



Farmers Perception Towards Using ICT Tools in Plant Disease Management

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ABSTRACT

The research was conducted to identify the perceptions of farmers towards using ICT tools in plant disease, determine and describe the selected characteristics of the farmers, and explore the challenges in using ICT tools. Data were collected from 48 farmers of Shajahanpur Upazila under Bogura district from a population of 240 farmers. Data were collected directly from the farmers using questionnaire. Data were collected by the researchers themselves along with research investigators using a structured interview schedule through face-to-face contact. Collection of data was started on 15 July 2019 and completed on 14 August 2019. Descriptive statistical measures such as frequency, range, mean, standard deviation and rank order was used wherever necessary in describing the variables. Both Microsoft Excel and SPSS programs were used to analyze the data. Farmer's perception on plant disease management index (FPPDMI) ranged from 314 to 370 against the possible range 100 to 500. The rank order of each of the statement was made on the basis of FPPDMI value. The highest proportion of the farmers had showed positive perception on 'Digital plant clinic need to be disseminated all over Bangladesh' followed by 'Mobile can be a useful source of agricultural information', 'Plant disease management is becoming easier using digital communication regarding prescription' and so on. On the contrary, regarding asking them about TV broadcast programs provide wrong agricultural information they strongly disagreed about this matter. The highest proportion (52.9 percent) of the farmers had neutral opinion, while 24.0 percent had positive and 23.1 percent had negative opinion regarding usage of ICT tools in plant disease management. 'Lack of proper internet facility in rural areas' (47.92 percent) emerged as the most important problem expressed by the farmers. The foremost suggestion cited by the farmers (50.0 percent) was 'organizing more training programs for the farmers. This innovative ICT based rural plant clinic system is developed to serve the actual needs of the farmers which they cannot get from their surroundings. This small scale pilot already made a positive impression within the farmers as well as the rest of the community. Thus, it is assumed that disseminating DRPC towards a wider farmer community can bring a positive impact on their lives and livelihoods and the broader agriculture sector of Bangladesh as well.