

# Role of Television in Rural Development: A Study on Two Districts of Bangladesh

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## ABSTRACT

The study's main objectives were to evaluate the contribution of television to rural development, including understanding the sorts of messages that are broadcast by television channels, attitudes toward broadcasted messages, and the effects of those messages on rural development. For the study, 300 participants were surveyed from six villages in the Munshiganj and Manikganj districts. Key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD) were also performed. The theoretical framework of the study was the agenda-setting theory of McCombs (1972) and the media growth theory by Mc Quail (1987). According to the study's findings, all of the respondents own televisions and regularly watch television. According to the study, 72% of respondents believed television to be a powerful medium, and over 70% believed it to be an effective one. Another finding showed that about 74.3% of people utilized developmental messages received from TV channels, and 49.67% saw positive effects from the messages to raise their standards of living. In rural Bangladesh, as study revealed 100% of people use television, compared to 21% who use newspapers, 0% who use radio, and 53.67% who use the internet, it appears that television is the major and most dependable source of development messages. So, a decision can be made based on the study that TV is playing a significant role and have the potentiality to be used effectively in rural developments of Bangladesh. The government should provide training to television employees on rural development community engagement in program identification, delivery, follow-up, and administration of development messages successfully. The creation of high-quality television programming should be collaborative. According to the report, television can help with opportunity identification, policy options, and strategic initiatives to advance rural development policies and services.

**Keywords:** Television, Development, Rural Development, Bangladesh.

## INTRODUCTION

The vast majorities of people in developing nations like Bangladesh live in rural areas and depend on the labor produced there for their subsistence. Therefore, rural development has been given the proper weight in any discussion of development. As per the preliminary report of population and housing census-2022 of Bangladesh, 68.49% of the nation's population resides in villages. Consequently, rural development and the growth of our national economy are intimately intertwined. The most amazing scientific discovery, television is recognized as the best medium for communication.

TV has demonstrated that it is a powerful medium for communication and that it has a significant impact on society by providing accurate information. Information is any message or news that is heard, read, or seen and adds to one's knowledge, awareness, or comprehension of specific subjects, events, or issues and helps one get ready for life's uncertainties (Ifukor, 2013). Therefore, it is commonly known that all national development initiatives are aided by the growth of a knowledge society or information society. Knowledge is highly valued in this society and is a major force behind all forms of progress. Balit (1996), who noted that information is the least expensive input for rural development, emphasized the relevance of this

revolution.

In Bangladesh, television is one of the most widely used media and information sources. In Bangladesh, 64% of homes possessed a television as of 2019, and cable television dominated the country's pay television market. When compared to 1975 figures, when less than 0.2% of Bangladeshi households owned a television, this represents a significant growth. As of 2019, the Bangladeshi government had approved about 45 privately held television channels, of which 34 are currently broadcasting. Five television networks have been deactivated: CSB News, Channel 1, Diganta Television, Islamic TV, and Channel 16. Only three of Bangladesh's four state-owned television stations, BTV Dhaka, BTV Chittagong, and Sangsad Television, broadcast on terrestrial television. Bangladesh has 49 total television channels, 39 of which are broadcasting right now. The content on this channel supports rural community development across all spheres. The rural poor in Bangladesh today, particularly the most disadvantaged sections of women and children, are specific targets of rural development.

The goal of rural development is to increase these target groups' ability to govern their immediate environment and to distribute the advantages of that control more widely. The main goals of rural development in Bangladesh are: (a) reducing poverty and improving the standard of living for rural poor people; (b) distributing income and wealth fairly; (c) expanding employment opportunities; (d) involving residents in the planning, decision-making, implementation process, benefit sharing, and evaluation of rural development programs; and (e) "empowerment," or giving the rural populace more economic and political power to regulate the use and distribution of resources. Bangladesh had several types of rural development organizations before to becoming an independent state in 1971, such as village-based governments, whose history may be traced back to antiquity.

These village governments' primary duty was to raise money for the national government, which was followed by other duties like maintaining law and order and fostering trade and commerce. Except for the creation of minimal rural infrastructure and emergency relief efforts, the Mughal emperors hardly ever showed a systematic institutional commitment to rural development. The goal of rural development is to give the populace more control over the dangerous environment they live in. Natural resources and the dominant force have both been identified as major problems for rural information development. Information of any kind, including news that is witnessed, read or verbally expressed, can help one become more knowledgeable about specific concepts, events, or problems and better prepare for the uncertainties of life (Ifukor, 2013).

