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ICT enabled approach for agricultural extension

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Agriculture continues to be main occupation and way of life for more than half of Asian population even today. It is essential to improve the accessibility of communication technology to rural population and to improve its relevance to local development.

Information and communication technology (ICT) offer a very good mix of tool to make agricultural extension more effective, more relevant and more credible with minimum investment. The ICT can help the agriculture extension more dynamic instrument of continuous two way dialogue with farmer on various issues including agricultural marketing and other forward linkages.

Cyber extension means using the power of online network, computer communication and digital interactive multimedia to facilitate the dissemination of agricultural technology. The ICT enabled extension is not the replacement of existing face to face to extension mechanism, but it may be supplement to make the existing mechanism more effective efficient and economical.

The continuous rapid development of telecommunication and computer based information technology is probably the biggest factor for change in extension, one which will facilitate and reinforce other changes. Broad basing agricultural extension activity, developing farming system, research and extension having location specific modules of research and extension and promoting market extension, sustainable agricultural development where ICT can play an important role.

Hence there is need to incorporate ICT in all endeavors related to agricultural development. All the organizations and departments concerned with agricultural development need to realize the potential of ICT for speedy dissemination of information to the farmers. ICT enabled extension hold strong potential to improve the efficacy and efficiency of the agricultural extension system. Now there is need to launch the countrywide project to capture and digitize the whole agricultural research knowledge and make it available to farmers at their door step in best possible way. ICT enabled extension will prove a powerful approach to rediscover the agricultural extension itself.

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