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FARMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PTV'S AGRICULTURAL TELECASTS ('HARYALI' AND 'KISAN TIME')

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Pakistan is predominately and agricultural country. Its development is largely dependent on the development of agricultural sector. Presently there exists a big gap between the average yield of various crops obtained in the country and their potential yield, which can only be minimized with the application of science and technology by farmers. The extension services have critical role to play for which they use a variety of extension teaching methods/media. Television is one of such media which is being used for the education of farmers. 'Haryali' and 'Kisan Time' are two important regular agricultural telecasts of Pakistan television (PTV). The present paper reports the perceptions of the farmers about these agricultural telecasts. The data show that majority of the respondents did not watch these telecasts. Among the viewers, most of the respondents watched 'Haryali' regularly. However, regular viewers of 'Kisan Time' were negligible in number. Most of the respondents regarded the telecasts interesting and informative. Relatively less number of respondents perceived the contents of the telecasts useful, practicable, and timely. Most of the respondents perceived the presentation style of the telecasts as highly impressive. 'Kisan Time' appeared to be better than 'Haryali' in this regard.
Key words: Agricultural telecasts, 'Haryali', 'Kisan Time', Television.

INTRODUCTION

Being an agricultural country, the economy of Pakistan continues to be predominantly agrarian in nature. Agriculture contributes 24% to GDP and employs 48.4% of the total work force besides being the only source of raw material for agro-based industries (Govt. of Pak., 2002). The statistics show that our agricultural production of various crops is much lower than that of many other countries and even there is a big yield gap between the average yield obtained by farmers and the potential yield of various crops obtained at research stations. It means that with the application of the available technologies at farm level, the agricultural production can be enhanced considerably. Thus the available technologies need to be disseminated effectively among the ultimate users through utilizing all possible means.

The extension agencies/organizations are constantly using a variety of communication channels involving individual, group and mass methods/media. In the present era of science and technology, the individual and group extension methods have limited scope. They cannot meet the information needs of the masses at large. On the contrary, mass media have the potential of providing information to a large number of farmers effectively and efficiently. Mass media tend to be less expensive due to more coverage. In this context Hussain (1993) reported that 66% of the farmers in Pakistan meet their information needs through mass media. Similarly Iqbal (1993) found that 74.67% of the respondents got information though radio and 54.67% through television. Singh (2001) argued that radio and television emerged as probably the most powerful mass media for disseminating information quickly. These are suitable for creating general awareness amongst the people, bring desirable change in attitude, and reinforce learning. He further goes on saying that these media are extremely convenient for communication in times of crisis and urgent situation. People with no education or very little education and those who are not in a position to attend extension programme personally can take full advantage of these media and build up adequate knowledge and skill. Majeed (1994) concluded that mass media played a significant role in providing basic information about weedicides. Ashraf (2001) reported that TV, signboards/slogans, literature, and radio were used by Novartis to popularize its products among farmers as pointed out by 45.00, 43.33, 40.00 and 34.16% of the respondents respectively. Malik (2000) reported TV and radio as the main sources of information for the adoption of improved agricultural technologies. She further reported that mass media were perceived useful in increasing agricultural production to a great extent by 17.5% to some extent by 48.36% and useless by 34.34% of the respondents. In addition, the cost of extension advice through mass contact comes to be considerably low as compared to individual and group contacts (Perraton, 1983).

Among the mass media, television is said to be an important and effective medium. Mazher et al (2003) found that 63.90% farmers of the study area watched TV and 56.70% watched agricultural programmes on TV. As regard the frequency of watching agricultural programmes, among the viewers 11.10% watched frequently, 48.50% occasionally and 40.40% rarely.

