

Chaupal : A Study of Viewing Behaviour

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A study was undertaken to know the viewing behaviour of the farmers of Chaupal Programme with a view to suggest suitable measures to increase the effectiveness of the farm telecast. Viewing behaviour in this study was conceptualised as the sum total of three components viz., viewing frequency, viewing pattern and viewing response. The study conducted with 55 viewers of Chaupal telecast in two villages of Bareilly district in U.P. revealed that majority of them were frequent viewers who used to watch "Chaupal" attentively and do nothing else while watching. Only a few viewers took down some notes. The study further revealed that most of the viewers discussed the programme with their family members and outsiders whereas few of them tried to seek additional information from Lucknow Doordarshan. Overall the viewing behaviour of the sample was of moderate level. Only five variables viz. education, material possession, socio-economic status, mass media exposure and extension agent contact had positive and significant correlation with viewing behaviour of the respondents.

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Acquisition of information has always been regarded as a factor playing a subtle but important role in human behaviour leading to decision for adoption of an innovation. Effective communication of farm information to the farmers is key to socio-economic transformation of a nation, particularly when the bulk of population live on farming. But in India where farmers live in accessible and isolated villages both on plains and hills such an effective communication is all the more difficult. In this situation, mass media can be hopefully expected to cater the need to a great extent. Television is one such mass media responsible for the rapid dissemination of agro-information. With its unique potential to communicate through two sense organs simultaneously (eyes and ears), admit-

tedly plays a very important role in imparting information to its audience.

A major breakthrough in the television technology was launching of INSAT-2 B which brought the rural audience closer to the T.V. programmes. Farm telecast all over Uttar Pradesh was possible only on October 2, 1993 through this satellite. The farm telecast in Uttar Pradesh is "Chaupal" which is telecast from Monday to Friday every week. The present study was undertaken to know the viewing behaviour of the farmers of "Chaupal" programme.

The study was conducted in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh. Two villages Mudia and Rithora of Bithrichainpur block were selected purposively. A total of 55 respondents were selected randomly, out of which 22 were from Mudia

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village and 33 from Rithora village. The past research studies pertaining to T.V. viewing behaviour indicated that certain background variables of the respondents had their association with the viewing behaviour. Among those the important ones were selected as independent variables for the present study in order to find their association with the 'Chaupal' telecast viewing behaviour (dependent variable) of the respondents. These were measured and scored with the help of a structured interview schedule.

The viewing behaviour in the present study has been conceptualized as the sum total of three components viz., viewing frequency, viewing pattern and viewing response (Laharia and Joshi, 1992).

Viewing Frequency : It refers to the number of "Chaupal" telecast's generally viewed by the respondents in a week. It has following five categories:-

| Sl.No. | Categories | No.of telecast watching (per week) | Score |
|--------|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Regular viewers | 5 | 5 |
| 2. | Only four-days viewers | 4 | 4 |
| 3. | Frequent viewers | 3 | 3 |
| 4. | Occasional viewers | 2 | 2 |
| 5. | Casual viewers | 1 | 1 |

Viewing Pattern : It indicates the attentiveness and sincerity of viewers while watching "Chaupal" programme. The item included in this component are as under :

| Sl.No. | Items | Score assigned |
|--------|--|----------------|
| 1. | Watching and simultaneously doing some work (other than taking down notes) | 1 |
| 2. | Watching only | 2 |
| 3. | Watching and also taking down notes | 3 |

Viewing Response : It implies the actions or activities performed by the viewers as a response to "Chaupal" telecast viewing. This, However, excludes the adoption of practices recommended under "Chaupal" telecast. This component consists of following items:

| Sl.No. | Items | Score(Assigned) |
|--------|---|-----------------|
| 1. | Discussion with family members | 1 |
| 2. | Discussion with other members | 1 |
| 3. | Discussion with family members as well as other farmers | 1 |
| 4. | Maintaining a diary register | 1 |
| 5. | Seeking additional information either from Doordarshan or concerned speaker | 2 |

Results and Discussion

Viewing Frequency: Table 1 shows that majority of viewers (36%) were frequent viewers, followed by occasional viewers (33%). Only about 15 per cent respondents were found to be regular viewers. 9 per cent respondents viewed the programme four days a week, whereas 7 per cent respondents were casual viewers. The result shows that the regular viewers were very few. Most of the farmers were either frequent or occasional viewers, probably because they were not aware of the exact days of the "Chaupal" telecast or because they did not find the timing of the telecast suitable for them.

Viewing pattern : Table 2 reveals that majority of respondents (62%) used to watch "Chaupal" attentively and do nothing else while watching. It further shows that (20%) respondents were those who also prepared some notes while watching. Only about 18 per cent were those who used to do some work also while watching "Chaupal". The result shows that most of the farmers found the "Chaupal" programme very informative and interesting. The result further reveals that only a few farmers used to take down some notes. The reason may be the low literacy level prevailing among the viewers.

