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Attitude towards the role of social media in disseminating agriculture information to the farmers in East Champaran district of Bihar

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Abstract

The transformative impact of social media on communication and information sharing has extended into various domains, including agriculture. This study explores the attitudes of farmers in East Champaran District, Bihar, towards the role of social media in disseminating agricultural information. Utilizing a descriptive survey methodology, the research examines how socio-economic factors influence farmers' perceptions and use of social media for agricultural purposes.

A total of 120 respondents from six randomly selected villages in Kalyanpur block were surveyed. The socio-economic profile of respondents revealed a diverse demographic, predominantly middle-aged and intermediate-educated individuals engaged in agriculture. Key findings indicate that while social media is widely regarded as a valuable tool for accessing expert advice, staying updated with trends, and connecting with other farmers, there are concerns regarding the reliability of information and its potential to be a distraction from farming activities.

The analysis shows a generally positive attitude towards social media, with 44.17% of respondents considering it essential for modern farming and 43.33% acknowledging its role in accessing expert advice. However, the trustworthiness of social media content and its ease of use for sharing information remain areas of concern. The study highlights significant correlations between socio-economic factors such as annual income, media exposure, risk-bearing capacity, and scientific orientation and favorable attitudes towards social media. Conversely, factors like marital status and type of house showed negligible impact.

This research underscores the evolving role of social media in agriculture, reflecting a nuanced understanding of its benefits and limitations. The findings suggest that while social media holds promise for enhancing agricultural practices, its effectiveness is influenced by various socio-economic conditions. The study provides insights that could inform strategies for leveraging social media to support agricultural development in rural areas.

Keywords: Social media, agricultural information, farmers' attitude, east Champaran, Bihar

Introduction

Social media has transformed communication, information sharing, and human interaction on a global scale. It encompasses a wide array of platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, where individuals and organizations create, share, and exchange content in virtual communities. This digital revolution has redefined how people connect, influencing various aspects of society, including politics, business, education, and personal relationships. Social media's immediacy and accessibility have made it a powerful tool for spreading information, fostering engagement, and driving social change. However, its rapid growth has also introduced challenges such as privacy concerns, misinformation, and the potential for addictive behavior. Understanding the role and impact of social media is crucial in today's interconnected world, as it continues to evolve and shape the way people communicate and engage with one another.

The Latin term "medium," which also means "delegate" and "in the middle," is where the English word "media" originates. Its phraseology describing radio, print, and other data sources comes presumably from "wide communications." Simply put, "media" is the word "medium" in plural form. This is used to describe ideas, information, education, and media that arise from the distribution of different kinds of knowledge to a person or group. It is defined as an assemblage of basic visual and aural instruments. It makes clear the many ways that individuals in our society communicate. Since the term "media" refers to all kinds of communication, it may be used to describe everything from the phone to the evening news on television.

We talk about media when we talk about how to reach a large number of people. Local media includes things like newspapers, radio, and television stations. Before, the only ways to get news and entertainment were through TV, radio,

newspapers, and magazines. Right now, the internet is starting to take over. Print newspapers are failing as hundreds of millions of readers shift to online news sources every year. The nation's lifeline, the media spreads important news across the world. It also informs us and teaches us about current events and the effects of the media. People get acknowledged all the time. This is a tool for gathering and sharing information. One kind of agency that achieves objectives, spreads important information, or facilitates communication is the media.

We utilize the media as a kind of communication tool to disseminate important information, novel ideas, state-of-the-art technology, and other noteworthy facts. Through a range of channels and informational instruments, including the media, we exchange information and interact with one another.

Social media

The phrase "social media" is derived from the two working terms "social" and "media". Social contacts are those that occur between neighbours who have similar interests. A friendly design is used in virtual entertainment to convey data from the source to all collectors. The phrase "social media" describes computer technology that promotes the sharing of knowledge via digital platforms, including facts, ideas, and views. Social media is online entertainment that gives consumers instant access to a variety of content, such as recordings, photographs, videos, and archives of personal information. Social media is the most significant tool for social interaction in the current world. Human interaction now has more importance as a result of its utilization. It has caused an effect on everything in its vicinity.

