

## PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA ABOUT AGRI. INFORMATION RELATED TO CROPS/AGROFORESTRY

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The research paper focused on extent/effectiveness of agri. information related to crops/agroforestry by the farmers through electronic media. The future preferential areas were also identified in this context. Furthermore, the various dimensions of agri. information (accurate, relevant, feasible, and useful) were also probed out. The study was conducted in Faisalabad District (a mix cropping zone) of the Punjab province (Pakistan). The data were collected from 330 randomly selected respondents (farmers) through a reliable and validated interview schedule. The collected data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The areas of agri. information major, minor, horticultural crops and agroforestry were ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respectively related to extent and effectiveness. The preferential areas showed the same ranking pattern. Moreover, regarding extent of agri. information as well as, TV was found relatively more prominent than other electronic media under study. Other notable media were radio and mobile phone. Concerted efforts are needed to harness the potential of electronic media for providing latest and pertinent information encompassing diversified spheres of agriculture.

**Keywords:** Electronic media, Agri. Informations, Crops/ Agroforestry

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### INTRODUCTION

Agricultural sector being the bastion of country's economy is contributing directly and indirectly in term of GDP (21.4%) and employment 45% (GOP, 2013). Agro based industries are thriving on the production augmentation of various crops. This important sector is catering for the life essentials in a variety of ways. The development of this sector is indispensable for getting excels in national as well as international scenario.

The average yields of various crops are lagging behind as compared to potential yields (Muhammad *et al.*, 2004). Moreover, the fluctuated growth is also a major dilemma and this important sector needs transformation (Govt. of Pakistan, 2014). There is a dire need to equip our farmers in terms of awareness about the latest technologies for increasing the production (Khan *et al.*, 2013).

Major crops (wheat, rice, sugarcane, maize, and cotton), minor crops (oilseed crops, pulses, fodder etc.) and horticultural crops (fruits, vegetables, flowers etc.) and agroforestry are beneficial in a variety of ways. The agri. information encompassing various facets related to the crops (major, minor, horticultural) and agroforestry can pave the way to bloom agricultural sector.

Various realms of agri. information (provided through electronic media) were focused in the context of extent and effectiveness. So, the information was collected to get insight about the effectiveness of various areas of agricultural information. The extent of using electronic media is important aspect. However, it is equally important

to find out the perceived effectiveness of agri. information for getting a comprehensive picture.

In addition to other avenues of agri. information, the technological advancements of in electronic media have improved and geared up the information delivery in an unprecedented quick pattern. Media can serve the purpose of dissemination of agri. information in a befitted manner (Ahmad *et al.*, 2007).

It seems inevitable to provide accurate, relevant, and timely information can pave the way to harvest more benefits (Morrow *et al.*, 2004). The success of agricultural information delivered through electronic media may be attributed towards effectiveness.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Faisalabad district (a mix cropping zone) of the Punjab, Pakistan. Multistage random sampling technique was used. An interview schedule was developed and experts were consulted for its validity. The data were collected through pretested interview schedule from 330 randomly selected respondents. Farmers' perceptions were probed out pertinent to the extent and effectiveness of agri. information related to crops/agroforestry. Future preferences were also dig out in this regard. Moreover, the collected data were analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). On the basis of a five point Likert scale (i.e. 1=Very low, 2=Low, 3=Medium, 4=High, 5=Very High). Weighted scores were calculated (by multiplying the frequency with the respective scale value).

**Table 1: Extent of getting information regarding various areas of agriculture through electronic media**

Areas regarding crops/agroforestry	Radio Score	TV Score	Mobile Phone Score	Telephone Score	Agri. helpline Score	Total	Rank
Major crops	86	263	86	32	12	479	1
Minor crops	56	94	31	24	-	205	2
Horticultural crops	22	30	16	8	-	76	3
Agroforestry	1	14	-	-	-	15	4
Total	165	401	133	64	12		

**Table 1 (a): Rank order of electronic media with respect to extent of getting agri. information (crops/agroforestry) received by the respondents**

Electronic media	Total	Rank
TV	401	1
Radio	165	2
Mobile phone	133	3
Telephone	64	4
Agri. helpline	12	5

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With the help of a five point Likert scale the farmers were asked about the extent as well as effectiveness of agri. information related to crops/agroforestry from the electronic media. Based upon the collected data, the scores were calculated which are presented in Table 1, 1(a) and Table 2, 2(b).

