

PRIORITIZING NEEDS FOR COMMUNITY RADIO BROADCAST FOR LIVELIHOOD

IMPROVEMENT: A STUDY OF PANTNAGAR JANVANI COMMUNITY

RADIO SERVICE OF UTTARAKHAND

ARCHANA BHATT¹ & S. K. KASHYAP²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Agricultural Communication, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology,
Pantagar, Uttarakhand, India

²Professor, Agricultural Communication, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology,
Pantagar, Uttarakhand, India

ABSTRACT

Information sharing through communication has a major role to play to bring out developmental change. Among the various communication media, mass media is considered to be the most effective one to serve the purpose. For the rural masses who reside in remote and less accessible villages, radio is the best medium to disseminate information. But in order to bring social, cultural, political and economical change there is a need of such a medium that can provide need based information to the community for improvement in their lifestyle. For this purpose, community radio seems to be the best alternative. It is the priority of a community radio to deliver content that relates to the information needs of the community it serves. The information thus provided and shared plays a major role in improvement of their livelihoods as well. The paper thus examines the varied information needs of the listeners of community radio and whether those needs were fulfilled by the media through various programmes. The sample consisted of 60 listeners and a pretested interview schedule was used to collect data. The data reveals that majority of the listeners preferred information related to improved crop varieties, land preparation, nursery preparation, importance of chemical and organic fertilizers, safe grain storage, prevention and control measures, credit availability and market facility, cattle raising, ill effects of smoking and drinking, job vacancies and women safety issues.

KEYWORDS: Community Radio, Information Needs, Listeners, Livelihood Improvement

INTRODUCTION

Communication plays an essential role in human development in today's new climate of social change. Communication is the central or a mediating factor facilitating and contributing to collective change process (**Sarvaes and Liu 2007**). Among the various communication media, mass media play a very effective role in the modern society. It can bring about revolutionary change in the society as it deeply influences our social, cultural, political, economical, civil and philosophical outlook. But when a bigger chunk of population of the country resides in the distant, isolated and inaccessible villages, the concern of providing effective communication becomes more problematic. For the rural masses, radio is considered as the most effective mass media as it reaches to almost whole of rural India in spite of its remoteness. It offers advantages in relation to time, cost, effectiveness and localness. Though radio is often seemed to be used for seeking developmental information or news but it remains dominated with entertainment and other issues while less focused towards developmental issues. Hence, there is a necessity for such a communication medium that can efficiently

work for the development of rural community and can lead to development. To serve this purpose, community radio seems to be the best option.

A community radio station is such radio station that is operated by a community, in the community, for the community and about the community. It plays a central role in community development (**Fraser and Estrada, 2001**). It allows for interaction, dialogue and direct community voice, as well as gives access to decision making and events. Community radio is well recognized as a powerful vehicle for advocacy and social change. Community radio stations can play a significant role in increasing and promoting participation, and opinion sharing, improving and diversifying knowledge and skills especially in the underdeveloped and developing countries. It can be an effective extension tool to reach out to the communities and to provide them with information relating to all aspects of their life. By providing information on various aspects related to the livelihoods of the community members, be it agriculture, education, health or any other field, community radio plays an important role in improving the livelihoods of people. Community radio can be educative and informative at the same time thus helping the people aware on various life aspects. In overall, a community radio provides the community a better way of living by being concerned about their livelihood issues and gives them a platform to express their viewpoints.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Khan (2010) in a study concluded that community radio plays a pivotal role in making the masses aware about their basic rights and duties. Not only limited to solving problems which a common man faces in his day-to-day life, but also the community radio provides them a strong platform from where they can freely disseminate their ideas among the community members in the best possible manner. Community radios also play a major role in agricultural development. As reported by Nazn and Hasbullah (2010), dissemination of information along with new concepts and farming techniques can bring novel opportunities to the farmers. Baniya (2014) in a study found that News and current affairs programs were the most preferred program by the people of all educational level in the study area. Young people were found to be interested on informative, educational, news and current affair programs rather than entertainment whereas the younger generation or the teenagers were found to be interested on entertainment programs. Likewise, the people involved in agriculture which made the majority of the population were interested to listen to the programs based on agriculture, forestry and rural issues. Al Hassan et al (2011) in his study found that Simli Radio has worked to improve awareness and knowledge of solutions to community development problems ranging from culture, rural development, education, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture to local governance and has promoted Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) operators and consequently improved sales and incomes.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research methodology is a detailed plan of investigation and the blue print of procedure for carrying out the research. The study was conducted in Uttarakhand state during the year 2015. 60 respondents were purposively selected for carrying out the research through simple random sampling out of the Phone-In log register of community register of Pant agar Janvani irrespective of their residential area. These respondents were the frequent or regular listeners of the radio station and were selected for the purpose of studying their general profile and information need assessment along with the extent of fulfillment of their needs and also the various strengths & constraints associated with the community radio station. The listeners were also selected for the intention of seeking various suggestions for the improvement of the

