

Application of Social Network Analysis for studying Agricultural Knowledge and Information System (AKIS)

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural Extension has long been considered as a ‘broker’ of information between the research and client system. But, with the increasing use of soft system methodology, agricultural extension is now conceptualized within Agricultural Knowledge and Information System (AKIS) that embodies multiplicity of stakeholders and their interaction. Complexity in agricultural knowledge and information sharing network has increased sharply in the face of increased pressure on natural resources, rapid shift in farm-based to non-farm based employments, opening up of the economy and broadened mandates of extension organizations. This poses great challenge to the efficiency of extension systems. Extension services now need to cater to diverse information and service need of the farming community and extension institutions need to deliver services more efficiently. This often needs institutional restructuring at multiple levels. To achieve these challenges, a strong innovative analytical tool will be required for understanding the complexity of AKIS. Social Network Analysis (SNA) provides excellent scope to analyse such complex human managed systems. This article proposes an outline of using SNA in studying AKIS in Indian context. The analysis can provide answer to many questions of practical importance – who are the influential actors in an AKIS? Which are the key institutions contributing towards betterment of farming community? How do these institutions interact among themselves? This will help agricultural institutions to deliver extension services more efficiently through informed targeting and capacity building of key players.

Keywords: Agricultural Knowledge and Information System, Social network analysis, Agricultural Extension
