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## Significance of print media in the dissemination of agricultural information among banana farmers in Tamil Nadu

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### Abstract

Agricultural communication is the process to disseminate the information or content about agricultural technologies and related knowledge among their stakeholders for the development of the Indian society. The diffusion of knowledge depends on the use of communication channels both by the scientists and farmers. Among the mass media, Print and electronic media found to be the most suitable for rural as well as agricultural target audiences. Though electronic media are wide use among the farmers, print media is still the key source for farmers to get information related to agriculture. The present study is carried out to assess usage of print media in dissemination of agricultural information among the banana growers in Tiruchirapalli district of Tamil Nadu. With a total sample size was 644 respondents. Nearly half of the respondents relied mainly on newspapers for Planting information, Plant protection, Water source/ supply and Marketing aspects. The study found that half of the total respondents (40% Newspapers 10% magazines) use prints media to get information on banana cultivation.

**Keywords:** agricultural communication, banana cultivation, print media, newspapers and magazines

### Introduction

In India, more than 70 percent of the people are still live with agriculture and its related trades in rural Communities (<http://m.kkhsou.in>). These agriculturists were characterized as low literates or illiterates, and lack of innovativeness to adopt and accept the modern technologies including agricultural sector. These factors have rendered our rural and agricultural communities into islands of underdevelopment. The development in Agricultural sector is the most important aspect for the development of the nation. Development communication, especially agricultural communication is needed the services to mobilize development in agriculture sector. Agricultural communication also addresses all subject areas related to the complex enterprises of food, feed, fiber, renewable energy, natural resource management, rural development and others, locally to globally (<https://en.wikipedia.org>). An agricultural communicator is expected to bring a high level specialized knowledge in the field of agriculture (Boone, K., Meisenbach, T., & Tucker, M. (2000))<sup>[1]</sup> that typically not fulfill the requirement to play a role of mass media as mass communicator. Farm productivity depends on the timely availability of farm technologies from knowledge centers like State Agricultural Universities and Research stations (Agricultural communicators) to the clientele system. The diffusion of knowledge depends on the use of communication channels both by the scientists and farmers.

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### Role of Print media in agriculture sector

Print medium is a key agent to disseminate agricultural information to educate and motivate the farmers to accept and transfer new innovations in the agricultural sector. Print media (newspapers and magazines, newsletters notices, posters and banners etc.) remains an important instrument to act as a vehicle for transferring agricultural technologies from lab to land in top 10 agriculture producing countries (France, Russia, Germany, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Africa, Philippines, Australia, and Malaysia) in the world. More than 65% print media communication was identified as the best means of communication source in Borno State of Nigeria (Shuwa M.I. *et al* 2015) <sup>[10]</sup>. Agricultural country India's development is mainly dependent on this sector. Among the mass media, the respondents' ranked electronic media occupies first and print is in second place and new media occupies third places (Rehman, 2011) <sup>[9]</sup> in most suitable for rural as well as agricultural target audiences to disseminate the agriculture production and marketing information. Print media plays pivotal role in major agri production state of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu ([www.echocommunity.org](http://www.echocommunity.org)). Farooq *et al.*, (2007) <sup>[2]</sup> pointed out that the agricultural information was carried by the print media for the development of farming community. Print media inform and educate the farming community to adopt new agricultural technologies for the success of farmers in agriculture sector. Since 1970, Ministry of Agriculture (Moa) of Botswana government publishing 'Botswana Daily news' to disseminate agricultural news for the benefit of the farmers and 'Gazette Newspaper', 'The Sunday Times', 'The Voice Megi', 'The Mid-Week' 'Sun' etc., published sparingly agricultural oriented news and advertisements. The information is to gratify the farmers' interest in terms of timeliness, information about technological transfer. Butt, T. M *et al.*, (2008) reveals that mass media were not fully utilized in the area which hindered not only the awareness level of the respondents but also adversely affects the adoption level in cultivation. Since the farmers are young and educated they could easily adopt modern production technologies in agriculture sector based on the information dissemination by print media. The young and educated farmers were taken to field visits, study tours and excursion trips to other states of India for gaining a hands - on experience on successful farm production (Pratap *et al.*, 2003) <sup>[8]</sup>. Print media is an important tool to transfer of technology to the literate farmers (Flor, 2002) <sup>[3]</sup> and illiterate farmers (Jennings & Packham, 2001 and Govt. of Bangladesh, 2008) <sup>[6]</sup> and farmer neighbourer and field workers at grass root level. Agricultural sector news disseminated by Print media is highly qualified for farmers due to a number of characteristics like durability, extensive and intensive coverage, low cost and choice of contents. (Hussain, 2005) <sup>[5]</sup>.

