

## **PREFERENCE OF FARMERS ON RADIO PROGRAMS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN THE DISSEMINATION OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this study was to have an understanding on the preference of farmers regarding different radio programs and their relative effectiveness in the dissemination of agricultural information. Data were collected from a sample of randomly selected 100 farmers through personal interview during 10 January to 10 March 2009. The findings revealed that the highest proportion (53%) of the farmers listened radio programs occasionally followed by 39% rarely and only 8% appeared to be regular listeners in receiving agricultural information. The majority (56%) of the farmers had low preference regarding the use of different agricultural radio programs followed by 38% had medium whereas only 6% had high preference. With regard to effectiveness, 'desh amar mati amar' was regarded as most effective radio program in the dissemination of agricultural information. In addition, 'krishi somacher' and 'sonali fashol' were achieved 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> position respectively, on the basis of their effectiveness with the same regard.

*Keywords: Agricultural information, radio programs, preference, effectiveness*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Information is an essential production factor in agriculture and rural development as well (Garforth *et al.*, 2003). Information coming from outside the area can bring fresh ideas, awareness of new opportunities. Knowledge derived from formal research, or developed in other localities, can stimulate new thinking and practices. It has been proved that extension messages are effective only if they reach the client but unfortunately these messages tend not to reach farmers (Sadaf *et al.*, 2006). So it is clear that, for consistent growth in agricultural production, it is very much necessary to communicate relevant and timely information to the farmers in order to improve their production techniques and increase their income.

In order to agricultural development, farmers need adequate information exposure to the latest modern technology. Improved form information and technology can be communicated through various channels to the farmers and one has to take into account the preferences of the farmers for a particular channel (Kashem and Halim, 1991). In the rural areas, people use different channels of information at different frequency. The common electronic mass media such as radio and television are regarded as very effective in communicating the latest technology to the farmers. Radio is a cheap electronic tool for the delivery of quick information (Hussain, 1997). Personal face-to-face extension methods, which come under individual and group methods, have their own strengths and weaknesses. One of their limitations is that they cannot cover all farmers of the community. Radio is one popular mass medium playing very important role in creating awareness about new agricultural technologies among farmers. It is also spreading agricultural technologies to the farmers at a faster rate than personal contacts (Mahmood and Sheikh, 2005).

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The cost of extension advice through radio comes to be considerably low as compared to individual and group methods (Oakley and Garforth, 1985). There are so many agricultural programs broadcast by radio and preference of farmers with this respect can also vary. In addition, effectiveness of the different radio programs is not equal in the dissemination of agricultural technologies. Keeping in view the above said facts, the researcher had been undertaken the study entitled “Preference of Farmers for the Radio Programs and their Relative Effectiveness in the Dissemination of Agricultural Information”. In order to give proper direction of the study, the following objectives were formulated:

- a. To determine the frequency of listening of different radio programs by the farmers.
- b. To determine the extent of farmers’ preference on the basis of use of different radio programs.
- c. To find out the relative effectiveness of different radio programs in the dissemination of agricultural technologies among the farmers.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in six villages namely Mohespur, Noshipur, Sabura, Mohadebpur, Gosaiपुर and Kornai of Chahalgazi Union of Sadar Upazila under Dinajpur district following simple random sampling technique. The farmers having radio were asked to indicate their extent of preferences either by very high, high, moderate, low or not at all with a score of 4,3,2,1 and 0 respectively for each of the selected 10 agricultural radio programs. On the otherhand, a five-point scale (very effective, effective, and moderately effective, less effective and ineffective with a score of 4,3,2,1 and 0 respectively) was formulated to take farmers’ opinion regarding the effectiveness of different radio programs. Data were collected personally by using a structured interview schedule during 10 January to 10 March 2009 from a sample of 100 respondents and analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A majority of the farmers (53%) listened agricultural radio programs occasionally. It is closely related to Ladebo *et al.* (1997) who observed that 48.7% farmers of the study area of Nigeria depend on radio programs for receiving farm information. Quite a good number of farmers (39%) listened radio broadcasts rarely in receiving agricultural information which was closely supported by Irfan *et al.* (2006). Only a fraction of the farmers (8%) appeared to be regular listeners of agricultural programs by radio broadcasts (Table 1). It meant that farmers in the study area were not aware and interested on the agricultural programs by radio broadcasts. In order to create awareness and interest on agricultural radio broadcasts for the farmers, measures should be taken to give greater emphasis on agricultural related information and there should be an appropriate strategy to highlight those issues.

