

**IMPACT OF CYBER AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AS A MEAN OF  
SUPPORTIVE SERVICE:  
(STUDY CONDUCTED IN NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE)**

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Cyber Agricultural Extension service for Information Communication Technology (ICT) was introduced by the Audio Visual Center (AVC) of the Department of Agriculture (DOA) in year 2004 to disseminate the agricultural production and marketing information to farmers. This study was carried out in eight Agrarian Service Center (ASC) areas in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts to evaluate the progress made during last few years. These ASCs were selected purposely as these are the ASCs at which the cyber extension units (CEUs) were established at the initial stage of the programme. Then, random samples of five adopters and five non-adopters were selected from each ASC for the survey. In addition to that, a sample of 20 officials from selected ASCs was also interviewed during the study.

Results indicated that there is no significant impact of the age of the farmer on the rate adoption to cyber extension service but, the level of education has a positive impact on adoption. The cyber extension units that are located in the close proximities of the urban centers are functioning well while those are in remote areas are not functioning properly. Farmers who are living within a radius of two kilometers from the CEU have used the service often, while the effort to use it has faded away as this distance increases. In general, the majority of the farmers are not aware of this service. It was also found that when the seniority of the officers in-charge of the CEU is high the efforts the officer has taken to promote this service is low due to the inadequate computer literacy of the officer. The level of present use of the resources available at CFUs is at a minimum and the most demanded type of information is management practices of commercial crops. Results also indicated that the CEUs are not maintained properly and the commitment of the AVC

to monitor the progress is not sufficient. In general, spaces and physical resources available at the units are inadequate.

Based on the results it is possible to recommend to launch a sound awareness programme, increase facilities at the CEUs, appoint a person with computer literacy to each CEU, maintain CEUs properly, and to link CEUs with the national level computer networks that are located in the areas such as "Vidhatha centers" and "Nanasala" in order to enhance the farmer's acceptability at a minimum cost.

*Key words:* Information Communication Technology (ICT), Audio Visual Center (AVC), Computer Networks, Commercial crops, Computer literacy