At present, various agricultural programmes are being telecasted on PTV to meet the information needs of the farming community. 'Haryali' and 'Kisan Time' are the important ones. 'Haryali' is a weekly programme telecasted on PTV and is sponsored by public sector whereas 'Kisan Time' is a daily programme telecasted on PTV World and is sponsored by private sector. These programmes involve a variety of presentation styles such as agricultural documentaries lectures/talks by experts in the field of agriculture, interviews of progressive growers, and panel discussions with experts and farmers. A large amount of money is being spent both by public and private sectors on these TV productions. How far there telecasts have been effective, seems to be an important area to be looked into. The present study was an attempt towards this end. The present paper reveals the scope of TV as an agricultural information source of the farmers, opinion of the farmers about agricultural programmes telecasted on TV, interest taken by the farmers in agricultural programmes, and farmers' perceived effectiveness of two important agricultural telecasts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the sake of quality data, the study was limited to Faisalabad tehsil only. Five union councils were selected at random, out of 48 rural union councils. From each selected union council, one village was selected randomly and from each selected village, 25 farmers having their own TV sets were selected at random. Thus a total of 125 respondents formed the sample for the study. The data were collected with the help of an interview schedule and statistically analyzed to draw conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Frequency of watching agricultural telecasts

Farming community is supposed to watch agricultural telecasts to become aware of the latest technologies. The frequency of watching the telecasts indicates their interest in the telecasts and also reflects the popularity and effectiveness of the telecasts among the viewers. The data in this regard are presented in Table 1, which depict that majority of the respondents (68.80 and 62.42%) did not watch 'Haryali' and 'Kisan Time' respectively. Only 3.20 and 4.0% respondents were found to be regular viewers of 'Haryali' and 'Kisan Time' respectively. Slightly more than 22% were the frequent viewers. It is evident from the data that both the programmes are at par as far as the frequency of watching is concerned.

Table 1. Frequency of watching ' Haryali' and 'Kisan Time'

Sr. No.	Frequency	'Haryali'		'Kisan Time'	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Regularly	04	03.20	05	04.00
2	Frequently	28	22.40	30	24.00
3	Rarely	07	05.60	12	09.60
4	Never	86	68.86	78	62.40
	Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Contents of agricultural telecasts

The effectiveness of agricultural telecasts partly dependents upon the contents. The contents need to be interesting and relevant and should include the latest information. The respondents were asked about various aspects of the contents and their responses are given in Table 2. The data show that most of the respondents (28.00 and 26.40%) regarded 'Haryali' as interesting and informative respectively. Relatively less number (12.80%) regarded the programme useful. Very few respondents considered the contents practicable and timely. Similarly most of the respondents (about 34%) regarded 'Kisan Time' interesting and informative. The programme was considered useful by only 18.40% of the respondents. No one regarded the contents practicable and timely.

Table 2. Opinion of farmers about the contents of 'Haryali' and 'Kisan Time'

Sr. No.	Opinion	'Haryali'		'Kisan Time'	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Interesting	35	28.00	42	33.60
2	Informative	33	26.40	43	34.40
3	Useful	16	12.80	23	18.40
4	Practicable	07	05.60	00	00.00
5	Timely	01	00.80	00	00.00
6	No response	86	68.86	78	62.40

Note: Since most of the respondents gave more than one response, the number exceeds the actual number of respondents.

Presentation style of the experts invited in agricultural telecasts

Experts' talks may be highly convincing and useful to the farmers if delivered in an impressive manner. The respondents were asked about the presentation styles of the experts and their responses are given in Table 3, which show that most of the respondents (27.20 and 31.20%) regarded presentation style as highly impressive in case of 'Haryali' and 'Kisan Time' respectively. No one regarded the telecasts unimpressive. A negligible number of the respondents perceived the presentation either moderately

impressive or less impressive. 'Kisan Time' appeared to be relatively better than 'Haryali' in this regard.

Table 3. Presentation style of experts invited in agricultural telecasts

Sr. No.	Presentation style	'Haryali'		'Kisan Time'	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Highly impressive	34	27.20	39	31.20
2	Moderately impressive	04	03.20	07	05.60
3	Less impressive	01	00.80	01	00.80
4	Un- impressive	00	00.00	00	00.00
5	No response	86	68.86	78	62.40

Note: Since most of the respondents gave more than one response, the number exceeds the actual number of respondents.

