



## Information access through radio programs on organic farming

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### Abstract

This study was carried out to examine the information access of organic farmers through radio programmes and to know the role of radio in dissemination of organic farming information. Growing awareness of health and environmental issues associated with the intensive use of chemical inputs has led to interest in alternate forms of agriculture in the world. Organic agriculture is one among the broad spectrum of production methods that are supportive of the environment. For the study 30 districts of Karnataka state was selected and multistage sampling was used for selecting sample. The total sample size were 600 respondents. Data was collected through structured interview schedule method. The finding of study reveals that majority of the farmers listen to organic farming programmes on radio and more than half of the farmers (59.7%, N=358) opine that they utilize the full information in their day to day farming.

**Keywords:** information, radio, organic farming

### 1. Introduction

Organic farming is gaining gradual momentum across the world, including in India. Organic agriculture is one among the broad spectrum of production methods that are supportive of the environment. The demand for organic food is steadily increasing both in the developed and developing countries with an annual average growth rate of 20–25%. Organic agriculture, without doubt, is one of the fastest growing sectors of agricultural production.

The mass media are diversified media technologies that are intended to reach a large audience by mass communication. Mass media are very essential tools for the transfer of information about agriculture sector and mass media plays a very significant role in agricultural development and dissemination of latest agricultural technologies among the farmers.

The advent of cheaper transistor radio, for example, has brought this medium to remote corners of even the least-developed countries, where a lack of electricity can be overcome by solar-powered transmitters and receivers. Radio remains the most powerful, and yet the cheapest, mass medium for reaching large numbers of people in isolated areas. Thanks to the revolution of the transistor, even the remotest villages have access to rural radio, which builds on the oral tradition of rural populations. Radio is an important tool for the rapid diffusion of important messages on new agricultural production ideas and techniques as well as on health, nutrition, family planning and other social and cultural issues.

Karnataka State Organic Farming Mission is trying to create awareness through AIR- FM Transmitter network by sponsoring Radio programmes in a state hookup. In Karnataka All India Radio and Karnataka State Organic Farming Mission have jointly started radio programmes on organic farming.

Bangalore, Dharwad, Mangalore, Hasan, Gulbarga, Bhadravati, Mysore AIR stations is producing and broadcasting several radio programmes on organic farming practices. There are some sponsored programmes based on a radio interview with progressive organic farmers and their family, that educates radio listening farmers on Organic Crops, Organic Manure: Compost, Vermi-Compost, Jeevanrutha, Panch Gavya, Plant Protection, Crop Rotation Practice, Planting of Indigenous Varieties, Application of Compost, Mulching of Crops, Intercropping, Mixed Cropping, Crop Residues, Animal Manure, Planting of Legumes, Green Manure, Off Farm Organic Waste etc., Programmes are presented in a variety of formats such as radio talks, interviews, question and answer and discussion and of course music-based entertainment programmes.

Through these programmes All India Radio is providing extension and education support to farmers regarding organic farming every day. These programmes also provide help to agricultural families, scientists, and researcher's and policy maker's by exposing them to the frontier areas of development in the different parts of the state and providing a forum for exchange of ideas and for debate and discussions. These programmes on organic farming was conceived to bring together the scientific community and knowledgeable persons on organic farming and allied subjects on the one hand and to take their scientific knowledge adequate to the organic farming community on the other, which ultimately meant increased food production to the country and increased income to the farmers.

### 2. Review of literature

Chapman (2003) <sup>[3]</sup> who reported that radio agriculture programmes gives reliable information to the farmers. Sadaqath and Mariswamy (2007) <sup>[11]</sup> reported that majority

(70.5 per cent) of farmers perceived radio useful to a medium extent, sixteen per cent of the farmers perceived it less useful while the rest 13.5 per cent perceived it as more useful.

Sharma (2008) <sup>[9]</sup> stated that radio is the most widespread, trusted media. It is a unique media form that can be tuned to user experience. One of the strengths of the radio is its low cost and its ability to be present and used everywhere. But one of the weaknesses of traditional analogue radio is that the programmes are tied to a time bound flow on a limited number of frequencies and that the programmes are not available when it suits the listeners.

Nwachukwu (2010) <sup>[5]</sup> reveals that 16.5 per cent of the respondents were very satisfied with the radio farmer programme. About 28.9 percent were satisfied, while the majority (54.6 percent) were not satisfied with the radio farmer programme in Imo state. The level of satisfaction of individual farmers with the radio farmer programme will largely inhibit or facilitate their utilization of this source of information. Anjo (2011) which indicates that 32.2% of the farmers expressed that radio agricultural programmes are highly relevant to their agricultural activities.

