

A conceptual image for an e-agriculture book cover. It features a hand holding a small green seedling with soil, symbolizing agriculture. In the background, a satellite is visible against a light sky, representing technology and digital services. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent white filter.

E-Agricultural Services and Business

Information Communication and Technologies in Agriculture Extension Services – A Boon or Bane: Experiences from Applications of ‘Lifelines’ in Mewat Region of India

Dr. S. M. Haider Rizvi
School of Good Governance and
Policy Analysis,
Bhopal India

Dr. Pradeep K Mehta
Institute of Rural Research and
Development,
Gurgaon India

ABSTRACT

The importance and potentials of Information Communication and Technologies (ICTs) has been established in every walk of life. ICT are utilized to the fullest by various communities and groups those who have access to these. But the access and usage of ICTs have been varied. With the advances of ICTs, the ‘Digital Divide’ has become more prominent. Those who have access to ICTs are applying the technology with innovations and making progress. But the poor who are already deprived of the basic amenities of life are neither having access to ICTs nor could get benefitted of their applications. They are also unaware about applications and are compelled to follow old age traditional methods and approaches. The developed nations and communities have used ICTs in agriculture very meaningfully and have been able to increase the produce by getting extension services and timely inputs.

There have been efforts for poor farmers to get them benefitted through agriculture extension services with the help of technology. The introduction and use of *Lifelines Technology* for the socio-economically marginalized farmers in Mewat region of India is a vibrant example in this context. In this initiative the ICTs have been applied strategically in the framework of sustainable livelihoods. But the usage of ICTs with such communities is not as smooth as with others. There are challenges at the levels of getting the technology accepted, the contextualization of the services, the delivery of services etc. The ICTs are ideally a boon for the developmental change in agriculture or elsewhere but if not taken properly might become a bane. The paper on **Information Communication and Technologies in Agriculture Extension Services – A Boon or Bane: Experiences from Applications of ‘Lifelines’ in Mewat Region of India** discusses the importance of ICTS in agriculture extension and knowledge repository services, the challenges in the usage and possible mitigation straggles. It would help in bringing out a fresh perspective with the experiences from the grassroots especially in developing a model for scalability and replicability of ICT Design Solutions in the lives of poor and marginalized. Efforts would be made to offer evidences in developing knowledge base in this area.