Table 1. Frequency of listening of different radio programs by the farmers

Frequency	Percentage of farmers	Possible score range	Observed score range	Mean	St. Dev.
Regularly ( above 10)	8				
Occasionally (6-10)	53				
Rarely ( up to 5)	39	0-20	1-15	6.78	3.724
Never (0)	0				
Total	100				

The data given in Table 2 reflect that more than half (56%) of the farmers had low preference on the basis of use of agricultural radio programs followed by 38% had medium and only 6% had high preference. These findings are closely related with those of Islam *et al.* (2001) which revealed that the

highest proportion (39%) of the farmers fell under low preference on the basis of use of mass contact media while 37% had medium and only 15% had high preference with the same regard.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their preferences of radio programs

Categories of preference	Percentage of farmers	Possible score range	Observed score range	Mean	St. Dev.
Low ( up to 12)	56				
Medium (13-25)	38	0-40	2-32	13.31	7.549
High (above 25)	6				
Total	100				

It could be mentioned that more than three-fourth of the farmers had low to medium preference on radio programs in receiving farm information and technology. This is because that most of the agricultural related radio programs are not specific, compatible and field oriented problems of the farmers. So technology specific, area based, and traditional folk based presentation should be considered and given under consideration in future communication strategy. The relative effectiveness of ten selected agricultural radio programs as perceived by the respondents was computed by multiplying the score value allotted to each category of the scale used to assess the effectiveness with the frequency percentages (Muhammad and Garforth, 1999). The scores computed in this way are presented in Table 3. It is evident from the findings that the agricultural radio program namely 'desh amar mati amar' was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with regard to its effectiveness in the dissemination of agricultural technologies with the score value of 272 whereas 'krishi somacher' and 'sonali fashol' as ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> position with the score value of 225 and 179, respectively. It is a cause for concern that these programs are playing crucial role in the communication of agricultural information and technologies among the farmers. This finding is consistent with the findings of Okwu *et al.* (2007) who observed that the radio programs were also effective to agricultural need which was indicated by 42% farmers. So the authority concerned should take care to use their front-line extension workers more effectively to proceed on a package-deal approach with emphasis on those radio programs having greater effectiveness.

Table 3. Relative effectiveness of different radio programs

Name of radio programs	Very effective $x_4$		Effective $x_3$		Moderately effective $x_2$		Less effective $x_1$		Ineffective $x_0$		Total score
	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	
Desh amar mati amar	34	136	25	75	26	52	9	9	6	-	272
Krishi somacher	20	80	26	78	30	60	7	7	17	-	225
Sonali fashol	19	76	19	57	20	40	6	6	36	-	179
Azker krishi	15	60	20	60	18	36	5	5	48	-	161
Chasabad	19	76	20	60	6	12	8	8	47	-	156
Khete khamare	4	16	18	54	35	70	4	4	39	-	144
Sabuz bangle	6	24	4	12	25	50	13	13	52	-	99
Khet khamer somacher	5	20	5	15	18	36	24	24	48	-	95
Krishan mati desh	-	-	5	15	19	38	20	20	56	-	73
Krishi khamer	2	8	6	18	6	12	9	9	77	-	47

Azker krishi, chasabad, khete khamare, sabuz bangla, khet khamar somacher, krishan mati desh, and krishi khamer were ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> on the basis of their effectiveness, respectively. These radio broadcast programs were regarded comparatively least effective by the farmers. It implies that there is a lot of scope for the improvement of their existing standard. In order to increase the effectiveness of these agricultural radio programs, the concerned authority should build up appropriate strategy for broadcasting further agricultural programs in future.

## CONCLUSION

It could be said from the findings that only 8% of the farmers listened radio programs regularly in receiving agricultural technologies. So, appropriate efforts should therefore be taken to increase the motivation and awareness of the farmers so that they listen agricultural radio programs regularly. Majority (94%) of the farmers had low to medium preference on the basis of use of agricultural radio programs followed only 6% had high preference. In view of this finding, it may be concluded that the concerned agencies have yet scope for giving emphasis on the radio broadcasts agricultural programs so that the farmers increase their preference with them. With regarding effectiveness, 'desh amar mati amar', 'krishi somacher', and 'sonali fashol' were ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively, by the farmers. The rest of the agricultural programs broadcasts by radio were comparatively low effective in the dissemination of agricultural technologies. So, it is necessary to design and broadcast more field and production oriented agricultural programs through radio for the improvement of their effectiveness.

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