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**Contribution of Television Channels in Disseminating Agricultural Information for the
Agricultural Development of Bangladesh: A Case Study**

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Abstract

Bangladesh is largely the agriculture based country where a variety of crops and vegetables are cultivated all the year round. The environment is propitious enough for agriculture. About 50% people of this country are directly and indirectly engaged with the agro based jobs. The contribution of agricultural sector to GDP is 18.70%. In this regard, if it is possible to provide the right farmers with the right information by the right way, the success will be definite. Different mass media plays an important role to disseminate agricultural information. Television is one of the most popular electronic media among the natives of this country for news and information. Therefore, this paper attempts to analyze the contribution of various TV channels on the dissemination of agricultural information for the farmers for their agricultural enrichment. Findings indicate a positive curve towards the dependency on and contribution of TV channels. The study was conducted on three villages of Durgapur Thana in Rajshahi district of Bangladesh.

Introduction

Bangladesh is basically an agricultural country. Agriculture sector is one of the vital sectors in Bangladesh that controls the economy of the country (Uddin and Alam, 2008). According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2008), in Bangladesh, the total arable land is 8.44 million hectare and one of the main contributors to the national GDP. Around 18.70% (Ministry of Finance, 2013) of the total GDP comes from this sector and employs just about 47.5% (MES, 2010, BBS) of the total work force. Agriculture includes farming crops, animals, fishery and foresting contributions. Farming crops includes paddy, wheat, jute, vegetables, sugarcane, pulses etc; animal farming includes dairy, poultry, fishery, sericulture etc. The importance of the agriculture sector has long been recognized by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Government has been launching a range of development projects and programs in the agriculture sector in the line of National Agriculture Policy formulated in 1999 (BBS, 2008). The GoB has targeted the year 2013 for getting the self-sufficiency on food.

Different Government Organizations (GOs) and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are trying with diverse initiatives for strengthening the agriculture sector of Bangladesh. Though various efforts of improvement are in there, but the agriculture sector is facing a range of challenges for its development like over population, climate change, loss of agricultural land, infertile land, use of excessive pesticides, lack of inputs, improper irrigation etc. Recently Bangladesh Academy of Agriculture (Shaikh, 2008) has identified dearth of proper information and lack of inclusion of ICT are some significant challenges.

For providing agricultural information to the farmers GOs and NGOs has taken some time befitting initiatives. The Government of Bangladesh has established Agricultural Information

Service (AIS) through which training guides, news letters, radio & TV programs, films etc. are arranged for disseminating information. It also uses different print and electronic media for this purpose. In 2010, AIS has developed SMS based information service with the help of a mobile operator 'Banglalink' and UNDP in the country. In 2003, under the "Support to ICT" taskforce program the ministry of agriculture of Bangladesh did set up an agricultural information system. But it was not met the success because it was incompatible for extension due to lack of database supports. In 2005, a group of researchers of D.Net (Development Research Network, Bangladesh) proposed the idea of "Pallitathya Help Center" and conducted a project on it. But unfortunately it was not so successful. Since October 2008, an e-agriculture initiative known as "e-Krishok" has been using information and communication technologies to deliver information and advisory services to farmers in rural and remote locations at a lower cost. In 2009 ministry of agriculture in Bangladesh with support from UNDP Bangladesh has initiated Agriculture Information and Communication Centers (AICC) in 20 areas. And agricultural information service has piloted 10 farmers community based Call Centers in those twenty areas (ebangladeshexpo, 2013).

Despite those initiatives, most of the farmers of Bangladesh are still in lack of information and modern agricultural knowledge. They need an easy access point to get and meet their information need. Information need has three basic elements: availability, access and utilization. But the GOs and NGOs initiatives are hard to reach and they lack ease of use by the farmers.

