

RESEARCH PAPER

Profile characteristics of Krishi Community Radio listeners and problems faced by them

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Abstract: Krishi Community Radio Station (KCRS) of University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad established on May 17, 2007, bridges the knowledge gap between agricultural research centres and rural farming population. Present study was conducted in 2023-24, to know about the profile characteristics, constraints and suggestions of KCRS listeners. Respondents were selected from eight villages of Dharwad district to form total sample size of 120. Results reported that, 51.67 per cent of respondents were of old aged, 27.50 per cent of the listeners had primary education, majority (68.30%) of the radio listeners were male, 67.50 per cent of the radio listeners belonged to medium family size. Equal percentage (44.1%) of the radio listeners' family occupation was farming and farming with subsidiary occupations, 32.50 per cent of the radio listeners were marginal farmers and majority (57.50%) of the radio listeners had low annual family income. Relatively more number of the respondents had low level of mass media exposure (39.17%), social media utilization (62.50%), extension contact (44.17%) and social participation (45.83%). Among the respondents, one-third (33.33%) had network coverage problem and 27.50 per cent suggested to change timings of broadcasting.

Keywords: Community radio, Constraints, Profile, Suggestions

Introduction

Krishi Community Radio Station is a vibrant and transformative platform dedicated in empowering rural communities, particularly those involved in agriculture. KCRS, situated at the heart of India's agrarian landscape, serves a vital role in sharing practical knowledge, modern farming techniques and government schemes directly with farmers, ensuring that even those in the most remote areas stay informed and engaged.

Operating with the motto of "by the community, for the community", Krishi Community Radio fosters a sense of ownership among its listeners, giving them a voice in shaping the content. It provides an accessible and inclusive platform where farmers can share their experiences, successes and challenges, creating a rich tapestry of real-world insights that benefit the entire farming ecosystem. Through a mix of educational programs, weather updates, expert interviews and season based information, Krishi Community Radio bridges the knowledge gap between agricultural research centres and the rural farming population. It plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable practices, enhancing food security and uplifting rural livelihoods.

In essence, Krishi Community Radio Station is not just a source of information but a community-driven initiative that nurtures dialogue, cultivates learning and strengthens the agricultural backbone of the nation. A detailed understanding of the listener base helps in planning for the sustainability and growth of the radio station. It enables the identification of potential areas for expansion, diversification of content and strategies for attracting new listeners while retaining existing ones. Thus, the present investigation was conducted on the

objective to assess profile characteristics, constraints and suggestions of Krishi Community Radio listeners. The study helps in tailoring content, to address specific needs, challenges and interests of different demographic groups within the farming community in the range of Krishi Community Radio Station of University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka for creating a responsive, impactful and sustainable community radio service that effectively supports and uplifts rural agricultural communities.

Materials and methods

Krishi Community Radio, UAS, Dharwad reaches up-to 15 to 20 km radius, covering 44 villages in Dharwad taluk. The present study was thus conducted in Dharwad taluk of Dharwad district during 2023-24. *Ex post-facto* research design was used for the study. Among the villages within the reachability range of KCRS radio, two villages in each direction *i.e.*, North, South, East, West of KCRS were selected namely, Narendra, Mangalagatti, Chandanamatti, Hebballi, Kavalgeri, Somapur, Chikkamalligwad and Hiremalligwad. In each village, 15 respondents were selected using purposive random sampling method forming a total of 120 respondents. Keeping in view the objectives, data was collected using interview schedule and analysed using descriptive statistical tools like frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Results and discussion

Socio-economic profile

Data in Table 1 shows that 51.67 per cent of respondents were elderly followed by middle-aged (34.17%) and young (14.17%). This may be because, old age people are more

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of KCRS listeners

| | | | n=120 |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Variables | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
| Age (in years) | Young age (35 years and below) | 17 | 14.17 |
| | Middle age (36-55 years) | 41 | 34.17 |
| | Old age (above 55 years) | 62 | 51.67 |
| Education | Illiterate | 31 | 25.83 |
| | Primary (1-4) | 33 | 27.50 |
| | Middle school (5-7) | 14 | 11.67 |
| | High school (8-10) | 13 | 10.83 |
| | PUC (11-12) | 18 | 15.00 |
| | Degree | 11 | 9.17 |
| | | | |
| Gender | Male | 82 | 68.30 |
| | Female | 38 | 31.70 |
| Family size | Small (<4 members) | 17 | 14.17 |
| | Medium (4-7 members) | 81 | 67.50 |
| | Large (>7 members) | 22 | 18.33 |
| Family occupation | Farming only | 53 | 44.17 |
| | Farming + Subsidiary | 53 | 44.17 |
| | Farming + Petty business | 14 | 11.67 |
| Land holding (Area in acres) | Marginal (<2.5) | 36 | 30.00 |
| | Small (2.5-5) | 20 | 16.67 |
| | Semi-medium (5.1- 10) | 22 | 18.33 |
| | Medium (10.1-25) | 29 | 24.17 |
| | Large (>25) | 13 | 10.83 |
| Family income | Low (< ₹ 60,000) | 69 | 57.50 |
| | Medium (between ₹ 60,000 – ₹ 1,20,000) | 40 | 33.33 |
| | High (> ₹ 1,20,000) | 11 | 9.17 |

comfortable using radios, considering radio as reliable sources for agricultural information. Results are consistent with Sultana (2018).

Among radio listeners, 27.50 per cent had primary education followed by illiterate (25.83%), PUC (15.00%), middle school (11.67%), high school (10.83%) and graduation (9.17%). This may be due to low motivation, financial issues and parental unawareness of the value of education, aligning with findings from Devendrappa *et al.* (2018).

