

Farmers Opinion about "Chaupal" - The Farm Telecast

Television has been widely accepted as a powerful audio-visual medium. It was formally introduced in India in 1959 primarily to impart education and to promote rural development. Since then it has travelled a long way. During the past few years there has been a vast expansion in the television coverage as well as in the number of television sets both in the urban and rural areas. Launching of INSAT-2B in 1993 gave a boost to the already expanding television network. The television programme could now be transmitted to remotest part of the country through this satellite. Regional telecast also started with the launching of the satellite.

At present, television is the most popular and effective means of information, communication, entertainment and instruction. Keeping in view its enormous potentiality to disseminate information to the rural, remote and inaccessible audiences, Doordarshan Kendra, Lucknow started a farm telecasts-"CHAUPAL" from Oct. 2nd 1993 as a programme of 30 minutes duration for the telecast of talks related to agriculture, animal husbandry and allied areas. It is telecast five days a week from Monday to Friday.

The programme is fairly new and there were no research studies to know the opinion of farmers about this programme. Keeping this in view the present study was undertaken to know the opinion of the farmers about the "CHAUPAL" with a view to suggest suitable measures to increase the effectiveness of the farm telecast.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh. Two villages Mudia and Rithora of Bithrichainpur block were selected purposively owing to their nearness to the research institute. A total of 55 viewers/respondents were selected randomly, out of which 22 were from Mudia and 33 from Rithora village.

Opinion in the present study was conceptualised as the image held by the respondents regarding the Chaupal telecast i.e. what farmers perceive Chaupal telecast to be and how do they look upon its uses and impact on society and individuals. Past researches on "opinion about farm telecast" indicated that certain background variables effect people's opinion about a programme. Among these, two important ones viz., socio-economic status (SES) and viewing frequency were

selected for the present study to see their association with the opinion of the respondents about Chaupal telecast. Opinion of respondents was measured on the following aspects.

- (i) Liking of Chaupal.
- (ii) Suitability of timing.
- (iii) Adequacy of duration.
- (iv) Suitability of content.
- (v) Extent of usefulness.
- (vi) Utilization of information provided
- (vii) Preference of days.
- (viii) Desired mode of presentation.

Results and Discussions

Liking of Chaupal Telecast

The study revealed that majority of the respondents (72%) found the programme good. On the basis of socio-economic status (SES) there was not much difference in the liking of the Chaupal telecast. But on the basis of viewing frequency there was a difference. The regular, 4 days viewers, frequent or occasional viewers found the programme better than others.

Suitability of Timing of Chaupal

There was not much difference in the opinion of the respondents about suitability of timing of Chaupal on the basis of socio-economic status or viewing frequency. Majority of the respondents found the timing (6.30PM) suitable, except a few who did not consider the present timings very suitable and suggested that it should be adjusted according to season. More specifically, they stated that during summer they work in their field till sunset and therefore, proposed to have the Chaupal telecast after sunset, at around 7.30 PM. For winter season they found the present timing of the programme perfectly suitable.

Adequacy of Duration

The Chaupal is telecast for half an hour from 6.30 PM. for five days in a week. An overwhelming majority (81%) felt that the present duration was adequate for telecasting the Chaupal. They did not differ in this aspect on the basis of their viewing frequency. However, the percentage of respondents considering the present duration inadequate was slightly more in case of high SES than those belonging to low and medium SES categories.

Those, who did not feel the present duration adequate suggested that it should be of 45 minutes or one hour duration. They felt that half an hour duration is too short to have good entertaining items as well as effective talks or groups discussions on any agricultural topic.

Suitability of Content

96% respondents found the content of the programme suitable and according to needs. It was also seen that there was not much difference in the opinion of respondents about the suitability of contents in the three SES categories except that a few respondents from the high SES category found the content of programme unsuitable. On the basis of viewing frequency, not much difference was found in the opinion of respondent about the suitability of content of Chaupal telecast. Only a few respondents from the regular viewers and frequent viewers category found the content unsuitable and suggested that women's and children's programme should also be included in Chaupal. They further suggested that very few programmes were telecast on animal husbandary, health and hygiene, setting up of small scale industries etc. The frequency of such type of programmes needs to be increased because Chaupal is basically oriented towards the upliftment of rural people.

Extent of Usefulness

Majority of respondents (60%) found the programme highly useful. On the basis of SES it was seen that more number of respondent in the high SES category found the programme highly useful than the respondent in other SES category. Greater percentage of regular, 4- days viewers, and frequent viewers found the programme highly useful than the respondents belonging to other categories formed on the basis of viewing frequency.

The result suggests that the perception of usefulness increases with the increase in one's periodicity of viewing the programme. Hence, the extension workers should motivate the casual and occasional viewers of Chaupal to watch it regularly.

Utilization of Information

The study reveals that majority of the respondents (67%) utilized the information provided in Chaupal telecast. It can be concluded that there was no significant difference among the respondents on the basis of SES on this aspect. However, viewing frequency did affect the information utilization. More number of occasional and casual viewers were found to utilize the information than the other categories formed on the basis of viewing frequency.

Preferences of Days

Majority of the respondents (60%) desired that Chaupal should be telecast daily, or at least 6 times a week. There was no significant difference among the respondents on this aspect on the basis of their SES. However, majority of regular viewers and 4 days viewers desired to have the programme daily while about half of the frequent viewers and occasional viewers expressed similar views. The observation is logical also as the regular and 4 days viewers are supposed to be more interested in Chaupal in comparison to other categories of viewers.

Mode of Presentation

The Chaupal telecast is usually in the form of talk, interview, reply to letter etc. It was found that interview mode of presentation was preferred the most, followed by talk and reply to letters. Further it was found that there was no difference among the respondents on this aspect on the basis of their SES. It was also found that majority of regular viewers and only 4- days viewers preferred interview than any other mode of presentation.

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that the respondents liked the Chaupal telecast and felt that it provided new information to them. Majority of the respondents opined that the present timing and duration of the programme were suitable for them while a few wanted, the timing of the programme to be adjusted according to season and the duration to be increased to 45 minutes or one hour. It may be difficult for the Doordarshan authorities to telecast the programme for one hour, daily so they could atleast increase the timing of two telecast per week to 45 minutes. Further, the respondents suggested that the programme should be telecast daily or atleast 6 times a week, and more number of programmes should be in the form of interview.

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