



Information Literacy of Rural farmer on Government Sponsored Welfare Programs: A Case Study of Bargarh District. (Odisha)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the information literacy of rural farmers. Today's Information is vital requirement of every field of human life such as agriculture. Agriculture is the backbone of Indian Economy, now a day's total economic depends upon the agriculture. This is mainstay the rural villages of Bargarh District. The rice pot of odisha is called Bargarh District and 73% of peoples depend upon agriculture. Information is the vital for changing era. Information Technology is taking new outline day by day. Information literacy of rural farmers make capable to recognize when information is needed and how to be located, evaluated and use effectively. Besides the present study conducts and analysis a questionnaire-based survey 853 agricultural farmers in seven Blocks of Bargarh District. Due to this some farmers are not satisfied in the cultivation. This paper concluded the growth Information literacy in modern era of this district.

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Introduction

Information Literacy is a vital skill to survive in the information era. Today's age is full of ICT enabled services in every field of human life. Information is growing rapidly day by day and being coded in the digital form. Government is also keen to make the citizens information literate about its welfare policies and programmes for various sections of the Society in Bargarh District, Odisha.

Agricultural production in the state has increased significantly keeping pace with the population growth of the state. Utilization of improved agricultural technology by the farmers to large extent depends upon the effective source of information channel and channel to which they are generally exposed directly or indirectly. One of the major problems of agriculture development in Odisha is not the availability of improved agriculture technologies but the technology does not reach the rural farmers of Bargarh district in adopted form in time. Adoption of improved techniques and methods in of rural farmers depends upon their socio-economical situation and Information literacy creates awareness of rural farmers in the various fields in electronic environment.

Society has been transformed by the rapid development and diffusion of information and communication technology (ICT) into fields such as education, business, health, agriculture, and so on. Information users may be bewildered by a variety of digitalized information. The process of identifying and selecting information has become complex. It is critical to promote information literacy (IL) in the digital age. Computers have become a necessary part of this digital society, and skills for computer use are a common prerequisite on many job applications. (Maharana, 2007)

Definitions of Information Literacy

Information literacy has been defined by different author, scholar, association and organization in different times. Some of the definitions are discussed in the following, though more or less these are similar to each other:

➤ Information Literacy is defined as the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate,

evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand. (www.infolit.org)

➤ "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." (American Library Association, 1998)

US National Commission on Library and Information Science in the UNESCO-sponsored Meeting of Experts on Information Literacy in Prague describes information literacy as

➤ "Information literacy is an understanding and set of abilities enabling individuals to 'recognise when information is needed and have the capacity to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information'." (CAUL, 2004)

Agriculture of Bargarh District

- Bargarh district comprises of two Sub-Divisions, Bargarh is the headquarters of the District. For this Agricultural District are 12 Tahasils & 12 Blocks. The district is comes under Agro-Climatic zone- Western Central Table Land and divided into five Agro Ecological Situation (AES). The District experiences extreme type of climate with hot & dry summer followed by humid monsoon and severe cold. The temperature varies between 100C to 480C. The district receives rainfall from South-West monsoon. The average annual rainfall in the district is 1367mm. But the rainfall is not well distributed. The erratic distribution of rainfall very often hampers the Kharif crop production particularly in Padmapur Sub-division & Bhatli, Ambabhona Blocks of Bargarh Sub-division.

- Oriya is the main language spoken in the district. It is generally known as Sambalpuri Oriya and is spoken in western parts of Orissa. Among this District depends only sources of Cultivation of Rice. (<http://www.ordistricts.nic.in>)

Bargarh District

The Bargarh district lies between 20° 43' to 21° 41' North latitude and 82° 39' to 83° 58' East longitude. It is one of the western most districts of the State of Orissa and came in to existence as a district from 1st April 1993. It is bounded on the north by the State of Chhatisgarh and on the east by the district of Sambalpur, on the south lies the district of Balangir and Subarnapur and on the west the district of Nuapara.

