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PERCEPTION OF GROUNDNUT GROWERS TOWARDS ICT IN SAURASHTRA REGION OF GUJARAT

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ABSTRACT

India is an agro based developing country with about 68.84 per cent population living in rural area. Agricultural extension is a service or system which assists farmers through educational procedures in improving farming methods and techniques, increasing production efficiency and income, bettering their levels of living and lifting the social and educational standards of rural life. The study was conducted in Saurashtra region of Gujarat. Four districts were selected purposively out of eleven districts and a total of 160 respondents were selected randomly. It is also evident that duration of utilization of mobile advisory service toped in 1-5 hrs./week category followed by television use (53.12 per cent) of the groundnut growers under this category Majority (58.75 per cent) of the respondents had medium level of perception about ICT technology. Whereas, 21.87 per cent and 19.38 per cent groundnut growers had low and high level perception about ICT technology, respectively.

Keywords: *groundnut growers, ICT perception*

INTRODUCTION

Groundnut is one of the vastly produced oilseed crop in the world as it is cultivated in more than 100 countries of six continents in the world and that is why it is referred to as a universal crop. Major groundnut producing nations are China, India, United States, Nigeria and Indonesia. In India, Groundnut is mainly grown in five states, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil-Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra and together they account for more than 90 percent of the crop's total area. Among these States, Gujarat stands first in terms of both area and production.

In Gujarat, total area of Kharif groundnut during 2017 was 1.62 million hectares and production was 3.05 Million Tonnes (Anonymous 2017b). Groundnut plays an important role in the agricultural and industrial economy of Gujarat state. Saurashtra region, which is known as "Groundnut Bowl of India" has greater importance for groundnut as it accounts for about 92 per cent of the total groundnut area of the state. Groundnut crop is grown mainly as rain fed crop in the state. Though, the groundnut is a principal crop of the Saurashtra as well as Junagadh district,There is a wide gap between average yield of common farmers and actual potential yield. The low yield leads to a considerable gap between supply and demand of edible oil in our country. As a result of this gap, the price of the edible oil rise beyond the reach of economically weaker section. Thus, one of the most important problem the country faces today and one that calls for immediate attention is that of stepping up production of all the oil seeds crops in general and groundnut in particular. Since improvement in varieties of groundnut has not been of the same order as in cereals and groundnut. One has to depend upon all the improved practices pertaining to groundnut cultivation to boost up the production per unit area.

OBJECTIVE

To understand the perception of groundnut growers towards ICT in Saurashtra region of Gujarat

METHODOLOGY

Ex-post facto research design was followed for carrying out the study. For drawing the sample for the study multistage simple random sampling technique was used. The study was conducted in Saurashtra region. The Saurashtra region consist of eleven districts; out of them four districts namely Junagadh, Gir somnath, Rajkot, Amreli were selected purposively on the basis of higher groundnut area & productivity. A total of 160 respondents were selected for the study. A sample of total 160 groundnut growers from sixteen villages was considered for the study. The dependent variables undertaken in this study were perception of the respondents towards ICT. To measure the perception of groundnut growers, a scale developed by Kale.*et al* was used with slight modification. An interview schedule was developed in accordance with the objectives of the study and it was pre-tested and translated into Gujarati. The data of this study were collected with the help of structural interview schedule.

The collected data were classified, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted in order to make the findings meaningful. The statistical measures such as percentage, mean, standard deviation and correlation co-efficient were used in the study

Documentation of ICT exposure of groundnut growers

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Twelve ICTs were selected for the study. The ICT utilization was studied as the extend of ICT utilization, duration of ICT utilization and purpose of ICT utilization.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on their duration of ICT utilization (n=160)

Sr. No.	ICTs	1-5 hrs. per week		5-10 hrs per week		10-15 hrs. per week		Above 15 hrs. per week	
		Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
1	**Radio**	75	46.87	25	15.62	20	12.50	15	09.37
2	**Television**	68	42.50	75	46.87	20	12.50	10	06.25
3	**Telephone**	52	32.50	34	21.25	18	11.25	15	09.37
4	**Mobile advisory service**	84	52.50	47	29.37	18	11.25	32	20.00
5	**Computer (Internet Connected)**	52	32.50	38	23.75	21	13.12	20	12.5
6	**e-mail**	35	21.87	35	21.87	30	18.75	10	06.25
7	**Web based search engine**	38	23.75	34	21.25	25	15.62	17	10.62
8	**Web based agricultural information portals**	42	26.25	32	20.00	32	20.00	08	05.00
9	**Video conferencing**	45	28.12	25	15.62	12	07.50	08	05.00
10	**Kiosk**	65	40.62	35	21.87	19	11.87	09	05.62
11	**e-newspaper**	36	22.50	32	20.00	28	17.50	11	06.87
12	**e-agricultural magazines**	24	15.00	20	12.50	12	07.50	05	03.12

It can be inferred that the duration of e-newspaper usage was the highest (20.00 per cent) in the above 15 hrs./ week category followed by mobile advisory service (12.00 per cent) and computer (internet connected) (11.25 per cent). This finding of the study was similar to the findings reported by Osondu and Ibeezim (2015).

It was also observed that 21.25 per cent of the groundnut growers use web based agriculture portals 10-15 hrs./week and the television utilization stood first in 05-10 hrs./ week category. This finding of the study was similar to the findings reported by Tunji, Abdulmumin and Adisha (2011)

It was a evident that duration of utilization of mobile advisory service toped in 1-5 hrs./week category followed by television use (53.12 per cent) of the groundnut growers under this category. This finding of the study was similar to the findings reported by Kumar (2006)

Perception of the groundnut growers about ICT technology

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on their perception about ICT (n=160)

Sr. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low level of perception (up to 77.17)	35	21.87
2	Medium level of perception (77.18 to 92.29)	94	58.75
3	High level of perception (Above 92.29)	31	19.38
Mean = 84.73			S.D. = 7.56

Majority (58.75 per cent) of the respondents had medium level of perception about ICT technology. Whereas, 21.87 per cent and 19.38 per cent groundnut growers had low and high level perception about ICT technology, respectively. The present finding of the study was similar to the findings reported by Gorfad (2012)

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents were in medium level perception of groundnut about ICT, followed by high and low level of perception, respectively. This might be due to fact that the majority of the respondents had medium level of education, social participation, extension participation as well as risk orientation. It can be inferred that the duration of e-newspaper usage was the highest in 15 hrs./week category. It was also evident that duration of utilization of mobile advisory service topped in 1-5 hrs./week category.

IMPLICATIONS

(1) Extension personnel and researchers can utilize the perception scale developed in this investigation to measure the level of perception of groundnut about ICT technology particularly while scheduling training programmes in the pocket of groundnut.

(2) A systematic institutional mechanism has to be developed wherein all the stake holders *viz*., farmers, extension personnel, and research personnel to have constant interaction and sharing of information about groundnut cultivation practices.

(3) The perception scale developed in this study may be useful to document the understanding of farmers on ICT technology

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict between author.

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