

Level of Use of On-line Communication Among Farmers in Central U.P.

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Abstract

The present investigation was undertaken with 150 farmers in Fatehpur district of Uttar Pradesh with major objective to evaluate the level of use of on-line communication among farmers. The findings of the study indicate that, maximum farmers are still dependent on phone, maximum respondents were seeking weather related information followed by information on disease and pest management, Majority of respondents felt that the information given by on-line service was timely and majority of farmers opined that public sources are slightly more reliable but at the same time private sources more timely.

Key words : Level, use, on-line communication, farmers.

Introduction

Today, we are living in the age of information and communication. Many of the societies have already changed from advanced industrial societies to information societies in which computer technologies, their network and other enhanced form of interpersonal and institutional communication has a major force. Some of the western countries have already entered the information age^[1,3]. The country is on the threshold of a new communication revolution of which satellite, computer, television and video are major manifestations. The Indian agriculture in recent years has shown encouraging sign of changing through conversion of agricultural technology in the production accomplishment needed for economic growth and rural development and social change. This could depend, to a great extent on the understanding of the totality of situation in which the new technologies are created, processed, communicated and

integrated into a farming system by the use of different communication through a variety of channels. But the effect of such innovations and the communications are not always well pronounced due to farmers' inadequate knowledge, understanding skill and sometime negative attitude leading to delayed or no action.

Online facilities in agriculture^[2] can be observed in two categories, viz. 'Public' and 'Private'. Public online facilities include information system of SAUs, KVKs, ATICs, Agril. Colleges and specially Kisan Call Centers (KCC). Whereas, in private system, many Multi National Companies (MNCs) have established their own online facilities e.g. e-Chaupals etc.

Material and Methods

The study was carried out by descriptive type of survey method. The area of study was district Fatehpur of Central Uttar Pradesh. Two types of organizations i.e.

private and public are running the on-line communication services in the state. Kisan Call Centre providing on-line services in agriculture was selected as public organization and Agropedia as private. 75 farmers from each category i.e. total 150 respondents were

selected using both type of online services. The data were collected through personal interview with the help of pre structured schedule and analyzed by the percentage and rank order.

Results and Discussion

A. Types of on-line services being used by users:

Table A.1 Distribution of respondents accessing types of on-line services.

SI. No.	Particulars	Number of on-line users		Total
		Public	Private	
		Frequency	Frequency	
1.	Telephone	75 (100.0)	73 (97.3)	148 (98.7)
2.	Teleconferencing	15 (20.0)	21 (23.0)	36 (24.0)
3.	Video conferencing	3 (4.0)	6 (8.0)	9 (6.0)
4.	Internet	13 (17.3)	11(14.6)	24 (16.0)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Table.1 depicts that 100.00 per cent respondents of public sector and 97.30 per cent of private sector are telephone users. Whereas, 20.0 per cent respondents of public

sector and 23.0 per cent of private sector use teleconferencing followed by 17.30 and 14.60 percent of internet users and only a few of video conferencing.

B. Areas of Information access

Table B.1 Distribution of respondents accessing weather related information N = 150

SI. No.	Particulars	Number of on-; line users		
		Public	Private	Total
1.	Temperature	-	-	-
2.	Rainfall	40 (53.4)	35 (46.7)	75 (50.0)
3.	Humidity	-	-	-
4.	Monsoon	60 (80.0)	40 (53.4)	100 (66.7)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Table B.1 Observes that farmers are using public on-line centre more frequently for weather related information in comparison to private on-line center. Among the different components of weather related information farmers are more interested to know about monsoon. In total 100 farmers asked for

information on monsoon and 75 enquired for rainfall. So, the picture is very clear that farmers do not enquire information on temperature and humidity. Further, very less farmers are interested in information on amount of rainfall received.

Table B.2 Distribution of respondents accessing soil related information N =150

SI. No.	Particulars	Number of on-; line users		Total
		Public	Private	
1.	Collection of soil sample	13 (17.4)	21 (28.0)	34 (22.7)
2.	Soil testing	3 (4.0)	8 (10.7)	11 (7.4)
3.	Information about soil treatment	8(10.7)	25 (33.4)	33 (22.0)
4.	Soil fertility management	2 (2.7)	14 (18.7)	16 (10.7)
5.	Reclamation of soil	-	-	-

It is evident from the **Table B.2** that farmers are mainly concerned with collection of soil sample (22.70%) and soil treatment (22.00%) followed by total 10.70 percent

enquiring on soil fertility management. It is interesting to note that nobody bothered about reclamation of soil.

Table B.3 Distribution of respondents accessing information related to soil conservation.

SI. No.	Particulars	Number of on-line users		
		Public(75)	Private(75)	Total(150)
1.	Soil Erosion	-	-	-
2.	Waste land management	24 (32.0)	22 (29.4)	46 (30.7)
3.	Crop rotation	18 (24.0)	23(30.7)	41 (27.4)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Table B.3 showing the level of accessing information related to soil conservation by the farmer's through on-line services, indicated that majority of the farmers does not consider soil conservation as important practice. Although a significant number of farmers (30.70%) take information

related to waste land management followed by 27.40 per cent asking about crop rotation, whereas, nobody has taken interest in an important problem i.e. soil erosion. Regarding service providers, both played almost equal role in disseminating information about soil conservation.

