



Constraints and Suggestions as Perceived by the Kisan Call Center Beneficiaries

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Mahaboobnagar district of Telangana to know the constraints faced by the KCC beneficiary farmers and to find out suggestion offered by the beneficiary farmers for further strengthening of Kisan Call Centre services. Ex-post facto research design was employed for the study. Simple Random Sampling was followed to select 90 respondents. Data collected by using well-structured interview schedule, group discussion method. Data were analyzed by using percentage analysis and rank order method. The findings of the study showed that the constraints faced by the KCC beneficiaries were 'Network busy problem (94.44%)', 'Problem in the network connection while calling to KCC (83.33%)', 'Illiterate farmers could not call and ask the KCC officials (82.22%)', 'Difficulties in getting complete information on the topic (77.77%)', 'Difficulties in getting recent and updated information on agricultural technologies (77.77%)', 'KCC agents not providing information on organic agriculture and ITK (66.67%)', and 'Location specific needs of the farmer not solved by KCC officials (53.33%)' were the major constraints faced by the KCC beneficiaries. The suggestion offered by the beneficiaries were 'more information on low cost technologies can be provided followed by more centers should be established for providing services to all farmers (94.44%)', 'Reliable and daily Market and weather information may be provided (83.33%)', 'Location specific information may be provided through KCC (82.22%)', 'Latest technologies information should be provided through KCC (77.77%)', 'Infrastructure of KCC should be increased to meet the needs of farming community (72.22%)', 'Details on farm machineries may be provided (66.67%)', 'All agriculture and allied sector government schemes information to be provided (66.67%) were the major suggestions given by KCC beneficiaries. It was concluded from results that regular capacity building programs have to be given on the subject matters of agriculture and allied sector with the support of University or Regional Research Stations for providing accurate, up-to-date information on farmers problems.

Key words: Constraints, Innovative technologies, Kisan Call Centre, Suggestions.

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INTRODUCTION

Telephone which is the powerful electronic machine that was a farmer's dream earlier has become a reality as the farmers can immediately make use of it to address their field problems and other farm difficulties³.

Strategic reforms in telecommunications sector since 1990's, facilitates strong ICT infrastructure in India. As on July, 2014, total telephone subscribers 946.40 million (27.68 million fixed land line telephones, 918.72 million wireless) and 14.50 million broadband subscribers were by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India⁶. The tele-density has reached 76.99 (number of telephone subscribers per 100 individuals). However, there is huge gap between urban and rural tele-density, 146.70 and 44.56 respectively. Despite several policy initiatives to promote rural ICT penetration, growth in tele-density continues to be skewed in favour of urban India⁶. In India, mobile subscribes base touches 952 millions. While the overall teledensity reached 76 per cent.

The on-line phone based expert advice service, Kisan Call Centres (KCC), launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India is available for all within the country since January 2004. There is a need to connect rural communication, research and extension networks and provide access to the much needed knowledge, technology and service². Estimates indicated that 60 per cent of farmers do not access any source of information for advanced agricultural technologies resulting in huge adoption gap⁴. Farmers were facing problems while availing Kisan Call Centre services. By keeping all factors in mind, present study was conducted to identify the constraints faced by farmers while availing KCC services and to enlist the suggestions for further improving of KCC services.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ex-post facto research design was used for the present investigation. A research was conducted in Mahaboobnagar District of Telangana because of this district has the highest net sown area under main crops among

all the districts in Telangana (Season and Crop Report 2012-13). The district has registered highest KCC services as per the dashboard data of m-Kisan portal. In Mahaboobnagar district two mandals (blocks) were selected from the total mandals of district based on the highest number of beneficiaries. From the list of villages in block three villages were selected by using simple random technique. Totally Six villages in two blocks were chosen for the study. From each village 15 beneficiary farmers were selected for the study thus making the sample size of Ninety (90). The primary data was collected by using structured interview schedule and group discussion. The data obtained were coded, classified and tabulated. Finally statistical tools such as Frequency (F), Percentage (%) and rank order were used for the analysis of the data, so that the finding could be meaningfully interpreted and conclusions drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Constraints Faced by Kisan Call Center Beneficiaries

The distribution of beneficiary respondents according to the constraints faced while availing extension services under KCC is presented in Table 1.

Table-1 clearly showed that, constraints faced by selected Kisan Call Center beneficiaries, Out of all the constraints the main constraint faced was 'Network busy problem' (94.44%). This might be due to the reason that there are more frequent calls to KCC. Less number of call centers available in government sector so, it is difficult to get line to every farmer.

Problem in the network connection while calling to KCC' was the major constraint faced by more than three-fourths (83.33%) of the respondents. 'Illiterate farmers could not call and ask the KCC officials', is another constraint reported by more than half (82.22%) of the respondents. This might be due to illiterate farmers felt difficulty in operating mobile, remembering call centre number and how to dial.

