



Constraints Being Faced by the Farmers in Utilization of ICTs and Suggestions to Overcome them

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ABSTRACT

The most important constraints reported by the farmers in utilization of the ICT tools were lack of awareness of all the ICT tools within the community, failure to broadcast/ telecast timely information, do not repeat the important programmes followed by irrelevancy of the programmes to the farmers, timings of broadcast/telecast are not suitable to the farmers and the suggestions given by the farmers to overcome the problems were create awareness on the ICT tools within the community by conducting awareness programmes and campaigns, provide timely information followed by change the timings of the farm broadcast/telecast to evening, use simple, clear and understandable words, repeat the highlights of the programme, conduct live phone in programme with progressive farmers and scientists.

Key words : Constraints, ICTs use, Suggestions.

Farmers' needs are much more diversified and the knowledge required to address them is beyond the capacity of the grass root level extension functionaries. ICTs can be broadly interpreted as technologies that facilitate communication, processing and transmission of information by electronic means. ICT can provide vital access to information, markets by connecting the rural poor and marginalized to the world's information resources and opportunities. The ICTs provide the flexibility in providing information on various modes of farming practices including all the crops, specific commodities and enterprises real time price information and all other information related to technological advances and tracking global competitiveness.

Thus, the ICT play an increasingly important role in linking the research-extension-market continuum towards developing professional competencies and entrepreneurial capabilities among specialists and farming communities respectively. Hence the present study was taken up with an objective to identify the constraints faced by the farmers in utilization of ICTs and eliciting suggestions to overcome them. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in this study was strictly confound to the use of communication devices or applications by the farmers

encompassing radio, television, mobiles, internet, kiosks and call centres for obtaining information.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was conducted during the year 2011 in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. The selected crops include paddy, cotton and chilli. Ex-post facto research design was followed. Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively. One mandal for each crop with highest area of cultivation was selected for the study. Thus a total of three mandals viz., Bapatla for paddy, Amaravathi for cotton and Veldurthy for chillies were selected for the study. Four villages from each mandal were selected randomly with a total twelve villages. For each crop forty farmers were selected by following proportionate random sampling constituting the total sample size to 120. The constraints being faced by the farmers in utilization of ICTs were collected through Interview schedule, which was subjected for statistical analysis and interpretation and suggestions were drawn to overcome them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Constraints faced by the respondents in utilization of ICTs

An attempt was made to find out the constraints perceived by the farmers in utilizing

Table 1. Constraints faced by the respondents in utilization of ICTs.

S.No	Constraint	F	%	Rank
A.	Radio			
1.	Failure to broadcast timely information.	118	98.33	I
2.	Do not broadcast information with simple words in local and familiar language.	45	37.50	VII
3.	The information broadcast is not complete and brief.	77	64.16	IV
4.	Timings of broadcast are not suitable to the farmers.	87	72.50	III
5.	Failure to summarize the programmes at the end.	50	41.66	VI
6.	Visual impact is absent.	44	36.66	VIII
7.	Do not repeat the important programmes.	118	98.33	I
8.	Failure to emphasize important profits	70	58.33	V
9.	Irrelevancy of the programmes to the listeners.	92	76.66	II
B.	Television			
1.	Does not telecast accurate information.	93	77.50	IV
2.	Do not telecast by illustrating with local success examples and naming of local places.	19	15.83	VI
3.	The information telecasted is not complete and brief.	99	82.50	III
4.	Salient points are not emphasized in the telecast.	107	89.16	I
5.	The recommendations of telecasts are not authentic and applicable to all the farmers in that area.	104	86.66	II
6.	Presentation of illustrations is not synchronized with the talk.	2	1.66	VIII
7.	The programmes are not telecasted in accordance with the schedule.	5	4.16	VII
8.	Important aspects of information is not highlighted prominently to ensure reinforced in the minds of farmers.	25	20.83	V
C.	Cellular phone, Internet, Kiosk and Call centres			
1.	Lack of training.	89	74.16	IV
2.	Difficult to use as skill is required in case of internet.	95	79.16	III
3.	Lack of awareness of the ICT tools within the community.	118	98.33	I
4.	Getting complete information is very cumbersome.	38	31.66	V
5.	Lack of awareness of services provided by the ICT tools.	109	90.83	II

ICTs and presented in Table 1. Ranks were given based on frequency and percentages.

