

## Utilization of social media by agricultural extension officers in Tamil Nadu

S INDHUJA, S VISHNUJA and C KARTHIKEYAN

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology  
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore 641003 Tamil Nadu, India  
Email for correspondence: indhusathasivam95@gmail.com

---

© Society for Advancement of Human and Nature 2019

Received: 9.1.2019/Accepted: 9.3.2019

---

### ABSTRACT

Social media is the medium for social interaction which uses ICT tools. With the growth of internet a wide range of ICTs have transformed social relationships, education and the dissemination of information. The present study was conducted to assess social media utilization behavior of agricultural extension officers. The study was conducted in Coimbatore district on 30 agricultural extension officers selected randomly. Most of the extension officers utilized social media like WhatsApp (100.00%) followed by YouTube (66.66%) and Facebook (63.33%) for sharing information, for entertainment and to interact with other extension officers. All the extension officials were using the social media through smart phones. The study revealed that social media may be used by the agricultural scientists to disseminate the new technologies among agricultural extension officers.

**Keywords:** Agricultural extension officers; ICT; social media; utilization

### INTRODUCTION

Information is power in all the fields of development. Social media is becoming powerful tool which connects millions of people around the world. The advent of social media and other ICT tools paved new ways of human interaction (Lakshmi and Babu 2018). Professionals are using social media to gather information on latest technologies. Nowadays social media is getting popular in the agricultural sector. Social media is web-based tool of electronic communication that allows users to personally interact with others individually or in groups for the purposes of exchanging information, sharing thoughts and opinions, influencing and facilitating decision-making by creating, storing, retrieving and exchanging information in any form (text, pictures, video etc) by anyone in the virtual world (Bhattacharjee and Raj 2016). Social media is a network-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas and information and the building of virtual networks and communities.

Social media is a form of electronic communication through which users can create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content (<https://www.merriam->

[webster.com/dictionary/social%20media](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media)). Social networking sites are websites that facilitate the building of contacts in order to exchange and share ideas, digital photos, videos, posts etc. The most popular social media platforms are WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+ etc. In the recent years it has been realized that social media is one of the powerful media for sharing and transforming the latest technologies globally. In order to understand the potentiality of social media in agricultural extension, the present study was conducted with an objective to assess the extent of utilization of social media by the agricultural extension officers.

### METHODOLOGY

The present study was purposively conducted in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. A total of 30 extension officers comprising agricultural extension officers (n= 24) and assistant agricultural officers (n= 6) working in the department of agriculture were selected randomly for the study. The research design adopted for this study was ex-post facto. Ex-post facto research is a systematic empirical enquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control over independent variables because their manifestations

have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulatable. Inferences among variables are made without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables (Kerlinger 1986). The data were collected by using an interview schedule and analyzed by applying suitable statistical tests such as percentage analysis and cumulative frequency.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The profile of the agricultural extension officers was studied and summarized as per Table 1. Most of the respondents were old in age (56.66%); the males were more (60.00%) and majority of them were undergraduates or postgraduates (80.00%).

It is evident from Table 2 that most of the respondents had opened their user accounts in social media platforms. Forty per cent of the respondents had experience of up to 5 years in using social media. All of them had been using WhatsApp followed by YouTube (66.66%) and Facebook (63.33%) however none used Blog or Flickr. Majority of them used social

Table 1. Profile characteristics of agricultural extension officers (n= 30)

Characteristic	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Percentage
Age	Young	3	10.00
	Middle age	10	33.34
	Old	17	56.66
Gender	Male	18	60.00
	Female	12	40.00
Qualification	Diploma	6	20.00
	UG/PG	24	80.00

media for information sharing (76.66%) followed by sharing of videos, audios, photos etc (66.66%) and entertainment (63.33%). However it was least used to build contact with other extension officers (30.00%). All the officials had smart phones though most of them were also having tablets (63.33%) and laptops (53.33%). Agricultural officers had been using the tablets provided by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Majority (70.00%) of the respondents had been using the social media mostly during evening hours

Table 2. Utilization of social media by agricultural extension officers (n= 30)

Characteristic	Category	Respondents	
		Number*	Percentage
Experience in social media (years)	0-5	12	40.00
	5-10	10	33.33
	>10	8	26.66
Social media utilized	WhatsApp	30	100.00
	YouTube	20	66.66
	Facebook	19	63.33
	Google+	10	33.33
	LinkedIn	8	26.66
	Twitter	7	23.33
	Instagram	5	16.66
	Blog	0	0
	Flickr	0	0
Purpose of utilization	Information sharing	23	76.66
	Sharing of videos, audios, photos etc	20	66.66
	Entertainment	19	63.33
	Information seeking	15	50.00
	Knowledge up gradation	12	40.00
	Creating awareness on new technologies	10	33.33
	Build contact with other extension officers	9	30.00
Access through gadgets	Smart phone	30	100
	Tablet	19	63.33
	Laptop	16	53.33

\*Multiple responses

Table 3. Social media utilization behavior of extension officers (n=30)

Characteristic	Category	Respondents	
		Number*	Percentage
Time of usage	Morning	12	40.00
	Afternoon	7	23.33
	Evening	21	70.00
	Night	16	53.33
Duration of usage (h)	0-1	8	26.64
	1-2	9	30.00
	>2	13	43.33
Frequency of usage	Daily	26	86.66
	Weekly	15	50.00
	Fortnightly	0	0
	Monthly	0	0

\*Multiple responses

followed by at night (53.33%) (Table 3). Most of them (43.33%) had been using social media for more than two hours. Majority (86.66%) of the respondents had been using social media daily (86.66%) followed by weekly (50.00%). The extension officials were frequent users of social media.

The perceived consequences of using social media by the extension officers were also studied (Table 4). Majority of the respondents (80.00%) perceived that social media updated knowledge in new technologies followed by 63.33 per cent who perceived that it helped in quick dissemination of information and 53.33 per cent perceiving that it helped in expertizing in the work. On the other hand negative consequences reported by them were changes in moral and social behavior (76.66%) followed by wastage of time and

Table 4. Perceived effects of social media (n= 30)

Positive consequences	Respondents		Negative consequences	Respondents	
	Number*	Percentage		Number*	Percentage
Updated knowledge in new technologies	24	80.00	Wastage of time; facilitates laziness	21	70.00
Quick dissemination of information	19	63.33	Decrease in face to face interaction with others	17	56.66
Expertizing in the work	16	53.33	Changes in moral and social behaviour	23	76.66

\*Multiple responses

increased laziness (70.00%) and decrease in face to face interaction with others (56.66%).

## CONCLUSION

It was found that most of the respondents had opened their user accounts in social media platforms. All of them had been using WhatsApp followed by YouTube and Facebook. Majority of them used social media for information sharing. All the officials had smart phones. They had been making full use of tablets provided by the Government of Tamil Nadu. They were frequent users of social media. From these findings it can be concluded that agricultural scientists may use the social media platform as one of the channels to disseminate the new technologies to the agricultural extension officers.

## REFERENCES

- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media>
- Bhattacharjee S and Raj S 2016. Social media: shaping the future of agricultural extension and advisory services. GFRAS Interest Group on ICT4RAS, Discussion paper. GFRAS, Lindau, Switzerland.
- Kerlinger FN 1986. Foundations of behavioral research. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Rinehart and Winston, Holt, New York, 667p.
- Lakshmi KB and Babu KM 2018. Extent of utilization of social media by extension functionaries in southern India. Indian Research Journal of Extension Education **18(3)**: 90-92.