EXPECTATIONS OF THE FARMERS REGARDING COMMUNITY INTERNET CENTER (CIC) AT VILLAGE LEVEL

N. M. Chauhan[1] and R. F. Thakor[2]

ABSTRACT

The computer and internet facilities are now reaching to the remote areas too. There will, however, be a need to have Community Internet Centers, on line of STD telephone booths, at village level. To know the expectations of the farmers regarding Community Internet Center at village level, the present study was conducted. Most of the respondents have expected the Community Internet Center (CIC) facilities to be established at panchayat office of the village. They were also expecting six sets of computer with agriculture graduate having computer knowledge as operator at CIC. Still, there are expectations that the Government should bear expenses to run CIC. The information on farmers' related sites was expected by most of the farmers in Gujarati language that too in the audio-visual form. The major purposes to have CIC explained by the respondents were to collect agricultural information, to collect information on government's programs. Majority of the respondents expressed their desire to use Internet daily or twice in a week by their own.

INTRODUCTION

The major segments of our population are being lived in rural areas. Hence, quick dissemination of technology information from the agricultural research system to the farmers in the field and reporting of farmer's feedback to the research system are the critical inputs in transfer of agriculture technology. To disseminate the required and recent agricultural information to the farmers in scattered villages at the variegated geographical situation in India is very difficult task.

Transfer of technology to the level of farmers is not a one time exercise because new farm technology is being constantly evolved. A continuous flow of technologies in an appropriate manner is vital to provide quick benefit of this development to the farmers. There has been a technological explosion in the field of agriculture. This demands that the farmer has to know all aspects of technology prior to its adoption. It can only be possible through the use of satellite based Internet technologies.

The number of satellite based Internet connection in Indian has crossed the two million mark and the number of telephone connections is over 320 million. Internet connectivity has touched almost all the districts in the country and is moving down up to the village levels (Aditya, 2003). Many pilot projects to connect rural community to cyber-space are underway at various locations. The initial response of the rural people, particularly farmers has been very encouraging; many organizations are trying to establish internet connectivity to make best use to satellite based communication technology. Keeping all the things in mind the present study has been undertaken

[1] Training Associate, KVK, Ambheti, Gujarat
[2] Training Associate, KVK, Ambheti, Gujarat

with a view to know the Expectations of the farmers regarding Community Internet Centre (CIC) at village level.

METHODOLOGY

The investigation was carried out in Anand district of Gujarat state because the district is agriculturally one of the more advanced districts. These farmers are having good interaction with their relatives in foreign countries, and thereby having more exposed to the new technology. Four villages Viz. Vasad, Mogar, Napad and Navli having more than 5000 population and comparatively sound infrastructure facilities were selected purposively. A list of progressive farmers was prepared with the help of village level worker from all the selected villages. Finally, 25 farmers were selected from each villages using simple random sampling technique. Thus, the study was confined to 100 farmers. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, data were collected using structured interview schedule prepared for the purpose. Statistical tools such as frequency and per cent, were employed to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the respondents

It was observed that 64 per cent of the internet facility expecting farmers were from the middle age group, with a high school and higher secondary level of education (45 per cent) and had joint family. Sixty percent of the respondents belonged to the small category of farmers with mixed farming as main occupation. In order to earn additional income along with farming about 46 per cent of them possessed two or more animals. More than half of the respondents were

found to be the member in one or more organizations.

Expectation of the farmers about CIC:

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that cent percent of the respondents expected to have CIC at village level. It shows that farmers have realized importance of Internet facility in villages as an effective source of information as well as for the speedy communication.

Table 1: The expectation of CIC at village level

n=100

Sr. No	Type of Expectation	Number	Per cent
1	Yes	100	100.00
2	No	00	00.00
	Total	**100**	**100.00**

It can be observed from the data in Table 2 that Building of Panchayat was preferred by 95.00 per cent of the respondents, followed by building of primary school by 81.00 per cent, building of co-operative dairy by 76.00 per cent and buildings of high school and community hall by only 5.00 and 3.00 percent respondents, respectively. The building of panchayat is such an informal place, where people feel much familiarity, thus it was preferred by great majority of the farmers to have CIC.

