

An effective e-commerce application framework for small, medium agri-enterprises and start-ups

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ABSTRACT

Agribusiness integrates agriculture and commerce to meet consumer demands sustainably while maximizing profitability. Despite progress in agricultural marketing, a gap persists in catering to the evolving needs of rural and urban stakeholders. Rapid improvements in rural Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, led by initiatives like BharatNet, are expanding internet connectivity to gram panchayats, offering millions of farmers digital access. This transformation provides opportunities to restructure agricultural extension and e-commerce systems. Agritech startups have emerged as crucial players in addressing farmer challenges; however, financial and technical barriers continue to hinder small and medium agri-entrepreneurs. The adoption of low-cost, user-friendly platforms like WordPress and WooCommerce presents a viable solution. WordPress, a widely used content management system, combined with the WooCommerce plugin, offers secure, customizable, and accessible features, enabling agri-entrepreneurs to establish online stores without significant investments or technical expertise. This study examines the implementation of WordPress-WooCommerce-based e-commerce solutions in capacity-building programs at ICAR-NAARM, Hyderabad, aimed at empowering agri-startups and small enterprises. Case examples such as Telangana-based Govada Foods and other e-commerce stores developed for NAARM participants illustrate the potential to enhance market access, reduce operational costs, and bridge the producer-consumer gap. A structured questionnaire was administered to 61 Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) students to analyze perceptions towards key dimensions, including ease of website building and management, design flexibility, scalability for business growth, and support for innovation. The results revealed that most respondents found the platforms moderately easy to use, expressed high satisfaction with design flexibility, and held positive views on scalability and innovation support. The findings advocate for promoting open-source e-commerce applications to empower agri-entrepreneurs, strengthen food supply chains, and drive sustainable agricultural development in India.

Keywords: *Agribusiness, Agri-entrepreneurs, E-commerce, Sustainable agriculture and WordPress-Woo Commerce*