



ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS BROADCASTED THROUGH LOCAL F.M. RADIOS IN CHITWAN DISTRICT, NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to assess the agricultural programs broadcasted through local radios in Chitwan, Nepal. Stratified random sampling was used to select 95 sample households from three villages namely; Bhandara, Dahakhani, and Geetanagar of Chitwan. About 71 percent respondents perceived that local radios were effective source of information. Among radio programs types, most preferred program was agricultural; combined with news and entertainment. Half of the respondents perceived that local radios creates slow rate of change in agricultural practices. About 72 percent of the respondents reported that the broadcasted time was appropriate whereas 71 percent of the respondents reported that the duration of program was not sufficient. Fifty four percent of the respondents suggested that effective way of program presentation would be, discussion between subject matter specialist and experienced farmer. The finding suggested that broadcasting updated agricultural news along with entertainment and increasing program duration would help farmers.

KEYWORDS : Effectiveness, farmers, FM radio

INTRODUCTION

Mass media like radio are important in creating awareness and interest in the diffusion process of innovations (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971). This is because, according to diffusion theory, an individual passes through different psychological stages in making decisions of acceptance or rejection of innovations and later to the confirmation of this decision. Radio has an immense potential to motivate people to accept innovations and in conveying emergent information to the people in the shortest possible time (Wilson & Gallup, 1954). Mass media carry development messages to the people which suggest the necessity of accessibility of mass media for development communication (Naraula, 2004). Agricultural development programs in developing countries largely depend on the nature and extend of use of mass media. Among mass media, FM radio is a participatory medium. It is a low-cost and popular way for disseminating information, news, and entertainment. Radio is designed to increase availability of localized information, media access and empowerment, and even market information and societal resource distribution for the community (Hussain & Tongia, 2007). Nowadays, FM radios are also the means of agricultural extension advisory services in Nepal.

Owing the importance of local FM radios, a study was designed to assess agricultural programs broadcasted through FM-stations in Chitwan. What were the effects of radio program on farmers? What were the nature and types of programs that farmers prefer most? What are the perceived rates of change in agricultural practices due to local FM radio programs? What should be done to make agricultural program more effective were some of the research questions of this study? This study was thought to be useful to improve the effectiveness of agricultural related program broadcasted by local FM radios.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Site: Chitwan district was purposively selected as a research area for this study. Three villages of Chitwan district namely; Bhandara, Dahakhani, and Geetanagar were selected as: sampling population, representing East, Middle, and West region of the district.

Sampling procedure: Ninety five respondent farmers were selected from three villages, using stratified random sampling for radio listeners' survey. Nine local FM radios namely Kalika, Synergy, Hamro, Triveni, Narayani, Dhruvatar, Vijaya, Chitwan, and Arpan were considered for this study.

Data collection: An interview schedule was used to collect primary

data. The data were also collected from farmers, program presenters of FM radios, and government extension workers. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Listening FM radio by respondent farmers

Study revealed that about 95 percent of respondents were listening FM radio whereas 5 percent respondents found not listening.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents on the basis of radio listening (n=95)

Listening FM radios	Frequency	Percent
Listen	90	94.7
Do not listen	5	5.3
Total	95	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

A similar study revealed that that 94.3 percent of the people in city listened to FM radio whereas 76 percent listen FM radio in village (Banjadey, 2006).

Farmers' preference on program type/nature

Most of the respondents reported that they preferred to listen agricultural programs; combined with news and entertainment, followed by entertainment program and news, respectively. Gupta (1994) also reported "radio provides news and entertainment. Radio is popular and acceptable among listeners in respect of rural and agricultural development program. Radio supported green revolution in part, now it can cope with new and emerging tasks of green revolution has presented to the farmers."

Table 2. Types of program preferred by respondents

Respondents preference on program	Frequency (n=90)	Percent
News	9	10.0
Entertainment program	14	15.6
Agricultural program	17	18.9
News and agricultural program	22	24.4
News, entertainment and agricultural program	28	31.1
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Frequency of radio listening by the respondents

Respondent were asked about their radio listening frequency. About 52 percent of the respondents were

Table 3. Frequency of listening agriculture focused programs

Radio listening frequency	Frequency (n=90)	Percent
Regularly	15	16.7
Sometimes	47	52.2
Often	16	17.8
At leisure time	12	13.3
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

reported that they were listening the FM radio sometimes, followed by often (17.8 percent) and regularly (16.7 percent), respectively. Accordingly, only 13.3 percent respondents tuned radio at leisure time only for agricultural program.

