

The Impact of TV Programmes on Agricultural & Rural Development

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Abstract

Agriculture is the back bone of our economy. The technological innovations have brought improvement in industrial sector a lot but agriculture sector is still using traditional technology in many respects. Communication is very powerful tool to impart information to improve rural development. Radio and television have made significant impact in the socio-economic and cultural development in our country. It works not only as informer, educator and entertainer but also as a good interpretater. Because of these qualities, it helps to eradicate poverty and illiteracy, ensure employment in rural regions, enhance their capacity building and talents for a comprehensive development and connects them with the main stream. Keeping all these points in views, Doordarshan started a project named "KRISHI DARSHAN" on January 26, 1966 for communicating agricultural information to the farmers on experimental basis. 80 villages of union territory of Delhi were selected. Experiment was successful as substantial improvement was observed in adopting better agricultural practices by the farmers. And with the passing of time many more agricultural programmes were added on in this bucket to empower agricultural sector of our country.

Keyword : Agriculture, Techniques, Programmes, Communication, Viewers, Contribution, Usefulness etc.

1. Introduction

Television is one of the potent development communication tools in the present era. Due to audio visual features, television is very effective medium to impart the knowledge and information to the rural area. It is true that we are living in the age of information explosion and globalization. Each and every country has its own strength and problems. Many developing countries are facing inherent Social and Economical problems such as over population, illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, housing, drinking water, sanitation, nutrition, child health care and problems related to women health etc. India is also facing some of these problems.

Agriculture is one of the strongholds of the Indian economy and it accounts for 18.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). India is developing into an open-market economy, yet traces of its past autocratic policies remain. Economic liberalization, including industrial deregulation, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and reduced controls on foreign trade and investment, began in the early 1990s to accelerate the country's growth, which has averaged more than 7% per year since 1997. India's diverse economy encompasses traditional village farming, modern agriculture, handicrafts, a wide range of modern industries, and a multitude of services. Slightly more

than half of the work force is in agriculture, but services are the major source of economic growth, accounting for more than half of India's GDP with only one-third of its labour force. India has capitalized on its large educated English speaking population to become a major exporter of IT services.

The year 2007-08 was a year of record food grain production and procurement. Food grain production increased to an all-time record level of 230.67 million tones. Similarly, oilseeds, milk, fruits, vegetables, and fish production has been growing over the past few years to reach new levels. The average growth rate of agriculture and allied sectors during the two years i.e., 2006-07 and 2007-08 has been more than 4 per cent as compared to the average annual growth of 2.5 per cent during the 10th Five-Year Plan.

The current revival in agriculture sector has been possible mainly due to a number of initiatives taken in the recent years. While public sector investment in the farm sector has grown from 1.8 per cent of sectoral gross domestic product (GDP) in 2000-01 to 3.5 per cent in 2006-07, private sector investment has increased from 8.9 per cent in 2003-04 to 9.9 per cent in 2006-07.

In 2010, the Indian economy rebounded robustly from the global financial crisis - in large part because of strong domestic demand - and growth exceeded 8% year-to-year in real terms. Merchandise exports, which account for about 15% of GDP, returned to pre-financial crisis levels. An industrial expansion and high food prices, resulting from the combined effects of the weak 2009 monsoon and inefficiencies in the government's food distribution system, fueled inflation which peaked at about 11% in the first half of 2010, but has gradually decreased to single digits following a series of central bank interest rate hikes. Government in 2010 reduced subsidies in fuel and fertilizers, sold a small percentage of its shares in some state-owned enterprises and auctioned off rights to radio bandwidth for 3G telecommunications in part to lower the government's deficit. The Indian Government reduced its deficit to 5.5% of GDP in FY 2010-11, down from 6.8% in the previous fiscal year. India's long term challenges include widespread poverty, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, limited non-agricultural employment opportunities, insufficient access to basic and higher education, and accommodating rural-to-urban migration.

More than 50% of India's population is still living in the villages and depend on the agriculture for their living. Our industrial growth and foreign trade also depends directly or indirectly on it. Total share of agriculture is near about 16 to 18.1% to our GDP. So for full development of the country, concentration on villages and agriculture sector is a must to meet the new challenges of the future.

