

## **Technology mediated e-learning opportunities for agricultural extension professionals**

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Indian agriculture is witnessing many changes and to meet the challenges, extension system of the country needs to look for alternate ways of learning and training opportunities. E-learning can help in enabling extension workers to become knowledge workers. The study is mainly based on the results on e-readiness assessment among the agricultural extension personnel in rice growing regions of India. The study was conducted in three major rice growing states in the country. Information was collected from 300 agricultural extension professionals. The sampling was purposive and design was ex-post facto. Findings are focused on the e-readiness and other parameters of existing agricultural extension systems in assessing such feasibility. An analysis of the distribution of respondents based on ICT skills/ revealed moderate to high degree of ICT skills among the rice extension workers. Since majority of the respondents are willing to spend 30 minutes to one hour per week for updating their knowledge, e-learning strategies will work in Indian extension system. The study empirically proves that one way of providing the regular information and training support 24 X7 at their place of work and at their convenience is by adopting e-learning strategies. For using the e-learning strategies, various potential Knowledge Delivery Systems (RKDS) including - blended learning, online synchronous courses and online asynchronous courses are identified for the training organizations. The study is first of its kind in the extension systems of the developing world. The findings and discussion will help the researchers in identifying the key areas to focus on E-Learning strategies. Accordingly a case study is presented on e-learning platform developed with 18 e-courses.

### **Biography**

Vara Prasad C had his Bachelor's degree in Agriculture and Rural Development from Loyola Academy Degree College from Osmania University, Hyderabad (2004), and Masters Degree in Agriculture Extension from Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur. Now he is working as a Research Associate (Information and Communication Technology Enabled Extension) under NAIP-Project entitled "Development and Maintenance of Rice Knowledge Management Portal" in Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad. He has extensive research experience in developing e-learning courses and other online material for agricultural extension professionals. Technology mediated instructional design and online / offline delivery models are the key aspects his current research.

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