



Role of Media to Resist Farmers' Shift to Alternate and Rural Development with Reference to Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT:

The present era is the era of information technology and expanding span of mass media throughout the world. Myriad of mass media tools are play a cardinal role in aware masses in each field of life including education, medical, science, technology, economic, social and political empowerment for human development. Agriculture is the fundamental base of human development to live daily life in better way and agriculture production in different areas of agriculture to provide food and other eatable and non-eatable items to the masses of the world; rural areas are the main tools of agriculture production of any country. With the passage of time, the newer and newer agricultural methods, scientific methods and modern natural agriculture methods for human beneficial are being adopted. Without awareness among rural agrarians, these agricultural productions are not much possible as agrarians remain confining to traditional agricultural. Here role of media is expected greater to each rural agrarian for rural development. The rural development of Himachal Pradesh depends upon agriculture sector whatever it gardening, fruit growing or common agriculture production. Being a hill State Himachal Pradesh, here agriculture production is much harder in contrast to other areas of plains of India and moreover in some hard geographical areas like of Himachal Pradesh it goes complicated to the rural agrarian but it is strong access to mass media and literacy among the agrarians of Himachal Pradesh, they are leveraging from the media programming on the development of agriculture production for rural development and media diffusion on agriculture awareness and governmental schemes for the rural development and developed agriculture. The rural areas of Himachal Pradesh have switched for agricultural production through which these rural areas' rural people are exhorted by modern media- print media, electronic media, new media, galore of social media tools, and media has become a main nut of awaking new schemes of farming, natural farming, growth in farming with the objective of cash crop profit through farming, gardening and horticulture. This awareness is coming from media through media development communication and media support development communication in which media, community, agricultural development schemes of government and administration are involved but media is playing a greater role to aware and involve rural people of Himachal Pradesh for adopting advanced agriculture, horticulture, natural farming and other eatable, non-eatable production for the rural development of Himachal Pradesh. However, seventy percent area of Himachal Pradesh is under forest cover and about thirty percent area of Himachal Pradesh is cultivated.

INTRODUCTION:

This is a hard truth that agriculture is the backbone of human life Human. On the other side is media, the development communication which aware and talks about the human development. Earlier when farmers used to involve in cultivating in traditional way and he used to unaware from the advanced farming in different cultivation areas for meet the demands and hunger of the human being. So farmers and farming are human being's fundamental pillars of human life and development and on the creation in the form of crops of different and horticulture production depend upon other socio-economic development. In the present world of science and technology, information technology and revolution in mass media communication are the major channels and tools to aware all including rural areas' farmers for growing much production in agriculture to meet all the human society's need, hunger and general growth through the modern ways of farming and natural farming to attain health profit and healthy food production, food consumption for all. If rural farmers are developed through farming, horticulture and aware on these by media, they can produce more and more grains for all including rural masses which lead also to the rural development together. However developed schemes on agriculture are being launched by the government for rural agriculture and rural development but lack of media literacy, communication gap, farmers do not leverage from such developed schemes as in some rural areas rural farmers have less access to media. Around 60% of the population of the world is farmers. Agriculture is the science and art of cultivating plants and livestock. Agriculture was the key development in the rise of inert human civilization, whereby farming of domesticated species created food [surpluses](#) that enabled people to live in cities. The history of agriculture began thousands of years ago as it remained a vehicle of hilly civilization or rural civilization to modernity or urbanization. Behind this advanced technology, science are there but communication, transportation and modern mass media tools are the major vehicles to aware the human civilization to advanced civilization otherwise modern technology and modern agricultural formulas and developmental schemes limited to a particular human society and rural areas. For example in India, many tribal rural areas are still away from the reach of media and modern technology, while rural area of Himachal Pradesh in this context is trailblazer.