Ayoade (2010) <sup>[2]</sup> found that farmers rely more on radio and television as a means of getting information through the mass media, as was reported by most of the respondents, which implies that most of the respondents listened to radio and television programme, indicating that agricultural programmes on radio and television have impact on farm families. Among group contact methods, farm centers were the major sources of information for cowpea production technologies. This points to the fact that farm centers could in addition to other sources be an important way of disseminating information among farmers. A general look at the effectiveness of information sources, it reveals that village extension worker ranked 11th which is the lowest among others. This might be due to the fact that friends and village heads are used as contact farmers, which makes extension agent, come into contact with only few farmers.

Oyesola *et al.* (2011) <sup>[6]</sup> reported that 93 per cent of respondents used radios as an information source.

### 3. Statement of the problem

Radio is the most popular and commonly used medium for disseminating information to the farmers about new technologies of agriculture across India. Therefore it was felt necessary to have an in depth study on 'Information access through Radio Programs on Organic Farming'.

### 4. Objectives

- To examine the information access of organic farmers through radio programmes
- To know the role of radio in dissemination of organic farming information.

### 5. Methodology

In the present research, multi-stage sampling techniques were used. The first stage of sampling consisted of selection of taluks (Blocks), at the second stage hobalis (a unit of Taluk) were selected and in the third stage villages were selected. At the final fourth stage, the respondents i.e. registered farmers (listeners) and non-registered farmers (non-listeners) were

chosen. The selected respondents for this study represent Karnataka State. From each district 1 Taluka (Block), from each Taluka 1 hobali (a unit of Taluk) and from each hobali 2 villages and from each village 10 respondents were selected randomly for data collection by personal interview method. In this mode a total of 600 respondents were selected for this study to assess the information access of organic farmers through radio.

A questionnaire was designed to interview the organic farmers of Karnataka state and structured interview schedule was drafted. For this study both closed and open ended questions were adopted. A questionnaire was developed in local Kannada dialect keeping in view of the objectives defined in the present study.

## 6. Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Respondents
Male	515 (85.8%)
Female	85 (14.2%)
Total	600 (100%)

Table 1 reveals that a large number of farmers (85.8%, N=515) are male, while very few are (14.2%, N=85) female. This supports the findings of Ani and Baba (2009), Nwachukwu (2010) <sup>[5]</sup>, Ayoade (2010) <sup>[2]</sup> and Oyesola (2011) <sup>[6]</sup> as they reported that the majority of the farmers were male.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents by age

Age	Respondents
18-35 years	159 (26.5%)
36-55 years	275 (45.9%)
Above 55 years	166 (27.6%)
Total	600 (100%)

The table 2 indicates that the majority of the farmers (45.9%, N=275) belong to the age group of 36-55 years, followed by 27.6% (N=166) of the farmers who belong to the age group of more than 55 years and only 26.5% (N=159) belong to the age group of 18 to 35 years.

The findings with regard to result shows in accordance with those of Guanren (1989), Krishna Murthy (1999), Barman and Gogoi (2000), Maraddi (2006), Butt (2008), Ani and Baba (2009), Hosamani (2009), Ayoade (2010) <sup>[2]</sup>, Rehman (2011) and Rasak and Amusat (2012) reported that the majority of the farmers belonged to the middle age group.

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents by education

Education	Respondents
Illiterates	41 (6.9%)
Primary and Secondary	213 (35.5%)
College	273 (45.5%)
Post-Graduation	69 (11.5%)
Others	4 (0.6%)
Total	600 (100%)

Table 3 shows that a great majority (93.1%, N=559) of the farmers are literates and only 6.9% (N=41) are illiterates. Among the literates 45.5% (N=273) have an education up to

college level, followed by 35.5% (N=213) of the farmers who have primary and secondary education and 11.5% (N=69) have a post graduation level of education.

This is supported by the findings of Chandramouli (1986), Barman and Gogoi (2000), Natikar (2001), Rehman (2011) and Rasak and Amusat (2012) who have examined that majority of the progressive farmers were literate.

**Table 4:** Utilization of Information by the Farmers Gained through Radio Programmes

Opinion	Respondents
Fully	358 (59.7%)
Some extent	208 (34.7%)
Not at all	34 (5.6%)
Total	600 (100%)

In the present research an attempt is made to know the utilization of information gained through organic farming radio programmes on three point scale i.e. Fully, to some extent and not at all. From table 4 it is observed that more than half of the farmers (59.7%, N=358) opine that they utilize the full information in their day to day organic farming. More than one third (34.7%, N=208) of farmers utilize the information to some extent and only 5.6% (N=34) of the farmers do not use the information at all.

