Assessing the effects of Television Agricultural Shows on Farmers' Information Need: A Case Study of District Shaheed Benazirabad, Sindh – Pakistan

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Abstract

Television agricultural shows (TVAS) have been playing a very significant role in proffering a fast information and knowledge concerning the agriculture to the millions of farmers in global arena. The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of television on the enhancement of farmers' agricultural knowledge, and it is supposed to investigate the perceptions of farmers for television to know if it promotes farmers' knowledge. The target population for this study entails the farmers who own a television set at their homes. Quantitative approach by running survey questionnaire comprising of closed-ended questions was employed to collect data so to receive the perceptions of the respondents for the subject being studied. further to get the feedback from farmers towards the statements concerning the study, five points Likert scale was used in this research study. The conclusions of the current study have determined that the Television agricultural shows (TVAS) were from the greatest agricultural information sources for the farmers of rural areas. Also, television shows have witnessed bearing the effect on the farmers in the spread and transfer agricultural knowledge in Sindh.

Keywords: Television Agricultural Shows; Farmers; Innovation; Technology; Mass Media.

1. Introduction

The TV agricultural shows have been playing a very significant role as the sources of disseminating the key information like technology and innovations to improve productivity and methods of farming, besides this TVASs have now been running in the current years as the sources of disseminating (Asenso-Okyere, 2009). The selection of the mediums of communication in developing countries is of critical importance, where there is a low rate of literacy level. Television in this reference is important, as it is able to transfer the knowledge concerning new agricultural technology to both the illiterate as well as literate farmers alike since the stuff inclines to "stick" and can also be utilized.

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Now a day, the use of the reality shows has become the fresh approach to ameliorate the conveyance of info via television. In Kenya, shows like "Shamba Shape-Up" (Shamba means 'small farm' in Swahili) which gathers celebrity presenters and cheerful music with the advice of expert on the financing, solar energy, fertility of soil, and disease prevention. Other programs having the similar objective of imparting information towards the farmers have been aired throughout the local TV stations. The efficiency of these steps need yet to be set, though there are clues; farmers seem affirmative (Mtwapa, 2014).

Though, the TV agricultural shows use has appeared relatively a fresh idea. Television has stood as a top-notch source forth communities of farming from rural side, which are deprived of extension services (Mahmood & Sheikh, 2005). Television can transmit information towards farmers about agricultural technology. With the help of this medium, one can offer information on time to a higher number of audience on spread geographical regions that could be unmanageable via personal contacts (Irfan et al., 2006). Television, has been getting utilized for years in attaining the purpose of creating awareness as well as disseminating information among the farmers about latest agriculture technologies (Mahmood & Sheikh, 2005).

Television plays potentially a broader role in communicating farmers' needs, among decision-makers and the dispersed public and in uplifting the profile of agriculture (Kari, 2012). Mass media provide dominant channels for conveyance of the messages with reference to agriculture and concerned info that could boost the capability development of farmers. Electronic media are able to convey efficiently the info towards a massive number of audiences; and television could particularly be the most well-known means in farmers (M. R. Nazari & Hassan, 2011). Agriculture development greatly hinges on the imparting of the knowledge and information related to fresh agricultural technology transfer towards farmers that are not too costly. These days the farmers have looked-for being timely informed about the use of fresh technologies and in future-coming warnings related to pesticides as well as other diseases being created via media (Prathap, 2010).

2. Statement of the Problem

Illiteracy and other social evils have weakened the rural segment of the country. The knowledge gape among the rural farmers has become a major stumbling block in these agriculture sectors of the country. The lack of agriculture information among farmers is the thing that deprives them of the technique how to sell the products in the market. It is a top-notch snag amongst these peasants that snatches from them the data against the fertilizers, pesticides use, and the techniques of new technologies in farming. Day by day bang up to date in the media channels can easily be avouched but the lack, somehow somewhere, infrastructure and problem of electricity are the bigger issues that hinder them from knowing what they really need.

