

Comparative Perception of Readers Towards Farm Magazines



Agriculture

KEYWORDS :

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ABSTRACT

Descriptive research design was followed for carrying out the study. The State of Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively for the study as the investigator hails from the state. Out of 23 districts of Andhra Pradesh, 16 were selected using simple random sampling technique. The districts were selected randomly according to the availability of the strength of the farm magazine readers obtained from the publishers of the respective farm magazines. Based on the criteria of highest circulation as well as the availability of the subscribers for each of the farm magazines, three Telugu farm magazines were selected for the study. They were the publications of Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University (Vyavasayam-I category) state department of agriculture (Padipantalu-II category) and private agency (Annadata-III category), respectively as denoted. Lists of subscribers for each of the three selected farm magazines i.e., Vyavasayam, Padipantalu, Annadata, belonging to selected districts of Andhra Pradesh were obtained from the publishers. From these lists, reader farmers were selected through simple random sampling. The method used was selecting from sequential list wherein from the alphabetical list of subscribers prepared for each of the farm magazines, every 10th subscriber was selected as sample for the study. Thus, primarily 80 readers were selected for each of the farm magazines and in total to 240 readers, questionnaires were mailed. The questionnaire was formulated to study the perception, problems and suggestions of readers towards respective farm magazines. Open ended questionnaire was used to study the problems and suggestions of readers of farm magazines. Only 152 subscriber farmers responded through filled in questionnaires. Among these questionnaires, 120 questionnaires of 120 readers were complete in all respects. Hence, keeping in view the principles of statistical research and to satisfy the appropriate number of sample size for the study, 40 readers (n1, n2 and n3) from each of the farm magazines (I, II and III categories) were selected making a final sample size of 120 readers for the study. 2009-2011 was the reference period for the study. Highly perceived item by the readers of I and II categories of farm magazines was subscription followed by utility whereas it was utility followed by subscription in III category of farm magazine in the order of ranking. Understandability was the item ranked last in three categories of farm magazines. From the ANOVA the average values of I, II and III category of farm magazines were 3.60, 3.64 and 3.93 respectively. As the difference between average values of three farm magazines exceeded the critical difference (0.25) it could be concluded that there is significant difference between perceptions of three magazines by readers. The analysis revealed that there was significant difference in perception of readers towards III category of farm magazine when compared with other two categories of farm magazines.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the mechanism through which human relations exist and develop. The key role of communication in any form is to plant new ideas into the minds of human beings. The responsibility reposed on extension workers is considerable, as they have to act as teachers to farmers in dissemination of innovations or new ideas by using various channels of communication for adoption. There are various types of communication as verbal, non verbal, written and visual. Print media is a written form of communication. There are various kinds of important print materials and literature which are very much useful in educating the farmers and in conveying them new ideas, skills and practices. Print media is more reliable source of scientific information in simple and easily understandable language on a specific topic and generally illustrated with action pictures which can reach a large number of farmers quickly and simultaneously. Further, the reader can go through the printed materials at their own pace, at their convenient time and can preserve it for future use. The main drawback of farm journalism in India is that it is overloaded with information about technology and organisational activities rather than about the farm people who adopt and use the technology. Disadvantages of farm journalism are illiteracy of people, varying needs of local people, delay of information and also difficulty in feedback. These need to be overcome so that the goal of farm journalism will be achieved effectively. Looking into the present situation there is a growing realization to improve the content and format of farm magazines. From communicator point of view, it is essential to find out the effective methods of improving content of farm magazine which could be used as effective media in transferring farm technology. The ultimate purpose of any farm magazine is to convey ideas and make the farmers adopt the recommendations in their field practices. Effectiveness of any media depends on its ability to disseminate the message properly so that it is understood, readily accepted and thus facilitated in adoption of the practices. The farm magazines could be made