Suitable time for agricultural telecasts

Suitable timings of agricultural telecasts are critical for their effectiveness. The timings should be set out in such a way that large number of farmers could watch the agricultural telecasts conveniently. The responses of the respondents in this regard are presented in Table 4, which show that majority (68.80 and 62.40%) of the respondents did not give any response about the timings as they were not the viewers of 'Haryali' and 'Kisan Time' respectively. Among the viewers, about 50% regarded the time of 'Haryali' as unsuitable and almost the same number regarded the time as suitable. However, in case of 'Kisan Time' most of the respondents (33.60%) regarded the time as unsuitable. Only a fraction (04.00%) of the respondents regarded the time as suitable.

Table 4. Opinion of respondents about the timings of agricultural telecasts

Sr. No.	Opinion	'Haryali'		'Kisan Time'	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Suitable	19	15.20	05	04.00
2	Unsuitable	20	16.00	42	33.60
3	No response	86	68.80	78	62.40
	Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

The respondents were further asked about the suitable timings for the agricultural telecasts. The data are given in Table 5, which depict that among the viewers, most of the respondents (15.20%) preferred afternoon followed by night (9.60%) and late night (6.40%) in case of 'Haryali'. As regards 'Kisan Time' most of the respondents (24.00%) preferred night followed by late night (9.60%).

Table 5. Suitable timings for agricultural telecasts

Sr. No.	Timing	'Haryali'		'KisanTime'	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Morning	00	00.00	00	00.00
2	Noon	00	00.00	05	04.00
3	Afternoon	19	15.20	00	00.00
4	Night	12	09.60	30	24.00
5	Late night	08	06.40	12	09.60
6	No response	86	68.80	78	62.40
	Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Effectiveness of agricultural telecasts

Farmers seem to be the best judge of the agricultural telecasts. Therefore, they were asked about the effectiveness of the telecasts. The data in this regard are given in Table 6, which highlight that 20.80 and 10.40% respondents regarded 'Haryali' as most effective and moderately effective respectively. Similarly, 25.60 and 12.00% of the respondents perceived 'Kisan Time' as most effective and moderately effective respectively. No one regarded the telecasts less effective or as ineffective. 'Kisan Time' appeared to be relatively better than 'Haryali' in this regard.

Table 6. Perceived effectiveness of agricultural telecasts

Sr. No.	Perception	'Haryaly'		'Kisan Time'	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Most effective	26	20.80	32	25.60
2	Moderately effective	13	10.40	15	12.00
3	Less effective	00	00.00	00	00.00
4	Ineffective	00	00.00	00	00.00
5	No response	86	68.86	78	62.40
	Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

CONCLUSIONS

A large majority (68.80%) of the respondents did not watch 'Haryali'. Among the viewers, most of the respondents (22.40%) watched frequently. Those who watched regularly and rarely were negligible. Similarly, a majority (62.40%) of the respondents never watched 'Kisan Time', while 24.00 and 9.60% watched frequently and rarely respectively. However, regular viewers of the programme were negligible in number. Most of the respondents (28.00 and 26.40%) regarded 'Haryali' as interesting and informative respectively. Relatively less number of respondents (12.80%) regarded the programme useful. Very few respondents considered its contents as practicable and timely. About 34% respondents perceived 'Kisan Time'

as interesting and informative. The programme was perceived useful by only 18.40% of the respondents. No one regarded the contents of the telecasts practicable and timely. Most of the respondents (27.20 and 31.20%) regarded presentation style of the experts as highly impressive in 'Haryali' and 'Kisan Time' respectively. 'Kisan Timed' appeared to be better than 'Haryali' in this respect. About half of the respondents regarded the time of 'Haryali' as unsuitable. Similarly most of the respondents (33.60%) regarded the time of 'Kisan Time' as unsuitable. 'Kisan Time' was perceived to be relatively better than 'Haryali' with regard to its effectiveness.

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