

A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDE AND TELEVISION  
VIEWING BEHAVIOUR OF FARM WOMEN TOWARDS  
FARM TELECAST PROGRAMMES OF CHENNAI DOOR  
DARSHAN

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**ABSTRACT:**

*Communication is vital for development. Communication at right time to the right audience will alone help for development. Farmers were presented with farm programmes in television to update their knowledge and it was interesting to know how the farm women react to the farm programme. Hence a research was conducted to study the television viewing behaviour of farm women and their attitude towards television. The relationship of characteristics of farm women with their viewing behaviour, their attitude towards television, reasons for viewing and non-viewing of the farm television programmes, and the suggestions of farm women to make the farm telecast more effective are the various dimensions of the study. A sample of sixty farm women was contacted to collect the data through a well-structured interview schedule and the data were subjected to analysis with statistical tools.*

**KEY WORDS:** Farm Television Programmes, Farm women, Viewing Behaviour, Attitude towards farm programmes.

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## INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the basis of our economic and social fabric. A sound agricultural base alone can sustain prosperity and thereby the national development. During the last few years, Indian agriculture has undergone a tremendous change. The farmers sometimes find it difficult to understand and act upon complex technological innovations in agriculture. The communication network has reached even the remote rural areas. Our country is witnessing the expanding influence of a giant medium of communication, namely Television. The uniqueness of this medium is that it has tremendous ability to create absorbing interest in it's with infinite ease. Quality TV programmes can hold the interest of audience for a long time. The spontaneity of TV creates instant impressions in the viewer's minds.. The Indian Agricultural Research Institute, which was associated with this programme from the very beginning, is one of the pioneer institutes where a good number of well-planned research studies have been conducted on various aspects of TV programmes, specifically TV as a medium for effective agricultural communication

. The IARI researches on TV have covered the area of relative effectiveness of TV in imparting knowledge about new agricultural technology, creating favorable attitudes towards recommended farm practices, influencing adoption of new agricultural technology, as well as factors affecting the gain and retention of new knowledge and influencing the viewing behavior about Krishi Darshan. Studies have also been conducted on the credibility of TV as a source of agricultural information, the functioning of TV Clubs, farmer's understanding of and liking for the Krishi Darshan Programme, reasons for low attendance, etc. On the one side, the Extension researchers are advocating farm television as an effective medium of communication by its monumental impact on viewers. The other side of the picture is that, the vast majority of rural women have low media participation. Hence, the present study was taken up with the following specific objectives.

1. To assess the viewing behavior of farm women towards farm telecast.
2. To measure the attitude of farm women towards Television.
3. To identify the reasons for viewing and non-viewing farm telecast programmes
4. To study the suggestions of farm women so as to make the farm programmes more appropriate and need study.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Office of the Director of Agriculture (1989) reported in their studies that 54.23 per cent of the farmers who are considered economically forward were able to purchase television sets as well as spare sometimes to use the telecast. Further it was also stated that 43.25 per cent of farmers used to live in tiled house followed with terraced and thatched houses by 40.78 per cent and 15.97 per cent respectively. More than 40.00 per cent of television owned and viewing farmers belonged to the age groups of 20 to 40 and 40 to 60 years respectively. It was reported that nearly 45.00 per cent of the respondents had education up to higher secondary level and majority of the respondents (58.33 per cent) possessed wetlands followed by garden land and dry land 50.24 and 36.66 per cent respectively and majority (52.00 per cent) of respondents lived in single family type and reported that 85.64 per cent of the respondents preferred to have farm telecast between 6.00 to 9.00 p.m. daily. The second preference was between 9.00 to 11.00 p.m. by 21.08 per cent of farmers. It was reported that 59.98 per cent of the farmers liked to have the telecast for 30 minutes duration and the respondents to the tune of nearly 55.00, 15.00 and 13.00 per cent preferred field scenery straight talk, photo display and explanation respectively.

Rathakrishnan (1988) reported that majority of the respondents had agriculture as main occupation, more than half of the respondents belonged to low income group and this did not in any way hinder the viewing of farm telecast, majority of rural viewers were small farmers had nuclear type of family. Majority of the viewers (70.00 per cent) had higher value orientation. Majority of the viewers preferred that the prior announcement of the programme be made a week in advance, which will make the farmers in retaining the exact date of telecast rather than making announcements too far ahead. The preferential choices of most preferred mode was 'discussion with farmers' which was followed by 'presentation with rural songs', followed by the other modes 'discussion with experts', and the latest preferred mode was 'straight talk'.

