

## **ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN CHANGING AWARENESS LEVEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE AMONG SMALL AND MARGINAL PADDY FARMERS OF TAMIL NADU**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study aims to assess the role of mass media in changing awareness level on the impact of climate change among small and marginal paddy farmers. A sample size of 200 respondents was selected from the districts of Erode and Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu. Findings revealed that majority of the farmers (41.5 per cent) have medium level of awareness about climate change. Variations in awareness levels of farmers are noticed among farmers from two different location (sub basins) selected for the study. Majority (43%) of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin had medium level mass media exposure, whereas in Ponnaniyar basin 40.00 per cent of the respondents were under high level of mass media exposure followed by medium and low. Different media would have been sought by the respondents for getting information on agricultural aspects. Even though most of the respondents were literates, limited availability of magazines, journals and periodicals related to agriculture and the problems on their subscription were acting as the limiting factors for accessing agricultural information. Leveraging traditional mass media and modern ICT technologies will help in the long run to increase the awareness levels among farming communities and help in devising and disseminating suitable coping mechanisms.

**KEYWORDS:** Awareness, Climate Change, Disseminating, Coping Mechanism and Information

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mass media plays an important role in disseminating the farm technologies. Agricultural technologies are disseminated through magazines, newspaper, radio and television. Climate change with its unpredictable turn out of events could result in deleterious consequences. Paddy being a water intensive crop could easily become vulnerable to its onslaught. In this context, awareness of climate change and its effects is of utmost concern. Media plays a vital role in educating and enlightening the people and the governments to protect and preserve natural resources in the interests of future generations and the climatic chaos. Sustainable Development is attained by protecting the environment in a judicious use of natural resources (Prabhanjan Yadav and Rapaka Jhansi Rani, 2011). In this regard media plays a crucial role in creating awareness and bringing the positive behavioral change among people in climate change. Different media would have been sought by the respondents for getting information on agricultural aspects. Now-a-days, in each and every house one having mass media like radio, television, newspaper *etc.*, but the coverage of agricultural related programmes by these sources is very limited when compared to other entertainment programmes. Again, though most of the respondents were functionally literates, limited availability of magazines, journals and periodicals related to agriculture and the problems on their subscription were acting as the limiting factors for gathering agricultural information from these sources too. Mass media play an important role in disseminating the farm technologies. Agricultural informations are disseminated through

magazines, newspaper, radio and television. Hence it becomes necessary to know about the level of mass media exposure.

The study was conducted in the Vaiyampatty block of Tiruchirapalli District (Ponnaniyar Basin) and Erode block of Erode District (Kalingarayan Basin) in Tamil Nadu. It was selected based on the water availability for farming situation. Seven villages in Ponnaniyar basin and eleven villages in Kalingarayan basins were selected for the study. This paper discussed about Role of Mass Media in Changing Awareness Level on impacts of climate change on different mass media method among paddy farmers of Erode and Tiruchirapalli districts of Tamil Nadu.

## METHODOLOGY

Paddy is the staple food crop of Tamil Nadu and is heavily exposed to the extreme and extraneous events of climate change. Erode and Tiruchirapalli districts were purposively selected for the study as the district has high range of variability in both rainfall and temperature. Kalingarayan (Erode) and Ponnaniyar (Tiruchirapalli) basins were then chosen as they have maximum acreage under paddy with majority of the farmers being small (2.5 to 5 acres) and marginal (< 2.5 acres). Canal irrigation was also found to be prominent in these basins resulting in farmers becoming more vulnerable to climate change events. Based on the discussions with the officials and subject matter specialists of the agricultural department one block was selected from each basin. For the selection of villages, an inventory of revenue villages in each block was collected. Then ten villages from each block were randomly chosen. The total sample size was 200 with randomly selecting 100 paddy farmers (comprising 50 male farmers and 50 female farmers) from each of the blocks.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Mass Media Exposure

Nowadays mass media plays an important role in disseminating the farm technologies. Agricultural informations are disseminated through magazines, newspaper, radio and television. Hence it becomes necessary to know about the level of mass media exposure. The data regarding mass media exposure are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Mass Media Exposure (n=200)**

