

Impact of mobile phone messages on retention of information and trickle down of castor production technology: An opinion study

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Access of information and improved communication is crucial requirement for sustainable agricultural development. The information and communication technology is being revolutionized the agricultural systems across the globe, but in India it is of recent one and gaining fast momentum. Among the communication tools, the mobile based technology is gaining lot of importance in disseminating the agricultural technologies. India is In second place use of mobile phone after China.In this aspect DOR has also tried on pilot basis to communicate technical information through ways2 (open access) to the selected castor growers mobiles for one year during 2009-10(trial & error basis).Further assessed the impact on the opinion related to various aspects of castor production technologies who have received messages from time to time on their mobiles.

A total of thirty farmers from the four villages in Amangal and Gadwal Mandals of Mahabubnagar were selected randomly for assessing the opinion of castor growers on usefulness of mobile phones in ascertaining the technical information, trickle down of castor production technology and constraints and suggestions as perceived by the growers.

Personal characteristics of growers are very important, which indicate various aspects of individual farmers and they play important role. In this study personal characteristics indicate that majority (60%) of the castor growers were belonged to middle aged(35-55 years) with middle school of education, possessed more than 20 years of experience in farming, agriculture was main source of income and large majority (75%) belonged to nuclear family. Further, the results showed that irrespective of land possessed, caste and education only 75% of them possessed mobile phones.

The castor growers have opinion that mobile phones are useful in getting information on various aspects as and when need arises viz., contacting friends, relatives, traders, agricultural scientists, Departmental officials besides marketing information which is essential for sale produce at right time. Majority (55%) of growers indicated that they were contacting for information on castor production technology. Further, 65% of them opinioned that seeking agricultural information through mobile phones was immediately with cheap, easy and also anytime one can contact and get agricultural information from the Departmental Officials and Scientists during various stages castor crop .Further76% of growers opinioned that one can get technical advices stage by stage from researchers, AOs, AEOs and on availability of inputs at various places besides market rates.

Perceived Constraints indicated that 80% of the castor growers opinioned about poor flow of information from the farmers who belonged to upper layer to lower layer and those who were not possessed mobile phones. In rural areas getting signal was the constrain as faced by more than sixty percent of castor growers. The retention of information by the growers was also

assessed and results indicate that only forty percent of them not remembered the information and many a times not receiving the messages due to technical problems.

Suggestions as perceived by the castor growers: indicated that the growers opinioned the messages should in local language, one an easily understand, rather in English, they also suggested that adopt a village for three years and provide them information on various aspects crops grown in the village. One of the suggestions was ten days interval between messages and another important suggestion was interaction meeting between farmers for knowledge assessment. Some of them also suggested both written and voice messages simultaneously so as to help in understanding messages timely adoption. Providing the growers a separate note books to the mobile users for noting the messages time to time would be beneficial.