



Effectiveness of Agricultural Advisory Services Through SMS by the Farmers in Pratapgarh District

KEYWORDS

SMSs, Mobile Phone, Farmers, ICT, KMAS, Technology Dissemination, KVK, Information and communication technology (ICT)

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ABSTRACT Kisan Mobile Advisory Services (KMAS), which is a part of the ICT tools is employed by the most of the Krishi Vigyan Kendras in India. In district Pratapgarh about 11, 85,519 farmers got the text SMSs from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Pratapgarh. The usual messages are timely information/ advices communicating as per the need of the situation. The study was conducted in district Pratapgarh in year 2015 – 16, where Krishi Vigyan Kendra is involved in transfer of technology through KMAS. KVK Pratapgarh disseminating technology to farmers through KMAS network in the districts, SMS related to plant protection perceived as 'very much useful' ranked 1st (70%), followed by Agronomical Practices ranked 11nd (63%) of farmers perceived as SMSs were 'most useful' for improving the agriculture knowledge. Majority (55%) of farmers perceived as SMSs were very much useful for time specific advisory. This study has shown that a majority of the farmers perceived information on pest and disease control as most important and they also felt that accessing information through mobile phone is easy and convenient

INTRODUCTION

Mobile phone technology has penetrated to such a large extent in India today; it is the primary mode of communication for many farmers. Mobile phones emphasize the importance of two way communication need and potential for customized information. Farmers require a wide range of continuous and reliable information on the best types of seed varieties, weather forecast, best cultivation practices, market information and logistical information throughout the growing season.

Recent developments in information and communications technology (ICT) offer a great opportunity to facilitate the flow of information and technology services delivery especially to the farmers (Maningas, 2006). It is comprehensible that on the one hand agriculture is becoming highly science driven and knowledge intensive, but on the other hand the existing public extension system has become less effective, more time consuming and costly and fails to meet the expectations of those involved in agricultural production (Mruthunjaya and Adhiguru, 2005). The use of ICT is an important pillar of agriculture extension and in the current scenario of a rapidly changing world has been recognized as an essential mechanism for delivering knowledge (information) and advice as an input for modern farming (Jones, 1997). For this, extension has to play expanded role including improved access to markets, research, advice, credit, infrastructure, development of farmer organization and business development services (Sulaiman, 2003). While involving in farming operations, farmer's need for different types of information during each stage of the development process, ranging from weather forecasts, pest attacks, inputs, cultivation practices, pest and disease management and prices (Jenny, 2011; Nilusha et al., 2011; Claire et al., 2010; Mittal, 2012; Nitin, 2012). However, Marcel and Bart (2012) reported that the main source of information for agricultural prices, weather forecast and advice on agricultural practice is the farmer's own observation and experimentation followed

by a conversation with other farmers. Radio and television are also common sources of information particularly for weather aspects. Majority of farmers in India do not have access to any source of information (Claire et al. 2010). Information and communication technologies (ICTs) these days play a crucial role in agricultural extension services meeting the information requirement for farmers. There are several organizations extensively using modern information technology in India to promote communication between researchers, extension workers and their farmer clients to transfer of technologies and information more effectively (Saravanan, 2010; Kameswari, 2011; Nikulsinh, 2010). In this context, a study has been planned with the objectives of to study the usefulness of KMAS by the Farmers.

METHODOLOGY

Stratified random sampling technique was used in the selection from different categories of farmers and hundred farmers were selected as the sample for the study. A pre-tested structured interview schedule was used to collect information from the respondents. The data were analyzed using appropriate statistics tool. The research design adopted for the study was 'Ex post – facto', since the KMAS had already started working in the district, the design was considered appropriate. The study was conducted in Pratapgarh districts, where Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs) send this SMS from farmer portal are involved in transfer of technology through KMAS.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table.1. Distribution of the message according to Importance of the information as perceived by the KVK (year 2015 to 2016)

S. No.	Type of information	Number of message	No. of Beneficiaries	Rank
1	Weather information	2	37525	VII

2	Time specific advisory	1	23345	VIII
3	Livestock management	1	17	VIII
4	Awareness message	3	53125	VI
5	Agronomical practices	13	278006	II
6	Nutrient management	4	89330	V
7	Plant protection techniques	15	276197	I
8	Animal husbandry	5	44934	IV
9	Horticulture	8	135410	III
10	ICT	3	82901	VI
11	Soil Testing	4	88394	V
12	Soil Health	4	76335	V

SMS related to plant protection perceived as 'ranked I', followed by Agronomical practices ranked II, Horticulture ranked III, Animal husbandry ranked IV, Nutrient management, soil health & soil testing ranked V, ICT & awareness ranked VI, weather information ranked VII and time specific advisory and livestock management scored ranked VIII according to importance of message which are communicated as per the need of the situation.

Table.2. Distribution of the respondents according to usefulness of the information received through KMAS as perceived by the farmers (n=100)

S. No.	Area	Very much useful	Useful	Partially useful	Not at all useful
1	Weather information	49 (49%)	45 (45%)	10 (10%)	06 (6%)
2	Time specific advisory	55 (55%)	30 (30%)	11 (11%)	04 (4%)
3	Livestock management	40 (40%)	32 (32%)	18 (18%)	10 (10%)
4	Awareness message	30 (30%)	41 (41%)	14 (14%)	15 (15%)
5	Agronomical practices	63 (63%)	33 (33%)	14 (14%)	0 (0%)
6	Nutrient management	42 (42%)	39 (39%)	14 (14%)	05 (5%)
7	Plant protection techniques	70 (70%)	28 (28%)	08 (8%)	02 (2%)
8	Animal husbandry	35 (35%)	40 (40%)	20 (20%)	05 (5%)
9	Horticulture	45 (45%)	42 (42%)	10 (10%)	03 (3%)
10	ICT	25 (25%)	30 (30%)	15 (15%)	25 (25%)
11	Soil Testing	48 (48%)	32 (32%)	10 (10%)	10 (10%)
12	Soil Health	44 (44%)	42 (42%)	08 (8%)	05 (5%)

From the above table, it implied that the farmers were utilizing the mobile services mostly in the field of plant protection measures followed by agronomic practices and Time specific advisory. SMS related to plant protection perceived as 'very much useful' (70%), Majority (63%) of farmers perceived as SMS,s were 'very much useful' for improving the agronomical practices, Majority (55%) of farmers perceived as SMS,s were very much useful' for time specific advisory followed by weather information (49%), soil testing (48%), horticulture (45%), soil health (44%) nutrient management (42%) and livestock management (40%) by the farmers.

CONCLUSION

Majority of farmers opined that SMS related to plant protection perceived as 'very much useful' (70%). The message

on agronomic practices is most suitable followed by management of disease & pests are found to be most suited as per the result. Majority of farmers found the information was very much useful followed by very much useful because subject information covered in KMAS were fully relevant to their situation & they are very much interested in technology dissemination through KMAS. The message related plant protection was very much useful because incidence of high in this situation followed by Agronomical practices.

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