

Usage of Mass Media by Farmers in Sri Lanka

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As a developing country, the agriculture sector still plays a vital role in the Sri Lankan economy. There are number of instruments which can be used for transmitting information with respect to agriculture. It's a need for the farmers to gain knowledge on the new adaptation of techniques for their cultivation as well to get to know new trends of the agriculture sector. To gain such benefits there must be an effective and efficient communication system. Through this study, the researcher's attempt is to find the solutions for the research question 'what are the factors that contribute to the use of a mass media channel with respect to the needs of the farmer community?' The main objective of this study is to examine the usage of mass media by farmers in Sri Lanka as a source of gaining practical information with respect to agriculture. To fulfil this objective, the researcher uses primary data collected by using a questionnaire and conducting interviews. The sample consisted of 650 farmers in four the provinces: North Central, Central, North Western and Sabaragamuwa. Farmers were randomly selected and surveyed. Data were analysed by using the percentages, frequencies and descriptive analysis. At the end of the present study some major findings were identified: television is the most famous and used instrument among the different mass media i.e. newspapers, journals, radio and magazines etc. The reason for that is with their educational background, to gain practical information with respect to agriculture, television is the most suitable media as it does not require higher literacy rate in comparison to the other instruments. However, the researcher found that the main information source for gaining practical knowledge on agriculture is the Agricultural Extension Officer. These results clearly show that the effective and efficient source for gaining practical knowledge on agriculture is the television with respect to the mass media whereas the role of the Agricultural Extension Officer for improving the agricultural knowledge of the farmers in Sri Lanka is significant.

Key words: *Agriculture, Farmers, Information, Literacy, Mass media.*