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Role of social media in accessing and disseminating agricultural information among rural youth

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Abstract

The present study entitled “Role of Social Media in Accessing and Disseminating Agricultural Information among Rural Youth” was conducted in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh to assess the sources of agricultural information accessed through social media and its effectiveness in disseminating agricultural knowledge among rural youth. Primary data were collected from 120 respondents using a structured and pre-tested interview schedule and analyzed through frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that most respondents had medium levels of digital literacy (53.33%), social media usage (51.67%) and social media intensity (51.67%). YouTube (75.83%) and WhatsApp (73.33%) were the major platforms used for accessing agricultural information, particularly for farming practices, pest and disease management (65.83%), weather forecasts (61.67%), expert advice (60.00%) and market prices (58.33%). The respondents expressed a favourable perception of social media, with 75.00 per cent considering WhatsApp useful for quick agricultural advice and 74.17 per cent finding YouTube videos helpful for understanding farming techniques. Overall, 73.33 per cent considered social media an effective tool for agricultural knowledge dissemination, indicating its significant potential as a complementary source of agricultural information for rural youth.

Keywords: Social media, rural youth, agricultural information, information dissemination, YouTube, WhatsApp, digital literacy

Introduction

Agricultural information plays an important role in improving farm-level decision-making, adoption of improved technologies and overall agricultural productivity. With the increasing availability of smartphones and internet services, social media has emerged as an important complementary source of agricultural information, particularly among rural youth. Platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp and Facebook provide opportunities to access and share information related to crop production, pest and disease management, weather, markets and government schemes. Singh *et al.* (2021) ^[8], in a study of 200 rural youth in Mansa district of Punjab, reported that YouTube, WhatsApp and Facebook were the most preferred social media platforms for agricultural information. About 27.0 per cent of respondents reported increased acreage under recommended crop varieties, 22.5 per cent used weather-based agro-advisories for irrigation scheduling and 24.1 per cent obtained crop marketing information through social media.

The effectiveness of social media depends on accessibility, digital literacy, relevance, reliability and the ability of users to understand and apply the information received. Sandeep *et al.* (2022) ^[7], based on 120 farmers in the Southern Telangana zone, found that 39.17 per cent perceived the effectiveness of agricultural information disseminated through social media at a medium level, while digital literacy, social media usage,

participation and access were positively associated with perceived effectiveness. The relevance of social media is particularly important in Satna district, where Raj *et al.* (2025) ^[5] studied 120 rural youth and reported that 38.33 per cent had high technology-management orientation and 35.00 per cent had medium information-management orientation, indicating considerable potential for strengthening digital agricultural information services. Therefore, the present study entitled “Role of Social Media in Accessing and Disseminating Agricultural Information among Rural Youth” was undertaken in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh to assess the sources of agricultural information accessed through social media and to evaluate its effectiveness in disseminating agricultural knowledge among rural youth.

Materials and Methods

The study was undertaken to examine the sources of agricultural information accessed by rural youth through social media and to assess its effectiveness in disseminating agricultural knowledge. A structured and pre-tested interview schedule was used to collect primary data from 120 rural youth respondents through personal interviews. Information was obtained regarding the use of different social media platforms and agricultural information resources.

To assess the types of information sources accessed through social media, respondents were asked about WhatsApp,

YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, government websites, expert advice, online farmer groups, mobile applications, pest and disease management, weather, market prices and government schemes. Responses were recorded as Yes/No and analyzed using frequency and percentage. The effectiveness of social media was measured using a three-point scale, viz., Agree (3), Neutral (2) and Disagree (1).

The independent variables included age, gender, education, landholding, farming experience, annual income, social participation, extension contact, source of information, digital literacy, mobile phone ownership, internet accessibility, social media usage, social media intensity and innovativeness. The collected data were coded and tabulated and frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used for analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Results and Discussion

The study titled “Role of social media in accessing and disseminating agricultural information among rural youth” was conducted to assess the socio-economic characteristics, social media use, adoption of agricultural practices and constraints faced by rural youth in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh. Data were collected from 120 respondents through a pre-tested interview schedule and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation and chi-square tests. The study also examined the influence of social media on agricultural information use and adoption of improved agricultural practices among rural youth.

