

Effectiveness of Different Communication Methods/Media Used By Novartis Pesticide Company in Tehsil Arifwala

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to find out the effectiveness of communication methods/media used by Novartis company in Arifwala tehsil of Pakpattan. Analysis was made of the data collected from 120 farmer respondents through a pre-tested interview schedule. The research indicated that all the respondents were aware of the Novartis company. It may imply that the Novartis pesticide company was popular among farmers of the area. All the respondents were found to be using pesticides of Novartis in addition to the products of other companies. Neighbours/friends/relatives appeared to be the major sources through which the respondents became aware of Novartis Company as reported by a vast majority (89.16%) of the respondents. This may imply that fellow farmers are playing very important role in informing each other about Novartis company. Agricultural campaigns appeared to be the most effective communication method followed by literature, lecture meetings, exhibitions, method demonstrations, result demonstrations and movies. Farm and home visits, discussion meetings, signboards, radio and TV were relatively less effective methods/media.

Key Words: Communication methods; Novartis; Pesticide

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays an important role in Pakistan's economy and will continue to occupy a key position in future. It provides employment to 44.1% of the total employed, besides being the main source of foreign exchange earnings. It also contributes about 26% to GDP (Govt. of Pakistan, 2000). Unfortunately, generally the farmers of the country are lagging behind very much with regard to agricultural productivity and farm income even in this technologically developed era. The average per hectare yield of various crops including wheat, sugarcane, seed cotton and rice obtained in Pakistan is much lower than that obtained in many other countries.

It is obvious that with such a low average per hectare yield and low rate of increase in agricultural production, it seems impossible to fulfill even the basic needs of our rapidly increasing population. The question therefore, arises that how to get out of the situation. Evidently it is only possible if farmers are made aware of the improved crop production and protection technologies and be motivated to adopt the same according to the recommendations.

Apart from other agronomic practices, plant protection occupies a key position in increasing crop productivity. Research has shown that application of proper plant protection measures has increased the yield of many agricultural crops. For example, in case of cotton crop, average yield was 339 kg ha⁻¹ in 1980-81 when there was less trend of pesticide use. In 1998-99 the average yield was raised to 512 kg ha⁻¹ (Govt. of Pakistan, 1999). The increase in production/yield may mainly be attributed to the adoption of plant protection technologies by the farmers. Convincing farmers for the adoption of a new technology is not so

simple. Different communication methods can be employed to achieve this objective.

The effectiveness of the methods/media varies from situation to situation. Unless the appropriate communication methods are selected and skillfully used by the field staff, the desired results may not be achieved. The present study has, therefore, been conducted to assess the effectiveness of communication methods/media used by Novartis pesticide company to popularize its products among the farmers of tehsil Arifwala.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Arifwala tehsil of district Pakpattan was selected as a research area for the study, which consists of 33 union councils and 191 villages. The tehsil is geographically divided into 4 strata by main roads. Three villages from each stratum were selected at random. From each selected village, 10 respondents were randomly selected thereby making a sample size of 120 respondents for the research project. "Novartis" company was selected for being a multinational and the biggest pesticide company in the research area. The data were collected with the help of an interview schedule. The data were tabulated and analyzed by working out simple percentages and weighted scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Awareness about Novartis pesticide company. There are many pesticide companies (national/ multinational) including Novartis working in the study area to sell their products. If the farmers are familiar with different pesticide companies, they are more likely to get maximum benefits

from them by using their products for plant protection. The awareness of a pesticide company among the farmers is an indicator of its popularity among the farmers. Therefore, the researcher thought it necessary to know whether or not the respondents knew Novartis pesticide company. According to the data obtained in this respect, all the respondents were aware of the Novartis company. This may imply that the Novartis pesticide company was very popular among farmers of the area.

Sources of information about Novartis company's pesticides. It may be in the interest of a company to know about the sources through which farmers generally get information about various pesticides of the company. The farmers may get information about Novartis company's products from different sources. The data in this regard are given in Table I, which show that a vast majority (89.16%) of the respondents became aware of Novartis company's pesticides through neighbors/friends/relatives. Other major sources of information appeared to be the TV, newspapers/dealers/signboards and extension field staff of Novartis as indicated by 45, 42.50 and 37.50% of the respondents. Extension field staff of Agri. Dept. and radio served as information sources for only 33.33 and 25.83% of the respondents. This may imply that fellow farmers are playing very important role in informing each other about Novartis company. TV, newspapers/dealers/signboards and extension field staff of the Novartis have also played an important role in introducing the products of this company. The results with regard to the role of neighbours/friends/relatives are in accordance with those of Ali (1992) who found that about 54% of the respondents got agricultural information through neighbors/relatives or friends. The results with regard to radio are in contrast to those of Iqbal (1988) who found that 60.5% of the respondents used radio as main source for getting agricultural information.