Viewing Response : The third component of viewing behaviour is the immediate response and follow up action taken up by viewers. Table-3 reveals that majority of the viewers (44%) discussed the programme with family members as well as other farmers followed by 31 per cent viewers who discussed it with their

family members only and 15 per cent who discussed it with other farmers. Only nine per cent viewers were found to maintain a diary or register to gather information from the telecast and only one respondent was found to seek additional information from Doordarshan or concerned authority. This highlights the fact that mass media like television is a one way means of communication. This is biggest limitation. So the television authorities should encourage the farmer for getting effective feedback from them. Now a days most of the television programmes have 'Doordarshan Audience Research cells' which are mainly responsible for getting feedback from the audience for their respective programmes. The programme should also develop similar measures to obtain maximum response from the audience.

Viewing Behaviour : The viewing behaviour score of each respondent was worked out by summing up the scores obtained by them on its three dimensions. The mean score of the sample was 6.61 with SD 1.8 which indicate that the viewing behaviour was moderate but it was highly heterogenous. Low level might be probably due to poor score on response aspect. Further analysis of table-4 reveals that about 11 per cent had low score (0-4) and only 16 per cent had high score (9 and above). Majority (72%) of viewers fell in the average category, having scores between (5-8). It suggests that many T.V. owning farmers need to be motivated to watch the telecast regularly and sincerely.

Association between personality Variables: Table -5 shows the value of correlation coefficient indicating the association between the selected socio-personal variables of the respondents and their viewing behaviour. It is evident from the table that out of total eight selected socio-economic and socio-personal variables, only 5 variables viz. education, material possession, socio-economic status, mass media exposure and extension agent contact have positive and significant relationship with

Therefore, it would be better if regular announcement of the "Chaupal" telecast days is made after every telecast of the programme.

2. The study did not show any type of feedback from the viewers to the Uttar Pradesh Dooradshah. It needs to be encouraged as it would not only provide valuable information to the programme producers to improve the quality of the programme, but also inculcate a habit of viewing the "Chaupal" telecast more regularly, attentively and sincerely among the farmers. Besides it would also motivate them to note down the important messages and discuss among themselves.

revealed that most of the viewers discussed the programme with their family members and outsiders. Most of the viewers had medium viewing behaviour.

The correlation-coefficient values of viewing behaviour of farmers with selected socio-economic and socio-personal variables were found significantly associated.

Suggestions

The study suggests the following two implications:-

1. The farmers are not fully aware of the exact days of "Chaupal" telecast.

viewing behaviour. This highlights the fact that the farmer possessing higher education, more material goods, high socio-economic status, having better exposure to mass media and extension agent contact, view "Chaupal" more seriously and keenly than others. Such positive and significant association between material possession and viewing behaviour was also reported by Singh (1977), Joshi and Laharia (1992).

To sum up, the above findings revealed that majority of the respondents were frequent viewers who used to watch "Chaupal" attentively and do nothing else while watching. Only a few viewers took down some notes. This study also

Table 1
Distribution of respondents according to their viewing frequency

| S. No. | Viewing frequency | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Regular viewers | 8 | 14.55 |
| 2. | Only Four days viewers | 5 | 9.09 |
| 3. | Frequent viewers | 20 | 36.36 |
| 4. | Occasional viewers | 19 | 32.73 |
| 5. | Casual viewers | 4 | 7.27 |
| Total | | 55 | 100.00 |

Table 2
Distribution of respondents according to their viewing pattern

| S. No. | Viewing of pattern | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|--|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Watching and simulataneously doing some work also (other than taking down notes) | 10 | 18.18 |
| 2. | Watching only | 34 | 61.82 |
| 3. | Watching and also taking down notes | 11 | 20.00 |
| Total | | 55 | 100.00 |

Table 3
Distribution of respondents according to their viewing response

| S. No. | Viewing of response | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|---|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Discussion with family members | 17 | 30.91 |
| 2. | Discussion with other farmers | 8 | 14.55 |
| 3. | Discussion with family members as well as other farmers | 24 | 43.64 |
| 4. | Maintaining of a deary/Register | 5 | 9.09 |
| 5. | Seeking additional information from either Doordarshan or concerned speaker | 1 | 1.81 |
| Total | | 55 | 100.00 |

Table 4
Distribution of respondents according to their viewing behaviour

| S. No. | Viewing Behaviour | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Low (0-4) | 6 | 11.00 |
| 2. | Medium (5-8) | 40 | 72.72 |
| 3. | High (9 & above) | 9 | 16.37 |
| Total | | 55 | 100.00 |

Table 5
Relationship between viewing behaviour and independent variables

| S. No. | Independent variable | Correlation coefficient |
|--------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Education | 0.344** |
| 2. | Age | 0.076 |
| 3. | Material possession | 0.335* |
| 4. | Socio-economic status | 0.683** |
| 5. | Mass media exposure | 0.852** |
| 6. | Extension agent contact | 0.546** |
| 7. | Herd size | 0.345 |
| 8. | Land holding | 0.059 |

* Significant at 5% level of probability (P 0.05)

** Significant at 1% level of probability (P 0.01)

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