The reasons for these findings are: radio remains the most important source of information among farmers. Radio provides information regarding land preparation to post harvest technology. A large number of farmers feel radio is the most credible source of information regarding organic farming. Radio brings the expertise in organic farming to the doorsteps of the farmers. This might be the reason for maximum utilization of the information by the farmers from radio programmes on organic farming.

The finding of the present study is in conformity with closely related study of Ango (2013) [1] which reported that the majority (97.8%) of the farmers adopted the new practices of information disseminated through radio agricultural programmes.

**Table 5:** Relevance of radio programmes on organic farming

Relevance of radio programmes	Respondents
Highly relevant	311 (51.9%)
Relevant	272 (45.3%)
Not relevant	17 (2.8%)
Total	600 (100%)

From the table 5 it can be seen that more than half of the farmers (51.9%, N=311) considered that radio is the highly relevant media in terms of information dissemination regarding organic farming, followed by 45.3% (N=272) who opine that it is relevant and only 2.8% (N=17) farmers replied that the radio is not at all relevant.

The probable reason for this finding might be that radio programmes on organic farming is relevant as a result of the knowledge gained that helps in improving their organic farming practices.

This supports the findings of Ango (2011) which indicates that 32.2% of the farmers expressed that radio agricultural programmes are highly relevant to their agricultural activities.

**Table 6:** Reliability of information regarding organic farming broadcasted by radio

Opinion	Respondents
Fully Reliable	316 (52.7%)
Some extent Reliable	262 (43.7%)
Not at all	22 (3.6%)
Total	600 (100%)

With respect to reliability of information table 6 shows that more than half of the farmers (52.7%, N=316) opine that the content of organic farming programmes are fully reliable, 43.7% (N=262) of the farmers opine that the content is reliable to some extent and only a few farmers (3.6%, N=22) said it is not at all reliable.

The results show that majority of the farmers believe that the content of organic farming programmes are reliable because the radio programmes provide reliable information to the farmers about the latest technology and new methods related to organic farming and it is very helpful to the farmers. All India Radio involves University Scientists, farmers' success stories and experts from the agricultural field. This can also be considered as another reason. This might be the strongest reason for farmers to fully rely on radio programmes on organic farming.

The findings of the study are similar to the findings of Chapman (2003) [3] and Sharma (2008) [9] who reported that radio agriculture programmes gives reliable information to the farmers.

**Table 7:** Quality of Radio programmes on organic farming

Opinion	Respondents
Very good	349 (58.1%)
Good	220 (36.7%)
Bad	20 (3.3%)
Very bad	11 (1.9%)
Total	600 (100%)

Regarding the quality of radio programmes on organic farming table 7 indicates that more than half of the farmers (58.1%, N=349) assessed that the quality of the programmes are very good. More than one third (36.7%, N=220) find it to be good, while 3.3% (N=20) find it bad and very few farmers (1.9%, N=11) opine that the quality of the programme is very bad.

The table clearly replicates that the listeners are happy with the quality of organic farming programmes broadcasted by radio. Very interesting finding of the table is that almost all farmers (94.8%, N=569) express that the quality of the programme is very good and good indeed which clearly gives a positive indication to the radio along with which it has increased the responsibility of such programmes. This reflects on their quality of harvesting in their fields.

**Table 8:** Completeness of organic farming information by radio

Opinion	Respondents
Complete	523 (87.1%)
Incomplete	77 (12.9%)
Total	600 (100%)

The description regarding the completeness of information given by radio programmes on organic farming is given in table 8. The findings show that more than four - fifth of the farmers (87.1%, N=523) stated that the information given through the radio about organic farming was complete. Only 12.9% (N=77) of the farmers opine that the information was incomplete.

The above findings show that the radio programmes on organic farming are in series and it provides detailed and complete information.

This supports the findings of Ango (2013) <sup>[1]</sup> who examines that the majority (97.8%) of the farmers are of the view that the radio agricultural programmes are very important to them in their agricultural practices.

## 7. Conclusion

The information access through radio programs on organic farming has been demonstrated and is predicted in this study. Today, it is usually recognized that radio programme inorganic farming are most effective when produced with audience participation, in local languages. The study reported that the listeners are happy with the quality of organic farming programmes broadcasted by radio. Radio emerged to be most widespread and popular media in enlighten farmers about government, agriculture policies and dissemination of organic farming information to the farmers of Karnataka state.

It is evident from the study that radio programmes on organic farming are most relevant in terms information dissemination regarding organic farming. The majority of the farmers in the study get benefit from the radio programme on organic farming and it helps them in improving their level of productivity and income.

## 8. Reference

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