

## **AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL MARKETING IN INDIA- A PROMOTIONAL ROLE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The economic development of any nation mainly depends on the development of agriculture sector. The agricultural extension, which is essentially a message delivery system, has a major role to play in agricultural development. The electronic media has a central role in facilitating the exposure of farmers and peasants to the latest information. The electronic media are channel that use electronics or electromechanical energy for the end-user to access the content/ subject. This is in contrast to static media, which today are most often created electronically, but don't require electronics to be accessed by the end-user in the printed form. The primary electronic media sources familiar to the general public are well known as video, audio, multimedia presentations, slide presentations, internet, radio, TV, and mobile and so on are promoting rural agricultural sector in developing countries. The paper is mainly emphasis on to know the existing media for promoting the agricultural sector in developing countries, to study the impact of electronic media on agricultural sector in India, and to make appropriate suggestions for the improvement of electronic media on the promotion of agricultural sector in India.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The devises of computers and electronics in agriculture provide international coverage of advances in the development and application of computers, viz., hardware, software and electronic instrumentation and control systems for solving problems in agriculture sector and related agro based industries like agronomy, sericulture, horticulture, forestry, livestock science, veterinary medicine and food processing etc. The agricultural extension, which is a message delivery system, has a major role to play in rural agricultural development in developing countries like India, Ethiopia, Eretria, Bangladesh, Pakistan etc. It serves as a source of advice and assistance for farmers and peasants to help them improving their production operations and marketing activities. The task of extension education is accomplished by different extension activities. The electronic media has a central role in facilitating the exposure of farmers and peasants to variety of information. However, electronic media in the form of radio and television remained in use by the department as important persuading and teaching tools.

### **TYPES OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

The electronic media, which influence the society is playing a major role on promoting of rural agricultural sector in any cultivated country as under:

- i) Television,
- ii) Radio,
- iii) Internet,
- iv) Smart phones may have created a new media type, and
- v) Electronic display advertising, electronic billboards.

The agricultural society comprises of farmers, peasants, workers, agro-based industries, management, government and public. The present study is of much relevance to agro business promotion by using modern media. The analysis has aimed to know the existing Media for promoting the agricultural markets/products/activities/business, and to study the impact of electronic media on agricultural markets/ products/ business in the economic changes of a nation.

### **2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

More specifically, the study has undertaken the following objectives:

- a. To know the existing media for promoting the agricultural sector in developing countries.
- b. To study the impact of electronic media on agricultural sector in India, and
- c. To make appropriate suggestions for the improvement of electronic media for the promotion of agricultural sector in India.

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The present study is mainly based on the following sources of information.

#### **(i) Primary Data**

First hand information is collected directly from the farmers and peasants. It provides information relating to existing role of electronic media and about 540 farmers in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India are taken as study by selecting respondents with random sampling technique. The use of electronic media was found to be the most reliable sources for getting information regarding technologies. The primary electronic media sources familiar to the general public are well known as video, audio, multimedia presentations, slide presentations, mobile, internet, TV, and radio and so on.

#### **(ii) Secondary Data**

A good amount of secondary data are also collected from the published reports of various institutions, research articles in various national and international journals, periodicals, reports from daily news papers and information from various websites. Besides, various text books on agriculture and rural marketing are reviewed.

### **3. USE AND AWARENESS OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN RURAL AGRICULTURE MARKETS /PRODUCTS**

The success of agricultural development programs in developing countries largely depends on the nature and extent of use of mass media in mobilization of people for development in general. The radio and television have been acclaimed to be the most effective media for diffusing the scientific knowledge to the masses. The countries like India, Ethiopia, Eretria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, where literacy rate is very low, the communication media is of vital importance, particularly the electronic media.

The television and radio are very significant media of news channels, as they transfer modern agricultural technology to literate and illiterate farmers and peasants alike even in interior areas, within the short period of time. In case India, Ethiopia, Eretria, Bangladesh, Pakistan etc., the majority of population engaged actively in agriculture. Therefore, television could serve as a popular medium of dissemination of farm information and latest technical know – how to the farm workers, agricultural farmers and peasants in developing countries like India, Ethiopia, Eretria, Bangladesh, Pakistan. The farmers and farm workers can easily understand the operations, technology and instructions through television. The subject matter is covered by radio, television, newspapers and magazines, which are almost similar with respect to agriculture, horticulture, livestock science, agricultural engineering and co-operatives activities. In this article, an attempt is made to know about the importance of radio, television, and their effect in the field of agriculture through sound communication system, internet and mobile.

### **4. DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS**

#### **(i) Television**

The electronic media played an important role to educate illiterate and literate farmers and peasants in rural areas on modern agricultural practices and agricultural system in a sustainable manner are imminent. To disseminate information without transmission losses. An electronic media wing was established during 2001 with five multidisciplinary scientists to promote e-extension by the ANGRAU in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and launched an innovative farm telecast program 'Rytu Mitra' through a TV channel Teja w.e.f August 2001. The program runs daily between 6.00 to 7.00 PM on all days in a year. The impact of any communication channel can be judged by its effectiveness on the target group.