As we are all aware, the development of the information society, sometimes referred to as the knowledge-based society, is currently gaining speed in all national growth programs. An important action that has the potential to ensure that both are essential is the emergence of an information and knowledge society. Rural development requires knowledge. Television has long been seen as a crucial medium for the dissemination of information and as a tool for instruction. One of the effective media for disseminating information is television. Information may be effectively spread to rural residents through television. This has evolved into a combination of sound and sight that can attract in too many people, whether or not they are literate (Nazari, 2001). Television can still be a useful medium for informing rural residents of information, even though technological growth has produced many means of information collecting. Through greater productivity, fair resource allocation, and empowerment, television is considered the most planned change to improve the economic and social lifestyle of the rural poor. In addition, TV broadcasting has long been utilized for experimentation, self-improvement, and news so that people can stay informed about events across the globe. In earlier research, no one had yet evaluated how television fits into every area of rural development. This study explores how watching television programs that promote the development of our rural areas on all fronts has benefited our rural populations in the Dhaka division's Manikganj and Munshiganj districts. The study specifically identified the categories of information that are useful for rural development. Few academics have considered media life to be a sort of communication where people obtain

information in their daily lives.

There has been some research on the socioeconomic, the different kinds of messages, and the effects of those messages that are being disseminated by television on various renowned researchers, but no study has been conducted in line with the role of television in rural development in Bangladesh, including all of the developmental sectors like education, agriculture, health, the environment, social problems, etc. in specific research at the same time. Finding the literature review for the study is difficult because of this. Therefore, this research will help us understand how the television channel's programming affects and motivates rural people in all spheres of development.

### **The rationale of the study**

The influence of television can change people's perspectives. By educating people about the benefits of television as a communication tool, we can help them achieve their educational objectives and learn about topics like agriculture, health, and other developmental challenges. Television serves a variety of useful purposes that help both individuals and society at large. It is a crucial part of a nation's communication network. Communication scholars constantly emphasize the immense potential of television for informing, teaching, and entertaining the public, according to David and Rechards (1996). Determining how much television can help rural members of society is essential if TV programming is to meet the informational and educational needs of rural communities. Consequently, the investigation was started.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In rural areas, television has been a crucial medium for spreading development messages. For rural residents to adopt new initiatives and take part in development activities, television is a crucial communication tool. However, the idea for this study was established after analyzing relevant studies done in Bangladesh and other nations.

Television was noted by Ifukor (2013) as one of the mediums used to reach rural residents with information. Therefore, he suggested that native tongues be used for television news so that viewers could grasp the messages better.

Metga (2012) investigated the various information requirements of rural residents as well as the information sources they use. His research revealed that rural residents acquire information mostly through radio and television, news, etc., and that the choice of information sources largely depended on the degree of education, income, gender, age, and occupation of rural populations. Therefore, the author recommended regularly assessing the information needs of rural areas and repackaging information in appropriate forms suitable to satisfy those communities' unique needs. The author also advocated for adequate rural programming on radio and television that was transmitted at the proper time.

Nosheen et al. (2010) analyzed information sources for home and agricultural activities that were particular to gender. The study's findings indicated that women were more likely than men to utilize television as a source of information, whilst men were more likely to rely on personal contacts. To determine the information sources and usage of frames, Fawole (2008) conducted a study. It was found that television accounted for 40% of farmers' daily information needs. Murty and Albino (2012) analyzed the role that different television channels had in providing farmers with agricultural information to help them improve their businesses. Their findings show a favorable relationship between television networks' dependence and contribution.

A research was done by Nazari and Hasan (2011) to determine how effective television is as a teaching tool for farmers. It was discovered that watching television programs considerably increased the farmers' level

of understanding. Hasan et al. (2010) researched to ascertain the current gap in learning about agriculture from television. It was discovered that Bangladeshi farmers primarily rely on television to keep up with weather forecasts. The most-watched television channel in the country (83%) is Bangladesh Television (BTV). Since 92% of viewers in rural regions watch television, it is preferable for them to learn about farming techniques from television programs.

According to Rao (1992), television was a medium created for the benefit of rural people. Only the educational potential of television was considered. The launch of the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) is regarded as the most important turning point in television history, not just in India but also globally. The experiment was designed to study the rural audience for developmental messaging in collaboration with the US National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA).