Sridhar (1982) in his study concluded that nearly three-fourth (72.50 per cent) of viewers preferred repetition of farm telecast and, among them 58.62 per cent desired that the repetition of the same message should preferably be in different format. The repetition was suggested only once by a majority of viewers i.e., by 67.24 per cent.

Uma Joshi (1990) stated that the trend was towards studying the impact of teaching women through television and multimedia approach would provide a wider scope for selecting the combinations of media, to which women of various region had access.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu was purposively selected as the study area due to its easy access to the researcher for conduction the study and familiarity of the study area. Coimbatore taluk was randomly selected for the study and among six blocks listed below, Periyanaickenpalayam was selected randomly. Periyanaickenpalayam block has 16 villages. A preliminary survey was conducted to find out the number of television sets owned by farm families. The lists of available television sets were arranged in the descending order and the first villages which have got maximum number of television sets were selected. They were (1) Narasimanaickenpalayam, (2) Gudalur, (3) Bilichi, (4) 4-Veerapandi, (5) Naickenpalayam and (6) Periyanaickenpalayam. A sample size 60 farm women were taken up for the study. From each selected village, the respondents were selected by using proportionate random sampling technique. The number of respondents selected in each village is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. List of villages selected and the number of respondents selected**

Village	Actual Number of viewers	Viewers selected for The study
Narasimanaickenpalayam	54	13
Gudalur	52	12
Bilichi	45	11
4-Veerapandi	40	9
Naickenpalayam	32	8
Periyanaickenpalayam	28	7
Total	251	60

### Dependent variables

The following were the dependent variables of this study.

1. Viewing behaviour
2. Attitude towards television

**Viewing behaviour:** Viewing behaviour was defined as the potentiality of an individual (rural audience) to watch television programmes with great curiosity so as to possess the capacity of inducting influence in him (Singh, 1977). Specifically it referred to the farmers pattern of watching Krishi Darshan (Vayalum Vazhvum) programme, their preferences and interest while viewing the programme and as well as carrying its acquired information to influence others (viewers and non-viewers).

In this study the viewing behaviour of farm women was measured in the following dimensions.

1. Viewing category
2. Viewing pattern
3. Ascertaining the farm programmes.

**Scores for viewing category:** The measurement and the scoring pattern of viewing category are explained below.

1. Whether the respondent is aware (1) / unaware (0) of the programme?
2. If aware, frequency of viewing the farm programme  
Regular (2) / Occasional (1) / Never (0)
3. Whether the respondent view the programme in full (2) / partial (1).

Scores for viewing pattern: It referred to the ways of viewing the farm programmes, seasonal concentration, posture while viewing and noting down some points of the programmes. The measurement and the scorings followed are presented below in Table 2.

**Table 2. Scores for viewing pattern**

Item	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. I will not attend to any item of work other than watching farm programme	2	1	0
2. I will take down important points in a note book	2	1	0
3. I will attend to house works in between the programme	2	1	0
4. I will spend more time in viewing seasonal times	2	1	0

**Ascertaining the programme:** It refers to the curiosity and interest of an individual to know the next day's title of the farm programme on the previous day itself in order to plan to watch it without missing it and also to inform to her peer group. The scoring procedure followed is presented below in Table 3.

**Table 3. Ascertaining the programme**

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. By seeing Nalaya Nikatchigal (Next day's programmes)	2	1	0
2. By viewing munnottam (Programme of the following weeks)	2	1	0
3. By reading newspaper	2	1	0
4. From others	2	1	0

The scores obtained by the respondent in viewing category, viewing pattern and the ascertaining of the programmes were added to find out the viewing behaviour score of the individual respondent, and respondents were classified as low, medium and high group using the mean and standard deviation values.

**Attitude towards television:** Attitude is referred to the positive or negative mental disposition of an individual either to accept or reject an object under analysis. In this study the like and dislike of the respondents towards television was found out. Attitude was measured with the help of a 'Likert' type of scale developed by Singh (1971).

