

Utility Perception of Mass Media by Farm Women

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation was conducted in Parbhani, Hingoli and Nanded districts in Marathwada region of Maharashtra State. The main objective of the study was to know utility perception of mass media by the farm women. A structured interview schedule was used to collect data from 150 respondents who were viewing agricultural programmes on TV, as well as listening agricultural programmes on radio and also reading agricultural articles in the newspaper. The statistical methods and tests such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, co-efficient of correlation and multiple regression were used for the analysis of data. The result of the study showed that most of the respondents were having medium level of farming experience (58.00%), education upto secondary school level (58.67 per cent), medium social participation (65.33%) and belonged to joint family (65.33%), 2 hours per day as leisure time (52.00%), semi-medium land holding (32.67%), farming as their occupation (52.67%), medium level of annual income (82.00%), medium innovation proneness (69.33%), medium level of scientific orientation (67.33%), medium market orientation (66.00%), medium level of awareness (46.67%) and medium mass media use behaviour (58.67%). It was also found that majority of respondents were having medium utility perception of TV (73.33%), medium utility perception of radio (68.66%), medium utility perception of newspaper (65.33 %) and medium utility perception of mass media (50.67%).

Key words : *Utility perception, Mass media, Farm women.*

Improved technologies for increasing agricultural production are now becoming available at a much faster rate. Though there is effective communication network available but it is not used effectively. Effective communication of farm information to the farmers is key to socio-economic transformation of our nation, particularly when the bulk of the population lives on farming. The function of the communication in the context of agricultural development is to inform, educate and motivate the farmers to accept new ideas and adopt improved agricultural practices in order to increase the production per unit of land.

The present age has been rightly termed as an "Information Age" people want adequate and authentic information as early as possible. Farmers have eagerness to obtain knowledge, particularly in the field of modern agriculture to make themselves psychologically strong to adopt modern methods of agriculture. In India, it is difficult to contact each and every farmer in limited time in an effective manner to transfer agricultural technology. The use of mass media is certainly most effective avenue to convey information to the people. Mass media play a significant role, in bringing awareness to people and motivate them to be active part in the nation building endeavour. Through mass media one can disseminate new agricultural information, extension programmes, government schemes and policies relating to agricultural development and success stories of farmers etc. Newspaper, radio and television are integral part of mass media and very crucial in this context.

Women are great communicators. This unique ability of women need to be utilized in dissemination of

appropriate technologies in agriculture. The development of women has always been the central focus in development planning since independence. The concept of "welfare" in the 1970s to "development" in the 1980 and presently to "empowerment" in the 1990s. All these approaches have been designed to improve the socio-economic status of women. The various research findings reveal that the farm women are exposed to various mass media to a varying degree. But the frequency with which they utilize the media sources must be varied. Considering the growing acceptance and realization of crucial role played by mass media in transfer of agricultural technology and its impact, agrarian structural reforms after globalization, pressure of population explosion, country's efforts for becoming developed country by 2020 A.D. and future prospects of Indian agriculture at state, national and international level, the present study has been undertaken with following specific objectives.

1. To study the socio-personal, economic, psychological and communication characteristics of the farm women.
2. To study utility perception of mass media by the farm women.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Parbhani, Hingoli and Nanded districts in Marathwada region of Maharashtra State. From each district, two talukas were randomly selected. From each taluka, five villages were selected randomly by lottery method. A common list of the respondents who were viewing agricultural programmes on television, as well as listening agricultural programmes on radio and also

reading agricultural articles in the newspaper were prepared and from each village five respondents were selected randomly by lottery method from the list. Thus, there were a total of 150 respondents, from whom the data were collected. The Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The data were collected by visiting the respondents personally with the help of structured interview schedule. The statistical methods and tests such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, co-efficient of correlation and multiple regression were used for the analysis of data. For measuring the utility perception of mass media, a scale was developed by using the Normalized Rank Approach Method as suggested by Guilford (1978). There were 17 main items under utility perception of TV, 17 main items under utility perception of radio and 15 main items under utility perception of newspaper. Thus, proposed scale finally comprised forty-nine main items and different sub-items.

