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Availability and Utilization pattern of online information sources among the farmers during COVID-19 situation

Adarsh Sharma, Poonam Chakrawarty, Abhilasha Sharma and KN Pathak

Abstract

In order to enhance the production and productivity of agriculture, farmers should have access to well organized, relevant information and their sufficient utilization requires good facilitation among the users. The present study is expected to identify farmer's knowledge and utilization pattern of online information sources during COVID-19 situation, which provides them direction to focus more on selection of available preferred online information sources. The current study was conducted in Narsinghpur district primarily due to majority of farmer uses online information sources in the district and well known area by the researcher. A total of 10 villages were selected from Chawarpatha block from Narsinghpur district. 11 respondents were selected from each village for the survey purpose. The study yields that Kisan mobile sandesh was most popular among the farmers followed by mobile phone, Agril. apps, social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, telegram etc.), YouTube, websites/web portals, e-books/e-magazine/e-newspaper, Kisan call centre, video conferencing, meeting apps (Google meet, zoom, webex etc.), e-NAM, digital videos and e-mail. Further, it was found that, based on overall utilization pattern of online information sources, majority of the farmers belonged to occasionally utilization pattern (36.37%) followed by regular (32.73%) and never (30.90%) utilization pattern of online information sources.

Keywords: Online information sources, ICT, Utilization pattern, COVID-19, survey, respondents

Introduction

There has been no significant technology innovation, which could give a fresh impetus to agricultural productivity. Insufficient extension services and poor access to information further widen the gap in the adoption of technology and lead to poor productivity levels; in fact, information is critical to the social and economic activities that comprise the development process and the right information at the right time will play a crucial role in the development of Indian agriculture. This can be served by efficient use of online information sources. Here comes the role of online information sources, which are robust and productive with new ideas, methods of the technology dissemination and further improving the knowledge and information among there society by providing new opportunities for development in all sectors. Reaching the information to millions of farmers is a gigantic task in a country like India because of diversified agro climatic zones, small scattered and fragmented holdings. While the extension activities in general, are traditional in nature and suffer from a variety of drawbacks like not reaching the needy farmers in the right form, at the right time, expensive, very time consuming process, erosion of quality messages, inability to cover all the farmers and focusing on the need for alternate information disseminating mechanisms. New emerging delivery methods had to play a significant role in providing the effective communication. Harnessing of information and communication technology has received top priority in India. Although the traditional channels of communication will remain important, the new online information sources had a great potential for disseminating information to the needy farmers. Online information sources are a diverse set of technological tools and resources to create disseminate, store, bring value and manage information. The benefits of several online information sources must be brought to grass root level farmers; addressing the precise information needs for all round socio - economic development. Online information sources can be useful to the farmers to acquire information on feeding, breeding, management and health care of animals leading to the knowledge empowerment of different stakeholders, including women. Utilization is here mentioned that to put the use of the online information sources in

obtaining agricultural information to the highest or greater degree, amount or intensity of benefit delivered to online information sources user farmers.

Although steps have been taken and facilities are being provided, the development is limited. Dissemination of knowledge through appropriate emerging extension delivery methods can play an important role in addressing these needs.

The role of online information sources in agriculture during COVID-19 situation played a new modern paradigm that facilitates and improves the agricultural sector. The online information sources had rendered services to farmers during COVID-19 situation for market access, announcement of weather condition, awareness of crop diseases etc. The online information sources help the farmers to understand the gap between productivity and market demand. The online information sources, particularly the mobile technology has helped the farm producers in knowing internal commodity prices like agriculture produce. Thus online information sources have been a big platform to the farm producer for their empowerment and enhancement and manage the efficient supply chain of the agricultural products.

In addition to this credibility-faithfulness in source is equally important for higher utilization of modern technical information among farmers during COVID-19 situation. This has direct bearing on the gain of knowledge and adoption of recommended practices.

The present study is expected to identify farmer's knowledge and utilization pattern of online information sources during COVID-19 situation.