Pantnagar Janvani Community radio station. For the purpose of studying the role of Pantnagar Janvani Community Radio Station in livelihood improvement, 6 Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) were held in the purposively selected villages having the maximum listeners, where a large number of people actively listen to the programmes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

At present, community radio is emerging as a major roleplayer in development of communities in overcoming barriers and providing platform for forwarding and accepting innovations, ideas, technologies, opinions, etc. They are producing and broadcasting variety of programmes in variety of formats carrying variety of messages for local people with their participation, but the development of communities can never occur until & unless the programmes aired on the community radio are in synchronisation with the information needs of listeners. Listeners are the active participants in any community radio and their information needs become a major issue along with their level of faith in the services. There is still a gap that persists between the programmers and the listeners or the end users, hence it is very important to know the information needs of the listeners. It is very important to know that the content or the information being disseminated through the community radio service is actually fulfilling the information needs of the listeners or not. It is equally important to study the role of community radio service in livelihood improvement of the community. Therefore a well organized study is required to be done to analyse the extent of fulfillment of information needs of the listeners of Pantnagar Janvani has been done.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study

- To identify various information needs of the listeners Community Radio Service Pantnagar Janvani
- To study the extent of fulfillment of information needs of listeners of Community Radio Service Pantnagar Janvani through the broadcasted programmes

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

- **Agriculture Related Information Needs**

Regarding need of agriculture information by the listeners, an in depth study was taken to observe the felt needs of the community related to different aspects of agriculture. The findings are given as follows:

Information Needs Regarding Crops and Improved Varieties

Regarding different aspects of crop production, maximum information need was found in case of **cereals** followed by other crops along with **improved varieties** of various crops.

Table 1

S No	Crops	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Improved varieties of all crops & Cereals	2.18	I
2	Pulses	2.16	II
3	Oilseeds	2.15	III
4	Sugarcane	2.08	IV
5	Horticultural crops	2.06	V

Information Needs Regarding Land Preparation and Seeds

Through the research, it was found that respondents mainly need information regarding **land preparation, method of sowing, seed rate and seed treatment** in case of land preparation & seed related information.

Table 2

S No	Land Preparation & Seeds	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Land preparation for various crops	2.18	I
2	Method of sowing, seed rate and seed treatment	2.16	II
3	Moisture conservation	2.15	III
4	Certified seeds & their availability & Sowing and planting time	2.13	IV
5	Soil testing	2.08	V

Information Needs Regarding Horticulture

In case of information needs regarding horticulture, maximum information was needed in case of nursery preparation, processing and preservation.

Table 3

S No	Horticulture	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Nursery preparation, Processing & preservation	2.08	I
3	Storage methods, Protection, care & harvesting	2.06	II

Information Needs Regarding Storage and Fertilizers

In case of Storage related information needs, listeners needed information mainly on **safe storage of grains from pests** followed by cold storage While, Information regarding fertilizers was mainly needed for **importance & use of chemical & natural fertilizers and organic fertilizers**.

Table 4

S No	Fertilizers	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Importance & use of chemical & natural fertilizers & Organic fertilizers	2.1	I
2	Balanced application, Availability & cost	2.08	II
3	Vermicompost & biofertilizers	2.06	III
S No	Storage	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Methods of safe storage of grains and protection from pests during storage	2.13	I
2	Cold storage	2.06	II

Information Needs Regarding Plant Protection

Listeners needed information regarding plant protection and irrigation mainly on **prevention & control measures** along with their **source, price & use of various pesticides**.

