Authors BIO-DATA

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Dr. Amol is basically engineering graduate. He has completed his Engineering degree in Electronics and Telecommunication and has also completed post gradugation in Computer Science from BAMU, Aurangabad University. He received his Ph.D from Aurangabad University with the topic for Ph.D as "Interactive Voice Response System for Rural "

Dr. Amol has total fifteen years experience in the field of Computer and Information Technology. He has developed many systems for the University.

For last Nine years, he is working as a Director in the Vidya Pratishthan's Institute Of Information Technology, Baramati. Dr. Amol's main area of interest is to work for poor people in the rural part of the India. In his nine years as a Director , he has designed number of computer labs ,which are economically sustainable to the rural schools and colleges. Dr. Amols's main innovation is Computer Mobile Van.

He has done lot of research work in Information Technolgy and its application for rural community. After seeing his work, Dr. Amol has received the Ashoka Fellow award in the year of 2002. He is engaged as a Technical advisor on many government and non-government organization. He is also a member of Planning commission government of India in Information Technology division. In his nine years as a director he has organized six international conferences in Baramati.

Credentials: Spreading the IT education to the masses. - For his work in rural areas in Maharashtra , Dr. Goje has received the Marathwada Bhushan award. Also received the Ashoka Fellowship. He is member of Working group on Agricultural Extension Constituted by Planning Commission government of India. He is key player in setting up the Community Training and learning centers (CTLC) in Maharashtra . In this project, VIIT is providing the basic computer training to the women from Self Help groups(SHG)

Dr. Goje has received the Manthan (AIF) award successively for two years in Year 2005 and 2006.

Role Community Radio in Agriculture

Summary:

The Indian agricultural sector is leveraging the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to disseminate the right information at the right time. The cost factor in face-to-face information dissemination and the difficulties in reaching the target audiences have necessitated the introduction of ICT in agriculture.

Use of Internet has given the globe a shrinking effect. Every kind of information is only a few clicks away. In today's world of competition –"information" is the key word to success. Availability of right information at the right time can make all the difference. Today relevant information outweighs the price of gold. The graphical user interface has simplified one of the most complex issues in the world. The time has come to exploit this medium to the best-suited interests in the other fields of life such as agriculture. India has surfaced as a country with a sound foothold in the field if Information technology. Large-scale investments are being made to enhance the potential of the information technology (IT) sector in India. Such investments would prove most cost-effective if the resources of the IT sector are blended with that of the agricultural sector in India thereby making the two ends of the thread meet. Various useful applications have been made to suit various requirements of the agricultural sector.

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. About two third of Indian population depends on the agricultural sector for their means of livelihood. It has been a roller coaster ride for the Indian agricultural sector since independence with many ups and downs. One of the remarkable ups being the 'Green Revolution', which resulted from the increase in the wheat production. The graph of agricultural production in independent India rose due to factors like bringing additional area under cultivation, extension of irrigation facilities, use of better quality seeds, advanced techniques, water management, and plant protection. Now imagine a scene where every aspect of yielding crops, right from selection of quality seeds-to threshing of the crop is aided by updated technology!! Imagine the potential, which can be tapped! All we need to do is exploit the resources of information technology and intertwine it with the conventional methods of yielding crops.The challenge here is to build

cost-effective IT based systems to improve the living standards of Indian rural population. The mission is to make cost effective IT based systems, which can enhance the yield of the crops thereby raising both the quality and quantity of the crops in India.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Community Radio) in Agriculture

What is community radio?

Community radio is a social process or event in which members of the community associate together to design programmes and produce and air them, thus taking on the primary role of actors in their own destiny, whether this be for something as common as mending fences in the neighbor hood, or a community-wide campaign on how to use clean water and keep it clean, or agitation for the election of new local leaders. The emphasis is on the ownership of democratic and development efforts by the members of the community themselves and the use of media, in this case radio, to achieve it. In every sense, this is participatory communication. It is above all a process, not a technology, not merely a means… [It is] the community speaking to each other and acting together for common goals.

There is no single definition of community radio and there are almost as many models as there are stations. Each community radio station is unique, a communication process shaped by a few over-arching characteristics and by the distinct culture, history, and reality of the community it serves. Among the characteristics that all community radio stations have in common are that they are community-based, independent and participatory.