It is expected that the rapid increase of modern technologies may produce technology centers but on the other side, there could be the chances of not transmitting properly the modern agricultural techniques (Butt, 2002). The research showed; only (28%) of respondents kept the knowledge for the program concerning agriculture and the greatest proportion of respondents who were unknown towards programs related to agriculture that were run on television (Khan, et al., 2010).

It was stated that both the information and knowledge could be fundamental means for development, although the necessary data is in hand, but just because of non-connectivity and non-availability of information in mass media people were confronting with various issues and hurdles in the way to access the fresh technologies. Many sectors are there in society that are better knowledgeable than that of others. This variance is more noticeable in both the under developing and developed countries. It has also been deemed that the stream of information could not unite rural people to offer a global network information (Kularatne, 1997). These issues are being expected to fall by all accounts but the research in agriculture can help by making innovations and technologies available.

Sher (2001) suggested that scope and the importance of television for development of agriculture cum rural communities cannot be declined to accept. Television produces multiple agriculture related programs for the communities hailing from rural sides in their won local languages. TV producers call the agriculture experts to propose new methods and techniques of seeding, ploughing, sowing, and harvesting the crops (Sher, 2001). Thus, fruitful sharing as well as transferring of the knowledge can be value-added by boosting the efficiency of the television channels in the nation – Pakistan. Moreover, the blocks can easily be doffed with the help of the execution of the research which is necessarily required at a greater extent. Because farmers need to be provided with what can do better in the agricultural sector in that these farmers construct an important segment of country.

3. Hypothesis

1. The Television Agriculture Shows (TVAS) have a significant effects on the farmers
2. The shows have the comprehensible messages towards the farmers.

4. Objectives

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5. Literature Review

Ahmad et al (2007) pointed out that 74% of the respondents watched television and gained new information against different programs about agriculture from television. Related to the interests of the farmers in television

programs, 50% of them told that they took interest in updates related to weather and added respondents at proportion of 37% had interest in receiving the information about day by day prices of products related to agriculture. Moreover, the findings also showed that 83 % of the respondents told they own television sets and viewed the programs related to agriculture and reaped the returns from those programs (Ahmad et al., 2007). Muhammad et al., (2004), carried out a study and they indicated that 50% of respondents had knowledge about different agriculture programs which were aired on Pakistan Television (PTV). Similarly, another 50% of the respondents were unknown to these programs (Muhammad et al., 2004).

Abbas et al., (2003) highlighted that 62% of the farmers in the district of Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan watched television and listened to programs based on agriculture on radio as well. The greatest number of respondents (84%) knew how to run fertilizer application, sowing, insect, irrigation methods and weed control via television. Though, farmers in majority told that the viewership time more than a decade ago for agricultural programs on television was not appropriate. The 34% respondents had recommended that 8.00pm was a more suitable time for the broadcasting of agriculture-related programs. It was put forward that by 25% of the respondents viewed the Sona Chandi and "Kisan Time" programs of agriculture on television (Abbas et al., 2003).

Khan et al., (2010), executed their research entitled "*Interaction of extension worker with farmers and role of radio and television as sources of information in technology transfer: a case study of four villages of district Peshawar and Charsadda:* they highlighted that the farmers were aware about agriculture programs which were run on television and what they resulted which had showed that 14% of the respondents watched "Kisan time, 12% of the respondents watched Haryali, 9% of the respondent's watched Khait Punjab day and 7% of the respondent's watched *Apna kisan apni zarait* (Khan et al., 2010).

OPFs (Open Society Foundations), Kenya relishes a vivacious type of media industry having more than20 local TV channels and a congregation of global brands (Spurk, Schanne, Mak'Ochieng, & Ugangu, 2013). Regardless of this rise, the home grown stuff aired has fallen low (Open Society, 2013). The amount of Television Agriculture Shows (TVASs) is even lesser, appealing to only a fragment of time fixed for the widespread programs like movies and drama, news, soap opera and music, (Ipsos-Synovate, 2011). Players in the segments comprising of farmers do not embrace the television as the technology knowledge and other transfer source.