Effectiveness of information tuned in FM radio

Table 4 revealed that most of the respondents reported local FM radio programs were effective source of information. Roy & Khanna (1985) also reported that the radio had been found to be effective medium in dissemination of information on agriculture through dynamic and conservational mode.

Table 4. Effectiveness of local FM radio in the study district (n=90)

Effectiveness	Frequency	Percent
More effective	20	22.2
Effective	64	71.1
Not effective	6	6.7
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Upetry (2006) also reported that broadcasting agricultural programmes like System of Rice Intensification (SRI) technology through the local FM radio created more demand for training among farmers, resulting in more SRI experiences in Nepal.

Perceived rate of change in agricultural practices due to local FM radio

More than half of the respondents reported that local FM radios brought slow rate of change in agricultural practices followed by medium (42 percent) and rapid change (6.7 percent), respectively.

Table 5. Rate of change in agricultural practices perceived by respondents due to local FM radio in the study district

Rate of change agricultural practices	Frequency n=90	Percent
Rapid change in agricultural field	6	6.7
Medium rate of change in agricultural	38	42.2
Slow rate of change in agricultural	46	51.1
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Slow rate of change may be due to lack of seeing is believing effect of radio programs. But Sharma & Kishore (1970) reported that radio brings change not only in agricultural field but also change in knowledge and attitude of the farmers of various socio-economic strata.

Appropriateness of broadcasting time

Table 6 revealed that about 72 percent of the respondents reported broadcasted time of agricultural program was appropriate whereas about 28 percent of the respondents felt time was inappropriate.

Table 6. Respondents view on broadcasting time

Appropriateness of time	Frequency (n=90)	percent
Appropriate	65	72.2
Inappropriate	25	27.8
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Farmers' preferences on broadcasting time

Respondents were asked for their views about the most appropriate times for agricultural program broadcasts.

Table 7. Farmers' preferences on broadcasting time

Time	Frequency (n=85)	Percent
6.00-7.00 am	30	35.3
7.00-8.00 am	15	17.6
8.00-9.00 am	9	10.6
9.00-10.00 am	4	4.7
17.00-18.00 pm	4	4.7
18.00-19.00 pm	23	27.1
Total	85	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

There were varied views about the suitable time of program tune. During focus group discussion farmer argued that suitability of time depend upon the season of year, gender, daily working schedule of farmers and nature of work. About 35 percent of the farmers reported that 6.00 to 7.00 am was the best time to listen the agriculture related radio programs followed by 18.00-19.00 pm. Based on focus group discussion, it was found that the program tuned at 7.30 am in Radio Chitwan and Synergy FM were only suitable in summer and raining season. However, during winter season the 7.30 am was reported as busy time for farmers. Female farmers said that evening time more suitable than morning as they had to perform various house works in morning.

Sufficiency of broadcast duration

About 71 percent of the respondents thought that duration for agricultural program broadcasted was not sufficient, whereas rest reported sufficient.

Table 8. Farmers' perception on duration of program

Duration of time	Frequency (n=72)	Percent
Sufficient	21	29.2
Not sufficient	51	70.8
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Ways to make effective agricultural program

During focus group discussion with radio program presenters and farmers, seven ways were identified to make agricultural program effective. About 54 percent of the farmers suggested that the more effective way would be discussion between subject matter specialist and experienced farmer followed by presentation with clear voice, competition on cultural program/activities.

Table 9. Ways to make radio program more effective

Ways to make effective program	Frequency n=52	Percent
Presentation with clear voice	10	(19.3)
Discussion between subject matter specialist and experienced farmer	28	(53.9)
Broadcast twice a day	2	(3.8)
Competition on cultural program or activities related to agriculture	4	(7.7)
Distribution of FM radio to the farmer	2	(3.8)
On the spot visit by radio presenter	2	(3.8)
Farmer should be self motivated to listen agricultural program	4	(7.7)
Total	52	(100)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Dube (2006) also reported that radio has been found that message conveyed over the radio penetrates deeper if it is followed by a discussion between the village people and some of their opinion leader. A similar study (Chandar & Sharma, 2003) found that

'Discussion' was the most suggested form of radio programming.

CONCLUSIONS

Assessment of agricultural programs broadcasted by local FM radios in Chitwan Nepal revealed that farmers preferred to listen agricultural programs combined with news and entertainment. This study found that FM radios were effective to change the agricultural practices, albeit low rate. Farmers' preferred to listen programs at 6.00am to 7.00 am, but depends upon the season and farmers schedule. Most of the farmers reported that broadcasting duration was not sufficient. To make program more effective, program presentation would be discussion between subject matter specialist and experienced farmer. This finding would be helpful to design FM radio programs for agricultural extension advisory services.

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