

**RESEARCH ARTICLE :**

Relationship between profile characteristics of the farmers and their perception towards information Kiosk in Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala

■ N.A. HINDUJA, N. KISHORE KUMAR, R. PRAKASH AND ALLAN THOMAS

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SUMMARY : Advantages of Information and Communication Technologies ICT's can be extended to the disordered and impeded farming community by accomplishing their access to ICT's to farmers through Information Kiosks and utilizing them as a stage for spreading of farm innovations which had already been begun in different states through different undertakings. The study revealed that majority of the farmers obtaining information from the Information Kiosks reported medium perception (55.00%) of the messages followed by low perception (10.00%) and high perception (8.00%). Relationship between the profile characteristics and the perception of the farmers about Information Kiosk indicated that effectiveness of Information Kiosk, awareness about Information Kiosk and information dissemination ways by the farmers utilizing the Information Kiosks positively correlated with the Perception of the farmers towards Information Kiosk.

KEY WORDS :

Perception,
Information Kiosk,
Effectiveness,
Awareness,
Information,
Communication
technology

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enabled extension systems act as significant operators for transforming the current agrarian scenario by boosting the access to knowledge, communication and sharing of information, building abundant opportunities and reinforcement of farming communities. Information Kiosks act as a stage for spreading of farm innovations which had already been begun in different states through different undertakings. Information

Kiosk displays the essential information on twelve major crops of the Kerala state in bilingual mode. It is totally touch screen driven with data supported by graphics and animations and has very simple and clear navigational paths. They are an efficient Information and Communication Technology tools which are accessible anytime and aid in timely delivery of agricultural messages to farmers. Taneja (1989) defined that Perception is the process of understanding sensation or attaching meaning based on experience to

Author for correspondence :**N.A. HINDUJA**

Department of
Agricultural Extension,
S.V. Agricultural College
(A.N.G.R.A.U.), TIRUPATI
(A.P.) INDIA
Email: nethaarunhinduja@gmail.com

signs. Thyssen (2000) reported that farmers want ICT application that supports the operation aspects of farming *i.e.*, real-time decision support of internet connections, e-mail and applications by photos, videos and sound. Anandaraja (2002) detailed that nearly two-third of the viewers of Interactive Multimedia Compact Disc (IMCD) (62.60%) have perceived all the 62 sub components *viz.*, overall perception (8), message component (17) and technical components (37), of IMCD as 'highly satisfied' while more than two-fifth of the viewers (23.30%) expressed as 'satisfied' and for a minimal percentage of the viewers (14.10%) it was 'not satisfied'. Senthilkumar (2003) assessed the respondent's perception about the information requirement through different cyber extension tools and indicated that all the respondents required the technological information via web page and group mail and mobile phone followed by IMCD and computer conferencing. Manhas *et al.* (2005) observed that in this era of globalization, Indian farmers need to be updated with latest information to compete for global marketing. The farmers who access this information have a better chance of succeeding than those who do not access the same. Vijai and Asokhan (2010) found that about three fourth of dairy farmers (75.50%) perceived that they could get information in time through ICT. The study was taken up with an objective of assessing the relationship between the profile characteristics and Perception of farmers towards the Information Kiosk. The implication is that access to agricultural information through the use of ICT will continue to improve, since the perceptions are overtly positive among researchers, extension agents and farmers.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the Thiruvananthapuram district of South Kerala region during 2013-2014. Ex-post facto research design is employed. Forty farmers obtaining information from Information Kiosk were selected through random sampling method from Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala as respondents. Perception was operationalized as the farmer's opinion towards the features of the messages of Information Kiosks. The method used by Balasubramani (2004) with necessary modifications was used. Twenty four statements were administered to the respondents in a three point continuum namely, most satisfied, satisfied and not satisfied with a scoring of three, two and one,

respectively. Summation of the score of all items gave the score of the respondents. Based on the scores, the Perception Index was calculated using the formula.

$$\text{Perception index (PI)} = \frac{\text{Individual subject's score}}{\text{Total score}} * 100$$

The data was coded, classified and tabulated and subjected to percentage, quartiles to meaningfully interpret the findings. Profile characteristics of the farmers like age, education, Exposure to ICT, awareness about Information Kiosk, information dissemination ways of the farmers, frequency of use of messages, information needs of the farmers, attitude of the farmers, constraints faced by the farmers, effectiveness of Information Kiosk are correlated with the farmers perception towards Information Kiosk to know the significant and non-significant relationship between the variables.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results are presented along with the inferences drawn in the light of the objective set forth for the study.

