

Identify the Usage Level of ICT-Based Knowledge Management Systems (IKMS) among Vegetable Farmers in Sri Lanka

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Information and communication technologies significantly bridge the information gap within communities towards creating a knowledge economy. Agriculture in Sri Lanka is one such sector that can derive benefits by providing the correct information at the right time to make actionable decisions. The use of information during the crop lifecycle helps farmers eliminate most of the daily issues. Information on cultivation methods, price fluctuations, supply, and demand is essential for farmers to make the right choices and get a better income. Having identified the essence of information and communication systems in bridging the information gap in farming communities, many mobile-based information systems have been introduced to the agriculture sector of Sri Lanka. We conducted a survey to understand how widespread these information systems among the farmer communities were, and found out that the use of such systems is very low among farmers. This survey was conducted among 54 farmers covering the major agriculture zones in Sri Lanka and findings of the study revealed that only 63% were aware of the available systems. In contrast, only 35% of the farmers use these applications to obtain information. Around 37% were unaware of the existence of applications though smartphone usage is recorded to be about 85%. This paper highlights the reasons for the lack of digital information systems usage among the farming community in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the paper will pave the path by highlighting the initiatives that can be carried out to increase the use and thus contribute toward a knowledge economy.

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