Under the above circumstances, this study has tried to measure the contribution of TV channels in disseminating agricultural information in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

Information plays a key role in agricultural development and production and their effective communication will help facilitate mutual understanding among farmers, agricultural scientist and extension workers (Agboola, 2000). According to Kaye (1995) good information improves decision-making, enhances efficiency and provides a competitive edge. Knowledge and information are basic ingredients for increased agricultural production and productivity. Information is a critical resource in the operation and management of the agricultural enterprise (Opara, 2008). Abbas et al. (2008) argued that lack of information adapted to local needs and lack of technical knowledge at farm level are the important factors responsible for this low yield. Information is therefore considered as one of the most important resources in agricultural and rural development that assists the farmers to take decisions and appropriate actions for further development related to farming (Harris et al., 2001; Morrow et al., 2002 and Stefano et al., 2005).

Mass media methods in agricultural information dissemination generally, are useful in reaching a wide audience at a very fast rate. They are useful as sources of agricultural information to farmers and as well constitute methods of notifying farmers of new developments and emergencies. They could equally be important in stimulating farmers' interest in new ideas and practices (Ani et al. 1997). Radio and television are the most effective tools in communication for the support of development (Hussain, 1997). TV can provide an illiterate person valuable instruction and education in agriculture, health population control, sanitation and other aspect of his daily life (Rahman, 1999). This paper tries to present the effect of agricultural information broadcasted by the TV channels of Bangladesh towards the development of the farmers of the Durgapur Thana in the Rajshahi District of Bangladesh.

Television Channels in Bangladesh

The history of television in Bangladesh began when a state-owned national TV station Bangladesh Television (BTV) started its terrestrial operations in 1964. In April 11, 2004 BTV has started “BTV World” satellite Transmission. The channel has contributed in the nation building process for more than 34 years without any partner. Besides education and entertainment, its mandate is to ensure the equitable dissemination of information to the mass people. It telecasts various programs comprising drama, documentaries, musicals, education and information, including 14 News bulletins in English and Bangle daily. BTV has a potential coverage of about 97 percent of the country’s population. For the greater interest of the nation 78% of the total programme include issues like agriculture, health and population, children and women, education and human rights etc. Its content mix comprises 20% news, 30% development and educative, 35% cultural and entertainment and other program 15%. (Bangladesh Television, 2013). In July 15, 1998 Bangladesh entered in the new era of TV channel history as ATN Bangla the first private satellite TV channel started its transmission. The first private terrestrial TV channel in Bangladesh was Ekushey Television which started its operation in April 14, 2000. Later the channel has started its satellite transmission stopping the terrestrial transmission. At present there are 3 state-owned and about 24 private TV channels in Bangladesh (Ministry of Information, 2010; Wikipedia, 2013).

Name of the TV Channels	Year of Establishment	Ownership	Language	Genre
Asain TV	2013	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
ATN Bangla	July 15, 1998	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
ATN News	2010	Private	Bengali	24 hour news and current affairs

Banglavisision	2005	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Bangladesh Television (BTV)	1964	State owned	Bengali	Entertainment
BTV World	2005	State owned	Bengali	Entertainment
Bijoy TV	-	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Boishakhi TV	-	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Channel i	1999	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Channel 9	2010	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Channel 16	-	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Channel 24	-	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Desh TV	March 26, 2009	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Diganta Television	2007	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Ekattor TV	-	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Ekushey Television	April 14, 2000	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Gazi TV (GTV)	-	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Independent Television	2010	Private	Bengali	24 hour news and current affairs
Islamic TV	2007	Private	Bengali	Religious
Maasranga TV	-	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Mohona TV	2010	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
My TV	-	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
NTV	2003	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
RTV	December 26, 2005	Private	Bengali	Entertainment
Sangsad TV	-	State owned	Bengali	Parliamentary activities
SA TV	-	Private	Bengali	Entertainment

Somoy TV	-	Private	Bengali	24 hour news and current affairs
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(Source: Ministry of Information, GoB and Wikipedia)

Table 1: List of TV Channels in Bangladesh

Methodology

The study has conducted in the Durgapur Thana of Rajshahi District in Bangladesh. The researchers have accomplished the survey within one month in the three villages namely Hariapara, Amgachi and Gowrihar started from 1 February to 29 February 2012. A structured questionnaire was prepared to collect the data. The researchers went to the respondents with the 60 structured questionnaires to 60 farmers randomly in those villages and got the interview by themselves. The researcher also talked informally to extract the most possible data from the respondents. The gathered data has analyzed by simple tabular and graphical and percentage representation.