Now, the important question is how to upgrade agriculture sector. The answer is very simple. Communication is very powerful tool to impart information to upgrade our agriculture. Television has changed thinking and has broken many myths towards life and tradition. It works not only as informer, educator and entertainer but also as a good interpreter. Because of these qualities, it helps to eradicate poverty and illiteracy, ensures employment in rural regions and enlightens the rural masses, to display their capacity and talents for a comprehensive development. To keep all these points in views,

Doordarshan started a project named "KRISHI DARSHAN on January 26, 1966 for communicating agricultural information to the farmers on experimental basis. 80 villages of union territory of Delhi were selected. Experiment was successful and that there was substantial improvement in the utilization of knowledge and information in adopting better agricultural practices.

Research Methodology

The study is based on analytical method. All the facts are presented for making the study more clear and specific. The objectives of the study are:

- To study the TV viewing pattern of rural audience.
- To ascertain the usefulness of rural and agricultural development programmes of Doordarshan Varanasi (DD VNS).
- To identify the contribution of the rural and agricultural development programmes, presented by the DD VNS.

Hypothesis of the study are:

- It is supposed that DD VNS gives its contribution through its programmes but there are some constraints.
- It is supposed that these constraints are unavailability of power or electricity, illiteracy, orthodox traditional attitudes towards cultivation techniques
- It is supposed that it can give its contribution more effectively but it needs viewers support.

For sample selection, two villages of Varanasi- Mirzamurad and Amini-were selected for the study, and the period of the programmes mounted by DD VNS is 5th to 9th April 2011.

Varanasi Door Darshan at a glance

Many High Power and Low Power TV stations were established in order to spread DD network widely. DD VNS was started as relay station in 1984. It was established as Programme Production Centre in September 1999. Initially the transmission time for locally produced programmes was 6:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. which later on was extended to 6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. The coverage zone of DD VNS is near about 120 K.M. in and around Varanasi.

Presently, DD VNS is broadcasting different types of programmes to its viewers such as rural and agricultural development programmes, sports, youth, current affairs, social, child, women empowerment and cultural programmes etc.

Varanasi district is surrounded by villages. In spite of significant socio-economic progress in India, these rural areas are still very traditional. A majority of rural population is affected by problems like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of sanitation, care facility and poor housing facility. Though use of tractors, fertilizers, pesticides and high yielding seeds are common in the agricultural operations yet rural people have not fully detached themselves from various traditional practices in the social sphere.

Varanasi Doordarshan Programmes on Agriculture

Varanasi Doordarshan transmits five programmes, related to agriculture and development in a week. These programmes are categorized as:

- Hard Core
- Soft Core

The basic objective of these programmes is to familiarize the rural audience with the latest technical and scientific knowledge about farming practices, agricultural implements, animal husbandry and rural development programmes to inform the viewers how to increase the farm production, necessity of family planning, personal hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, health and education. Three soft core and two hard core programmes are broadcast in a week.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes, a survey was conducted in two villages of District Varanasi, at a distance of 20 - 25 K.M The objective of the survey was to study the impact of rural and agricultural programmes of DD VNS on audience on production, rural development, identify constraints in viewing DD VNS programmes and to make content analysis of the programmes. For this study 15 relevant questions were asked to get the feedback.

Survey Data Analysis

1.	Viewing Pattern	10% Regular Viewer	70% Sometimes Viewer	20% Do not watch TV
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Viewer ship of DD VNS programmes is only 10 percent regular while 70% people watch its programmes sometimes. The single constraint in the regular viewing of TV is the non availability of electricity on the most days at the time of broadcast. 20% people do not watch its programmes.

2.	Programs Liking	75% people watch agricultural	20% people watch youth and current affair	Only 5% people watch sport
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75% people watch agricultural and cultural programmes while 20% people watch youth and current affair programmes. Only 5% people watch sport programmes.

3.	Programme quality rating	45% say very good	50% say good	5% say Not Good
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Regarding the programmes quality, 45% respondents say that DD VNS Programmes are very good while 50% say it good.5% say that these programmes are not up to the mark.

4.	Programme Content	75% say it based on insect and irrigation problem	5% say it is based on weather and seeds	20% say it is based on finance
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75% audience says that DD VNS programmes are related with insect and irrigation problem. These programmes give them proper solution. While 5% people say these problem are concentrated only with weather and seeds. 20% respondents say that DD VNS provides all solutions even related to finance.