Table 5

S No	Area	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Prevention & control measures, Source, price and use of pesticides	2.18	I
2	Identification of various diseases & pests and Symptoms of infestation	2.15	II
3	Care & protection during use	2.16	III

4	Weed control	2.03	IV
5	Irrigation	2.08	V

Information Needs Related to Credit & Marketing

Information was needed the most in case of **credit & marketing** followed by equipments and machinery.

Table 6

S No	Area	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Availability of Credit, subsidies & marketing facilities & prices	2.28	I
2	Low cost implements & machinery, Availability & price	2.06	II

Livestock Related Information Needs

In various aspects, maximum information need was seen in case of **cattles** in all aspects, i.e. improved breeds, balanced feed & fodder, nutritive value of feed, protection from diseases, vaccination, care & management and marketing of products, followed by poultry, and fisheries and least in case of piggery.

Table 7

S No	Area	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Cattles	2.01	I
4	Poultry	1.73	II
5	Fisheries	1.64	III
6	Piggery	1.32	IV

Health & Hygiene Related Information Needs

Most needed information was seen in case of **ill effects of drinking & smoking, identification, symptoms, prevention & protection of generally prevalent diseases** and **family planning** issues followed by other aspects.

Table 8

S No	Area	Weighted mean	Rank
1	Ill effects of smoking & drinking	2.83	I
2	Identification of general prevalent diseases & Symptoms of prevalent diseases	2.8	II
3	Preventive measures	2.76	III
4	Causal factors of prevalent diseases, Protection measures and Family planning issues	2.75	IV
5	Sanitation	2.73	V
6	Methods of family planning	2.71	VI
7	Nutrition & health issues		
	Women & Adolescent children	2.7	VII
	Pregnant & lactating women	2.66	IX
	Infants		
8	Govt. plans and programmes related to health & nutrition & safe drinking water	2.68	VIII
9	Facilities available in govt. hospitals	2.65	X

Education Related Information Needs

Most of the listeners needed information related to **job vacancies and entrance examinations** followed by girl education, career opportunities, scholarships and importance of science and maths education.

Table 9

S No	Area	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Job vacancies	2.81	I
2	Various entrance examinations	2.76	II
3	Importance of girl education & Career opportunities for children	2.75	III
4	Importance of education & Govt. scholarships available for school going children	2.73	IV
5	Importance of science & maths education	2.58	V

Information Needs Related to Social Aspects and Culture & Entertainment

Social Aspects

Respondents mainly wanted information to be given related to **women safety, youth empowerment, environment** followed by other aspects like gender issues, unemployment, income generation, entrepreneurship, personality development, etc. while least information need was seen in case of Cooperatives, NGOs, SHGs, etc.

Table 10

S No	Area	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Women safety issues	2.8	I
2	Youth empowerment	2.76	II
3	Environment	2.71	III
4	Role of youth in society	2.63	IV
5	Gender issues	2.56	V
6	Unemployment	2.55	VI
7	Income generating activities	2.51	VII
8	Entrepreneurial activities	2.48	VIII
9	Personality development	2.45	IX
10	Roads & transport	2.4	X
11	Communication skills	2.31	XI
12	Cooperatives, NGOs, SHGs, etc.	1.85	XII

Culture & Entertainment

Most of the listeners information needs were in case of **youth & children related shows, news & quizzes, local folk songs, dialects, stories**, followed by announcements, religious shows, festivals & days and tourism.

