

A Study on the Usage of Mass Media Information Communication Technology among the Farming Community of Mandya District, Karnataka State, India

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Abstract: Mass-media plays a very important role in bringing about change in the behavior of users by putting across the useful information, which leads to decision making for adoption of innovation. Among the different Mass-media channels radio and television are becoming popular for farm, home, community and entertainment programmes. This paper discusses the Usage of Mass Media Information Communication Technology among the farming community of Mandya District, Karnataka State, India.

Keywords: Mass Media, Analysis of Communication Channels, Farming Community, Impact Factor, ICT.

1. Preamble

As we march through 21st Century it is increasingly realized that, IT is a powerful means for socio-economic achievements, provided we are familiar with the ways and means of utilizing it. During 1960's & 70's the lab-to-land

linkages through excellent extension system played a crucial role in the success of the Green Revolution - a breakthrough is Indian Agriculture.

Since then a number of agricultural development and extension programmes have seen sponsored by the government, NGO's, institutions for faster and beneficial communication of farm technologies.

In agriculture the question of appropriateness is more complex. It is **situation driven**. Above all what is appropriate for one farm community may not be appropriate for another - if they live in different agro-ecological zones. Adding to this hiatus, there was a general observation that there is considerable gap between the present knowledge of farmers and what has been developed by the agricultural scientists. The grouse was that the existing mass media and extension services had not effectively reached the rural masses.

Effectiveness of communication channels to which the farmers are generally exposed, directly or indirectly, determine the successful utilization of improved agricultural technologies. In earlier instances the information perception system of the farmers was ignored and all the efforts were in vain.

However, the breakthrough in ICT and the advent of internet has revolutionized the rural communication system. The mobile technology has enabled the farming community to have direct access to agri information resource personnel. A new change over the rural agri-scenario is taking place.

India being a land of villages is no exception to this change over. Several studies have been carried out in this regard. Mandya is small district created in 1939 in Karnataka State, agriculture being the main occupation. Sugercane and rice are the main crops cultivated. Hence, the district is known as "Land of Sugar & Rice".

Dr. Scarlett Epstein, Prof. of Manchester University and a well-known social scientist had visited Mandya District in 1955 and made a detailed study of two villages-Dalena & Vangala regarding the prevailing agricultural demographic and the socio-economic situations before the district was provided with irrigation facilities from Krishna Raja Sagar Dam. Her study was published in the year 1962 as a book **Economic Development and Social Change in South India**. This work was highly appreciated all over the world. After 15 years Dr. Epstein again visited these two villages to discover vibrant changes in the situation. Due to improved irrigation facilities one village had improved its economic situation and significant changes in the socio-cultural arena than the other village. Taking cognizance of these revolutionary changes she wrote her second book **South India Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow** in the Year 1973.

I was very much impressed by these two works of Dr. Epstein since Mandya happens to be my home district. With the breakthrough in ICT, the economic

4. Channels of Mass-Media

Mass-Media communication includes all those means of transmitting messages such as radio, televisions, videos, newspapers, magazines, websites, computer and films, which enable a source of one or few individuals to reach a large audience. Communication via new technologies is interactive, demulsified and asynchronous in nature. Interactivity is the degree to which participants in a communication process have control over, and can exchange roles in their mutual discourse. Demassification is the degree to which a special message can be conveyed to each individual in a large audience.

The main aim or function of mass media is to inform, educate and motivate the people to accept new ideas and technologies so as to increase their living conditions and status. Schramm (1964) observes that it is extremely difficult to imagine that the national and economic development can be achieved without the input of external information. Irrespective of this complexity and indirectness, the fact remains that development related information must reach the population if any positive change is to be brought about. But when the bulk of population live in less accessible and isolated villages, both in plains and hills, such an effective communication is very difficult.

