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UTILIZATION PATTERN OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY THE FARMERS OF GUNTUR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The utilization pattern of social media by the farmers was studied in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh in India. Three mandals were purposively selected based on highest number of farmers using social media. A total of 90 farmers were purposively selected for the study. The results showed that most of farmers use WhatsApp followed by YouTube and Facebook. Regarding purpose of utilization, majority of farmers used social media for market information and price trends followed by weather information, plant protection measures, weed management, fertilizer management, agri inputs availability, irrigation management, seed treatment and farm mechanization *etc.* for increasing the productivity and profitability in agriculture.

KEYWORDS: Social media, Utilization pattern, Agricultural information, farmers.

INTRODUCTION

The greatest challenge of today is the improvement in the quality of human life particularly of the rural people through eradication of poverty, hunger and achieving overall rural balance. Global attention directed at agriculture due to emerging challenges of food security in recent years, resulting partly negligence of dissemination of appropriate technology. Increasing production is a major challenge facing present agriculture. Traditionally, agricultural information was mainly provided by agriculture extension system of state agricultural universities, state departments of agriculture and allied sectors, extension service providers from NGOs and input dealers and mass media sources such as newspapers, radio, television and magazines but in recent years, technology awareness, computer literacy speed of smartphones and internet have changed the way farmers communicate and get agriculture related information. Now farmers are able to get all sorts of information through social media. Social media gives opportunities to farmers for co-creating content and also promotes co-learning among farmers. The present study aims to evaluate the utilization pattern of social media platforms by the respondents in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In the present study Ex-post research design was followed. Ex-post facto research is a systematic empirical enquiry in which the scientists do not have control of influencing independent variables, because manifestation has already occurred.

The Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh state was chosen as the locale of the study since the researcher belongs to the same state and familiar with the local language and culture. From the Guntur district, three mandals were purposively selected based on the highest number of respondents utilizing social media (Source: KVK, DAATTC in Guntur). From each of the selected mandals, two villages were selected by following lottery method of simple random sampling procedure. The sample constitute a total of six villages. From, each of the selected villages, fifteen farmers were selected by following purposive sampling procedure. The sample constitute a total of 90 respondents.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Component wise utilization pattern of farmers towards social media

I. Awareness on social media

The Table 1 depicted that all the respondents (100.00%) were having awareness on WhatsApp followed by (91.11%) of the respondents were having awareness on YouTube and (28.89%) of the respondents were having awareness on Facebook.

II. Accessibility on social media

The Table 1 depicted that all the respondents (100.00%) were having accessibility on WhatsApp followed by (91.11%) were having accessibility of the respondents on YouTube and only (28.89%) of the respondents were having accessibility on Facebook.

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III. Possession of knowledge on social media

The Table 1 depicted that majority of the respondents (80.00%) were having high knowledge on WhatsApp and remaining (20.00%) were having medium level of knowledge on WhatsApp.

Majority (71.11%) of the respondents were having low level of knowledge on Facebook followed by (22.22%) of the respondents were having medium level of knowledge on Facebook and only (06.67%) of the respondents were having high knowledge on Facebook. This was due to lack of awareness on Facebook and also the respondents were not shown interest towards the use of Facebook.

Majority (62.22%) of the respondents were having medium level of knowledge on YouTube, (28.89%) of the respondents were having high level of knowledge on YouTube and (08.89%) of the respondents were having low level of knowledge on YouTube.

IV. Frequency of use

The Table 1 depicted that the extent or frequency of use of social media by the individual respondents for agricultural practices. The results showed that extent of utilization of social media regularly in priority wise were; WhatsApp 96.67 per cent followed by YouTube (30.00%) and Facebook (03.33%).

The results showed that social media platforms used weekly by respondents in the order of priority wise were YouTube 44.44 per cent followed by Facebook (07.78%) and WhatsApp (03.33%).

The results showed that social media platforms used occasionally by respondents in the order of priority wise were Facebook 17.78 per cent followed by YouTube (16.67%) followed by WhatsApp (05.56%).