In a report, it was found for a project based study developed (Spurk et al., 2013), on "Shortcomings of communication in agricultural knowledge transfer in Kenya – and ways to improve it", approximately 13.7% proportion of the farmers, in Kenya, of small scale type chosen television for agricultural knowledge. The greatest proportion (83%) of the farmers chosen radio and the remaining proportion stated other sources of knowledge like magazines and

newspapers as well. Other interpretations highlight that valid agricultural information can be obtained nonetheless almost not used by households cum peasants as well.

Rehman et al., (2011), the level of knowledge got via shows about agriculture telecasted might be taken like sign television effectiveness as a source of knowledge towards farmers. The great factors of efficiency of media in the conveyance of the information about agricultural towards farmers comprise; timeliness, farmers' interest, novelties, and the quality of information. All these segments require to get bestowed due concern due to the extension lead organizations during consuming some mediums to be the devices of knowledge spread. Multiple segments gauge the audiences' choice of news platforms. Thus, access is from the basic elements, an all-embracing sight is existing there; the reputation of content of news is dogged by the problems covered (Rehman et al., 2013).

The triumph of agriculture based programmes of development across the developing countries that depend highly upon extent and the environment of mass media use in the mobilization of people against prosperity. The planning experts across developing countries make sure that the agricultural development could be speeded with the in-effect mass media (Hassan et al., 2010). Television and Radio are much-admired as mostly effective medium against the diffusion of the scientific knowledge towards the masses. In the country such as Iran, where literacy rate in the rural areas is low-slung, the option of communication media is of great significance. With this respect, radio and the television are the top-notch mediums, as they convey information through fresh agriculture based technology towards both the educated cum and uneducated farmers alike, though in the interior areas as well, within a short span of time (Nazari et al., 2009).

Ekoja (2003) asserted that the sources of information in variety of agriculture related topics for the farmers are the practical education, propagation publication, television and radio, daily farm newspapers, consultation services, and agriculture exhibitions etc. (Ekoja, 2003). According to Jenkins' research (2003), newsletters in North California are the most valuable sources of information in the sector of agriculture. Computers and other newly introduced media are chosen at the least as compared to utilization of scientific conferences; thus, some of the farmers take their usage. Arokoyo (2003) also suggested that the television, radio, and video are the most important information sources for the farmers in Nigeria, and print media too have a particular situation in conveying information related to agriculture as well. Radio and television have a specific situation among other mass media with reference to informal education. Owing to the huge use, the media are among the best cultural and educational tools (Arokoyo, 2003).

Dutton, William, Gillett, McKnight and Peltu (2004) suggested that ICT tools such as television can increase the opportunities for underprivileged people but then again there is the need for the accessibility of information about agriculture, health, markets, and education. At one fell swoop, ICT could also

be utilized as a form of empowerment, where the communities which are less economically stable could utilize ICT to gain updates about the services which the government render, which comprise information about distribution of grains (crops), distribution of fertilizers, government financial aid, and other essential information related to the assistance proffered from the government side for agriculture related activities (Dutton et al., 2004).

6. Materials and Methods

This survey based research was executed in five different villages of the district Shaheed Benazirabad – old Nawabshah. District Shaheed Benazirabad entails four subdivisions (tehsils) namely Sakrand, Nawabshah, Qazi Ahmed and Daur. The five different villages of the district were randomly selected for this study, and from each of which 10 farmers were taken as samples of the study because the rural areas of the district under study work mainly in the agriculture. All the respondents the questionnaires given to were all educated with different levels of qualifications except a few were found uneducated. All the copies of questionnaire were successfully filled and received back.