By using constructed utility perception of mass media scale, utility perception index was calculated by following formula.

$$UPI = \frac{\sum \text{Score obtained for component} \times \text{scale value of component}}{\sum \text{Maximum score for component} \times \text{scale value of component}} \times 100$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Socio-personal, economic, psychological and communication characteristics of the farm women:

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that, majority of the respondents i.e. 58.00 per cent were having medium level of farming experience, followed by 24.00 per cent and 18.00 per cent of them were having low and high level of farming experience, respectively. Majority (58.67%) of the respondents had education upto secondary school level, followed by primary school level (26.00%). Majority (65.33%) of the respondents were having medium social participation, whereas most (65.33%) of the respondents were having joint family. Majority (46.67%) of the respondents had medium size of family and majority (52.00%) of the respondents were having two hours per day as leisure time, followed by 20.67 per cent of them were having three hours per day as leisure time. About 32.67 per cent of the respondents were from semi-medium land holding, while 27.33 per cent were from small land holding category. Maximum number (52.67%) of the respondents were having farming as their occupation, while 20.00 per cent of the respondents had farming + labour as their occupation. Appreciable percentage (82.00%) of the respondents had medium level of annual income, whereas 12.67 per cent and 5.33 per cent of them had high and low level of annual income, respectively. Majority of the respondents were from medium innovation proneness

category followed by 29.34 per cent respondents were from high innovation proneness category. Significant percentage (67.33%) of the respondents were with medium level of scientific orientation and most (66.00 %) of the respondents were with medium level of market orientation, while 24.00 per cent and 10.00 per cent of them were from high and low level of market orientation, respectively. More number (46.67%) of the respondents were having medium level of awareness, followed by 38.66 per cent and 14.67 per cent of them were having high level and low level of awareness, respectively. Majority of the respondents i.e. 58.67 per cent were having medium mass media use behaviour, followed by 24.00 per cent of the respondents were having low mass media use behaviour.

B. Utility perception of mass media by the farm women: For studying utility perception of mass media three media namely TV, radio and newspaper were selected.

Table 1
Socio-personal, economic, psychological and communication characteristics of the farm women

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency (N=150)	Percentage
1	Farming experience		
	Low (upto 14)	36	24.00
	Medium (15 to 41)	87	58.00
	High (42 and above)	27	18.00
2	Education		
	Illiterate (No schooling)	00	00.00
	Primary school level (I to IV standard)	39	26.00
	Secondary school level (V to X standard)	88	58.67
	Higher secondary level (XI to XII standard)	16	10.67
	College level (Above XII standard)	07	4.66
3	Social participation		
	Low (upto 2)	28	18.67
	Medium (3 to 10)	98	65.33
	High (11 and above)	24	16.00
4	Family type		
	Nuclear family	52	34.67
	Joint family	98	65.33
5	Family size		
	Small (upto 4)	44	29.33
	Medium (5 to 8)	70	46.67
	Big (9 and above)	36	24.00

6	Leisure time		
	1 hour per day	21	14.00
	1.5 hour per day	01	00.67
	2 hours per day	78	52.00
	3 hours per day	31	20.67
	4 hours per day	17	11.33
	More than 4 hours per day	02	01.33
7	Land holding		
	Marginal (upto 1.00 ha.)	40	26.67
	Small (1.01 to 2.00 ha.)	41	27.33
	Semi- medium (2.01 to 4.00 ha.)	49	32.67
	Medium (4.01 to 10.00 ha.)	17	11.33
	Big (10.01 ha. and above)	03	02.00
8	Occupation		
	Farming	79	52.67
	Farming + labour	30	20.00
	Farming + business	18	12.00
	Farming + service	23	15.33
9	Annual income		
	Low (upto 22371)	08	5.33
	Medium (22372 to 554243)	123	82.00
	High (551244 and above)	19	12.67
10	Innovation proneness		
	Low (upto 7)	02	01.33
	Medium (8 to 9)	104	69.33
	High (10 and above)	44	29.34
11	Scientific orientation		
	Low (upto 15)	11	07.33
	Medium (16 to 20)	101	67.33
	High (21 and above)	38	25.34
12	Market orientation		
	Low (upto 17)	15	10.00
	Medium (18 to 23)	99	66.00
	High (24 and above)	36	24.00
13	Awareness		
	Low (upto 7)	22	14.67
	Medium (8 to 10)	70	46.67
	High (11 and above)	58	38.66
14	Mass media use behaviour		
	Low (upto 6)	36	24.00
	Medium (7 to 9)	88	58.67
	High (10 and above)	26	17.33