Further, the data revealed that, some of the respondents were never used the social media platforms like Facebook 71.11 per cent followed by YouTube (08.89%). This may due to lack of awareness and knowledge to access the social media platforms.

V. Years of using social media

The Table 1 depicted that the years of using social media by the individual respondents for agricultural practices. The results showed that less than one year of using social media in the order; YouTube 30.00 per cent followed by Facebook (08.89%) and WhatsApp (03.33%).

The results showed that 1-2 years of using social media platforms by the respondents in the order; WhatsApp 43.34 per cent followed by YouTube (21.11%) and Facebook (15.56%).

The results showed that 2-3 years of using social media platforms by the respondents in the order; WhatsApp 41.11 per cent followed by YouTube (36.67%) and Facebook (04.44%).

The results showed that 3-5 years of using social media platforms by the respondents in the order; WhatsApp 08.89 per cent followed by YouTube (03.33%) and Facebook (00.00%).

The results showed that only WhatsApp was used by the respondents since more than 5 years. This is because the respondents were recently used the social media platforms. In beginning stage, the respondents were unaware about the use of Facebook and YouTube.

Further, the data revealed that, some of the respondents were never used the social media platforms like Facebook 71.11 per cent followed by YouTube (08.89%). This may due to lack of knowledge and difficulty to understand the how to use of social media platforms by the respondents.

VI. Membership in agricultural groups

The Table 1 depicted that the membership of the individual respondents in agricultural groups. The results showed that the respondents belongs to the membership in one group were, WhatsApp 72.22 per cent followed by YouTube (16.67%) and Facebook (00.00%).

The results showed that the respondents belongs to the membership in more than one group were, WhatsApp (27.78%), Facebook (00.00%) and YouTube (00.00%).

The results showed that the respondents were not belongs to the membership in any group were, Facebook 100.00 per cent followed by YouTube (83.33%) and WhatsApp (00.00%). These respondents were not belongs to any group but they just shown the suggested videos and images for getting the information on agriculture.

The data presentation in Table 1 depicted that the usage of social media by respondents for information on different areas. Figures in the table revealed that majority of farmers used social media for market information and price trends (2.98), weather forecasting (2.97), plant protection measures (2.90), weed management (2.82), fertilizer management (2.73), agri inputs availability (2.58), irrigation management (2.15), seed treatment (2.03), farm mechanization (2.02), selection of variety (1.81), crop insurance (1.74), seed production (1.38), post harvest technology (1.35), land preparation (1.24),

Table 1. Component Wise utilization pattern of respondents towards social media

I. Distribution of farmers according to the awareness on social media

S. No.	Social media	WhatsApp		Facebook		YouTube	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
A	Yes	90	100	26	28.89	82	91.11
B	No	0	0	64	71.11	8	08.89

II. Distribution of farmers according to the accessibility on social media

S. No.	Social media	WhatsApp		Facebook		YouTube	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
A	Yes	90	100	26	28.89	82	91.11
B	No	0	0	64	71.11	8	08.89

III. Distribution of farmers according to the possession of knowledge on social media

S. No.	Social media	WhatsApp		Facebook		YouTube	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
A	High	72	80.00	6	06.67	26	28.89
B	Medium	18	20.00	20	22.22	56	62.22
C	Low	0	00.00	64	71.11	8	08.89

IV. Distribution of farmers according to the frequency of use

S. No.	No.of days	WhatsApp		Facebook		YouTube	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
A	Regular	82	91.11	3	03.33	27	30.00
B	Once in a week	3	03.33	7	07.78	40	44.44
C	Occasionally	5	05.56	16	17.78	15	16.67
D	Never	0	00.00	64	71.11	8	08.89

V. Distribution of farmers according to the years of using social media

S. No.	Years using social media	WhatsApp		Facebook		YouTube	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
A	Less than 1 year	3	03.33	8	08.89	27	30.00
B	1-2 years	39	43.34	14	15.56	19	21.11
C	2-3 years	37	41.11	4	04.44	33	36.67
D	3-5 years	8	08.89	0	00.00	3	03.33
E	More than 5 years	3	03.33	0	00.00	0	00.00
F	Do not use	0	00.00	64	71.11	8	08.89

