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PERSPECTIVE OF ICT IN STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SYSTEM: A REAL TIME SMS SERVICES THROUGH *MKISAN* PORTAL

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the key sector of Indian economy to provide foundation for sustainability of millions of farm families. Information sharing on new technologies of agriculture through efficient extension mechanism is imperative in order to bring changes in decision making capacity of farmers. In this new satellite era the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), particularly mobile telephony could be an opportunity to make information available at farmers' doorstep. In this context, Kisan SMS Portal (*mKisan*) has made an endeavor to disseminate information amongst the farmers through SMS system in local languages. In Assam, Agro Meteorological Field Units (AMFU) under the project Integrated Agro-met Advisory Services (IAAS) play the key role in disseminating relevant information to farmers through this portal. The present study was conducted with sixty randomly selected farmers from Golaghat District of Assam to explore the prospective of Short Message Services (SMS) provided by AMFU, jorhat through *mKisan*. The study revealed that the new way of agro-meteorological advisory service mechanism had a positive prospect in disseminating information amongst the farming community. However, to leverage full potential of information dissemination enabled by mobile telephony would require significant improvements in infrastructure support and capacity building amongst the human resources.

KEYWORDS: Agriculture, AMFU, IAAS, ITC, mKisan, SMS