The role of Community Radio in successful farmer-scientist collaborations

Community radio can facilitate cooperation between farmers and scientists, and make farmers the ultimate winners.

In many areas of the world, and for many reasons, farmers lack the necessary information to improve farm activities. Governments are cutting back extension services. And when farmers do receive information about the results of agricultural research, it is not always useful or relevant to their particular circumstances. This may be because farmers themselves have not

been involved in the process. Sometimes the methods designed to help farmers are unrealistic because they are too costly or rely on inaccessible resources. Or the information might be presented in a very technical way, or in an unfamiliar language.

When farmers and scientists work together, farmers get a chance to explain their problems and perspectives. Researchers can respond to problems identified by farmers, and create opportunities for new research that addresses local challenges.

Role of broadcasters

What is the role of radio in linking farmers with scientists?

Radio broadcasters are used to communicating with their audience in a familiar, conversational way. In consultation with researchers, broadcasters can help transform technical research results into radio programs that are interesting and easy to understand. They can broadcast in the languages of their listeners. At the same time they perform a useful service by publicizing the work of agricultural scientists. Agriculture is hard work and a risky business by nature. Community radio can also be used for the weather information for the day and forecast for the next three to four days with interpretation in terms of agricultural activities.

Sharing farmers Creativity and Innovations.:

Innovation and experimentation are important to farming and rural life. Innovations can be as simple as reorganizing a plot of land, or using a new storage technique. These simple changes can increase agricultural production and help manage the farm more efficiently.

The community radio is one of the most effective ways to share farmer innovation stories. With the help of programs developed with our support, farmers learn how to manage resources, increase yields, modify tools and reduce labour. On-air dialogues that offer new perspectives can help small-scale farmers – who usually don't have access to extension, training or the internet – share information relevant to their situation, and improve their knowledge and understanding of factors important to agricultural development.

WHY COMMUNITY RADIO IS THE ANSWER FOR (RURAL) AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT?

In rural areas television sets are not affordable, therefore community radio is more popular. Radio is a medium, which does not presuppose that people can read, therefore the people would listen to radio because they can understand the language or dialect it broadcasts in.

CHALLENGES FACED BY COMMUNITY RADIO

1) Lack of Human Resource capacity: There were stations with computers, but lack of skills to use them to access important news sites. As a result, such stations concentrated on local news, therefore lacking on national and international news. There is a definite need for ICT development in community radio stations to improve delivery.

2) The fact that community radio stations lose their excellent volunteers, who acquired experience through these stations, is a serious challenge. In some cases it has been difficult to replace whoever left, because there was no succession training, also a serious problem in these stations.

3) Finance: Some stations are doing well financially, but for others, this is a huge problem. In some cases, it is apparent that there is no innovation in fund-raising possibilities. The lack of funds makes it impossible for these stations to conduct any meaningful research or marketing for the station. Volunteer management is also a problem, due to lack of incentives.

The FM Radio station will be dedicated to being community focused and shall:

- Visit field and open days at research institutions. These events can provide the basis for interesting farm radio programs.
- Produce programs about local farmer-scientist collaborations.

- Through real-life stories and fictional drama, challenge the stereotypical views that farmers and scientists might have of one another.
- Involve agricultural researchers in the production of programs about their research.
- Make researchers available on air to take questions from farmers.
- Disseminate the latest agricultural technologies to the rural farming community with a view to reduce the time lag between the technologies generation and its adoption.
- Provide information on various agriculture related issues like weather information, best practice for a season, crop recommendations, pesticides, seeds availability etc.
- Provide information on government's various developmental schemes to different target groups for their use.

Provide a forum for exchange of ideas and a platform for expression to farmers and others who have been insignificant in the existing media.

Provide market rates from major regional markets in Maharashtra including local market in the Project Area.

Some day, new technologies and improved education might give farmers everywhere access to the information we have in our homes today. For now, radio is our medium of choice in our mission to share knowledge for a better world.

Because of its unrivalled access and its low production costs, radio is the technology that best meets the information and communication needs of farmers, world-wide.