Objective

To determine the level of attitude of the farmers towards role of social media in dissemination of agricultural information.

Research methodology

The design of the present study is descriptive one based on survey method to systematically describe the socio-economic characteristics of farmers and their attitude levels of the respondents towards role of social media in dissemination of agricultural information to the farmers.

In Bihar there are 38 Districts. Among them East Champaran District was selected by purposive sampling for the study. There are 27 blocks of East Champaran District of Bihar out of that one block namely Kalyanpur was selected through purposive sampling method. From Kalyanpur block, 6 villages were selected through random sampling method and 120 respondents were selected through randomly for the present study.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 outlines the socio-economic status of respondents in

relation to their views on the role of social media in disseminating agricultural information. The data reveals diverse demographic characteristics among the participants. In terms of age, 36.67% are young (18-35 years), 42.5% are middle-aged (36-55 years), and 20.83% are old (55 and above). 47 individuals or 39.16%, are illiterate, while 28 (23.34%) have completed primary school. Educational levels drop as the education level increases, with only 11 (9.16%) having intermediate or higher education. In terms of caste, 43.33% belong to Other Backward Castes, 29.17% to General Castes, and 27.50% to Scheduled Castes, reflecting a diverse demographic distribution within the sample. Most respondents live in nuclear families (77.5%) and have small family sizes (55%).

Regarding housing, 68.33% reside in semi-cemented houses, with a small proportion in huts (6.67%) or cemented homes (25%). Land holding is predominantly small (50.83%), with marginal (29.17%) and medium (17.5%) holdings being less common. The primary occupation for 61.67% is agriculture, followed by caste-based occupations (10%) and service (11.67%). Annual income is mostly between 1 to 2 lakh (53.33%), with fewer respondents earning more or less.

For farm power, 70.83% use diesel engines or pumping sets, while 28.33% use tractors and 5% use bullocks. In terms of scientific orientation, 55% have a medium level of orientation. External contact sources for agricultural information include personal contacts (73.33%), with fewer turning to Krishi Vigyan Kendra (10%) or Village Development Officers (1.67%). Information sources are dominated by progressive farmers (81.67%) and mobile phones (78.33%), with other channels like radio (5%) and television (8.33%) being less significant.

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of respondents' attitudes towards the role of social media in disseminating agricultural information to farmers. The majority of respondents generally view social media as a valuable tool, with 44.17% considering it essential for modern farming and 43.33% acknowledging its help in accessing expert advice. However, there is a notable variation in attitudes regarding trust and ease of use. While a significant number find social media beneficial for staying updated with trends and connecting with other farmers, confidence in the reliability of agricultural information on these platforms is less uniform. Around 47.50% are undecided about the trustworthiness of social media content related to agriculture, and 45.83% find sharing farming-related information somewhat challenging. Despite these concerns, many respondents appreciate social media's influence on farming decisions, marketing, and productivity. Yet, 34.17% view it as a potential distraction, reflecting mixed feelings about its overall impact on farming activities.

