

Content Analysis of News Published about TNAU in English and Tamil Dailies

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ABSTRACT

Content analysis described as the scientific study of content of communication. The effort of the press in carrying agricultural news to the entire population becomes important because of the role food plays in the national polity and survival. Since extension agents are change agents and newspapers are vehicle of change thus newspapers become vital in the social change process. A purposive sample consisting of two popular English daily newspapers (The Hindu and New Indian Express), and two popular Tamil daily newspapers (Dinamalar and Dinathanthi) were selected and surveyed from January 2010 to December 2012. All Tamil Nadu Agricultural University related news items that appeared during the period were taken from these selected four daily newspapers. Result showed that in reported agricultural issues, majority reported 1-2 stories per day representing 92.39, 91.04 and 90.31 of total sample size in 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively. The subject matter coverage that attracted the highest reportage was information, technology, advisory services, forecasting. The formats of presentation around 45-47 per cent of the news issues covered comprised picture + text only. Finally, the readability that both English and Tamil dailies are Very Hard to read/understand. The authors concluded that newspapers are not likely to make significant contribution to the dissemination of agricultural information for enhanced agricultural production.

Key words : *Content analysis, Subject coverage, Formats, Readability, Agriculture, News, Dailies.*

Agricultural news refers to information on formal and non-formal training and educational activities related to agriculture, for example, examinations, teacher placements and advertisements. Content analysis as defined by Babbie (2001) is the study of recorded human communications such as books, magazines, web pages, poems, newspapers, songs, paintings, speeches, letters, email messages, bulletin board postings on the internet, laws and constitutions as well as components or collections. In content analysis, researchers examine a class of social artifacts that usually are written documents such as newspaper editorials.

Sittonet al. (2006) reported that agriculture and its related issues could influence the public's understanding of and participation in the agricultural policy process. In addition, public responsiveness to policy is most likely where information is readily available in mass media reporting. Mainstream print media such as newspapers and magazines have begun to serve agriculture in a more indirect way. They now provide information regarding agricultural issues and events to the non-farming public, which now use this information to gain knowledge about and make decisions regarding agricultural issues faced by the agriculture industry. However, general newspapers do not report in such a way as to increase public understanding of issues facing farmers or farmer understanding of public concerns about agriculture's environmental or social effects. To analyze the reporting of topics such as agricultural issues, researchers use content analysis, which is an observational research method that is used to systematically evaluate the symbolic content of all forms of recorded information (Tucker et al. 2003).

Rogers (2003) stated that most people develop their initial awareness of issues through the mass media and the media are also a primary source of information about technology and science issues. Many individuals receive news from daily newspapers and it is important that the public is presented with objective information so that individuals can form their own opinion about complex or controversial issues, including those related to agricultural industry. Oladele (2011) stated that privately owned newspaper has more agriculture news on the front page, as compared to government owned newspaper. Awojobi (2012), revealed that in reported agricultural issues, majority reported 1-2 stories per day. Content analysis of agricultural news in newspaper is necessary because agriculture plays an important role in the lives of farming community in rural areas. Agricultural education news creates awareness among the educators, students and the farmers and therefore the quality of the news must always be reviewed. The newspaper plays an important role in creating awareness about the issues that develop the society, therefore it is important to know as to what news categories of agriculture news are covered, daily reportage and know the formats/mode of presentation in selected newspapers.

METHODOLOGY

A purposive sample consisting of two English daily newspapers (The Hindu and New Indian Express), and two Tamil daily newspapers (Dinamalar and Dinathanthi) were selected. The prime consideration in the selection of the newspapers was prominence, as reflected in their circulation and regional representation. The daily newspapers were surveyed from January 2008 to December 2012. All

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University related news item that appeared during the period were taken from these selected four daily newspapers.

Name of newspaper	2010	2011	2012	Total
The Hindu	150	138	100	388
New Indian Express	105	82	79	266
Dinamalar	111	132	95	338
Dinathanthi	120	139	108	367
Total	486	491	382	1359

A total of 1359 newspaper issues were analyzed for the study which was circulated over a period of three years.

