

## Effectiveness of Mobile-based Advisory to Farmers in Soil and Water Conservation

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### Introduction

The generation and application of agricultural knowledge is increasingly important, especially for small and marginal farmers, who need relevant information in order to improve, sustain, and diversify their farm enterprises. ICTs can directly support farmer's access to timely and relevant information, as well as empower the farming community through creation and sharing of knowledge. ICTs essentially facilitate the creation, management, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of any relevant data, knowledge, and information that may have been already been processed and adapted (Batchelor, 2002; Chapman and Slaymaker, 2002; Rao, 2007; Heeks, 2002). In the past, television and radio were the main electronic broadcast technologies used to reach rural communities; however, in the past two decades, internet and mobile-based channels have emerged. ICTs now include computer-based applications and such communication tools as social media, digital information repositories (online or offline), and digital photography and video, as well as mobile phones (Balaji *et. al.*, 2007).

Among the ICT tools, the rise of the mobile phone has been one of the most spectacular changes in the developing world over the past decade. Mobile phone, because of its affordability, accessibility, minimum skill requirement, widespread network etc., has emerged as important tools for the smallholder farmers. The increase in use of mobile phones across the globe and India has impinged on agriculture in various ways. Mobiles are being used to help raise farmers' incomes, making agricultural marketing more efficient, lowering information costs, reducing transport costs, and providing a platform to deliver services and innovate. Whether the potential of these trends can be realized more widely, especially in rural areas and in an equitable way, is uncertain. Every aspect of the technology is changing rapidly; the public sector, private sector, and private citizens are constantly experimenting with new applications for it. Mobile phone penetration in rural India is expanding rapidly (from 1.4 units