Table B.4 Distribution of respondents accessing information related to water conservation

N=150

SI. No.	Particulars	Number of on-line users		
		Public	Private	Total
1.	Water harvesting	-	7 (9.4)	7 (4.7)
2.	Watershed development	4 (5.3)	3 (4.0)	7 (4.7)
3.	Use of water saving irrigation equipments	-	9 (12.0)	9 (6.0)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

It is evident from **Table B.4** that the use of help line services is very low in case of water conservation related questions. Among

users, farmers are using private on-line services more frequently than public sources.

Table B.5 Distribution of respondents accessing information related to cultural practices

N=150

SI. No.	Particulars	Number of on-line users		
		Public	Private	Total
1.	Land preparation	7 (9.4)	6 (8.0)	13 (8.7)
2.	Seed sowing	15 (20.0)	18 (24.0)	33 (22.0)
3.	Nursery raising	3 (4.0)	18 (24.0)	21 (14.0)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

It is observed from **Table B.5**, that farmers are using private on-line service more in comparison to public on-line center. Among the different components of the cultural

practices, farmers were more interested to know about seed sowing. In total 33 farmers (22.0 %) asked for information on seed sowing and 21 farmers' (14.0%) took

information about nursery raising. But regarding land preparation, 13 farmers (8.7%) availed the on-line information service. The

number of farmers seeking on-line information related to cultural practices is still very low.

Table B.6 Distribution of respondents accessing information related to crops

N= 150

SI. No.	Particulars	Number of on-line users		
		Public	Private	Total
1.	Cereals	35 (46.7)	25 (33.4)	60 (40.0)
2.	Legumes	15 (20.0)	16 (21.4)	31 (20.7)
3.	Oilseeds	10 (13.3)	25 (33.3)	35 (23.4)
4.	Cash crops	10 (13.3)	25 (33.3)	35 (23.4)
5.	Fruits	3 (4.0)	5 (6.6)	8 (5.4)
6.	Vegetables	11 (14.7)	20 (26.7)	31 (20.7)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Table B.6 highlighted the frequency of accessing varieties related information of different crops by the farmers. The information related to varieties is more frequently asked. The farmers are more interacted in accessing information related to varieties of cereal crops. In total 60 farmers (40.0%) asked information about varieties of cereals, 35 farmers (23.4%) asked information related to the varieties of both oilseeds cash

crops. In oilseeds, mostly farmers (33.3%) used private on-line services than public (13.3%). It was observed that 33.3 per cent farmers used private on-line service and 13.4 per cent farmers used public on-line service for variety related information of cash crops. In case of pulses and vegetables, 31 farmers (20.7%) took information from on-line information sources. But information accessed on fruits is very meager.

C. Perception of respondents.

Table C.1 Perception of respondents towards clarity of response

N-150

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
	Experts gave answer		
1.	Always correct	114	76.00
2.	Sometime correct	16	10.66
3.	Sometime incorrect	20	13.33

It is apparent from the Table C.1 that majority (76.0%) of farmers perceived the message/answer by the expert is always correct. The scientists contributing in the

online service centers are empathetic to the information needs of farmers and could able to communicate in the language of users.

Table C.2 Perception of respondents towards timeliness of message

N=150

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Timely	140	93.33
2.	Late	10	6.66

It is vivid from the Table C.2 that most (93.33%) farmers felt that the information given by on-line services was timely. Rest of the farmers felt that information given by the on-line services were late.

Table C.3 Distribution of respondents on the basis of relevance of message N=150

Sl. No.	Particulars	Number of on- line users		Total
		Public	Private	
1.	Relevant	70(93.33)	72(96.00)	142 (94.67)
2.	Irrelevant	5(6.67)	3 (4.00)	08 (5.33)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Table C.3 indicates private service providers serve slightly more relevant information than public services. Most respondents (94.67) are getting relevant information but public sources are slightly ahead in providing irrelevant information.

Table C.4 Opinion of respondents on adequacy of information N=150

Sl. No.	Particulars	Number of on- line users		Total
		Public	Private	
1.	Highly satisfactory	12 (16.0)	21 (28.0)	33 (22.0)
2.	Satisfactory	54 (72.0)	40 (53.4)	94 (62.7)
3.	Unsatisfactory	6 (8.0)	8 (10.6)	14 (9.4)
4.	Highly unsatisfactory	5 (6.7)	4 (5.4)	9 (6.0)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

It has been revealed from Table C.4 that 28 per cent farmers from private service users and 16 per cent from public service users were highly satisfied with adequacy of information. On the other hand, more than 15 per cent respondents were not satisfied with adequacy. This is an indication that farmers require better source, therefore, the efforts are required to make help line service more adequate.

Table C.5 Opinion of respondents regarding utility of Information N=150

Sl. No.	Particulars	Number of on- line users		Total
		Public	Private	
1.	Aware of practices	75 (100.0)	75 (100.0)	150 (100.0)
2.	Adopted the practices	55 (73.30)	53 (70.67)	108 (72.00)
3.	Aware but not utilized	20 (26.70)	22 (29.30)	42 (28.00)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

It is obvious from Table C.5 that on-line users could create awareness for all (100%) towards farm technologies. It is further clear that 72.0 per cent of the farmers adopted the practices recommended through advice and rest of them (28.0%) could not adopt the practices. The effectiveness of on-line services was found very high in awareness, whereas, adoption of advice related to farm practices is also significant but still there is scope to increase adoption level.

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