Of the four newspapers selected for the study, The Hindu lead with 388 issues considered for the study followed by Dinathanthi with 367 issues. Percentage analysis was opted to perform basic Content Analysis for the study whereas to perform Readability Test a renowned site named

http://www.usingenglish.com/resources/text_statistics.php was utilized to obtain readability tests and scores for the study as intended by the researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Subject matter coverage by English & Tamil Dailies

Findings showed that all the subject matter coverage was contained in the selected newspapers. Olowu (1990) posited that virtually all aspects of agriculture production activities are newsworthy because they are found in newspaper.

Table 1
Subject matter coverage by English & Tamil Dailies

Subject matter	2010		2011		2012	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Information/Technology	60	12.35	64	13.03	44	11.52
Advisory Services/Forecasting	75	15.43	62	12.63	45	11.78
Encouragement	20	4.12	27	5.50	26	6.81
Curriculum Examination	31	6.38	40	8.15	33	8.64
Training/Meetings/Conference/Seminar	72	14.81	78	15.89	75	19.63
Management/New Strategies	31	6.38	21	4.28	14	3.66
Programmes/Celebrations	17	3.50	25	5.09	18	4.71
Exhibitions/Demonstration	17	3.50	25	5.09	17	4.45
New initiatives/Research	39	8.02	36	7.33	19	4.97
Policy Issues	27	5.56	26	5.30	18	4.71
Awards/Fellowship	30	6.17	33	6.72	24	6.28
Career Development	15	3.09	12	2.44	6	1.57
Collaboration	13	2.67	11	2.24	12	3.14
Funding (Resource development)	2	0.41	1	0.20	1	0.26
Accolades	6	1.23	5	1.02	3	0.79
Protest/Strike	10	2.06	3	0.61	9	2.36
Alerts & Warning	21	4.32	22	4.48	18	4.71
Total No. of news items	486	100.00	491	100.00	382	100.00

From the above Table 1 it could be inferred that around 15-20 per cent of news issues were regarding announcement of Trainings / Meetings / Conferences / Seminar followed by 12-15 per cent of news covered advisory services and forecasting and around 12 per cent information covered news on Agricultural Technology Information. The analysis also reveals that least priority was provided to news content on funding (Resource Development), accolades, collaboration, career development and exhibitions / demonstration which turns out to be the prime areas of concern for the current newsprint media.

Daily reportage of agricultural issues in English & Tamil Dailies

In 2010, out of the 486 editions of newspapers that reported on agriculture, 92.39 per cent reported one or two stories a day, 7.20 per cent reported 3-4 stories while only 0.41 per cent reported up to 5-6 agricultural news items. In 2011, out of the 491 editions of papers that reported on agricultural issues, 91.04 per cent of them reported once or twice daily, 8.76 per cent of the newspapers reported 3-4 stories while only 0.20 per cent reported up to 5-6 agricultural news items. In 2012, 382 editions of newspapers reported on agricultural issues and out of which 90.31 per cent reported once or

Table 2
Daily reportage of agricultural issues in English & Tamil Dailies

Number of stories	2010		2011		2012	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1-2	449	92.39	447	91.04	345	90.31
3-4	35	7.20	43	8.76	36	9.42
5-6	02	0.41	01	0.20	01	0.26
Total	486	100.00	491	100.00	382	100.00

Freq. - Frequency, % - percentage

twice and 9.42 per cent reported 3-4 stories while only 0.26 per cent reported upto 5-6 agricultural news items.

Majority (>90%) of the issues published irrespective of the language was between 1 to 2 stories per day and based on these, reportage of agricultural issues in newspapers is very low. It could be inferred that as a result of the low level of reportage, farmers and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector are not likely to obtain required information on agricultural practices from newspapers.

Modes / formats of presentation

Modes/formats of presentation is defined as the arrangement of text on printed output by means of text, data, picture, text + data, data + picture, picture + text and text + data + pictures. Findings in Table 3 showed that around 45-47% of the news issues covered in the selected dailies comprised picture + text depicting the wish of common readers in reading text as well as observing pictures. It was followed by text

Table 3
Modes / Formats of presentation

Modes / Formats	2010		2011		2012	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Text	183	37.65	199	40.53	156	40.84
Data	0	0	0	0	0	0
Picture	0	0	0	0	0	0
Text + Data	45	9.26	45	9.16	32	8.38
Data + Picture	0	0	0	0	0	0
Picture + Text	230	47.33	220	44.81	173	45.29
Text + Data + Pictures	28	5.76	27	5.50	21	5.50
Total	486	100.00	491	100.00	382	100.00

alone as the format of news (38-41%).