Gender analysis of radio listeners showed that 68.30 per cent were male and 31.70 per cent were female. This likely reflects KCRS radio's focus on farming content, which appeals that men were keen to know the different aspects of agriculture. Size of family reflected that more number of radio listeners belonged to medium-size families (67.50%) followed by large families

(18.33%) and small families (14.17%). Many older respondents likely belong to multi-generational households. Among radio listeners, 44.17 per cent reported that their family occupation is farming or farming with subsidiary occupations, like animal husbandry and agri-related businesses. Additionally, 11.67 per cent combined farming with petty businesses. Many respondents felt that sole farming was insufficient for improving their livelihoods, prompting them to pursue auxiliary professions. The results of family size and family occupation partially align with Sharma *et al.* (2020) and results of gender analysis completely align with Sharma *et al.* (2020).

Nearly one-third (32.50%) of radio listeners were marginal farmers, one-fourth (25.00%) were small farmers, and 23.33 per cent belong to semi-medium farmers category. The reason was land fragmentation. Followed by medium farmers (16.67%) and large farmers (2.50%). These results are similar to Vitthal (2017).

Family income showed that 57.50 per cent of radio listeners had low income, mainly due to reliance on rainfed farming, due to climate change earnings were low. One third (33.33%) had medium income, and 9.17 per cent had high income. These findings align with Pandey *et al.* (2014).

Table 2. Communicational and psychological profile of KCRS listeners

| | | | | n=120 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Variables | Category | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Mass media exposure Mean=7.68 S D=5.43 | Low | 47 | 39.17 | |
| | Medium | 40 | 33.33 | |
| | High | 33 | 27.50 | |
| Social media utilization Mean=1.70 S D=2.49 | Low | 75 | 62.50 | |
| | Medium | 8 | 6.67 | |
| | High | 37 | 30.83 | |
| Extension contact Mean=1.43 S D=1.66 | Low | 53 | 44.17 | |
| | Medium | 28 | 23.33 | |
| | High | 39 | 32.50 | |
| Social/ organisation participation Mean=2.32 S D=2.62 | Low | 55 | 45.83 | |
| | Medium | 44 | 36.67 | |
| | High | 21 | 17.50 | |

Table 3. Constraints faced by KCRS listeners

| | | | n=120 |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Constraints | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Network coverage problem | 40 | 33.33 | |
| Lack of time | 38 | 31.67 | |
| Lack of interest | 27 | 22.50 | |
| Engaged in day to day house hold work | 19 | 15.83 | |
| Lack of content/quality in the programmes | 11 | 9.17 | |

*Multiple responses are possible.

Table 4. Suggestions provided by KCRS listeners n=120

| Suggestions | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Change in timings of broadcasting radio | 33 | 27.50 |
| More marketing related programmes | 27 | 22.50 |
| Specific programmes for small and marginal farmers | 23 | 19.17 |
| Discussion forums or interactive programmes with farmers and scientists | 19 | 15.83 |
| Increase the area of coverage | 14 | 11.67 |

*Multiple responses are possible

Communicational and Psychological Profile

The Table 2 revealed that 39.17 per cent of radio listeners had low mass media exposure followed by medium exposure (33.33%) and high exposure (27.50%). The higher number of older respondents likely contributed to lower exposure levels. Additionally, women tend to watch television more for entertainment, resulting medium to high exposure. These findings align with Sharma (2004).

Regarding social media utilization, 62.50 per cent of radio listeners had low social media utilization. Many respondents were older, had only primary education and preferred in-person interactions than usage of social media. Meanwhile, 30.83 per cent had high social media utilization and 6.67 per cent had medium utilization. Results may be due to what's App group is now trending. These results are comparable to Kritikumar (2021).

Among the respondents, 44.17 per cent had low extension contact, as many women showed little interest in farming information, and some men relied on personal experience rather than consulting agriculture departments. Nearly one-third (32.50%) had high extension contact followed by medium contact (23.33%), often visiting local officials for information on subsidized inputs or govt. schemes. These results align with Geeta (2007).

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Radio listeners had low social participation (45.83%), mainly due to most respondents were male and not members of SHGs. Few were involved as office bearers in cooperative societies or local governance. Around 36.00 per cent had medium participation followed by high participation (17.50%), often due to involvement in SHGs and milk cooperatives. These findings align with Vitthal (2017).

Problems faced by Krishi Community Radio listeners and suggestions

One-third of respondents reported issues with connection and network, while nearly the same percentage cited lack of time as a major constraint, especially during the rainy season when farmers are busy in the fields. For women, indicated due to household chores not able to listen. Additionally, lacked interest in KCRS programs (22.50%), household responsibilities (15.83%) and mentioned concerns about content of programmes (9.17%) (Table 3).

Most of the respondents (27.50%) suggested to change broadcast timings, wanted more marketing-related programs (22.50%), requested programs for small and marginal farmers (19.17%), urged for more discussion forums with farmers and scientists (15.83%) and recommended increasing coverage area (11.67%) (Table 4).

Conclusion

The data indicates that Krishi community radio listeners have a low socio-economic profile, highlighting the need for improvement. Motivating rural youth with mass media exposure and social participation to engage with KCRS programs, alongside collaborating with local representatives, could enhance listener engagement. Key constraints identified include connectivity issues and time limitations during busy farming seasons. Respondents suggested improving broadcast timings, increasing marketing content, and creating programs for small farmers to enhance engagement and effectiveness.

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