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Attitude of Farmers towards Information and Communication Technology

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A B S T R A C T

ICT stands for the Information and Communication Technology which can be broadly interpreted as technologies that facilitate communication, processing and transmission of information by electronic means it is a parasol term that includes use of any device from mobile phones computer to ATMs. The present study on Attitude of farmers towards Information and Communication technology in Wardha district of Maharashtra state with a sample size of 120 farmers selected from 10 different villages of two tahsils. It is observed from the given pooled data that majority 33.33 per cent of them strongly agreed the statement "I like to use ICT tools", 80.00 per cent of them accepted the statement, "ICT tools provide you information according the need", 50.00 per cent of them dis-agreed the statement "Use of ICT tools will build social value among farmers" and 30.00 of them strongly dis-agreed with the statement "Only literate people can adopt the ICT tools". In general, it was observed from the study, majority of them were under favourable attitude category followed by less favourable and highly favourable category respectively.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can bring new information services to the rural areas where the farmer (end user) will have much control than ever before over the current information channels. Access to such information sources is a crucial requirement for the sustainable development of the farming systems.

The unprecedented development of ICT, its application, and the emergence of a global information society are changing the way people live, learn, work and interact. Enhanced access to knowledge is rapidly becoming is rapidly becoming a potent tool for empowering the people and communities in their quest for new opportunities, dignity and a better life. Traditional media have been used very successfully in developing countries, and rural radio in particular has played major role in delivering agricultural messages. Print, video, television, films, slides, pictures, dramas, exhibitions, etc…have also been used to speed up the flow of information (Munyua, 2000).

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Wardha district of Maharashtra State. Two tahsils of Wardha district such as Deoli and wardha were selected for the study. In them five villages

were selected purposively from each taluka considering the availability of ICT tools and its utilization. Thus, in total, ten villages were taken for the study and a total of 120 respondents were selected.

The exploratory research design was used for the study. The data were collected in face-to-face situation by the personal interview method with the help of structured interview schedule. The data were tabulated, analysed and the results were interpreted as on Table 1.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study had been presented under the following headings.

Attitude of farmers towards ICT

The data in Table 1 further revealed that the statement, "I like to use ICT tools" was agreed by 61.66 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed by 33.33 per cent and disagreed by 5.00 per cent of the respondents, the statement "ICT tools provide worldwide information" was agreed by 60.00 per cent of respondents and strongly agreed by 18.33 per cent of the respondents.

For the statement "ICT provides wider information regarding agriculture" majority of them (70.00%) has agreed and about 21 per cent of them strongly agreed the statement.

"Usage of ICT tools lead to modernization in life style" for this statement majority (76.66%) of them agreed followed by 10.00 per cent of them disagree the statement and the statement "ICT tools will build social value among farmers" has been agreed by half of the respondents (50.00%) while remaining half of them disagree the statement.

Statements agreed by respondents were; "Only literate people can adopt ICT tools" (55.00%), "Basically ICT tools are costly" (83.33%), "Youth has more access to ICT tools" (41.66%), "ICT tools can provide you information with some assistance" (51.66%), "ICT tools provide timely information" (73.33%), "It is very easy to get information from ICT tools" (61.66%) and "Frequency of distribution of ICT tools is not convenient" (36.66%), about 23 per cent of them strongly agreed with this statement.

Statements strongly agreed by respondents were; "Youth has more access to ICT tools" (58.33%), "ICT tools can provide you the required information with some assistance and help"(13.33%),"ICT tools facilitate interactive discussions" (13.33%), "Basically, ICT tools are costly" (15.00%).

Statements disagreed by respondents were, Great majority of them dis-agreed the statement "Use of ICT tools will build social value among farmers" (50%), "ICT usage is socially feasible" (58.33%).

"Frequency of distribution of ICT tools is not convenient" (40.00%), "Subject matter is not clearly specified in ICT tools" (38.33%), "It's very easy to get information from ICT tools" (36.67%).

Overall attitude level

As data in the table 2, shows that majority of the farmers 80.00% of them were having favourable attitude towards ICT and its tools followed by 13.33% of the farmers who are less favourable towards ICT and its tools and 6.66% of them are less favourable to ICT and none of them are not favourable to the ICT, these findings are in conformity with the findings of Palaiah *et al.*, (2016).