VI. According to the membership in Agricultural groups

S. No.	Category	WhatsApp		Facebook		YouTube	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
A	Not a member in a group	0	00.00	90	100.00	75	83.33
B	Member in group	65	72.22	0	00.00	15	16.67
C	Member in more than one group	25	27.78	0	00.00	0	00.00

VII. Utilization pattern of social media for specific information

S. No.	Area of information	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Mean score	Rank
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	Land preparation	5	05.56	22	24.44	53	58.89	10	11.11	1.24	**XIV**
2	Selection of variety	3	03.33	69	76.67	16	17.78	2	02.22	1.81	**X**
3	Seed treatment	15	16.67	66	73.33	6	06.67	3	03.33	2.03	**VIII**
4	Fertilizer management	70	77.78	16	17.78	4	04.44	0	00.00	2.73	**V**
5	Irrigation management	28	31.11	52	57.78	6	06.67	4	04.44	2.15	**VII**
6	Weed management	79	87.78	7	07.78	3	03.33	1	01.11	2.82	**IV**
7	Plant protection measures	83	92.22	5	05.56	2	02.22	0	00.00	2.90	**III**
8	Farm mechanization	35	38.89	32	35.56	13	14.44	10	11.11	2.02	**IX**
9	Seed production	7	07.78	33	36.67	38	42.22	12	13.33	1.38	**XII**
10	Post harvest technology	10	11.11	18	20.00	56	62.22	6	06.67	1.35	**XIII**
11	Weather forecasting	88	97.78	2	02.22	0	00.00	0	00.00	2.97	**II**
12	Agri. inputs availability	56	62.22	22	24.44	7	07.78	5	05.56	2.58	**VI**
13	Market information and price trends	89	98.89	1	01.11	0	00.00	0	00.00	2.98	**I**
14	Crop insurance	5	05.56	59	65.56	24	26.66	2	02.22	1.74	**XI**
15	Subsidies on agri.inputs	10	11.11	4	04.44	2	02.22	74	82.23	0.44	**XVI**
16	Government schemes and programmes	0	00.00	6	06.67	13	14.44	71	78.89	0.27	**XVII**
17	Livestock production and management	6	06.67	12	13.33	55	61.11	17	18.89	1.07	**XV**

livestock production and management (1.07), subsidies on agri inputs (0.44) and government schemes and programmes (0.27), were ranked according to the mean score respectively.

Overall Utilization Pattern of social media by the Farmers

Data regarding utilization pattern of farmers towards use of social media is presented in Table 2 the data clearly points out that majority 65.56 per cent of farmers had medium utilization pattern towards social media followed by low utilization pattern (18.89%) and high (15.55%) utilization pattern towards social media.

The aforementioned data can be used to infer that most farmers had a moderate use pattern of respondents toward social media in terms of disseminating information about agriculture. This is because frequent use of social media was observed during the initial period of establishment and some had diminished overtime due to the static nature of information and the farmers' lack of substantial time for social media use. Farmers' use of social media can be improved if the material is current and based on their needs.

In addition, many farmers stated that they would prefer save time by getting information on their own mobile devices than through extension workers. The

Table 2. Overall utilization pattern of farmers towards social media

S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low utilization pattern	17	18.89
2	Medium utilization pattern	59	65.56
3	High utilization pattern	14	15.55
Mean: 64.32			**S.D: 6.30**

results was in accordance with Swaroop (2016) and Vivek (2017).

The study clearly indicated that majority of farmers were using WhatsApp and YouTube. The use of remaining social media platform *viz.,* Facebook should be increased by increasing awareness among the farmers and establishing training centres for how to use the social media platforms. Majority of farmers had medium utilization pattern due to multiple reasons and the use of social media can be improved among farmers to providing information is updated and need based. The results also concluded that many farmers expressed that information can be obtained easily through their own mobiles for simple information, rather than spending time for the extension workers.

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