

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mass Media Exposure among the Farm Women in Sub-Himalayan Region of India

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ABSTRACT

Mass media is the major agricultural information source and farm women are the major agricultural human resources in India. It is observed from the different studies that farm women were exposed to different mass media sources for different types of information. However, it is important to know the influence of these mass media sources on the agricultural information network output of the farm women. In light of this, a study was undertaken on the influence of mass media exposure on the agricultural information network output in terms of knowledge of the farm women. The study was conducted in the North Bengal region of West Bengal from 2017 to 2020. Ex-post facto research design and both purposive and random sampling methods were used for the selection of the respondents. It was found from the study that the majority of the farm women used a mobile phone for agricultural information, followed by TV, posters, exhibitions, advertisement boards, and agricultural literature. All the selected mass media sources, that is, newspaper, TV, radio, literature, mobile phone, exhibition, advertisement board, film show, and posters had a positively and significantly influence on agricultural information network output in terms of knowledge of the farm women.

Key words: Agricultural information, farm women, knowledge, mass media, mobile phone

INTRODUCTION

Mass media exposure refers to the communication process which can be used to communicate, different technology or innovation within a short period of time over a large number of people. Information is essential for agricultural development. Farm women are one of the major agricultural human resources in India as well as others developing and underdeveloped countries. It is essential to provide timely information to the farmwomen for agricultural development. Mass media play an important role of agricultural information dissemination to farm women. Farm women in India use different types

of mass media for agricultural information. Mass media sources, for example, mobile phone, TV, and newspaper have a distinctive observation in various studies which identified its impact on providing agricultural, health and important information to the farmers.^[1-9] A mobile advisory service, created through a participatory manner, can help to address the communication and challenges of information dissemination.^[10] The mass media can provide attention of rural women on different development programs and gave them opportunities to express their reactions.^[11] The television had increased awareness on current news, and general awareness, including career information, news regarding college admissions and provided entertainment.^[12] It was found from the previous study that the majority of the farmers were aware about of animal husbandry-related program broadcasted through radio and

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television.^[13] It was also found from the past study that the majority of the rural youth and farmers used television as a mass media sources, followed by mobile phone, newspaper, computer with internet, magazines and radio, and their mass media exposure level was medium, followed by high and low.^[14,15] It was found from different studies that the majority of the farmers and farm women use TV, mobile phone, radio and newspaper as a mass media sources, and the farm women who have high mass media exposure had more knowledge in agriculture.^[1,16,17] However, few studies were found on the extent of use of the mass media by the farm women for reaching out relevant farm information and the influence of the mass media on the agricultural information network output of the farm women. The present study was undertaking to find out the extent of use of mass media by the farm women, to analyses the networking of farm women with different mass media information sources and the impact of different mass media on agricultural information network output in terms of knowledge of the farm women.

METHODS

This empirical study was conducted on the farm women of sub-Himalayan region of India (District: Cooch Behar, West Bengal). The research design was followed in the study was ex-post facto research design. Ex-post research design was used since the variables chose for investigation had already resulted in a cause-and-effect relationship. The manifestation of the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable had already occurred and the researchers therefore did not manipulate them. In the light of the objectives and scope of the study, decisions were taken on the techniques of investigation, research materials and tools to be used and pattern of statistical analysis to be incorporated. To identify the sampling frame of the study, a list of household heads was collected from the *panchayat* office. The list of respondents was identified with help of the Farm Science Centre, Farmers Producer Organization, Farmers Producer Company and NGO from which the number of samples were drawn. The total sampling frame of the study area was 480 of which 300 samples (n)

were selected as a respondent. Respondents were categorized in two different groups according to their subscriber of mass media sources. One is control groups where participants were not exposed with mass media sources; another is experimental groups in which participants were exposed with different mass media sources. The statistical measures that were used to analyses the research data included correlation coefficient, coefficient of variation, mean, standard deviation, percentage, pair-wise ranking. Correlation analysis was done through SPSS 17. The dependent variable of the study is the agricultural information network output in terms of knowledge gained by the respondents. The independent variables are newspaper, TV, radio, literature, mobile phone, exhibition, advertisement board, CD, film show, poster, and any others mass media sources. The respondents who had high mass media exposure may have more knowledge in agriculture. Therefore, it was hypothesized that high mass media exposure has a positive relationship with the dependent variable. The variable is measured and data were collected through the well-structured interview schedule.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mass Media Exposure of the Farm Women

It is observed from Table 1 that the majority of respondent's subscribed mobile phone (79.33%), followed by TV (55%), literature (43.33%),

Table 1: Distribution of respondent according to subscriber of mass media (n=300)

