

## HOW AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION REACHES PADDY FARMING COMMUNITIES\*

A. M. T. Gunawardene

*(Research and Training Officer, Agrarian Research and Training Institute)*

There are three main avenues of agricultural information to farming communities. They are (1) The contacts with extension personnel either individually or in small group situations, (2) through exposure to mass media such as radio, newspapers and other printed matter (most of this material also originals with the extension agencies), (3) through informal sources of information such as family members, neighbour farmers, friends, relations, etc..

The principal formal source of agricultural information to the paddy farming sector is the extension service of the Department of Agriculture. The available data does not show any noteworthy variation between districts and broad zones in regard to information sources. Pest problems affecting crops seems to be the major reason for seeking advice of extension personnel.

Neighbour farmers were found to be an important source of information specially in the adoption of varieties of paddy. However with regard to information of a more technical nature such as fertilizer recommendations farmer neighbours were less effective. Further the dependence on other farmers for information of a technical nature was less in the more developed farming areas compared to the less developed farming areas. Although other farmers were found to be important sources of information, evidence of strong opinion leadership was evident. Hence the applicability two stage model of information flow under paddy farming conditions is somewhat questionable. This suggests the possibility of a more complex, multi-directional information flow among paddy farmers.

\* The available information relates mainly to the paddy farming sector and hence the qualification 'Paddy farming communities' in the title. It does not mean that these arguments are not applicable to other agricultural sectors.

The penetration of mass media into paddy farming communities seems to be high. Although the exposure to mass media is high, the reach of agricultural information through these media is low.