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The district has an area of 5837 Sq.Kms. The population of the district as per 2001 census is 13.46 Millions out of which 6.81 millions are male and 6.65 millions are female.

● The Bargarh district headquarters is on the National Highway No.6 running from Kolkata to Mumbai, hence well connected to the rest of the country with comfortable road. There is a Railway Station and the nearest Airport is Raipur (220 Kms) & Bhubaneswar (350 Kms). The best period of the year to visit this place is between October to March. During this period the Dhanu Yatra Festival (World's biggest open air theatre) is observed here. (<http://www.ordistricts.nic.in>)

Review Literatures

Some of the important studies, identical to the present investigation conducted earlier that deserve mention are reviewed as under:

Ali Akanda and Roknuzzaman (2012), in their study on "Agricultural Information Literacy of Farmers in the Northern Region of Bangladesh. The study aims at exploring the extent of agricultural information literacy of farmers in the northern region of Bangladesh. Besides the review of relevant literature the study conducts a questionnaire-based survey of 160 farmers working in ten districts in the region. Many of the farmers, however, are not well aware of modern techniques of agriculture, and they occasionally use such techniques for farming. Due to some problems farmers are moderately satisfied in getting agricultural information, and in many cases their satisfaction level is very low. The paper concludes with providing certain recommendations for the improvement of information literacy of the farmers in Bangladesh.

A study conducted by **Parvathamma & Pattar (2013)**, on "Information Literacy among the Rural Community in an Economically Backward Region of Karnataka State, India. In India, more than 70% of the population lives in villages and agriculture is the main source of income. A study of the rural community in the Bellary District was undertaken to understand their socioeconomic status; the types, channels and sources of information used; and difficulties faced in utilization of the information. Findings show that the majority of the respondents are youth and have completed at least primary education. Only 10% can read and write English; they are unable to utilize information in languages other than Kannada, their mother tongue. Friends, neighbors, and elders serve as the major source of information; television, mobile phone, and radio are the preferred channels for agricultural information. Internet connectivity, must impart information literacy skills.

Joshi and Nikose (2010), in their study on "The paper presents the various facets of internet information literacy among the faculty members of Rajiv Gandhi College of Engineering, Chandrapur. Seven faculty members of the College were distributed questionnaires. Out of 100 among 70 members were responded. The Electronic journals are found more for e-resources 65 numbers, 65 were used for also to update the knowledge, 50 members skilled in internet using and 60 members use search engines for searching e-resources as a large.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the competency level of information literacy among the rural farmers of Bargarh Districts(Odisha)
- To make comparison of level of information literacy skills among the rural farmer about various resources & services
- To identify areas of strengths and weakness in information literacy skills among the rural farmers
- To know, how far they are succeeding in getting relevant information regarding Govt. welfare programmes.
- To find out major problems encountered by the farmers when accessing and using information

Scope of Study

The study mainly focuses on Information Literacy skills of rural farmers identifying, locating, searching, accessing, retrieving and using information from both print and electronic sources of information. The rural farmers of Bargarh district were chosen purposively for the study because it's rural-cum-tribal characteristics and all about the benefits they would get. Out of a total population 1,481,255 in (Census 2011 data) Literacy rate 80% this district has two sub-divisions and 12 Blocks, only cover seven blocks namely Bargarh, Attabira, Barpali, Bhatli, Bheden, Bijepur and Sohela were selected random sampling basis.

Methodology

The Present study is based on survey method. A questionnaire was designed for the study. Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problems. It may be understood as a case study how research is done scientifically. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research method but also the research methodology. There are case study methods can be used in the studying the users of information literacy. It was administered to draw information from wide spectrum of respondents to different block of Bargarh District. The questionnaire was designed in the local Odia language (Sambalpuri) so the literate farmers could be able respond themselves. A total of 1000 questionnaire was distribution farmers engaged in agricultural activities in the Bargarh District were selected purposively from Seven Blocks, namely Attabira, Bargarh, Bhatli, Barpali, Bijepua, Bheden, Sohela and 853 farmers return the Questionnaires from above Blocks.

