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## Utilisation pattern of agriculture resources information system network (AGRISNET) by farmers of Nagarkurnool district of Telangana

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to know the utilisation pattern of Agriculture Resources Information System Network (AGRISNET) project by farmers of Nagarkurnool district of Telangana. Among the various projects in operation Agriculture Resources Information System Network (AGRISNET) was selected for the study. Twelve respondents were selected randomly from each village that constituted 120 respondents for the study. It was observed that out of 120 respondents nearly 46.67 per cent of the farmers were utilising Agrisnet services with 7.50 per cent were using weekly once, 15.83 per cent using monthly once and 23.33 per cent were using it whenever needed. Further, the study also revealed that two-fifth of the farmers (40.83 per cent) were utilising services of AGRISNET for information regarding quality inputs followed by 37.50 per cent for getting information on government schemes related to agriculture and allied. 28.33 per cent for crop protection, 26.66 per cent for market prices and 26.66 per cent for weather information. From this study it was found that Agriculture Resources Information System Network (AGRISNET) was a popular ICT and the farmers were interested in getting information which need regular update like quality inputs, information on government schemes, crop protection practices, market prices.

**Keywords:** ICTs, information technology, utilisation pattern, Agrisnet

### Introduction

ICT in agriculture is an emerging field focusing on the enhancement of agricultural and rural development in India and to facilitate greater access to information that drive or support knowledge sharing. The advancements in ICT can be utilized for providing accurate, timely, relevant information and services to the farmers, there by facilitating an environment for more remunerative agriculture. Given the development scenario in Indian Agriculture, ICT movement is still evolving. However, in agriculture, despite the rapid spread and potential of ICTs to facilitate farmer's access to information, many of the initiatives face common challenges, such as issues of sustainability, affordability, ease of use, accessibility, scalability and availability of relevant and localised content in an appropriate language (Keniston, 2002; Dossani *et al.* 2005; Saravanan, 2010) [2, 1, 4].

At present, there are many ICT initiatives by government, non-government and private organisations in the field of agriculture. Agriculture Resources Information System Network (AGRISNET) is a mission mode project funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India to develop a comprehensive online knowledge portal to disseminate relevant information to farmers. The goal of the project is to follow an all-inclusive approach in terms of ensuring technological connectivity, development of system software and provision of hardware at agriculture department offices up to the block level in all states and union territories. The AGRISNET aims to provide improved services to the farming community through use of ICT. The aim is also to establish Indian agriculture online in the country. The objective of the programme is to provide IT enabled services to farmers and also for computerization of various offices in the States in agriculture & allied sectors. Funds under AGRISNET are provided to the State Governments/Union Territories on the basis of specific project proposals submitted by them. The States are given funds for software development, hardware (including system software) and other genuine ICT needs of the State upto district level. Requirements of hardware/software below district level are considered as per justification given by the States in their proposal. To overcome these challenges, mobile based ICTs are being implemented

across the country. There is a need for research to know the utilisation pattern of AGRISNET among the farmers. Therefore, the present study was undertaken with the above specific objective.

**Methodology**

The state of Telangana is purposively selected for this study which was formed on 2nd June 2014 and it is one of the potential state contributing more for the nation development. The economy of Telangana is mainly driven by agriculture. Two important rivers of India, the Godavari and Krishna flow through the state, providing irrigation. Rice is the major food crop. Other important crops are cotton, sugar cane, mango and tobacco. There are many multi-state irrigation projects in development, including Godavari River Basin Irrigation Projects and Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, the world's highest masonry dam. Telangana government is taking various development measures including ICT project for promotion of agriculture. However being a newly formed state, Telangana needs further suggestions for effective implementation of ICT projects for developing farming community. The government of India is also introducing digitalization in all sectors. Hence it is right time to take stock of possibility of digitalization in agriculture sector too. Even though for the past two decades, the government is implementing many ICT initiatives for dissemination of agriculture information, only limited studies are available about the extent of use of ICT projects in promotion of agriculture.

The present study was undertaken in Nagarkurnool district of Southern Telangana region which was purposively selected as it has more ICT projects operating in the region. Agriculture Resources Information System Network (AGRISNET) was operational in the study area. The other institutions like one college of Agriculture, Palem and one Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Palem and one Regional Agricultural Research Station also available in Nagarkurnool district and who are providing agro-technological information through ICT services for the benefit of farming community. There are three revenue divisions available in Nagarkurnool district. They are Nagarkurnool, Kalwakurthy and Achampet. Nagarkurnool revenue division was purposively selected for this study since Kisan Call Centre was in operation in this division. There are 21 mandals available in Nagarkurnool revenue division of which four mandals viz., Thadur, Bijinepally, Thimmajipeta and Nagarkurnool were purposively selected for this study.