Materials and Methods

Location of the study area

The study was conducted in Narsinghpur district because of majority of the farmers use online information sources in the district and well known area by the researcher. Narsinghpur district is situated in the central part of the Madhya Pradesh. On the northern ends Vindhyachal & on the southern ends throughout the lengths are Satpura ranges of Mountains. In the northern part river Narmada flows from east to west. Latitude: 22°45' North 23°15' North, Longitude: 78°38' East 79°38' East, Area: 5125.55 sq km, Altitude: 359.8 meters above the sea. A total of 10 villages were selected from Chawarpatha block from Narsinghpur district. 11 respondents were selected from each village for the survey purpose, making the total number of respondents understudy as 110.

Table 1: Selection of District, Block, Village and Respondents

S.No.	District	Block	Village	No. of Respondents
1	Narsinghpur	Chawarpatha	Bohani	11
2			Ajansara	11
3			Harrai	11
4			Kodiya	11
5			Lilwani	11
6			Nayagaon	11
7			Sihora	11
8			Chirchira	11
9			Bamhori	11
10			Chiriya	11
Total respondents = 110				

Sampling technique

The sample of the present study was selected by random sampling method.

Results and Discussion

Availability of important online information sources among the farmers in COVID-19 situation

The important online information sources available to the farmers during COVID-19 situation is presented in Table 2. It was found that higher number of farmers 100.00% possess "Kisan mobile sandesh" with (rank I), followed by 90.91% possess "Mobile phone" (rank II), 72.73% possess "Agril. Apps" (rank III), 70.00% possess "Social media (facebook, whatsapp, telegram etc.)" (rank IV), 68.18% possess "YouTube" (rank V), 56.36% possess "Websites/web portals" (rank VI), 36.36% possess "e-books/e-magazine/e-newspaper" (rank VII), 34.55% possess "Kisan call centre" (rank VIII), 31.82% possess "Video conferencing" (rank IX), 22.73% possess "Meeting Apps (Google meet, zoom, webex etc.)" (rank X), 18.18% possess "e-NAM" (rank XI), 16.36% possess "Digital videos" (rank XII) and 9.09% farmers possess "e-mail" (rank XIII), respectively.

Table 2: Availability of important online information sources among the farmers in COVID-19 situation (n=110)

S. No.	Online information sources	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Kisan mobile sandesh	110	100.00	I
2.	Mobile phone	100	90.91	II
3.	Agril. Apps	80	72.73	III
4.	Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, telegram etc.)	77	70.00	IV
5.	YouTube	75	68.18	V
6.	Websites/web portals	62	56.36	VI
7.	e-books/e-magazine/e-newspaper	40	36.36	VII
8.	Kisan call centre	38	34.55	VIII
9.	Video conferencing	35	31.82	IX
10.	Meeting Apps (Google meet, zoom, WebEx etc.)	25	22.73	X
11.	e-NAM	20	18.18	XI
12.	Digital videos	18	16.36	XII
13.	e-mail	10	9.09	XIII

Utilization pattern of online information sources by the farmers in COVID-19 situation

The Table 3 and Figure 1 showed the utilization pattern of important online information sources among the farmers in COVID-19 situation. It was found that utilization pattern of 'Kisan mobile sandesh' majority of farmers belonged to occasionally (45.45%) followed by regular (30.91%) and never (23.64%) utilization pattern.

It was found that utilization pattern of 'Mobile phone' majority of farmers belonged to occasionally (38.18%) followed by never (34.55%) and regular (27.27%) utilization pattern.

It was found that utilization pattern of 'Agril. Apps' majority of farmers belonged to occasionally (40.91%) followed by never (36.36%) and regular (22.73%) utilization pattern.

