

**EVALUATION REPORT ON SATELLITE INSTRUCTIONAL
TELEVISION EXPERIMENT (SITE) - 1981**

1. **The Study**

The Department of Atomic Energy of the Government of India entered in 1975 into an agreement with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the U.S.A to conduct jointly a Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) with a view to provide informal education to the rural population of India through an intimate medium of communication. Accordingly, the SITE programme was launched on 1st August, 1975. This joint venture of NASA, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and All-India Radio (AIR) had the objectives of (a) exploring the potential of satellite for nation-wide communication through the medium of TV and (b) broadcasting instruction programmes in the field of agriculture, family planning, education etc. The SITE programme was introduced in 2400 villages in 20 districts of Rajasthan, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

The programmes under the SITE were classified into two broad categories i.e. (a) educational television (ETV) which was meant for the school children in the age group of 5-12 years and (b) instructional television (ITV) for adult audience, primarily designed for neoliterates and illiterates. ETV programme was focussed to make education more interesting, creative, purposive

and stimulating and also to create an awareness in the changing society. The telecasts for adult viewers were to cover incidents of national importance, improved practices in agriculture, health, hygiene, family planning, nutrition, etc. and some recreation programmes. The programmes were telecasted for a duration of four hours each day in two transmissions. The programmes were produced after categorising the target audience into four linguistic groups viz Hindi, Oriya, Telugu and Kannada. The SITE was in operation for one full year from August 1975 to July 1976 and covered 6 states.

At the instance of the Planning Commission, the Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) conducted an evaluation study of the Programme in three phases, viz,

(i) Bench-Mark Survey during July, 1975, (ii) Concurrent Observation running in three rounds from August, 1975 to July, 1976, and (iii) Repeat Survey from August, 1976 to November, 1976. The study was confined to those aspects of the programmes telecasted for adults only.

2. Objectives

The overall objective of the study was to understand the impact of the SITE Programme on the rural communities. The specific objectives, however, related to:

- i) The change in knowledge, attitude, etc. in respect of the various developmental programmes in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, health and family planning;
- ii) The views and reactions of the sample respondents about the benefits derived from TV;
- iii) The viewing pattern and the socio-economic background of the viewers; and
- iv) The hardware (maintenance and functioning) and software (programme content) of the Satellite television

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample

The sampling design adopted for the study was a multi-stage one. From each of the 6 States covered by the programme, one district with the maximum number of TV sets was selected. From each selected district two Community Development Blocks were chosen with probability proportional to the number of 'TV villages' in them. From each selected block, 4 villages were selected at random from the alphabetically arranged list of TV villages. Of these, the first two were taken as 'observational villages' and the other two were put in the category of 'non-observational villages'. The total of observational villages formed about 1% of the total TV villages. Two 'non-TV villages' located between 15 to 20 kms from the periphery of TV cluster villages were selected as 'control villages' in each of the selected blocks.

The number of selected TV observational villages remained the same during the first and third rounds of the Concurrent Observation. For the quick second round, 10% of the total TV villages were selected through multi-stage stratified sampling method.

In each selected village, 30 households were selected. The households were stratified into three-cultivators, labourers and others-on the basis of the principal occupation of the head of the household. The households were selected systematically from the first stratum (cultivator households) and randomly from the strata of labourers and others. A total of 2160 households were selected in 6 states. However, information was collected only from 2140 households as 20 households were dropped on account of death or migration to other villages.

4. **Reference Period**

The reference period, combined for the three phases of study, ranged from August, 1975 to July 1976, i.e., the period for which the experiment was done.

5. **Main Findings**

1. The maximum percentage of TV Sets (70%) functioned in the month of August, 1975. The position deteriorated in the subsequent period. Failure in electricity supply and hardware defects were the factors mainly responsible for the non-functioning of TV sets. The loss of viewing days was greater in Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh than in the other three states.

2. The time allocated for the development programmes varied from 17% to 30%. Of this, three-fourth of the time was for programmes on agriculture and health. Over 2/5th of the (total) programmes telecasted dealt with agriculture and nearly 1/3rd with health.

3. 78% of the development programmes observed by the P.E.O field teams were rated as good and over 90% as relevant to the local situations. About three-fourth of the respondents felt that the development programmes were, on the whole, useful and conformed to the local conditions. Over one-fourth of the viewers could acquire detailed knowledge of the new practices shown on the television.

4. Nearly 52% of the viewers were in favour of applying the new knowledge gained. About 34% of them wanted government's assistance in terms of credit, supplies, etc. for the application of the new knowledge. 87% were willing to try these practices with the present information while the rest of them asked for

supplementary information.

5. Size of audience per TV set declined from the range of about 200 to 600 persons in the first round to about 60 to 80 persons in the third round. The overall decline was 59%. More than 1/3rd of the respondents missed the telecast due to their pre-occupation with domestic or agricultural work while another 1/4th missed it because of indifferent health and fatigue.

6. About two-third of the total audience consisted of adults, with men constituting more than 2/5th of the total and women about 1/4th. The remaining 1/3rd were children. During the third round of the survey, only 1/3rd of the adult household members were viewers.

7. The departmental extention machinery did not adequately participate in the TV programmes; nor did it perform its clarificatory and supporting role.

8. Gain in knowledge and attitude per respondent was the highest in the field of agriculture followed by family planning, animal husbandry and health. This was mainly because of the numerical majority of cultivators in the rural areas. Knowledge and attitude improved invariably with the viewing of TV.

9. At the end of the SITE programme, a substantial number of respondents opined that the government took greater interest in promoting the welfare of the poorer sections by disbursing loans and giving other facilities more liberally than before.

10. After the introduction of the SITE programme, some benefits of watching television like the learning of new things about agriculture and allied fields, knowledge about the happenings in other places, information about the governmental efforts to promote the welfare of the poor, entertainment and information regarding availability of loans and other facilities to villagers than before were recognized. Even occasional viewers got their outlook broadened and changed considerably.