Significance provided to data formats is relatively lesser and is glaringly visible from the analysis. It is recommended that prominent newspapers must increase better presentation of items with picture + data + text and enhanced readability for better utilization of the news in order to reach more readers.

Readability analysis

One test for a good extension publication is ease of reading. Unless written material is read understood, it is not an effective teaching device (Wilson and Gallup, 1954). Hence, readability is an important factor that decides the effectiveness of printed material; various formulae are available to measure readability in different languages. It was decided to measure the readability level of newspaper clippings using the existing readability formulae of Flesch (1948) is used. The readability scores obtained from the analysis along with the degree of easiness are detailed in table 5 and 6. News articles from the English and Tamil dailies covering 10% of issues on target subject pertaining to a month were selected for the analysis.

(a). Readability score for English newspapers

It is vivid from the Table 4 that, all the articles of the randomly selected samples from news dailies were found to be 'very hard' according to Flesch formula. The overall rating also showed the 'very hard' level of readability.

The readability scores of English dailies infer that they are very hard to read/understand by a wide range of readers proving a significant insight on to the way the news contents are being published.

(b). Readability score for Tamil newspapers

It could be seen from the results provided in Table 5 that all the sample articles fell under 'very hard' category of readability as revealed by Flesch formula.

The overall scores of Tamil Dailies readability also demonstrated a similar Very Hard outcome.

Table 4
Readability score for English newspaper obtained from the analysis

Article/news item number	English Newspapers		Article/news item number	English Newspapers	
	Readability Scores	Category		Readability Scores	Category
1 st news item	9.25	Very Hard	12 th news item	12.83	Very Hard
2 nd news item	11.71	Very Hard	13 th news item	12.30	Very Hard
3 rd news item	11.32	Very Hard	14 th news item	15.19	Very Hard
4 th news item	11.72	Very Hard	15 th news item	17.92	Very Hard
5 th news item	11.71	Very Hard	16 th news item	12.70	Very Hard
6 th news item	11.34	Very Hard	17 th news item	12.47	Very Hard
7 th news item	14.94	Very Hard	18 th news item	11.24	Very Hard
8 th news item	13.87	Very Hard	19 th news item	11.92	Very Hard
9 th news item	11.00	Very Hard	20 th news item	9.16	Very Hard
10 th news item	10.33	Very Hard	21 st news item	9.18	Very Hard
11 th news item	16.44	Very Hard	Overall ratings	12.31	Very Hard

Table 5
Readability score for Tamil newspaper obtained from the analysis

Article/news item number	Tamil Newspapers		Article/news item number	Tamil Newspapers	
	Readability scores	Category		Readability scores	Category
1 st news item	4.35	Easy	12 th news item	14.64	Very Hard
2 nd news item	21.38	Very Hard	13 th news item	9.00	Very Hard
3 rd news item	21.46	Very Hard	14 th news item	46.26	Very Hard
4 th news item	6.33	Easy	15 th news item	19.65	Very Hard
5 th news item	3.27	Easy	16 th news item	6.56	Easy
6 th news item	12.76	Very Hard	17 th news item	9.34	Very Hard
7 th news item	17.83	Very Hard	18 th news item	6.55	Easy
8 th news item	10.57	Very Hard	19 th news item	5.90	Easy
9 th news item	11.43	Very Hard	20 th news item	5.45	Easy
10 th news item	10.43	Very Hard	Overall ratings	13.33	Very Hard
11 th news item	23.45	Very Hard			

CONCLUSION

The key findings of the study reveal that only 1-2 news items are being majorly covered on agriculture by the prominent English and Tamil dailies. The subject matter coverage are more on announcements on events like Meetings/Conferences/Seminars and are majorly in Picture + Text | Text only formats. It is also uncovered that both English and Tamil dailies are Very Hard to read/understand for a wide range of audience questioning the basic assumption of proper content development for news issues.

The news dailies intent of importance to carry agricultural news as one of the significant news like sports/entertainment is showcasing a declining trend. This in turn shall ensure that newspapers actually perform the role of purveyors of change and augment efforts of government, policies, researchers, extension fraternity and Farming community towards achieving food security and prosperity through agriculture.

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