



AGRICULTURAL JOURNALISM IS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR FARMERS DEVELOPMENT IN DHARWAD DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture in India dates back to Indus Valley Civilization Era and even before that in some parts of Southern India Today, India ranks second worldwide in farm output. Agriculture is becoming increasingly information intensive. At the same time, information and communication technology provides a range of sophisticated methods for enhancing communication with farmers. But much work remains to assess the effectiveness and feasibility of various communication strategies. Although electronic media are playing an ever more important role in agricultural communication, print media will surely remain an important source of agricultural information in many parts of the world for some years to come. It is important to assess the degree to which media such as newspapers and magazines can play an important role in fostering the diffusion of useful information to farmers. The level of agricultural communication in print media in India is fairly high, in comparison to many other countries, but still not close to an adequate level. Agriculture is a subject of exceptionally high national importance, and many daily newspapers present stories on new agricultural technology. Agricultural communication and journalism is a field of study designed to change people's behaviors. The agricultural production and processing industry is faced with issues of image, ethics and survival. There is a wide variety of agricultural newspapers and magazines throughout the world. The present paper is an attempt to critically evaluate the agricultural journalism an effective tool for farmer's development in Dharwad district of Karnataka State.

Keywords : AGRICULTURAL, JOURNALISM, TOOLS, FARMERS, DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Information today has become the most important element for progress in society. Its Value has increased considerably in agriculture where the systems have become knowledge intensive. Use of information in the agriculture sector is increasing farming productivity in a number of ways. Timely information on weather trends, best practices in farming and timely access to market information help farmer make correct decisions about what crops to grow and where to sell them and where to buy the inputs. Access to and use of the latest information is critical for the success of farmers. Development of agriculture requires, among other things, a timely and systematic transmission of useful and relevant information on agricultural technology to the farmers. Hence, attention has been focused on the flow of information from the lab to land so that the farmers as the end users may get the direct benefit.

Dharwad district Agriculture and irrigation

Dharwad District, in the Belgaum region is a district of Karnataka with its administrative



headquarters located at Dharwad city. According to 2011 census, the district encompasses a geographical area of 4,260 sq km and has a population of 18, 47,023 (persons) including 9, 37,206 (males) and 9, 09,817 (females). The district has a sex ratio of 971 (females for every 1000 males. The major religions in the district are Hindu (75.26%) and Muslim (20.94%) of the total population respectively. The literacy rate in the district is 80.00% (persons), 86.37% (males) and 73.46% (females). Main spoken languages are Kannada (70.62%), Urdu (17.21%) and Marathi (3.67%). Labor Force Participation Rate is 43.07%. Main source of income in the district is from the agriculture sector and per capita income is Rs. 97,372. The crime rate in the district is 170.82 for the year 2014. Total cropped area is 4, 63,447 in hectares and the forest area is 387 in sq.Km. To know more about the Administrative Setup, Demographics, Economy, Market Size, Life Style, Infrastructure, Industries, Labor and Workforce, Agriculture, Education, Health, Environment and Pollution, Housing, Crime & Law, Social and Welfare Schemes and Electoral features of Dharwad District.

Dharwad district Agriculture and irrigation

Agriculture is a focus area in Dharwad, with Floriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food processing sector driving the segment here. It has 56.89% net sown land cultivating cereals like Jowar, Wheat, Bengal Gram and Tur, its commercial crops include Ground nut, onions, Maize and Cotton and Cashew, Chilly including Potato and Onion. The district also has 109 Veterinary hospitals, two Livestock breeding Farms and one semen collection center to establish focus on Animal Husbandry exclusively. It also has well established milk producers cooperative societies adding thrust to this sector.

Role of Mass Media in agriculture

The success of agricultural development programs largely depends on the nature and extent of use of the mass media in the mobilization of people for development. It has been realized that the development of agriculture could be hastened with effective use of mass media. Radio and television are acclaimed as the most effective media for disseminating scientific knowledge to the masses. In a country like India, where literacy level is low, the choice of communication media is of vital importance. In this regard, television and radio, particularly the community radio, are significant as they transfer modern agricultural information to literate and illiterate farmers alike even in interior areas within a short time. In India, farm and home broadcast with agricultural thrust were introduced in 1966 to enlighten farmers on the use of various technologies to boost agricultural development. With the majority of Indian population engaged actively in agriculture, television is serving as a suitable medium of dissemination of farm information and latest technical knowhow. The farmers can easily understand the operations, technology and instructions through television.

Among the several mass media, the print media has acquired a greater role in dissemination of information on improved agricultural practices to the farming community and also to inform the public in general. Newspapers and farm magazines have a vital role to play in the communication of agricultural information among the literate farmers. Increasing rate of literacy in the country offers new promises and prospects for utilizing print medium as a means of mass Communication. The print media widens the scope of communication.

Objectives of the Study

- To know the need of agricultural journalism
- To assess the Awareness of agricultural development to farmers in Dharwad district

Research Methodology

This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been taken to



analyze the agricultural journalism. The data used in it is purely from secondary sources according to the need of this study.

Agricultural Journalism

Agricultural journalism is of recent origin in India. It is now gaining importance, particularly after the establishment of agricultural universities in India. Technical information needs to be provided to the farmers at the right time and in the right way to increase productivity. It is very much a development reporting activity in the context of agricultural development to inform, educate and motivate farmers to accept new ideas and agricultural practices in order to increase production. Agricultural journalism is a specific, focused and systematic mode of writing for the people engaged in farming as a business for their subsistence. Agricultural journalist collects the desired information and keeping in view the specific needs of the farmers disseminates it through various methods of communication such as print, radio, television and social media.