Objectives

The main objectives of this study are –

- To know the duration of watching agricultural programs in the TV channels.
- To find out which TV channels are preferred by the respondents.
- To trace out the most preferred agricultural programs of the respondents.
- To determine what type of agricultural information the respondents get from the Channels.
- To identify the farmer's initiatives to apply knowledge in their agricultural process after watching TV programs.

Findings

Age of the Respondents

The table represents the information of respondent's age where it is seen that majority number 18 (30%) of respondent's age level is between (25-30) years followed by 21.67% (30-35) years, 20% (35-40) years and 16.67% (20-25) years. The least number is 11.67% whose age is above 40.

Age (by year)	Respondents	Percentage
20-25	10	16.67
25-30	18	30.00
30-35	13	21.67
35-40	12	20.00
40+	7	11.67
Total	60	100.00

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

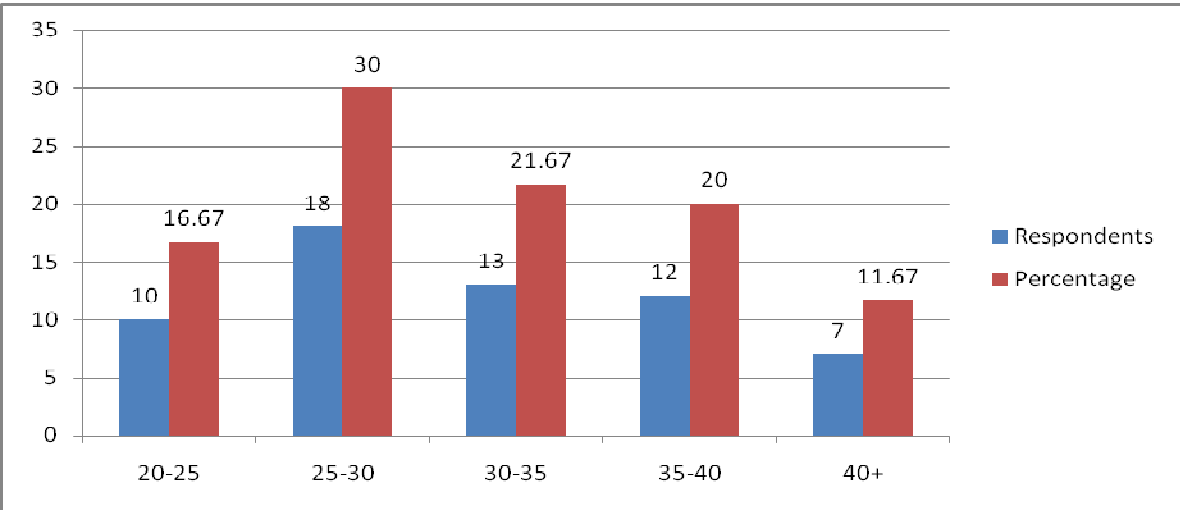


Figure 1: Age of the Respondents

Educational Qualifications

Education is the root of all success. An educated person is generally conscious. And a conscious person knows what is good for life and which is not propitious for life. Table 1 depicts about the educational qualification of the respondents. As of the table it is observed that the largest proportion 25 (41.67%) of the respondents is literate where as 38.33% respondents have completed primary education. Moreover only 1.67% respondents have finished the higher secondary level education and 6.67% respondents cannot read and write. Besides, no respondents have diploma and graduate.