5. Mass-Media and Farming Community

In such a situation mass media are extremely important in stimulating a sense of involvement, which is essential for development. Mass media creates empathetic spirit, widens people's horizon and conducive climate for change. That is why Bellurkar *et al* (2000) stated that the mass media should be put to service for national development. Among the different mass media radio and television are considered as powerful media, as an institutionalized source of information for creating awareness about the innovation existent with additional information. They are used as powerful educational tools. The eye and ear mindedness of farmers makes this media as one of the most promising of the present day educational sources. They offer vitality and newness, which attract attention, create interest and stimulate desire to learn. To keep pace with such development, effective utilization of Radio and Television as a means of information and communication is very much essential. The ultimate purpose of any media is to convey ideas and make the people to adopt the recommendations in their daily life. But, to what extent the media are successful in this endeavor can be judged only by the media consumers who are at the receiving end and are benefitted ultimately.

6. Data Collection

A well-structured interview schedule was constructed for the present study. Data were collected by personally interviewing the randomly selected farmers either in their residence or on their farm.

7. Analysis and Discussion

Table - 1 : Distribution of respondents according to their age (n=800)

Categories	Number	Percent
Young	256	33.25
Middle	275	35.45
Old	259	31.30
Total	800	100.00

It could be inferred from the table-1 that (35.45 per cent) of the respondents belonged to middle age category followed by young age (33.24 per cent) and old age category (31.30 per cent).

Table - 2: Educational status (n=800)

Educational status	Number	Percent
Illiterate	109	13.62
Functionally literate	107	13.38
Primary education	130	16.25
Middle school	127	15.88
High School	112	14.00
Higher Secondary	109	13.62
Collegiate	106	13.25
Total	800	100.00

It could be seen from the table -2 that (16.25 percent) were educated up to primary school followed by (15.88 percent) with middle school. Another (14.00 percent) were found educated up to high school level followed by higher secondary (13.62 percent) and collegiate levels 13.25 percent).

It is concluded that primary and middle school education constituted higher percentage of farmer's programme users.

Table - 3: Innovativeness

Innovativeness	Number	Percent
I prefer to wait and take my own time (low)	75	9.38
After I have seen other farmers to have done it successfully (Medium)	310	38.75
As soon as it is brought to my knowledge (High)	415	51.88
Total	800	100.00

Table-3 indicates that the majority of the (51.88 percent) farmers would adopt as soon as it is brought to their knowledge. 38.75 percent of the respondents adopted after they had seen other farmers to have done it successful. 9.38 percent of the respondents preferred to wait and take their own time in adopting the new technologies.

Table - 4: Economic motivation

Economic motivation	Number	Percent
Low	171	21.38
Moderate	219	27.38
High	410	51.25
Total	800	100.00

From the table-4 the collection data emphasized that half of the respondents had high (51.25 percent) levels of economic motivation followed by moderate (27.38 percent) and low levels (21.38 percent) of economic motivation. As majority of the farm programme users were medium and small farmers, they might have been motivated to achieve economic aspirations. Thus half of the respondents were seen with high levels of economic motivation.

Table - 5: Decision making pattern

Type of decision	Number	Percent
Independent decisions	234	29.25
Joint decision with family members	513	64.13
Joint decision with other than family members	53	6.63
Total	800	100.00

It could be inferred from the table -5 that majority (64.13 percent) of the respondents are making joint decisions with family members for farm and home activities. Another (29.25 percent) of the respondents make independent decisions. Only (6.63 percent) are making joint decisions with other than family members such as progressive farmers whom their regard as role models.

Table- 6: Awareness level of Mass Media

Awareness level	Farm Broadcast		Farm Telecast		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Low	234	29.25	252	31.05	486	30.37
Moderate	278	34.75	263	32.88	541	33.81
High	288	36.00	285	35.75	573	35.81

It could be seen from the table-6 that (36.00 percent) of the respondents has high level of awareness about farm broadcast followed by moderate (34.75 percent) and low (29.25 percent). Regarding farm telecasts more than fifty percent (35.75 percent) of the respondents had high level of awareness followed by moderate (32.88 percent) and low levels (31.05 percent). The awareness level of the respondents regarding the farm programmes over radio and television could be moderate (33.81 percent) followed by low (30.37 percent) and high (35.81 percent).