Mirchandani (1970) said the project's main goal was to gain experience in the development, testing, and management of satellite-based instructional television systems, particularly in rural areas. This was done to show the potential of satellite in developing nations, to encourage national integration, and to improve agricultural practices to support general school and adult education as well as improve occupational skills among rural residents. According to Mitra (1992), an entertainment focus has been added to the initial priority of instruction, notably with the help of commercial sponsors. Since Mitra's research, television has become even more prevalent in rural India. Today, even some of the most isolated parts of the nation can watch television. Village life is drastically changing in the late 1990s as people quickly integrate into the television age (Johnson, 2000).

According to Srivastava and Lurie (2001), television is the most affordable and effective mass media for bridging distance and literacy obstacles in rural areas. With this aim, they conducted research in four villages in Uttar Pradesh, close to the city of Lucknow, to determine the farmers' familiarity with television programs promoting rural agriculture. The majority of the farmers interviewed stated that they found television programs to help learn new information about agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, etc. However, it was discovered that some farmers simply found television programs useful for gaining new information, while others believed that television programs were the sole thing that raised awareness of various agricultural innovations.

According to Yadav (2004), the respondents ranked television as a medium through which they and their kids acquired a lot of new things and as a significant source of knowledge and education. Children in these families are perhaps the group most susceptible to being impacted by what is broadcast on television.

Moore (2007) noted that not everyone in society has equal access. Poor communities frequently deny access to information that could enhance the lives of their residents. The farmers' access to the most recent scientific and technological advancements in modern agriculture is unquestionably facilitated by television. According to Harande (2009), development can only be successful if rural residents have access to useful, varied information for their activities via television.

According to Holbert, Shah, and Kwak (2003), television programs have improved the social standing of rural women by including information on women's rights and issues in their content. Political awareness, economic choices, interpersonal interactions, and villagers' worldview are all influenced by television, which has brought psychological and structural change to rural life in India (Johnson, 2000).

According to Santas T. & Ezekiel S.A. (2011), communication experts generally agree on the value of rural broadcasting as a means of promoting national development. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World expressed this concern. According to Asemah (2011), rural broadcasting combines the dissemination and transmission of social development programs to the rural population to favorably influence their behavior. He continued by saying that it involves using local radio and television to deliver

development programs to rural residents.

Sathish K., D.O. In many nations, television is valued highly as a source of information and a teaching tool. The success stories of using television for development in many nations have disproven the idea that television is primarily an adversarial medium focused on amusement. Sen S. Rommani (2011) contributed to this; media play a critical role in the development communication. The media disseminate information that will alert people to important occurrences, chances, threats, and changes in their neighborhood, nation, and globe. Information and communication activities are key components of any rural development effort, according to Robert C. and Tom S. (2002). Information distribution has long been an important part of rural development programs because rural regions are frequently described as being information-poor. The poor in rural areas frequently don't have access to knowledge that is necessary for their survival.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study's main goal is to evaluate how television contributes to rural development. The precise goals are:

1. To investigate the villages' current socioeconomic circumstances.
2. To determine the types of messages that TV networks in rural development promote.
3. To understand how TV messages affect rural development.

### **Theoretical Framework**

According to the idea, which emphasizes the use of media for development, Bangladesh should employ the media for rural broadcasting to speed up the development of rural areas. According to Seibert F. et al.'s social responsibility theory from 1963, the media should respect and uphold specific societal responsibilities and should avoid reporting anything that can stir up crime, violence, civil unrest, or offense towards minority groups. This highlights how the media may aid in the creation of effective national security problem communication.

In accordance with established national policy, the mass media must embrace and carry out activities that promote positive growth, according to Mc Quail's (1987) Media growth Theory. Based on the same principle, Foralin (2002) contends that the media accept and help with the issues of national integration, economic development, modernization, and promotion. The state of being literate.

According to McCombs, M., and Donald L.'s Agenda Setting Theory (1972, 1973), people typically learn about public issues through the data that the media offers. While people in this situation are free to believe whatever they want, most of the time they consider the majority of the things the media emphasizes to be important.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were used in this investigation. We visited each home to gather primary data using an interview schedule. A set of questionnaires were used to perform the survey. The questionnaire was written in both Bangla and English for easier comprehension. Demographic inquiries about name, phone number, age, religion, gender, career, educational attainment, monthly income, and other details were asked at the outset of the survey. A wide range of developmental concerns were covered by the survey.

