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Digital Marketing Practices Adopted by Agricultural Service Companies in India

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ABSTRACT

All of the services required to transport a farm product from the farm to the consumer are generally considered to be part of agriculture marketing. Over the past 60 years, there have been many changes to the agriculture marketing system as a result of an increase in marketed surplus, higher urbanisation and income levels, corresponding changes in the structure of demand for marketing services, as well as increased connections with distant and foreign markets. Reduced marketing expenses are the main objective of agricultural marketing. E-Agriculture or e-Agribusiness refers to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the agricultural sector. e-Agribusiness. Every aspect of the agri-food chain will be affected by digitalization, but it will necessitate big changes in farming, rural economics, and produce marketing.

Farmers gain from ICT use in agriculture since it enables them to learn about the market and sell their products. In the digital era, the whole agriculture industry may be transformed. ICT assists small farmers in locating various purchasers for producers ready to pay a premium. Small business owners deal with a small number of buyers who either pick up from them or pay them directly. Market distortions can be reduced by using a mobile application that provides price information to farmers. M- farm mobile application are used globally in Kenya enable sales collective by allowing users to locate farmers, input dealers, purchasers, and storage warehouses. Farmers are obtaining better market prices, according to the research. Farmers in China's agriculture industries traditional plan their crop depending on previous season's sales.

Farmers now have access to consumer sales data through Alibaba's flash sale and marketing platform "Juhuasuan" and its virtual farming feature "Jutudi" so they can more precisely plan crops based on recent consumer patterns. It allows customers to order agricultural products in advance of harvest. To avoid middlemen, it works directly with cooperatives and farmers. The government of Tamil Nādu offers the Uzhavan app for marketing products as one of the services it provides, as well as many other digital apps from other state governments to notify farmers about timely and accurate agricultural production and market information. This article provides an overview of current digital agriculture marketing services.

Keywords : Agriculture Marketing, Agriculture produce, Information Communication Technology, Digital Marketing

Introduction

India is an agricultural country that is directly or indirectly dependent upon the agricultural sector. India has placed a strong emphasis on agricultural production, ranking second in the world such as crops rice, fruits, and vegetables after China. Marketing is getting crucial in the field of agricultural products to consumers, selling output, obtaining a fair price, building relationships, and delighting customers. Agriculture marketing has been assumed that includes all services involved in getting a farm product from the farm to the end user. Planning, organising, grading, packaging, holding, processing food, distributing and marketing are all made easier with it. Due to increased marketed surplus, rising urbanisation, and income levels, and subsequent changes in the pattern of demand for marketing services, the agriculture marketing system has undergone many changes over the previous 60 years.

Important factors that affect the anticipated result The application of (ICT) in the agricultural industry is known as e-agriculture or e-agribusiness. Every aspect of the agri-food chain will be affected by digitalization, but it will necessitate big changes in farming, rural economics, and produce marketing. Farmers gain from ICT use in agriculture since it enables them to learn about the market and sell their products.

Literature Review

Jairath, M. (2012), "variance proliferation of regulated markets throughout the presence of requisite infrastructure in these controlled markets,

amenities/facilities the benefits to farmers from selling A regulated market's agricultural products differ from region to region.

Balu (2020), "inadequate' extension services and limited access to information cause a gap in the adoption of technology and low levels of productivity in the agricultural sector. He also made the point that timely information is essential for the development of Indian agriculture. A digital technology solution enables effective engagement of agribusiness by young farmers.

Oseremen Ebhote (2020), "came to the conclusion that digital marketing is a highly effective transformation for agricultural development. The government must take the required actions to increase farmer knowledge of digital marketing.

Sudhakar Reddy (2021), "digital marketing' platforms are beneficial to farmers since they raise the selling price and lower the marketing expense of their agricultural product, such as cotton lint, maize grains, paddy, and vegetables, among others. A useful tool for company and information, digital marketing. He also says that the marketing of large amounts of crops is aided by digital media. He recommended that the Indian government and state governments adopt strategies and policies for the sustainable development of the digital agriculture sesector

Research Methodology

The current study is supported by secondary data the various secondary information sources used for the present research paper include the journals ,google survey form, magazines, and Agricultural related websites.