Table 2 : Distribution of respondents according to choice of the place for CIC

n=100

Sr. No	Place	Number	Per cent
1	Panchayat	95	95.00
2	Primary school	81	81.00
3	Co-operative Dairy	76	76.00
4	High school	05	05.00
5	Community hall	03	03.00

The data in Table 3 indicate that operator or guide, printer, separate cabin, downloaded information in printed form and

extra seating facilities were expected by 98.00, 72.00, 68.00, 63.00 and 53.00 per cent of the farmers, respectively.

Table 3 : Distribution of respondents according to expectation of service

n=100

Sr. No	Expectation of service	Number	Per cent
1	Operator/Person to Guide and help	98	98.00
2	Printer	72	72.00
3	Separate cabin	68	68.00
4	Collected information in printed form	63	63.00
5	Extra seating facilities	53	53.00

The data in Table 4 indicate that agriculture graduate with computer knowledge was preferred by nearly cent per cent (98.00 per cent) of the farmers as a manager of the centre, followed by any educated person of the village was preferred by 76.00 per cent, expert of computer by 57.00 per cent and primary school teacher by 28.00 per cent of the farmers.

Table 4 : Distribution of according to choice of person to manage CIC

n=100

Sr. No	Expectation of service	Number	Per cent
1	Agriculture graduate with computer knowledge	98	98.00
2	Educated person of village	76	76.00
3	Expert of computer	57	57.00
4	Primary school teacher	28	28.00

With a view to knowing farmers' choice of source to take initial financial support to start CIC, information was collected and presented in Table 5. The first choice of the farmers to take initial financial support to start CIC was Government agencies followed by co-operative societies, villagers sharing, voluntary donation and foreign relatives.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to their expectation for initial financial support

n=100

Sr. No	Institution	Number	Rank
1	Government	2.00	I
2	Co-operative societies	0.92	III
3	By villagers' sharing	0.07	V
4	Voluntary Donation	0.65	IV
5	Foreign relatives	1.45	II

The information regarding choice of the farmers to bear expenses to run CIC was also collected and presented in Table 6. It can be seen that respondents said that Government should bear expenses to run CIC, at the same time other preferences given by them to bear expenses to run CIC were village panchayat, co-operative dairy and collecting charges from users.

Table 6 : The respondents as per the choice to bear expenses to run CIC

n=100

Sr. No.	Responsible for expenditure	Number	Rank
1	Government	1.60	I
2	Village Panchayat	1.02	II
3	Co-operative Dairy	0.92	III
4	By collecting charges from users	0.79	IV

Respondents were also asked to give there expectation regarding number of internet connected sets of computers (Table 7). Majority of the farmers (78 per cent) suggested that more than six sets should be there at CIC while 22.oo per cent expected 5 to 6 sets of internet connected computer sets at CIC.

Table 7 : Respondents' choice to have minimum computer sets at CIC

n=100

Sr. No.	Internet set	Number	Per cent
1	1 to 2	00	0.00
2	3 to 4	00	00.00
3	5 to 6	22	22.00
4	More than 6	78	78.00
	Total	**100**	**100.00**

It can be seen from Table 8 that most of the farmers was expected information in Gujarati language that too in the form of photographs and written form on agricultural related webs as well as on ICT. At the initial stage if it is difficult to provide information on most expected form, thus many of them were also expected information in audio-visual form, written form and audio form.

Table 8 : Respondents choice on form of information on internet and ICT

n=100

Sr. No	Type of information	Mean value	Rank
1	In Gujarati language	1.98	I
2	Photographs with written form	1.94	II
3	Audio-visual form	1.91	III
4	Written information	1.42	IV
5	Audio form	1.20	V

The data presented in Table 9 reveals that the major uses of internet expected by the respondents were to collect agricultural information, to collect information on government's programs, for speedy communication, for exchange information, for entertainment, to collect information for their children's education, to contact foreign

the agricultural sites, information is available in English language so they are not in opposition to use it. Thus, all State Government should launch farmers' related sites in local languages. Many State Governments have initiated their efforts in this direction

The result Table-10 shows that farmers have real interest to be a part of Internet communication process thus, majority (78.00 per cent) of the respondents were expecting to use Internet by their own while, 22.00 per cent were wanted to use it with the help of others.

