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Utilization pattern of Social media by the Farmers of Cuddalore District

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Abstract

In the digital era, the study about the utilization pattern of social media enhances the farmers' income, improves agriculture productivity and bridges the digital gap between rural areas and modern cities. In this aspect, a study on utilization patterns of social media was conducted in Cuddalore District with 120 farmers from nine villages belonging to three blocks. The samples were obtained through data collection techniques, survey questionnaires and quantitative analysis. This paper's objective of research is to determine the contribution of respondent attributes and their degree of utilization of social media sites and applications used for agricultural purposes. However, a maximum number of respondents had low to medium level of knowledge in the extent of using social media for agricultural purposes.

Key words : Utilization Pattern, Social Media and Agricultural Information.

In recent days social media is very popular for various purposes. It consists of two words, "social," which means to communicate and exchange information with others, whereas "media" refers to mass media like TV, radio, newspapers, etc taken collectively. In general, "social media" indicates "web-based" communication devices such as computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets and other such devices that allow people to exchange words with one another by sharing information, facts, views, expertise and interests in online platforms.

Social media has become more accessible than ever and has created new platforms for sharing knowledge and strengthening interconnection. Farmers who were earlier hesitant to participate in discussions got actively involved in sharing their learning and asking doubts to the farming community. It has provided an opportunity for farmers to collaborate with other farmers. People found it was more comfortable to express and share their views

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by using WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, etc. Thus, farmers may access a need for information concerning their lives up to days. For the preparation of the manuscript relevant literature[1,2] has been consulted.

The present study was conducted among the farmers in the Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. Three blocks were selected namely Panruti, Kurinjipadi and Bhuvanagiri from Cuddalore district each consisting District three villages were selected based on high number of social media utilizer farming communities. Data collection techniques, survey questionnaires by quantitative analysis were employed to investigate the utilization pattern of social media platforms by the respondents based on their preferences, motivations and information seeking behaviour.

The utilisation of various social media applications by farmers for agricultural purposes was studied. The variables taken into account were use of different social media, frequency of use, mode of access, preferred time, format of use, frequency of downloading and frequency of uploading.

Distribution of respondents according to social media usage :

Table-1. Distribution of respondents according to use of different social media usage (n=120)

S. No	Sites and Applications	Frequency	Per cent
1.	YouTube	120	100.00
2.	Wikipedia	22	18.33
3.	Facebook	72	60.00
4.	Twitter	40	33.30
5.	WhatsApp	120	100.00
6.	Instagram	64	53.30
7.	LinkedIn	34	28.33
8.	Pachathundu	42	35.00
9.	Uzhavan app	38	31.66
10.	Plantix	25	20.83

The results on distribution of the respondents based on use of different social media shows majority of the respondents (100%) were using WhatsApp and YouTube which means it was preferred by most of the respondents, ensued by Facebook then Instagram followed by Pachathundu, Twitter, Uzhavan app, LinkedIn, Plantix and Wikipedia.

Distribution of respondents according to frequency of usage :

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to frequency of usage (n=120)

S. No	Sites & App	Responses				
		Daily/Once in two days	Once in 3-4 days	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly
1.	You Tube	28 (23.33)	36 (30.00)	32 (26.67)	16 (13.33)	8 (6.67)
2.	Wikipedia	- -	- -	30 (25.00)	47 (39.16)	43 (35.83)
3.	Facebook	20 (16.67)	32 (26.67)	44 (36.67)	16 (13.33)	8 (6.67)
4.	Twitter	16 (13.33)	12 (10.00)	37 (30.83)	34 (28.33)	21 (17.50)
5.	WhatsApp	80 (66.67)	40 (33.33)	- -	- -	- -
6.	Instagram	48 (40.00)	52 (43.33)	4 (3.33)	16 (13.33)	- -
7.	Linked In	- -	- -	- -	72 (60.00)	48 (40.00)
8.	Uzhavan app	- -	12 (10.00)	52 (43.33)	56 (46.67)	- -
9.	Pachathundu	- -	- -	21 (17.50)	48 (40.00)	51 (42.50)
10.	Plantix	- -	- -	- -	72 (60.00)	48 (40.00)

The results on distribution of respondents according to the frequency of usage show WhatsApp, followed by Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter used daily or once in two days. WhatsApp was the most preferred social media application. LinkedIn, Uzhavan app, Pachathundu and Plantix among other apps were used with lesser frequency.

Distribution of respondents according to mode of access :

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to the mode of access (n=120)

S. No	Mode of use	Frequency	Per cent
1.	WiFi	6	05.00
2.	Data pack	104	86.67
3.	Lan	10	08.33
Total		120	100.00

The results on distribution of the respondents according to the mode of access show majority (86.67%) of the respondents used data or net pack and only 13.33 percent collectively used WiFi and LAN for accessing social media.

Distribution of respondents according to preferred time :

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to the preferred timing (n=120)

S. No	Preferred Timings	Frequency	Per cent
1.	6:00 am – 9:00 am	9	07.50
2.	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	15	12.50
3.	12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	13	10.83
4.	3:00 pm – 6:00 pm	11	09.17
5.	6:00 pm – 9:00 pm	28	23.33
6.	9:00 pm – 12:00 am	36	30.00
7.	After 12 at night	8	06.67
	Total	120	100.00

The results on distribution of the respondents according to preferred time concluded that evening between 09:00 pm-12:00 pm was mostly preferred timings; the reason being that they get free time during these hours after working all day. Some of them get free time from 06:00 pm-09:00 pm.

Distribution of respondents according to format of use :

Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to the preferred format (n=120)

S. No	Preferred Format	Frequency	Per cent
1.	PDF file	27	22.50
2.	Video	84	70.00
3.	Multimedia	87	72.50
4.	Text	45	37.50
5.	Audio	24	20.00
6.	Advertisement	54	45.00

The results on distribution of the respondents based on format used for visiting agricultural content in social media shows a majority of the respondents (72.50 percent) preferred to use multimedia as a format, followed by 70.00 percent of respondents who preferred video format. Advertisement and text format were preferred by 45.00 percent and 37.50 percent of the respondents and the least preferred formats was pdf 22.50 percent and audio 20.00 percent.

Distribution of respondents according to frequency of downloading :

Table 6. Distribution of respondents according to the frequency of downloading (n=120)

S. No	Downloading	Regularly	Sometimes	Never
1.	Audio Lecture	32 (26.67)	72 (60.00)	16 (13.33)
2.	Video Lecture	32 (26.67)	76 (63.33)	12 (10.00)
3.	Power Point	4 (3.33)	45 (37.50)	71 (59.16)
4.	PDF	-	72 (60.00)	48 (40.00)
5.	Text	4 (3.33)	60 (50.00)	56 (46.67)

The results on distribution of the respondents according to the frequency of uploading shows none of the respondents preferred video and audio or any other formats to regularly upload content on social media. Majority of the respondents preferred audio followed by video format. Also, the respondents sometimes upload text, pdf and Power Point formats.

According to the study, one of the major findings showed a knowledge deficit among farmers and this knowledge gap has created a lack of information. To fill this gap, agricultural extension plays a very crucial role and with the scarcity of extension professionals and means to reach the farmers there is a need to propagate reliable, quick and accurate information. Therefore, the extension person needs to adopt with latest digital media to influence and disseminate information to farmers through social media.

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