

Perceived Problems and Suggestions of Farmers regarding Kisan Call Centre

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ABSTRACT

Availability of appropriate information at right time and communication of information have been most important factors for increasing agricultural production. There is flood of information but which information will be useful where and for whom and how to take it to the needy people has been a big challenge. Farmers need a bunch of information in agriculture at every stage ranging from improved crop cultivation practices, weather forecast, hybrid seeds, inputs for cultivation, insect, pest and disease management, storage facility and price of agricultural produce. Farmers can get information from number of ways including trial and error. Important information related to agriculture is neither symmetric nor costless. The study was conducted in Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh to know the problems faced by the farmers to using kisan call centre. Ex-post facto design was used for the research and snow ball sampling was used for selecting 150 respondents and data was collected with the help of well-prepared schedule. Data was analyzed by using chi square test for finding association among dependent and independent variables.

Keywords: Communication gap, Information, Technology

INTRODUCTION

It is very necessary to disseminate the new technology and updated information related to agriculture, to each and every farmers for full utilization of technology which lead and support to rapid growth and improvement in livelihood of the farmers and development of agriculture sector as well as grand domestic product (GDP) of nation. The growth rate of agriculture sector is continuously decreasing and during 2017-18 it was 6.5 per cent in comparison to 8.0 per cent in 2015-16 and 7.10 per cent in 2016-17. It is estimated that the population will cross over 150 crore till 2050 and the demand of food will be double during 2050. Information and communication technology have potential to fulfil the future demand of the population and it can be improved through escaping the information gap between farmers and research agency

(Khan *et al.*, 2010). This information gap may be fulfilled by extensive use of ICT tools in agriculture (Lalsey, 2001).

The initiative has been started by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India through launching the scheme *Kisan Call Centre* on 21 January 2004 to handle the queries of the farmers on the spot in their own dialect and it has been provided the toll free No 18001801551 and 1551 for BSNL landline which is accessible through any mobile phone. The service to asking queries and providing solution & information to the farmers from 6 AM to 10 PM in seven days of a week. Now it is available in 24 different languages. Kisan call centre is providing information to the farmers at three levels on the basis of queries. Kisan call centre agency provides a bridge to connect the farmers, research specialist, subject matter specialist and other research

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agencies working in agriculture. It provides a panel for discussion about location specific problems. It helps to the rapid distribution of technology among farmers and is also helpful to identify the location specific problems and develop the location specific solutions through accessing the timeline of farmer's queries. One can assess and identify the major problems and cause of problems through checking the farmers call history. It may also be helpful to the policy makers to identify the weak section and much needed area for development. It is helpful to the researchers in developing the location specific and demand driven technologies for proper growth and development of the specific farmers. Gradually the awareness and use of *kisan call centre* is increasing among farmers.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected Varanasi district of Utter Pradesh. Nine villages were purposively selected in Harhua block of Varanasi and snowball sampling method was used for selecting 150 respondents who made a call to kisan call centre either regularly or occasionally. Data was collected through interview schedule. The data were collected directly by researcher interviewing the respondents. The statistical

methods such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation were used to qualify variables.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The problems related to the calling kisan call centre are summarized in Table 1 where it is evident that maximum of the respondents/farmers (65.33%) reported network problem, poor connectivity and inadequate distribution network of agricultural inputs mostly in rural areas was major problems. Lack of awareness about KCC (56.0%), and 45.33 per cent farmers were not interested, 39.33 per cent caller found busy network of KCC agency, 32 per cent solutions provided by KCC were obsolete, 25.33 percent faced problem of affordability of the mobile phone. However, 27.33 percent of the farmers reported that call on hold, followed by unable to understand the actual problems of the farmers (23.33%), not provided updated information regarding seed, pesticide etc. were the problems of farmers (20.66). Some of the findings are similar to that of Slatia *et al.* (2011). To substantiate the quantitative finding the case studies have been reported which were observed by researcher during data collection directly in field condition. It include case with negative perception of the respondents/farmers towards kisan call centre in which

Table 1: Problems faced by farmers in getting services of kisan call centre

S.No.	Problems	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Order
1	Inadequate distribution network of agricultural inputs in rural area	98	65.33	I
2	Lack of awareness among people about the kisan call centre	84	56.00	II
3	Farmers themselves are not interested	68	45.33	III
4	Phone line of kisan call centre was found busy	59	39.33	IV
5	Kisan call centre gives obsolete information	48	32.00	V
6	Most of the time kisan call centre agents put farmers call for waiting	41	27.33	VI
7	High initial cost of buying telephone /mobile	38	25.33	VII
8	Personnel of kisan call centre are sometimes unable to understand the farmers' problem	35	23.33	VIII
9	Kisan call centre is not providing the updated information regarding the seed, pesticide, etc. products of private companies	31	20.66	IX
10	Kisan call centre personnel are not well prepared to answer the farmers questions which leads to confusion about the technology	20	13.33	X
11	Experts do not have answer to questions of farmers	12	8.00	XI
12	Information was not relevant to agricultural operations of farmers	4	2.66	XII

researcher tried to feel the grassroots problems faced by farmers during the query time and reply of KCC agents. In first case Mr. Abhishek Dubey, (farmer from Bhavanipur village of Varanasi) called KCC in July 2018 after the harvesting of fruits from his 10 years old mango tree (variety Duseheri) regarding proper fertilizer and nutrient management. As per record provided his tree was fabulous in production, and taste of fruits. Response of the Farm Tale Advisor which was in first level advised the farmer to take dry dung and urea, mixed it with soil and spread around the roots of tree. The result was disturbing as after the application of dry dung there was severe attack of the termite resulting drying of tree. Such experience created highly negative attitude towards KCC. Another experience of Mr. Rajendra Prasad, (a farmer from village Bhavanipur) called during February 2019. to KCC regarding the control of weeds in vegetable field he was advised chemical control with the herbicide which has been either closed or not available in the market, even once he was suggested to use Endosulfan for pest control which is banned due to its residual effect. Ms. Rajendra Prasad share that they don't get the updated information related to pesticide and herbicide for effective control of insect, pest and weeds in vegetable.

CONCLUSION

From the findings it can be concluded that majority of the farmers had faced the problems related to inadequate and poor connection of network mostly in rural areas along with lack of awareness and out of date information provided by KCC agency. The findings of the study may help to identify the growth and current

status of the kisan call centre. The findings of the study providing the weakness and problems faced by respondents may have policy implication in order to update the knowledge and working of KCC Agency.

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