Profile of the Respondents

The data presented in Table 1 reveal that nearly half of the rural youth (48.33%) belonged to the middle age group, followed by 35.00 per cent in the young age group and 16.67 per cent in the old age group. Regarding gender, 60.00 per cent were male and 40.00 per cent were female, indicating a relatively higher participation of male youth in agricultural activities. With respect to education, 30.00 per cent of the respondents were educated up to higher secondary level and an equal proportion had graduate and above education, while 26.67 per cent had secondary education. Only 3.33 per cent

were illiterate. The relatively favourable educational status suggests that rural youth possessed adequate educational exposure to understand and utilize modern agricultural information and communication technologies. In terms of landholding, 31.67 per cent possessed marginal holdings, followed by small (28.33%), semi-medium (22.50%), medium (14.17%) and large holdings (3.33%). Thus, the majority of rural youth were associated with small and marginal farms.

Regarding farming experience, the largest proportion (30.00%) had 5–10 years of experience, followed by 26.67 per cent with 10–15 years, 22.50 per cent with up to 5 years and 20.83 per cent with more than 15 years of experience. Annual income showed that one-third (33.33%) of the respondents earned ₹1,00,001–1,50,000 annually, while 28.33 per cent earned ₹50,001–1,00,000 and 23.34 per cent earned more than ₹1,50,000. With respect to social participation, 35.00 per cent were members of one organization, 31.67 per cent participated in two or more organizations and 18.33 per cent served as office bearers, whereas 15.00 per cent had no organizational participation. Extension contact was predominantly medium (48.34%), followed by high (28.33%) and low (23.33%). Similarly, information source utilization was medium among 51.67 per cent of respondents, indicating that most rural youth had moderate interaction with different agricultural information sources.

The findings further indicate that digital literacy, mobile phone use, internet accessibility and social media use were predominantly at the medium level. More than half of the respondents had medium digital literacy (53.33%), while 50.00 per cent reported medium levels of mobile phone ownership/use and internet accessibility. Social media usage was medium among 51.67 per cent, while 33.33 per cent belonged to the high category. Similarly, social media intensity was medium among 51.67 per cent, followed by high (31.66%) and low (16.67%). Innovativeness was also predominantly medium (52.50%), followed by high (30.83%) and low (16.67%).

Table 1: Distribution of Rural Youth According to Selected Characteristics (N=120)

S. No.	Variable	Category	No.	%	Category	No.	%	Category	No.	%
1	Age	Young	42	35.00	Middle	58	48.33	Old	20	16.67
2	Gender	Male	72	60.00	Female	48	40.00	—	—	—
3	Education	Illiterate	4	3.33	Primary	12	10.00	Secondary	32	26.67
		Higher Secondary	36	30.00	Graduate & above	36	30.00	—	—	—
4	Landholding	Marginal	38	31.67	Small	34	28.33	Semi-medium	27	22.50
		Medium	17	14.17	Large	4	3.33	—	—	—
5	Farming experience	Up to 5 yrs	27	22.50	5–10 yrs	36	30.00	10–15 yrs	32	26.67
		Above 15 yrs	25	20.83	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	Annual income	Up to ₹50,000	18	15.00	₹50,001–1,00,000	34	28.33	₹1,00,001–1,50,000	40	33.33
		Above ₹1,50,000	28	23.34	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	Social participation	None	18	15.00	One organization	42	35.00	Two or more	38	31.67
		Office bearer	22	18.33	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	Extension contact	Low	28	23.33	Medium	58	48.34	High	34	28.33
9	Information source utilization	Low	24	20.00	Medium	62	51.67	High	34	28.33
10	Digital literacy	Low	18	15.00	Medium	64	53.33	High	38	31.67
11	Mobile phone ownership/use	Low	16	13.33	Medium	60	50.00	High	44	36.67
12	Internet accessibility	Low	22	18.33	Medium	60	50.00	High	38	31.67
13	Social media usage	Low	18	15.00	Medium	62	51.67	High	40	33.33
14	Social media intensity	Low	20	16.67	Medium	62	51.67	High	38	31.66
15	Innovativeness	Low	20	16.67	Medium	63	52.50	High	37	30.83