Study Results and Discussion

Data analysis is the major part of every research work. The present study significantly displays and elaborates the various aspects of the Research paper from the ground of systematic outlook, such as Questionnaires distribution of Seven Blocks, frequency of Gender, Age group, Education status of farmers, sources of Information, Information Literacy skills, Awareness of Govt. welfare programmes, Use of Modern Technology, Level of Satisfaction and Facing problems etc.

Data collect different Blocks of Bargarh District

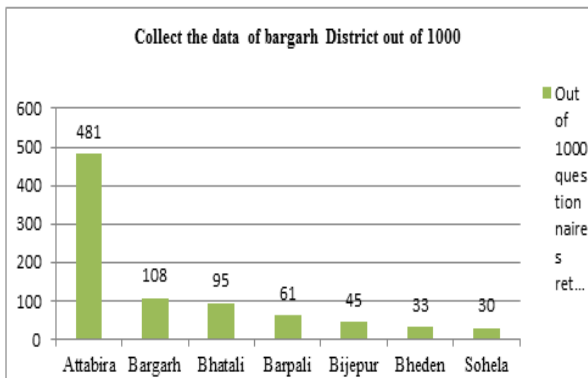
Table 1

Blocks of Bargarh District	Out of 1000 questionnaires return 853
Attabira	481
Bargarh	108
Bhatali	95
Barpali	61
Bijepur	45
Bheden	33
Sohela	30

As shown in Table: 1 and Graph: 1 the Questionnaires Distribution the seven blocks of Bargarh District. Highest numbers respondents 481 return the questionnaires Attabira Blocks (Parmanpur, Janhapara and Hirilipali) and in this Blocks most of the young rural farmers actively work in agriculture and the Second highest numbers is Bargarh Block 108 farmers responded.

Gender of the Respondents of Farmers

In total 853 respondents responded against the questionnaire, of which 786 were male and 70 were female (Table 2). Total no's of respondent in the Bargarh District different blocks of Gender Male and Female.

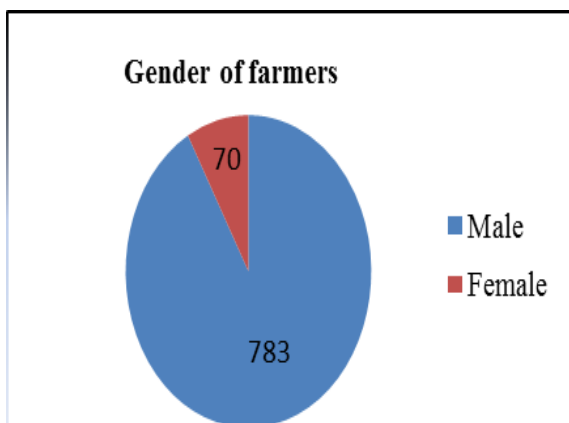


Graph 1

In the time of data collection the most of the female Farmers are widow so they hesitated after convince they give their data.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondent's Gender

Gender	out of 853
Male	783
Female	70



Graph 2

Frequency Distribution of Age Group

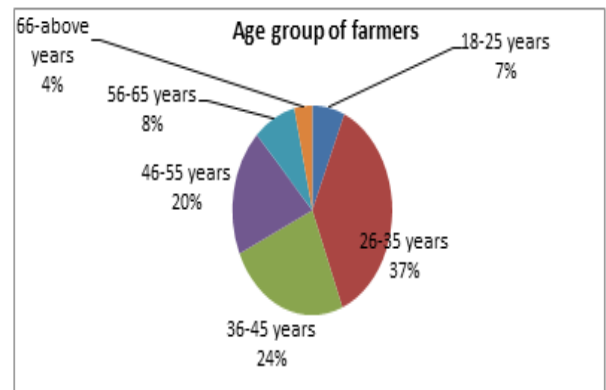
Table 3 & Graph: 3 shows that the highest percentage 318 (37.29%) belonging the age group 26-35 years followed by the age groups of 36-45 (24.38%), while age group 46-55 year of farmers (19.58%) show in tables data.