7. Data Analysis

Table: 1. Distribution of the respondents according to their age bracket

Age bracket	Frequency	Marital Status	Frequency	Educational Level	Frequency
21-28	8	Single	17	Uneducated	10
29-36	18	Married	33	Less than Middle	11
37-44	20	----------	----------	Between Matric and Intermediate	15
45-52	6	----------	----------	Higher than intermediate	14
Total	**50**	**Total**	**50**	**Total**	**50**

Table no. 1. The age distribution of the respondents' data showing in the table that the majority of the respondents were aged between 37 to 44 years old while the next bigger proportion of the respondents comprised people of 29 to 36 years old. As far as the marital status is concerned, majority of the respondents (33) was married. In terms of the proportion of the levels of educated and uneducated respondents, it was found that the majority of the respondents (15) possessed the qualification between matriculation and intermediate. And the second proportion was of those who had the qualification higher than intermediate and they were 14 in numbers.

8. Procedure

Two main questions were put forward among the farmers of the selected villages. The first question was regarding the effectiveness of TVASs and the

other was concerning the enhancement of the shows. Each one of the two questions is discussed below;

8.1 Effect of TVAS on farmers

For the purpose to have an understanding towards the views of farmers on the effectiveness of Television agricultural shows (TVAS) on them, the respondents were questioned to highlight if they understand the shows were effective. In an according manner, 33 of the respondents said that the shows have effects, while the remaining 17 respondents said that the shows have no effect.

8.2 How can TAVs be enhanced

a) Proper Timing
b) Make shows Interesting
c) Increase practicability
d) Farmers-friendly Language

The questions were asked from respondents as to get their opinions towards how TVAS can be improved. The four categories of the opinions were put before them. Particular timing to be given to shows was recommended by 19 respondents, whereas the amelioration on the practicability of the views was suggested by 13 respondents. Others 10 respondents opinionated that the betterment in shows to set them more thought-provoking and 8 opted the measures to break the language hurdle.

Table. No. 2.
Opinion on TVASs

Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D
TVA shows have the right quality	10	17	3	5	15
The message is original	20	13	4	6	7
The shows meet my interests/needs	2	5	3	30	10
The message is timely	27	17	1		5
The message is comprehensible	10	15	2	18	5
TVAS are Effective	28	12		7	3

SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N=Neutral, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree

Opinion on TVASs

Table. No. 2. In an endeavor to level the opinion of the respondents on the effectiveness of television agricultural shows (TVAS) a five point Likert scale was employed. On a scale of 1-5 options with "Strongly Agree"(1), "Agree"(2), "Neutral''(3), "Strongly disagree"(4), "Disagree"(5), respondents were questioned to answer by marking the right box subjecting to the level of their agreement. Related to if the TVAS are with the right quality, 17

respondents did "Agree", 10 respondents strongly agreed, 15 respondents did disagree and the neutral as well as strongly agree boxes were ticked by 3 and 5 respondents respectively.

Towards the question if the TVAS messages are original, some 20 respondents did tick the option of "strongly agree" while 13 respondents did opt the option of "agree". Although 4 stayed "neutral", another 7 respondents opted "disagreed" and 6 respondents remained "strongly disagreed". The point pertaining to if the shows touch the farmers' interests. The majority of the respondents (30) remained "strongly disagree", 10 respondents "stayed disagreed" but the number of the respondents of strongly agree, agree and neutral was 2, 5 and 3 respectively. That means there was a higher number of the respondents on this question as they felt that TVASs do not touch the areas of their needs/interests.

The majority of the respondents (27) at the question if they receive the messages on time. They have opted the box stating the option of "strongly agree". The next major proportion of the respondents (17) opted the box stating "agree". The number of the respondents of strongly disagree, disagree and neutral was 0, 5 and 1 respectively.

The final question if the messages were comprehensible and put forwarded. The majority of the respondents (18) have opted the box stating the option of "strongly disagree". The next major proportion of the respondents (15) opted the box stating "agree". The number of the respondents of "strongly agree", disagree and neutral was 10, 5 and 2 respectively. And the final question was whether TVASs are effective. The majority of the respondents (28) have opted the box stating the box of "strongly agree". The next major proportion of the respondents (12) opted the box stating "agree". The number of the respondents of "strongly disagree", "disagree" and "neutral" was 7, 3 and 0 respectively.