Agriculture for the Masses

In the preface to the first number, Bose hits upon the contradiction in the field of Indian Agriculture. Indian peasants were admittedly most hard working and persevering work force in the World, who also displayed some amount of technical skill in agricultural pursues. Yet they were the poorest on earth having not even the minimum food and clothing to put their body and soul together. It intends to improve agricultural production by combining indigenous and foreign agricultural knowhow as agrarian relations were difficult to alter under colonial rule, agricultural development from below can be an alternative to redressed the situation. This involved a careful study of classification of land and soil according to its productivity. It may vary from place to place depending on local soil and climate. Strategies must be found to maximize production with minimum cost, cheapest and easily available natural manures, pesticides, and diverse ways of small irrigation and colonization of agricultural implements at minimum cost, improvement of cattle health by providing healthy product.

Fundamentals of agricultural journalism

There are some fundamentals of agricultural journalism which have to be kept in mind so that the information flows smoothly and farmers are able to accept, evaluate, adopt and adapt. Following are the tips for agricultural journalists to make the information intelligible to the farmer.

Use of simple and plain language: The agricultural journalist should translate the technical terms in a simple language.

Presentation of innovative ideas: People understand new ideas which are presented in a logical manner and it will help them get the best return for their investment.

To the point and brief message: Farmers are able to remember the information given to them point wise and in brief, directing towards advantages to be achieved. The message should not be verbose.

Use of visuals: Visuals make the message more interesting, catchy and more meaningful. Increasing use of visuals in a message makes it more intelligible and pleasing to the eyes.

Message which is Recent, Reliable, Realistic and Relevant: Is highly acceptable to the farmers.

Effective Writing for farmers

Agricultural journalist should follow four important steps which are based on research findings for effective writing in the print media.

Planning: Think how to best achieve the objective of the message.

Writing: After proper planning, an agricultural journalist takes up the writing of the message for the media.



Trimming: It has been observed that many agricultural journalists tend to be verbose. Pruning of writing is equally important.

Checking and re-checking: We must be economical in the use of words not in giving information. The fewer words a sentence have the more its intelligibility.

Farmer's information needs and search behavior

As agriculture systems become more complex, farmer's access to a reliable, timely and relevant information source is critical to their competitiveness. Farmer's are clearly not a homogenous group, and understanding the specific factors that influence their information source, access and use is a first step towards better facilitate information sharing. Studies show that the needs of the farmers are different according to the state of development of the rural area concerned. Context specific information is more relevant and useful to meet farmer's information needs and has greater impact on the adoption of technologies which increase farm productivity. Finally, the transmission of the available information and its use depends on the challenges that farmer face for which the information was needed to begin with. To access, assess and apply the content, the users must have the economic resources, including money, skills and technology and social resources, like motivation, trust, confidence and knowledge.

Impact of radio in agriculture

Regular transmission of radio programs related to agriculture gives valuable information about new farming methods. Radio transmission is quick and reaches to a wider population. As the farmers receive useful information from the radio, gradually they bring change in farming method applying new techniques. Information and knowledge are two significant factors for rural development. The knowledge of locality further assists the farmers. Dissemination of information along with new concepts and farming techniques can bring novel opportunities to the farmers.

Mass Media and Agricultural Development

The benefits of the development communication programmes and policies in agricultural development in India are indeed quite enormous. The TV and radio programmes can only be successful when they are professionally designed, packaged and executed by the media experts and communication specialists. These individuals should attract governments' attention to provide rural farmers with credit facilities, markets and other resources. Ultimately, there will be better rural development, and by extension national development.

Agricultural information users

The agricultural sector has a variety of information user community. Agricultural information user populations are basically researchers, extension workers, farmers, educators, students, agribusiness personnel, bankers, industrialists, policy makers and agricultural document lists. All these uses have different types of information needs. The farmers need information to know the procedure of increasing output, the use of fertilizers, useful pesticides, high yielding seeds, testing needs of soils, access to credit facilities, marketing of their products, etc.

Strategy for agricultural journalism

Farmers normally live in remote rural areas. The information professionals must be very visible to farmers in rural areas. Agricultural information can be transferred to a large number of farmers through the mass media and at a low cost. Farmers need to be informed of what is happening around them. It has been found that when human beings are deprived of information around them, they tend to become dehumanized and completely ignorant of their environment. It, therefore, means that for an individual



person to be able to function properly in his environment.

Policy implications

Public research institutes and agricultural universities need to seek opportunities to put their technologies in the hands of farmers for testing, adaptation, and eventual reporting. There is much scope for the production of more imaginative farm journals and newsletters, and a more interactive approach to agricultural reporting in newspapers. Agricultural journalism should not be seen as reporting finished products but rather as fostering extended communication among farmers about their adaptation of technology. Farmers appreciate reading about the experiences of their counterparts, not only related to important production technologies but also 'minor' ideas and innovations in farm and household management that improve the quality of rural life and provide additional incentives for pursuing technological change.

Conclusion

The agricultural journalism across the world that has created awareness among the farmers indicates the success of such Medias. The agricultural journalism disseminate information across the countryside about modern farming system in terms of hybrid seeds, off-seasonal vegetables, selection of seeds, and marketing of the agricultural products. Nevertheless, the programs need to be village centered, dialogic, dramatic and easy to understand. There is the lack of agricultural journalists in our context. From all indications, this study has revealed some of the age-long factors affecting effective implementation and actualization of various agricultural programmes and policies initiated by the government. There is no doubt that agriculture is back on the development agenda. But despite the promises and the rhetoric from governments worldwide, investment in agriculture is still lagging. Communication for agriculture is also not seen as a major priority at either national or international level or the role of the media as an effective player in agricultural is undervalued.

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