The findings are in agreement with Mishra *et al.* (2022) ^[4], who observed that most farmers regularly used YouTube, WhatsApp and Facebook, particularly for agricultural information and that social media utilization varied significantly across young, middle and old age groups. Further, Sandeep *et al.* (2022) ^[7] reported that digital literacy and social media usage were positively related to the effectiveness of agricultural information received through social media. Raj *et al.* (2025) ^[6], in a study of rural youth in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh, also found that 46.67 per cent had a neutral perception and 28.33 per cent had a favourable perception towards social-media-based agricultural extension, highlighting the growing relevance of social media and the need to strengthen digital literacy among rural youth.

The types of sources of agricultural information accessed by rural youth through social media

The Table 2 reveals that YouTube and WhatsApp were the most prominent social media platforms used by rural youth for accessing agricultural information. YouTube was used by 91 respondents (75.83%) for learning farming practices,

followed by WhatsApp groups (73.33%). Pest and disease management information was accessed by 65.83 per cent of respondents, while weather forecasts were received by 61.67 per cent. Similarly, 60.00 per cent received agricultural advice through WhatsApp messages from experts or extension workers and 58.33 per cent used social media for obtaining market price information. Government scheme information was accessed by 57.50 per cent of respondents. These findings indicate that rural youth primarily used social media for obtaining practical, timely and need-based agricultural information related to crop production, protection, weather, markets and government programmes. Further, 56.67 per cent of respondents followed agriculture-related Facebook pages, 55.83 per cent followed agricultural influencers or experts and 54.17 per cent accessed government agricultural websites shared through social media. About 53.33 per cent participated in online farmer groups, while 51.67 per cent used Instagram for agricultural updates or reels. In contrast, the use of mobile applications (48.33%), agricultural webinars (37.50%) and Telegram channels (40.00%) was comparatively lower.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to types of agricultural information sources accessed through social media

S. No.	Statements	Yes f (%)	No f (%)
1.	I access agricultural information through WhatsApp groups.	88 (73.33)	32 (26.67)
2.	I use YouTube for learning farming practices.	91 (75.83)	29 (24.17)
3.	I follow Facebook pages related to agriculture.	68 (56.67)	52 (43.33)
4.	I use Instagram for agricultural updates or reels.	62 (51.67)	58 (48.33)
5.	I use Telegram channels for agricultural information.	48 (40.00)	72 (60.00)
6.	I access information from government agriculture websites shared on social media.	65 (54.17)	55 (45.83)
7.	I receive agricultural advice through WhatsApp messages from experts or extension workers.	72 (60.00)	48 (40.00)
8.	I join online farmer groups for agricultural discussions.	64 (53.33)	56 (46.67)
9.	I watch live agricultural webinars shared on social media.	45 (37.50)	75 (62.50)
10.	I use mobile apps linked/shared through social media for farming information.	58 (48.33)	62 (51.67)
11.	I follow agricultural influencers or experts online.	67 (55.83)	53 (44.17)
12.	I access pest and disease management information via social media platforms.	79 (65.83)	41 (34.17)
13.	I receive weather forecasts through social media platforms.	74 (61.67)	46 (38.33)
14.	I use social media for market price information of crops.	70 (58.33)	50 (41.67)
15.	I access government scheme information through social media platforms.	69 (57.50)	51 (42.50)

