ISSN 2828-5252

EXCEL JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING TECHONOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE

(A Peer Reviewed International Multidisciplinary Journal)

VOL. 01 | NO. 30 | JUNE. JULY. 2026

# *Use of Akashwani in Agricultural Development of Marathwada Region*

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***Abstract:***

Mass media significantly impacts the agricultural sector, influencing information dissemination, community building and sustainable farming practices. It provides farmers with real-time updates on weather forecasts, market trends and agricultural practices, enabling them to optimize their operations and improve yields. Mass media also serves as an educational tool, raising awareness about sustainable farming practices and environmental conservation. Documentaries, educational programs and articles inform farmers about biodiversity, soil health and water conservation, agronomy, cropping pattern, irrigation water management. By promoting sustainable practices, mass media encourages farmers to adopt methods that enhance productivity while protecting the environment such like less use of chemical fertilizers, harmful chemical processed seeds etc. This educational aspect is significant in encouraging a responsible approach to agriculture, ensuring sustainable practices for future generations. The impact of mass media on agriculture is multifaceted, enhancing communication, education and community engagement. As technology evolves, the influence of mass media in agriculture will likely expand, providing more opportunities for farmers to thrive in an ever-changing landscape. In all media Ashwani's role is major in agricultural development of Marathwada region. Specially Parbhani Akashawani Kendra broadcasted so many agricultural programmes.

**Keywords:** Mass media; Information; Sustainable farming; Farmers; Agriculture, Marathwada Region, agricultural development

Date of submission 18-05-2026 Date of acceptance 06-06-2026

**Introduction**

Mass media plays a pivotal role in the agricultural sector, serving as a vital conduit for information dissemination, education and advocacy. Its influence is far-reaching, impacting the decisions, practices and overall development of agriculture worldwide. In emerging nations, the majority of people still rely on "traditional mass media" including radio, television and newspapers. Accordingly, these three media outlets could be useful for spreading agricultural-related information. Educating the public about new government initiatives, methods and technology is one of the main roles of mass media in agriculture. Numerous media platforms such as radio, television, advertising, movies, the internet, newspapers, magazines and so on are among the technologies used in this communication. Mass media is important in helping farmers receive developments in contemporary agriculture. Furthermore, by drawing attention to certain concerns, the media can improve people's understanding and alter their behaviour. Newspapers provide additional benefits, such as stable form a wealth of information and authority, even if radio and television are the mass media formats with the quickest rates of growth. Additionally, the media serves as a link between farmers and resources and markets. It offers vital details on demand patterns, market pricing and the most effective ways to promote agricultural goods. This relationship aids farmers in making wise choices and maximizing their earnings. Furthermore, media outlets provide farmers with access to professional viewpoints, guidance and solutions to issues in agriculture, helping them to address obstacles more skilfully. The media is very important for lobbying and influencing policy. Through drawing attention to problems that farmers confront, such the effects of climate change, water shortages and financial restrictions the media may persuade decision-makers to take these issues seriously. By advocating for farmers, we can make sure that their needs are met and that their voices are heard. On the other hand, the media also supports government programs and policies meant to assist farmers and make sure they are aware of the advantages that are accessible to them. In several nations, grower communities decision-making and the progress of agriculture and rural areas have benefited from the usage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Through new technologies that are unique to producers, ICTs have significantly changed agricultural improvement and relocation skills and knowledge. In addition to the potential for ICT to disseminate agriculturally efficient information among producer’s other media such as radio, television, mobile phones and the internet can also facilitate the exchange of pertinent

Date of submission 18-05-2026 Date of acceptance 06-06-2026

and appropriate materials that promote the efficient and productive use of resources. The integration of technology with mass media has further revolutionized agricultural communication. Digital media including social media platforms, mobile apps and websites offer real-time updates and interactive platforms for farmers to engage with experts and peers. This technological integration has made information, moreaccessible and timelyallowing farmers to adapt quickly to changing conditions. However, traditional media such as television and radio still play a significant role particularly in rural areas where access to digital technology may be limited. Programs customized to local languages and cultures enhance understanding and adoption among diverse audiences.

The Marathwada Region is a historically and culturally significant area located in the central part of the Indian state of Maharashtra. It represents one of the five main regions of the state, the others being Konkan, Vidarbha, Khandeshand Western Maharashtra. Known for its distinctive linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic characteristics, Marathwada occupies a pivotal position in the state's historical and developmental narrative. Its geography, traditions, and socio-political movements have greatly contributed to Maharashtra's identity.

**Key Roles of Media in Agricultural Development**

Information Dissemination: Media is essential for providing farmers with up-to-date and timely information on a wide range of topics, including: Weather forecasts and climate advisories, which are critical for planning farming activities like sowing and harvesting. Market prices for agricultural produce, empowering farmers to make better marketing decisions and avoid exploitation by middlemen.New technologies and modern farming techniques, such as proper use of fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation methods, and new crop varieties.