Research Objectives

1. To study the digital agricultural marketing services in India.
2. To study the benefits and drawbacks of digital services for agricultural marketing.
3.To research ways to enhance digital agriculture marketing in India.

E-choupal

It was released in 2000 by Indian Tobacco Company Limited. (ITC). By use of the internet, e-Choupal links rural farmers with agricultural and aquaculture goods including coffee, soyabeans, and prawns. Farmer-to-farmer pricing and sale negotiations will be possible in rural regions because to ITC distribution of computers and internet access. Farmers are informed about mandi pricing, suitable farming practises, weather forecasts, and ordering agricultural supplies fertilizers, seeds Sanchalak oversees the ITC kioski (a literate and trained farmer).the laptop that Sanchalak uses is at his house and has internet access. A single kiosk may provide services to 600 farmers from ten settlements within a 5-kilometer range. Middlemen are wholly unnecessary as a result. Since the launch of e-Croupal services, farmers' earnings have improved. In 30000 communities throughout 10 states, there are currently 7900 e-Choupals in operation.

Reliance Group

The Reliance Group is a business conglomerate based in It plans to buy around 2000 acres in Karnataka for its contract farming enterprise, which could become a major hub for farm produce exports. Warehouses will be built across the state in the near future. Farmers would supply fresh fruits and vegetables to Reliance Fresh Stores, the company's first model, as they would benefit tremendously from selling directly to Reliance. Transportation expenses are decreased as a consequence.

Agmarknet

The Agricultural Marketing Information Network (AMIN) is a DMI-sponsored initiative to provide a national information network for the quick gathering and transmission of pricing, commodity, sales, arrival, and contract farming information. In March of 2000, it was established by the ministry of agriculture of the union. This connect the 7000 wholesalers. marketplaces for agricultural in India. The web is accessible not just in English but also in eight regional tongues. This covers 350 different commodities over more than 3252 different markets.

E-nam

National Agriculture Market, often known as E-Nam, is an online trading platform for agricultural products in India that was established on April 14, 2016. Farmers, merchants, and purchasers may exchange commodities online thanks to the market. The market aids in better pricing determination and offers options for efficient marketing of products. By January 2018, the market's transactions totaled 36,200 crore (410 billion or US$5.4 billion in 2020), the majority of which were intra-market. It now has a list of over 90 commodities that are accessible for trade, including essential foods like grains, vegetables, and fruits.

The eNAM marketplaces are proving to be popular since the crops are weighed right away, the stock is published the same day, and the payments are processed online. In February 2018, some alluring features including MIS dashboard, HIM and other mobile payments, improved features on the mobile app such gate admission and payment using mobile phones and farmers database is helping adoption even further. The majority of trading at the moment is intra-market, but it will gradually be expanded to include inter-market and inter-state trading, resulting in the creation of a single national market for agricultural commodities. Through an electronic trading network, 585 marketplaces from 16 states are linked. Farm products have been exchanged on e-NAM in excess of 164.53 lakh tonnes. In order to save production, it was developed to transport agricultural products from one market

to another in an easy and effective method.

Nafed

The Indian government's top organisation for cooperative marketing is the National Association for Cooperative marketing in Agriculture (Nafed). The Maharashtra Grape Growers Association is one of the most venerable and effective farmer organisations. Nafed, an organisation that was established in 1958, encourages the cooperative selling of with its own branches and the cooperative marketing network, agricultural product are sold for the benefit of farmers. It directly gathers agricultural products from farmer in regulated marketplaces, cutting out the middleman. In India, the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (Nafed) serves as the umbrella body for marketing cooperatives for agricultural products. Nafed has access to every geographic region in the nation, including the most isolated rural areas, through the network of its cooperative societies and marketing federations. In order to effectively execute and realise the objectives of the PMFME programme, MoFPI and Nafed have engaged into an MoU given Nafed's competence in the production, marketing, and branding of agricultural goods.

