

CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN AGRICULTURAL ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

Social media, as a contemporary paradigm of digital communication, encompasses a diverse array of interactive tools that facilitate real-time information exchange, collaborative learning, and participatory engagement among individuals. In the agricultural domain, these platforms have emerged as transformative conduits for farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, capacity building, and problem-solving. Historically, mass media channels such as newspapers, television, and magazines constituted the primary means of disseminating agricultural information. However, the advent of the 21st century has redefined communication dynamics, placing unprecedented informational power directly into the hands of end-users through mobile and internet-enabled devices (Lathiya et al., 2015).

In the context of modern agriculture, farmers increasingly require access to cutting-edge technologies and timely, evidence-based information to address the multifaceted challenges stemming from technological gaps and environmental uncertainties. Social media platforms enable the exchange of agricultural innovations, experiential insights, and problem-solving strategies, which were traditionally shared through local, face-to-face interactions—often “over the farm gate.” Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter provide virtual spaces where farmers can pose queries, seek expert advice, and engage in peer-to-peer learning communities.

Empirical evidence indicates that a variety of social media channels are actively utilized in agricultural extension service delivery worldwide, with Facebook demonstrating the highest prevalence of use (64.7%). The majority of agricultural stakeholders engaging with social media are versatile users (33.5%), with a significant proportion (75.7%) primarily visiting these platforms to access information. This trend underscores the growing recognition of social media as a strategic tool for enhancing agricultural extension services. Extension officers affirm that social media can play a pivotal role in delivering critical agricultural advisories, thereby bridging the communication gap between practitioners and farming communities.

Nonetheless, the adoption and effective utilization of social media in agricultural extension are constrained by several systemic barriers, including limited awareness, high rates of illiteracy, inadequate user training, infrastructural deficiencies, insufficient stakeholder participation, lack of institutional integration, inadequate quality control mechanisms, absence of robust impact assessment frameworks, and the need for gender-sensitive approaches. While the integration of social media into agricultural extension systems is progressively gaining acceptance, its

optimization necessitates targeted interventions to address these structural and socio-economic challenges.

KEYWORDS: *Social Media, Agricultural Extension, Digital Communication, Farmer-To-Farmer Learning, Information Dissemination, Facebook, Whatsapp, Youtube.*

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