**Education and Training**: Media outlets, especially television and radio, serve as potent educational tools for both literate and illiterate farmers by delivering information in local languages and dialects. Programs like DD Kisan's "Krishi Darshan" in India use audio-visual content to demonstrate new practices, making complex information easy to understand.

**Awareness and Adoption of Innovation**: Mass media campaigns help create awareness about government schemes, financial aid, and new technologies, which is a crucial first step in encouraging farmers to adopt innovative and sustainable practices, such as integrated pest management or conservation agriculture.

**Advocacy and Policy Influence**: Media can highlight the challenges faced by farmers, such as water scarcity or financial issues, bringing these concerns to the attention of policymakers

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and the public. This can influence policy decisions and mobilize support for agricultural reforms and funding.

**Community Engagement and Networking**: Digital and social media platforms (like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube) allow farmers to connect with peers, experts, and suppliers. This peer-to-peer communication facilitates the sharing of practical knowledge and experiences, building social networks that support continuous learning and problem-solving.

**Showcasing Success Stories**: By sharing testimonials and success stories of farmers who have benefited from adopting new technologies, media can motivate other farmers to follow suit and try new methods, thereby influencing behavioural change. In essence, media serves as a dynamic link in the agricultural information system, enabling knowledge flow, building skills, and ultimately contributing to enhanced productivity and the overall socioeconomic development of the farming community.

**Akashwani in agricultural development:**

All India Radio has been a witness to the course of development of India as an institution of communication given to catalyze the process of change on the one hand and as an upholder as well as preserver of a vibrant cultural heritage on the other. The socioeconomic development of agrarian sector is a vital factor in Indian agriculture. Keeping this in view All India Radio has been playing a vital role continuously by adopting innovative techniques. In keeping with the respective social objectives, the concern of All India Radio has been to aid the process of changing lives of those who exist on the margins of development. Differing perceptions of development potential at different times needed to be unbundled leading to devising of commensurate communication strategies within the typical development framework. In the process of doing so, it has relentlessly evolved to its present state creating many milestonesof history of achievement and accomplishment. The relevance of All India Radio in the process of social development and change has always been robust primarily because of its innate strength to be in tune with time. The crafts and techniques of information dissemination have meticulously addressed the social realities of respective time in its long course of public service and the impact has been discernible in different realms of life of the society in general and agrarian sector in particular. The research is based on observation, and archival documents. All India Radio is a living organism.Although All India Radio has been dedicated to the service of farming community, it embarked on the new initiative of narrowcasting to turn the hard-core agriculture programme into the Voice of Farmers i.e. Kisvanvani from 15 th February 2004. The Programmes are broadcasts across the length and breadth of the

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country. The thrust of Kisanvani Programme is to educate the farmers on the subjects such as diffusion of innovation, Lab to land, knowledge and skill of modern and scientific techniques of agricultural practices, horticulture, animal husbandry, poultry farming, fishery, rural banking and self-employment schemes and other allied activates.Realizing the contribution of radio towards reaching new agricultural technologies tofarmers of United States of America in 1966, the then Union Minister of Agriculture BharatRatna C. Subramaniam played an instrumental role in introducing Farm & Home Units at sevenAll India Radio stations in the country. This marked the beginning of a new era of farmbroadcasting in India.If All India Radio may take credit for its role as an agent of social change, it can justly doso in the field of rural and farm broadcasting. The vast changes that have taken place in thecountryside, particularly, the "green revolution" could not have come about so quickly withoutthe use of radio. The educational and developmental role of radio has been nowhere moreevident than in its programmes for rural listeners. They use many forms like Farm and Home units, Rural and Urban programmes, Farm school of Akashwani, non-formal education about farming, participatory broadcasting etc. With use of all these farmers of Marathwada region got more benefit in agriculture development.

**Geographical and Administrative Overview of Marathwada Region**

Marathwada lies in the Deccan Plateau and comprises eight districts: Aurangabad, Beed, Jalna, Latur, Nanded, Osmanabad (renamed Dharashiv in 2023), Hingoli, and Parbhani. The region covers an approximate area of 64,590 square kilometres. Bounded by the Vidarbha region to the east, Khandesh to the north, and Western Maharashtra to the west, it shares its southern border with the state of Karnataka and Telangana to the southeast.The terrain of Marathwada is primarily semi-arid, featuring undulating plateaus, hill ranges, and river basins. Major rivers include the Godavari, Purna, and Manjara, which play an essential role in agriculture and irrigation. The region experiences a tropical climate, with hot summers and moderate monsoons, though rainfall is often erratic, leading to frequent droughts.