more effective through need based content, proper writing and appropriate usage of cover page, illustrations and contents of format. The success of the farm magazines goes with the taste, perception, attitude towards farm magazines and its components. If the reader develops favourable attitude, automatically it creates interest and motivates the individual to search for the new information and thus it is worthy to consider their perception, problems and suggestions to improve farm magazine. But this study is a pioneering attempt wherein efforts are made to analyse perception towards farm magazine, trends and format of presentation, readability, information per cent and direction of content as part of content analysis of farm magazines. Three farm magazines namely Vyavasayam, Padipantalu and Annadata which are published by Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University, state department of agriculture and a private publication, respectively were considered for the study. The study was confined to analysis of the selected Telugu farm magazines with reference to perception of content from the farmer's point of view.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. To study the perception of readers towards farm magazines, 16 districts were selected in Andhra Pradesh state. They were Ranga Reddy, Visakhapatnam, Krishna, Guntur, Anantapur, Warangal, Karimnagar, East Godavari, Nalgonda, Nellore, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Kurnool, West Godavari, Adilabad and Khammam districts. The districts were selected randomly according to the availability of the strength of the farm magazine readers obtained from the publishers of the respective farm magazines. In Andhra Pradesh state, more than 20 Telugu farm magazines were published by the government organizations (agricultural universities, co-operative institutions and government undertaking institutions), private organizations and non government organizations. Based on the criteria of highest circulation as well as the availability of the subscribers for each of the farm magazines, three Telugu farm magazines were

selected for the study. They were the publications of Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University (Vyavasayam-I category), state department of agriculture (Padipantalu-II category) and private agency (Annadata-III category) respectively as denoted. The Vyavasayam is a monthly farm magazine published by the Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad (Government organization) in Telugu language. It was started in the year 2009 and has a circulation of 2,50,000 copies. Padipantalu (II Category) is another monthly farm magazine published in Andhra Pradesh by the government organization called State department of agriculture, Hyderabad. It was started in the year 1945 and has a circulation of 1,00,000 copies over entire Andhra Pradesh state. This magazine has gained popularity in short time among the progressive farmers of Andhra Pradesh. Annadata (III Category) is monthly farm magazine published in Telugu by the Eenadu private publisher, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. It was started in year 1969 and has circulation of 3,00,000 copies. Respondents of the study to know the perception of farm magazines were the readers of those magazines. Reader of the farm magazine was operationalised as the subscriber who had life membership for a farm magazine and be an active reader. Lists of subscribers for each of the three selected farm magazines i.e., Vyavasayam, Padipantalu, Annadata, belonging to selected districts of Andhra Pradesh were obtained from the publishers. From these lists, readers were selected through simple random sampling. The method used was selecting from sequential list wherein from the alphabetical list of subscriber prepared for each of the farm magazines every 10th subscriber was selected as sample for the study. Thus, primarily 80 readers were selected for each of the farm magazines and in total to 240 readers, questionnaires were mailed. The questionnaire was formulated to study the general information and educational levels, perception, problems and suggestions of readers towards respective farm magazines. Open ended questionnaire was used to study the problems and suggestions of readers of farm magazines. Only 152 subscriber farmers responded through filled in ques-

tionnaires. Among these questionnaires, 120 questionnaires of 120 readers were complete in all respects. Hence, keeping in view the principles of statistical research and to satisfy the appropriate number of sample size for the study, 40 readers (n1, n2 and n3) from each of the farm magazines (I, II and III categories) were selected making a final sample size of 120 readers for the study. Perception of farm magazine was operationalised as the manner in which the readers perceive the magazine in terms of different items-understandability, utility and subscription. Understandability was studied in terms of language and presentation of information so as to understand. Utility was studied in terms of provision of timely, need based, location specific, holistic information and periodicity. Subscription was studied in terms of amount and tenure of membership. Under three items-understandability, utility and subscription twenty statements were prepared to study the perception of respective readers towards three farm magazines. Among these, ten were positive and ten were negative. The responses for each statement were rated on five point continuum which ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The weightages for positive statements were 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. It was reversed for negative statements. The maximum possible score which could be obtained was hundred and the minimum possible score was twenty. The frequency of responses obtained under each of the statements was multiplied with the corresponding weightages to arrive at a total score of a statement. Mean score of a statement is obtained by dividing total score with total number of respondents. Based on mean scores, each statement was ranked. The average mean score of an item is obtained by summing up the mean scores of all statements under it and dividing it with number of statements. Based on these average mean scores, the items were ranked. The same procedure was repeated for three farm magazines. In the present study, the mean scores of each statement (Appendix II) obtained by the readers of three farm magazines were subjected to Analysis of variance (ANOVA) to study the difference in perception of readers of three farm magazines.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Table.1 Distribution of readers based on their perception towards selected farm magazines

