

F-16. Radio as an information source to the tea smallholder in Sri Lanka

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There are several information sources to the tea smallholder in Sri Lanka. Amongst them radio can play a major role in the information dissemination process.

Objective of this study is to identify the situation of the radio as an information source to the tea smallholder and its relative usefulness.

Secondary and primary data were used. Primary data was collected through a cross-sectional survey and case studies. SPSS and SAS computer programs were used to analyse the data.

Relationship between the 6 characteristics of the radio as an information source, such as, availability, trustworthiness, amount, understandability, relevance and timeliness and its overall usefulness were examined. Regarding availability and trustworthiness radio was accorded the third place; amount of information

fourth place; understandability lowest. Information disseminated by the radio is strongly relevant to the farmers when transmitted during the season. It was accorded the third place in terms of the overall usefulness.

Interaction of the understandability and relevance of the information shows a strong relationship with overall usefulness of the radio as an information source. Although radio has no significant relationship with the level of knowledge of the farmers as an individual source, together with the other formal and informal sources it shows a positive relationship. More than 75% of the smallholders prefer radio as an information source.

Response of the tea smallholder to the “Swarna Patra” radio programme produced by Tea Smallholdings Development Authority has decreased. Reason for this is its unchanged rhythm for a long period.

Communication link between radio and the tea smallholder are satisfactory, but need further development. This study shows, that radio as an information source to the tea smallholder can play a significant role.