Educational Qualifications	Respondents	Percentage
Signature literate	25	41.67
Primary education	23	38.33
Secondary School	7	11.67
Higher Secondary	1	1.67
Diploma education	0	0.00
Graduate	0	0.00
Illiterate	4	6.67
Total	60	100.00

Table 3: Respondents Educational Qualification

Occupation

Table 4 express regarding the occupation of the respondents. It is noticed that the big number 47 (78.33%) of respondents lead their live depending on the agriculture while the least portion 5 (8.33%) of respondents depends on both agriculture and business. Besides, 13.33% respondent's occupation is simultaneously agriculture and jobs.

Name of the occupation	Respondents	Percentage
Agriculture	47	78.33
Agriculture and business	5	8.33
Agriculture and jobs	8	13.33
Total	60	100.00

Table 4: Occupation

Frequency of Watching TV

In the modern age, it will be difficult to find those who do not enjoy the various programs in the TV. Now a day, TV has been the sources of entertainment and different news of both home and abroad that may cover social, cultural, political, educational, agricultural, economical, health, geographical, environmental, religious and others information. Table 3/The figure 2 reveals the information regarding the frequency of watching TV by the respondents. As of the table/bar graph it is observed that majority number 40 (66.67%) of respondents watch TV everyday where as 33.33% respondents enjoy it irregularly. No respondents commented that they do not enjoy anytime.

Answer	Respondents	Percentage
Everyday	40	66.67
Irregular	20	33.33
Not applicable	0	0.00
Total	60	100.00

Table 5: Frequency of Watching TV

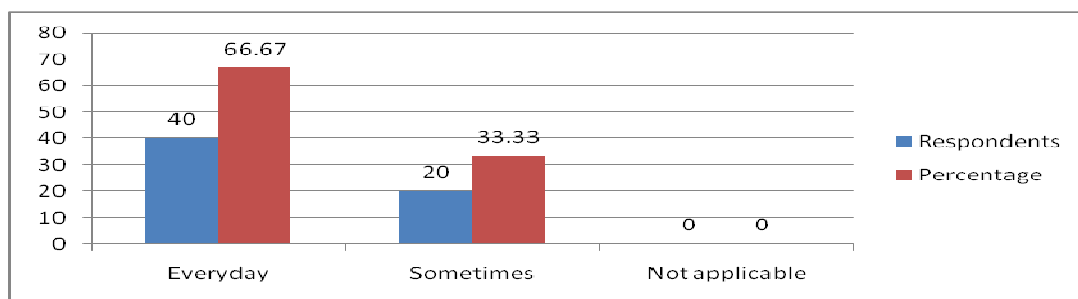


Figure 2: Frequency of Watching TV

Watching Agricultural Program in TV

Figure 3 represents the frequency of watching agricultural information based programs in the TV channels where 92% respondents watch the program and least number 8% do not watch.

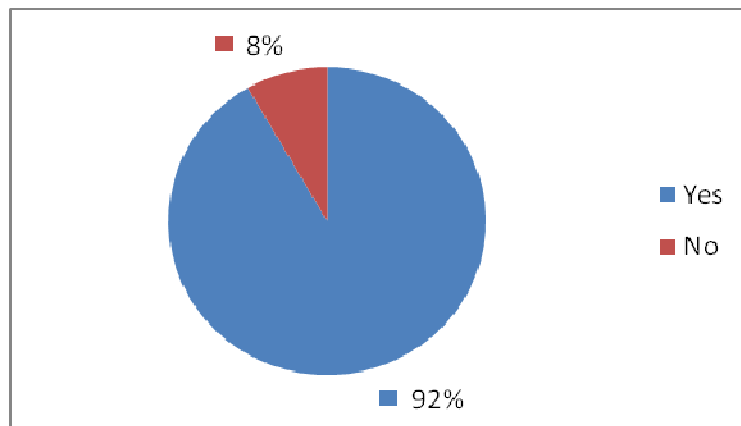


Figure 3: Frequency of Watching Agricultural Program in the Various TV Channel

Preferred TV Channels for Agricultural Program

Table 6 shows the Preferred TV Channel for Agricultural Program. Majority number 27 (45%) of respondents watches the agricultural information based program in BTV followed by 23 (38.33%) Channel I, ATN Bangla 6 (10%) and Bangla Vision 4 (6.67%).