**Historical Background of Marathwada Region:**

Marathwada has a rich and complex history dating back to ancient times. The region was once part of the Satavahana Empire (circa 230 BCE–220 CE), which promoted trade and cultural development across the Deccan. During the medieval period, it came under the rule of the Yadavas of Devagiri and later the Delhi Sultanate following Alauddin Khalji's invasion in the 14th century.In the 17th century, the region was incorporated into the Mughal Empire, with Aurangabad serving as an important administrative and military centre under

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Emperor Aurangzeb, who ruled from the city during his Deccan campaigns. The Mughal architectural legacy, particularly the Bibi Ka Maqbara, remains a prominent symbol of this era.Following the decline of Mughal power, Marathwada became part of the Nizam's Hyderabad State. This association lasted until India's independence, when the Hyderabad State was integrated into the Indian Union through "Operation Polo" in 1948. Subsequently, in 1956, the States Reorganisation Act incorporated Marathwada into the newly formed Bombay State, and later it became part of Maharashtra in 1960.

**Socio-Economic Conditions of Marathwada Region:**

Marathwada is predominantly agrarian, with agriculture forming the mainstay of its economy. The principal crops include cotton, jowar (sorghum), bajra (pearl millet), pulses, and sugarcane. However, the region faces recurring droughts, limited irrigation facilities, and inconsistent monsoon rainfall, which have contributed to frequent agricultural distress and migration.Industrialisation has been relatively slow compared to other parts of Maharashtra. The establishment of the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) estates in Aurangabad and nearby districts has spurred some industrial activity, particularly in the automobile, pharmaceutical, and brewing sectors. Aurangabad, often referred to as the "Industrial Hub of Marathwada", hosts several multinational companies and is emerging as a significant centre for tourism and manufacturing.
Despite these developments, Marathwada continues to face challenges related to water scarcity, unemployment, and uneven educational development. The Marathwada Water Grid Project, initiated by the state government, aims to address water supply issues through the interlinking of rivers and construction of reservoirs.The Marathwada Agricultural University in Parbhani (now renamed Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth) has contributed significantly to agricultural research and innovation, particularly in drought-resistant crops and sustainable farming practices. Despite these advancements, literacy rates in some rural districts remain below the state average, underlining the need for continued educational investment.

**Use of Akashwani inagricultural development of Marathwada Region:**

Akashvani (All India Radio) has been a vital, accessible, and effective medium for agricultural development in the Marathwada region, which is often susceptible to drought. It effectively bridges the gap between agricultural research institutions and the rural farming community, many of whom have low literacy levels, by providing timely and localized information in local languages.


Excel Publication
Impact factor: 5.136 (IIFS)

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Dissemination of Critical Information: Akashvani stations in the region, such as Akashvani Parbhani, broadcast essential information like daily market rates, weather forecasts (especially crucial given the erratic rainfall in Marathwada), and warnings about pest and disease outbreaks.

Education on Modern Techniques: Radio programs serve as an educational tool for farmers, providing knowledge on improved varieties of seeds, correct methods of fertilizer application, water management techniques, and other modern farming practices recommended by universities like the Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Agricultural University (VNMAU).

"Kisanvani" Programs: The dedicated "Kisanvani" (Voice of the Farmer) programs are a key initiative. These half-hour daily programs use a "narrowcasting" approach, focusing on specific local agro-climatic zones and addressing the immediate, need-based problems of the local farmers in their own dialect.

Awareness of Government Schemes: Akashvani creates awareness about various government agricultural schemes, subsidies, and loan facilities (e.g., solar pump schemes, crop insurance, and sustainable agriculture irrigation schemes) that farmers can leverage for their benefit.

Two-Way Communication and Feedback: While traditionally a one-way medium, Akashvani has evolved to incorporate participatory communication. It organizes phone-in and live interactive programs where farmers can directly interact with agricultural scientists and experts to resolve their doubts and get professional guidance.

Motivation through Success Stories: Programs often feature interviews and success stories of progressive farmers from the region who have successfully adopted new technologies. These real-life examples motivate other farmers to try new methods and improve their yields.

Support during Crises: In a drought-prone region like Marathwada, Akashvani's role becomes even more critical during natural disasters. It broadcasts special, urgent messages and advisories on drought mitigation measures, alternate land use, and drought-resistant crops to minimize losses.

**Conclusion:**

Through these efforts, Akashvani contributes significantly to enhancing the knowledge, skills, and overall resilience of the farming community in Marathwada, ultimately aiding the region's agricultural development.During the last 80 years, farmers scattered over the sub-continent have come to dependon AIR for information and entertainment. In some parts of the Maharashtra, the broadcasts havesucceeded in changing agricultural practices to the

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advantage of the individual farmer and the state's agricultural production like Marathwada region. Such success encourages one to hope that radio can be aninstrument for development and growth if properly used.Thus, the world's largest broadcaster All India Radio has also moved to narrowcastingfrom broadcasting keeping pace with technology to reach the smallest of the small village in the Marathwada with a view to function in a participative approach for the betterment of farmingcommunity.The contribution of All India Radio in the area of farm extension has been notable. It hasrelentlessly innovated and evolved through time in its search for new and adopted appropriateformats as well as suitable communication contents for meeting the objective of Marathwada region.

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