Nafed has an extensive sales and distribution network spanning various channels and formats.

a) Nafed Bazar Chain - Nafed operates several stores, through its Consumer Marketing Division, under the brand Nafed Bazaar for retailing grocery and consumer items at affordable prices. The Nafed Bazaar chain will soon be expanded to a network of over 200 stores across India. b) Institutional Sales - Nafed also supplies grocery items, stationary & office supplies and various other FMCG products to a large number of government institutions. c) Direct Sales Channel - Nafed will soon launch a Direct Sales Channel for retailing niche and unique items, directly to customers, through a dedicated team of Nafed trained Direct Sales Partners and Kisan Kart vending carts. d) Quick Service Retail Stores - Nafed is also coming up with Quick Service Retail Stores (QSRS) which are smaller sized retail stores for locations that witness high footfalls of primarily office employees and students such as Metro, ISBT, Indian Railway Stations, Schools and Colleges.

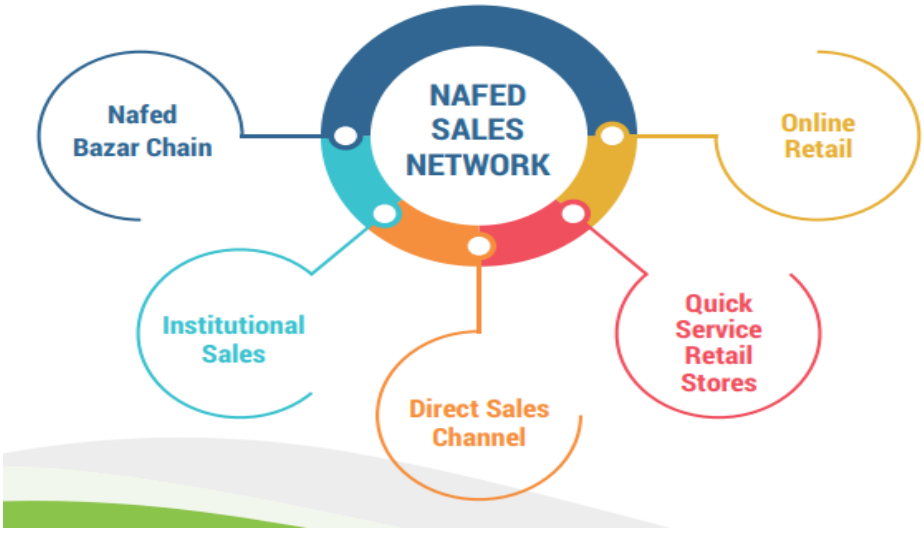

Figure No. 1 Nafed Sales Network.

Ikisan

- Ikisan's site www.Ikisan.com is the leading Agri portal to answer the diverse demands of the agriculture sector.
- Ikisan is a pioneer in the field of utilising the internet and IT technologies in the field of agriculture.
- Ikisan uses an integrated strategy and gives farmers Total Solutions.
- Ikisan has created both online and offline strategies while keeping in mind connectivity's practicalities.
- Ikisan has created cutting-edge interactive models so that even people with low literacy levels may identify issues with their crops and find appropriate remedies.
- Turnkey project conception, design, and implementation are areas of competence for Ikisan. ECIL collaborated on the implementation of a project from the Technology Mission for Cotton, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The goal of the project is to create software for cotton that will help farmers, deploy it in 250 agricultural market yards throughout 10 cotton-growing states in India, and allow farmers to use it via PCs and touch-screen kiosks.
- Ikisan has a track record of success building a network of kiosks that provide farmer services on a subscription basis.
- Ikisan can provide feasibility study studies for Argo products and export-processing enterprises by drawing on its domain expertise.
- On a turnkey basis, Ikisan provides end-to-end communication services in the field of farm extension services.
- Ikisan and the Government of Andhra Pradesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on the Rural E-Seva Project, which calls for the construction of about 6,000 information kiosks in rural parts of the state for the objectives of e-governance and information

distribution.

The only organisation with a specific mission and the capacity to use information technology to its full potential throughout the Agri-value chain. It offers information regarding, among other things, management procedures, weather, and market prices for goods.