Preferred TV Channels	Respondents	Percentage
BTV	27	45.00
Channel I	23	38.33
Bangla Vision	4	6.67
ATN Bangla	6	10.00
Total	60	100.00

Table 6: Preferred TV Channels for Agricultural Program

Preferred Agricultural Program in different TV Channels

Table 7 reveals about the Preferred Agricultural Program in different TV Channels. It is seen that Mati O Manush broadcasted by BTV is preferred by the majority number 45 (17.79%) of respondents while Krishi Dibanishi broadcasted by BTV and Channel I is chosen by 16.60%. Besides Desh O Jonopoder Khobor, Hridoye Mati O Manusher Dak, Hridoye Mati o Manush broadcasted by BTV, Channel I are also chosen by 20(7.91%) simultaneously. The least number 6(2.37%) of respondents prefer to watch Krishi Bishoyok Pramanno Anushthan of ATN.

Preferred Agricultural Programs in TV (Translated Title)	Respondents	TV Channel	Percentage
Mati O Manush (Soil & Men)	45	BTV	17.79
Desh O Jonopoder Khobor	20	BTV	7.91
Hridoye Mati O Manusher Dak (The Post of Soil & Men in Heart)	20	Channel I	7.91
Hridoye Mati o Manush (Soil & Men in Heart)	20	Channel I	7.91
Krishi Dibanishi (Agriculture: Round the Clock)	42	BTV and Channel I	16.60
Krishi Budget (Agriculture Budget)	23	Channel I	9.09
Krishi Barta (Agriculture News)	12	Channel I	4.74
Krishi Shongbad (Agriculture News)	37	Channel I	14.62
Krishi Bishoyok Pramanno Anushthan (Agriculture Based Documentary)	6	ATN	2.37
Shamol Bangla (Green Bangla)	16	Bangla Vision	6.32
Obiram Bangla (Unending Bangla)	12	BTV and ATN	4.74
Total	253	--	100

Multiple responses (N=253)

Table 7: Preferred Agricultural Program in different TV Channels

Types of Agricultural Information the Respondents Get

Table 8 demonstrates that majority number 50 (13.19%) of respondents get the quality information regarding quality seeds while the information of fertilizer is got by 47 (12.40%) respondents. Besides these, 43 (11.35%), 40 (10.55%), 37 (9.76%) respondents collect the information on pest control information, Irrigation and Water management, and Seasonal fruits,

vegetables information respectively. Moreover, information on poultry firm and fishing are got by 35 (9.23%) respondents respectively. Furthermore, the least number 15 (3.96%) of respondents have said that they get the information on soil testing and uncomplicated cultivation information respectively.

Types of Agricultural Information	Respondents	Percentage
Quality seeds & germination information	50	13.19
Fertilization information	47	12.40
Pest control information	43	11.35
Uncomplicated cultivation information	15	3.96
Preservation of crops and vegetables information	17	4.49
Poultry farm information	35	9.23
Fishing information	35	9.23
Dairy farming information	20	5.28
Soil testing information	15	3.96
Irrigation and water management	40	10.55
Alternative cultivation information	25	6.60
Seasonal fruits, vegetables information	37	9.76
Total	379	100

Multiple responses (N=379)

Table 8: Types of Agricultural Information the Respondents get from the Channels

Initiatives to Apply Knowledge in Agricultural Process after Watching Programs

If anyone is motivated by something to do anything, he/she tries to accomplish the tasks as of his/her strength. Table 9 demonstrates about the Initiatives of the farmers to apply in their cultivation process after watching the programs. It reveals that majority number 41 (68.33%) of respondents has taken the moderate initiatives to apply the techniques and strategies which he has learned through watching the programs while 16.67% has taken the strong initiatives and 15% has taken the less strong initiatives to apply on their cultivation process.