### **Study area**

Bangladesh's Manikganj and Munshiganj districts were specifically chosen for this investigation. Later, one

upazila from each of the districts of Manikganj and Munshiganj was chosen for the survey. Srinagar Upazila was chosen for the Munshiganj district whereas Ghior Upazila was chosen for the Manikganj district. Majhipara, Senpara, and Gupternagar Village of Shologhor Union under the Srinagar upazila of Munshiganj district and Jabra, Rathura, and Tora Village of Baniajuri Union under the Ghiorupazila of Manikganj district were the three villages examined for this study.

### Population and Sampling

Random sampling methods have been applied in selecting villages and houses. Only one person was interviewed in selected houses. Districts were selected according to the researchers' convenience for data collection. Five groups were created for focus group discussion, maintaining criteria of 'aged male farmer', 'house wife', 'employed educated youth', 'unemployed educated youth', and 'uneducated youth' for five groups. Each group had six members. Researchers act as moderators for FGD.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Male and female village dwellers from the Manikganj and Munshiganj districts participated in the survey. This study was based on survey information acquired through in-person interviews with participants in their residences, workplaces, farms, and streets. Key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD) were also performed. This study's foundation was quantitative analysis. The information was tallied and evaluated for its statistical significance and relevance to the goal of the study. Microsoft Excel 2007 was used to analyze data. The conclusions were presented in a written research report. The results of the study were presented using a column chart, bar chart, pie chart, line chart, and area chart.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSION

### Socio-Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The socio-demographic details of the respondents are shown in Table 1. There were 300 participants in all, 180 (or 60%) of them were men, while the remaining participants were women. 24 (8.13%) were under the age of 20, 35 (11.67%) were in the 19 to 30-year range, 73 (24.33%) were in the 40 to 50-year range, 70 (23.33%) were in the 50 to 60-year range, and the remaining (97, 32.33%) were over the age of 50. 15% of people lack formal education, 21.33% have completed elementary school, 49.33% have higher secondary education, and 14.33 have earned a college degree. Muslims made up the majority of respondents—235 to be exact—while Hindus made up 65.

Of the participants, the number of farmers, day laborers, businesspeople, government employees, students, housewives, and others were 57(19%), 20(6.67%), 72(24%), 23(7.67%), 84, 41 and 03 respectively.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic information**

variables	Frequency(300)	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	180	60%
Female	120	40%
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20	25	8.33%
20 to 30	35	11.67%
30 to 40	73	24.33%
40 t0 50	70	23.33%
Above 50	97	32.33%

<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate or No formal education	45	15%
Up to Primary	64	21.33%
Up to Higher Secondary	148	49.33%
Higher education	43	14.33%
<b>Profession</b>		
Farmer	57	19%
Day laborer	20	6.67%
Businessman	72	24
Service holder	23	7.67%
House wife	84	28%
Students	41	13.67%
Others	3	1%
<b>Monthly Income(In Bangladeshi Taka)</b>		
Below 20000	185	61.67%
20000-35000	90	30%
35000-50000	22	7.33%
Above 50000	3	1%

### Media ownership and Usages

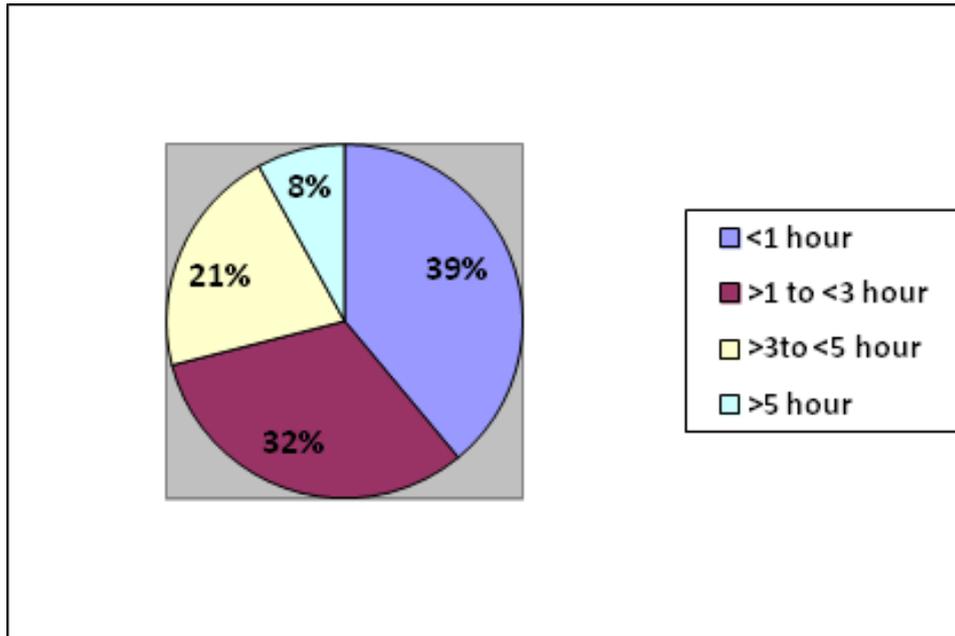
Surprisingly, despite the rise of new media forms and the use of contemporary technology, television continues to have a prominent position in society. According to the study, all participants reported having a TV in their homes and watching TV shows. It’s interesting to note that none of the respondents own a radio and don’t listen to one either. Although just 9.67% of those polled buy newspapers, 21% of them read them, indicating a moderate level of engagement with print media. 161 people, or 53.67%, have access to the internet, and they all use it to get information about topics related to development.