S. No.	Categories	Kalingarayan Basin (n =100)		Ponnaniyar Basin (n =100)	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1.	Low	23	23.00	21	21.00
2.	Medium	43	43.00	39	39.00
3.	High	34	34.00	40	40.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

It is apparent from the Table 1 that 43.00 per cent of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin comes under medium level mass media exposure followed by high (34.00 %) and low (23.00 %). Whereas in Ponnaniyar basin 40.00 per cent of the respondents were under high level of mass media exposure followed by medium and low with 39.00 per cent and 21.00 per cent respectively. Different media would have been sought by the respondents for getting information on agricultural aspects. Now-a-days, in each and every house, it is noticed that mass media like Radio and Television are available but the coverage of agricultural related programmes by these sources is very limited, when compared to other entertainment programmes. Even though most of the respondents were literates, limited availability of magazines, journals and periodicals related to agriculture and the problems on their subscription were acting as the limiting factors for accessing agricultural information.

There is not much difference in the mass media exposure of respondents among two basins. Mass media is playing greater role in the dissemination of information more effectively there by one can easily became aware of the things which are happening in their day to day life. Study implied that, those who are having high level of mass media participation have greater perception and adaptation ability to climate change.

### Mass Media Extension Methods

The success of agricultural development programmes in developing countries largely depends on the nature and extent of use of mass media in mobilization of people for development. The planners in developing countries realize that the development of agriculture could be hastened with the effective use of mass media. Radio, Televisions have been acclaimed to be the most effective media for diffusing the scientific knowledge to the masses. In a country like India, where literacy level is low, the choice of communication media is of vital importance.

**Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents According to Their Mass Media Extension Methods**  
n= 200

S. No.	Particulars	Kalingarayan Basin (n=100)			Ponnaiyar Basin (n=100)		
		Regularly	Occasionally	Never	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
1.	Listening to agricultural programmes in radio	69.00 (per cent)	24.00 (per cent)	7.00 (per cent)	54.00 (per cent)	37.00 (per cent)	9.00 (per cent)
2.	Reading newspaper	87.00 (per cent)	9.00 (per cent)	4.00 (per cent)	60.00 (per cent)	16.00 (per cent)	24.00 (per cent)
3.	Reading farm magazines and journals	60.00 (per cent)	33.00 (per cent)	7.00 (per cent)	68.00 (per cent)	19.00 (per cent)	13.00 (per cent)
4.	Reading leaf lets/ folders/ pamphlets	40.00 (per cent)	45.00 (per cent)	15.00 (per cent)	57.00 (per cent)	17.00 (per cent)	26.00 (per cent)
5.	Viewing agricultural programmes in TV	59.00 (per cent)	38.00 (per cent)	3.00 (per cent)	11.00 (per cent)	76.00 (per cent)	13.00 (per cent)
6.	Attending agricultural meetings	50.00 (per cent)	40.00 (per cent)	10.00 (per cent)	77.00 (per cent)	14.00 (per cent)	9.00 (per cent)
7.	Demonstrations	35.00 (per cent)	50.00 (per cent)	15.00 (per cent)	16.00 (per cent)	69.00 (per cent)	15.00 (per cent)
8.	Attending field days	13.00 (per cent)	55.00 (per cent)	32.00 (per cent)	2.00 (per cent)	27.00 (per cent)	71.00 (per cent)
9.	Watching agricultural films	12.00 (per cent)	53.00 (per cent)	35.00 (per cent)	7.00 (per cent)	43.00 (per cent)	50.00 (per cent)
10.	Viewing exhibitions	21.00 (per cent)	64.00 (per cent)	15.00 (per cent)	18.00 (per cent)	55.00 (per cent)	27.00 (per cent)

### Listening to Agricultural Programmes in Radio

From the table 2 we may reveal that majority (69.00 %) of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin and Ponnaiyar

basin (54.00 %) regularly listening to agricultural programmes in radio. Mostly the farmers were listening radio programmes during evening hours. From the result we infer that radio was one of the powerful media used by the farming community.