Type of mass media	Subscriber of mass media	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Newspaper	26.00	74.00
TV	55.00	45.00
Radio	14.00	86.00
Literature	43.33	56.67
Mobile phone	79.33	20.67
Exhibition	0.00	100.00
Advertisement board	0.00	100.00
Lesson from CD	10.67	89.33
Film Show	0.00	100.00
Poster	0.00	100.00
Others	0.00	100.00

newspaper (26%), radio (14%), and CD (10.67%). This finding is line with the study found by.^[1,5,18-20] It is observed from Table 2 that the mean score on use of mobile phone was highest, followed by the use of TV., poster, exhibition, advertisement board, agricultural literature, film show, newspaper, CD, and radio. The majority of the farm women used mobile phone as mass media sources, followed by TV, poster, exhibition, advertisement board, agricultural literature, film show, newspaper, CD, and radio. The result of this study is line with the study found by^[1-5] but not line with the study of.^[9] It may due to continuous up gradation of mobile phone and television as per society need. It is found from Table 3 that a significant number of the farm women had medium level (47.34%) of mass media exposure, followed by low (29.33%) and high level (23.33%) of mass media exposure. The coefficient of variation value within the distribution of 45.43% indicates that there was a medium consistency level of the distribution for the variable mass media exposure. It is revealed from the study most of the farm women had a medium level of mass media exposure, followed by low and high levels. The result of this study is line with the results found by.^[14,15] but the contradicted with the study of.^[21]

Table 2: Extent of mass media exposure of the farm women (*n*=300)

Sl. no.	Type of mass media	Mean score	Rank
1	T. V	1.16	II
2	Radio	0.16	X
3	Mobile phone	1.43	I
4	Newspaper	0.46	VIII
5	Film show	0.61	VII
6	Lesson from CD	0.45	IX
7	Literature	0.62	VI
8	Exhibition	0.70	IV
9	Poster	0.81	III
10	Advertisement board	0.67	V
11	Others (puppetry)	0.01	XI

Table 3: Level of mass media exposure of the farm women (*n*=300)

Category	Score	Percentage	Statistics
Low	1.00–5.33	29.33	Range=1–14,
Medium	5.34–9.67	47.34	Mean=7.11,
High	9.68–14.00	23.33	SD=3.23,
			CV=45.43%

Networking of Farm Women with Different Mass Media Information Sources

It is observed from Table 4 study that the majority of the respondents used television for others (entertainment program) purposes (70.00%), followed by news (55.00%), agriculture (21.33%), health (12.67%), sports (10.67%), and education (8.00%) purposes. It is observed from the study that the majority of the farm women used television for different types of entrainment program. It is shown from the study [Table 4] that the majority of the respondents used radio for news (14.00%) and entertainment program (14.00%) purposes followed by agriculture (6.00%), health (4.00%), education (2.67%), and sports (2.67%) purposes. It is noted from the study that a very low percentage of the respondents used radio for agricultural information. It may due to poor signal of the radio, low level awareness about smart radio and more engagement of the respondents on others type mass media sources. This finding is line with the results found by.^[22] It is found from the study [Table 4] that the majority of the respondents used mobile phone for others (entertainment program) purposes (93.67%), followed by health (55.00%), agriculture (46.67%), news (18.00%), and education (11.33%). It is observed from the study that the majority of the respondents used mobile phone for entertainment program. This finding is line with the results found by.^[6] It is found from the study [Table 4] that the majority of the respondents used newspaper for news purposes (34.00%), followed by agriculture (29.33%), health (14.67%), others (11.33%), education (8.00%), and sports (7.33%) purposes. This finding is line with the results found by.^[7] It is noted from the study that newspapers play an important role of agricultural information dissemination to the respondents. It is observed from the study [Table 4] that the majority of respondents were shown film for other (entertainment program) purposes (56.00%), followed by agriculture (19.00%) and health (8.00%) purposes. It is noted from the study that a very less percentage of the respondents shown agricultural film. It may due less availability of agricultural film in local languages. It is shown from the study [Table 4] that the majority of the respondents learned other subjects (38.67%) from CD, followed by education (4.67%) and

Table 4: Networking of farm women with different mass media information sources (n=300)