**Table 2: Media ownership and Usages**

Ownership and Usages	Frequency	Percentage
Having TV set	300	100%
Watching TV	300	100%
Having Radio	0	0%
Listening Radio	0	0%
Buy Newspaper	29	9.67%
Reading Newspaper	63	21%
Have Internet Access	161	53.67%
Use internet for getting message	161	53.67%

### Frequency of TV usages

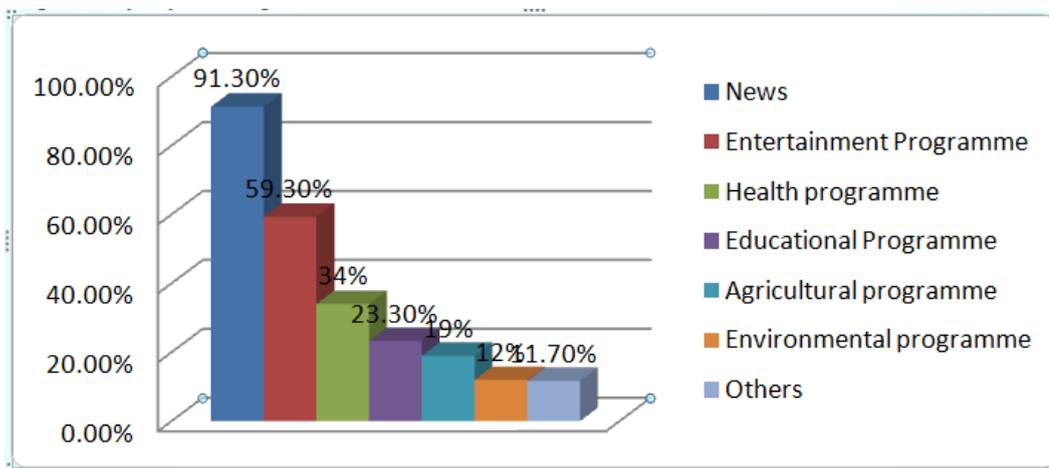
According to figure 1, 117 people (or 39% of the population) watch less than an hour of television every day. While 63 (21%) of them watch television for more than 3 hours but less than 5 hours every day, 32% (96) of them watch television for more than 1 hour but less than 3 hours. 8% spend more than five hours a day watching television.



**Figure 1: Respondents' Frequency of TV usages**

**Purpose of TV watching**

91.30% of respondents claim to watch TV mostly for news. 34% of TV viewers watch for entertainment purposes. 34 percent of people expressed interest in health-related programming. The goal of requesting information for educational, agricultural, environmental, and other purposes is given as 23.30%, 19%, 12%, and 11.70%, respectively, by the respondents.



**Figure-2: Respondents' purpose of TV watching**

**Consuming development messages**

Data from survey revealed that programs based on development issues drew less number of viewers, highest 34% for health related programs, directly. But almost 84% of the respondents get development message from television. They received these messages mainly through news, advertisement, development issues related programs, announcements broadcast on television and different talk show. Discussion participant in focus group expressed more interest in programs aired after evening. While teenage groups prefer 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. BST, farmers and housewives prefer the hours of 7 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.