Table 3

Age group	No. of Farmers (N=853)	%
18-25 years	56	6.56
26-35 years	318	37.29
36-45 years	208	24.38
46-55 years	167	19.58
56-65 years	73	8.56
66-above years	31	3.63

Show that the Table :4 and Graph:4 Under educational status, maximum numbers of farmers i.e. (32.71%) are attained up to the matriculation, 26.73 % are pass out Undermetrics , while 20.86 % are graduate and Non of the person are found illiterate in the study. Educational Literacy is playing a crucial

role to improvement the agriculture and farmers of Bargarh District different blocks of Odisha.

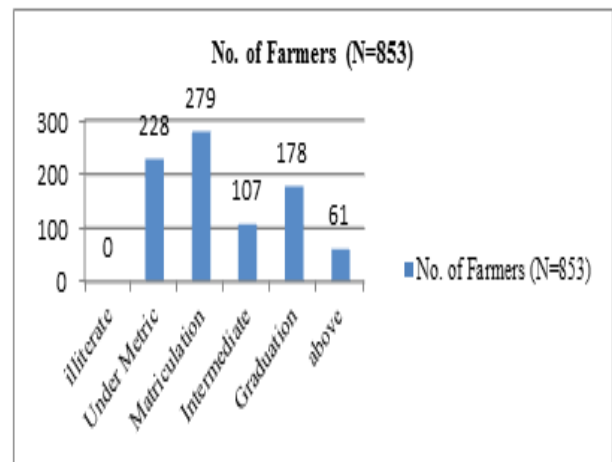


Graph 3

Educational qualification of farmers

Table 4

Educational Qualification	No. of Farmers (N=853)	%
illiterate	00	00
Under Metric	228	26.73
Matriculation	279	32.71
Intermediate	107	12.55
Graduation	178	20.86
above	61	7.15



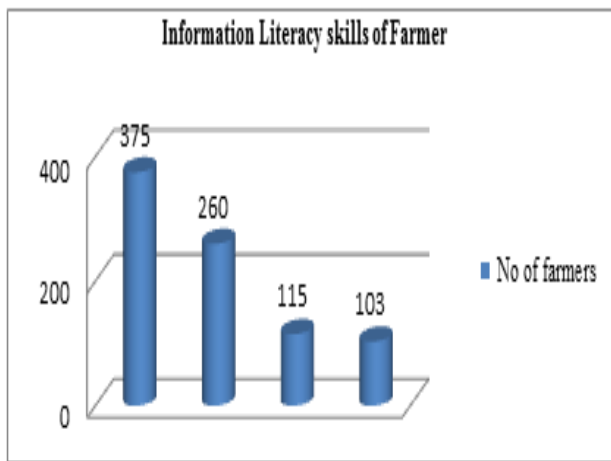
Graph 4

Table: 5 show that the 380 farmers get their information suppliers and 282 farmers get their information leaflet/Boucher/poster, while 38 farmers collect the information from Newspapers. None of the farmers attained seminar, conferences and collect the information from Mouths of Government officials.

Information Literacy Skills of Farmers

Table 6

Information Literacy Skill	Out of 853	Percentage
Using Mobile Phone	375	43.97
Using Internet	260	30.48
Using computer and Audio Video Equipment	115	13.48
Retrieving Information From Online	103	12.07

**Graph 5**

The farmers of Bargarh District were asked about their information literacy skills which are presented in Table: 6 and Graph:6 show that the results clearly point out that a large percentage of the respondent farmers 375 had the sufficient skill on evaluating and using information moderate level of skill on using mobile phone and 260 farmers using Internet. Moreover, the farmers were aware of some extent to use computer, multimedia and audio-visual equipment as 115 respondents agreed.

