

## Mass Media Utilization by Farm Women

RURAL women share abundant responsibilities and perform a wide spectrum of activities like running the family, maintaining the household, attending to farm labour, performing several farm activities, looking after domestic animals and extending a helping hand in rural artisanship and handicrafts; but their contribution in economic terms has not been recognized. They are extensively involved in agriculture as female farm heads, co-owners, family farm workers and also employees (Zaidi and Munir, 2014). About 38 per cent of family workers in agriculture are women. But, although their contribution to local and community development is significant, their role still goes unnoticed and they are still not fully involved in decision-making, besides spending time on various duties and responsibilities in on-farm and off-farm activities. Though women have made their presence felt in all spheres of agriculture, they lag behind in technical competency and advanced information on farm technologies. In a study conducted on the knowledge level of farm women on farm technologies by Sankaran and Perumal, (1993), it was reported that 50.00 per cent of the farm women belonging to small farm category and possessed low level of knowledge on farm technologies.

Farm women should be fully aware of the latest agricultural technologies so as to achieve faster development in agriculture. The transfer of technology approach which mainly includes mass media is not paying much attention towards dissemination of adequate and timely agricultural information to the farm women. Access to communication media prepares women for improving their communication and mediation skills to strengthen their capacity to contact and mediate with the external world. In this backdrop, the present study was undertaken with the following specific objectives:

1. To know the extent of utilization of mass media by farm women
2. To find out the relationship and extent of contribution of personal, socio-economic, psychological and communication characteristics of farm women with their extent of utilization of mass media

The study was conducted in Mandya and Maddur taluks of Mandya district in Karnataka State during 2014-15. Five villages were randomly selected for the study from each of the two sampled taluks. From each village, six farm women were randomly selected for the study. Thus, the total sample constituted 60 farm women. Relevant data was collected from 60 farm women using a pre-tested interview schedule.

Mass media utilization of participation is referred to the exposure of the farm women to different mass communication media such as listening to radio, viewing television and reading newspapers and farm magazines. Procedure followed by Trivedi (1963) was used for computing the extent of utilization of mass media by farm women. The response for each media were obtained on three options namely, 'regularly', 'occasionally' and 'never' for which scores assigned were 2, 1 and 0, respectively. Minimum and maximum score a respondent could get was 0 and 12, respectively. Based on the total score obtained, the respondents were classified into three categories, viz., low, medium and high on the basis of mean and half standard deviation.

Category	Criteria	Score
Low	< (Mean - ½ SD)	Below 5.26
Medium	(Mean ± ½SD)	5.26 to 6.56
High	> (Mean + ½ SD)	Above 6.56

Information regarding personal, socio-economic, psychological and communication characteristics of farm women were collected using suitable scales. The collected data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, zero order correlation and multiple regression analysis.

The data in the Table I reveals that 45.00 per cent of farm women had medium level of overall utilization of mass media, followed by 31.66 per cent having low and 23.34 per cent having high level of overall utilization of mass media. It can be inferred that more than three-fourth (76.66 %) of the farm women were having low to medium level of overall utilization of mass media. More or less similar findings were

TABLE I  
*Overall utilization of mass media by farm women* (n=60)

Category	Farm women	
	Number	Per cent
Low	19	31.66
Medium	27	45.00
High	14	23.34

observed by Swathilakshmi *et al.* (2015). Low literacy level, non-availability of newspapers and farm magazines in the villages, lack of free time to utilize mass media and non-coverage of local agricultural issues in mass media are the major reasons for majority (76.66 %) of farm women having low to medium level of overall utilization of mass media.

The Table II revealed with respect to the extent of utilization of mass media of farm women, it is observed that less than one-tenth of the farm women ‘regularly’ viewed television (6.67 %) and read newspaper (3.33 %). Whereas, less than one-fourth of farm women ‘occasionally’ read newspaper (23.33 %) and farm magazines (3.33 %), viewed television (15.00 %) and listened to radio (10.00%). A majority of the farm women have not read newspaper (73.34 %) and farm magazines (96.67 %), listened to radio (90.00 %) and viewed television (78.33 %) for obtaining information on improved agricultural technologies.

The results in Table III presents the data on the relationship and extent of contribution of personal, socio-economic, psychological and communication characteristics of farm women with their extent of

utilization of mass media. It is seen from table III that age, socio-economic status and deferred gratification were not having significant relationship with the extent of utilization of mass media by farm women. Variables such as, achievement motivation, management orientation, innovativeness, extension agency contact and extension participation of farm women were having significant relationship at five per cent level with the extent of utilization of mass media by farm women, whereas education and attitude towards farming had highly significant relationship at one per cent level with the extent of utilization of mass media by farm women. It can be inferred that for every unit increase in the education, achievement motivation, management orientation, innovativeness, extension agency contact and extension participation there will be an increase in the utilization of mass media by farm women. Similar findings were reported by Ani and Baba (2009) Lakshminarayan *et al.* (2010) and Viswanatha *et al.* (2014).

All the ten socio-economic, psychological and communication characteristics had contributed to the tune of 60.20 per cent of variation in utilization of mass media by farm women. Variables such as education, attitude towards farming, extension agency contact and extension participation had contributed significantly towards utilization of mass media among farm women.

The findings of the study indicate that television was the most popular media used by the farm women probably due to its easy availability and portability that warrants the wide scale use of mass media. Community television sets can be installed in common places such as market shandies and community halls

TABLE II  
*Extent of mass media utilization by farm women*

Mass media	Farm women					
	Regularly		Occasionally		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Reading newspaper	02	3.33	14	23.33	44	73.34
Reading farm magazines	0	0.00	02	3.33	58	96.67
Listening to radio	0	0.00	05	10.00	54	90.00
Viewing television	04	6.67	09	15.00	47	78.33

TABLE III  
*Association of independent variables with the decision making pattern of farmers in sugarcane cultivation activities*  
 (n=60)

Independent variables	Correlation value	t value
Age	0.111 NS	0.999 NS
Education	0.333 **	2.500 *
Socio economic status	0.121 NS	1.68 NS
Achievement motivation	0.261 *	1.79 NS
Management orientation	0.121 NS	1.92 NS
Attitude towards farming	0.390 **	2.96 **
Innovativeness	0.268 *	0.196 NS
Deferred gratification	0.09 NS	0.111 NS
Extension agency contact	0.279 *	2.16 *
Extension participation	0.312 *	2.30 *

NS= Non-significant; \* = Significant at 5 per cent level; \*\* = Significant at 1 per cent level; R2 value=0.692

for facilitating easy viewing by farm women. Farm Universities, Development Departments and other concerned agencies can promote the use of farm magazines effectively by making available these publications free of cost to the farm women; who are members of local media forums. Similarly the feedback behavior of farm women can be enhanced by giving interesting agricultural programmers for women through television such as backyard farming, new farm equipment reducing the drudgery of farm women and also by increasing the coverage of agricultural features in print media.

Farm women have been long accorded as invisible workers in agriculture and their contribution for agricultural development is tremendous. Hence, organizing and promoting effective use of media forums like radio, television and print media would play a vital role in enlightening farm women for agricultural development. Therefore, dissemination of improved

production technologies through media (newspapers, farm magazines, radio, television etc.) in local languages will increase their knowledge and adoption of modern agricultural technologies.

*Dept. of Agril. Extension* K. NISHITHA  
*College of Agriculture* M. T. LAKSHMINARAYAN  
*UAS, GKVK* B. KRISHNAMURTHY  
*Bengaluru-560 065*

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