Like others in the world, in Himachal Pradesh modern agronomy, plant breeding and agrochemicals such as pesticides and fertilizers practices, and technological developments have sharply increased yields, but caused widespread damage. However, in Himachal Pradesh media is playing more

awareness on 'Subhash Palekar Kheti', the natural farming being enforced by government and administration which is rural development based farming. In Himachal Pradesh, the major agricultural products can be broadly grouped into foods, fruits, medicinal products, fibers, and raw materials, etc. and food classes subsume cereals or [grains](#) of different crops, vegetables, different category fruits, apple growing, [oils](#), meat, milk, mushroom production and more.

Himachal Pradesh is now practicing agriculture as main source of income or livelihood particularly in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh even apple growing farming is being done through natural farming to gain maximum profit, and for this recommendable job by way of priming new techniques and good quality of seeds to the farming community are being provided by H.P. Government and media is playing an essential role in populating the latest techniques, equipments and other related information to the stakeholders mostly rural masses. So in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh, a drastic change in agriculture practices in recent times is being experienced through media report today.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Himachal Pradesh's farmers have been traditionally credited with turning the H.P. State's rugged mountain valleys into India's best farming hubs, and with bringing in the apple revolution and high-yield cash crops. But the success story has now rapidly gone downhill as the share of agriculture in H.P. State's economy has dropped to just eight percent in 2017-18, compared to 26.5 percent in 1990-91. Large tracts of fertile land have been abandoned by farmers in the Himachal Pradesh State for being uneconomical. The Himachal Pradesh survey report describes that contribution of agriculture and allied sectors in total H.P. State domestic product has declined from 57.9 percent in 1950-51 to 55.5 percent in 1967-68, 26.5 percent in 1990-91 and to 8.8 percent in 2017-18. In comparison, other sectors like transport and services have seen a significant growth graph. It is a reflection on farmers shifting to alternate means of livelihood and also migrating to urban towns. The younger generations are particularly uninterested in taking up agriculture-related activities, and are on the look-out for government jobs or contractual salaries. Dr. Tej Pratap (former VC of Agriculture University Palampur & APG Shimla University), now Vice-Chancellor of the Dr. G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Uttarakhand describes in his study that the food grain crop has almost lost its relevance and become non-viable in lower hills like Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Una and Kangra. Wild boars, Nilgai and monkeys are invading the fields and destroying crops. And finally, there is the climate change issue- long dry spells and excess rains when not needed by farmers. Onkar Sharma, principal secretary in the H.P. State's agriculture department describes in his study that the share of agriculture in the State Domestic Product may go down further in coming years. Onkar Sharma describes in his departmental studies that agriculture department of H.P. State did make some interventions through schemes like JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) for crop diversifications, and increasing productivity. There are subsidy schemes like solar fencing against wild animals, micro-irrigation, crop insurance, and subsidy on buying farm implements. He says that the fact remains that farmers are abandoning cultivations. The damage caused to them by wild animals is huge and they cannot protect crops day and night. Next, land use changes are happening quite fast in the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh. One factor behind this is possibly the expansion of the road network, which has led to the diversification of farm land towards building home-stays, guesthouses, shops and small business ventures by the villagers of Himachal Pradesh. Many villagers close to the cities and towns have even rented their uncultivated fields to company offices, educational institutions, automobile dealers, hotels, shops and land for sale to convert it into a parking yard, small industry, rented- houses and shops, etc. The villagers close to Shimla City, towns of district headquarters and other small towns of Himachal Pradesh that they have benefit to give or sale agricultural land vehicle parking, they get lakh of rupees from rented land or land for sale per *bighas*. The study reveals that such farmers are happy to get something out of nothing. They say that they have given up farming which used to on thousand of *bighas* land of family land because it has become impossible to save anything from wild animals. Many farmers of H.P. say that ten to fifteen years back, they used to grow excellent maize crop. Now, the yield was zero, they have stopped cultivations. There is so much cost of input, and there is nothing left to carry home. Singh et al (1985) also studied on rural development in different States of India that a few savings of rural people are switching people to alternate options of income towards cities and using their lands for house building for rent due to diversified climate and shortage of resources. Kumar et al (2002) conducted a study that there is diversification agriculture and rural development Himachal Pradesh as the agro climatic conditions in HP State are congenial for the production of cash crops like off seasons vegetables seeds, potatoes and ginger. However the profitable vegetable production is the first choice of the rural people after the common agriculture but irrigation shortage is a big problem in hilly State Himachal Pradesh. There are various policies from the side of HP government to short out many agricultural problem and rural development as well but a larger section of rural areas is still not aware properly in this area to increase crop production.