### Banana Cultivation in India

India is one of the largest banana cultivation countries in the world, that contributes 29 per cent to global production from its 7.4 per cent land areas followed, by China (9 per cent) and

Philippines (9 per cent) (Hussain, 2005) <sup>[5]</sup>. During the last decade, ICAR-NRCB's immense contribution banana production estimated to 30.2MT from an area of 8.47 lakh hectares that remained keeping India as the largest producers of banana cultivation in the world. In India, banana crops ranks first (36%) in production among other fruit crops. Banana / plantain crops are widely grown in both tropical and subtropical regions comprising of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa, Bihar, eastern U.P., West Bengal, Assam and North eastern states with considerable socio-economic and cultural importance. According to the Department of Horticulture statistics Govt. Tamil Nadu, banana crop cultivating in Cauvery delta basin in 25,720 ha are. Hence, the Govt. of India started the ICAR-National Research Centre for Banana head quarter in Tiruchirapalli in 1993 to identify new innovation of technology for the development of banana cultivation. The 25 years old research Centre invented many technologies in banana cultivation and how does those technologies transferred to farmers with help of mass media such as the radio, TV, newspapers, magazines and in the new media.

### Methodology

Simple random sampling techniques used, to collect data from selected five blocks (Thottaiyam, Lalgudi, Andanallur, Manachanallur and Tiruverambur) in Tiruchirapalli district in Tamil Nadu. About 750 structured questionnaires were administered and distributed in selected rural and urban areas 644 duly filled questionnaires were received for data analysis. The single stage sampling method was used to select the samples from the major banana cultivating areas of Thottaiyam, Lalgudi, Andanallur, Manachanallur and Tiruverambur blocks in Tiruchirapalli district. The division of sample was distributed according to the Block i.e., place of cultivation of banana. While analyzing the respondents in block wise 26.71% from Thottaiyam, 24.07 % from Lalgudi, 21.43 % from Andanallur, 18.79 % from Manachanallur and 9.01% of the respondents from Tiruverambur & other blocks. Thus, it can be interpreted that the highest percentage was from Thottaiyam Block in Cauvery river basin area.

