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CELLULAR APPS FOR STRENGTHENING EXTENSION TOOLBOX

^aSaleem Ashraf, ^bZakaria Y. Hassan*

^a In-Service Agricultural Training Institute, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan.

^b Directorate of Agricultural Extension & Adaptive Research, Punjab, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

Availability of accessible information for farmers is hot topic. Many extension personals continue to use traditional extension methods to collect data rather than adopting new approaches like social media providing opportunity for exchanging information and keeping electronic logs for future practice. Cellular apps like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, LINE and Viber are presented here to be the part of extension toolbox. Discussed apps hold potential to exchange information in text, audio and video form not only individually but also in groups. Information dissemination is free of cost and could be more effective through problems and solution sharing form extension agents to farmers and from farmers to farmers creating feasibility of farmer-to-farmers extension. On the basis of analysis integration and usage of cellular apps among extension personal is strongly recommended and farmers must be motivated to adopt and use these cellular app to get the solution of their problems.

Keywords: Social media, cellular apps, extension.

INTRODUCTION

The Main purpose of extension is to approach farmers for their facilitation, either it is under the jurisdiction of cooperative extension of USA or any other extension system globally. Technological advancements in social media have made contact an easy in modern world (Parsons, 2005). However, still many extension personnel and community leaders continue to use existing methods to collect data rather than adopting latest innovative methods like social media (Kinsey, 2010). Social media is capable of to provide opportunities for exchanging information and keeping electronic logs for future use. Waters *et al.* (2009) highlighted the usage of social media about non-profit organizations to streamline their management functions, interact with volunteers and donors for educating others about their services and programs. Through diversified interactions with stakeholders on Facebook and other social media applications, organizations tend to build associations with important publics. Kelleher (2006) encourages policy practitioners to utilize internet services and social networking to advocate for their

organizations and services. Use of social media is rapidly increasing. Similarly, with the increase of social media, Extension has been challenged stick to clients using digital tools. Survey conducted in North Carolina depicted that respondents do believe digital technology should be integrated to Extension Programme (Alston, 2012). For the long term engagements of extension programs use of social media like Facebook and twitter etc. is main buzz from recent past. Present manuscript is illustration of usage of "Cellular Apps" to make extension contact easier with community particularly farming communities.

Cellular Apps: Cellular apps are also known as mobile applications/apps being used to define internet applications that execute on smartphone and other devises like windows phones as well. Apps helpful for the users by connecting to internet services more commonly accessed on notebook computers or desktop computers and also enable the users to use internet services on their portable devices. A mobile app may be a website bookmark utility or a mobile based instant messaging client, Gmail or mobile and many other applications. However, mobile instant messaging is the most promising function of app enabling community members to share their ideas in the form of text, audio, video or pictorial

* Corresponding Author:

Email: saleem1828@gmail.com

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form without any cost. Henceforth, present manuscript is more focused on mobile based instant message social media clients like Whatsapp, Viber, Line and Messenger.

Whatsapp: WhatsApp is available with the facility of built in WhatsApp messenger by to making more effective media of communication. WhatsApp is alternative to text messaging app. It is claimed that 100-500 million are using this facility and the pace of joining of followers is also increasing day by day. Moreover, now video has also multiplying its effectiveness. Peoples around the world are anxious to get know the use of WhatsApp due to cost free communication services.

The attaching multimedia to messaging is an enough reason to get access to this app. Furthermore, chat and groups chat can be carried out through this media globally without cost. WhatsApp Messenger is currently available for windows, iPhone, Blackberry, Android phones of all concerned brands and all of those phones can message one another as well. Therefore, above mentioned merits would enhance the adoption of this unique mode of communication in the long run. WhatsApp is a vital source of communication which can help communities to gain additional input regarding planning for development through interaction by virtue of that can rectify thinking, idea and their executional approach. This will facilitate Extension and other leaders to serve better through community oriented approach.

Facebook Messenger: Facebook is one of the most known social media tool which has tendency to attract users to create an interactive web page for sharing mutual interested information amongst one and other. It is rather difficult to be on webs page on cellular phones. This constraint has overcome through messaging on Facebook using Facebook messenger. Which are more efficient and enabling users to contact one and other through using Facebook messenger App on cell phone.

Information sharing in the form of text, image and video has now become easier. Whereas, app may lead users to main page of the Facebook with single click. Roundabout 50-100millions of users has already been on the Facebook messenger and numbers are increasing day by day. By keeping this figure if the users use the access the Facebook it would be a huge quantity of respondents with number of ideas and innovation to share one another. By the concept the extension will be more affective through Facebook messenger for sharing productive information in order to enhance the rate of adaptations of Good Agricultural Practices in the long run resultantly; the

administrative can assure food security to each and every masses of this globe.

LINE: LINE had also very impressive effects on exchange messages with person of common fog free of cost. This mode of media has ability to exchange messages within individuals and groups where voice and video calls facilities are also offered free of cost. Sharing of pictorial views, images and location information is also available without any cost. Increasing numbers of line users on the globe with tremendously fast track is evident of its popularity and success. Furthermore, LINE extends its access to all kind of atmospheres. In this context merits of LINE can also be undertaken for information sharing with farmers by strengthening extension system. By virtue of this mean extension agents can be enable for sharing latest information with the farmers that are research oriented with prescribed systematic bundle of remedies. Henceforth, this mode of information can be converted to cultural change phenomenon I agriculture in order to enhance productivity and profitability of the farmers in which they can serve prosper and healthy life.

VIBER: It is another cellular app with extensive potential to become the part of extension system for latest information sharing amongst farmers for their needs with redress of the remedies of their problems. s Viber users have also opportunity to exchange messages, audio and video calls free of cost with any advice or network in the country. iT has tremendous linkage with all networks and smartphones. This wide opportunity can be converted for the improvement of extension system in order to make bridge between the farmers and the extension agents as well as both of these with the research organizations. Viber access is available on 3G/4G and Wi-Fi networks. With the increase of number of smartphones with the farmer and other masses this makes the great platform to work Viber with extension system in order to enhance productivity and profitability of farmers by virtue of their problems and their remedies measures at all times. If it happens, it will bring a great revolution in the farmers' community for their prosperous life.

CONCLUSION

Traditional practices of gathering data and information dissemination are still practiced by extension personals. It is time for extension personals to make their toolbox full of new methods like cellular apps. Cellular apps are most viable sources to exchange free of cost information among farmers. Moreover, farmers' wider access to smartphone has made the adoption of apps easier for communication

process. Therefore, above narrated list of cellular apps available free of cost could be game changer in making extension work and facilitation easier, cost saving and effective.

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