

Expectations and opinions of the farmers from ICT in agriculture at village level

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to know the expectations and opinion of the farmers regarding community internet center at village level for sustainable agricultural development. Most of the respondents was expected the Community Internet Center (CIC) facilities at panchayat office of the village. They were also expecting six sets of computer with agriculture graduate having computer knowledge as operator at CIC. They expect that Government should bear expenses to run CIC. The information on farmers' related sites was expected by most of the farmers in Gujarati language that too in the audio-visual form. The major purposes to have CIC explained by the respondents were to collect agricultural information, to collect information on government's programmes, and to know more about market prices. Majority of the respondents expressed their desire to use internet daily or twice in a week by their own. All of them expressed positive response to have proper training about the use of Internet facility through government agency at CIC. The results showed that majority of the farmers understood that internet is a rich source to collect world wide information on agriculture and it is the fastest way to exchange information in shortest time'. Majority farmers completely or to a certain degree felt that though internet is costly affair for the farmers but it is the best mean to collect information on market prices of agricultural products. 82.00 per cent of the farmers were wishing their children to make positive use of internet at the same time 81.00 per cent of them had opinion that farmers should make use of internet. It can be concluded from the results that out of the 10 independent variables, five variables liked education, land holding, contact with NRI's, experience of internet use and mass media exposure are significantly and positively correlated with the opinion of the farmers about the use of internet for farming community. More than 70 per cent of the farmers opined that internet was the rich source and fastest way of exchanging information in short time. It must be used by the farming community for their betterment.

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INTRODUCTION

The economy of our nation is based on agriculture and allied agro based industries, animal husbandry and other agriculture based businesses. Agriculture continues to be the major occupation and way of life for more than half of the total population. Thus, overall development of our country is not possible by ignoring the agriculture and farmers in the process of development. Since major segment of our population are being lived in the rural areas, quick dissemination of technology information from the agriculture research system to the doorstep of the ultimate users and reporting their problems to research system are the critical inputs in transfer of agricultural technology (Buddhadev, 2003). It is observed that the information and communication support during last few decades has mainly been conventional. This approach has not been able to reach large mass of the farmers who are spread across the whole country.

Farmers are more desirous and become anxious to get quick, exact and authentic information in the changing

scenario of agriculture at global level. Dissemination of the required and recent agricultural information to the farmers in scattered villages at the variegated geographical situation in India is very difficult task. Transfer of technology to the level of farmers is not a onetime exercise because new farm technology is being constantly evolved. A continuous flow of technologies in an appropriate manner is vital to provide quick benefit of this development to the farmers. There has been a technological explosion in the field of agriculture. This demands that the farmer has to know all aspects of technology prior to its adoption. It can only be possible through the use of satellite based internet technologies.

Agriculture continues to be the major occupation and way of life for more than half of the total population. Thus, overall development of our country is not possible by ignoring the agriculture and farmers in the process of development. Since major segment of our population are being lived in the rural areas, quick dissemination of technology information from the agriculture research

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