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Knowledge of Farmers towards ICT Tools in Phulwari Sharif Block of Patna District of (Bihar) India

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ABSTRACT

ICT has the potential to affect many aspects of economic and social activities such as productivity, poverty alleviation, quality of life, education, employment, etc. This study focusses on the farmer's knowledge on ICT. The investigation was undertaken in Phulwari Sharif block of Patna district of Bihar. A sample of 120 respondents were drawn from 8 villages. The data were collected through pre-structured interview schedule on ICT tools viz, Television, Radio and Mobile. Majority of the respondents had access to television than radio and mobile to get information regarding new agriculture techniques. The study revealed that 68.33 per cent respondents had medium level of knowledge on ICT tools. Variables like gender, landholding, education, mass media and innovativeness have significant relationship with the level of knowledge while age, caste, occupation, annual income and risk orientation have no significant relationship with the level of knowledge. ICT has influenced majority of the farmers by providing information in easier and cheaper way.

Key words: *ICT, Knowledge, Innovativeness, Variables*

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas are often associated with small area which has low population. The rural community mainly have agriculture as occupation and labourers as a poor. The major problem for the growth and development socially and economically are lack of education, lack of proper information related to agriculture, social issues, political resources, marketing, etc which is a hurdle for the socio-economic development of rural people. ICT development is recognized as an important tool that can help empower poor people, develop their skills, increase productivity and improve the quality of life. ICT is a generic term referring to technologies that are used for collecting, storing, editing and passing on information in various forms. ICT has enhanced the linkage between the farmers in the rural areas and agriculture experts, scientists and agents. It has become very important for the rural people to accept, adopt and use ICT tools for their growth and development socially, economically and for lifelong learning.

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Television, radio and mobile are the powerful tools of communication in emerging world and increased the awareness and present real stage of society.

In this paper, it is investigated the knowledge of farmers on ICT tools as it offers better and more suitable services by facilitating the distribution of valuable information timely to the farmers to increase the crop production, to protect the crop from diseases and pests, weather report, etc with innovative strategies.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Phulwari Sharif block of Patna district of Bihar. Out of 35 villages in Phulwari Sharif block, 8 village were selected randomly. 15 respondents from each village were selected randomly, thus the sample size was 120. A pre-structured interview schedule was developed for data collection. Based on findings the references were drawn. Tabulation and quantification of data was done as per standard procedure by using statistical tools used *viz.* frequency, percentage and mean score.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result obtained from present study as well as relevant discussion have been presented under following heads:

Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

S. No.	Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Age (in years)**	20-35 years	26	21.66
		36-55 years	56	46.67
		Above 55 years	38	31.67
2.	**Gender**	Male	97	80.83
		Female	23	19.17
3.	**Caste**	General	19	15.83
		OBC	79	65.83
		SC	22	18.34
4.	**Education**	Illiterate	19	15.83
		Primary school	11	9.17
		Middle school	16	13.33
		High school	46	38.33
		Inter	17	14.17
		Graduate	11	9.17
5.	**Occupation**	Farming	95	79.17
		Farming + Business	21	17.50
		Farming + Service	4	3.33
6.	**Land holding**	Below 1 ha	64	53.33
		1-2 ha	43	35.83
		Above 2 ha	13	10.83
7.	**Annual income**	10,000-35,000	28	23.33
		36,000-75,000	59	49.17
		More than 75,000	33	27.50
8.	**Family type**	Nuclear	73	60.83
		Joint	47	39.17
9	**Extension contact level**	Low (0-2.77)	51	42.50
		Medium (2.78-4.90)	45	37.50
		High (4.91-7.03)	22	8.33
10.	**Mass media exposure level**	Low (0-0.96)	38	31.66
		Medium (0.97-2.19)	64	53.34
		High (2.20-3.41)	18	15.00
11.	**Innovativeness level**	Low (7-10.66)	8	6.67
		Medium (10.67-14.33)	108	90.00
		High (14.34-18)	4	3.33
12.	**Risk orientation level**	Low (8-9.66)	18	15.00
		Medium (9.67-11.33)	69	57.50
		High (11.34-13)	33	27.50

The above table shows that about 46.67 per cent of the respondents are belonged to 36-55 years followed by the age group of (above 55) and (20-35) respectively. 80.83 per cent of the respondents were male followed by (19.17%) female respondents. 65.83 per cent respondents belonged to OBC caste followed by SC (18.34%) and General (15.83%). 38.33 per cent respondents are having education up to high school, followed by 15.83 per cent are illiterate, 14.17 per cent respondents till Intermediate and 13.33 per cent respondents till middle school. 79.17 per cent respondents earn only through agriculture followed by farming plus business (17.50%) and farming plus service (3.33%). 53.33 per cent of the respondents are having below 1 ha of land followed by 1-2 ha (35.83%) and above 2 ha (10.83%). 49.17 per cent respondents are earning 35,000-75,000 rupees followed by the respondents earning above 75,000 (27.50%) and 10,000-35,000 (23.33%). 60.83 per cent of the respondents have nuclear family followed by respondents having joint family (39.17%). 42.50 per cent of the respondents having low level of extension contacts. 53.34 per cent of the respondents have medium level of mass media exposure. 90 per cent of the respondents are having medium level of innovativeness. 57.50 per cent of the respondents are having medium level of risk orientation.

Table 2: Level of Knowledge

S. No	Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (14-18.66)	33	27.50
2	Medium (18.67-23.32)	82	68.33
3	High (23.33-28)	5	4.16
	Total	120	100

From the above table it is found that the level of knowledge about ICT tools is medium (68.33%) followed by low (27.5%) and high (4.16%) respectively.

Table 3: Relationship of Independent Variables with Knowledge on ICT

S. no	Variables	r Values
1	Age	-0.01589 (N.S.)
2	Gender	0.10306**
3	Caste	0.087212 (N.S.)
4	Land holding	0.23416*
5	Education	0.234042*
6	Occupation	0.002168 (N.S.)
7	Annual income	0.063544 (N.S.)
8	Mass media	0.234**
9	Innovativeness	0.14384**
10	Risk orientation	0.040929 (N.S.)

^{NS} = Not significant, *= positively correlated

The above table shows the relationship of independent variables with the knowledge on ICT. Variables like age, caste, occupation, annual income and risk orientation has no significance relationship with the knowledge on ICT, while variables like gender, land holding, education, mass media and innovativeness have positive correlation with the knowledge on ICT.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussed result, it is concluded that majority of the respondents have medium level of knowledge on ICT. The

association with the independent variables like age, caste, occupation annual income and risk orientation with the knowledge on ICT is not significant, while the association of gender, land holding, education, mass media and innovativeness is positively correlated with the knowledge of respondents on ICT. Due to lack of awareness about recent ICT tools, that is why their knowledge level is medium, for the further enhancement of knowledge by giving awareness programmes, trainings and workshops. ICT provides timely information about recent agricultural technologies, marketing strategies, success stories etc. for the farmers.

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