Table 1: Constraints faced by the Kisan Call Center Beneficiaries

(n=90)

S. No.	Constraints	Beneficiaries		Rank order
		No.	Percent	
1.	Network busy problem	85	94.44	I
2.	Problem in the network connection while calling to KCC	75	83.33	II
3.	Illiterate farmers could not call and ask the KCC officials	74	82.22	III
4.	Difficulties in getting complete information on the topic	70	77.77	IV
5.	Difficulties in getting recent and updated information on agricultural technologies	70	77.77	V
6.	KCC agents not providing information on organic agriculture and ITK	60	66.67	VI
7.	Location specific needs of the farmer not solved by KCC officials.	48	53.33	VII
8.	Clarity of the information provided is not good and not in the local dialect of the region.	25	27.77	VIII
9.	Lack of Credibility in the information provided by KCC level I officials	18	20.00	XI
10.	Difficulties in explaining problems through phone	20	22.22	X
11.	Delivery of information by KCC officials is very fast and not understandable.	20	22.22	IX
12.	Irrelevant answers from the KCC officials for the query asked.	15	16.66	XII

More than three-fourths (77.77%) of respondents have expressed constraint 'there is difficulties in getting complete information on the topic', 'difficulties in getting recent and updated information on agricultural technologies' (66.67%). 'Kisan Call Center agents not providing information on organic agriculture and ITK' was the constraint expressed by 66.67 per cent of the farmers.

Location specific needs of the farmer not solved by KCC officials' was the constraint faced by 53.33 per cent of the farmers. 'Lack of clarity of the information and not in the local slant of the region' was the constraint faced by 27.77 per cent of the respondents. 'Delivery of information by KCC officials is very fast and not understandable' (22.22%) was another constraint.

Difficulties in explaining problems through phone' (22.22%), followed by 'Lack of Credibility in the information provided by KCC level "I" officials' was another constraint faced 20.00 per cent of the farmers, 'Irrelevant answers from the KCC officials for the query asked' was the constraint expressed by merger (16.66%) per cent of the respondents.

This Findings supported by Savithramma⁵ who reported that majority of

the respondents faced problem with line busy and also findings were inline with Virendrakumar Sobanbhai⁷ who also reported constraints were Kisan Call Centre gives out-dated information, KCC agents was not explaining information clearly, farmers do not getting complete satisfaction with the answers of service providers of KCC, network problem, Phone line busy problem.

Suggestions Given by the Selected Kisan Call Center Beneficiaries

Table-2 clearly showed that, suggestions given by the selected Kisan Call Center beneficiaries to overcome the constraints faced by them.

It is observed from Table 2, that the foremost suggestion expressed by the beneficiary respondents was 'More information on low cost technologies can be provided (100%)' followed by 94.44 per cent of the respondents suggested that 'More centres should be established' for providing services to all farmers, providing timely up-to-date information and for avoiding the line busy problem.

More than three-fourths (83.33%) of respondents requested that 'Reliable and daily

Market and weather Information may be provided' to get information on daily market prices and fetching reasonable price to their commodities followed by 82.22 per cent of the respondents suggested that 'location specific information may be provided through KCC' and 72.22 per cent of respondents suggested that 'Latest technologies information should be provided through KCC'.

More than half (77.77%) of the respondents suggested that infrastructure of KCC should be increased to meet the needs of farming community, followed by 66.67 per cent of the respondents reported that KCC may provide 'Details on farm machineries, majority (66.67%) of the respondents reported that agriculture and allied sector government

schemes information to be provided. More than half (64.44%) of the respondents suggested that 'More awareness should be created among the farmers'.

More than one-third (33.33%) of the respondents reported that 'Information provided by officials should be practically applicable to the current situation' because information provided by call centre may not be applicable to their situation as there was no reduction in pest and disease incidence. Merger (14.33%) per cent of the respondents reported that 'Post-Harvest /Value Addition information of main crops may be provided. Similar findings were reported by Savithramma⁵ and VirendrakumarSobanbhai⁷.

Table 2: Suggestions given by the selected Kisan Call Center beneficiaries

n=90

S.No.	Suggestions	Beneficiaries		Rank order
		No. (n=90)	Per cent	
1.	More information on low cost technologies can be provided	90	100.00	I
2.	More centers are required	85	94.44	II
3.	Reliable and daily Market and weather Information may be provided	75	83.33	III
4.	Location specific information may be provided	74	82.22	IV
5.	Latest technological information can be provided	70	77.77	V
6.	Infrastructure of KCC should be increased to meet the needs of farming community	65	72.22	VI
7.	Farm Machinery details may be provided	60	66.67	VII
8.	All agriculture & allied sector government schemes information to be provided	60	66.67	VIII
9.	More awareness should be created among the farmers	58	64.44	IX
10.	Information provided by officials should be practically applicable to the current situation	30	33.33	X
11.	Post-Harvest / Value Addition information of main crops may be provided	13	14.33	XI

CONCLUSION

Form the findings of the study concluded that more than three-fourth (77.77%) of the respondents were not getting up-to-date information. Regular capacity building programs have to be given on the subject matters of agriculture and allied sector with the support of University or Regional Research Stations for providing accurate, up-to-date information on farmers problems. More than four fifth (82.22%) of respondents suggested that they need location specific information. Hence, in order to provide location specific information it may be suggested to tie up KCC functionaries with local extension functionaries and KVKs of ICAR. 'Poor connectivity' is one of the major constraint faced by the beneficiary farmers. Hence, it is suggested that increase in the strength of the connectivity of rural areas, the service providers may establish high frequency bandwidth at rural areas to reach services to all farmers.

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