In order to test the hypotheses whether TAVS are effective or not, the results showed that the first hypothesis was accepted through the majority of the respondents. On the other hand, the second hypothesis if the message of TVAS towards farmers is comprehensible, the result showed agreement among the farmers and hence the hypothesis was accepted.

9. Conclusion

Admittedly, agriculture is the spine of the country and almost 70% of the population is making their both ends meet through agriculture. Among the disseminating information sources, media is the fourth pillar of the state where people get greater information about discrepant issues like politics, agriculture, and education. The role of television to broadcast the programs of different types especially of agriculture in society is high, but to this time, it is vague in terms of its services for the betterment of the agriculture sector.

To this end, this study was carried out to know how and to what extent the media is causal to the agricultural ground with reference to both the productivity as well as income of farmers from the Sindh province of Pakistan.

This study has found that the TVASs were some of the greatest sources of the information related to agriculture for farmers in the district Shaheed Benazirabad. The only respondents who had television sets at their homes were selected for this research. Factors contributing towards the effects of television play a very constructive role and TVASs must be paid a strong devotion on to upsurge their effectiveness. On the flipside, although the age of the farmers selected from the area under study ranges from the ages of 20 years and ahead, have access to television sets at their homes. Factors for the choices of farmers for the different TVASs were mounted as language understanding, interactivity, show being interesting and the proper timing of shows.

There were twofold perspectives, on the one side, the majority of the respondents were educated on the different levels and the too small number of the respondents as uneducated. The highest number of the respondents found the educated with the different levels of qualification so they were enough mature to watch television and could properly reap the benefits of information and updates about agriculture sector. On the other hand, it could be felt sorry for the highest number of the farmers found as the educated and that indicated their poverty-stricken situation and because of that they could not move further to get higher and higher education.

However, Mass media provides the channels in effect against the style of communicating agriculture related messages, which can rise knowledge and power behavior of audience people. Broadcasting media can easily convey the information efficiently towards the large audiences; and television can also be an important channel in the particular manner.

Media scholars seem too frequent taking greater interest in programs production of high value in commercial perspective. Mostly, some agricultural programs are not organized to get-up the farmers. As a result, many farmers are more controlled to rely on the third parties for the information of agriculture, which may often be biased. In fact rural people contribute the greater part of the country's population, it looks necessary to establish a particular TV network for this group to meet their needs. It is hereby also commended that producers entail appropriating and appealing the television items for example, comic plays, shows contests, and etc. through their programs under the care of the specialists from some agricultural organizations.

10. Recommendations

Even though it is deciphering to note that the massive usage of television for rural development, with especial focus on the sector of agriculture in Sindh, Pakistan can help boosting the constituency's economic development, there are some insinuations and obstructions in terms of the understanding and the access to content of television programmes among farmers for agricultural development in Sindh - Pakistan. Among the hurdles and tasks are literacy, accessibility, and the role of government in providing the production and

airing of television programmes in order to achieve development in the sector of agriculture and the acceptance level of agriculture concerned television programmes for farmers.

To this end, television stations should fix their focus more on airing more agricultural-related development programs with basic farming seasonal practices in the evening time to encourage farmers to partake at maximum. There is a deny of the fact that the agriculture sector in all communities, nations, and countries plays a massive role in developing the economy of the world and rural people are greatest proportion of the population of a country. Thus, considering this fact, it is suggested that a particular television network be indispensably set up which can fulfill the needs and the interests of this group. In doing so, human development can rise strong and also the television of particularly telecasting agriculture information should be aired round the clock.

The benefit of information cum skills of technologies are inaccessible to major proportion of the population all across the globe. It is the high time to develop a knowledge based society to convey the information and participating all the socio-cultural aspects the most. Moreover, government could opt for the priorities in variety of the areas comprising of people empowerment by offering them the access of knowledge and information related to the various fields like health, education, agriculture, and rural development.

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