

The Hindu – December 31, 2007

e-Sagu paying dividends to farmers

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Technological marvel: Farmers enrolled in e-Sagu have started deriving the fruits of 'timely and personalised' advice, saving significantly in input costs.

HYDERABAD: Taking technology to the doorstep of people, the semi-literate and illiterate masses in particular, is by no means an easy task.

But, e-Sagu, a one of its kind Information Technology-based agriculture advisory system, is surely taking the lead in bridging the digital divide and bringing technology to farmers.

Farmers enrolled in e-Sagu, launched by International Institute of Information Technology and Media Labs Asia, have started deriving the fruits of 'timely and personalised' advice, saving significantly in input costs, averaging about Rs. 3,874 an acre.

Started on an experimental basis in few villages in Station Ghanpur mandal of Warangal district, e-Sagu spread to over 35 villages in Khammam, West Godavari, Anantapur, Mahbubnagar and Ranga Reddy districts, covering over 5,000 farms.

e-Sagu that was tested on cotton initially is now extended to chillies, rice, red gram castor and groundnut in addition to prawn and fish farms in West Godavari district.

Small-time cooperatives

The impact of the project can be gauged from the fact that farmers in Mahbubabad mandal of Warangal and Mudigonda mandal of Khammam districts have formed small-time cooperatives, pooling funds, for purchase of quality fertilizers and pesticides.

A significant feature of e-Sagu is that farmers need not be literate and are not expected to use the system directly. Coordinators, educated youth equipped with digital cameras, will visit individual farms, with unique identification numbers, assigned to them regularly and take photographs of the status.

These photographs along with a format comprising several aspects like whether the previous advises were followed would be sent to the central lab located at IIIT here.

Once the analysis of photographs is completed, expert advise for the particular farm would be sent to coordinators through SMS.

Good savings

Project chief investigator P. Krishna Reddy said the revenue model of e-Sagu bringing insurance, banking, manufacturers of agri inputs and experts under one roof was being evolved.

Though farmers have to pay the tune of Rs. 600 for every crop season, they are overwhelmingly responding to it as the saving they make is much higher than the fee charged.