

Chapter 7

Adoption of Information Communication Technologies in Enhancing Agricultural Productivity in Rural Kenya

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ABSTRACT

With the development of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), family engagement and to a larger extent social engagement has evolved from traditional media to digital media. Many countries have shifted from using agricultural extension officers to using of digital technology in accessing agriculture related information to enhance overall economic growth. Farmers in Kenya continue to face a multitude of problems to maximize crop and animal productivity. It is a fact that Kenya possesses valuable agricultural knowledge and expertise in addition to fertile soils.

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However, a wide information gap exists between research knowledge and the farmers. Farmers need timely expert advice to make them more productive and competitive.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, agricultural extension officers operated as intermediaries between research and farmers as they facilitated communication in helping farmers in their decision-making and ensuring that appropriate knowledge is implemented to obtain best results from Agricultural activities. Agricultural extension is one of the institutional sectors that advance the exchange and transfer of information that can be changed into useful knowledge. It fills in as a source of guidance and help for farmers in enhancing their marketing and production Agricultural extension is one of the oldest sub-disciplines of development communication. Servaes & Lie (2020) maintain that the agricultural extension officers play an important role in rural communication in regard to agriculture. These officers are often the first to be in direct contact with rural households, and so these people can signal rural household problems.

In Kenya, Agricultural extension services have been in existence since the establishment of the British Colonial government to offer guidance to farmers in order to boost agricultural production in addressing issues of food security. They provide crucial knowledge, building capacity, and connecting farmers to resources and markets, they also empower rural communities to achieve food security and economic prosperity.

Chelule, Munyua and Kibett (2022) argue that Agricultural extension services are put in place to improve rural development in many nations however their financing has been a major impediment in them accomplishing their mandate. They aver that in Ghana as much as the Department of Agriculture (DOA) is decentralized, it depends on the central government to support its work. Although this money is intended to be distributed quarterly, at the beginning of each quarter, the analysis discovered that they have not been forthcoming since 2012.

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