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of the respondents

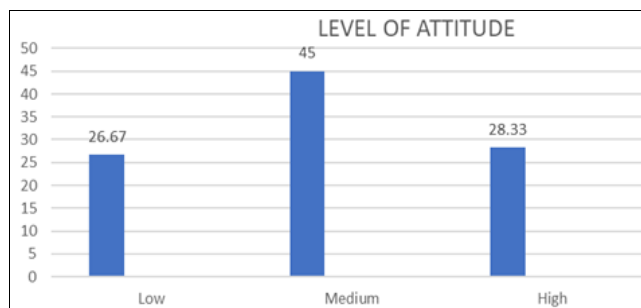
S. No.	Age categories (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age categories (Years)		
I	Young (18-35)	44	36.67
II	Middle (36-55)	51	42.50
III	Old (55 and above)	25	20.83
2	Education		
I	Illiterate	47	39.17
II	Primary School	28	23.33
III	Middle School	19	15.83
IV	High school	15	12.50
V	Intermediate & Above	11	9.17
3	Caste		
I	General caste	35	29.17
II	Other Backward caste	52	43.33
III	Scheduled caste	33	27.50
4	Type of family		
I	Nuclear/Single family	93	77.50
II	Joint family	27	22.50
5	Family size		
I	Small (up to 6 members)	66	55.00
II	Medium (7-14 members)	52	43.33
III	Large (15 and above)	2	1.67
6	Housing pattern		
I	Hut	8	6.67
II	Semi-cemented	82	68.33
III	Cemented	30	25.50
7	Land holding		
I	Marginal (Below 1 ha.)	35	29.17
II	Small (1 to 2 ha.)	61	50.83
III	Medium (2 to 4 ha.)	21	17.50
IV	Large (4 ha. and above)	3	2.50
8	Occupation		
I	Agriculture labour	10	8.33
II	Caste based occupation	12	10.00
III	Agriculture	74	61.67
IV	Business + Agriculture	10	8.33
V	Service (Govt. + Private)	14	11.67
9	Annual income		
I	Up to 1.0 lakh	29	24.17
II	1 lakh to 2 lakh	64	53.33
III	2-3 lakh	23	19.17
IV	Above 3 lakhs	4	3.33
10	Farm power		
I	Tractor	34	28.33
II	Diesel Engine/Pumping set	85	70.83
III	Electric Motor	46	38.33
IV	Bullock	6	5.00
5	Power tiller	3	2.50
11	Scientific orientation		
I	Low (7-9)	26	21.67
II	Medium (10-12)	66	55.00
III	High (13-15)	28	23.33
12	Extension Contact		
I	Personal contacts	88	73.33
II	Krishi Vigyan Kendra	12	10.00
III	Village Development Officer	18	15.00
IV	Agriculture Development Officer	2	1.67
13	Source of information		
I	Friend	56	46.67
II	Relatives	40	33.33
III	Progressive farmer	98	81.67
IV	Neighbors	78	65.00
V	Mobile	94	78.33
VI	Radio	6	5.00
VII	Television	10	8.33
VIII	VDO'S	10	8.33
IX	Computer	8	6.67
X	Exhibition/Extension programme	49	40.83
XI	Others	26	21.67

Table 2: Attitude of the respondents towards role of social media in dissemination of agricultural information

S. No.	Statements	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	I believe social media is a valuable tool for farmers.	38 (31.67%)	42 (35.00%)	40 (33.33%)
2	Social media helps me stay updated with the latest agricultural trends.	38 (31.67%)	50 (41.67%)	32 (26.67%)
3	I find social media platforms easy to use for sharing farming-related information.	30 (25.00%)	55 (45.83%)	35 (29.17%)
4	Social media has improved my knowledge about farming practices.	37 (30.83%)	52 (43.33%)	31 (25.83%)
5	I trust the information I find on social media related to agriculture.	24 (20.00%)	57 (47.50%)	39 (32.50%)
6	I use social media to connect with other farmers.	45 (37.50%)	44 (36.67%)	31 (25.83%)
7	Social media has positively influenced my farming decisions.	43 (35.83%)	52 (43.33%)	25 (20.83%)
8	I feel confident using social media to promote my farming products.	31 (25.83%)	43 (35.83%)	46 (38.33%)
9	Social media helps me access expert advice on farming issues.	52 (43.33%)	42 (35.00%)	26 (21.67%)
10	I enjoy participating in farming communities on social media.	32 (26.67%)	37 (30.83%)	51 (42.50%)
11	Social media provides useful resources for solving farming problems.	33 (27.50%)	52 (43.33%)	35 (29.17%)
12	I am comfortable sharing my farming experiences on social media.	51 (42.50%)	48 (40.00%)	21 (17.50%)
13	Social media has helped me increase my farm's productivity.	36 (30.00%)	44 (36.67%)	40 (33.33%)
14	I feel social media is a distraction from my farming activities.	41 (34.17%)	46 (38.33%)	33 (27.50%)
15	Social media has helped me market my farming products more effectively.	48 (40.00%)	42 (35.00%)	30 (25.00%)
16	I regularly use social media to seek information about new farming techniques.	43 (35.83%)	46 (38.33%)	31 (25.83%)
17	Social media helps me find potential buyers for my farm produce.	37 (30.83%)	47 (39.17%)	36 (30.00%)
18	I believe social media is an essential tool for modern farming.	53 (44.17%)	44 (36.67%)	23 (19.17%)