The data presented in Table 1 and 2 indicate that the sphere of major crops was in leading position both in the context of extent as well as effectiveness. The subsequent sphere was minor crop. Relatively weaker areas appeared in the form of horticultural crops and agroforestry. As a whole, electronic media under study did not show a healthy picture in all the areas both in sense of extent of agri. information as well as respondents' perceived effectiveness.

Moreover, the data presented in Tables 3 depicted that respondents' perceived effectiveness of information regarding various areas of agriculture delivered through electronic media revealed an increasing trend. However, the difference of score values was not substantial.

The data depicted in Table 1(a) and Table (b) reveal that TV was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> both in case of extent and effectiveness. However, radio was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in case of extent and mobile phone was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in case of effectiveness. Mobile phone was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in case of extent while radio was at 3<sup>rd</sup> position in case of effectiveness. Telephone acquired the 4<sup>th</sup> position in both the cases of extent as well as effectiveness. The lowest position was gained by agri. helpline.

The data presented in Table 3(a) reflects notable augmentation of effectiveness of mobile phone as compared

to the extent of agri. information. However, a peculiar picture of TV (the leading medium) appeared which showed a little declining trend in the context of contrasting view of extent and effectiveness. It may be inferred that extent and effectiveness of a medium may reflect different scenario.

**Preferences of various areas of agricultural information for future:** Probing pertaining to farmers' future preferential areas of agricultural information through electronic media would be beneficial in the formulation of recommendations based upon the empirical evidence. Depending upon the data collected, the scores were calculated, which are reflected in Table 4.

The data depicted in Table 4 highlight that regarding major areas of crops, respondents gave the priorities to obtain information about major crops followed by minor crops. The next subsequent preferred area was horticultural crops. The least preferred area was agroforestry.

Regarding effectiveness, the research findings are in consonance with the results of Muhammad *et al.* (2012) in which the area of major crops was relatively more prominent than that of horticultural and minor crops in case of radio and TV. However, contrasting aspect was also worth mentioning that in Muhammad *et al.*, 2012 horticultural crops were in leading position than that of minor crops while in the present study, the area of minor crops was 2<sup>nd</sup> and horticultural crops was at 3<sup>rd</sup>. The aspect of forestry was at the declined position in the both studies. In another study, Nouman *et al.*, 2008 emphasized the need to promote agroforestry through effective use of media.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It may be concluded from the findings that the pattern appeared related to extent, effectiveness and even in future preferential areas major, minor, horticultural crops and agroforestry were ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respectively. It is also underlined farmers should be motivated to get more and more agri. information regarding the aforesaid areas of agri. information. There is a dire need to look into the matter of dissemination of agri. information not only in the context of extent but also the effectiveness thereof. Moreover, in

**Table 2: Respondents' perceived effectiveness of information regarding various areas of agriculture delivered through electronic media**

Areas regarding crops/agroforestry	Radio Score	TV Score	Mobile Phone Score	Telephone Score	Agri. helpline Score	Total	Rank
Major crops	85	241	123	49	14	512	1
Minor crops	55	96	54	37	-	242	2
Horticultural crops	24	34	28	13	-	99	3
Agroforestry	1	16	-	-	-	17	4
Total	165	387	205	99	14		

**Table 2 (a): Rank order of electronic media with respect to perceived effectiveness of agri. information (crops/ agroforestry) by the respondents**

Electronic media	Total	Rank
TV	387	1
Mobile phone	205	2
Radio	165	3
Telephone	99	4
Agri. helpline	14	5

**Table 3: Difference between extent of getting information regarding various areas crops/agroforestry and respondents' perceived effectiveness of information delivered through electronic media**

Areas regarding crops/agroforestry	Extent of getting information A	Perceived effectiveness B	Difference B-A=C
Major crops	479	512	33
Minor crops	205	242	37
Horticultural crops	76	99	23
Agroforestry	15	17	2

**Table 3 (a): Difference between extent of getting information regarding crops/agroforestry and respondents' perceived effectiveness with the perspective of various electronic media**

Electronic media	Extent of getting information A	Perceived effectiveness B	Difference B-A=C
Radio	165	165	0
TV	401	387	-14
Mobile phone	133	205	72
Telephone	64	99	35
Agri. helpline	12	14	2

**Table 4: Respondents' future preferences for obtaining information about various areas of agriculture through electronic media**

Areas regarding crops/ Agroforestry	No.	Score	Rank
Major crops	221	631	1
Minor crops	119	265	2
Horticultural crops	74	144	3
Agroforestry	34	86	4

this era of diversification all areas should be covered in befitted manner. Future research for exploring the potential of these media is highly desirable for combating the prospective challenges.

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