

# ***Social Media: Empowering Farmers to Take Judicious Actions Related to Agriculture***

**Diksha Patel<sup>1\*</sup>, Pragma Ojha<sup>1</sup> and Vister Joshi<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Subject Matter Specialist, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Banda

<sup>2</sup>Subject Matter Specialist, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Jalaun

**Corresponding Author**

Diksha Patel

Email: pateldiksha279@gmail.com



**OPEN ACCESS**

**Keywords**

Social Media, Farmers, Agriculture

*How to cite this article:*

Patel, D., Ojha, P. and Joshi, V. 2025. Social Media: Empowering Farmers to Take Judicious Actions Related to Agriculture. *Vigyan Varta* 6 (5): 61-65.

## **ABSTRACT**

Social media has changed the way we think, comprehend and communicate, and it has not just restricted young people in urban pockets anymore but has penetrated deep into rural areas as well. Social networking platforms such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram is acting as a powerful tool for farmers to connect with buyers as well as agribusinesses over large geographical distances. It is also helping to share knowledge and information of mutual interest by farmers living in the same region or growing similar crops in the different parts of the country. Social media is facilitating farmers to make judicious decisions. Social media can empower farmers as it brings in transparency, engagement, trust and authenticity in the supply chain. The most important aspect is that it reduces social isolation for farmers and enables them to connect with other farmers, agribusinesses and customers comfortably. They can market their produce well and sell it off wherever they want, seeking best prices. Also, they can interact with experts, people with influence, from whom they can gain a wealth of knowledge, experiences and guidance. Even for regular farm operations such as building irrigation system, buying crop inputs, accessing better markets, such online platforms can do wonders for farmers. Social media can keep them updated of every farm-related development.

## INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed the communication revolution in the world. The internet, social media and mobile are allowing people to connect with each other easier than ever before. Social media are becoming an integral part of the lives of people and allowing instant global connectivity and information sharing and now become one of the most powerful tools to reach out a large number of audiences quickly, efficiently and effectively. Through social media "one post can theoretically be spread worldwide and viewed by millions within minutes, if not seconds with audience whom we don't have traditional connections" (Cornelisse *et al.*, 2011). In the past few years, companies, governments, and non-profit organizations have been establishing a presence on social media websites to better engage their constituents and social media has become a key part of the outreach strategy for many organizations (Dadashzadeh, 2010). Companies and organizations are realizing that engaging in social media can allow for "highly participative" interaction with customers and constituents that makes them feel more loyal and positive towards the company or organization performing the outreach (Culnan, 2010).

Extension has historically been a leader in adopting new tools, technologies and practices for educational program, delivery content management and clientele service. Formerly, extension outreach used face to face contact, newspapers and other printed media, and other forms of broadcast to get word out about programs, opportunities and advice to interested constituents of extension's work. Now, extension is competing with people and organizations around the world because of the ease of finding information online. To continue to educate the public about extension programs and be the local source of

information, one Extension educator believes Extension needs to be highly intuitive and accessible. To achieve this, extension can turn to social media to provide information and connect with its clients. Social media is helping extension perform its outreach services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner (Langcuster, 2010).

India has more smartphones than computers, and the users are increasing rapidly in the rural parts- from 9 percent in 2015 to 70 percent in 2025 or even higher due to increasing affordability and access to mobile internet in the country; this indicates a substantial growth in smartphone usage over the decade. According to Indian Cellular and Electronics Association, rural India registered a year-on-year growth of 35 percent in 2018 compared to 7 percent in urban areas. This bears good news for the efforts to use social media in agriculture extension. Lack of skills can be a hurdle initially, but sensitisation and training can help enhance the number of farmers using social media. The central government's **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan** (PMGDISHA) which was launched in Feb, 2027, aims to increase digital literacy in the country can facilitate farmers to get benefitted from social media. Effective usage of social media would certainly enhance agriculture extension education efforts and thus productivity.

### 1.1 SOCIAL MEDIA

Mayfield (2008) defines social media as a group of new online media which have most or all of the following characteristics:

**Participation-** Social media promotes contribution and feedback from users who are interested in participating; therefore, it blurs the line between media and the audience.

**Openness-** Social media is accessible to people, it does not have any sort of barriers that prohibit access to users

**Conversation-** Two-way communication is what makes social media stand out from the traditional media

**Community-** Social media provides people with a platform to share common interests which promote sense of community amongst the users

**Connectedness-** Links to various sites, people, networks etc promote social media's ability to connect it's users to various areas of interest.

### Types/ forms of Social Media

**Social Networking-** Services that allow you to connect with other people of similar interests and background. Usually they consist of a profile, various ways to interact with other users, ability to setup groups, etc. The most popular are Facebook and LinkedIn.

**Bookmarking Sites-** Services that allow you to save organize and manage links to various websites and resources around the internet. Most allow you to "tag" your links to make them easy to search and share. The most popular are Delicious and StumbleUpon.

**Social News-** Services that allow people to post various news items or links to outside articles and then allows its users to "vote" on the items. The voting is the core social aspect as the items that get the most votes are displayed the most prominently. The community decides which news items get seen by more people. The most popular are Digg and Reddit.

**Media Sharing -** Services that allow you to upload and share various media such as pictures and video. Most services have additional social features such as profiles,

commenting, etc. The most popular are YouTube and Flickr.