The media is playing an important role in dissemination the information related to farming sector like other sectors all over Himachal Pradesh. It is all due to fast medium of different communication tools that any development in farming sector reaches to the stakeholder immediately and they make best use of latest development in their interested field.

RESEARCH PROBLEM:

The role of media in agriculture development is to communicate the feasible farm technologies as being used in other small and less resources countries of the world in such a manner to attract the attention of farmers of Himachal Pradesh and help them to understand and remember the message and ultimately facilitate them to take appropriate decision to adopt agriculture for rural development. However, HP Government has many developmental schemes for agriculture and rural development but there is lack of support development communication among public/farmers, government, administration, stakeholders towards resist farmers' shift to alternate & rural development in Himachal Pradesh. Media reporting is also restricted to natural disasters, food shortages and rising food prices while it must on how to increase resources for the rural development through agricultural production and modern technology,

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH:

1. To review the existing farming systems practiced in rural sector of Himachal Pradesh in context of rural development.
2. To study the role of media for development of farming in rural sector of Himachal Pradesh.
3. To study developmental policy issues for enhanced media interventions into the farming sector in the context of rural development of Himachal Pradesh.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present research study on 'Role of Media to Resist Farmers' Shift to Alternate & Rural Development with Reference to Himachal Pradesh' is based on the secondary data collection and information from other published research studies and news reporting in media both in electronic media and print media including internet. The data for the purpose of present research study is collected through the secondary sources mostly from annual reports of Himachal Pradesh Government, Government of India, newspapers, internet and magazines, HP Government journals. In this research study, researcher finds simple find out the per hectare agricultural productivity method for rural development in HP over the period 2015-2020.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**Table: 1. Per Hectare Productivity of Different Crops in HP**

Year Crops	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Wheat	1.51	1.75	1.88	1.94	1.94
Maize	2.25	2.39	2.22	2.30	2.30
Barely	1.23	1.51	1.70	1.72	1.72
Ragi	0.89	0.91	0.89	0.97	0.97
Pulses	1.20	1.38	1.43	1.75	1.75
Common millets	0.59	0.69	0.64	0.66	0.66
Total Food grains	1.78	1.96	1.95	2.04	2.09
Chillies	0.37	0.28	0.32	0.34	0.35
Ginger	7.5	1.77	7.01	6.85	6.70
Oilseeds	0.50	0.48	0.46	0.52	0.5

Source: Annual Report of Economics and Statistics Department of H.P

Table-1 depicts that the per hectare productivity of wheat increase in the different years slightly, it was 1.51 per hectare but increased to 1.94 per hectare in 2019-20. The productivity of pulses also increased it was 1.20 per hectare in 2015-16 but it was increased to 1.73 per hectare in 2019-20. The productivity of total food grains increased from 1.77 per hectare productivity to 2.08 per hectare productivity in 2019-20. Reasons high varieties of seeds, irrigation, agricultural developmental schemes of government and media awareness on agriculture play important role.