A cursory look at the Table 1. indicated that, among the constraints faced by the respondents in utilizing radio, failure to broadcast timely information was ranked I, followed by irrelevancy of the programmes to the listeners (II rank), timings of broadcast are not suitable to the farmers (III rank), the information broadcast is not complete and brief (IV rank), failure to emphasize important profits (V rank), failure to summarize the programmes at the

end (VI rank), do not broadcast information with simple words in local and familiar language (VII rank) and visual impact is absent (VIII rank).

In case of television, the constraints expressed by the farmers include, salient points are not emphasized in the telecast was ranked I, followed by the recommendations of telecasts are not authentic and applicable to all the farmers in that area (II rank), the information telecasted is not complete and brief (III rank), does not telecast accurate information (IV rank), important aspects

Table 2. Suggestions to overcome the constraints in utilization of ICTs.

S.No	Suggestion	F	%	Rank
A. Radio				
1.	Provide timely information	98	81.66	I
2.	Use simple, clear and understandable words.	72	60.00	III
3.	Use local language.	34	28.33	VII
4.	Conduct live phone in programme with progressive farmers and scientists.	52	43.33	V
5.	Broadcast some of the success stories.	45	37.50	VI
6.	Repeat the highlights of the programme.	69	57.50	IV
7.	Change the timings of the farm broadcast.	89	74.16	II
8.	Frequency disturbances should be avoided.	12	10.00	VIII
B. Television				
1.	Provide timely information	93	77.50	I
2.	Telecast success stories and interviews with farmers and scientists.	32	26.66	VII
3.	Information should be complete and brief.	62	51.66	V
4.	Repeat the important points of the topic.	68	56.66	IV
5.	Localized recommendations should be given.	45	37.50	VI
6.	Change the farm telecast timings.	87	72.50	II
7.	Use simple and understandable words.	76	63.33	III
C. Cellular phone, Internet, Kiosk and Call centres				
1.	Training should be given to the farmers.	91	75.83	II
2.	Create awareness within the community by conducting awareness programmes and campaigns.	98	81.66	I
3.	Increase the availability of kiosks at village level	68	56.66	III
4.	Complete information on the topic should be provided by the call centres.	52	43.33	IV

of information is not highlighted prominently to ensure reinforced in the minds of farmers (V rank), do not telecast by illustrating with local success examples and naming of local places (VI rank), the programmes are not telecasted in accordance with the schedule (VII rank) and presentation of illustrations is not synchronized with the talk (VIII rank).

Among the constraints faced by the respondents in utilizing cellular phones, internet, kiosk and call centres, lack of awareness of the ICT tools within the community was ranked I, followed by lack of awareness of services provided by the ICT tools (II rank), difficult to use as skill is required in case of internet (III rank), lack of training (IV rank) and getting complete information is very cumbersome (V rank).

These findings are in confirmation with Grigg *et al.* (1999) and Gawande *et al.* (2009).

Suggestions to overcome the constraints

Based on the constraints, the suggestions were drawn from the respondent farmers to overcome them are presented in Table 2. Suggestions were ranked based on frequency and percentage.

A perusal of the Table 2. indicated that, among the suggestions given by the respondents to overcome the constraints in utilizing radio, provide timely information was ranked I, followed by change the timings of the farm broadcast (II rank), use simple, clear and understandable words (III rank), repeat the highlights of the programme (IV rank), conduct live phone in programme with

progressive farmers and scientists (V rank), broadcast some of the success stories (VI rank), use local language (VII rank) and frequency disturbances should be avoided (VIII rank)

Among the suggestions given by the respondents to overcome the constraints in utilizing Television, provide timely information was ranked I, followed by change the farm telecast timings (II rank), use simple and understandable words (III rank), repeat the important points of the topic (IV rank), information should be complete and brief (V rank), localized recommendations should be given (VI rank), telecast success stories and interviews with farmers and scientists (VII rank).

Among the suggestions given by the respondents to overcome the constraints in utilizing cellular phones, internet, kiosk and call centres, create awareness within the community by conducting awareness programmes and campaigns was ranked I, followed by training should be given to the farmers (II rank), Increase the availability of kiosks at village level (III rank) and complete information should be provided (IV rank).

The findings are in accordance with Sridevi (2003) and Sivanarayana *et al.* (2006).

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