S. No.	Statements	n ₁ =40						n ₂ =40						n ₃ =40					
		Degree of feeling																	
		I						II						III					
		S.A	A	UD	DA	S.D	TS	S.A	A	UD	DA	S.D	TS	S.A	A	UD	DA	S.D	TS
I Understandability																			
1	I can understand the language used in the farm magazine	13 (33.00)	27 (67.50)	0	0	0	173	19 (48.00)	21 (52.50)	0	0	0	179	32 (80.00)	8 (20.00)	0	0	0	192
2	I feel that illustrations provided in the farm magazine are difficult to understand	0	15 (37.00)	11 (28.00)	12 (30.00)	2 (5.00)	121	0	19 (47.50)	4 (10.00)	12 (30.00)	5 (13.00)	123	6 (15.00)	12 (30.00)	0	17 (43.00)	5 (13.00)	123
3	I can understand the information on all farming related aspects provided in the farm magazine	7 (18.00)	11 (27.50)	7 (18.00)	15 (38.00)	0	130	7 (18.00)	15 (37.50)	6 (15.00)	12 (30.00)	0	137	21 (53.00)	13 (32.50)	2 (5.00)	4 (10.00)	0	171
4	I can't understand the English words used in the farm magazine	0	20 (50.00)	3 (7.50)	11 (28.00)	6 (15.00)	123	2 (5.00)	18 (45.00)	0	13 (33.00)	7 (18.00)	125	0	15 (37.50)	0	19 (48.00)	6 (15.00)	136
5	Font size is comfortable to me to read the information in the farm magazine	3 (7.50)	26 (65.00)	5 (13.00)	4 (10.00)	2 (5.00)	144	5 (13.00)	19 (47.50)	4 (10.00)	4 (10.00)	8 (20.00)	129	10 (25.00)	12 (30.00)	2 (5.00)	16 (40.00)	0	136
6	I feel that tables given in the farm magazine are difficult to follow	0	16 (40.00)	8 (20.00)	16 (40.00)	0	120	2 (5.00)	18 (45.00)	3 (7.50)	14 (35.00)	3 (7.50)	118	0	14 (35.00)	0	24 (60.00)	2 (5.00)	134
II Utility																			
1	I feel that information provided in the farm magazine is not timely to follow	0	15 (37.50)	3 (7.50)	12 (30.00)	10 (25.00)	137	9 (23.00)	5 (12.50)	9 (23.00)	17 (43.00)	0	114	0	11 (27.50)	0	22 (55.00)	7 (18.00)	145