### Result and Discussion

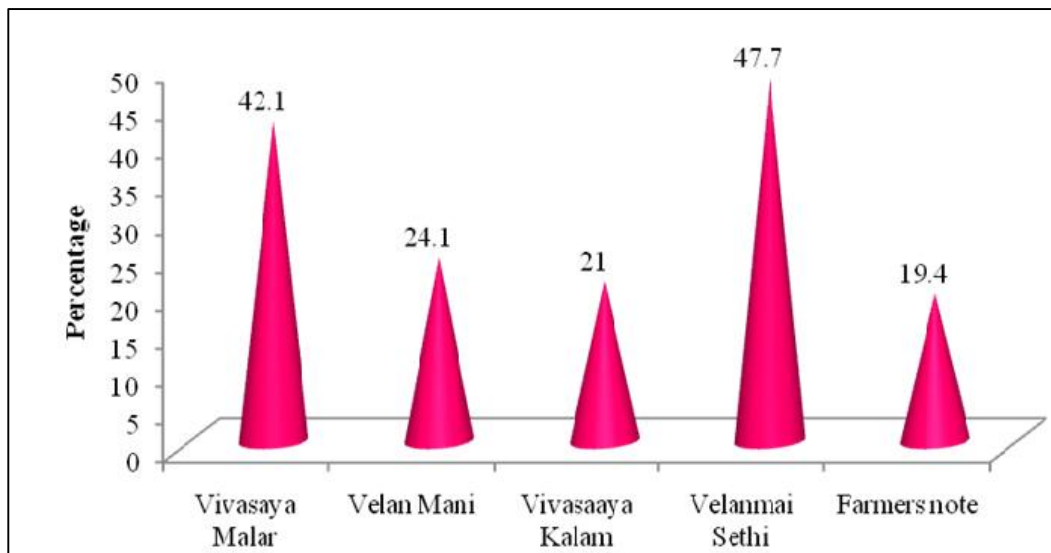
#### Agricultural news in Newspapers

The opinion of the respondents regarding the dedicated pages for Agricultural news in Newspapers like *Vivasaya Malar*, *Velan Mani*, *Vivasaaya Kalam*, *Velanmai Sethi*, Farmers note was analyzed and the results are given in Table 1. It is evident that 42.1 % of the respondents were reading *Vivasaya Malar*, 24.1% of the respondents reading *Velan Mani*, 21% *Vivasaaya Kalam*, 47.7 % *Velanmai Sethi* and 19.4 % of the respondents reading *Farmers note* on Newspapers. Further in order to find out the significant association with reading Agricultural programmes on Newspapers, a Chi-square test was used and the result of the test is also shown in the following table 1. It is noted from the table 1 that the 'p' value is less than 0.01 and hence it is concluded that there is highly significant association is found between the reading Agricultural programmes on Newspapers.

**Table 1:** Agricultural programmes reading on Newspapers

Newspapers	Agricultural information				Total	Chi square	p
	No		Yes				
	N	%	N	%			
<i>Vivasaya Malar</i> (Dinamalar)	373	57.9	271	42.1	644	206.44	< 0.001**
<i>Velan Mani</i> (Dinamani)	489	75.9	155	24.1	644		
<i>Vivasaaya Kalam</i> (Dinakaran)	509	79.0	135	21.0	644		
<i>Velanmai Sethi</i> (Daily Thanthi)	337	52.3	307	47.7	644		
<i>Farmers note</i> (The Hindu)	519	80.6	125	19.4	644		

\*\* Highly Significant

**Fig 1:** Agriculture programmes reading on news paper**Agricultural Journals/ Magazines**

Agricultural information through Agricultural Journals/ Magazines *Vanoli Uzhvar Sanga Sethik Kathir*, *Valarum Vivasaya Tamizhagam*, *Uzhavar Valarum Velanmai*, *Thamilaka Vivasayee Ulagam*, *Velan Vaniga Ulagam*, *Indraiya Velaanmai*, *Naveena Velanmai*, *Malrum Velanmai*, *Naam Uzavar*, *Uzhavar Osai*, *Pasumai Vikadan*, *Puthiya Thalaimurai*, *Agricultural Today* was analyzed and the results are given in. Table 2 shows that 12.4% of the respondents were reading *Vanoli Uzhvar Sanga Sethik Kathir* followed by 3.6% *Valarum Vivasaya Tamizhagam*, 11.6% *Uzhavarin Valarum Velanmai*, 5% *Thamilaka Vivasayee Ulagam*, 9% *Velan Vaniga Ulagam*, 11.5% *Indraiya Velaanmai*, 6.7% *Naveena Velanmai*, 5.9 % *Malrum Velanmai*, 7.1% *Naam Uzavar*, 29.5% *Uzhavar Osai*, 11.5 %

*Pasumai Vikadan*, 1.7% *Puthiya Thalaimurai* and 3.1 % of the respondents reading *Agricultural Today*.

Agri sector news disseminated by Print media (Newspapers and journals/magazines) is highly qualified for farmers due to the use of different characteristics like durability, extensive and intensive coverage, low cost and choice of contents. Shahid Farooq *et al.*, (2007)<sup>[2]</sup> study results also support the present study.

Further in order to find out the significant association with reading Agricultural programmes in Agricultural Journals/ Magazines, a Chi-square test was used and results are shown in table 2. It is noted that the 'p' value is less than 0.01 and hence it is concluded that there is highly significant association is found with the reading Agricultural programmes on Agricultural Journals/ Magazines.

