

A STUDY ON ENHANCING RURAL TELECOM NETWORK THROUGH BRIDGING THE INFORMATION GAP FACED BY THE FARMERS.

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Abstract

Global attention that came back to agriculture which is due to the price which also hike in recent years, which is also resulting partly from where it is long-standing negligence which is made on diffusion of the appropriate technology that has a stagnated production in the face of a rising population. Increasing number of production is a major challenge which is facing present agriculture. Small-holder farmers who may dominate the landscape of the developing world which also needs to improve the farming and it is carried through proper acquiring and adequate knowledge and well acquainted information. Information and Communication Technology services may also provide few critical accesses to the knowledge, information, and technology that even farmers require to improve the productivity and thus it also improves the quality of their lives and their livelihoods.

Keyword: Agriculture, Technology, Information and Communication Technology Service.

Introduction

ICT acts as an accelerating force which is behind the productivity of Indian agricultural markets. Knowledge is termed as a useful resource and they are backed by adequate technological infrastructure and with appropriate strategies, it can also become a transformational factor for overall development of the agricultural markets. According to Jones (1997), "agricultural extension is defined as an essential mechanism for the delivery of knowledge and advice as an input for the modern farming. The need is of a shift the focus from delivery of technology to delivery of knowledge and information".

This is possible with the use of Information and communication technologies which can make agricultural extension a more diversified, knowledge driven system for meeting on demand of farmers' information needs. ICT can continuously introduce newer sets of information services to agricultural markets where even the farmers can have a better control. Access to such new information sources is defined as a crucial requirement for the sustainable development of the farming systems.

Importance of ICTs application

- Provide universal information services. The information communication revolution had made whole universe into a global village. The result of which and benefit of which can be reaped by farmers. For example, a farmer in a remote village of India can connect to a farmer in a remote village of Germany, thanks to technology that has made this possible. This paves way for universalization of knowledge.
- Deliver e-Governance (leading to transparency and better accountability). Of late, all agricultural data and information are digitized. This provides free access to these e-resources from anywhere and at any point of time.
- Improved information access and the delivery of services to the farming community.

- Improved productivity and the profitability of farmers through better advisory systems.
- Efficient and Increased utilization of information by stakeholders for their decision making.

Review of literature

Kumar, Praduman, et.al (2008) in the article entitled “Agricultural growth accounting and total factor productivity in south Asia”, observed that productivity growth in agriculture is essential for the development of the sector. Author has been reviewed with the various developments in the agricultural productivity which is related to the south Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The total factor productivity growth and its contribution in the production growth have been summarized for south Asia which is over the past three decades. Crop specific total factor productivity (TFP) growth figures that have been updated for India by using of more recent micro farm level data for 03 decades.

Authors discussed and synthesized the changes in TFP and its various sources of growth for the major crops, major crop systems, crops and the livestock sectors for the countries of south Asia. Hence that reform in marketing and macroeconomic policies are needed to encourage long term investment and technological changes in the agricultural sector.

Eamin Ali Akanda (2012) in their work entitled, “Agricultural information literacy of farmers in the northern region of Bangladesh”, made an attempt to explore the extent of agricultural information literacy of farmers in the northern region of Bangladesh. They analysed that farmer's need of information for the various purposes of agricultural activities, and use of different sources and its media for access to such information. According to author many of the famers, however, they are not well aware of the modern techniques of agriculture, and they are occasionally use of such techniques for farming. Due to some of the problems farmers are moderately satisfied in getting agricultural information, and in many of the cases their satisfaction level is very low. They concluded with providing the certain recommendations for the improvement of the information literacy of the farmers in Bangladesh.

Research Methodology

Information and Communication Technology is of utmost importance which determines the effectiveness and utilization of services and facilities to improve both farmer and nation at macro and micro level. In particularly the agricultural production of the nations and farmers cultivation source and knowledge depends on innovation technology as well as information technology.

Research Gap

From the study of available literature, it is clear that most of the studies have been conducted relating to awareness of ICT in agriculture sector. There are few studies that have been carried out to examine the impact of ICT in agriculture sector in India. Very few studies either at India/India level have focused on particular program/scheme of ICT for agriculture and ICT initiatives for agricultural extension. No studies are found which particularly focused on impact, awareness and utilization of ICT for agriculture sector in Hassan district.

Aim:

Aim of the research is to investigate in detail about bridging the information gap faced by the farmers by enhancing Rural Telecom network with specific reference to Indian villages

Objectives of Study

- To provide various strategies for the farmers to adopt Rural Telecom network in order to enhance the communication among Indian villages

Hypothesis

- Null Hypothesis: Availability of information does not bridge the information gap faced by farmers with specific reference to Indian villages
- Alternative Hypothesis: Availability of information bridges the information gap faced by farmers with specific reference to Indian villages

Limitations of the Study

- This research completely concentrates on bridging the information gap faced by the farmers by enhancing Rural Telecom network with specific reference to Indian villages
- Due to time limitation, only restricted number of respondents are participated for collecting the primary source of data

Findings

- Internet penetration by 10 percent in emerging economies correlates with an incremental GDP increase of 1-2 per cent.
- A number of studies in developing countries showed that TV was main source of agricultural information among poor and illiterate farmers; TV did not show this kind of significant role in some developed countries such as New Zealand and the USA.
- Computer wireless connections and the third generation (3G) mobile telephone networks were expected to be crucial means in improving agricultural sector in developed countries by combining a mobile phone with hand held computer to transfer a variety of information types at a higher rate.
- In developing countries, now, however, many countries, including India, Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam, have simple Short Message Services(SMS) through cellular telephones for market prices of agricultural commodities.

Conclusion

The enhanced and smooth communication among these components of the system results in the overall development of the agriculture system of the country. There is dire need for Government, NGOs, Public Private Partners and public to give more importance to ICT for agriculture extension which leads better and sustainable agricultural development.

In terms of usage of telecom network tools in agriculture it is observed that 67 percent of the respondents are not using the TELECOM NETWORK in agriculture while only one third or 33 percent of the respondents are using the TELECOM NETWORK tools in agriculture. Regarding education qualification it is observed that one fourth (25 percent) of the respondents under the study has no formal education. While nearly one third

(33 percent) of them completed their primary and higher secondary education. Less than five percent of the respondents have completed their higher education (Graduation and Post-Graduation).

With these incredible opportunities or programmes, implementation of ICT applications poses a lot of challenges in India due to lack of information tools, friendly and locally relevant digital content, rural mobile infrastructure limitations like, network and signal, electricity problem, illiteracy and large number of local languages. ICT based applications need to be integrated with ongoing agricultural extension programmes and methods. Public-private partnerships for project implementation and web to mobile, voice, image and text integrated applications need to be developed to cater to the farmer specific information and knowledge.

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