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AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN HORTICULTURE SECTOR IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR.



Hilal Ahmad parray¹ and P. Zearamane²

¹Ph.D research scholar, Dept. of economics Annamalai University,
Annamalai nagar, Tamil nadu.

ABSTRACT:

India is favorable for various horticulture crops such as fruits, vegetables and medicinal plants. In the Economy of Jammu and Kashmir Horticulture plays a vibrant role in GDP. In order to make the horticulture sector smooth and sustainable, information and communication technology played important role from last few decades to produce qualitative as well as quantitative outcome. ICT has modernized the horticulture sector and broadened the market of various fruits which in turn has increased cost of return and enhanced the living standard of growers in Kashmir. In this paper we have drawn various dimension of information needed for growers and available ICT tools in realizing those needs.

KEYWORDS: Information, Communication, Apple production, Kashmir and Dimensions.

INTRODUCTION:

Horticulture in Jammu and Kashmir plays a vital role and contributes major share in the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. In order to improve the quality and quantity it is necessary to know the technological aspects and to develop the communication that helps the growers for attaining sustainable production. Information technology is considered as an important part for the development of agriculture in Jammu and Kashmir especially in horticulture sector. It has been reported that the production of total fruits was 1672.24 metric tons in year 2009-2010 comprising 1494.51 metric tons of fresh fruits and 177.73 metric tons dry fruits and in 2011-2012 production has increased up to 1780.17 metric tons. Total export of fresh and dry fruit has been recorded 8.51 lakh metric tons and 0.51 lakh metric tons respectively. (Digest of statistics 2010). In the wider outlook to achieve the target of 2.36 million tons of fruit production (i.e. 1.96 million tons is only apple and 0.4 million tones are other fruits) in Jammu and Kashmir at national level to meet house hold demand for



1.32 billion population of the country by the year 2020 (Pukhta 2012). Since decades agriculture is playing an important role in improving the horticulture through technology to the grower's level. Information Technology (IT) may strengthen not only the production part but also marketing structure by use of various IT tools in production and empowering growers with various information regarding marketing. Practical demonstrations (259) were the most preferred method of communication by the customers of the state in adopting the technical knowledge on various aspects for attractive fruit production followed by speech/lectures (256). Regarding the participation of the different groups in various trainings, rural youth showed maximum interest followed by farmers/farm women. However, after providing training impact recorded was up to 95.75% which was earlier only 4.84 whereas, the full adoption of the trainings ranged between 14.29% for marketing of fruits and 78.19% integrated disease and insect-pest management. This has been done due to the diversification of agriculture land to horticulture land i.e. cereals to fruits and has increased the income of rural Kashmiri growers (wani.2008). Various training programmes like technical aspects of fruit cultivation, including agronomic practices, fertigation, pest and disease management etc., were imparted to the farmers by various means of communication/media (frontline demonstrations, result demonstrations and use of audio visual aids) and to assess which method of communication was more effective in imparting the technology. The study discusses various magnitudes of information needed for horticulture growers and also feasible application of IT tools in identifying those needs.

Objectives

1. To know the role of ICT in horticulture sector.
2. To portray how to utilize these tools through various informative programmers.

Feasible IT tools for growers.

Information technologies has a lot of potentiality regarding the tools of information systems such as voice information delivery services, developments in electronics, video Conferencing, multimedia and internet Technologies have shaped possibilities for swift gathering, processing and presentation of information.

1. Voice information delivery services: it is a telephone-based information delivery services which helps the growers in different farming methods and also market contact to develop the lives of rural farming groups in Jammu and Kashmir. Problems that growers are facing while cultivating crops their solutions may well be on the internet but due to lack of literacy and language, this is way beyond the reach of majority of growers.

2. Database Management System(DBMS):It includes the whole warehouse of data and through DBMS various data are generated regarding the fruit production system related to various varieties ,their characters, pests, climate data, post harvest input resources, marketing resources, statistical data on area , production and productivity. To provide a platform for storing data in electronic form database is simply and quickly managed for addition,deletion and modification. Database management is a group of hardware and software for addition ,modification,deletion and reporting of data. At present many flavor of DBMS are available in market to develop database for horticulture crops such as MS Access, Base,MS-SQL,My-SQL, Foxpro, dBase, Oracle etc.

3. Kisan call center: A Kisan call center is one of the important telecommunication infrastructure,

computer support and human resources organized to manage successfully the queries raised by farmers immediately in the local language. Now a days most Subject Matter specialists (SMSS) utilizing telephone and computer in solving the problems and answer the queries at a call center.

Kisan call center is a new aspect in the field of Agriculture Extension Management which plays an important role in making full use of on-going information and communication revolution. Utising the communication bandwidth serving the farming community from remotest areas of the country.

4. E-Learning for basic skills, agricultural education and video- based approaches: This type of class covers the provision of information and learning material for agricultural skills. The specific video-based approach has several important advantages to traditional forms of agricultural content, which are typically not in the local language, are planned for a literate audience, use expert terminology, lack grassroots level practicalities, and remain inaccessible in a sea of scattered media.

5. Farmpik Shoppe: In order to supply genuine quality inputs and extension services. Agri-fresh has established three agricultural input stores, called "Farmpik Shoppe", where growers may purchase inputs. These stores supply pesticides, seed, fertilizers and other agri-inputs from reputable companies such as BASF, Bayer and PI industries. Representatives of these companies and the technical experts from local agricultural universities also provide technical advice on cultivation and post-harvest management to farmers through village meetings. Because of these stores, farmers receive genuine, quality agricultural inputs at reasonable prices.

Suggestions

1. Government should make the IT tools accessible to the farmers at ground level.
2. The IT tools are very expensive therefore subsidy should be given by the government so that everyone can make use of these tools.
3. Awareness programs should be held in every locality of farmers and the awareness should be given in the local language so that they can understand how to use the IT tools in more effective manner.
4. The growers sell their products for less cost as they are not aware, and don't have direct marketing information because of the intermediates who don't always give them the right information. Therefore direct marketing information should be provided to the growers to get the maximum returns.
5. The number of marketing places for selling the products should be increased in order to lower down the transportation costs which are increasing very rapidly.
6. Most importantly the pesticides and fungicides available in the market, because of their low quality, damage the products severely, should be checked regularly which in turn will increase the yield and the quality of the crops.

CONCLUSION

Information Technology is the solution in improving the quality and quantity of various horticulture crops in the Jammu and Kashmir. For sustainable productivity it is important to utilize the IT tools in the horticulture sector and broadens the account in remote areas. In order to make the use of various technologies, it is important to make accessible information on time to the growers at the required period so that they will get the maximum production and return. In the trail to revolutionize access process by the use of certain infrastructure facilities must be developed for different growers in Jammu and Kashmir. It has been found that information and technology increased interests for cultivation among the different growers especially rural youth in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is

also concluded that proper use of Information and communication technology can offer solutions in order to improve the fruit production by advanced technology in Kashmir valley. Use of different methods of communication in local dialect will help in spreading of knowledge which will improve the socio-economic conditions of horticulture growers.

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Hilal Ahmad parray

Ph.D research scholar, Dept. of economics Annamalai University, Annamalai nagar, Tamil nadu.

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