**Table 2:** Agricultural programmes reading on Agricultural Journals/ Magazines

Agricultural Journals/ Magazines	Agricultural information				Total	Chi square	p
	No		Yes				
	N	%	N	%			
<i>Vanoli Uzhvar Sanga Sethik Kathir</i>	564	87.6	80	12.4	644	522.92	< 0.001**
<i>Valarum Vivasaya Tamizhagam</i>	621	96.4	23	3.6	644		
<i>Uzhavarin Valarum Velanmai</i>	569	88.4	75	11.6	644		
<i>Thamilaka Vivasayee Ulagam</i>	612	95.0	32	5.0	644		
<i>Velan Vaniga Ulagam</i>	586	91.0	58	9.0	644		
<i>Indraiya Velaanmai</i>	570	88.5	74	11.5	644		
<i>Naveena Velanmai</i>	601	93.3	43	6.7	644		
<i>Malrum Velaanmai</i>	606	94.1	38	5.9	644		
<i>Naam Uzavar</i>	598	92.9	46	7.1	644		
<i>Uzhavar Osai</i>	454	70.5	190	29.5	644		
<i>Pasumai Vikadan</i>	570	88.5	74	11.5	644		
<i>Puthiya Thalaimurai</i>	633	98.3	11	1.7	644		
<i>Agricultural Today</i>	624	96.9	20	3.1	644		

\*\* Highly Significant

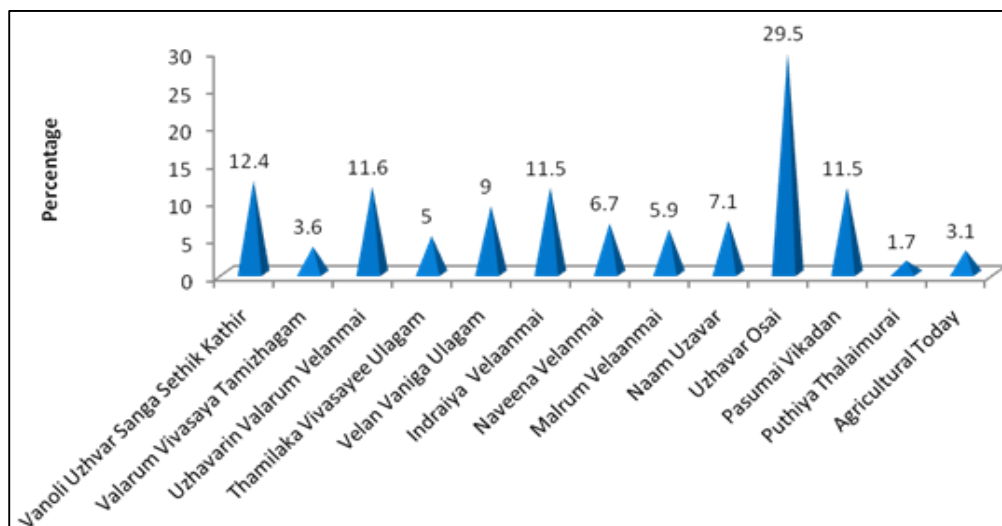


Fig 2: Agriculture programmes reading on agriculture journal / magazines

### Print media used for banana cultivation information

The frequency and percentage distribution regarding the information on banana cultivation information is presented in table 3 & fig. 3 respectively. Getting information on banana cultivation like planting information, Pest and disease management, New cultivation technologies, Water source/supply, Intercropping, Marketing, Fertilizer management, Crop loan, Crop insurance, Post-harvest technology and Weather forecast through the print media like Newspaper and Magazines is considered under this study.

Table 3. Print media used to get information on banana cultivation

S. No.	Information needs	News paper	Magazines
1.	Planting information	40.7%	11.8%
2.	Pest and disease management	49.5%	14.0%
3.	New cultivation technologies	44.4%	12.9%
4.	Water source/ supply	46.1%	8.1%
5.	Intercropping	44.3%	11.0%
6.	Marketing	46.7%	8.5%
7.	Fertilizer management	40.5%	9.6%
8.	Crop loan	39.0%	8.4%
9.	Crop insurance	38.5%	7.1%
10.	Post-harvest technology	29.5%	5.3%
11.	Weather forecast	29.8%	3.6%

Table 3 shows that the respondents got information on banana cultivation for planting information through Newspaper 40.7% and

11.8% from Magazines. Regarding Pest and disease management, 49.5% from Newspaper and 14% from Magazines, New cultivation technologies, 44.4% from Newspaper and 12.9% from Magazines, Water source 46.1 % through Newspaper and 8.1% through Magazines.

