AVAILABILITY, PREFERENCE AND FREQUENCY OF UTILIZATION OF COMMUNICATION SOURCES TO DAIRY ENTREPRENEURS*

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ABSTRACT
The study was conducted among 60 dairy entrepreneurs, selected through multistage random sampling, from Ollukkara block of Thrissur district. Milk Co-operative Society was found to be the most available communication source to dairy entrepreneurs followed by newspaper and radio. Veterinary hospital was the most preferred source of communication followed by other qualified persons in animal husbandry and Veterinary College. Radio followed by newspaper and friends were the most frequently utilized communication sources. In general, availability and preference for communication sources influenced their frequency of utilization.

Key words: Dairy entrepreneur, Communication source, Availability, Preference, Frequency Utilization.

INTRODUCTION
Entrepreneurship development has a significant role in the progress of dairy sector in a state like Kerala wherein reduced land availability, increasing cost of concentrate, fodder shortage and increased labour charge make dairying a less successful venture. Entrepreneurs who are a highly motivated group aspiring to adopt latest scientific knowledge can enhance the milk production of the state.

Being commercial milk producers, entrepreneurs will be in constant touch with various extension agencies involved in the dissemination of information on dairying. It is necessary to equip these farmers with the innovation in dairying and they need the right information at the right time from the right source. They can never conduct the business in a communication vacuum. Hence it is necessary to know the availability of various communication sources, preference of dairy entrepreneurs towards these sources and the frequency of utilization of these sources and correlation between these.

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives.

- To study the availability of communication sources to dairy entrepreneurs.
- To study the preference of dairy entrepreneurs towards various communication sources.
- To study the frequency of utilization of various communication sources.
- To study the correlation among availability, preference and frequency of utilization of communication sources.

MATERIAL AND METHODS
The study was conducted among 60 dairy entrepreneurs of Ollukkara block of Thrissur district in Kerala. There were 32 milk co-operative societies in Ollukkara block and out of these ten milk co-operative societies were selected at random. Six

* Part of the M.V.Sc. thesis submitted to Kerala Agricultural University.
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dairy entrepreneurs were selected at random from each society and thus, in all 60 dairy entrepreneurs constituted the sample. The data were collected with the help of a structured interview schedule.

(a) Availability of Communication Sources

It meant the extent of availability of various communication sources selected for the study as felt by respondents out of their past experiences.

The scoring procedure followed by giving score of 3, 2 and 1 respectively to readily available, available to some extent and not available sources.

A total score of each source, over all the respondents, was worked out and depending on this source – wise total score, the sources studied were ranked from one to thirteen.

Further since the total score of a source can range from 60 to 180, three class intervals were fixed as low, medium and high with scores as 60 to 100, 101 to 140 and 141 to 180 respectively.

(b) Preference for Communication Sources

This refers to the choice of communication sources selected for study by the respondents. Each respondent was asked to rank 13 communication sources from one to thirteen by giving first rank to the most preferred communication source and last rank to the least preferred one. The rank obtained for each source from each respondent was converted to score by giving scores in descending order from 13 to 1 for sources with ranks 1 to 13.

A total score of each source, overall respondents, was worked out and depending on this source-wise total score, the sources studied were ranked from one to thirteen.

Further, since the total score of a source can range from 60 to 780, three class intervals were fixed as low, medium and high with respective scores 60 to 300, 301 to 540 and 541 to 780 respectively.

(c) Frequency of utilization of Communication Sources

This meant the period within which the respondent used to consult the communication source. The scoring procedure followed was everyday, 2 to 6 times a week, once a week, once a month, once in 6 months and never with respective scores 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1.

A total score for each source, over all the respondents, was worked out and depending on this source – wise total score, the sources studied were ranked from one to thirteen.

Further, since the total score of a source can range from 60 to 360, three class intervals were fixed as low, medium and high with respective scores 60 to 160, 161 to 260 and 261 to 360.

(d) Correlation among availability, preference and frequency of utilization of Communication Sources

Correlation coefficient was determined to found out the relationship among availability, preference and frequency of utilization among various communication sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 revealed that milk co-operative society is the most available communication source on dairying for respondents followed by mass media sources like newspaper and radio. This result agreed
with the findings of Boniface (1996) that radio was a highly utilized information source by neo-literate agriculturists. It is indicative of further enhancement in the utilization of these media sources by effective policies and programmes. Periodicals, poster and other publications were the least available sources. These otherwise potential communication sources were relegated to the background when compared to others. Extension agencies publishing these items should critically look into the message contained in them or adequacy of publication.

Table 2 revealed that except poster and other publications all other sources were highly available to dairy entrepreneurs. No communication source was found in low available category.

Table 3 revealed that veterinary hospital was the most preferred source followed by other qualified persons in animal husbandry. This finding agreed with that of Pushkaran (1975) who reported that poultry farmers consulted more of technical experts. Entrepreneurs preference for communication sources is reasonable and therefore these sources need to be more interactive through suitable extension programmes. Other publications were among the comparatively least preferred communication sources possibly because of their scarce availability.

Table 4 indicted that veterinary hospital, other professionally qualified persons in animal husbandry and veterinary college had high preference.

It could be seen from Table 5 that radio was the most frequently utilized communication source followed by newspaper, friends, television, veterinary hospital, neighbours, relatives, milk co-operative society, poster, periodicals, other professionally qualified persons in animal husbandry and other publications in that order. The finding that radio was the most frequently utilized communication source is in agreement with that of Ingle (1987), Boniface (1996) and Pradhan et al. (1998)
The comparatively high scores of radio and newspaper indicated their popularity and preference among farmers. Some of the comparatively lesser utilized institutional sources were veterinary hospital, milk co-operative society and veterinary college inspite of their significance as contact centres for valid and reliable information. This may be due to the dearth of appropriate extension programmes with these institutions. Similarly print media such as poster, periodicals and other publications were comparatively lesser utilized inspite of the fact that the respondents were entrepreneurs and literate, could be because of the lesser availability of relevant printed materials.

The availability and frequency of utilization of the communication sources were positively and significantly correlated for most of the sources. Similarly there is a positive significant correlation between availability and preference of communication sources. Preference for communication sources had appositive and significant effect on utilization of communication sources. This in general indicated that availability and preference of communication sources influenced their frequency of utilization.

**CONCLUSION**

Since the dairy entrepreneurs felt that milk co-operatives, newspaper and radio as the most available sources for information support, these sources should be more exploited to transfer information. Least available sources like poster, periodicals should be published more on timely and relevant information transfer among entrepreneurs. Among the most preferred sources, those with technical experts such as veterinary hospital, veterinary college were cited which necessitate more of participatory extension programme with these organizations.

**REFERENCES**