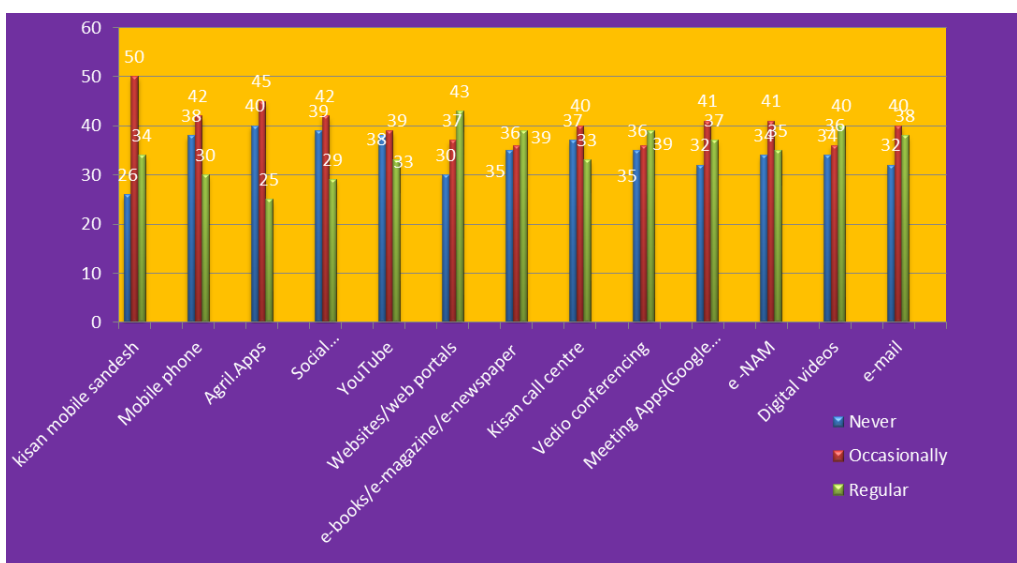
It was found that utilization pattern of 'Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, telegram etc.)' majority of farmers belonged to occasionally (38.18%) followed by never (35.46%) and regular (26.36%) utilization pattern.

In case of 'YouTube' utilization pattern was found that most of the farmers had occasionally (35.45%) followed by never (34.55%) and regular (30.00%) utilization pattern.

It was found that utilization pattern of 'Websites/web portals' majority of farmers belonged to regular (39.09%) followed by occasionally (33.64%) and never (27.27%) utilization pattern.

Table 3: Utilization pattern of important online information sources among the farmers in COVID-19 situation (n=110)

S. No.	Online information sources	Utilization pattern		
		Never	Occasionally	Regular
1.	Kisan mobile sandesh	26 (23.64)	50 (45.45)	34 (30.91)
2.	Mobile phone	38 (34.55)	42 (38.18)	30 (27.27)
3.	Agril. Apps	40 (36.36)	45 (40.91)	25 (22.73)
4.	Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, telegram etc.)	39 (35.46)	42 (38.18)	29 (26.36)
5.	YouTube	38 (34.55)	39 (35.45)	33 (30.00)
6.	Websites/web portals	30 (27.27)	37 (33.64)	43 (39.09)
7.	e-books/e-magazine/e-newspaper	35 (31.82)	36 (32.73)	39 (35.45)
8.	Kisan call centre	37 (33.64)	40 (36.36)	33 (30.00)
9.	Video conferencing	35 (31.82)	36 (32.73)	39 (35.45)
10.	Meeting Apps (Google meet, zoom, WebEx etc.)	32 (29.09)	41 (37.27)	37 (33.64)
11.	e –NAM	34 (30.91)	41 (37.27)	35 (31.82)
12.	Digital videos	34 (30.91)	36 (32.73)	40 (36.36)
13.	e-mail	32 (29.09)	40 (36.36)	38 (34.55)
	Overall	34 (30.90)	40 (36.37)	36 (32.73)

**Fig 1:** Utilization pattern of important online information sources among the farmers in COVID-19 situation

It was found that utilization pattern of 'e-books/e-magazine/e-newspaper' majority of farmers belonged to regular (35.45%) followed by occasionally (32.73%) and never (31.82%) utilization pattern.

It was found that utilization pattern of 'Kisan call centre' majority of farmers belonged to occasionally (36.36%) followed by never (33.64%) and regular (30.00%) utilization pattern.

In case of 'Video conferencing' utilization pattern was found that most of the farmers had regular (35.45%) followed by occasionally (32.73%) and never (31.82%) utilization pattern.

In case of 'Meeting Apps (Google meet, zoom, WebEx etc.)' utilization pattern was found that most of the farmers had

occasionally (37.27%) followed by regular (33.64%) and never (29.09%) utilization pattern.

It was found that utilization pattern of 'e –NAM' majority of farmers belonged to occasionally (37.27%) followed by regular (31.82%) and never (30.91%) utilization pattern.