### **Reading Newspaper**

From the Table 2 that majority (87.00 %) of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin comes under regularly reading newspaper followed by occasionally (9.00 %) and never (4.00 %). Whereas in Ponnaniyar basin 60.00 per cent of the respondents were under regularly reading newspaper followed by occasionally and never with 16.00 per cent and 24.00 per cent respectively. The farmers were mostly read out the regional news papers for agricultural and common news.

### **Reading Farm Magazines and Journals**

Table 2 shows that more than half of the respondents in both basins were regularly reading farm magazines and journals to know the recent agricultural technologies, success stories and for new trends in agriculture. The farm magazines such as Uzhavarin Valarum Velanmai of TNAU, Pasumai Vikatan, Uzhavar Osai (Tamil farm magazines) were subscribed by respondents.

### **Reading Leaf Lets/ Folders/ Pamphlets**

Table 2 indicated that 40.00 % of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin come under regularly reading leaf lets, folders and pamphlets followed by nearly half of the respondents (45.00 %) occasionally and never (15.00 %). Whereas in Ponnaniyar basin majority (57.00 per cent) of the respondents were under regularly reading leaf lets, folders and pamphlets followed by occasionally and never with 19.00 per cent and 13.00 per cent respectively.

### **Viewing Agricultural Programmes in TV**

From the result of Table 2, the larger difference may found in viewing agricultural programmes in TV between both the basins. In Kalingarayan basin majority (59.00 %) of the respondents were regularly viewing agricultural programmes in TV but in case of Ponnaniyar basin 11.00 per cent of the respondents only were regularly viewing agricultural programmes. The agricultural programmes broadcasted by DD Pothigai and Makkal TV mostly viewed by the kalingarayan basin respondents than the respondents of Ponnaniyar basin.

### **Attending Agricultural Meetings**

From the result of Table 2, nearly half (50.00 %) of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin comes under regularly attending agricultural meetings followed than the respondents who were occasionally (40.00 %) and never (10.00 %) attending the agricultural meetings. Whereas in Ponnaniyar basin majority (67.00 per cent) of the respondents were under occasionally attending agricultural meetings followed by never and regularly attending agricultural meeting with 14.00 per cent and 9.00 per cent respectively.

### **Demonstrations**

Table 2 indicated that 35.00 % of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin comes under regularly attending agricultural demonstrations followed by occasionally (50.00 %) and never (15.00 %). Whereas in Ponnaniyar basin 16.00 % of the respondents were under occasionally attending agricultural demonstrations followed by occasionally and never with 69.00 per cent and 15.00 per cent respectively.

### **Attending Field Days**

From deep scan the Table 2 that 13.00 % of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin comes under regularly attending field days followed by occasionally (55.00 %) and never (32.00 %). Whereas in Ponnaniyar basin only 2.00 per cent of the respondents were under regularly attending field days followed by occasionally and never with 27.00 per cent and 71.00 per cent respectively.

### **Watching Agricultural Films**

Table 2 indicated that 12.00 % of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin come under regularly watching agricultural films followed by nearly half of the respondents (53.00 %) occasionally and never (35.00 %). Whereas in Ponnaniyar basin only 7.00 % of the respondents were under regularly watching agricultural films followed by occasionally and never with 43.00 per cent and 50.00 per cent respectively.

### **Viewing Exhibitions**

Table 2 indicated that 21.00 % of the respondents in Kalingarayan basin comes under regularly viewing exhibitions followed by more than half of the respondents (64.00 %) occasionally and never (15.00 %). Whereas in Ponnaniyar basin 18.00 % of the respondents were under regularly viewing exhibitions followed by occasionally and never with 55.00 per cent and 27.00 per cent respectively.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, it can be said that different sources of mass media were not fully utilized in the studied area which hindered not only the awareness level of the respondents but also usage of new media tools by the farmers. There is an urgent need for create effective mass communication strategies for climate change awareness and extension activities among small and marginal paddy farmers of Tamil Nadu. It would be pertinent to propose to the policy makers that, to drawn new policies with a view to providing necessary skills to pursue adaptive strategies through mass media to cope with the problems that climate change and its adverse effects in farming community.

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