Table 3: Attitude level of the respondents towards role of social media in dissemination of agricultural information

Attitude level	Frequency	Percentage
Low (18-24)	32	26.67
Medium (25-30)	54	45.00
High (31-36)	34	28.33
Total	120	100

**Fig 1:** Level of attitude

The distribution of table 3 and graph of attitude levels among respondents is as follows: 26.67% of respondents have a low attitude level, scoring between 18 and 24. The largest group, 45.00%, falls into the medium attitude level category, with scores ranging from 25 to 30. Additionally, 28.33% of respondents exhibit a high attitude level, with scores from 31 to 36. In total, there are 120 respondents. This distribution reveals that a significant majority hold a medium attitude towards the subject, while there is a relatively even split between those with low and high attitude levels. Similar findings are reported by Patel and Kumar (2022) [7].

Table 4 examines the correlation between respondents' socio-economic profiles and their attitudes towards the role of social media in disseminating agricultural information. Key findings reveal that several factors have significant correlations with attitude levels. For instance, annual income (0.487), mass media exposure (0.516), risk-bearing capacity (0.463), progressiveness (0.575), and scientific orientation (0.499) all show strong positive correlations, indicating that higher levels in these areas are associated with more favorable attitudes towards social media.

Education (0.265), age (0.272), occupation (0.342), and size of land holding (0.354) also have moderate positive correlations, suggesting a notable, though less pronounced, impact. In contrast, marital status, type of house, and family type show no significant relationship with attitudes, highlighting that socio-economic factors like income and media exposure play a more crucial role in shaping attitudes towards the use of social media in agriculture.

Table 4: Correlation between socio-economic profiles of the respondents with their attitude level towards role of social media in dissemination of agricultural information to the farmers

S. No.	Independent variables	Correlation coefficient
1.	Age	0.272*
2.	Marital status	0.135 ^{NS}
3.	Education	0.265*
4.	Occupation	0.342*
5.	Type of House	0.163 ^{NS}
6.	Size of land holding	0.354*
7.	Annual income	0.487**
8.	Family type	0.133 ^{NS}
9.	Mass media exposure	0.516**
10.	Risk bearing capacity	0.463**
11.	Progressiveness	0.575**
12.	Scientific Orientation	0.499**

* Significant at 0.05 percent level of probability

** Significant at 0.01 percent level of probability

NS= Non-significant

Conclusion

It is concluded that the respondents were with a middle-aged, intermediate-educated individuals engaged in agriculture, and a significant portion living in nuclear families and small land holdings. The attitude shows that most of the respondents have a medium level of attitude towards social media, with a balanced representation across low and high levels. The factors such as annual income, mass media exposure, risk-bearing capacity, progressiveness, and scientific orientation strongly correlate with more favorable attitudes towards social media, whereas factors like marital status and type of house have negligible impact. This comprehensive view underscores that while social media is increasingly valued in agriculture, its

effectiveness and perception are significantly influenced by various socio-economic factors.

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