The scale consists of nine items of which four were positive and the rest were negative. The responses were measured on a five point continuum, the points being 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with weights 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 for the positive statements and reverse scorings for the negative statements, respectively. The scores of all the statements were summed up to get the attitude score of an individual.

Based on the scores obtained, the respondents were classified as less favourable, favourable and highly favorable using the values of mean and standard deviation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Viewing Behaviour of Farm Women Televiewers

Fast changing agricultural technology demands upto date information to be added, to agricultural programmes through telecasts, for farmers regularly. It is worthwhile to state that the views about the telecast could be judged from the audience response based on their viewing behaviour.

Theoretical framework for the concept of viewing behaviour in the present study was based on the assumptions that behaviour being the function of knowledge, attitude and skills of an individual had different manifestations depending upon their need disposition, one's object of viewing will be governed by his/her selective perception, viewing pattern and interest. Hence, the viewing behaviour in this study is based on the respondents' viewing category, viewing pattern and ascertaining nature of farm telecast programmes. The distribution of respondents based on their viewing behaviour was worked out and given in Table 4.

**Table 4. Distribution of farm women televiewers based on their viewing behaviour**

Item	Low		Medium		High	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Viewing behaviour	11	18.33	41	68.34	8	13.33

From Table 4 it could be seen that more than two-third of the respondents possessed medium level of viewing behaviour which was followed by low and high level of viewing by 18.33 and 13.33 per cent respectively. Farm women help in ploughing, intercultivation, harvesting, irrigation, post-harvesting and storage and it may be said that they are fully involved in agriculture. Major farm telecast research studies pointed that fewer women than men participated in viewing television and that the content of farm programmes have not been oriented to the needs of farm women. Hence appropriate steps have to be taken to suit the farm programmes according to the felt needs of farm women so as to improve the viewing behaviour of the respondents. Women, in general, are good communicators in spreading latest trends and techniques in farm practices. Indirectly this will pave way for reducing the time lag in the adoption of improved technology by others.

### Attitude of Farm Women towards Television

To be successful, any programme should be perceived favourably by the clients with their mental and physical capabilities. Television is not an exception to this. Hence, an attempt was made to measure the attitude of farm women towards television.

According to Thurstone (1946) as quoted by Allen L. Edwards (1969) “Attitude is appositve or negative disposition towards any object or phenomena”.

Attitude is the individual’s organization of psychological process, as inferred from his/her behaviour, with respect to some aspect of the world which (s)he distinguishes from other aspects. It represents the residue of his/her previous experiences with which (s)he approaches any subsequent situation including that aspect and, together with contemporary influences in such a situation, determine his/her behaviour in it. Attitudes are enduring in the sense that residues are required through experience in new situations (Julius Goult and William L. Kold-Dictionary of the Social Sciences.)

The distribution of respondents based on their attitude towards television is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5 Distribution of the farm women televiewers based on their attitude towards television.**

(n = 60)

Item	Less favourable		Favourable		Highly favourable	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Attitude towards television	3	5.00	53	88.34	4	6.66

It is implicit that the Table 5 that, 80.34 per cent of the selected farm women televiewers found to possess favourable attitude towards television and 6.66 per cent had a highly favourable attitude towards television. Only 5.00 per cent of the respondents had less favourable attitude. The reason for favourable and highly favourable attitude of farm women towards telecast might to be due to the fact that, the programme telecasts were entertaining, interesting and educative. It was reported by farm women that they were exposed to the scientific advancements, in addition to political and current events in the country and throughout the world. The attitudinal pattern of the respondents of the present study agrees with the findings of Sachidanathan (1980), Abraham (1981) and contradicts with the findings of Rathakrishnan (1988).



## Reasons for Viewing and non-Viewing Farm Television Programmes

### Reasons for Viewing Farm Television Programmes

Television growth in India has impressed the women of rural and urban areas to a considerable effect. The effects derived by viewing television programmes are very many. Compared to other media, television is more habit forming one, being a 'medium of eye'. Television viewing play a vital role in the process of modernization, it created an awareness of the daily happenings of the world.

Women being the pivot of home on whom depends the future of India, education through television prepares them for their multiple roles in their home, society and in farm. Rural women generally are not only the home makers but they also share equal in the field with men; hence the viewing of farm programmes through television will expose them to the latest technology in Agriculture, Horticulture, Crop Production, Floriculture, Bee Keeping, Animal Husbandry etc.

