Volume 17 Issue 8
Originally issued as E1

Global Journal of Management and Business Research: E Marketing
Volume 17 Issue 1 Version 1.0 Year 2017
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-4588 & Print ISSN: 0975-5853

A Study on Role of Social Media in Agriculture Marketing and its Scope

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From the analysis it is found that social media is very useful tool in agricultural marketing. It saves time and cost of the farmers for getting information. Facebook is the most likely social media for pages and profiles. YouTube videos are most popular for information getting with applications. WhatsApp is is the handy use of social media and mostly preferred for related groups. Many officials are having their official pages, blogs, and groups on social media and it helps in getting information and solving the problems. Challenges were adoption of social media as tool of marketing. People are less trusted on e-buying, e-selling of agricultural commodity on social media.

Keywords: *social media, information and communication technology (ITC), agricultural, farmers.*

GJMBR-E Classification: *JEL Code: M30*



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A Study on Role of Social Media in Agriculture Marketing and its Scope

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I. Introduction

It is called as today's world is world of 'Social Media'. Various social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp etc. are becoming greater ways of sharing information about agricultural produce and agricultural marketing. The use of social media in agricultural marketing is increasing rapidly now days. Many service provider companies are giving better facilities to the farmers. Eg. BSNL is providing mahakrishi plan. Social media allows users to communicate directly with the customers, service providers; information sharing centers etc. farmers are using social media to increase their produce at each stage. Social media and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) starts sharing of creation, information and advices for the particular cause. Increasing networking of mobile phones in rural areas, increases two way communication. Social media is becoming powerful tool and connects millions of people globally. Farmers are using social media because it has ability to connect with farmers, agribusiness, agri experts over a geographical distance. Up to certain extent social media in agricultural marketing provides solutions to the agricultural marketing problems. The main purpose of social media is sharing information and creating awareness. The most popular social media among farmers is Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp etc. In addition to use of social media is on personal basis, they tell their stories of success, failure etc., they also shares updates regarding harvesting, post harvesting, promoting agricultural produce, market information, answering problems of farmers if it is related to their known areas. Social media is very different form traditional media. The users of social media are creating their own groups, pages, community, blogs to share information. In this group they are also selling, buying agricultural commodities. It can be done by sending images, pictures, links, videos etc.This sharing of information facilitates the marketing of farmers produce and formation of network. There are many blogs covering agricultural marketing related information.

a) Definitions of Social Media

A definition that focuses on the interpersonal networking dimensions (e.g. Facebook) "We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site."

For the purposes of this paper we are going to use the following working definition:

Social media enable people to create, publish, share, collaborate, discuss and network through a wide range of new, mainly digital, formats and platforms.

Different types of Social media: Blogs, Microblogs (Twitter), Conversational threads, Social Photos, Social Networking (Facebook, LinkedIn), Video Sharing (YouTube). Metrics on Social

A main benefit of social media in agricultural marketing is ability to gain wealth of knowledge and ideas, opportunity to establish key partnership, opportunity to reach wider consumers, experts in agricultural field.

Media: Internet, Mobile Phones, Networks.

Facebook: People have their own profile brand, pages, groups

LinkedIn: Connects with professionals, share information related or becomes a resources

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Twitter: Follows agricultural marketing experts, tweets regularly, share information, join Twitter Charts.

YouTube: Upload / download videos related

WhatsApp: Groups related to agricultural marketing

b) Challenges of Social Media use in Agricultural Marketing

1. Adoption of social media as a tool of agricultural marketing.
2. There is a limited access to social media because of data, network etc.
3. There is a need of training and education about use of social media in agril marketing.
4. People are less trusted on e-buying, e-selling of agricultural commodity on social media.
5. All the activities are restricted by time, technology, networks etc.
6. Cost of technology use in agricultural marketing is more.

II. Literature Review

Social media overcomes geographical boundaries and creates communities who share common interests. The users also seek out information from traditional media social media platforms. Rhoades and Hall (2007) noted that there was a large presence of blogs covering topics on agriculture. The study adopted the uses and gratification theory which explain the motivation that makes users choose a certain media to satisfy their specific needs. These needs develop out of the social environment. The theory states that receivers select the types of media and media contents to fulfill their needs. Uses and gratification links need gratification to a specific medium choice that rests with the audience member.