Since all these four mandals are very closer to the district head quarters and getting benefit of ICTs from long period and they are also very adjacent to college of Agriculture, Krishi Vigyan Kendra and Regional Agricultural Research station and very well exposed to ICT projects by these institutions. Collection of data and getting suggestions from the respondents will be of more appropriate for developing strategies. There are totally 88 villages available in all the four mandals of which ten villages viz., Kummera, Lingasanapally, Vattam, Nandivadennam, Bijinepally, Ippalapally, Gummukonda, Palem, Malkapur and Gagallapalli were selected by random sampling method for study. From the selected ten villages, the list of farmers enrolled under ICT projects was obtained. A total of 1207 farmers were enrolled in these selected villages. Since the population size of all the selected villages was almost equal and in order to have a representative sample, 12 respondents were selected randomly from each village that constituted 120 respondents for the study. "Ex-post facto design" was employed for the

study as the ICT project had already started working in the area. A detailed pre-tested schedule was prepared to know the extent of utilisation, utilisation pattern of services provided by the Agriculture Resources Information System Network (AGRISNET) project. The appropriate responses were collected from the respondents through personal interview. The respondents were interviewed personally by a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The data collected were coded, tabulated and analyzed using suitable statistical tools and the results were described in this paper.

**Results and Discussion**

**Extent of utilization**

The data in Table 1 indicated that nearly 46.67 per cent of the farmers were utilising Agrisnet services with 7.50 per cent were using weekly once, 15.83 per cent using monthly once and 23.33 per cent were using it whenever needed. The moderate utilisation frequency is because of need of farmers for updated market prices in nearby market yards but less knowledge of services were provided.

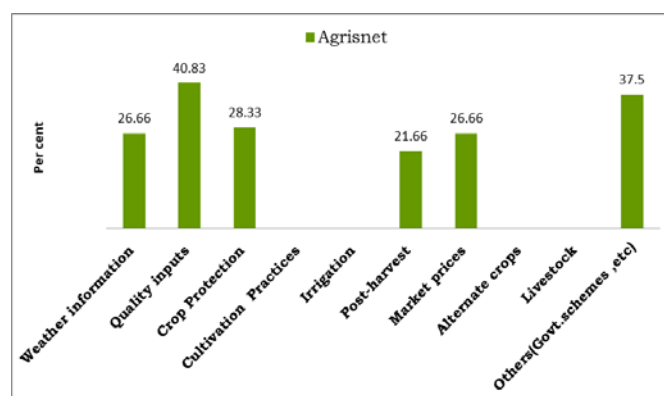
**Table 1:** Extent of utilisation of AGRISNET (n-120)

S. no.	Extent of Utilisation	Frequency	Per cent
1	Daily once	0	0.00
2	Weekly once	9	07.50
3	Monthly once	19	15.83
4	Whenever needed	28	23.33
5	Never	64	53.33
	Total	120	100.00

These findings were in line with research findings of Subhas singh *et al.* (2010) [5], who noticed the usage of ICTs, were moderate to low in rural areas.

**Utilisation pattern of ICT projects of specific information**

The data in Fig 1 indicated that two-fifth of the farmers (40.83 per cent) were utilising services of Agrisnet for information regarding quality inputs followed by 37.50 per cent for getting information on government schemes related to agriculture and allied. 28.33 per cent for crop protection, 26.66 per cent for market prices and 26.66 per cent for weather information. Whereas 21.66 per cent were utilizing Agrisnet for post-harvest practices information. The reasons for this pattern may be because farmers were interested in getting information which need regular update like quality inputs, information on government schemes, crop protection practices, market prices.



**Fig 1:** Type of information utilized

The reasons for this pattern may be because the potential applications under the project are monitoring of schemes,

crop production, productivity, yield data, weather watch (early warning) system, inputs (Fertilizer, Seed, Pesticides) availability, agriculture credit related information, horticulture details, extension services and watershed management with the help of uses state-of-the-art broadband satellite technology to establish the network within the country. These findings are in line with research findings of Meena *et al.* (2011) [3], who reported that most of the farmers expect information on high yielding varieties, plant protection practices and market information.

### Conclusion

Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs) have a wide scope in providing information services to the farmers for the proper decision making regarding profitable farm businesses, given the low extension personnel to farmers ratio in India. There are many ICT based initiatives which are trying to provide farm information, but among these very few projects are popular and effective among farmers. In this study it was found that Agriculture Resources Information System Network (AGRISNET) was a popular ICT and the farmers were interested in getting information which need regular update like quality inputs, information on government schemes, crop protection practices, market prices through reliable delivery of information to the grass root level.

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