		n ₁ =40						n ₂ =40						n ₃ =40					
S. No.	Statements	Degree of feeling																	
		I						II						III					
		S.A	A	UD	DA	S.D	TS	S.A	A	UD	DA	S.D	TS	S.A	A	UD	DA	S.D	TS
2	I feel that information given in the farm magazine catered my needs	8 (20.00)	17 (42.50)	4 (10.00)	11 (28.00)	0	142	9 (23.00)	16 (40.00)	3 (7.50)	9 (23.00)	3 (7.50)	139	29 (73.00)	8 (20.00)	0	3 (7.50)	0	183
3	I feel that information provided in the farm magazine is not complete and brief	6 (15.00)	13 (32.50)	7 (18.00)	14 (35.00)	0	109	2 (5.00)	18 (45.00)	6 (15.00)	10 (25.00)	4 (10.00)	116	0	6 (15.00)	9 (23.00)	14 (35.00)	11 (28.00)	150
4	I feel that the information provided in the farm magazine is not accurate	0	0	0	4 (10.00)	36 (90.00)	196	0	0	0	12 (30.00)	28 (70.00)	188	0	0	0	15 (38.00)	25 (63.00)	185
5	I feel that farm magazine published information suitable to local conditions	13 (33.00)	27 (67.50)	0	0	0	173	18 (45.00)	22 (55.00)	0	0	0	178	32 (80.00)	8 (20.00)	0	0	0	192
6	I feel that the information provided in the farm magazine is not practicable to me	0	14 (35.00)	4 (10.00)	12 (30.00)	10 (25.00)	138	2 (5.00)	12 (30.00)	7 (18.00)	10 (25.00)	9 (23.00)	132	4 (10.00)	10 (25.00)	7 (18.00)	13 (33.00)	6 (15.00)	127
7	I feel that agriculture operations as per Telugu calendar are not useful to me	2 (5.00)	12 (30.00)	9 (23.00)	11 (28.00)	6 (15.00)	127	3 (7.50)	15 (37.50)	4 (10.00)	11 (28.00)	7 (18.00)	124	5 (13.00)	12 (30.00)	4 (10.00)	19 (48.00)	0	117
8	I feel that postal addresses of research stations and extension centres are very useful to me	0	13 (32.50)	6 (15.00)	12 (30.00)	9 (23.00)	103	4 (10.00)	12 (30.00)	8 (20.00)	10 (25.00)	6 (15.00)	118	29 (73.00)	6 (15.00)	0	5 (13.00)	0	179
9	I feel that information provided on agriculture implements is not useful to me	0	10 (25.00)	2 (5.00)	17 (43.00)	11 (28.00)	149	0	9 (22.50)	6 (15.00)	15 (38.00)	10 (25.00)	146	0	8 (20.00)	4 (10.00)	12 (30.00)	16 (40.00)	156
10	I feel that periodicity of farm magazine has to be changed from monthly to fortnight	13 (33.00)	15 (37.50)	10 (25.00)	2 (5.00)	0	159	23 (58.00)	12 (30.00)	5 (13.00)	0	0	178	35 (88.00)	5 (12.50)	0	0	0	195
III Subscription																			
1	I feel that farm magazine is available at competitive price	9 (23.00)	18 (45.00)	0	10 (25.00)	3 (7.50)	140	36 (90.00)	4 (10.00)	0	0	0	196	31 (78.00)	7 (17.50)	0	2 (5.00)	0	187
2	I don't mind to pay higher prices for farm magazine	0	0	0	10 (25.00)	30 (75.00)	190	0	0	0	3 (7.50)	37 (93.00)	197	0	3 (7.50)	0	24 (60.00)	13 (33.00)	167
3	I feel that tenure of life membership is appropriate	14 (35.00)	19 (47.50)	7 (18.00)	0	0	167	9 (23.00)	6 (15.00)	21 (53.00)	3 (7.50)	1 (2.50)	139	10 (25.00)	5 (12.50)	19 (48.00)	6 (15.00)	0	139
4	I feel that there is urgent need to renew the tenure of life membership	3 (7.50)	17 (42.50)	12 (30.00)	8 (20.00)	0	135	3 (7.50)	14 (35.00)	16 (40.00)	7 (18.00)	0	133	6 (15.00)	8 (20.00)	17 (43.00)	9 (23.00)	0	131

Table.2 Rank order of different items and statements of perception of readers towards selected farm magazines

S. No.	Statements	n ₁ =40		n ₂ =40		n ₃ =40	
		I		II		III	
		MS	Rank	MS	Rank	MS	Rank
I Understandability							
1	I can understand the language used in the farm magazine	4.33	I	4.48	I	4.80	I
2	I feel that illustrations provided in the farm magazine are difficult to understand	3.03	V	3.08	V	3.08	V
3	I can understand the information on all farming related aspects provided in the farm magazine	3.25	III	3.43	II	4.28	II
4	I can't understand the English words used in the farm magazine	3.08	IV	3.13	IV	3.40	III
5	I feel that font size is comfortable to me to read the information in the farm magazine	3.60	II	3.23	III	3.40	III
6	I feel that tables given in the farm magazine are difficult to follow	3.00	VI	2.95	VI	3.35	IV
	Average mean score	3.38	3	3.38	3	3.72	3