Type of mass media	type of information listen/view/reading					
	agriculture	news	education	health	sports	others (entertainment)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
TV	21.33	55.00	8.00	12.67	10.67	70.00
Radio	6.00	14.00	2.67	4.00	2.67	14.00
Mobile phone	46.67	18.00	11.33	55.00	0.00	93.67
Newspaper	29.33	34.00	8.00	14.67	7.33	11.33
Film show	19.00	0.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	56.00
Lesson from CD	2.67	0.00	4.67	0.00	0.00	38.67
Agricultural literature	51.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Exhibition	66.67	0.00	14.67	0.00	0.00	0.00
Poster	38.00	0.00	49.00	56.00	15.00	63.67
Advertisement board	28.00	14.67	46.67	58.67	7.33	37.67
Others (puppetry)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.33
Total	309.34	135.67	145.01	209.01	43	386.34
Average percentage (total percentage/11)	28.12	12.33	13.18	19.00	3.91	35.12

agricultural(2.67%)subject. It is found from the study [Table 4] that the majority of the respondents used literature for agricultural purposes (51.67%) only. It is noted from the study that agricultural literatures play an important role in mass media sources. It may due to the availability farm literature in local languages. It is observed from the study [Table 4] that the majority of the respondents participated in agricultural exhibition (66.67%) program followed by the educational exhibition (14.67%) program. It is found from the study [Table 4] that majority of the respondents viewed other types of posters (63.67%) in the roadside followed by different health-related poster (56.00%), educational poster (49.00%), agricultural poster (38.00%), and sports-related poster (15.00%). It is noted from the study that less percentage of the respondents viewed agricultural-related poster. It is found from the study [Table 4] that the majority of the respondents viewed health-related advertisement board (58.67%), followed by educational (46.67%), others (37.67%), agricultural (28.00%), news (14.67%), and sports (7.33%) related advertisement board. It is revealed from the study that less percentage of the respondents viewed agriculture-related advertisement board. It is found from the study [Table 4] that a smaller number of the respondents were shown puppetry and they showed puppetry for entertainment (1.33%) purposes only. It is observed from the study [Table 4 and Figure 1] that the majority of the respondents use mass media sources for entertainment program purposes

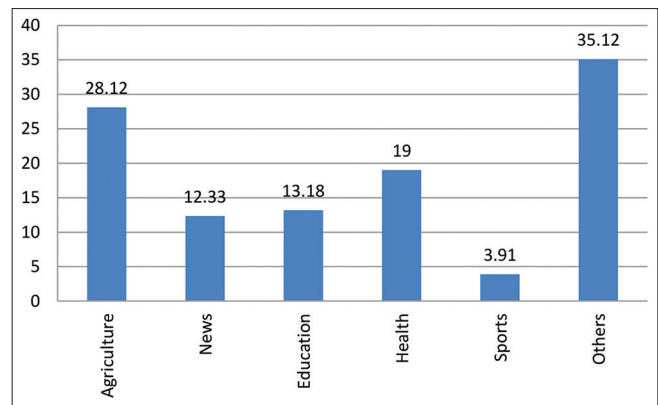


Figure 1: Type of mass media information viewing/reading/listening by the farm women

(35.12%), followed by agricultural (28.12%), health (19%), educational (13.18%), news (12.33%), and sports (3.91%) purposes. It is revealed from the study majority of the farm women use mass media sources for entertainment program purposes followed by agriculture, health, education and news purposes. The finding of this study is line with the result found by.^[5,14]

Influence of Mass Media Exposure on Agricultural Information Network Output

Table 5 revealed that there exist a positive and significant association between the agricultural information network output of the farm women and the exposure of newspaper, TV, radio, literature, mobile phone, exhibition, advertisement board,

Table 5: Correlation of mass media exposure with the agricultural information network output in terms of knowledge of the farm women ($n=300$)

Mass media sources	Knowledge
Newspaper	0.420**
TV	0.280**
Radio	0.217**
Literature	0.371**
Mobile phone	0.159**
Exhibition	0.323**
Advertisement board	0.222**
Lesson from CD	0.529**
film show	0.532**
Poster	0.138*
Others	-0.113

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

film show, and poster. It is revealed from the study that the newspaper, TV, radio, literature, mobile phone, exhibition, advertisement board, film show, and poster provided different types of agricultural information which is positively influence on knowledge development of the farm women. Hence, the respondents who were subscribed and regularly used different mass media sources had more knowledge in agriculture. This finding is line with the result found by.^[16]

CONCLUSION

It is revealed from the study that the mass media exposure level of the farm women was medium followed by low and high. It is revealed from the study that the majority of the farm women networking with the mass media for entertainment program purposes followed by agricultural, health, educational, news and sports purposes. It is concluded from the study that newspaper, television, radio, literature, mobile phone, exhibition, advertisement board, film show, and poster had a positively and significantly influence on agricultural information network output in terms of knowledge of the farm women. The question of how mass media can be used among farm women to disseminate knowledge and technology is an important one that certainly demands more in-depth research. The findings of this study suggest that mass media networks can help households gather more information about cognitive aspect. Understanding these networks

provides a platform for introducing improved farm technologies and getting connected to a wider group of farming communities.

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