Perception of the farmers towards information Kiosk :

The respondents are categorized according to their perception towards Information Kiosk into low, medium and high perception category based on quartiles. The distribution of farmers for perception towards Information Kiosk is presented in Table 1 and Fig. 1. It is clear from the Table 1 that majority of the farmers obtaining agricultural information from the Information Kiosk reported medium perception (55.00%) of the messages followed by low perception (10%) and high perception (8.00%). Majority of the farmers opined medium level of perception towards Information Kiosk because

Table 1: Distribution of farmers according to their perception towards information Kiosk

Sr. No.	Extent of perception	Number of respondents	Percentage
1.	Low	10	25
2.	Medium	22	55
3.	High	8	20
	Quartile ₁		20.33
	Quartile ₂		269.6
	Quartile ₃		319.4
	Range		33.33-300

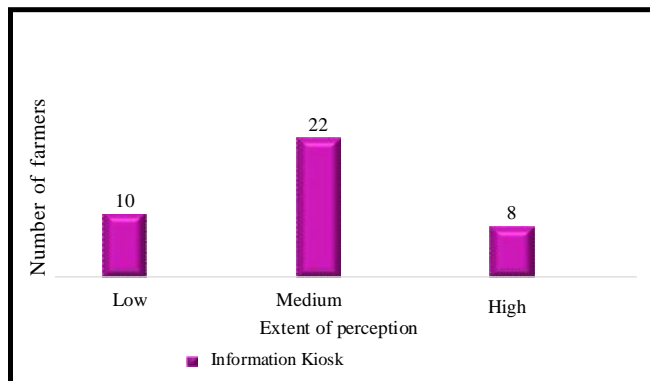


Fig. 1: Distribution of farmers based on their perception towards information Kiosk

majority of the components of the Information Kiosk such as physical layout and display, content of the information, function of the Information Kiosk were found to be satisfied by the farmers. Chandrakandan *et al.* (2003) from their study conducted in Thondamthur block of Coimbatore district found that over all self-confidence and interest towards computer learning and use was high and had medium perception.

Correlation between profile characteristics and perception of farmers towards information Kiosk:

Correlation analysis was employed to assess relation between profile characteristics of the farmers obtaining information from Information Kiosk with their Perception towards Information Kiosk. The correlation co-efficients were worked out and the significance was tested by comparing with the table values. The results are represented in Table 2. It indicates that Information dissemination ways of the farmers (0.394*), awareness of farmers towards Information Kiosk (0.342*) are positively correlated and are significant at 5 % level. Effectiveness of Information Kiosk (0.421**) is positively correlated and is significant at 1 % level. The r values of Age (-0.140^{NS}), Education (0.100^{NS}), Exposure to ICT (0.176^{NS}), Frequency of use of messages (0.150^{NS}), Information needs (0.022^{NS}), Attitude of the farmers (0.034^{NS}), Constraints (-0.160^{NS}) were having non-significant relationship with Perception of farmers towards Information Kiosk.

From the Table 2, it can be observed that information dissemination ways such as letters, by word of mouth, telephone, email, by adopting the content obtained from Information Kiosk provides information about the

Table 2: Correlation between profile characteristics and perception of farmers towards information Kiosk

Sr. No.	Independent variables	Perception towards Information Kiosk (Correlation co-efficient r values)
1.	Age	-0.140 ^{NS}
2.	Education	0.100 ^{NS}
3.	Exposure to ICT	0.176 ^{NS}
4.	Information dissemination ways	0.394*
5.	Awareness	0.342*
6.	Frequency of use of messages	0.150 ^{NS}
7.	Information needs	0.022 ^{NS}
8.	Attitude of the farmers	0.034 ^{NS}
9.	Constraints	-0.160 ^{NS}
10.	Effectiveness	

*and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01 respectively
NS= Non-significant

Information Kiosk to other farmers. Sharing of messages obtained through Information Kiosk by the benefitted farmers among his fellow members or groups aids in communication of information support provided through Information Kiosk to farmers and makes it feasible for developing a positive perception towards this ICT tool. Awareness acquired by farmers by different sources about Information Kiosk such as self -visit of the Information Kiosk by the farmer, Canvassing through Kiosk operator/Project staff, knowing about Information Kiosk through friend/relative, newspaper, extension personnel facilitated in developing a positive perception towards Information Kiosk. As awareness of the farmers about the Information Kiosk increases the Perception also increases. Effectiveness of Information Kiosk includes its conversational ability, quick availability, ability to exploit a considerable amount of knowledge, reliability, scalability, Preservation and improvement in its knowledge content which play an important role in realizing its use as a significant agricultural information source for the benefit of farmers. Hence, as Effectiveness of an Information Kiosk increases it also increases the Perception of the farmers towards the Information Kiosk. Oladele (2011) revealed that researchers (60.00%) had a more positive perception of the effect of ICT on information access than the extension agents (38.64%) or the farmers (25.11%).

Information dissemination ways provide information about the ICT tools and increase the

awareness about various sources of information to the farmers. As awareness about the Information Kiosk increases it supports in increase of the Perception. Effectiveness of an Information Kiosk meets the information requirements of the farmers which in turn increases the Perception towards it by the farmers.

Authors' affiliations :

N. KISHORE KUMAR, R. PRAKASH AND ALLAN THOMAS,
Department of Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture (KAU),
VELLAYANI (KERALA) INDIA
Email: kishngl@yahoo.com, prakasraja@gmail.com;
t_allan@rediffmail.com

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