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Constraints Encountered by Famers in ICT Utilization – an Analysis

SHANTHYA, M.S[*] and S. ELAKKIYA[**]
[*]Corresponding author email id: shanthyamanoharan95@gmail.com

Abstract – **The use of computers and technology today has become fundamental to the operation of organizations and society. These allow the transfer of massive amounts of information in a matter of seconds, enabling humankind to advance in a multitude of ways. ICT provides the farmers with the latest technologies and improve their farm income. Hence the present study was undertaken to find out the constraint encountered by farmers in ICT utilization. In this existing scenario it is expected that integration of ICT's in agricultural extension will provide needed impetus to agricultural sector and ICT's can compliment the traditional extension system for "KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE" delivery to the millions of farmers. The study revealed that the majority (93.33 %) of the respondents encountered the problem in ICT utilization were lack of feedback followed by problems of foreign language (90.00%) and 86.66 per cent said lack of skills to use ICT gadgets.**

Keywords – **ICT, Constraints of Farmers, ICT Utilization, Knowledge Resource, Gadgets.**

I. Introduction

Innovations that are guided by small holder farmers, adapted to local circumstances and sustainable for the economy and environment will be necessary to ensure food security in the future - BILL GATES.

Agriculture is one of the important sectors in India. Apart from this India is also a forerunner in IT sector. Empowerment of the rural agrarian community depends on the better accessibility to ICT services. But access to Information and communication technology is far less especially when coming to rural areas. ICT can bring revolution in the agrarian society with proper approachability. However, it is observed that the rural populations still have difficulty in accessing crucial information in order to make timely decisions (Mooventhan et. al 2016).

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as various services and applications associated with them, such as video conferencing and distance learning. ICT enables the dissemination of requisite W information at the right time (Rao, 2007).

Though agriculture and IT are at the economic background, farmer's distress is at rise due to knowledge gap between the scientists and the farmers. The gap prevails because of the short supply of extension personnel. In order to provide the farmers with the latest technologies and improve their farm income, ICT plays a vital role. But this is not the real case at the ground level as farmers are facing several issues regarding the ICT utilization. Realizing this problem, a study was undertaken to know the constraints encountered by farmers in ICT utilization.

II. Materials and Methods

The present study was purposively conducted in K. Paramathi and Karur block of Karur district in Tamilnadu to analyze the constraints encountered by the farmers in ICT utilization. A random sample of 30 farmers were selected through random sampling method and a sample of 15 farmers were selected from each block for the study. A well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule was used to study the objectives and the data were collected using personal interview. Percentage analysis were done to analyse the data.

III. Results and Discussion

The results collected from the respondents regarding the Constraints Encountered by famers in ICT utilization are presented in the following table 1.

Table1. Constraints Encountered by famers in ICT utilization n=30*

S. No.	Statements	Number	Percentage
1.	Cyber Phobia	23	76.66
2.	Unavailability of public sector infrastructure to access ICT	21	70.00
3.	Lack of free training to access advanced ICT gadgets	14	46.66
4.	Lack of feedback	28	93.33
5.	Lack of credibility of subject matter content	11	36.66
6.	Lack of updation	15	50.00
7.	Difficulty in reading on screen text	19	63.33
8.	Lack of skills to use ICT gadgets	26	86.66
9.	Use of ICT causes eye and other health problems	9	30.00
10.	Clarification is difficult, if any doubt arises	24	80.00
11.	Lack of information about multiple crops	14	46.66
12.	Lack of locally relevant information	16	53.33
13.	Problems of foreign language	27	90.00
14.	Lack of information supporting services like logistics, storage	12	40.00
15.	Lack of clarity on price fixation in market	18	60.00

*- Multiple responses

Table 2 reveals that the majority (93.33 %) of the respondents encountered the problem of lack of feedback followed by problems of foreign language (90.00%) and 86.66 per cent said lack of skills to use ICT gadgets. This is line with Jayanthi (2016). Apart from that respondents (80.00 %) expressed that clarification is difficult, if any doubt arises followed by 76.66 per cent faced cyber phobia while using ICT services. 70.00 per cent of the respondents revealed that public sector infrastructure such as power supply, internet facilities are unavailable to access ICT and this is in conformity with the findings of Dhaka and Chayal (2010). Difficulty in reading text were encountered by 63.33 per cent of the respondents.

The suggestions given by the respondents were timely and regional information would help the farming community in speculating the market changes. 53.33 per cent of the respondents felt lack of locally relevant information and the technologies must be fully understandable for the local population, the end-users resulting into possibilities for them to become involved in the possible innovation and extension of the use of the technology. Also must contribute to the increase of productivity at farm level. Digitally literate can be able to access the ICT gadgets but the rest are unanswered. So, Government policy can be focused on improving the ICT infrastructure with effective training to the rural farmers will undoubtedly improve the accessibility and brings down the cyber phobia which has been encountered by the farming community.

IV. Conclusion

Development of agriculture in the present scenario depends on bridging the knowledge gap among the end users. In this regard ICT enables better improvement in agriculture. Sufficient budgetary support for creation of digital infrastructure is needed to reduce the digital gap. To overcome these challenges, mobile based ICT's are being implemented across the country. For instance, farmers can raise queries related to agriculture and allied sectors using their mobile phones to a Kisan Call Centres (KCC) and various other portals which has been operating in every state of India. Generating awareness among young and middle aged farmers about the availability of ICT services is the first step to be considered to increase farmers participation in ICT initiatives. Various modes of delivery of services such as internet, agri-clinics, mass media, common service centre, Kissan Call Centre, m-Kisan, Agropedia, Agmarknet coupled with physical outreach of extension personnel is one of the ways to successfully implement effective ICT services in the rural community and apart from that government initiatives can help in achieving and strengthening the digital connectivity throughout the country.

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Authors' Profiles

SHANTHYA, M.S, PG scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, TNAU, Coimbatore.
email id: Shanthyamanoharan95@gmail.com

S.ELAKKIYA, PG scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, TNAU, Coimbatore.
email id: elakkimohanur@gmail.com