



E-ISSN: 2278-4136

P-ISSN: 2349-8234

www.phytojournal.com

JPP 2020; Sp9(2): 192-193

Received: 25-01-2020

Accepted: 27-02-2020

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Farm Radio- ICT tool for empowering farmers

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Abstract

Farm radio is an online web to reach the unreached farmers. It provides scientific information on monthly agricultural operations in cereals, millets, vegetables, livestock, home science, weather information, market information, unforeseen climate changes, outbreak of pests and its mitigation, contingency measures etc. The podcasts can be listened on mobile phone by typing www.farmradio.in on any search engine. Each podcast is 3-4 minutes. Podcasting of the information is on monthly and need basis. It is useful to farmers, extension functionaries, scientists etc. The farmers were able to enhance knowledge on scientific practices in agriculture due to listening the podcasts. The language of podcast is *telugu*. As the podcasts are in local language, it was easy to understand and easy to apply in field also it is knowledge driven and sharing.

Keywords: Farm radio, Podcasts, ICT, Online, Knowledge

Introduction

ICT refers to all communication technologies, including radio, television, internet, wireless networks, cell phones, computers, software, video-conferencing, social networking and other media applications and services enabling users to access, retrieve, store, transmit, and manipulate information in a digital form.

Use of ICTs in the era of digitization is important for accelerating the development process of farmers in our country. It is impossible for the extension functionaries of the government departments to reach doorstep of farmer with the basket of information, as farmer extension worker ratio (2879:1) is wide. (Mukherjee and Maity, 2015) [3].

ICT has changed the society from have's and have not's and to be informed or not to be informed. The change in society largely depends on its accessibility and usability of different ICT tools. There are several ICT tools used in agriculture for obtaining and dissemination of information. These are radio, television, mobile phone etc. which are capable of spreading the information to nook and corner of the world.

Farmers are losing interest in agriculture due to lack of marketing, climatic aberrations, less profit and lack of scientific information.

Keeping the importance of ICTs and farmers interest in agriculture in mind, an online web podcasting ICT tool was designed for timely transfer of technology to farmers i.e. through www.farmradio.in

Materials and Methods

As farmers have less information about scientific farming practices, lack of market information, forecasting of weather information etc. Public and private agencies started working on using ICT tools to disseminate timely, useful information to mobile phones of farmers.

World Wide Web is an organization of hypertext documents containing text, images, animation, sound video and interactive programmes. Websites all over the world can be accessed through World Wide Web.

Farm radio was designed for podcasting agriculture information on a web based ICT tool to reach the unreached farmers. It is developed for the farmers where ever internet service is available. Monthly and need based podcasts of different agricultural operations are podcasted.

The podcasts are on agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, weather information, market information, home science, package of practices of different crops in *telugu* language. Farm radio is a knowledge driven web podcasting for the farmers at large.

www.farmradio.in is an online web, podcasting monthly agricultural operations to be carried in the farmers fields.

It is an unique ICT tool in transfer of technology to farmers, extension functionaries, scientists, NGOs etc. Farm radio gives freedom to podcast what you want and when you want to the listeners.

Results and Discussions

ICT has three major roles to play- informative, instructive and influence. The instructive role of ICT is mainly used in administration whereas informative and influential roles of ICT were mainly exploited in development programmes. The audience or receiver, in particular, the farmers who are the ultimate users of the messages received from different sources through different ICT tools, perceive several roles of ICT which can satisfy their information needs and influence their

behavior to a desirable way. (Chandra N, Roy A M L, Mukherjee R, Jethi P, Joshi and Kharbikar H L, 2018) [4]. Access to right information at right time in the right format and from the right source to the farmer has the ability to push a farmer towards success from failure. (Opara, 2008) [1]. The benefits of farm radio as perceived by the farmers and extension functionaries were obtained for further improvement of podcasts. They were easy to understand, timely podcasts, knowledge sharing, cost effective, large coverage area, any time listening. The major challenges, are creating awareness of farm radio usage among the farming community and extension functionaries. The above findings of the study regarding the problems of using ICT tools as perceived by the farmers were in line with findings of Dhaka and Chayal (2010) [2].

Features of podcasted information

Item	Podcast
Field crops	Fertilizer management in Rice, Monthly agricultural operations in Maize, Fall army worm management in Maize, Seed treatment in different crops, Pests management in Rice, Monthly agricultural operations in cotton, management of different crops during floods etc..
Horticulture	Month wise - Horticultural crops management
Veterinary	Month wise – Management of Cattle, Poultry, Buffalo, Goat and Sheep.



Conclusion: www.farmradio.in is web based podcasting of agricultural information on monthly basis and each podcast is 3-4 minutes. It is useful to farmers, extension functionaries, scientists etc. The farmers were able to enhance knowledge on scientific practices in agriculture due to listening of podcasts. ICT led transfer of technology process makes the entire extension system effective in handling any challenge. In this present scenario of globalization, privatization, farm radio will definitely benefit farming community in accessing latest agriculture information as it is a knowledge driven podcasting ICT tool.

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