Cargill offers a secure marketing platform that is free of commissions and brokerage fees. It's a for-profit venture aimed at eliminating market inefficiencies and middlemen in crop marketing. Hindustan Unilever Limited and the Khadi Gramodyog Board of Madhya Pradesh have joined forces in a private public collaboration. It's a joint project with the umbrella type brand "Vindhya Valley." In Kolhapur, Maharashtra, the "Warna Bazaar" milk cooperative group has more than 40 shops that serve as a one-stop shop for agricultural supplies. Mahindra and Mahindra established the 2000 to offer agricultural extension services and buy a sizable quantity of products from farmers. With Aadhar retail locations in Gujarat and Punjab, Godrej and Future Group are able to purchase directly from farmers. Krishivihar.com.agriwatch.com and commodityindia.com are two further websites that offer market data. In India, social media is being utilised to empower and organise small farmers. Small-scale tea producers in West Bengal, India, developed a website last year that was connected to Facebook and Twitter, enabling them to speak with global customers directly. For instance, turmeric producers in the Sangli region of Maharashtra utilised Facebook's Mobile Messenger to organise themselves and prevent a potentially disastrous price reduction brought on by surplus. Tens of thousands of turmeric growers might be reached through communication.

App Uzhavan

The Tamil Nadu government released a bilingual (Tamil and English) smartphone app to promote the usage of Tamil. Technology benefits farmers. It provided farmer with 12 crucial agricultural services, including real time data. Information on agricultural commodities; prices and distribution channels. The Uzhavan app's e-market function, which was unveiled on May 1 in the thick of the lockdown, has assisted farmers in getting a fair price for their goods by offering a platform that connects them with buyers online.

A seller, who is usually a farmer, can upload pictures and details of their crop. Similarly, the buyers can register to choose the crops they are interested in and the district that they would like to purchase from.

“The main aspect is that both the sellers as well as the buyers can access the contact number of each of them and carry forward with their transaction. The government just provides a platform for facilitating the trade and is not directly involved in the transaction,” said P. Venkatachalapathy, Deputy Director of Agriculture (Information Technology and ATMA).

Principal Secretary (Agriculture) Gagandeep Singh Bedi said the feature was introduced after farmers from several parts across the State echoed that they could not sell their produce at a good price during the lockdown.

App Napanta

A digital agricultural platform is working to overcome inefficiencies in the pre harvest management of agricultural product in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh communities with better market connection. Farmer have access to three year pricing trends for 300 commodities as well as real time data on daily market prices from more than 3500 agri markets. It speaks both Telegu and English.

It provides information about geo-climatic conditions of a particular location made available by Agriculture University of Telangana. It guides farmers in how and where to get the soil test done free of cost and depending on the nature of soil what will be the amount of urea to be used.He believes such information will take care of the needs of population of farmers but for specific doubts they can still get in touch with Agriculture Forum of NaPanta, comprising agriculture scientists, retired agriculture officers and other experts.

According to the needs of his crop cycle, a farmer may also purchase or rent agricultural equipment, and he or she can sell their goods for the greatest price possible without the need of a middleman thanks to an app that connects the buyer and the seller directly.

“Farming is not dependent on single advisory. From seed, fertilizer and pesticide recommendation to market linkage and equipment, it is a combination of various services. We identified these and tried to provide what all important things a farmer needs in his day-to-day life,” he told The Federal.From someone who had no knowledge of agriculture when he started in 2016, Naveen Kumar has come a long way and developed good insights into the sector and what ails the system. “Small and marginal farmers depend on third parties for their every need. The representatives of seed, fertilizer and pest control companies try to push the products for an extra profit landing the farmers in trouble,” he said.

Before starting NaPanta, Naveen Kumar co-founded apnaloanbazaar.com, a retail loan distribution service online. He had previously worked as a credit relationship manager for ICICI Bank and then as a credit risk manager for HDFC Bank.

Napata was developed at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and with the institute's assistance, it was able to interact with agricultural input suppliers, reach farmers, and do commerce.

However, as nobody was ready to invest in advisory services to farmers, the start-up had to find its own revenue model through equipment rentals. While for farmers it is free service, Napata charges a small sum from this want to rent out the equipment.

