

Need of Agricultural Information and their Accessibility for Women Farmers in Imbulpe DS Division in Sri Lanka

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The need of agricultural information and accessibility for farmers are more crucial for enhancing the food production. Therefore, this research was conducted to study the agricultural information needs and accessibility for women farmers in Imbulpe DS division in Rathnapura District. Out of the women farmers of the area, 238 were selected through simple random sampling method from purposively selected seven Grama Niladhari (GN) divisions. Pre-tested, interviewer-administered questionnaire survey was used to collect data from March to July 2019. Descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis were used for data analysis. Based on the findings, most of the women farmers were within the age group of 40 - 59 years, married, and studied up to secondary education. Women farmers were undertaken production, processing, technology and marketing of agricultural products in this area. Most of the women farmers showed that they need more information regarding improved crop varieties. The lower level of agricultural information needs was showed for suitable storage facilities. About 60.5% of the respondents indicated higher level of agricultural information accessibility on improved crop varieties related to the production factors. Moreover, low level of agricultural information accessibility was shown regarding the improved market systems under the marketing factors. Extension agents were their major sources of agricultural information and ICT tools were the least important agricultural information source. Age, marital status, educational level and monthly income showed strong positive association with the agricultural information accessibility. A moderate level of positive association was obtained between farm land size and the agricultural information accessibility of this area. Therefore, enhancement of agricultural information accessibility by organizing awareness programs and extension services for the women farmers, enhancement of accessibility for market information through ICTs and encouragement of women farmers' participation in the farming societies of Imbulpe area will be very important to develop the agricultural information accessibility furthermore.

Keywords: *Accessibility, Agricultural Information, Needs, Sri Lanka, Women Farmers*