Table: 7 indicate that the farmers Satisfy the Government welfare Programme only 13.48% Agricultural Loan, 9.49% subsidy, 3.78% agricultural Insurance scheme, 37% respondents of Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana, 36.93% Kishan Credit Card and 34.58 % Farmers Insurance scheme and Moreover, a good number of the respondents admitted that they are Not satisfied the government welfare programs 17.59% Kishan Gold Card, 24.03% National and state Level programs, 28.13 Marketing agricultural Programme.

Awareness regarding Government Welfare Programme

Table 7

Welfare Program	1	2	3	4	5
Agriculture Loan	450 (52.76)	160 (18.76)	105 (12.30)	115 (13.48)	23 (2.70)
Subsidy	355 (41.61)	240 (28.13)	90 (10.55)	81 (9.49)	87 (10.19)
Agricultural Insurance Scheme	213 (24.98)	320 (37.51)	256 (30.01)	33 (3.87)	31 (3.63)
Marketing of Agricultural Programme	240 (28.13)	180 (21.10)	50 (5.87)	350 (41.03)	33 (3.87)
National & State Level Programme	205 (24.03)	351 (41.14)	80 (9.37)	118 (13.84)	99 (11.60)
Farmer Health Insurance scheme	150 (17.59)	128 (15)	192 (22.51)	295 (34.58)	88 (10.31)
Kishan Credit Card	130 (15.24)	120 (14.06)	183 (21.45)	315 (36.93)	105 (12.31)
Kishan Gold Card	150 (17.59)	75 (8.79)	346 (40.56)	215 (25.2)	67 (7.86)
Biju Krushak kalyan joyana	100 (11.73)	150 (17.59)	190 (22.27)	322 (37.75)	91 (10.66)
Development of Agricultural farms	250 (29.3)	150 (17.59)	320 (37.52)	80 (9.38)	53 (6.21)
Jalanidhi scheme	188 (22.04)	143 (16.77)	185 (21.69)	258 (30.24)	79 (9.26)

1) Not satisfaction 2) satisfy some extend 3) Moderately Satisfied 4) satisfied 5) High Satisfy

Awareness of Technology information Need

Table 8

Awareness of Modern technology Use	1	2	3	4	5
Tractor	20 (2.30)	80 (9.4)	100 (11.73)	163 (19.11)	490 (57)
Power tiller	170 (20)	30 (3.5)	415 (49)	80 (9.37)	158 (19)
Modern Irrigation system	29 (3.4)	38 (4.5)	98 (11)	145 (17)	543 (64)
Use motorized pump for irrigation	400 (47)	203 (24)	150 (18)	80 (9.37)	20 (2.3)
Weather Information	21 (2.4)	93 (11)	108 (13)	279 (32.71)	352 (41)
Insect Control Technology	40 (4.7)	20 (2.3)	129 (15)	211 (24.74)	453 (53)
Marketing Information	61 (7.2)	535 (63)	115 (13)	107 (12.54)	35 (7.9)
New methods of crop preservation	378 (44)	238 (28)	92 (11)	78 (9.14)	67 (7.9)
Sri Prannali	273 (32)	340 (40)	140 (16)	100 (11.73)	00

1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Occasionally 4) Often 5) Very often

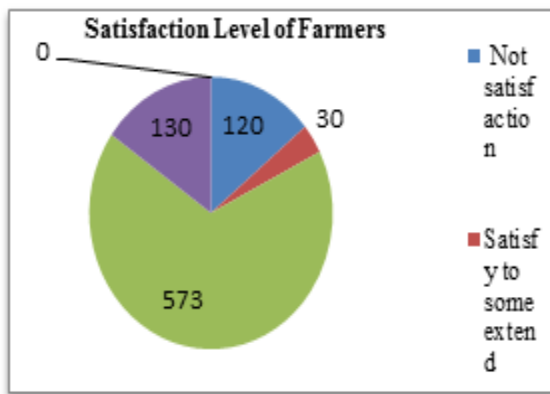
Table: 8 show that the significant percentage of farmers (57.9%) agree that they usually (very often) use tractors for cultivation and (49%) of respondent agree they Often used Power Tiller. The findings also indicate that motorized pump (47%) is never used for irrigation by the farmers and 64 % of farmers used Very often Modern Irrigation system so they depend on the Hirakud Dam. Moreover, a good number of the respondents admitted that they very often aware Weather information (41%) and (53%) Insect control Technology, on spraying machines and modern agricultural equipment used and Occasionally 11% respondent aware the new methods of crop preservation .Only a few of the farmers (11%) are capable of using Sri Prannali technology in agriculture.

