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Social media in agricultural extension services: Farmers and extension agents perspective

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to analyse the attitude, perceived benefits and constraints faced by the farmers and extension agents in utilizing social media. Farmers and extension agents have shown high positive attitude towards statement 'social media improves youth attitude towards agriculture'. The overall attitude of the farmers and extension agents in utilizing social media falls under medium level positive attitude and perceived benefits of utilizing social media in agriculture by farmers and Extension agents was agro chemicals information and major constraints when accessing agricultural information from social media was irrelevant posts and unauthorised information.

Keywords: Social media, Agricultural extension, Farmers' perception, Extension agents, Attitude, Perceived benefits

1. Introduction

The traditional agricultural extension system has primarily relied on personal interactions between extension officers and farmers. Knowledge dissemination was achieved through face-to-face meetings, field visits, and participatory approaches such as the farmer-to-farmer method, group discussions, Farmer Field Schools (FFS), demonstrations, and field days. These methods have been instrumental in transferring agricultural technologies and innovations at the grassroots level. However, with the rapid advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs), especially the widespread use of the internet and mobile connectivity, the extension landscape has undergone a significant transformation. These platforms enable instant communication, faster dissemination of advisories, and real-time feedback from farmers, making extension services more dynamic and responsive. (Chowdary *et al.*, 2024) ^[5]

This interactivity not only enhances knowledge sharing but also builds trust and engagement between farmers and extension personnel (Balaji. *et al.* 2024) ^[3]. Furthermore, social media groups and online communities have emerged as virtual learning platforms where farmers exchange innovative practices, market information, and success stories. This has expanded the reach of extension services beyond geographical boundaries, enabling cost-effective and continuous learning. In this view, it is essential to assess the role and effectiveness of social media in delivering agricultural and allied extension services, particularly in bridging the information gap, improving decision-making, and promoting the adoption of latest technologies among

farming communities.

2. Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in operational area of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Ghantasala Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh. The objectives of the study are attitude of the farmers and extension agents towards social media, perceived benefits of utilizing media in agriculture by farmers and extension agents and constraints faced by farmers and Extension agents while utilizing social media. In KVK operational area total 9 adopted villages were selected for the investigation and from each village ten respondents were selected. Descriptive survey research design was used and ninety sample size was selected for the study by proportionate random sampling method. To measure the attitude and perceived benefits of the farmers and extension agents using most relevant, relevant and irrelevant three-point continuum. Constraints being faced by farmers and extension agents were collected through interview schedule. Mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were the statistical tools used for analyzing the data.

3. Results and discussions

3.1 Attitude of farmers and extension agents using Social media for information dissemination

Table 1 represents the attitude of farmers and extension agents using social media for information dissemination, along with their order of importance ranked in percentage. The findings revealed that both farmers and extension

agents showed a highly positive attitude towards the statement “social media improves youth attitude towards agriculture” (56.67%), which was ranked first in order of importance. (48.89%), reflecting the respondents’ recognition of social media as a reliable source for accessing timely agricultural information. This was followed by “Communication and knowledge transfer is easy through social media” (40.00%), suggesting that users find these platforms convenient for exchanging knowledge and experiences. Further, “Social media has impacted

communication system and other fields” (36.67%) and “Social media technology has helped manage change” (27.78%) were also positively perceived, indicating that the technology has enhanced communication networks and facilitated adaptability among users. On the contrary, a smaller percentage of respondents agreed with the statements “Social media is capable of causing communication divide” (24.44%), “I do not have ICT skill to use social media” (13.33%), and “Social media is gender sensitive” (11.11%).

Table 1: Attitude of farmers and extension agents using Social media for information dissemination

S. No.	Item	Most Relevant		Relevant		Irrelevant		Rank
		F	%	F	%	F	%	
1.	Social media improves youth attitude towards agriculture	51	56.67	19	21.11	20	22.22	I
2.	Getting current & up to date information is a new development through social media	44	48.89	24	26.67	22	24.44	II
3.	Communication and knowledge transfer is easy through social media	36	40	33	36.67	21	23.33	III
4.	Social media has impacted communication system and other fields	33	36.67	28	31.11	29	32.22	IV
5.	Social media technology has helped manage change	25	27.78	33	36.67	32	35.56	V
6.	Social media is capable of causing communication divide	22	24.44	48	53.33	20	22.22	VI
7.	I do not have ICT skill to use social media	12	13.33	35	38.89	43	47.78	VII
8.	Social media is gender sensitive	10	11.11	11	12.22	69	76.67	VIII

