

## RESEARCH NOTE

## Attitude of Farm Women Towards ICT Tools based Extension Services

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### ABSTRACT

*ICT is an important tool that strengthens the extension activities in the current scenario and will bring new information services to rural farmers and farm women which will commence greater communication of information at fast speed. Access to such ICT tools for information is a crucial requirement for the sustainable development of the farming systems. ICT tools improve the linkages between research sub-system and farmer sub-system. In this backdrop a study was conducted to observe if the Udham singh nagar district farm women have a favourable attitude towards the ICT - based extension services. Around 120 respondents were interviewed for the study. All of the farm women owned mobile. The study revealed that majority of the farmers (56.66%) have a favourable attitude towards the ICT-Based extension services whereas, 22.50 % of the respondents have a most favourable attitude. This means that there is a scope for higher usage of ICTs in disseminating the agriculture related information and the farm women need to be aware of the advantages of using the information and communication technologies.*

**Key words-** *ICT; Extension; Attitude; Farm women; Agriculture;*

Almost all human activities at present are being guided and supported with the help of Information and communication technology. ICT tools are becoming one of the basic necessities of daily life. ICT enabled extension in agriculture is of great help to communicate a message in a more effective and comprehended manner. By studying the attitude towards the ICT- based extension services of the farm women who are the end users of the availing ICT tools and ICT projects we can know the extent up to what range of per centage the existing ICT-infrastructures have been a boon to the rural population especially the farming sector. Such study and the resulting findings need to be documented in order to draw lessons for the future. Arora and Rathore (2013) in a study found that the attitude of the users was better than that of non-users towards e-choupal and it can change the attitude of the non-users towards the programme while ICTs can enhance their knowledge and skills in the field of agriculture with little effort. Dhaka and Chayal (2010) focused their study

on the attitude of farmers towards ICT as a source of information and concluded that effective utilization of ICT has potential to make the rural communities prosperous as it enables the dissemination of requisite information in user friendly form, easy to access, cost-effective ways at the right time. Shankaraiah and Swamy (2012) show that in Doddaballapura 32.5 per cent of the farmers had most favourable attitude while 40 per cent of farmers had favourable attitude followed by 27.5 per cent who had least favourable attitude towards MMS network. Hence the focus of this study was to find if the farm women have a more favourable attitude towards the extension service through ICTs or vice-versa.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand state out of which two blocks were selected randomly i.e. Rudrapur and Kashipur by following Simple Random Sampling without replacement

method. From each block, two villages were selected randomly. Kolaria and Chhatarpur were selected from Rudrapur block and Gopipura and Chandpur were selected from Kashipur block. Data were collected from each of 120 selected farm women as respondent with help of interview schedule. Statistical techniques used in data analysis include: frequency, per centage, mean, Standard deviation, correlation and Garrett ranking.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Attitude towards ICT Tools based extension services:*

The attitude scale consists of 22 statements. The responses had to be recorded on a five point continuum representing strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree with scores of 5,4,3,2 and 1 for positive statements and vice-versa for negative statements. Table 1 shows mean weight score and their respective rank on the basis of response of various statements.

Farm women were asked to give their choices and on the basis of scores obtained ranking was done and it was found that farm women had most favourable attitude

towards ICTs provide solutions to the present agricultural situation followed by ICTs are potential tools to reach the needy farm women was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> on the basis of mean weight score followed by ICTs cannot meet location specific needs of farm women was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> whereas Farm women can get remunerative prices to their produce through ICT based market intelligence was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> on the basis of mean weight score and other attitude statements were ranked with respective mean weight score.

The attitude score of each respondent was calculated by summing the scores obtained on all the items. The attitude score on this scale ranges from 22 to 110. The higher score indicates that respondent had more favourable attitude towards ICTs based extension services and vice-versa. Hence following table shows the score. Table 2 shows summated scores and categorization of respondents.

After careful study of Table 2 we conclude that 20.83 per cent of respondent have least favourable attitude i.e. less than 78 score whereas 56.66 per cent of respondent have favourable attitude i.e. 78 to 90 score

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents on the basis of Attitude towards ICT tools based extension services (N=120)**

Statement	MWS	Rank
ICTs provide solutions to the present agricultural situation	107.40	01
ICTs cannot meet location specific needs of farm women	72.80	03
ICTs are potential tools to reach the needy farm women	84.80	02
Farm women feedback is fast through ICTs than traditional methods	21.13333	18
Illiteracy will not deter farm women in availing ICT services	20.73333	20
ICTs cannot deliver personalized information	19.93333	21
ICT based ext. services assist the farm women in planning and decision making aspects in agriculture	29.80	13
ICT services is a distant dream for resource poor farm women.	25.93333	15
Farm women can get remunerative prices to their produce through ICT based market intelligence	40.00	04
Expert advice makes the farm women enterprise/activities productive	40.00	05
All kinds of information exchange are possible only through ICTs.	30.26667	12
Existing infrastructure of ICTs is not enough to meet the needs of farming community.	33.06667	07
Only resourceful farm women can get the benefit of the ICTs.	20.93333	19
Access to information Centre at village level is boon to the farming community.	34.73333	06
Phone-in-live with scientist gives firsthand information about queries.	33.06667	08
ICTs alone would solve the problems of farm women.	30.86667	11
ICT based pest/disease outbreak warning system facilitate farm women to take preventive measures.	31.33333	09
ICT extension services avoid personal extension contact.	18.33333	22
ICT based extension services provide new opportunity to build a skilled and knowledge community.	29.13333	14
ICT is a valuable tool, but it will never influence farm women's own decision making.	21.26667	17
Weather forecasting through ICTs assist farm women in timely decisions.	31.26667	10
ICT based extension services are alternative to the present extension system.	26.66667	16

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents in categories on the basis of Attitude towards ICT tools based extension services (N=120)**

Category	No.	%
Least favourable (<78)	25	20.83
Favourable (78 to 90)	68	56.66
Most favourable (> 90)	27	22.50

and 22.5 per cent of respondent have most favourable attitude i.e. more than 90 score. The findings of the present study are in contrary with *Kharmudai et al. (2018)* in a study reported that majority of the Khasi tribal farmers possessed medium favourable attitude and more favourable attitude towards ICTs based Extension services which implied that there is a scope of more usage of ICTs in disseminating the agriculture related information among the tribal farmers and they need to be aware of the advantages of using the information and communication technologies. Since majority of the farmers had moderate to more favourable attitude towards the ICT-Based extension services, effective utilization of ICT has a potential to make the rural

communities prosperous as it enables the dissemination of requisite information in user friendly form, easy to access and cost-effective ways at the right time with the proper assistance of the Extension personnel.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that majority of the farm women possessed favourable attitude and most favourable attitude towards ICTs based Extension services which implied that there is a scope of more usage of ICTs in disseminating the agriculture related information among the farm women and they need to be aware of the advantages of using the information and communication technologies. Since majority of the farm women had favourable to most favourable attitude towards the ICT-Based extension services, effective utilization of ICT has a potential to make the rural communities prosperous as it enables the dissemination of requisite information in user friendly form, easy to access and cost-effective ways at the right time with the proper assistance of the extension personnel.

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