Data Analysis

Table 1. How many agricultural applications do you know?

Less than	82%
10 and more	16%
More than 50	4%

Table 2. Importance of selling agricultural product.

Quality product	43%
Good advertising	19%
Price	25%
Distribution	16%

Table 3. Main negativities when selling agricultural products.

Rapid deterioration of the product	68%
Low quality of the	15%
Negative marketing	5%
High cost	19%

Table 4 Factors considered by farmers to use digital marketing platforms to reduce the marketing cost& to increase the selling price.

Sr.No.	Factors Considered	No. of respondents	%
1	Their agricultural product's qualities assured for long period	125	75.40
2	No middle men & less storage cost	130	63.20
3	Minimum logistics' issues	143	71.60
4	Maximum price to their products	89	70.50
	Total farmers sample	500	100

Solution utilising information and communication technology to improve agriculture marketing

Communication Technology Government meddling over many years has led to the present agricultural marketing system in place today. In the modern digital environment, we are able to completely transform the agriculture sector. Small farmers are helped by ICT in finding a variety of buyers who are willing to pay a premium for their products. Small company operators deal with a select group of clients who either pick up their goods or make direct payments to them. By deploying a mobile application that gives farmers pricing information, market distortions can be lessened. M-Farm mobile applications offer sales collective in Kenya, where users may find farmers, input dealers, buyers, warehouses for storage, loans, and other services. It has been stated that farmers are earning higher market prices as a result of these collective sales. Utilizing blockchain technology, it is possible to quickly and effectively identify subpar food across the food chain. By letting customers know where their food comes from, it provides companies who utilise it a competitive edge. Blockchain is being used by Walmart to trace each bag of lettuce and spinach from the farm to the shop. 100 farmer provide leafy green vegetables to Walmart will have to input data about their goods into a blockchain database. It helps to guarantee the food supplied to customers is fresh. Initiatives from the business sector successfully update farmers on a regular basis. Technology developments have increased the efficiency of China's agriculture sector. Farmers have traditionally planned their produce in accordance with sales from the preceding season. Alibaba's flash sale is an excellent method to save money, and the marketing platform "Juhuasuan" features a feature called "Jutudi" that simulates farming and gives access to consumer sales information allow farmer to better plan their crops depending on prevailing consumer trends Customers may order agricultural products ahead of the harvest thanks to it. It engages with cooperatives and farmers directly to cut out intermediaries. The reductions offered to customers range from 30 to 50 percent off the going rate. Chinese e-commerce sites like "Pinduoduo" are engaged in similar activities. With over 11 million daily active users, the "Duo Duo orchard" virtual agricultural function was released in 2018. The welfare of farmers in India is significantly impacted through ITCs e-choupal, APMC, AGMARKNET, M&M, Gojrej Group, and other companies. A focus is placed on cash crops, which are produced by smallholder farmers and marketed in order to provide money for rural residents. Agricultural goods vary from basics to

high-value crops.

Conclusion

The smallholder farmers who utilise agricultural marketing applications, smartphones have the potential to revolutionise the game. It increases consumer knowledge of market costs and agriculture product demand.Despite all of these possibilities, it's crucial to keep in mind that there isn't a single, effective response to every problem. More benefits will most likely be recaptured if you have more sophisticated marketing talents than if you don't. In order to give suitable solutions to farmers, the agriculture extension mechanism is becoming increasingly reliant on technology. To encourage digital agripreneurship, businesses must develop a pool of digitally trained workers. If the uphoven app is actively advertised on social media, it will attract more farmers who do not already use it by demonstrating its value to them and how it differs from other m-Agri applications. A well-planned kind of communication, advertising makes use of both verbal and nonverbal clues. The government and a number of companies are investing in agriculture marketing initiatives for the benefit of farmer Digital agriculture marketing will be crucial in the next years to tripling farmer revenue and doubling farmer production.

The government and many companies are investing in agriculture marketing
solution for welfare of farmers. Digital Agricultural Marketing will play a vital role in the years
to come in doubling the farmers produce and tripling the Income of the farmers

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