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Impact of the Mass Media on Farmer's /Farmers' Decision Making and Agricultural Production

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ABSTRACT
The present study was conducted to assess the impact of mass media information on the farmer's agricultural production in the different district of Uttar Pradesh, India and it was based on the data collected from 229 agricultural farmers of the three different districts (agro-climatic regions). The descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis of the data. The primary data was collected through well framed interview schedules on the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the impact was analyzed on agricultural production. The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were divided in three categories namely rich, medium and poor. Findings of the present study have demonstrated that among the different available sources of mass media, 62.88 % respondents used TV and 25.76% used newspapers as their main sources of getting information on agricultural production. Considering the prominent role of information system in decision-making, it is important to understand the factors those influence the adoption of mass media information which in turn affects the farmer's agricultural production.
Key words: *Mass Media, Farmers, Agricultural production, Climatic Zones.*

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INTRODUCTION

As per Census of India 2011 the total population of Uttar Pradesh is 199,812,341 [5]. The major portion of the population depends on agriculture and animal husbandry for livelihood. Agricultural sector not only provides livelihood for rural people or households who are either landless agricultural laborers or marginal or small farmers but also provides the supplementary income opportunities. Lack of the information dissemination system or mass media exposure to the rural farmers is a main technological constraint for the development of farmers and creates a huddle to the agricultural production in the villages. The intensification of agricultural production is concerned with increasing agricultural and livestock production. To increase this, small households need access to different services that provide improved animals, seed varieties, fertilizers, irrigation facilities, technical advice etc. Along with these, the reach of information which includes very importantly market information, is very necessary. The use of mass media for information seeking is a powerful tool at present for the benefits of farmers through which they can achieve goals of agricultural production. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to know the effects of mass media on the agricultural production in different agro-climatic zones of Uttar Pradesh.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in three agro-climatic regions of Uttar Pradesh namely Tarai region, Central Plains and Western Plains. Two 'Blocks' of one 'District' were selected randomly from each agro-climatic region. From each selected 'Block' two 'Villages' were selected and total 229 households were included in this study for the collection of primary data. The mode of primary data collection was personal interview using well-structured and pre-tested schedules. Primary data included 'Personal characteristics' (age, education, occupation, use of mass media etc.) and Farm-specific characteristics' (herd size, landholding, etc.). The various measures of descriptive statistics such as average, percentage

and frequencies were used to describe farm and household specific characteristics. The detail of the sampling plan is given in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Distribution of sample households across blocks/districts and agro-climatic regions

Agro-climatic region	District	Blocks	Villages
Tarai	Lakhimpur	Pasgwana	Birampur
			Baikuwan
		Behjam	Pipra
			Alipur
Central Plains	Sitapur	Maholi	Bhagwanpur
			Tikra Tikr
		Piswana	Bhithora
			Karipakar
Western Plains	Meerut	Machra	Amarpur
			Hasanpur
		Hastinapur	Eqwara
			Saifpur

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Farm and Farmer-specific Characteristics

The generated data was statistically analyzed and results of those are presented in tabulated form. Table 2 represents the farm- and farmer-specific characteristics of respondent households belonging to different economical categories. The landholding-size was significantly different across different household categories, which was obvious, as landholding is one of the major determinants of economic status of rural households. The ownership of crossbred cattle and buffaloes was significantly higher across rich households in comparison poor households. There was no any significant difference between the number of indigenous cattle owned by the poor and rich households. A higher proportion of respondents in both medium and rich households pursued agriculture and animal husbandry as their source of livelihood as compared to the poor households. The dependency on agricultural production, as income source, was significantly more in the case of poor than rich households. A significantly higher proportion of the rich households were members of a group or society than the poor respondents. The proportion of respondents reporting easy access to credit increased with rise in economic status. Easy availability of credit (loan) was 11.57 % in the poor respondents than that of rich which was 61.11%. This finding clearly indicates that access to credit is easier for the rich households and poorer households are largely excluded from accessing institutional credit sources. The milk production per household was found to increase with increase in economic status. Rich households owned a significantly higher number of high-yielding milch animals in comparison to poor households. The absolute quantities of milk marketed per day per household increased with increase in economic status but, there was no significant difference in the proportion of milk marketed across different economic categories of households. The agriculture production per household found to increase with increase in economic status [1-3]. Rich households owned significantly high-yielding 'Sugarcane' (Total 55.89 %) and in Medium households higher production of 'Wheat' which was 91.26 % of Sowing (Table 3 A and B).

Table 2: Farm and Farmer specific characteristics of study area

Particulars	Poor	Medium	Rich
Size of landholding (acres)	1.21	3.92	6.06
Herd Size (No.'s)			
Indigenous (Indig.) Cows	0.54[a]	0.53[b]	0.11
CB Cows	0.61	1.35	1.33
Buffaloes	1.66	3.67	8.11
Occupation (% of Households)			
Agril.+AH	80.99	98.88	100
Agril. Labour + AH	7.43	2.22	0.00
Agril.+AH+Service	0.00	0.00	0.00
Business+AH	0.82	0.00	0.00
AH+Labour	7.43	0.00	0.00

AH	1.65	0.00	0.00
AH+Service	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dwelling Structure*			
Membership of Group (%)	14.04	53.33	72.22
Credit availability**	11.57	33.33	61.11
Milk Produced/Household/day (Lts.)	3.43	8.44	9.61

Table 3 A: Sowing of Cultivation (%) by different economical group in study area

Crop Name	Poor	Medium	Rich
Sugarcane	29.75	83.33	94.44
Wheat	88.42	97.77	77.77
Rice	18.18	70	72.22
Fodder	30.57	80	83.33

Table 3 B: Total Sowing of cultivation (%) by farmers in study area

Name of crop	Total cultivation %
Sugarcane	55.89
Wheat	91.26
Rice	42.79
Fodder	54.14

Availability of mass media in the study area and respondent's preference

The availability of mass media in the study area was found in the form of television and newspapers (Table 4A). Table 4B shows the percentage distribution of respondents based on availability of mass media and their preferences. Out of 100 respondent 62.88% preferred TV and 25.76% preferred newspapers. As the televisions are easily available with majority of the respondent hence the percentage of getting information is more in the case of TV [4]. The use of newspapers is secondary in getting information because majority of the respondents are less educated and less or non-availability of news paper in the different regions.

Table 4 B: Use of Mass Media (%) by different groups of farmers in study area

Particulars	Poor	Medium	Rich
TV	37.19	91.11	94.44
News Paper's	15.7	30	72.22

Table 4 A: Use of Mass Media different groups (%)

Mode of information receiving	Percentage of farmers
Television (TV)	62.88
Newspaper	25.76

CONCLUSION

The mass media has an important and prominent role in dissemination of information to the farmers which in turn affects their agricultural production. To increase the agricultural production, it is also important to understand the factors those influence the adoption of mass media information. Getting information is easier through television as the TV is easily available with majority of the farmers. The newspapers remain secondary source of information because the education level and availability of the newspapers in the different regions are the major concerns.

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