



Book Review -Farm Opinion Leaders

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Book Name:	Farm Opinion Leaders
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Short Review

This book endeavours to help the readers identify the farm opinion leaders and to understand the characteristics of farm opinion leaders and farm opinion seekers. Beside this motivation, satisfaction and effectiveness of farm opinion leaders and farm opinion seekers are also demystified for a rural set up. The study of influence of family members on the head decision maker of the family is initiated. A theoretical 4 P's model of farm opinion leadership is proposed and a new method for identification of farm opinion leaders is conceptualised. Agriculture marketing decisions for four agriculture product categories i) agri input consumables (seed, fertilizer and pesticides) the fast moving agriculture goods (FMAGs), ii) agri input capital (farm machineries) the agriculture durables, iii) agri input credit (formal and informal sources) and iv) agri output (price, packaging, transport, storage and market selection) were studied.

Long Review

The book endeavours to help the readers identify the farm opinion leaders and to understand the characteristics of farm opinion leaders and farm opinion seekers. Beside this motivation, satisfaction and effectiveness of farm opinion leaders and farm opinion seekers are also explained in detail. This book is based on a research conducted in four villages namely Dulkibandh, Bijmara, Derlapada and Bhelagaon of Odisha, India. These villages represent isolated, mature, cooperative society and an equal mix of developed and developing village societies ideal for such social research. The main author stayed and became a part of social setting during the complete research duration,

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which was beneficial to get an insight of this social phenomenon. Primary survey was done in three stages including one focus group discussion in each village. During the pre-sowing of Rabi 2014, 50 farmers from each village were randomly surveyed using a detail schedule based on the nominations of farm opinion seekers, the farm opinion leaders were identified and surveyed with a similar schedule. After the harvest the opinion seekers were enquired about their satisfaction with their opinion leaders to understand the dynamism of the social phenomenon. Beside this, study of influence of family members on the head decision maker of the family was initiated. Theoretical 4 P's model of farm opinion leadership was proposed and a new method for identification of farm opinion leaders was conceptualised subjected to be verified by peer researchers.

The analysis of farm opinion leaders and farm opinion seekers has been attempted using four agriculture product categories i) agri input consumables (seed, fertilizer and pesticides) the fast moving agriculture goods (FMAGs), ii) agri input capital (farm machineries) the agriculture durables, iii) agri input credit (formal and informal sources) and iv) agri output (price, packaging, transport, storage and market selection) were identified and studied. The overlap intensity of product category was low in developed villages implying farm opinion leaders were more specific (towards monomorphic) than developing villages which were generalist (towards polymorphic). Among the product categories agri input consumables category had highest product dominance. Though the villages were mostly dominated by socially lower caste but farm opinion leaders mostly belonged to higher caste. Farm opinion seekers had lower saving, less unequal consumption and lower income. The farm opinion leaders were relatively younger and educated. The family education score of farm opinion leaders was very low. Average land holding of farm opinion leaders was 13.51 acres as compared to 4.15 acres in case of farm opinion seekers. Other than farming, government service was most common main occupation followed by the farm opinion leaders. Business, farming and government service were mainly pursued subsidiary occupations. The farm opinion leaders had better economic status with more land, better house, mechanised farming and material possessions.

For identification of farm opinion leaders a technique was developed. It was identified that in a village (which is a highly mature group, as people are familiar since generations) maximum 26 farm opinion seekers can be surveyed to identify farm opinion leaders. On an average 9 farm opinion seekers can effectively identify farm opinion leaders. Social network analysis of all 4 product categories in 4 villages was done.

Opinion is sought with highest intensity and reciprocated with highest intensity in case of agri output product category. The study of influence of family members on the head decision maker of the family was initiated. It was concluded that son followed by wife and father were the main influencers within the family across different product categories. The members who were consulted by HH head within family were mostly young i.e. below 30 years. They were comparatively more educated than other members of the family and mostly pursued occupation other than farming. Interestingly, more

farm opinion leaders preferred moneylender as compared to farm opinion seekers. Further, farm opinion leaders preferred branded consumables. Farm opinion leaders and farm opinion seekers were found to interact more with input sellers followed by output buyers, bank staff and agri machinery sellers. Farm opinion leaders had higher social participation. Among the various information sources it was found that television and agriculture department employees were the most frequently used media and government source respectively by farm opinion leaders and farm opinion seekers. But the importance of information source was more for news and magazine and university scientist. Farm opinion leaders preferred voice call followed by SMS and post for receiving information.

In behavioural characteristics like trust, tie strength, opinion passing, agriculture risk orientation, social outcome of decision making, change seeking, exploratory buying behaviour, cosmopolitanism, innovativeness, and empathy farm opinion leaders scored higher, whereas similar scores were found in case of homophily and scientific orientation, in case of normative influence the farm opinion seekers scored higher than farm opinion leaders. Farm opinion leaders also had more score in management orientation, production orientation, marketing orientation, communication, prudence, collectivism, credibility, self-confidence, social competence and community attachment as compared to farm opinion seekers.

The main motive of farm opinion seekers was to seek information, followed by economic motivation to enhance their well-being and product involvement. Further opinion was sought for avoiding risk and saving time. The chief social motivation for the farm opinion seeker was to improve friendship and belongingness with others followed by to eliminate fear that 'no one will come to rescue if I do a new thing without consulting and to do as others are doing'. The chief self / intrinsic motivation of farm opinion leaders was found to vent out satisfaction or dissatisfaction about agriculture product and services, and to feel a sense of achievement by making others to do what was right.

Paired sample t test of pre and post opinion seeker satisfaction was found to be insignificant. Logit regression model was used, the Nagelkerke R^2 value of 94.3 Caste, household size, income, family education status, land size, farm power, trust, agriculture risk orientation, empathy, collectivism, credibility, community attachment, social participation, self-confidence, and scientific orientation have significant coefficients in the logit regression model. Policy recommendations based on the findings of the research were suggested along with areas for future research.

The book is a practical guide for agri business companies, and agriculture extension professionals. The book will definitely prove to be a useful companion for those who are interested in to get success in rural markets.