**Micro-blogging-** Services that focus on short updates that are pushed out to anyone subscribed to receive the updates. The most popular is Twitter.

**Blog Comments and Forums-** Online forums allow members to hold conversations by posting messages. Blog comments are similar except they are attached to blogs and usually the discussion centres around the topic of the blog post.

Other types of social media include Forums and discussion boards (e.g. Yahoo! Answers), WhatsApp and Collaborative websites.

### REASONS FOR ITS POPULARITY

- It helps to reach a large audience.
- Maintains a direct connection with your audience
- Create organic content.
- Access to paid advertising services.
- Build your brand.
- Get knowledge about anything

### ADVANTAGES

- These platforms are self-help support systems that help us to help each other.
- Social networking and knowledge sharing on online platforms have opened up new avenues of opportunity for farmers while providing them tech-based solutions.
- Social media is also used to lend emotional support to farmers under stress.
- Farmers continuously need information about pests, seeds, methodologies, weather, machinery and etc and hence, social media platforms are one stop solution for them.

- It enables smarter farming through opportunities to learn from agricultural experts.

### DISADVANTAGES

- Overuse of social networks can lead to procrastination and a tendency to waste time
- Circulation of false information and getting trapped in them.
- Not all farmers are educated enough to understand how to use these platforms.

### Case Studies for Use of Social media for empowering farmers to take judicious actions:

1. Indian Farmer's Club on Clubhouse, founded by Deepak Chavan, are such platforms for farmers where they have discussions on horticulture, vegetable harvesting, crop management, sowing time etc and help farmers 24×7.
2. Karshaka Mitra YouTube channel changed the life of 56-year-old farmer when his video on direct sowing of paddy through broadcast method got 3 lakh views. It drew the attention of first chief minister of Telangana, K. Chandrasekhar Rao, who called the farmer Srinivasu Raju for a meeting to discuss farming methods.
3. In Vidarbha's farm-distressed district of Yavatmal, over 13 farmers came together and formed a WhatsApp group to share information about farm operations and government schemes. From time to time they share information about cropping patterns, new irrigation and pest control techniques, use of fertilisers and pesticide, innovations in cultivation methods, crop damage among others. These farmers are benefitted greatly since the group has scientists, experts and consultants working in the agriculture field. There is need to have such groups in every part of India.
4. Maharashtra government took a decision to promote its policies and schemes related to agriculture through WhatsApp. The use of communication technology would equip farmers with real-time data, monitoring demand and supply of seeds and crop produce as well as updated information about market prices. Himachal Pradesh government also has enrolled total of a few thousand farmers on **WhatsApp** to help them resolve their farm-related problems and issue advisories. Globally, in New Zealand, the UK, the US, Australia, discussions are facilitated between farmers and agribusinesses under the **AgChat** model, which is a Twitter online discussion group. All this gives a glimpse into how powerful and effective social media can be to connect with millions of farmers in our country.
5. Services such as Digital green, Spoken web, Conspeakous VoiceGen and VoiKiosk provides audio and video uploads to convey crop information.
6. Reuters market light and Iffco kisan sanchar are getting very popular among the farmers.
7. KVK, Banda Progressive farmers whatsapp group: KVK, Banda formed a KVK, Banda Progressive farmers whatsapp group where 354 progressive farmers were the active members present. KVK, provide all the latest know-how, tentative training schedule of month started, Mausam advisory, etc to the farmers. Farmers also interact with SMS of KVKs directly for their problem related to agriculture and livestock. Sometimes the farmers can share healthy discussion with other farmers and their problems will be solved at whatsapp only.

8. KVK, Banda NICRA Group: KVK, Banda formed a KVK, Banda NICRA whatsapp group where 154 Farmers of Chaudhary Dera (Village adopted under NICRA Project) were the active members. KVK, provide all the latest know-how, Mausam advisory, Forecast, etc to the farmers.
9. KVK, Lalitpur has its youtube Channel where all the SMS prepared 2-4 min. video and uploaded for farmers use. By using all this information, farmers can take judicious actions for their problems.

## CONCLUSION

Every new technology has its own pros and cons and when the technology starts offering diverse paths of advantages, then it becomes a boon. The advent of social media, though sometimes called as a disaster for society, proves to be beneficial, in case of agriculture. All depends on the mind of the user in the end. Government needs to eye this area efficiently and with increasing awareness, they need to bring schemes and other benefits through social media. The role of NGOs working in rural areas also comes here to educate the illiterate enough to know how to use a basic mobile phone. At last, it's the inclusive

development of all and with all that will lead to actual growth and development of the whole nation as one unit.

## REFERENCES:

- Cornelisse, S., Hyde, J., Raines, C., Kelley, K. Ollendyke, D. and Remcheck, J. (2011). Entrepreneurial Education Practiced via Social Media. *Journal of Extension* [Online],49(6): Article6TOT1.
- Culnan, M.J., McHugh, P.J. and Zubillaga, J.I. (2010). How large U.S. companies can use twitter and other social media to gain business value. *MIS Quarterly Executive*,9(4):243-259. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Dadashzadeh, M. (2010). Social media in government: From e-Government to e-Governance. *Journal of Business & Economic Research*,8:81-86.
- Langcuster, J. (2010). Social media changing Extension work. *South-east Farm Press*, 37(22):17-23. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Mayfield, Anthony (2008). What is Social Media: E-book from I-Crossing, UK.