Table 11

S No	Area	Weighted Mean	Rank
1	Youth & children oriented shows, News & quizzes	2.63	I
2	Local folk songs, stories & dialects	2.56	II
3	Community announcements	2.4	III
4	Religious & cultural shows	2.36	IV
5	Important days & festivals	2.21	V
6	Tourism promoting shows	2.16	VI

It was found that the listeners of the community radio had varied information needs. Listeners needed information related to agriculture, livestock, health & sanitation, education, social issues, culture, etc. The information needs that were found to be maximum or most needed by majority of the listeners are given as follows:

Table 12

S No	Information Needs
1	Agriculture Related Information Needs
	Improved varieties of all crops & Cereals
	Availability of Credit, subsidies & marketing facilities & prices
	Land preparation for various crops
	Importance & use of chemical & natural fertilizers & Organic fertilizers
	Methods of safe storage of grains and protection from pests during storage
2	Livestock related information needs
	Cattles
3	Health & hygiene related information needs
	Ill effects of smoking & drinking
	Identification of general prevalent diseases & Symptoms of prevalent diseases
4	Education related information needs
	Job vacancies and entrance examinations
5	Information needs related to Social aspects
	Women safety issues
	Youth empowerment
	Environment
	Role of youth in society
6	Information needs related to culture and entertainment
	Youth & children oriented shows,
	News & quizzes
	Local folk songs, stories & dialects

Extent of Fulfillment of Information Needs

Regarding the fulfillment of information needs of the listeners, the most preferred information needs revealed through the survey were checked with the content that have been aired by the community radio through various programmes.

Table 13

Information Needs of Listeners	Information Given Through CRS	Remarks
Agriculture Related Information Needs		
Improved varieties and crops	Need fulfilled	
Land preparation for various crops & seeds	Need fulfilled	
Horticulture	Need fulfilled	
Beekeeping and sericulture	Need fulfilled	Not much required by listeners
Fertilizers	Need fulfilled	
Storage	Need fulfilled	
Plant protection	Need fulfilled	
Irrigation	Need fulfilled	
Agricultural Implements & machinery	Need fulfilled	
Credit and marketing facilities	Need fulfilled	
Livestock related information	Need fulfilled	
Health and sanitation related information needs		
Disease prevention, protection & control	Need fulfilled	
Ill effects of drinking & smoking	Need fulfilled	
Family planning	Need fulfilled	Frequency is less
Women, adolescent children and infants health	Need fulfilled	Frequency is less
Government plans, programmes and facilities relate to health	Need fulfilled	Frequency is less
Safe water and sanitation	Need fulfilled	

Education related information needs		
Importance of girl education	Need fulfilled	
Career opportunities and job vacancies	Need fulfilled	
Importance of science and maths education	Need fulfilled	
Government scholarships and entrance exams	Need fulfilled	
Social aspects		
Gender	Need fulfilled	
Women safety issues	Need fulfilled	Frequency is less
Roads and transport	Need fulfilled	Frequency is less
Entrepreneurship and income generation	Need fulfilled	
Environment	Need fulfilled	
Unemployment	Need fulfilled	
Youth empowerment & role in society	Need fulfilled	
Personality development & communication skills	Need fulfilled	
Culture & entertainment		
News & quizzes	Need fulfilled	
Local folk	Need fulfilled	
Community announcements	Need fulfilled	Less frequency
Youth & children oriented programmes	Need fulfilled	
Religious & cultural shows	Need fulfilled	Not much required by listeners
Tourism	Need fulfilled	

Hence, it was found that most of the preferred information needs of the listeners were broadcasted through one or the other programme of Pantnagar Janvani. While it was seen that programmes on few of the most preferred information needs were broadcasted in less frequency.

CONCLUSIONS

Community radio is more about bringing up the community voices for growth and development. It has played an eminent role in livelihood improvement throughout the world but the major concern is to assess actual information needs related to multiple livelihood options. The research taken focused on need analysis, assessment of problems and finalization of information to be catered in the community. It was found that information related to improved varieties was a critical intervention in crop raising. Similarly, land preparation, nursery preparation, importance of chemical and organic fertilizers, safe grain storage, prevention and control measures, credit availability and market facility were found to be the most preferred information needs. Similarly, cattle raising was most preferred segment in livestock rearing. Ill effects of smoking and drinking was found to be the most preferred segment in health and hygiene. Job vacancies were more preferred need in education related information needs. Women safety needs were found to be the most critical issue in demand in social aspects. Therefore, in respect of livelihood improvement, these felt needs were found to be critical information needs to be catered through community radio in different formats to bring desirable change.

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