From Table 2, it can be observed that the majority of farmers and extension agents exhibited a positive attitude (65.55%) towards using social media for agricultural information dissemination. This indicates that most respondents recognize the usefulness and practicality of social media platforms in accessing and sharing agricultural knowledge. This was followed by those with a negative attitude (17.77%), suggesting a smaller segment still hesitant or facing barriers such as lack of digital literacy or infrastructure. Meanwhile, highly positive attitude (16.66%) was recorded among respondents who were enthusiastic adopters of social media, reflecting their strong confidence and satisfaction in using these platforms for timely and relevant agricultural information.

Table 2: Overall attitude of farmers and extension agents using social media for information dissemination

S. No	Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
1	Highly positive attitude (0-4.90)	15	16.66
2	Positive attitude (4.90-12.30)	59	65.55
3	Negative attitude (12.30-15)	16	17.77
Total		90	100
Mean= 8.62, SD=3.73			

3.2 Perceived benefits of utilizing Social media in agriculture by farmers and Extension agents

Table 3 reveals the perceived benefits of utilizing social media in agriculture as reported by farmers and extension agents. The results indicate that Agrochemicals ranked first (48.89%), showing that most respondents primarily use social media to obtain information related to safe and effective use of agrochemicals. This was followed by Weather condition and environmental information (37.78%), highlighting the importance of timely updates for agricultural decision-making. Other key benefits identified include Weed control (36.67%), Government agricultural policies and plans (33.33%), Marketing of produce (33.33%), Improved crop variety (31.11%), Improved planting techniques (28.89%), and Pest and disease control (27.78%). In addition, a smaller proportion of respondents reported using social media for information on Fertilizer application (15.56%), Processing and storage (13.33%), and Credit facilities, sources, terms, and conditions (11.11%).

Table 3: Perceived benefits of utilizing social media in agriculture by farmers and Extension agents

S. No.	Information accessed	Most Relevant		Relevant		Irrelevant		Rank
		F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Agrochemicals	44	48.89	24	26.67	22	24.44	I
2	Weather condition and Environmental information	34	37.78	34	37.78	22	24.44	II
3	Weed control	33	36.67	28	31.11	29	32.22	III
4	Government agricultural policies and plans	30	33.33	31	34.44	29	32.22	IV
5	Marketing of Produce	30	33.33	28	31.11	29	32.22	V
6	Improved crop variety	28	31.11	52	57.78	10	11.11	VI
7	Improved Planting Techniques	26	28.89	54	60.00	10	11.11	VII
8	Pest and disease control	25	27.78	55	61.11	10	11.11	VIII
9	Fertilizer application	14	15.56	58	64.44	20	18.00	IX
10	Processing and storage	12	13.33	68	75.56	10	11.11	X
11	Credit facilities, source, terms & conditions	10	11.11	24	26.67	54	60.00	XI

3.3 Constraints when Accessing Agricultural Information from social media

Table 4 shows the major constraints faced by farmers and extension agents in accessing agricultural information

through social media. The most important constraint identified was Irrelevant posts (I), followed by Untimely provision of information (II) and Lack of infrastructure (III). Other issues included Difficulty in understanding and proper

utilization of information (IV), Illiteracy (V), Relative cost for access (VI), Poor network access (VII), and Lack of awareness of available information sources (VIII). These findings indicate that although social media serves as a valuable platform for agricultural information dissemination, challenges related to content relevance, accessibility, and digital literacy still limit its effective use.

Table 4: Constraints when Accessing Agricultural Information from social media

S. No	Constraints	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Irrelevant posts	81	90.00	I
2	Untimely provision of information	77	85.55	II
3	Lack of Infrastructure	72	80.00	III
4	Difficulty in understanding and proper utilization of information	69	76.66	IV
5	Illiteracy	65	72.22	V
6	Relative cost for Access	60	66.66	VI
7	Poor network access	55	61.11	VII
8	Lack of awareness of information sources available	42	46.66	VIII

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that both farmers and extension agents have a positive attitude toward using social media for agricultural information sharing. Social media serves as an effective tool for knowledge exchange, awareness creation, and decision-making support in farming. Despite challenges like irrelevant posts, poor infrastructure, and low digital skills, it plays a vital role in complementing traditional extension methods. Strengthening digital literacy, infrastructure, and access to reliable content will further enhance its effectiveness in sustainable agricultural development.

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