Table 2
Distribution of respondents according to mass media utility perception

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency (N=150)	Percentage
1	Utility perception of Television		
	Low (upto 68.31)	16	10.67
	Medium (68.32 to 90.61)	110	73.33
	High (90.62 and above)	24	16.00
2	Utility perception of Radio		
	Low (upto 60.83)	25	16.67
	Medium (60.84 to 84.65)	103	68.66
	High (84.66 and above)	22	14.67
3	Utility perception of Newspaper		
	Low (upto 53.59)	37	24.67
	Medium (53.60 to 85.97)	98	65.33
	High (85.98 and above)	15	10.00

It was apparent from Table 2 that, regarding utility perception of TV, majority (73.33 per cent) of the respondents belonged to medium utility perception category, followed by 16.00 per cent and 10.67 per cent of them belonged to high and low utility perception category, respectively. Majority of respondents are having medium utility perception of Television because they have more interest in viewing the agricultural programmes on TV and also can easily understand whatever shown in these programmes through live demonstrations. The present findings are supported by findings of Lekule (2000), Dabhade (2001), Naganikar (2005), Patil (2007) and Ghadi (2008).

It was also noticed from Table 2 that, regarding utility perception of radio, majority (68.66 per cent) of the respondents were from medium utility perception category, while 16.67 per cent of the respondents were from low utility perception category and only 14.67 per cent respondents were from high utility perception category. Medium utility perception of radio may be due to that radio is affordable mass media and also available easily in rural areas. Another reason may be that farm women can also listen agricultural programmes on radio while doing their work at home or at farm. Similar findings are reported by Lekule (2000), Dabhade (2001), Naganikar (2005), Patil (2007) and Ghadi (2008).

Table 2 regarding utility perception of newspaper indicated that, most of respondents i.e. 65.33 per cent were having medium utility perception. Near about 24.67 per cent of them were having low utility perception. Comparatively few of them were

(10.00 per cent) observed in high utility perception category. Farm women had medium utility perception of newspaper may be due to their low level of education and newspaper reading by the women in rural area is supposed sign of modernity. These findings are in line with the findings of Lekule (2000), Dabhade (2001), Naganikar (2005), Patil (2007) and Ghadi (2008).

Table 3
Distribution of respondents according to their overall utility perception of mass media

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency (N=150)	Percentage
1.	Low (upto 68.25)	45	30.00
2.	Medium (68.26 to 79.74)	76	50.67
3.	High (79.75 and above)	29	19.33

Table 3 revealed that, nearly half of the respondents i.e. 50.67 per cent belonged to medium utility perception category, while 30.00 per cent of them from low utility perception category and only 19.33 per cent of the respondents belonged to high utility perception category. The probable reason might be medium education, annual income and mass media use

behaviour which have cumulative effect on medium utility perception of mass media. Similar findings are reported by Lekule (2000), Dabhade (2001), Naganikar (2005), Patil (2007) and Ghadi (2008).

CONCLUSION

The result of the study showed that most of the respondents were having medium level of farming experience, education upto secondary school level, medium social participation and belonged to joint family, two hours per day as leisure time, semi-medium land holding, farming as their occupation, medium level of annual income, medium innovation proneness, medium level of scientific orientation, medium market orientation, medium level of awareness and medium mass media use behaviour. It was also found that majority of the respondents were having medium utility perception of Television, medium utility perception of radio and medium utility perception of newspaper. Nearly half of the respondents belonged to medium utility perception of mass media category followed by low and high utility perception category.

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