Table I. Sources through which the respondents became aware of Novartis pesticides

Source	No.	%
Extension field staff of Novartis	45	37.50
Neighbours/friends/relatives	107	89.16
Extension field staff of Agri. Dept.	40	33.33
Television	54	45.00
Radio	41	34.16
Newspapers, dealers, signboards etc.	51	42.50

Communication methods/media used by Novartis company to popularize its products. Awareness of the farmers about various methods/media used by the Novartis company reflects the interest taken by the farmers in different communication methods used to popularize the products of the said company. It also reflects the effectiveness of the methods/media. An enquiry was, therefore, made to know the communication methods/media used by Novartis. The data in this regard

are presented in Table II, which reveal that television, signboards/slogans, literature and radio were used by Novartis to popularize its products as pointed out by 45, 42.50, 40 and 34.16% of the respondents, respectively. It may imply that mass media played an important role in diffusing agricultural information among farmers. Similar results were achieved by Malik (2000) who found that mass media were perceived useful in increasing agricultural production to a great extent. Other methods included farm and home visits (30%), method demonstrations (12.50%), result demonstrations (24.16%), lecture meetings (31.67%), discussion meetings (12.50%) exhibitions (10%), campaigns (9.16%) and movies (10%). The findings with regard to result demonstrations are in accordance with those of Chatha (1984) who found that result demonstrations were conducted by Ciba Geigy to introduce Curacron among the farmers.

Table II. Communication methods/media used by Novartis company to popularize its products

Communication methods/media	No.	%
Farm and home visits	36	30.00
Method demonstrations	15	12.50
Result demonstrations	29	24.16
Lecture meetings	38	31.67
Discussion meetings	15	12.50
Literature	48	40.00
Radio	41	34.16
Television	54	45.00
Exhibitions	12	10.00
Campaigns	11	9.16
Signboards/slogans	51	42.50
Movies	12	10.00

Effectiveness of various communication methods/media used by Novartis. Farmers seem to be the best judge to assess the effectiveness of the communication methods/media used by Novartis. Therefore, the respondents were asked about methods/media, which were considered best by them. In order to compute the relative effectiveness of the communication methods/media, each percentage was multiplied with the score value allotted to each category of the scale used to assess the effectiveness (Table III). The relative effectiveness score shows that agricultural campaigns got the highest score of 418.14 as against 500 maximum and 100 minimum score. Other methods/media, which got about 400 and more score were literature, lecture meetings, exhibitions, methods demonstrations, result demonstrations and movies. Communication methods/media, which got less than 400 score included farm and home visits, discussion meetings, signboards, radio and television.

Reasons for dissatisfaction. All farmers may not be fully satisfied with communication methods/media employed by the Novartis. However, it seems useful to probe into

Table III. Relative effectiveness of communication methods/media as perceived by the respondents

Communication methods/media	Excellent x 5		Good x 4		Satisfactory x 3		Fair x 2		Poor x 1		Total score
	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	
Farm and home visits	11.11	55.55	69.44	277.76	16.66	49.98	-	-	2.77	2.77	386.06
Method demonstrations	13.33	66.65	73.33	293.32	13.33	39.99	-	-	-	-	399.96
Result demonstrations	17.24	86.20	72.41	289.64	3.44	10.32	6.89	13.78	-	-	399.94
Lecture meetings	7.89	39.45	86.84	347.36	5.26	15.78	-	-	-	-	402.19
Discussion meetings	20.00	100.00	40.00	160.00	33.33	99.99	6.66	13.32	-	-	373.31
Literature	16.66	83.3	72.91	291.64	10.41	31.23	-	14.62	-	-	406.17
Radio	12.19	60.95	43.90	173.60	29.26	87.78	7.31	7.40	7.31	7.40	338.95
Television	5.55	27.75	42.59	170.36	40.74	122.22	3.70	-	7.40	-	335.09
Exhibitions	-	-	100.00	400.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	400.00
Campaigns	18.18	90.9	81.81	327.24	-	-	-	7.84	-	1.96	418.1
Signboard/slogans	-	-	66.66	266.64	27.45	82.35	3.92	-	1.96	-	358.79
Movies	-	-	74.99	299.96	33.33	99.99	-	-	-	-	399.94

the reasons for dissatisfaction of the respondents. Main reasons were improper timing of Radio/TV broadcasts/telecasts, dominance of company's field staff in discussion meetings, and incomplete information displayed through signboards as indicated by 43.90, 51.85, 40 and 34.62% of the respondents, respectively. Other reasons included old information provided through video movies, inadequate information supplied through radio, farm and home visits made to small farmers very rarely, improper place for conducting farm and home visits, less involvement of farmers in method demonstrations, timely non-availability of literature and inadequate result demonstrations. It may imply that still there existed a lot of scope in improving communication methods/media used by Novartis.

CONCLUSIONS

All the respondents were found to be aware of the Novartis company and they were using pesticides of Novartis in addition to the products of other companies. It may imply that the Novartis company was popular among farmers of the area. Neighbours/friends/relatives appeared to be the major sources through which the respondents became aware of Novartis company as reported by a vast majority (89.16%) of the respondents. This may imply that fellow farmers are playing very important role in informing each

other about Novartis company. Other major sources of information were TV, newspapers and extension field staff of Novartis. A number of methods/media were used by Novartis to popularize its products of which agricultural campaigns were perceived to be the most effective followed by the literature, lecture meetings, exhibitions, method demonstrations, result demonstrations and movies. Farm and home visits, discussion meetings, signboards, radio and television were perceived to be relatively less effective.

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