Table.1 Distribution of respondents according to their attitude about ICT

Sr. No	Statements	SA	A	DA	SDA
		F. (%)	F. (%)	F. (%)	F. (%)
1.	I like to use ICT tools	40 (33.33)	74 (61.66)	6 (5.00)	00 (0)
2.	ICT tools provide worldwide information	22 (18.33)	72 (60.00)	26 (21.66)	00 (0)
3.	ICT provides wider information regarding agriculture	26 (21.66)	84 (70.00)	10 (8.33)	00 (0)
4.	ICT usage is socially feasible	0 0	48 (40.00)	70 (58.33)	02 (1.66)
5.	Use of ICT tools lead to modernization in life style	10 (8.33)	92 (76.66)	12 (10.00)	06 (5.00)
Sr.no	Statements	SA	A	DA	SDA
		F. (%)	F. (%)	F. (%)	F. (%)
6.	Use of ICT tools will build social value among farmers	00 0	60 (50.00)	60 (50.00)	00 (0)
7.	Only literate people can adopt the ICT tools	2 (1.66)	66 (55.00)	16 (13.33)	36 (30.0)
8.	Basically, ICT tools are costly	18 (15.00)	100 (83.33)	02 (1.66)	00 (0)
9.	Youth has more access to ICT tools	70 (58.33)	50 (41.66)	00 (0)	00 (0)
10.	ICT tools can provide you the required information with some assistance and help	16 (13.33)	62 (51.66)	36 (30.00)	06 (5.00)
11.	ICT tools provide you information according to the need	00 (0)	96 (80.00)	24 (20.00)	00 (0)
12.	ICT tools provide timely information	02 (1.67)	88 (73.33)	28 (23.33)	02 (1.67)
13.	It's very easy to get information from ICT tools	02 (1.67)	74 (44.00)	44 (36.67)	00 (0)
14.	ICT tools facilitate interactive discussions	16 (13.33)	72 (60.00)	32 (26.67)	00 (0)
15.	Frequency of distribution of ICT tools is not convenient	28 (23.33)	44 (36.66)	48 (40.00)	00 (0)
16.	Time of broadcasting /telecasting of ICT tools is not convenient	10 (8.33)	50 (41.66)	60 (50.00)	00 (0)
17.	Subject matter is not clearly specified in ICT tools	00 (0)	68 (56.66)	46 (38.33)	06 (5.00)
18.	Information disseminated through ICT is not in local language	08 (6.66)	92 (76.66)	20 (16.67)	00 (0)

(SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, DA- Dis Agree, SDA- Strongly Dis Agree, F- Frequency)

Table.2 Distribution of respondents according to their level of overall attitude towards ICT

Category	Index range	Frequency	Per cent
Not favourable	<25.00	0	0
Less favourable	25-50	16	13.33
Favourable	50-75	96	80.00
Highly favourable	>75	08	6.66
	Total	**120**	**100**
Mean 66.51		**SD 8.37**	

Table.3 Correlation coefficient values of independent variables in relation to attitude of respondents

Sr. No	Variables	Co-relation coefficient
1	Age	-0.010^{NS}
2.	Education	0.206*
3.	Land holding	0.137^{NS}
4.	Annual income	0.157^{NS}
5.	Social participation	0.449**
6.	Extension contact	0.413**
7.	Source of information	0.327^{**}
8.	Innovativeness	0.424**
9.	Risk preference	0.547**
10.	Availability of ICT tools	0.284**

* Significant at 0.05 % level of probability
** Significant at 0.01 % level of probability.
NS: Non- Significant

Relationship between selected characteristics of farmers and their Attitude towards ICT

To enumerate existing relation between independent variables and attitude of farmers, the correlation co-efficient was used to work out and test their statistical significance and is given in table 2.

Variables such as social participation, extension contact, source of information, risk preference innovativeness and availability of ICT tools had positive and significant relationship with attitude of respondents at one cent level of significance this may be due to the reason that the person with good participation and contact will have positive attitude, while, education had positive and significant relationship with attitude of respondents at five per cent level remaining variables such as, annual income and land holding are having non-significant relation with attitude, and variable age is found to have negatively non-significant relation with attitude of the respondents about ICT tools. Similar findings were found with Raghu *et al.*, (2016) (Table 3).

In conclusion, it is evident from the study that more than half of them were having favourable attitude towards ICT and its tools. So, there will be relatively more probability of adopting these technologies by favourable farmers. Hence there is requirement of setting awareness centres about ICT by starting ICT

initiated programmes of providing information at village level and availability of ICT tools within their surrounding areas and provision of data in required language can bring a strong impact on people. The pooled data is evident that the correlation co-efficient of Attitude to its independent variables is highly significant with social participation, extension contact, source of information, innovativeness, risk preference, availability of ICT tools.

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