

Radio listening behaviour of farmers of Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

Radio plays a major role in the information dissemination. Radio is a way to send electromagnetic signals over a long distance to deliver information from one place to another. It acts as an effective mass media from which every social member is benefited. The main objective of this study was to assess the radio listening behaviour of the farmers. The study was conducted in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. Data were collected using questionnaire to find out the listening behaviour of the respondents. Most of the respondents did not possess radio. It was found that the listening behaviour of radio among farmers had been diminishing and hence the necessary information to be disseminated could be given in various other forms such as folk songs, skits and success stories.

Keywords: Farmers; radio; listening behaviour; information

INTRODUCTION

Radio has multitude communication purpose such as personal, commercial and safety use. In the backdrop of technologies such as cell phones, internet and others the radio has held strong hold. It is also a convenient form of entertainment to a large audience. The advantages of radio over other mass media include portability, easy handling, easy accessibility and low cost. The mass media agricultural programme is very important to cover all farmers by extension services (Haj 2000).

Kuewumi (2009) asserted that radio has radicalized the face of human communication and ultimately became a fixed point in the daily lives of humans whereby people are informed, taught, nurtured and reformed by way of relaxation, reinvigoration and resuscitation. This makes radio as a medium of mass communication being constantly sought after by its ardent listeners.

Egbuchulam (2002) defined radio as a mobilizer and a formidable factor in the new world order in economy, technology and politics. It is best described as the cheapest, safest and the most effective medium of communication available to man. It is a

vehicle for projecting personality through which it attracts and holds an audience. It is an efficient instrument for getting a message to a large number of people at the same time because it transcends the boundary of space and time and also leaps across illiteracy barriers (Onabajo 1999). Egbuchulam (2002) asserted that radio has been a major communication tool for improving the quality of people's lives, bringing to their doorstep news, entertainment and education through its programmes.

Despite the world-wide enchantment with the internet and web-based learning, radio still retains the advantage of being able to serve dispersed, isolated and disadvantaged communities aspiring to overcome the barriers of illiteracy and physical distance in many countries. Presently it is of interest to know whether radio still serves as a medium to disseminate agricultural information and if so what was the perception of the users about the medium. Hence this study was attempted to identify answers to these queries.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. There is an All India Radio Station located in the district. The district has nineteen

blocks out of which three blocks viz Cheranmahadevi, Nanguneri and Pappakudi; one village in each block viz Karisalpatti, Sankanankulam and Pudupatti respectively and 15 farmers per village were selected randomly. Hence a total number of 45 respondent farmers was selected for the study. The data were collected by using an interview schedule and analyzed by applying suitable statistical tests such as percentage analysis and cumulative frequency.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The profile characteristics of farmers are presented in Table 1. It is evident that about three-fourth (75.56 %) of the respondents belonged to middle age category and most of them were male (84.44%).

Table 1. Profile characteristics of farmers (n= 45)

| Characteristic | Category | Respondents | |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------|------------|
| | | Number | Percentage |
| Age | Young | 5 | 11.11 |
| | Middle age | 34 | 75.56 |
| | Old | 6 | 13.33 |
| Gender | Male | 38 | 84.44 |
| | Female | 7 | 15.56 |
| Education qualification | Illiterate | 9 | 20.00 |
| | Primary school | 15 | 33.33 |
| | Middle school | 10 | 22.22 |
| | Higher school | 6 | 13.33 |
| | Collegiate | 5 | 11.11 |
| Profession | Only farming | 33 | 73.33 |
| | Farming + others | 12 | 26.67 |

Most of them (33.33%) were educated up to primary level and only farming was their main profession (73.33%).

Data given in Table 2 show that only about one-third (35.55%) of the respondents possessed radio and 81.25 per cent listened to programmes. More number of respondents (53.84%) listened to radio at other places than in the field (46.16%). Majority preferred to listen to radio alone (61.54%).

The radio utilization behaviour of the farmers (Table 3) shows that they mainly listened to radio in the morning (46.15%) or evening (38.46%). More than half (53.84%) of the respondents listened to radio for 1 to 2 hours. Majority of them (84.62%) used radio daily.

Table 4 depicts that the respondents listened to any programme (92.31%) whereas 84.61 per cent listened to agricultural programmes. Majority of them (84.62%) were of the view that frequency of radio waves was clear and 90.91 per cent said that they were comfortable of the time of broadcast. All reported that programmes were not being given by farmers on the radio; 72.73 per cent did not adopt the practices after listening to the radio and 81.82 per cent needed changes in broadcasting.

CONCLUSION

Radio is an effective medium for dissemination of information. But nowadays social media as well as

Table 2. Radio listening behaviour of farmers (n= 45)

| Component | Category | Respondents | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------|
| | | Number* | Percentage |
| Possession of radio | Owned | 16 | 35.55 |
| | Did not own | 29 | 64.44 |
| Radio listening behavior | Listen | 13 | 81.25 |
| | Do not listen | 3 | 18.75 |
| Place of listening | Field | 6 | 46.16 |
| | Other places | 7 | 53.84 |
| Pattern of listening | Listening alone | 8 | 61.54 |
| | Listening with others | 5 | 38.46 |
| Aid/tool of listening | Radio medium | 13 | 100.00 |
| | Mobile | 2 | 15.38 |

*Multiple responses

Table 3. Radio utilization behaviour of farmers (n=45)

| Component | Category | Respondents | |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| | | Number | Percentage |
| Time of listening | Morning | 6 | 46.15 |
| | Noon | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Evening | 5 | 38.46 |
| | Night | 2 | 15.38 |
| Duration of listening (h) | 0-1 | 1 | 7.70 |
| | 1-2 | 7 | 53.84 |
| | More than 2 | 5 | 38.46 |
| Frequency of listening | Daily | 11 | 84.62 |
| | Weekly | 2 | 15.38 |
| | Fortnightly | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Monthly | 0 | 0.00 |

other mass media such as newspaper and television dominate the information dissemination property of the radio. It was revealed from the study that the farmers were giving least importance to listening agricultural programmes on radio. More farmers listened to radio during morning for about one to two hours every day. The adoption of the agricultural practices after listening to the agricultural programmes was very less besides farmers needed more changes in the broadcast of programmes.

The number of listeners to agricultural programmes through radio can be increased by bringing some changes like providing programmes in the form

Table 4. Perception of listeners on agricultural programmes broadcast through radio (n= 45)

| Characteristic | Category | Respondents | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|------------|
| | | Number* | Percentage |
| Listening to programmes | Any programme | 12 | 92.31 |
| | Agricultural programmes | 11 | 84.61 |
| Clarity of frequency of radio waves | Clear | 11 | 84.62 |
| | Not clear | 2 | 15.38 |
| Comfort towards the time of broadcast | Comfortable | 10 | 90.91 |
| | Not comfortable | 1 | 9.09 |
| Programmes being given by farmers | Given | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Not given | 11 | 100.00 |
| Adoption of the practices after listening | Follow | 3 | 27.27 |
| | Do not follow | 8 | 72.73 |
| Need for changes in broadcasting | Needed | 9 | 81.82 |
| | Not needed | 2 | 18.18 |

*multiple responses

of folk songs, skits, live group discussions, phone out programmes and covering more number of success stories of farmers from the same district.

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