Table-2. District wise per Hectare Productivity of Vegetables in HP

Districts	2018-19	2019-20
Bilaspur	27.06	27.29
Chamba	17.82	19.55
Hamirpur	15.35	15.54
Kangra	21.03	21.54
Kinnaur	12.14	12.13
Kullu	19.36	21.23
L & Spiti	10.29	12.75
Mandi	19.55	19.82
Shimla	18.27	18.26
Sirmour	22.31	28.34

Solan	31.57	34.65
Una	18.64	18.69

Source: Annual report of Economics and Statistics Department of H.P.

Table-2 depicts that productivity of vegetables highest in district Solan in H.P. and lowest productivity in district Kinnaur the main reasons the climatic conditions of district Solan is favorable for vegetables whereas, per hectare productivity of vegetables is low in Kinnaur district.

Table-3. Per hectare Productivity of Different Fruits

Districts	2018-19	2019-20
Bilaspur	0.35	0.27
Chamba	0.57	1.63
Hamirpur	0.45	0.38
Kangra	0.87	1.31
Kinnaur	4.56	2.5
Kullu	6.33	2.4
L & Spiti	0.14	0.17
Mandi	0.85	1.52
Shimla	11.56	10.76
Sirmour	0.98	1.33
Solan	1.03	1.27
Una	2.9	2.20

Source: Annual report of Economics and statistics Department of H.P

Table 3 depicts that per hectare productivity of different fruits highest in Shimla district but lowest in L & Spiti district reason the most of the apples grow in Shimla district because of favorable climatic condition.

Table-4. Media user HP Farmers on Agricultural & Rural Development information

Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Newspaper	20%	27%	32%	33%	35%
Radio	10%	8%	5%	3%	1%
Social Media	60%	68%	74%	81%	88%
TV	57%	62%	70%	79%	83%
Smart Mobile Phone	88%	91%	95%	97%	98%

Source: Different Media Reports published in print and electronic media

Table 4 depicts that maximum farmers of HP use electronic media and print media but after the advent of social media or smart mobile phones farmers use mobile phone regarding information on agriculture and rural development.

Programs and Development Policies commenced by the H.P Government & Central Government:

There are various policies and schemes are being run by H.P. Government to increase the agricultural productivity for the rural development such as:

(a) Quality Seed Multiplication and Distribution: Under this scheme, expenditure is incurred on seed multiplication farms, seed testing in laboratory and certification, subsidy on cost of seeds and cost on demonstrations.

(b) Manure and Fertilizers: In order to ensure adequate supply of fertilizers, the Government has entrusted this responsibility to HIMFEED/Cooperative Societies. The farmers are educated about balanced use of fertilizers and as per soil testing nutrient basis.

(c) H.P. Crop Diversification Projects: Under this, enhancing the income of farmers, foreign help like Japan International Cooperative Agency is supporting through the government's hands. The government is trying to cover the whole State under this projects and rest loan for farming is being provided to do diversification of farming in different categories.

(d) Support of Central Government of India & H.P. Government for Natural Farming: Under this, Natural Farming which is known by another name 'Subhashpalekar Kheti' is a dream project of H.P. Government to do farming in natural way free of cost to increase the agriculture productivity, healthy foods from agriculture and income resources of the farmers, gardeners, horticulturists in the State and now at present the farmers are being exhorted to do the farming of 'Mota-Anaaz' as this farming was left by maximum farmers in India but again the requirement of 'Mota-Anaaz' is much for healthy food as ailment free food as cleared by scientists and doctors.

(e) Soil Testing Centres: Soil testing centres have been launched for growing agriculture production as per climatic condition.

(f) Plant Protection: Under this, H.P. Government is imparting plant protection to the poor family, SCs/STs at fifty percent costs.

(g) Commercial Crops: Under this, the major emphasis is being given on the production of off-season vegetables, quality vegetable seeds, potato, and ginger besides soybean, oilseeds and pulses are given more importance to grow.

(h) Quality Control: Under this, H.P. Government has commenced three fertilizer testing lab at Hamirpur, Sundernagar, Shimla; and bio-fertilizer and bio-pesticide labs at Palampur and three seed testing labs at Solan, Palampur and Mandi are set up.