In the case of Intercropping, 44.3% of the respondents got information on banana cultivation through Newspaper and 11% from Magazines. Regarding the Marketing, 46.7% of the respondents got information on banana cultivation from Newspaper, and 8.5% from Magazines, 'Fertilizer management', 40.5% of the respondents received information on banana cultivation through Newspaper and 9.6% through Magazines. 39% of the respondents got information on 'Crop loan for banana cultivation through Newspaper and followed by Magazines (8.4%). Regarding the Crop insurance, 38.5% from Newspaper and 7.1% from Magazines. Regarding Post harvest technology, 29.5% of the respondents received information on banana cultivation through Newspaper and 5.3% from Magazines. Regarding Weather forecast 29.8% of the respondents received information on banana cultivation through Newspaper and 3.6% from Magazines. Hence, it is found from the analysis that majority of the respondents (40%) get information on banana cultivation through the newspaper regarding Planting information, Pest and disease management, New Cultivation technologies, Water source/ supply, Intercropping, Marketing, Fertilizer management, Crop loan, Crop insurance, Post-harvest, technology, Weather forecast and followed by (10%) magazines

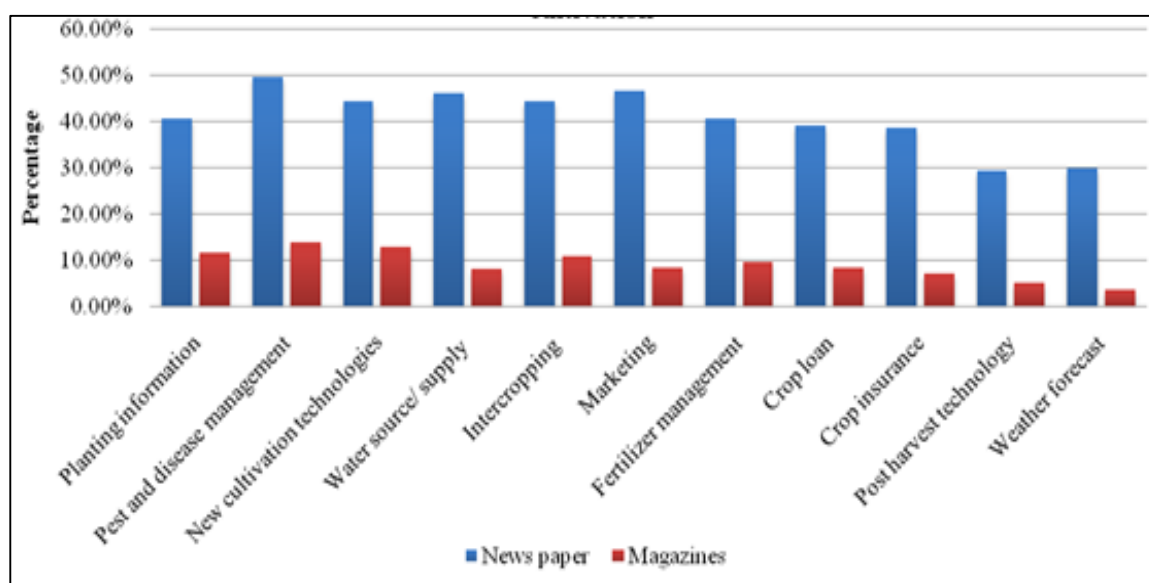


Fig 3: Percentage distribution of media used to get information on banana cultivation

## Conclusion

The print media communications plays a vital role in disseminating the agricultural information to the farming communities in transferring of technologies on banana cultivation from Lab-to-Land. Print media could be effectively used by modern young literate audience and get benefited from the print media information which written in simple language, easy to understand explaining with opt photos, pictures, diagrams and info graphics. From the study, it was found that the dissemination of information in print media such as newspaper, magazines coverage on agricultural activities should be in local languages to communicate in the way of storytelling and also emphasized the balanced mixture media planning to gratify to the needs of target audience.

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