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Attitude of farmers towards *i-khedut* portal regarding agricultural development in Saurashtra region

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has emerged as an important tool for accelerating agricultural development by facilitating timely dissemination of information and improving farmers' access to agricultural services. In this context, the Government of Gujarat launched the *i-khedut* portal to provide farmers with information on agricultural schemes, subsidies, weather forecasts, market prices, crop insurance and modern farming technologies. The present study entitled "Attitude of Farmers towards *i-khedut* Portal Regarding Agricultural Development in Saurashtra Region" was undertaken to assess the attitude of farmers towards the portal and identify the factors influencing their attitude. An ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The investigation was conducted in Junagadh and Rajkot districts of the Saurashtra region of Gujarat. A total of 180 farmers were selected through a multistage random sampling technique. Data were collected using a pre-tested structured interview schedule and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that a majority (43.33 per cent) of the farmers possessed a favourable attitude towards the *i-khedut* portal, while 18.89 per cent exhibited a highly favourable attitude. The multiple regression analysis indicated that the selected independent variables jointly explained 90.90 per cent of the variation in farmers' attitude ($R^2 = 0.909$). Extension contact, utility of ICT tools, achievement motivation, innovativeness and social participation showed a positive and significant influence, whereas age and scientific orientation exhibited a negative and significant influence on attitude. The study concludes that the *i-khedut* portal has substantial potential to enhance agricultural development through improved access to information and services. Strengthening extension support, digital literacy and awareness programmes may further enhance farmers' favourable attitude and effective utilization of the portal.

Keywords: *i-khedut* portal, ICT in agriculture, farmer attitude, digital extension, Saurashtra region.

Introduction

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy and plays a vital role in ensuring food security, employment generation and rural development. According to the 2011 Census, about 68.84 per cent of India's population resides in rural areas, where agriculture and allied activities serve as the primary source of livelihood. In Gujarat, the agricultural sector has experienced significant growth through various innovative initiatives such as Krishi Mahotsav, Soil Health Cards and the adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in agricultural extension services. Recognizing the importance of digital transformation in agriculture, the Government of Gujarat launched the *i-khedut* portal in 2014 to provide farmers with easy access to government schemes, subsidies, market prices, weather forecasts, modern agricultural technologies and other agricultural support services (Anon., 2025).

The rapid expansion of internet connectivity and smartphone usage in rural India has created new

opportunities for delivering agricultural information efficiently. ICT-based platforms such as the *i-khedut* portal have emerged as effective tools for enhancing transparency, reducing information gaps and improving farmers' access to agricultural services. The portal facilitates online registration for government schemes, crop insurance, agricultural credit and information related to agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries and other allied sectors. However, the success of such digital initiatives largely depends on farmers' attitudes and willingness to utilize them. Therefore, understanding the attitude of farmers towards the *i-khedut* portal is essential for evaluating its effectiveness and strengthening its role in promoting agricultural development in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat (Anon., 2025).

Objective

- To study the attitude of farmers towards *i-khedut* portal.

Methodology

The present study entitled “Attitude of Farmers towards *i-khedut* Portal Regarding Agricultural Development in Saurashtra Region” was conducted in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat state. An ex-post facto research design was adopted for the investigation. The design was considered appropriate for studying the existing attitudes of farmers towards the *i-khedut* portal and examining the factors associated with their attitudes.

The study was carried out in Junagadh and Rajkot districts of Saurashtra region. These districts were purposively selected due to their accessibility and the widespread use of the *i-khedut* portal among farmers. A multistage sampling technique was employed for selecting the respondents. In the first stage, two districts namely Junagadh and Rajkot were selected. In the second stage, three talukas from each district were selected randomly, making a total of six talukas. Subsequently, two villages were selected randomly from each taluka, resulting in a total of twelve villages. Finally, fifteen farmers from each selected village were chosen through simple random sampling. Thus, the total sample size comprised 180 farmers.

Data were collected through a pre-tested structured interview schedule. The schedule was designed to gather information regarding personal, socio-economic, communicational and psychological characteristics of the respondents along with their attitude towards the *i-khedut* portal. The independent variables included age, education, farming experience, land holding, herd size, annual income, social participation, sources of information, extension contact, utility of ICT tools, scientific orientation, achievement motivation, risk orientation and

innovativeness. The dependent variable was the attitude of farmers towards the *i-khedut* portal regarding agricultural development.

The attitude of farmers was measured using a standardized attitude scale developed for assessing perceptions towards ICT-based agricultural services with suitable modifications to fit the objectives of the study. Responses were obtained on a Likert-type continuum and scores were calculated to determine the overall attitude level of the respondents.

The collected data were classified, tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the characteristics of the respondents. Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to determine the relationship between selected independent variables and farmers' attitudes towards the *i-khedut* portal. Constraints faced by farmers and their suggestions for improving the portal were analyzed through frequency and percentage distribution and ranked according to their importance.

The findings generated from the study provide valuable insights into the acceptance and effectiveness of the *i-khedut* portal and its role in promoting agricultural development in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat.