(i) Agricultural Marketing: Under this, the government has launched agricultural marketing through agricultural and horticultural marketing act, 2005 for crop diversifications and its marketing to generate income of the farmers under the agricultural projects of central government and State government and annual plan budget for each year.

(j) Media Support to Agriculture Advancement: Media support is necessary as it is primary objective to aware the farmers for their agriculture advancement through mass media such as TV, Doordarshan, Radio, newspapers, magazines, public relations and now social media tools using internet and smart mobile phones. Many DD channels like DD Himachal generally focus on agricultural programs-Kisanvani by All India Radio and Krishi Darshn Doordarshan.

(k) Kisan Call Centre: Under this farmers get new informations, innovations on agriculture by dialing toll free number 1800-180-1551 or 1551.

(l) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna: Under this scheme, the annual growth of agriculture is achieved and studied.

(m) National Crop Insurance Schemes:

(1) Rashtriya Krishi Bima Yojna: Under this, provide insurance coverage and financial aid to the farmers in the event of failure of any of the notified crop due to natural calamities or other diseases.

(2) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna: Under this scheme, main focus is on the annual growth of the farming is set.

(n) National Food Security Mission: under this, main focus is on increase the production and productivity of wheat, maize, pulses and rice.

(o) Rainfed Area Development: Under this, the government provides fund for development and conservation of natural resources along with farming.

(p) Link Agriculture with MNREGA/Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Scheme: There is a target of doubling the income of farmers across the country including Himachal Pradesh. This will happen when cost of cultivation fixed. In this context, in Himachal Pradesh, MNREGA scheme of central government is supporting farmers for water tank building for irrigation, building ponds, stressing on organic farming/ vemi compost for produce good crops. Moreover, under this scheme, construction of fields, cleaning wilderness land for cultivation and safety walls to the fields and canals for irrigation. There are other beneficial schemes and development schemes for the rural development including social and economic development.

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

The study found that twenty percent farmers are not interested to grow different productivities of crops, vegetables and fruits in lower Himachal Pradesh while in upper HP only fruits are produced. It is also found that the agricultural development news not given priority for coverage and also lacks status symbol as relating to the farmers problems of menace of wild animals to the crops. So twenty percent farmers have switched towards grow alternate crops or single crop to save from the wild animals' attack in lower Himachal Pradesh. The farmers of rural areas adjoining town areas or city areas of Himachal Pradesh are finding and shifting to alternate productivity such as business/ run shops, sale agricultural lands for other institutions, corporate people and building houses for rent. The farmers have no expertise and technical base to agricultural production with the climatic change and save crops.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

- Ensuring development support communication among farmers and participation of government, administration, public on agriculture production.
- Required more skilled human resource to maintain social media interactions, measuring the impact of agricultural productivity schemes of government on farmers to avoid shifting to another alternate of sale land and leaving farming as farming is the backbone of human being.

- Encouraging stakeholders/farmers to access resources through direct control of government, media and public relations regarding better agriculture for rural development and pay much to the crops growers in the market links

CONCLUSION:

The importance of the role of media for human life cannot be denied as this is true that beyond the basic human requirements like food, shelter etc. man needs to communicate with other human beings, society and nation for development. The media is the primary tool of communication in every society and likewise its contribution in the field of farming sector cannot be denied. In the same way, Himachal Pradesh has its rich media access to its people including farmers, gardeners in rural and urban areas as well. Due to different climatic conditions of hilly State Himachal Pradesh and a menace of wild animals to the crops, farming and gardening both are challenging for agricultural productivity and rural development as results farmers are shifting to another alternate of agriculture, however, a large percent of farmers are still involved in agricultural productivity who are leveraging from the developmental schemes being run by H.P. Government and central Government of India for the development of rural areas through better agricultural production in which media is playing a cardinal role to resist farmers to alternate business.

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