

Research Article

# Accessibility of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to the farmers of north Karnataka

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**SUMMARY :** A study was conducted in Belgaum district of Karnataka to assess the accessibility of ICTs to the farmers and constraints in utilizing them. The study also tried to get some suggestions from farmers for making ICTs more effective. Among the various ICT projects in operation, four projects namely, Kisan Call Centre (KCC), Krishi Marata Vahini web portal, Raith Mitra Kendra Kiosks and e-Choupal were functional in the study area. A sample of 140 respondents was selected randomly and was personally interviewed using pretested schedule. It revealed that 79.29 per cent farmers owned mobile phone, 12.86 per cent of farmer owned computers and only 5.71 per cent had Internet connection. For majority of farmers (54.29%) nearest internet centre was more than five kilometres away and for only 18.57 per cent farmers internet centre was within kilometre. It was also observed that 26.43 per cent of farmers were taking help of internet facilitator, and only 12.86 per cent retrieve information on their own. The lack of adequate skills in operating ICT tools among farmers (73.57%) and the lack of proper infrastructure (61.43 %) were observed as major constraints in utilisation of ICTs. Majority of the farmers (74.29%) suggested that they need training to improve their skills in operating ICT equipment.

**KEY WORDS:**

Accessibility, ICT, KCC, e-Choupal, Raith Mitra Kendra, Krishi Marata Vahini

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