



Assessment of agriculture information needs of farm women for development of ICT based material

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Abstract : A study was conducted during 2009-10 to identify the information needs of farmwomen in agriculture and allied areas for development of ICT based material. Data were collected from three categories of stakeholders viz., KVK SMS, agriculture scientists and farmwomen in three major areas i.e. farming, horticulture and animal husbandry. The information needs have been prioritized first five as per rank order using Kruskal-Wallis test. It was found that the information needs identified and prioritized by three stakeholders do not match as per rank order. Significant differences (Mann-Whitney test) were found between farmwomen and scientists and KVK SMS in some of the activities of all the three areas. Therefore, those five needs identified and prioritized as per rank order by farmwomen, KVK SMS and scientists and those having no significant difference among three stakeholders were prioritized as needs of information for farmwomen for development of ICT based materials. Some of the prioritized needs were water management practices, intercropping methods, organic farming, post harvest processing of field crops, manuring /fertilizer application, seed selection and seed treatment, appropriate farming systems for different situation, pest management, bio-pesticides and their use, control of diseases, animal breeding aspects and fodder cultivation.

Key Words : Information needs, Farming, Horticulture, Animal husbandry, Farm women

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the mainstay of Indian economy which provides employment to 65 per cent of the total workforce in the country and contributed 15.7 per cent of the GDP in 2008-09 (Economic Survey 2009-10). However, the agricultural sector is confronted with the major challenge of increasing production to feed a growing and increasingly prosperous population in a situation of decreasing availability of natural resources. Information and communication technologies (ICT) play an important role in addressing the challenges agriculture facing now-a-days and uplifting the livelihoods of the rural poor. The role of both women and men is important for sustainable growth and development in agriculture sector. Women constitute 40 per cent of the agricultural workforce and play an enormous role in agriculture and allied activities but they are marginalized with respect to access to information

about latest technological developments in agriculture and allied fields. In this regard, agriculture scientists and extension field functionaries have a key role to play. E-Agriculture is an emerging field focusing on the enhancement of agricultural and rural development through improved information and communication processes. Parikh *et al.* (2008) conducted study on ICT tool to reach the unreached. It involves the conceptualization, design, development, evaluation and application of innovative ways to use information and communication technologies (ICT) in the rural domain, with a primary focus on agriculture. Use of ICT in agriculture has a promise in ushering agricultural growth, "but miles to go". Keeping in view the importance of latest technological developments in agriculture, there is a need for training farm women regarding the necessary technologies, so that they can perform those activities with more competences. Thus, the present study was undertaken to identify the information

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