It was found that utilization pattern of 'Digital videos' majority of farmers belonged to regular (36.36%) followed by occasionally (32.73%) and never (30.91%) utilization pattern.

It was found that utilization pattern of 'e-mail' majority of farmers belonged to occasionally (36.36%) followed by regular (34.55%) and never (29.09%) utilization pattern.

Table 4 and Fig 2 revealed the overall utilization pattern of online information sources, it was found that majority of

farmers belonged to occasionally utilization pattern (36.37%) followed by regular (32.73%) and never (30.90%) utilization pattern of online information sources.

Table 4: Overall utilization pattern of online information sources

S. No.	Utilization pattern	No. of respondents (n=110)	Percentage
1.	Never	34	30.90
2.	Occasionally	40	36.37
3.	Regular	36	32.73
	Total	110	100.00

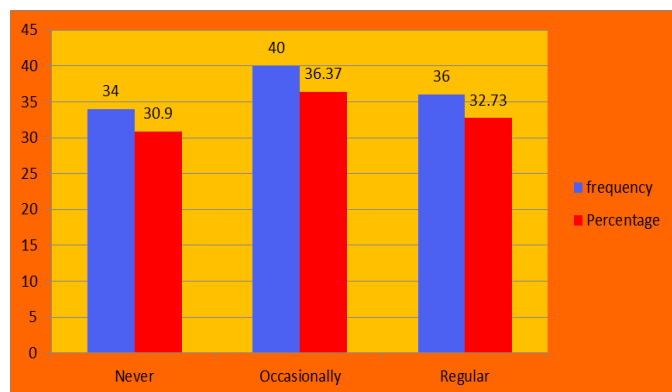


Fig 2: Overall utilization pattern of online information sources

Discussion

Availability of important online information sources among the farmers in covid-19 situation

The result showed that higher number of farmers 100.00 percent possess “Kisan mobile sandesh” with (rank I), followed by 90.91 percent possess “Mobile phone” (rank II), 72.73 percent possess “Agril. Apps” (rank III), 70.00 percent possess “Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram etc.)” (rank IV), 68.18 percent possess “YouTube” (rank V), 56.36 percent possess “Websites/web portals” (rank VI), 36.36 percent possess “e-books/e-magazine/e-newspaper” (rank VII), 34.55 percent possess “Kisan call centre” (rank VIII), 31.82 percent possess “Video conferencing” (rank IX), 22.73 percent possess “Meeting Apps (Google meet, zoom, WebEx etc.)” (rank X), 18.18 percent possess “e –NAM” (rank XI), 16.36 percent possess “Digital videos” (rank XII) and 9.09 percent farmers possess “e-mail” with (rank XIII). The finding is in conformity with the findings of Gupta *et al.* (2019) [2] and Nwalieji *et al.* (2019) [7].

Utilization pattern of online information sources by the farmers in covid-19 situation

The result illustrated here about overall utilization pattern of online information sources, which found to be that majority of farmers belonged to occasionally utilization pattern (36.37%) followed by regular (32.73%) and never (30.90%) utilization pattern of online information sources. The finding is in conformity with the findings of Chikaire *et al.* (2015) [1] and Swaroop (2016) [8].

Conclusion

Higher number of farmers 100.00 percent possess “Kisan mobile sandesh” with (rank I), followed by 90.91 percent possess “Mobile phone” (rank II), 72.73 percent possess “Agril. Apps” (rank III), 70.00 percent possess “Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, telegram etc.)” (rank IV), 68.18 percent possess “YouTube” (rank V), 56.36 percent possess

“Websites/web portals” (rank VI), 36.36 percent possess “e-books/e-magazine/e-newspaper” (rank VII), 34.55 percent possess “Kisan call centre” (rank VIII), 31.82 percent possess “Video conferencing” (rank IX), 22.73 percent possess “Meeting Apps (Google meet, zoom, WebEx etc.)” (rank X), 18.18 percent possess “e –NAM” (rank XI), 16.36 percent possess “Digital videos” (rank XII) and 9.09 percent farmers possess “e-mail” with (rank XIII).

Overall utilization pattern of online information sources, it was found that majority of farmers belonged to occasionally utilization pattern (36.37%) followed by regular (32.73%) and never (30.90%) utilization pattern of online information sources.

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