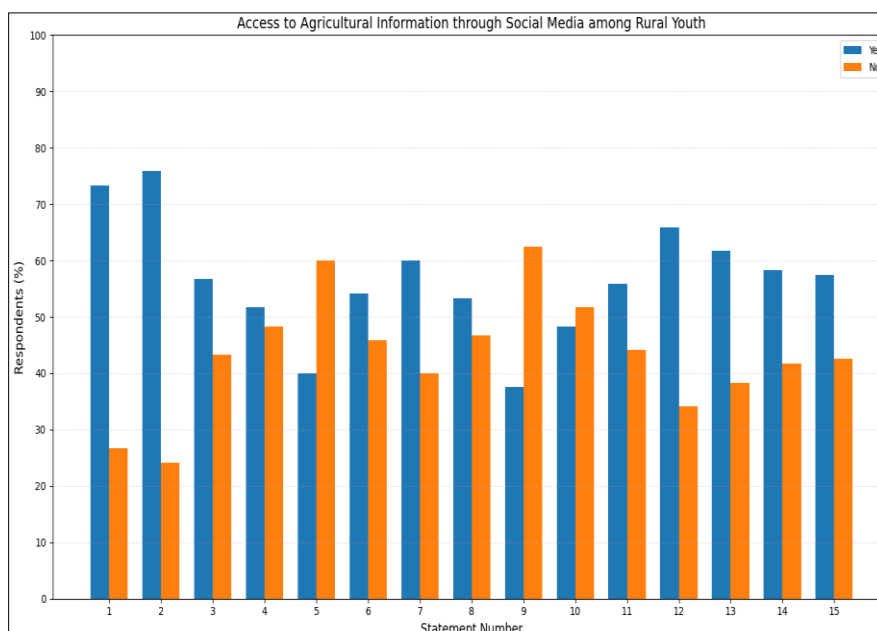


Fig 1: Distribution of respondents according to types of agricultural information sources accessed through social media

The findings are supported by Singh *et al.* (2021) ^[8], who reported that YouTube, WhatsApp and Facebook were the major social media platforms used by rural youth for accessing agricultural information. Similarly, Mishra *et al.* (2022) ^[4] found that YouTube and WhatsApp were widely used by farmers for agricultural information, whereas Telegram and Instagram had comparatively lower utilization. Sandeep *et al.* (2022) ^[7] also observed that social media played an important role in disseminating agricultural information and improving access to timely farm-related knowledge.

The effectiveness of social media in disseminating agricultural knowledge and types of resources of agricultural information among rural youth

The Table 3 shows that a considerable majority of rural youth expressed a positive opinion regarding the usefulness of social media for agricultural learning and information access.

WhatsApp groups were considered particularly useful for obtaining quick farm-related advice (75.00%), followed by YouTube videos for gaining a better understanding of farming techniques (74.17%). A substantial proportion also reported that information available on social media was simple to comprehend (73.33%) and helped improve their knowledge of modern agricultural practices (72.50%). Overall, nearly three-fourths of the respondents (73.33%) considered social media an effective means of sharing agricultural knowledge.

The results further reveal that respondents used social media for obtaining government scheme information (65.00%), improving farm-level decisions (62.50%), addressing agricultural problems (60.83%) and maintaining contact with agricultural experts (58.33%). Comparatively fewer respondents felt that social media could replace traditional extension services, as only 48.33 per cent agreed with this statement.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to the effectiveness of social media and agricultural information resources

S. No.	Statements	Agree (3) f (%)	Neutral (2) f (%)	Disagree (1) f (%)
1.	Social media provides timely agricultural information.	84 (70.00)	25 (20.83)	11 (9.17)
2.	Social media helps me learn improved farming practices.	86 (71.67)	24 (20.00)	10 (8.33)
3.	Information shared on social media is easy to understand.	88 (73.33)	23 (19.17)	9 (7.50)
4.	Social media increases my awareness about modern agriculture.	87 (72.50)	24 (20.00)	9 (7.50)
5.	Agricultural information on social media is reliable.	68 (56.67)	34 (28.33)	18 (15.00)
6.	I prefer social media over traditional sources for farm information.	72 (60.00)	29 (24.17)	19 (15.83)
7.	YouTube videos help me understand farming techniques better.	89 (74.17)	22 (18.33)	9 (7.50)
8.	WhatsApp groups are useful for quick agricultural advice.	90 (75.00)	21 (17.50)	9 (7.50)
9.	Facebook pages provide useful agricultural updates.	66 (55.00)	34 (28.33)	20 (16.67)
10.	Instagram or reels help me learn farming practices quickly.	62 (51.67)	35 (29.17)	23 (19.16)
11.	Social media helps me connect with agricultural experts.	70 (58.33)	32 (26.67)	18 (15.00)
12.	Social media improves my decision-making in farming.	75 (62.50)	29 (24.17)	16 (13.33)
13.	I use social media to solve farm-related problems.	73 (60.83)	31 (25.84)	16 (13.33)
14.	Government agricultural schemes are easily known through social media.	78 (65.00)	28 (23.33)	14 (11.67)
15.	Social media reduces the need to depend on traditional extension services.	58 (48.33)	34 (28.33)	28 (23.34)
16.	Overall, social media is an effective tool for agricultural knowledge dissemination.	88 (73.33)	23 (19.17)	9 (7.50)