Results and Discussion

Attitude of farmers towards *i-khedut* portal

Attitude of a person is the degree of his positive or negative feelings associated with any object or thing and thus it plays an important role in determining his behaviour. Attitude of the farmers towards *i-khedut* portal under investigation is given in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the farmers according to their level of attitude (n=180)

Sr. No.	Attitude of farmers towards <i>i-khedut</i> portal	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly unfavourable attitude (14.00 to 25.20 score)	02	01.11
2.	Unfavourable attitude (25.20 to 36.40 scores)	08	04.45
3.	Neutral attitude (36.40 to 47.60 scores)	58	32.22
4.	Favourable attitude (47.60 to 58.80 scores)	78	43.33
5.	Highly favourable attitude (58.80 to 70.00 score)	34	18.89
Total		180	100.00

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that a considerable proportion (43.33 per cent) of the farmers had favourable attitude towards the *i-khedut* portal (47.60 to 58.80 scores). This was followed by 32.22 per cent of the farmers who exhibited neutral attitude (36.40 to 47.60 scores). Further, 18.89 per cent of the farmers were found to have highly favourable attitude (58.80 to 70.00 scores), whereas 04.45 per cent of the farmers had unfavourable attitude (25.20 to 36.40 scores). Only a very small proportion (01.11 per cent) of the farmers were observed under strongly unfavourable attitude category (14.00 to 25.20 scores).

Therefore, the findings indicate that a majority (43.33 per cent) of the farmers held a favourable attitude towards the *i-khedut* portal. This positive outlook is a direct result of the platform's practical value in the daily lives of cultivators in the Saurashtra region. The portal provides a convenient and transparent mechanism to access crucial agricultural schemes and financial subsidies.

By simplifying application procedures and eliminating middlemen, the platform significantly reduces the financial burden on farmers. Consequently, these tangible economic benefits, combined with the ease of online services,

naturally foster a strong, supportive viewpoint among the users.

These observations are closely supported by the recent findings of Asari *et al.* (2021)^[3], Kushwaha (2023), Ajay (2024)^[1] and Dawane *et al.* (2025)^[4].

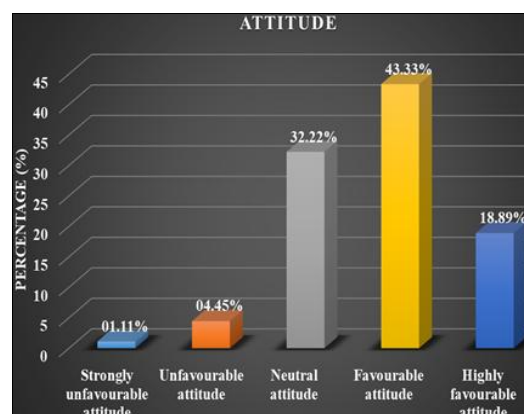


Fig 1: Distribution of the farmers according to their level of attitude

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis of Factors Influencing Farmers' Attitude towards *i-khedut* Portal Regarding Agricultural Development

Variable	Regression Coefficient (b)	t-value	P-value
Age	-2.345	-3.454*	0.001
Education	0.051	0.266	0.790
Farming Experience	-0.006	-0.099	0.921
Land Holding	-0.031	-0.122	0.903
Herd Size	-0.030	-0.198	0.843
Annual Income	0.385	1.615	0.108
Social Participation	0.778	2.460*	0.015
Source of Information	0.047	1.465	0.145
Extension Contact	0.621	10.744**	0.000
Utility of ICT Tools	0.243	4.564**	0.000
Scientific Orientation	-0.078	-3.405*	0.001
Achievement Motivation	0.441	6.236**	0.000
Risk Orientation	0.056	1.959	0.052
Innovativeness	1.242	3.822**	0.000
R ²	: 0.909		
Adjusted R ²	: 0.901		
F-value	: 117.10		
Probability (F)	: < 0.01		

The data presented in Table 2 reveal that the contribution of selected independent variables towards explaining the variation in farmers' attitude towards the *i-khedut* portal regarding agricultural development. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.909$) indicated that all the fourteen independent variables included in the model jointly explained 90.90 per cent of the variation in the attitude of farmers towards the *i-khedut* portal. Further, the obtained F-value (117.10) was found to be significant, indicating the goodness of fit of the regression model.

Among the selected variables, extension contact ($b = 0.621$, $t = 10.744^{**}$), utility of ICT tools ($b = 0.243$, $t = 4.564^{**}$), achievement motivation ($b = 0.441$, $t = 6.236^{**}$), innovativeness ($b = 1.242$, $t = 3.822^{**}$) and social participation ($b = 0.778$, $t = 2.460^*$) exerted a positive and significant influence on farmers' attitude towards the *i-khedut* portal. This implies that an increase in these variables would lead to a corresponding increase in the favourable attitude of farmers towards the portal.

On the other hand, age ($b = -2.345$, $t = -3.454^{**}$) and scientific orientation ($b = -0.078$, $t = -3.405^{**}$) showed a negative and significant influence on attitude. The negative regression coefficient indicated that an increase in these variables tended to decrease the favourable attitude towards the *i-khedut* portal.

The variables namely education, farming experience, land holding, herd size, annual income, source of information and risk orientation were found to be non-significant, indicating that they did not contribute significantly towards explaining the variation in farmers' attitude towards the *i-khedut* portal under the present study.

Thus, it can be concluded that extension contact, utility of ICT tools, achievement motivation, innovativeness, social participation, age and scientific orientation were the major determinants influencing farmers' attitude towards the *i-khedut* portal regarding agricultural development.

These findings are in line with the observations of Manjuprakash and Bellagi (2024) ^[5], Mukherjee *et al.* (2024) ^[6], Nagar *et al.* (2024) ^[7] and Shehrawat *et al.* (2024)

^[8], who emphasized the importance of ICT exposure, extension support and innovative behaviour in shaping farmers' acceptance of digital agricultural technologies.

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