Hence, it could be interpreted that more than one fourth of the farmers of the sample population are having moderate level of overall awareness category. This may be due to the popularity of the farm broadcast in rural areas.

Table-7 : Choice of Radio Broadcasts

Sl. No.	Farm Broadcasts	Mean Score	Regularly		Often		Rare		Never	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Krishi ranga	1.93	329	41.13	263	32.87	120	15.00	88	11.00
2.	Raitharige Salahe	2.95	121	15.13	470	58.75	119	14.88	90	11.13

From the table.7 it is revealed that among the farm broadcasts mean score for Raitharige Salahe (2.95) was more than that of other farm programs like Krishi Ranga (1.93).

Table - 8: Favorableness of farm broadcast

Degree of favorableness	Number	Percent
Less favorable	206	25.75
Favorable	214	26.75
More favorable	380	47.50
Total	800	100.00

It could be observed from the table-8 that (47.50 percent) of the respondents were found to possess more favorable attitude and (26.75 percent) had favorable attitude towards farm broadcast. 25.75 percent of the respondents had less favorable attitude toward farm broadcast programmes.

Table- 9: Choice of Tele-Broadcasts

Sl. No	Farm telecasts	Mean Score	Regularly		Often		Rare		Never	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Krishi darshan	3.28	300	37.50	434	54.25	40	5.00	26	3.25
2.	Anna datha	3.64	171	21.37	462	57.75	119	14.88	48	6.00

Table.9 indicates that among the two farm telecasts mean score for Annadatha (3.64) was more than Krishi Darshan (3.28). The coverage of subject matter area and the frequency of telecast were found to be more in Annadatha compared to Krishi Darshan. Further it was noticed from the Table that majority of them were found to be often viewers followed regular viewing category for the two farm telecast programmes. Only a least percentage comes under non-viewing category.

Table - 10 : Favorableness of farm telecast

Degree of favorableness	Number	Percent
Less favorable	201	25.12
Favorable	280	35.00
More favorable	319	39.88
Total	800	100.00

Table-10 revealed that (39.88 percent) for the farm programme users found to have more favorable attitude and nearly one-third of the (35.00 percent) respondents had favorable attitude followed by the respondents having less favorable attitude (25.12 percent) towards farm telecast.

8. Findings and Suggestions:

- Since the farmers varied in their socio-personal and economical characteristics, the farm programmes in future should be in such a way that they should satisfy all sections of farmers. Compared to farm broadcast, the slot for the telecast of farm programmes was found to be less. Though, the multichannel cable television channels are found to be popular among the people now days, the allotment of time and slot for farm telecast is limited only to two television channels. It should be taken care of by the farm telecast planners to cater to the needs of farmers in phased manner.

- The awareness of the growers on the component of programmes indicates that the rate of awareness of both the farm telecast and farm broadcast are relatively low. Hence, there is an urgent need to give much publicity for the farm programmes. Through this it is possible for them to generate enough awareness among the farmers. At the same time it is also necessary to give more coverage and increase the frequency of telecast and broadcast related to cultivation.
- A considerable proportion of farmers exhibited relatively less favorable attitudinal patterns towards the farm broadcast and telecast. This should be definitely noted down by the media planners and policy makers to improve the quality of the programmes through the coverage of location specific and need based subject matter areas.
- Above all, the constraints as experienced by the farmers in utilizing the farm programmes will throw light and unearth the factors which speak about the effective utilization of the programmes. These identified constraints are to be seriously considered by the media planners and policy makers and the Government should also play a vital role and make efforts towards the organization of the farm programmes.

9. Conclusion:

This is only a glimpse of prevailing conditions in Mandya district of Karnataka. India is basically an agricultural country where almost 70% of the land is under cultivation and over 80% of the populations follow agri-based occupations. The same situation prevails in other developing countries. Hence, the tools of mass media and communication technologies need to be constantly developed and updated keeping pace with the technological advancements in other fields.

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