### Perception of the respondents regarding TV massages

As 216 (72%) respondents said, “TV is a powerful media,” the respondents have a very good impression of the power of television in development. The usefulness of TV in promoting health was the subject of 85 negative responses compared to 215 good ones. 245 people concurred that TV had a significant impact on advancing education. A smaller percentage of persons (90) believe that television is an effective medium for agricultural growth. Environmental massages seem to be working because 70.67% of respondents said they were effective.

**Table 3:- Perception of the respondents’ regarding TV massages**

Characteristics	Frequency
Respondents perception about power of TV	
Powerful	216
Not powerful	84
Massages on Health Issues	
Effective	215
Not effective	85
Massages on education	
Effective	245
Not effective	55
Massages on agricultural	
Effective	90
Not effective	210
Environmental messages	
Effective	212
Not effective	88

### Application of TV massages on respondents

The following table illustrates how people use media messages to raise their standards of living. Impressively, 224 respondents attempted to follow media manipulation in order to advance their lives. However, 49.67% of them thought the massages were extremely beneficial.

**Table 4: Application of TV massages on respondents**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Tried to use media message to develop their lives	224	74.67
Found the media message helpful	149	49.67%

Information is so crucial that no one can achieve in life without it. At every point, information is essential. The vast majority of people in Bangladesh are rural farmers who rely on the agro-economy for their livelihood. They deal with a variety of problems, including illiteracy, poor health, and poverty. Rural communities lag behind urban communities in development. When compared to metropolitan people, they lag far behind in many areas, including socioeconomic status and every element of life. Therefore, information that is provided through television can significantly contribute to their socioeconomic status improvement. There is currently no alternative to using TV as a medium to achieve the highest level of growth. This project aims to develop rural communities through the viewing of educational television programs.

The findings of this study incorporated with another research conducted by Hossain and Islam (2010) in Bangladesh and found that more than 83% of the participants used television as a source of information. A study was conducted in 2012 by Chhacchar et al. to evaluate the impact of television networks on agricultural development. According to the study, the majority of respondents said television had a mediocre impact on agricultural development as like this study that counts 30% of the respondents.

Alam and Haque (2014) conducted research in Bangladesh and discovered that the majority of the participants made modest actions to put the agricultural development they had learned from viewing television programs on agriculture to use. A study was conducted by Jafri et al. (2014) to evaluate the role of television as a variety of information sources.

The study discovered that viewing television programs was how rural people learned about all facets of agriculture. A study was done in 2004 by Muhammad et al. to determine how television affects agricultural development. The study found that only up to 25% of respondents (84.80%) got their agriculture information from television. Our findings also support these studies as well.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite all of our efforts, our research is still limited by a few factors. These restrictions included: The majority of the people believed that the survey was conducted to aid them financially, so they attempted to conceal the truth. Time constraints are the study's main drawback. Some replies declined to provide information because they were misunderstood. We did not include copying strategies and prevention programs in this study, which could be explored further in future studies due to the lack of a variety of reference books, research works, essays, and journals available at the secondary level.

## CONCLUSION

According to this study, television can be a potent tool for rural residents to raise their standard of living and participate in local or national decision-making. This is in line with the conclusions reached by (Jallov and Lwanga – Ntale 2007), who found that community television, which has local broadcasters, gives people a voice, a chance to vent their complaints, and a chance to participate in governmental decision-making.

According to the study, using television as a tool to boost rural development gives people the ability to think about their problems locally. This is relevant to (Kamba 2009), who found in his research that educating rural people about the value of information provided by television will encourage them to consider knowledge as a necessary component of progress.

The importance of television in the outlying parts of Manikganj and Munshiganj district is highlighted in this study. The mass media / television, social media, internet, newspapers, and other sources are the most widely used methods for acquiring everyday information. These channels can successfully spread information on agriculture, social issues, the environment, health, and education. Television may be the most widely used information source due to its ability to hypnotize viewers by airing content that has a profound emotional impact on viewers. As a result, decision-makers and program managers should make the most of all the tools at their disposal to inform the public, especially the rural population.

According to the report, television will continue to be the most useful tool for communication and development among rural populations. Similarly, it said that television should get assistance at all levels—local, national, and international—because it is still a crucial weapon for the agenda of rural development. Specifically, this is in reference to a 2016 FAO report. In order to promote community development policies and services in favor of small-scale family agriculture and rural development, television may help identify opportunities, consider policy choices, and build strategic initiatives.

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