

Kisan Call Centre



Background & Objectives

Agriculture extension services along with facilitation to farmers are the mandate of Agriculture Department everywhere in the country. Continuing fragmentation of land holdings and the increasing number of small holdings are creating challenges for the extension function from the viewpoint of input supply, transfer of technology, ensuring general awareness, etc. One-on-one contact via extension services is now becoming practically difficult, and a shift towards the group approach is becoming inevitable.

For speedy transmission of technology and latest technical updates to farmers, for resolving their diverse problems, an innovative means, namely, the KISAN CALL CENTRE, was established in Madhya Pradesh under Rashtriya Kisan Vikas Yojna (RKVY) during 2008-09.

After fulfilling all necessary formalities, the Govt of Madhya Pradesh, Department of Farmer Welfare & Agriculture Development, in coordination with SIAET, chose Indian Society of Agriculture Business Professionals (ISAP), as a partner. The responsibility of ensuring smooth functioning of the KCC was entrusted to ISAP. KCC in the state started to function in Bhopal in September 2008.

- To facilitate farmers of the state to get information/solutions to their problems through use of the Toll Free Number 1800-233-4433.
- To provide technical inputs to farmers.
- To serve as a feedback mechanism for the policy makers.
- To forge strong Research Extension Farmer Linkages.

Intervention

The Kisan Call Center established in the state functions from 7am to 7pm every day. It comprises a 15-seater computerized answering system working in two shifts, i.e., 7am to 1pm and 1pm to 7pm. The major topics handled by KCC experts are as follows:-

- Disease and pest control for different crops grown in the region,
- Good agricultural practices, livestock management, fishery, etc.
- Best practices in agriculture in the state as well as of other states,
- Crop related information in agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry aromatic plants, spices, plantation crops, cash crops, etc.
- Vermi-compost, organic farming, including organic plant protection, etc.
- Information on HYV seeds and nutrient management for different crops,
- Market related information for different crops in the state.
- Farmer support programmes which are being implemented by the government of Madhya Pradesh and
- Agriculture related information that impacts farmers, farming practices, etc.

The Kisan Call Centre works on two levels. At the first level, replies/solutions are provided to farmers' queries instantaneously by experts. At the next level, the queries are analysed so that area-specific analysis can be done based on which timely information could be disseminated to farmers through TV, radio etc., to caution or overcome possible damage to agricultural crops or livestock. It is important to mention here

KCC served as an early warning system, for example during the crisis of drought during 2009 kharif and untimely floods in October 2009. It was transformed into a control room to provide solutions to the emergence and contingent needs of the farmers on area specific basis across the state.

Queries related to agriculture and allied sectors are being addressed through the Kisan Call Centre, instantly, in the local language, by experts in Agriculture / Horticulture Departments, State Agricultural Universities, ICAR institutions etc. Subject Matter Specialists (SMSs) interact with the farmers via telephone and computer to understand their agriculture-related problems and answer the queries through the Call Centre. The infrastructure is provided at three locations namely - a Professionally Managed Call Centrer (Level-I), a Response Center in each organization, where SMSs are made available (Level-II) and the Nodal Cell (Level-III). Queries related to agriculture and allied sectors are being addressed through these call centres to deliver extension services to the farming community.

KCC provides answers to farmers on queries related to agriculture, horticulture, plant pathology, soil sciences, and animal husbandry and so on. The information dissemination to the farmers is mainly categorised into three types, namely, information on Pre-cultivation, Cultivation and Post Cultivation. Information under the category of Pre-cultivation that is provided to the farmers through the KCC includes information related to field preparation, time and place of availability of HYV seeds, availability of fertilizers, training and orientation for the farmers for usage of best seeds, balanced use of pesticides and fertilizers, required amount of water for the specific crop, etc.

Under the category of Cultivation phase, KCC provides information related to pest and disease control, irrigation, government schemes, loans, etc. In the post cultivation phase, it provides information on the market, storage facilities, transportation, value addition, etc.

KCC experts use backend data support systems, which are inbuilt in the MIS system. Kisan Call Centre Software is an MIS tool covering the complete milieu of advisory services provided through the Call Centre providing backend data support to the

knowledge worker, while processing queries from farmers from 7 am to 7 pm, all seven days of the week. The software captures callers' details and the query. The information is processed into an MIS output which helps area-wise, crop-wise and problem wise analyses within the time-space framework and provides preventive and advance action solutions from both qualitative and quantitative aspects. It also helps to identify pest attacks in any particular geographical area and the information collected is provided to the State Agriculture Department for taking suitable timely action through broadcasting on Kisan call centre itself. It addresses not only agricultural practices, but also livestock, policy issues, government interventions, etc.