Satisfaction level of farmers in terms of getting information

Table 9

Level of satisfaction	N=853	Percentage
Not satisfaction	120	14.06
Satisfy to some extend	30	3.52
Moderately satisfied	573	67.17
Satisfied	130	15.25
High satisfied	00	00

In the Table:9 and Graph:9 show that the satisfaction level of farmers as observed in reveals that more than thirty percent (67.17%) farmers are moderately satisfied in terms of getting agricultural information, while only 15.25% are satisfied, 3.52% are satisfied to some extent, and 14.06% are not satisfied at all. The evidence shows that none of the farmers are highly satisfied.



Graph 9

Major Problems facing By the Rural farmers

Table 10

Problems	1	2	3	4
Low Level Of Income	75 (8.84)	85 (9.96)	243 (28)	450 (52.75)
Lack Of Personal Interest & special knowledge	24 (2.8)	453 (53.10)	285 (33)	91 (10.67)
Inadequate transport facility	115 (13)	95 (11.10)	123 (14)	520 (60.96)
High rate Of illiterate	00	00	253 (29.66)	600 (70.34)
Inaccessibility of Rural Areas By the NGO	45 (5.3)	122 (14.3)	334 (39)	352 (41.27)
Ignorance Govt. responsibility	64 (7.59)	398 (46.70)	200 (23)	191 (22.39)
Rural electrification	15 (1.8)	128 (15)	580 (68)	130 (15.24)

1-Less Significant 2-Neutral 3-Significant 4- High Significant

Table 10 shows the farmers indicate the low level of income (52.75%), and high rate of illiteracy (70.34%) are the highest significant problems encountered by them. Inadequate transport facility (60.96%), lack of rural electrification (68%), inaccessibility to the rural areas by the NGOs (39%) significant problems, while lack of Personal Interest and special knowledge (53.10) and ignorance of Government responsibility (46%) are identified as Neutral problems.

Findings

- Most of the Female agricultural farmers are Widows otherwise their Husband is physically handicap.
- The farmers of Attabira Blocks are more active in Information Literacy of agriculture.
- Farmers are getting their source of information from Suppliers and Leaflet/ Boucher/Poster.
- 26 to 35 age Of Young Famers are more active this cultivation of Paddy.
- Information Literacy Skills of large numbers of farmers are using Mobile Phone.
- In the Bargarh District most of the Farmers educational Qualifications are matriculation (279) and Under Metric (228).
- Most of the Farmers Principal Occupation is Paddy in the above Blocks of Bargarh District.

- Most of the farmers have below 5 acres.
- Major Problems are facing Lack of rural electrification in Village farmers.

Conclusion

Information literacy plays a crucial role in intimating information regarding of agriculture. It helps in identifying the types of cultivation and types of product. In the western Odisha of Bargarh District, the most important crops Product are rice. The rice pot of odisha is called Bargarh district. Now this study has provided a first look at the potential of awareness information literacy of rural farmers in affecting the agricultural sector as a whole. As the above discussion majority of rural farmers are not having access of most of the essential agricultural information. Therefore ICT and Information Literacy is very much important for the dissemination and technical knowledge of the rural farmers community of Bargarh District (Odisha). This study has reported there is growing awareness of information literacy among the rural farmers and its use among the farming community. Farmers must be able to get information delivered to them at a time and place of their choosing and it will be beneficial to farmer's to realize productivity gains from the adoption of new farming practices and actions to mitigate crop losses.

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