Table 10 : Opinion of respondents for process of exploring internet

n=100

Sr. No	Way of internet use	Number	Per cent
1	By own	78	78.00
2	With the help of others	22	22.00
	Total	100	100

The expected frequency of the farmers to use Internet facility at CIC was measure. The result (Table 11) indicates that majority (63.00 per cent) of respondent were expecting to use internet at CIC daily or

Table 9 : Respondents according to their purposes to have CIC

Sr. No	Purpose	Mean value	Rank
1	For agricultural information	1.71	I
2	For information on Government's Programs	1.64	II
3	For speedy communication	1.61	III
4	For exchange information	1.21	IV
5	For entertainment	1.11	V
6	For information for their children's education	0.74	VI
7	To contact foreign relatives	0.67	VII
8	To contact relatives in India	0.64	VIII
9	To know agricultural information of developed countries	0.56	IX
10	To know more about market prices	0.51	X

relatives, to contact relatives in India, to know information on agriculture of developed county and to know more about market prices (Buddhadev et. al. 2003). The farmers are ready to use Internet for agricultural information but on majority of

twice in a week, followed by 28 per cent whenever needed, 06.00 per cent once in a week and 3.00 per cent once in a fortnight. Thus it can be said that favorable expectation was observed among the farmers to use Internet at CIC.

Table 11 : Expected frequency to use internet at CIC by respondents

			n=100
Sr. No	Expected frequency to use ICT	Number	Per cent
1	Daily	32	32.00
2	Twice in a week	31	31.00
2	Once in a week	06	6.00
3	Once on fortnight	03	3.00
4	Once in month	00	00.00
5	Whenever needed	28	28.00
	Total	**100**	**100.00**

The data presented in Table 12 indicate that majority (70.00 per cent) of respondents expected training through government agency, followed by 13.00 per cent expected training by Agricultural University, 11.00 per cent respondents by Gram Panchayat. Only 4.00 and 2.00 percent of them expected such training by co-operative society and NGOs.

Table 12 : Expectation of respondents for the agency to provide training on use of CIC

			n=100
Sr. No	Agency	Number	Per cent
1	Government	70	70.00
2	Co-operative society	04	04.00
3	NGOs	02	02.00
4	Gram Panchayat	11	11.00
5	Agricultural University	13	13.00
1	Government	70	70.00
	Total	**100**	**100.00**

CONCLUSION

Cent per cent respondent was expected the Community Internet Centre (CIC) facilities at village level. Slightly less than cent per cent of them preferred panchayat office as the best place of CIC and they were expecting agriculture graduate with computer knowledge as operator or guide at CIC. The respondents expressed that there should be more than six sets of computer, further they expect that Government should bear expenses to run CIC. The information on farmers' related sites was expected by most of the farmers in Gujarati language that too in the audio-visual form. The major purposes to have CIC explained by the respondents were to collect agricultural information, to collect information on government's programs, to speed up communication, to exchange information, and to know more about market prices. Majority of the respondents expressed their desire to use Internet daily or twice in a week by their own .All the respondents expressed positive response to have proper training about the use of Internet facility through government agency, at CIC.

REFERENCE

Aditya, V. P. S. (2003). ICT for knowledge sharing and enabling supply chain for green produce and products, Paper presented at the National Workshop on "ICT for Agriculture and Rural Development" organized by Indian Association for Information Technology in Agriculture and DA-IICT, Gandhinagar (Gujarat), India on December 18-19, 2003.

Buddhadev, B. V., Chaudhary Sanjay and Patel Ashok (2003). Crop Production Information System for Farmers, Paper presented at the National Workshop on "ICT for Agriculture and Rural Development" organized by Indian Association for Information Technology in Agriculture and DA-IICT, Gandhinagar (Gujarat), India on December 18-19, 2003.