

ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN RURAL AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS - A PROMOTIONAL INJECTION

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INTRODUCTION

The devises of Computers and Electronics in Agriculture provide international coverage of advances in the development and application of computer hardware, software and electronic instrumentation and control systems for solving problems in agriculture and related agro based industries. These include agronomy, horticulture, forestry, aquaculture, animal husbandry, livestock science, veterinary medicine, and food processing etc. Agricultural extension, which is essentially a message delivery system, has a major role to play in agricultural development. It serves as a source of advice and assistance for farmers and peasants to help them improving their production, distribution and marketing. The task of extension education is accomplished by different extension methods/media, which may come under individual, group and mass contacts. The electronic media has a central role in facilitating the exposure of farmers to a 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 following are the some of the electronic media, which influence major role on promoting of rural agricultural markets/ products.

1. Television
2. Radio
3. Internet
4. Smart phones may have created a new media type
5. Electronic display advertising, electronic streaming billboards.

OBJECTIVES AND MOTHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

To be precise, the study has undertaken the following objectives:

1. To know the existing Media for promoting the Agricultural markets/products,
2. To study the impact of Electronic Media on Agricultural markets/ products, and

3. To make appropriate suggestions for the improvement of Electronic Media on the Promotion of Agricultural markets/ products.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The following are the different sources of information used for the purpose of the study.

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 Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh are taken as study respondents by using 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.

Secondary Data

Good amount of secondary data are collected from published reports of various institutions, research articles in various national and international journals, periodicals, reports from daily news papers and information from various websites. In addition to the above books are reviewed.

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. Radio and Television have been acclaimed to be the most effective media for diffusing the scientific knowledge to the masses. In countries like India, Ethiopia, Eritrea where literacy level is low, the choice of communication media is of vital importance, particularly Electronic Media.

The Television and Radio are significant, as they transfer modern agricultural technology to literate and illiterate farmers and peasants alike even in interior areas, within short period of time. With the main stream of Indian population, Ethiopia population and Eritrea population engaged actively in agriculture, television could serve as a suitable medium of dissemination of farm information and latest technical know – how. The farmers can easily understand the operations, technology and instructions through television. The coverage of different subject matter by radio, television, newspaper and farm magazine are almost similar with regard to agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, agricultural marketing, agricultural engineering and cooperatives. 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, internet and mobile.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Television

Electronic Media play an important role to educate illiterate and literate the farmers and peasants on Modern Agricultural Practices and system in a sustainable manner are imminent. To disseminate information without transmission losses. The only Agricultural University in

the A.P., Acharya N.G.Ranga Agricultural University has taken a lead in exploiting Information Technology for the benefit of farming community particularly under the distance education mode. 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 ‘Rythu Mitra’ through a TV channel Teja w.e.f August 2001. The program runs for one hour daily between 6.00 to 7.00 PM on all 365 days. The impact of any communication can best be judged by its effectiveness on the target group.

Radio

Radio as a communication medium plays an important role in the nation’s socio-cultural, political and economic development in all aspects. It is a powerful communication system medium in Indian rural agricultural markets, where, in the absence of regular and stable electric supply in rural and far flung areas. People have to depend on radio to meet their needs of information, education and entertainment. Community and village panchayath radio serves to bring small communities together, focuses on the common man’s day-to-day concerns and helps in realizing local aspirations in rural markets. It aims 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 issues relating to education, health, environment, agriculture, rural and community Development. 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 workshops and seminars in various parts of the country. In end of year 2006, the Government of India has liberalized the policy for Community radio and decided to grant permission for setting up Community Radio Stations to ‘Non-profit’ organizations (FM Radio).

a. Telecast/ Broadcast Awareness on Agricultural Programs

S. No	Telecast / Broadcast	Short messages Awareness	Advertisements Awareness	No Awareness
1	T V	351 (65.0%)	378 (70.0%)	162 (30.0%)
2	Radio	356 (66.0%)	384 (71.0%)	156 (29.0%)

b. Telephone/Mobile/Help line Awareness on Agricultural Programs

S. No	Phone/Mobile/Help line Awareness	Awareness	No Awareness	Total
1	Telephone/Mobile	16 (3.00%)	524 (97.00%)	540(100.00%)
2	Help line	81 (15.00%)	459 (85.00%)	540(100.00%)

It is observed that the awareness about agricultural programs through radio/TV broadcasts/telecasts about 66.00% of the respondents are aware pertinent to the advertisements and short messages on agricultural programs and name of the programs. It is found that 30.00% of the respondents are unaware of the regular agricultural telecasts. In case of TV program “Rythu Mitra and , Kisan time” are well known with 70.00% of the respondents.

It was found that 71.00% farmers had television/radio sets. However, more than 70.00% farmers of the study area listened/watched agricultural programs on radio and television.

It is also observed that negligible segment of the farmers about 97.00% of the respondents are not aware of the mobile message about agricultural 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.

It may be concluded that as a 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.

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, lack of expertise in agriculture/development issues and Lack of 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

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 coverage, 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.,
8. To establish more permanent networks and exchange on Internet e.g. E-agriculture global platform www.e-agriculture.org etc.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The present study has aimed to know the existing Media for promoting the Agricultural markets/products, and to study the impact of Electronic Media on Agricultural markets/products in the economic changes of a nation. There is a scope to study in Service Sector and also manufacturing sector and other means of media like print, direct and other media.

SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The Agricultural Society comprises of the farmers, peasants, workers, agro based industries, management, Government and general public. The present study is of much relevance to agro business promotion by using modern media.

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, in prospective scenario, the preference for using the electronic media under 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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