

EVALUATING THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN ENHANCING MARKET EFFICIENCY FOR FARMERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO CHENGALPATTU DISTRICT

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Abstract

This research investigates the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance agricultural market performance for smallholder farmers in the Chengalpattu District in Tamil Nadu. ICT interventions are recognized as pivotal in mitigating information asymmetry, lowering transaction costs, and broadening market access. India's e-NAM and Tamil Nadu's Uzhavan app exemplify such initiatives by offering real-time price information, transparent trading platforms, and direct farmer-buyer linkages. Chengalpattu, with its diverse agricultural landscape and strategic location, presents a compelling case study for examining the impact of ICT on price realization and market integration. This study adopts a quantitative research design, employing non-probabilistic purposive sampling to survey 100 respondents using a well-structured questionnaire. Building upon existing global and Indian research, we hypothesize that ICT adoption will reduce price dispersion, strengthen farmer bargaining power, and facilitate more efficient market arbitrage. While acknowledging the mixed results of some SMS-based services, this research contextualizes national and state ICT initiatives within Chengalpattu specific institutional environment. The analysis explores policy implications related to bolstering digital infrastructure, providing targeted farmer training, and fostering integration with platforms like e-NAM and Uzhavan. The study concludes by emphasizing that strategically designed ICT interventions, integrated with local extension services and farmer organizations, can significantly improve market efficiency for Chengalpattu farmers. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of rigorous, field-based quantitative validation to confirm these findings.

Keyword: ICT, Agricultural Marketing, Market Efficiency, E-NAM, Uzhavan App, Farmers, Price Information, etc.