5.	Presentation of the programmes	30% say that programmes are successful	60% say that Content are not up to the parameter	10% say that these programmes are sufficient.
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Maximum respondents say that percentage of the problems related to agriculture is high but the presentation of the programmes is not balanced. 30% audience says that these programs are successful enough while 60% respondent do not agree as they think that these programme topics are not appropriate with respect to weather and other parameters. While 10% people say that these programmes are not sufficient.

6.	Helpfulness of the programmes	50% say that are helpful	35% say not that much helpful	15% say never helpful.
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On the question of helpfulness, 50% respondent say that these programmes are helpful while 35% say, it is not that much helpful. 15% people say that these programmes are never helpful.

7.	Rural Development Program	65% say very good	20 % say good while 5% say it useless	10% unable to say.
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65% people say that rural development programmes are very good. It throws proper light on the problems related to remote areas. 5% says it is useless. While 20% audience say that these programmes are good. 10% are unable to say anything.

8.	Usefulness of Information	70% say useful	10 % say useless	20% unable to say.
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70% respondent say that the information concern with the crops, disease, causes and cure are useful. 10% say that it is useless while 20% are unable to anything.

9.	Impact on society	50% say it effective	45 % say some extant	5% useless
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50% respondents say that these programmes work as a helper in breaking myth and superstition related to social evils. 45% say that it becomes successful but not to that extant. Only 5% say it useless.

10.	Agricultural beneficiary	45% say beneficial	35 % say it less failure	20% say fully failure
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45% says that agricultural programmes are beneficial while 35% say less beneficial. 20% say that these programmes are failure.

11.	Provide speed to development process	45% say good speed	35 % say less speed	20% say No
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On the other hands 45% respondents say that these programmes provide a good speed to the development process. Because it evokes and provokes people not only from urban areas but remote areas also. 35 say that it gives speed but a limited point while 20% people say that it does not provide any types of speed.

12.	Content Quality	20% say Content is pure	50% say Sometimes correct sometimes not	10% unable to say
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50% people say that programmes presented by DD VNS are sometimes correct or sometimes not. 20% people say that the information is pure and correct while 20% say no. 10% are unable to say anything.

13.	Beneficiary of women education and family planning programmes	45% say women education and family planning good	20% say useless	35% unable to say
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45% say that the programmes concern with women education and family planning are beneficial while 35% are unable to say anything. 20% say that theses programmes are useless.

14.	Requirement of the viewers	60% require Weather related topic	30% require employment news	10% require family planning content
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60% people expect agricultural topics according to weather. 30 people want employment news while 10 want that subject concern with family panning should be included more.

15.	Entertainment aspect of the programme	40 % demand more entertainment	45 % Suggest of <i>the rural by the rural and for the rural</i>	10% demand on location shoot while 5% are unable to say.
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40 % say that the programmes of DD VNS should be made more interesting. 45 % people suggest that rural and agricultural development programmes are of the rural by the rural and for the rural. 5% respondents are unable to say anything. 10% say that interviews with the farmers in their fields along with their opinion and experiences on various practices would be more effective and useful.

Conclusion

Today we are living in the age of information explosion. Facing formidable problems like poverty, illiteracy, population, superstition, untouchability casteism, DD VNS has to develop such programmes which help in eradicating to a large extent their problems. A strong communication strategy is required in creating awareness among the masses to motivate them. In order to develop these villages and to enhance the quality of life of the villages a definite policy with regard to communication support must be formulated and pursued.

For making its programmes more effective and attractive, DD VNS should adopt such topics and communication style which would be more appealing. Interaction with farmers to elicit their opinions and experiences on various practices would be more effective and useful.

It has been said about DD VNS that it is the mirror of Varanasi city. It creates a large impact on the masses because of its audio visual quality. Because of a regional channel, it creates a sense in its favor. Due to this it has become mouthpiece of the masses. So, the language of the programmes is local and impressive. But there is some misunderstanding in its programmes making. At the period of programme making, they do not include topic like weather and other conditions. There are some other constraints like unavailability of electricity, illiteracy, which create a huge hindrance. Thus it can be concluded from the study that DD VNS can contribute more but it needs support of the masses and its viewers.

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