The reasons expressed by farm women for viewing farm television programmes by the farm women viewers are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6 Reasons expressed by farm women for viewing farm television programmes by the farm women viewers (n = 60)**

Reason	Number	Percentage*
Programmes are clearly understandable	45	75.00
To convey the information to fellow farmers	42	70.00
To learn the latest farm technologies	40	66.66
Programmes are need based	36	60.00
Programmes are interesting	35	58.33
As a leisure time activity	26	43.33
To adapt the technologies	21	35.00

\* Total percentage exceeds hundred since multiple responses were allowed.

A point that deserves an intelligible attention from Table 6 was that 75.00 per cent of the farm women expressed that the programmes were clearly understandable. The other reasons were, to convey the information to fellow farmers (70.00 per cent), to know the latest technologies (66.00 per cent), programmes are need based (60.00 per cent) and were interesting (58.33 percent).

Singh (1971) reported that in general the overwhelming motive of most of the farmers to view television was to match entertainment programmes. In other words attraction towards television

seemed to be its ability to entertain them through projection of movies, film songs and dramas apart from giving useful information in the matters of their interest. The next major reason stated, was, farmers viewed television just to pass their time, as a measure of relax after their hard work and also to get news and obtain knowledge on agriculture, and allied fields of interest.

Rekha Bhagat and Mathur (1989) stating out the reasons for regular viewing of general programmes inferred that mere possession of a television was the major reason (84.00 per cent). The other reason was to listen to the news (79.00 per cent) and to gain knowledge (76.00 percent). On the contrary, the findings of the present study are encouraging as majority of reasons quoted for viewing television reflect the intended effects the television is expected to produce.

### Reasons for Non-viewing Farm Television Programmes

Table 7 exhibits the reasons expressed by the farm women for their non-viewing of farm television programmes.

**Table 7. Reasons for non-viewing of farm television programmes expressed by farm women viewers (n = 60)**

Reasons	Number	Percentage *
Affects the studies of children	40	76.66
Lack of time	44	73.33
Invite neighbor's disturbance	22	36.66
Programmes are not location specific	11	18.33
Unsuitability of time of telecast	11	18.33
Continuous viewing affects eye sight	9	15.00
Programmes telecast are not suitable	9	15.00
Programmes are not interesting	8	13.33
Lack of clarity in television set	5	8.33
Poor presentation of information	3	5.00

\* Total percentage exceeds hundred since multiple responses were allowed.

The analysis of Table 7 brings to limelight, the reasons for non-viewing of farm programmes. Majority of the respondents (76.6 percent) reported that, viewing farm programmes affects their children's studies. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Sachidanathan (1980), Abraham (1981) and Rekha Mathur (1989).

Above one third of the respondents (36.66 per cent) felt that viewing television invites disturbance from neighbor's and 18.33 per cent stated that programmes were not useful. The finding is in line with the results of Sachidanathan (1980) and Abraham (1981).

The other factors expressed towards non-viewing were non-suitability of telecast time (18.33 per cent), eye sight problem due to continuous viewing (15.00 per cent), non-suitability of programmes (15.00 per cent), programmes which are uninteresting (13.33 per cent), lack of clear reception of programmes in their television sets (8.33 per cent) and poor presentation of programmes (5.00 per cent).

### Suggestions of Farm Women on Farm Telecast

The suggestions and preferences of farm women towards farm telecast were collected to draw out conclusions about the usefulness and the impact of farm telecast which are presented below in two sub-heads:

- a) Views of respondents about farm telecast and
- b) Suggestions on farm telecast by farm women.

#### Views of respondents about farm telecast

The views of respondents are tabulated in Table 8.

**Table 8. Distribution of farm women televiewers according to their views about various aspects of farm telecast(n = 60)**

Aspect	Category	Number	Percentage
Change of time and duration	Yes	7	11.66
	No	53	88.34
Orientation of the farm programmes to local needs	Yes	56	93.33
	No	4	6.67
Number of technologies to be given	One	48	80.00
	Two	11	18.33
	Three	1	1.67
Opinion about the farm programmes	Like	50	83.34
	Like very much	5	8.33
	Neutral	5	8.33

	Dislike	-	-
Re-telecast of farm	Yes	58	96.67
Programmes	No	2	3.33

It could be seen from the perusal of Table 8, that, more than 88.00 per cent of farm women favored the present time of telecast. Only 11.66 per cent of the respondents expressed that the present time of telecast could be changed.