The Kisan Call Centre is a fusion of two separate technologies, namely, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Agricultural Technology. Both have their specialized domains and work cultures. The Kisan Call Centre staff are organized into three levels, namely Level-I (the basic Call Center interface, with high quality bandwidth and local language proficient Agriculture Graduate), Level-II (Subject Matter Specialists on concerned important crops and enterprises, connected through good bandwidth telecom and computer connectivity) and Level-III (the Management Group to ensure ultimate answering and resolution of all the farmers' queries which are not resolved at Level-II, connected on off line mode).

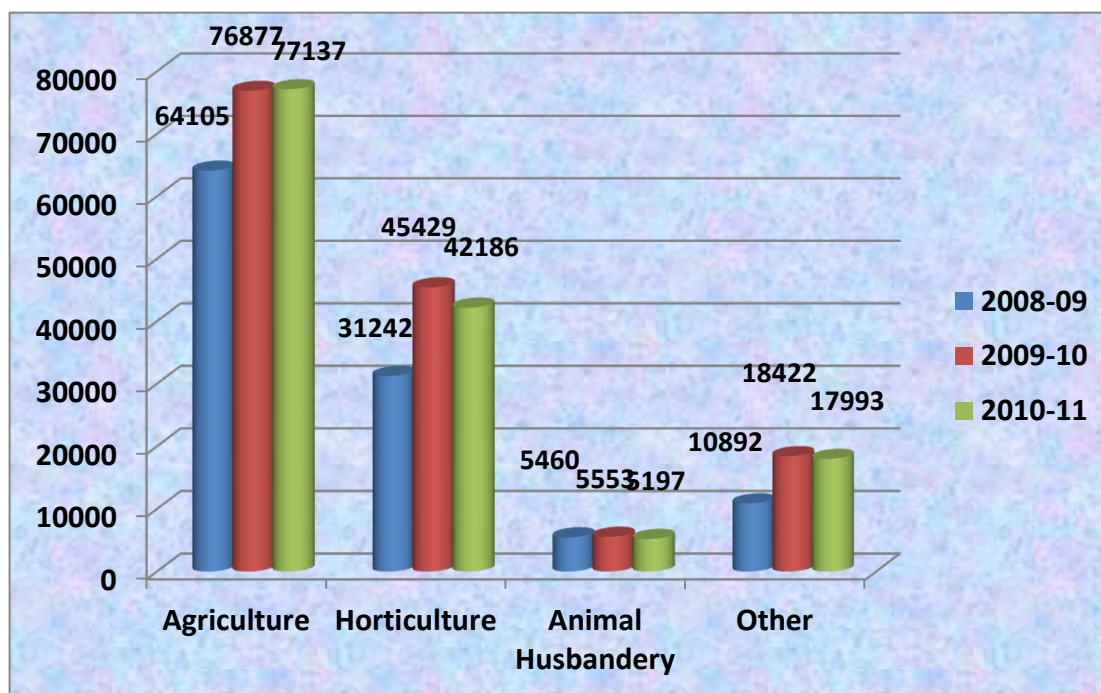
The total cost of the KCC project is Rs 2.25 crores per year (as per the information provided by the ICT Provider), funded by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Farmer Welfare and Agriculture Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh, and covers the software, hardware and other operational costs of the initiative.

The KCC provides timely information to the rural farmers who are benefited through this project. The farmers get accurate answers to their queries, thus facilitating them to better manage their crops.

Outcome

The KCC has resolved 4,73,694 queries from farmers of 50 districts of Madhya Pradesh as of December 2011. For successful

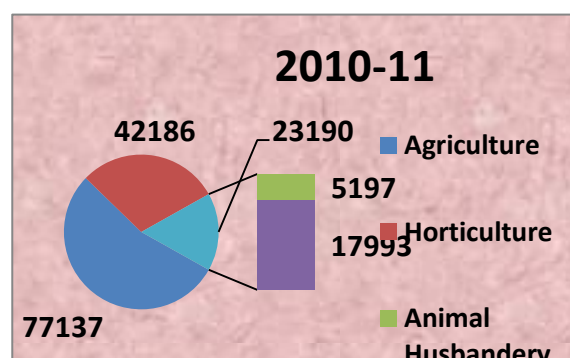
functioning of the KCC, monitoring and review of the various activities of the KCC is being carried out on a regular basis by the Nodal Institution.



Details of Calls received by Kisan Call Center during 2010-11

A comprehensive & exhaustive case study of KCC has been done by NIRD and the major comments of the impact analysis is as given below.

After the detailed interivew with 30 beneficiary farmers, it is revealed that 88.66% farmers did not participate in any social activities before introduction of the initiative but post KCC, at least 13.33% of the farmers have increased the social participation/ interaction with their fellow farmers. Successful farmers benefited through KCC have become members of one or two organizations.



As many as 30 beneficiaries accepted that the farmers should try to adopt new techologies/farm practices which may help to increase their farm income to a large extent.