Extent of initiatives	Respondents	Percentage
Strong initiatives	10	16.67
Moderately strong initiatives	41	68.33
Less strong initiatives	9	15.00
Total	60	100.00

Table 9: Extent of Initiatives to Apply Knowledge in Agricultural Process after Watching Programs

Result of Information Adopting in Agricultural Production

Increment of Production	Respondents	Percentage
Very high	7	11.67
High	36	60.00
Moderately high	12	20.00
As of before	5	8.33
Total	60	100.00

Table 10: Effect of Information Adopting in Agricultural Production

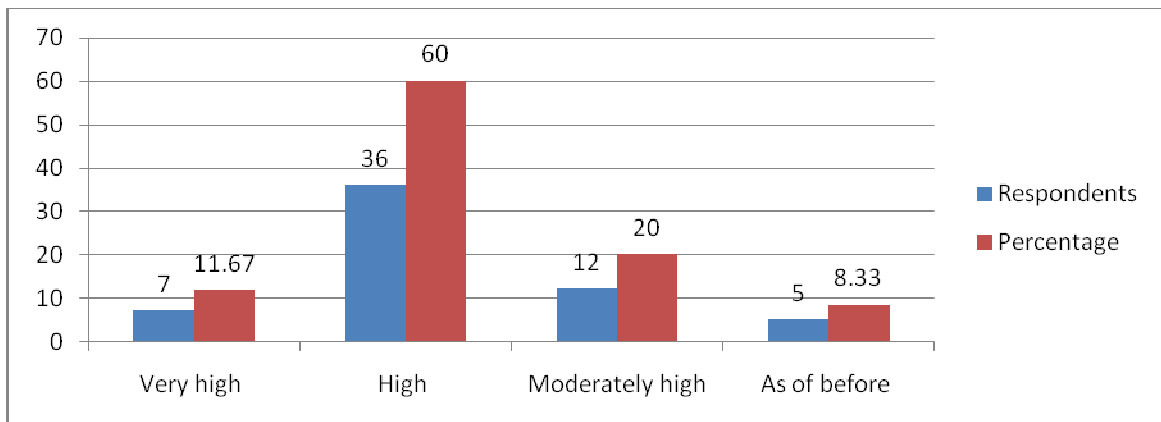


Figure 4: Effect of Information Adopting in Agricultural Production

Key findings

- Majority number of respondent's age level is between (25-30) years.
- The largest proportion 25 (41.67%) of the respondents is literate only.

- It is noticed that the big number 47 (78.33%) of respondents lead their live depending on the agriculture.
- Majority number 40 (66.67%) of respondents watch TV every day.
- Most of the respondents 91.67% watch the agriculture based program in TV.
- Majority number 27 (45%) of respondents watches the agricultural information based program in BTV.
- In this study it is seen that, Mati O Manush broadcasted by BTV is preferred by the majority number of respondents.
- Majority number 50 (13.19%) of respondents get the worth information regarding quality seeds from the TV channels.
- It is seen that big portion of the respondents are very satisfied with the agricultural program of different TV channels.
- It reveals that majority number 41 (68.33%) of respondents has taken the moderate initiatives to apply the techniques and strategies which he has learned through watching the program to their cultivable land.
- A large portion of the farmer has been getting high production after utilizing the sought information from the TV channels.
- Respondents were asked about the alternative sources of agricultural information where it is clear that most of the respondents get the agricultural information from Upazila Agriculture Officer.

Conclusion

Agriculture and farmers are correlated. The development of the farmers will ensure the development of entire agriculture. The agricultural development will largely depend on how much farmers are aware of agriculture and in what extent they get the information. At present, the various TV channels have been broadcasting the effective agricultural information based program. As a result, farmers are getting the valuable information on agriculture. But these are not sufficient. The TV channels should be more conscious to broadcast more agricultural information based program to create the awareness among the farmers so that they can put the best effort towards the development of the agriculture which will enhance the development of the country. As a result, Bangladesh will be ahead one more step.

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