In the study report of Monitoring and Evaluation Cell of Directorate of Agriculture, Tamil Nadu (1989) it has been reported that, 85.64 per cent of the respondent's preferred to have farm telecast between 6 to 9 p.m. daily. The second preference was between 9 to 11 p.m. by 21.08 per cent of farmers.

Sridhar (1983) and Bhopale and Moje (1989) had stated that more than 70.00 per cent of the respondents reported that the present time of telecast was suitable.

With regard to the programme orientation to the local needs, it was expressed by majority of respondents (93.33 per cent) that, programmes were need based.

Regarding the presentation of number of programmes, 80.00 per cent of the farm women stated that they need only one technology in a programme time. It was further expressed by them to repeat the technology many times through various modes so that they could easily learn the technologies.

More than 80.00 per cent of farm women expressed that they liked the farm programmes and 8.33 per cent liked them very much another 8.33 per cent remained neutral. It is interesting to note that no one disliked the farm telecast programme.

#### **Suggestions on farm telecast by farm women**

The suggestions of farm women to make the farm television programmes more appropriate are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- 1. Timeliness:** Majority of the respondents expressed that they need no change with regard to the present time telecast from 7.00 p.m. To 7.30 p.m. It was found that the present timing is convenient to majority of the respondents. Only very few farm women were of the view that the time of telecast may be changed to 7.40 p.m. after the Tamil news brief.
- 2. Duration:** It was expressed by the respondents that no change either by an increase or decrease of time was needed and the present duration of 30 minutes was sufficient.

3. **Content of the programme:** With regard to the understandability of the farm telecast, it was felt by the respondents that they were able to understand fully the main points of the programme. The respondents were of opinion that only one technology needs to be discussed in a programme. Further, it was suggested by them, to repeat the technology through different modes of presentation so that it will catch the eyes of different categories of far women based on their perception and understanding levels.
4. **Synchronization of visual:** At times it is seen that, there is no proper synchronization of visuals. For example when the presenter explains about the characters of a new variety or a new technology no visual was projected to the audience. Instead the programme presenter was focused. And more over it was expressed that when the programme presenter was to be focused the visuals were shown. This may be due to lack of adequate rehearsals which needs correction.
5. **Programme presentation:** Very critical comments were made by farm women with regard to programme presentation. The performances by a majority of interviewers (comperes) were not up to the satisfaction of the farm women respondents. It was felt that interviewing persons were selected mostly from urban areas and hence they did not really know the importance of the farm based programmes. Sometimes it was seen that these interviewers were simply keeping quiet, not even showing any type of gestures to the presenter of the programme. This badly affects the programme from the viewer's point of view.

To overcome this, persons who possess sound knowledge in agriculture and allied fields with rural background have to be selected and intensive skill oriented training may be imparted to them. It was also suggested by farm women that some of the progressive women farmers from each district may be trained for this purpose, so that the interviews may be livelier.

### Conclusion

1. The visual charm of television was liked by all.
2. Farm women attached high credibility to television and owning a television set was perceived as a prestige factor in the social system.
3. Their attitude towards this medium is highly favourable, and with a few the same remained neutral. No one was found to have unfavorable/negative attitude.

4. The members felt that the television combines the immediacy of Radio and the motions of the cinema. Television is a home medium and by touch of switch the whole world can be brought to home.
5. Television was not only watched for entertainment but also for information and educative value.
6. Many viewers preferred television to other media because they liked to look into the speaker's eye, to judge for them how reliable they are, by the way they look and act, not just by what they say.
7. They wanted to learn about the farm related activities like environmental effect, small energy gadgets used in farm and home, food and nutrition etc.
8. They feel, in some farm programmes, the speakers appeared to have lack of confidence in what they say.
9. More of success stories and location specific innovations should be telecast and awareness about successful farming in other parts of the country or elsewhere should be highlighted.
10. Wherever possible the farm messages telecast may be adequately and cautiously mixed with other educational programmes.
11. More and more of real life situations, demonstrations of the methods on farm practices, actual colour, type, shape and pattern of technological units are to be shown on the screen.
12. Special programmes for educated farm women and school children are to be included.

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