## (ii) Radio

Radio as a communication medium plays an important role in nation's socio-cultural, political and economic development in all aspects. It is a powerful communication system medium in Indian rural agricultural markets, where there are no regular and stable electric supply in rural and far off areas. The public have to depend on radio to fulfill their needs of news, information, education and entertainment. The community and village panchayath radio serves to gather small communities, focuses on the common man day-to-day concerns and helps in realizing local aspirations in rural markets. The main objective is to contribute to the lives of the local community by creation of content by the people and for the people of that community. It will focus on different issues on education, medical and health, environment, agriculture, rural and community development programs. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting proposes to create awareness amongst the masses about the policy for establishing and running community radio stations by arranging a number of awareness camps in different parts of the country. At the end year 2006, the government of India has liberalized the policy for community radio and decided to grant permission for setting-up community radio stations as 'non-profit' organizations, viz., FM radio.

Table 1.1 presents the data on the awareness about agricultural programs through radio/TV broadcasts/ telecasts is about 66 per cent of the respondents are aware pertinent to the advertisements and short messages on agricultural programs and name of the programs. It is found that 30 per cent of the respondents are unaware of the regular agricultural telecasts. In case of TV program "Rythu Mitra and Kisan Time" are well known with 70 per cent of the respondents. It was found that 71 per cent farmers had television/radio sets. However, more than 70 per cent farmers of the study area listened/watched agricultural programs on radio and television.

**Table 1.1: Telecast/ Broadcast awareness on agricultural programs**

Sl. No	Telecast/ Broadcast	Short messages awareness	Advertisements awareness	No awareness
1	T V	351 (65)	378 (70)	162 (30)
2	Radio	356 (66)	384 (71)	156 (29)

*Figure in parentheses are percentages*

It is obvious from the table 1.2 that negligible segment of the farmers having the awareness of Telephone/ Mobile on the agricultural business programs and about 97.00% of the respondents are not aware of the mobile message about agricultural business programs / activities. It is found that 15.00% of the respondents are found aware of agricultural help line including agricultural and livestock help and they are aware of various agricultural information related contact Nos. It is also observed that very few farmers are using Internet information on agricultural and livestock programs.

**Table 1.2: Telephone/ Mobile/Help line awareness on agricultural programs**

Sl. No	Phone/mobile/help line awareness	Awareness	No awareness	Total
1	Telephone/Mobile	16 (03)	524 (97)	540(100)
2	Help line	81 (15)	459 (85)	540(100)

*Figure in parentheses are percentages*

It can be concluded that on the whole, the awareness of various electronic media based programs and contacts was very low and there is a great potential to enhance awareness level in each case of electronic media under study for agricultural purposes.

## 5. OBSERVATIONS

1. It is observed that the farmers are not willing to promote feedback reporting as it is time-consuming and expensive system.
2. It is observed that the agriculture/development news not given priority for coverage and also lacks 'status symbol' as relating to people (farmers) without much power/influence.

3. It is observed that the agricultural scientists are not willing to use electronic media on coverage of new methods, new seeds etc., and they often are mistrustful on electronic media.
4. It is observed that agricultural scientists have lack of communication skills and experience in knowing how to send the information to the audience or in using people at right time and they who wish to communicate often fail to do so in simple lay terms and they use so much jargon words.
5. It is observed that the Research and development projects have lack of funds, expertise in agriculture/development activities and technical equipment
6. It is observed that the farmers and rural populations can be suspicious of journalists and local tradition may also forbid them to reveal their knowledge to outsiders.
7. It is observed that the media do not have access or are not aware of good, trustworthy, up to date information about farmers.
8. It is observed that the Information is often held at ministry level so difficult to access or is of foreign origin and not relevant to local situation
9. It is observed that Lack of agricultural information available in local languages.

## 6. SUGGESTIONS

1. To use innovative approaches for communicating agricultural information like community-based FM radio stations and agricultural information centers to be provided agricultural information in local languages to rural communities.
2. To Increase funding and support on R&D for the role of media in agriculture both internationally and in the private sector must be taken seriously, if we are to avoid future food crises.
3. To implement a study that explored specifically what decisions or steps are most effective when creating common or open exchange platforms that maintain video clips for farmers.
4. To provide greater capacity in terms of expertise in agriculture/development issues and technical equipment for strengthening of electronic media.
5. More efforts are needed to fill lacuna between the media and development partners if agriculture is to have a higher profile amongst target farmers and peasants by providing new TV channels, FM Radio and means to enhance the role of the media.
6. To Improve Internet connectivity in community centers in rural areas and association offices and to support capacity strengthening.
7. To promote e-learning system, like internet, mobile, slides etc., for various agriculture purposes.
8. To establish more permanent networks and exchange on internet, e.g. e-agriculture global platform [www.e-agriculture.org](http://www.e-agriculture.org) etc.,
9. To create awareness among the farmers in rural agricultural activities by enhancing the promotion of electronic media programs in their colloquial languages.

## 7. CONCLUSION

As a whole, the awareness regarding agricultural broadcasts and contacts was very weak. Further, the use of electronic media for getting agricultural information was not appreciable i.e. from very low to low levels and some electronic media was used not at all. However, the preference for using the electronic media in the present study ranged from very low to medium showing improving mean value in each case as compared to the present use of electronic media. Nevertheless, overall it can be concluded that electronic media are not plying effective role in the dissemination of agricultural information among farming community.

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