II	Utility						
1	I feel that information provided in the farm magazine is not timely to follow	3.43	VII	2.85	X	3.63	VIII
2	I feel that information given in the farm magazine catered my needs	3.55	V	3.48	V	4.58	IV
3	I feel that information provided in the farm magazine is not complete and brief	2.73	IX	2.9	IX	3.75	VII
4	I feel that the information provided in the farm magazine is not accurate	4.90	I	4.70	I	4.63	III
5	I feel that farm magazine published information suitable to local conditions	4.33	II	4.45	II	4.80	II
6	I feel that the information provided in the farm magazine is not practicable to me	3.45	VI	3.30	VI	3.18	IX
7	I feel that agriculture operations as per Telugu calendar are not useful to me	3.18	VIII	3.10	VII	2.93	X
8	I feel that postal addresses of research stations and extension centers are very useful to me	2.58	X	2.95	VIII	4.48	V
9	I feel that information provided on agriculture implements is not useful to me	3.73	IV	3.65	IV	3.90	VI
10	I feel that periodicity of farm magazine has to be changed from monthly to fortnight	3.98	III	4.45	II	4.88	I
	Average mean score	3.59	2	3.58	2	4.076	1
III	Subscription						
1	I feel that farm magazine is available at competitive price	3.50	III	4.90	II	4.68	I
2	I don't mind to pay higher prices for farm magazine	4.75	I	4.93	I	4.18	II
3	I feel that tenure of life membership is appropriate	4.18	II	3.48	III	3.48	III
4	I feel that there is urgent need to renew the tenure of life membership	3.38	IV	3.33	IV	3.28	IV
	Average mean score	3.95	1	4.16	1	3.90	2

Table.3 Rank order of different items of perception of readers towards selected farm magazines

S.No.	Item	I Rank	II Rank	III Rank
I	Understandability	3	3	3
II	Utility	2	2	1
III	Subscription	1	1	2

It is clear from Table.3 that highly perceived item by the readers of I and II categories of farm magazines was subscription followed by utility whereas it was utility followed by subscription in III category of farm magazine in the order of ranking. Understandability was the item ranked last in three categories of farm magazines. Subscription was the item which was ranked first in perception readers of I and II category of farm magazines. This indicated the importance of provision of qualitative information in farm magazine at competitive prices. This could be discussed from the result of Table.2 wherein readers perceived that 'they don't mind to pay higher prices for farm magazines'. Utility was second perceived item in I and II category of farm magazines. This result can be related to the results of Table.2 wherein the readers perceived that the information given in I and II category of farm magazines was not accurate but was suitable to local conditions. Mentioning of trade names of chemicals, varieties and doses needs to be taken care of. Whereas, the readers of III category felt that periodicity needs to be changed to fortnight to obtain more detailed and specific information. Utility and subscription were the first and second perceived items by the readers of III category of farm magazine as they felt that this magazine published information suitable to local conditions besides being supplied at competitive prices (Table.2). Third perceived item by the readers of all farm magazines was understandability. The reasons for the same can be known from Table.2 wherein they felt that tables and illustrations used to present the information were difficult to follow which in turn effected their understandability. Hence, the tables and illustrations needs to depict comparative economics of cost of cultivation and profits (between the technology being practiced and suggested) so as to help in easy understandability. This was the perception of readers wherein the educational level of majority was intermediate.

Comparative Perception of Readers of Three Magazines

In the present study, to know the variation in the perception of readers of three eminent farm magazines Vyavasayam-I, Padipantalu-II and Annadata-III of Andhra Pradesh, analysis of variance (ANOVA): two factors without replication was used. Through this analysis, the variation in the perception between three farm magazines was studied.

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in perception of readers of three farm magazines.

Empirical hypothesis: There is significant difference in perception of readers of three farm magazines.

In the present study, the mean scores of each statement obtained by the readers of three farm magazines (Table.2) were subjected to Analysis of variance (ANOVA). From the ANOVA the average values of I, II and III categories of farm magazines were 3.60, 3.64 and 3.93 respectively (Table.4). As the difference between average values of three farm magazines exceeded the critical difference (0.25) it could be concluded that there was significant difference between perceptions of readers of three magazines and thus, null hypothesis was rejected and empirical hypothesis was accepted.