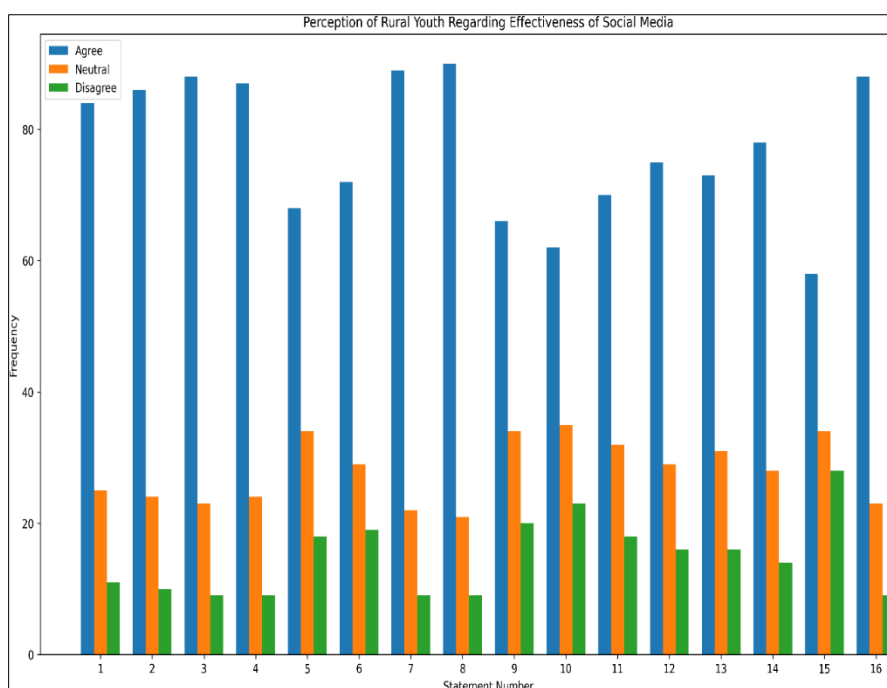


Fig 2: Distribution of respondents according to the effectiveness of social media and agricultural information resources

The findings are in line with Kumar *et al.* (2023) ^[2], who reported that social media empowered agricultural youth by providing opportunities for continuous learning and access to information on improved and modern farming practices. Similarly, Madhushekar *et al.* (2023) ^[3] found that 84.16 per cent of farmers used social media for agricultural information, highlighting its effectiveness as a modern agricultural communication channel.

Conclusion

The study concluded that social media has become an important channel for accessing and disseminating agricultural information among rural youth. The majority had medium levels of digital literacy (53.33%), social media usage (51.67%) and social media intensity (51.67%). YouTube (75.83%) and WhatsApp (73.33%) were the most commonly accessed platforms, particularly for farming practices, pest and disease management (65.83%), weather information (61.67%) and expert advice (60.00%). Further, 73.33 per cent of respondents considered social media effective for agricultural knowledge dissemination, while 75.00 per cent found WhatsApp useful for quick agricultural advice. Thus, social media has considerable potential to strengthen agricultural extension among rural youth, although it should be used as a complementary channel alongside conventional extension service. These findings are consistent with Singh *et al.* (2021) ^[8], who reported that YouTube, WhatsApp and Facebook were preferred by rural youth for agricultural information and with Madhushekar *et al.* (2024) ^[3], who found that 84.16 per cent of farmers used social media for agriculture-related information.

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