Social Media in agricultural marketing has a positive impact on the interaction with consumers, the company or brand awareness and sales (Conrad Caine 2012; Uitz 2012)

The use of social media in the field of agricultural marketing offers great opportunities for the buying, selling of agricultural commodities (Bitcom 2012)

a) Objectives

1. To study role of social media in agricultural marketing.
2. To study challenges of social media in agricultural marketing.
3. To suggest various social media and their use.

III. Research Methodology

This study is based on descriptive research over a social media purposively because researcher wants to know the use of social media who meets the characteristic of the study. For this study researcher selected 100 resonances randomly and focus group discussion for the collection of the data from the farmers.

Results and Findings of the study

Age (Yrs)	Frequency	%
20 - 30	30	30
30 - 40	42	42
40 - 50	25	25
≥ 50	3	4

The data shows that major respondents are from the age group of 30-40 years i.e. 42 %. Below that the age group is 20-30 yrs i.e. 30%.

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	91	91
Female	9	9

The data shows that major respondents are from the gender male i.e. 91 % and female respondents are 9 %. While interviewing with farmers it is found that male farmers are getting more time to use social media as compared to female farmers

Education	Frequency	%
Illiterate	6	6
Non Matrix	44	44
Matrix	30	30
Graduate	16	16
Post Graduate	4	4

The data shows that most of the respondents were non matrix i.e. 44 % followed by Matrix i.e 30 %.

While interviewing with farmers it is found that farmers are able to operate mobile phones and social media on it.

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Do you have account on social media?

Yes	56	56
No	44	44

The data shows that most of the respondents have account on social media websites.

Social Media

Parameter	Frequency	Rank
Facebook	28	2
Twitter	12	4
YouTube	18	3
LinkedIn	2	5
WhatsApp	50	1

The data shows that most of the respondents are having account on social media. Most of them are using WhatsApp followed by Facebook and YouTube.

Frequently of visiting Social Media

Parameter	Frequency	%
Daily	23	41
Weekly	16	29
Fortnightly	12	21
Sometimes	5	9

The data shows that most of the respondents are visiting Social media daily i.e. 41%.

Use of social media in agricultural marketing for

Parameter	Frequency	Rank
Information seeking	34	1
Sharing information	12	5
Selling / buying of agri commodity	13	4
Solution of problem	28	2
Market rates	21	3
Branding of agri commodity	9	6

The data shows that most of the respondents are using social media for information seeking followed by Solution of problem. From the interview of the respondent it is found that farmers are seeking information on YouTube videos, because the visualize the thing.

How likely are you to view pictures / videos that are posted on social media?

Very Likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
12	21	7	12	4

The data shows that most of the respondents are likely for to view pictures / videos that are posted on social media.

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Problems in using social media in agricultural marketing

Parameter	Frequency	Rank
Adoption of social media as a tool of agricultural marketing.	21	4
There is a limited access to social media because of data, network etc.	45	1
No training and education about use of social media in agril marketing.	35	2
People are less trusted on e-buying, e-selling of agricultural commodity on social media.	34	3

IV. Findings

Many organizations are having their official pages, blogs, and groups on social media. It is having prompt response for the question. It saves time and cost of the farmers. Farmers getting right information on right time. For example weather report. Network providing companies are giving more data in lesser prices. It helps farmers to browse more. Young farmers believes more on use of social media in agricultural marketing. They seek more information on YouTube and Facebook. WhatsApp is the most likely app among farmers.

V. Conclusion

The results of the study shows role of social media in Agricultural Marketing is dominated by males. The age group of farmers is following most between 30-40 yrs who are using social media effectively. Most of the farmers are using mobile phones nowadays with internet and social media applications in it. Farmers are making use of social media for innovative practices, sharing information etc. the most popular social media in agricultural marketing is Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter and LinkedIn. Most of them login to social sites daily. Various problems in use of social media in agricultural marketing is studied. These social media outlets also provide a platform for those who do not approve of modern agriculture practices.

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