Table.4 Comparison of perception of readers of three farm magazines based on ANOVA

S. No.	Category	Average values	Comparative Category of average values	Difference in average values	Result	
1.	Vyavasayam (I)	3.60	Padipantalu (II)	3.64	0.04	NS
			Annadata (III)	3.93	0.33	*
2.	Padipantalu (II)	3.64	Vyavasayam (I)	3.60	0.04	NS
			Annadata (III)	3.93	0.29	*
3.	Annadata (III)	3.93	Vyavasayam (I)	3.60	0.33	*
			Padipantalu (II)	3.64	0.29	*

From ANNOVA, CD-0.25 * Significant at 5% level of probability, NS - Non significant

Table.4 shows the comparison of average value of each category of farm magazine with the average values of other two categories of farm magazines (for e.g. Vyavasayam vs Padipantalu, Vyavasayam vs Annadata). The analysis of this Table revealed that there was significant difference among perception of readers of III category of farm magazine when compared with other two categories of farm magazines. Moreover, III farm magazine was also perceived to be more useful to the readers over the other two (Table.3) and hence readers perceived its periodicity to be reduced to fortnight.

By reading the Annadata (III) farm magazine, most of the respondents adopted the information and they obtained good yield. Respondents said that they had faith in usefulness of

information provided in the farm magazine. Majority of the respondents were using farm magazine as a multipurpose reference book, as it contains all the information on agriculture, horticulture, veterinary and home science. Further, it provides information on pesticides and their mixing with fertilizers which are more useful to them. General information on miscellaneous topics like vermicompost are used by the respondents by reading farm magazine and thus resulted in earning good income. The perception of the farm magazine varied from person to person and this may be due to their varied attributes such as personal and socio psychological characteristics. This findings exhibited similar relationship with that of Saini and Sandhu (1995), Umale and Kubde (2000), Gokulraj and Prasad (2009).

CONCLUSION

Subscription was the highly perceived item (I and II categories) which indicated that the readers don't mind to pay higher prices for qualitative information. Quality of information (evaluative information-'why to' aspects) has to be emphasized in the publications by the concerned authorities.

The highly perceived item in III category of farm magazine was utility wherein they demanded a fortnightly publication as it was highly valued and thus would timely meet the information needs of the readers.

Second perceived item by readers of I and II categories of farm magazines was utility. The readers perceived that there was no accuracy in reporting of technical information. Trade names of chemicals, varieties and their doses need to be carefully checked by concerned authorities to make the magazine really useful to the readers.

To make information in I and II categories of farm magazines more useful to farmers, farmers first approach needs to be em-

phasized. Attention needs to be given to need-based information defined in farmer's own medium. The focus needs to be on encouraging the farmers to learn, adopt and do better analysis not by the outsider's help but on their own.

Last perceived item in all the categories of farm magazines was understandability. The readers felt that tables and illustrations used to present the information were difficult to follow which inturn effected their understandability. Hence, the tables and illustrations needs to depict comparative economics of cost of cultivation and profits (between the technology being practiced and suggested) so as to help in easy understandability. Better understandability of message leads to acceptance and adoption. The most commonly published format of articles in all the categories was 'others' which were published as such by the concerned editors in the form received from scientists. Editors of farm journals should preferably be agricultural graduates trained in farm journalism so as to screen, modify and adapt articles to target readers. They were not processed into most commonly accepted formats like popular articles, success story. Hence, the writers of articles need to trained in farm journalism.

Journalism is not just reporting of events. It also involves message selection based on needs, interest and level of the target readers, treatment and presentation of message and communicating the same to make it meaningful, understandable and acceptable to target readers. Feedback from the readers has to be taken to improve the understandability and thereby the quality of farm magazines.

Visual communication of a technology (simple pictorial representation) would help the illiterate readers to better understand and appreciate the concept and thus improves the quality of farm magazines.

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