

Attitude of farmer-subscribers towards Kisan Mobile Advisory Service in Banaskantha district of Gujarat

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ABSTRACT

Kisan Mobile Advisory Service (KMAS) has been launched in 192 KVKs all over India and KVK, Deesa is one of the KVKs selected for implementation of the scheme. KVK is using Kisan portal of Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India to send the SMSs to the registered farmers in local language free of cost for better utilization of information technology in agriculture and allied sectors. The success, progress and development or failure of any programme mainly depend on peoples' attitude towards it. In this view a study was conducted to know the attitude of farmer-subscribers towards Kisan Mobile Advisory Service in Banaskantha district of Gujarat state. A total of 123 respondents selected through multistage sampling technique constituted sample and data collection was done with the help of structured-schedule by personal interview of the respondents. Results of the study revealed that great majority (80.49 %) of farmers possessed favorable attitude towards this programme. The study recommends the need for considering attitude of farmer-subscribers towards KMAS as it influences the affordability and utilization of the same.

Keywords: Farmer-subscribers; KMAS; attitude; information; SMS service; agriculture

INTRODUCTION

Communication and information technology play very important role in public as well as private extension. Information is critical resource for farmers to increase production and productivity.

The government has a huge research and development infrastructure in the form of institutions such as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Agriculture Technology Management Agencies (ATMAs). The role of this set-up in research and extension activities is of great importance. The use of Kisan Mobile Advisory Service (KMAS) scheme in frontline extension system of KVK is new ICT initiative to meet the information needs and expectations of the farmers.

KMAS was started by ICAR with the aim of passing the agricultural information free of cost to maximum number of farmers in local language through SMS. It is operated by KVKs all over India. Subject areas of KMAS are agronomy, plant protection, horticulture, animal science, home science, dairy etc. Advantages of KMAS are that farmers can get free information, location specific information delivery and information in local language at low cost. KMAS has been launched in 192 KVKs all over India and KVK, Deesa is one of them selected for implementation of the scheme. KVK is using Kisan portal of Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India to send the SMSs to the farmers.

The success, progress and development or failure of any programme mainly depends on peoples' attitude towards it. According to Newcomb (1950)

attitude may be thought as predisposition to act, perceive, think and feel in relation to something. Thurstone (1946) defined attitude as the degree of positive or negative effect associated with some psychological object. Attitude is a state of readiness or a tendency to react in a certain manner. Individual's attitude is present but it is dormant most of the time. Attitude scale has been proved as useful tool to measure the attitude of large number of individuals towards specific areas. Such instrument stimulates people to express their attitude.

The use of KMAS by farmer-subscribers is affected by the attitude of them towards KMAS. Keeping this point in mind the study was carried out to reveal the attitude of farmer-subscribers towards KMAS.

METHODOLOGY

The study was confined to ex post facto research design as the independent variables had already made impact on utilization of ICT (Kerlinger 1976). Multistage sampling technique was employed in the study. The study was conducted in Banaskantha district of Gujarat state where Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) has been providing technological knowledge in agriculture through KMAS.

KVK, Deesa has been selected by ICAR for mobile advisory services among 192 KVKs selected in first phase since 2009. The area of work of KVK, Deesa is Banaskantha district hence it was selected purposively. Out of 14 Talukas in Banaskantha district six were purposively selected on the basis of more number of subscriber-farmers of KMAS. Three villages from each selected Taluka were purposively selected on the basis of higher number of subscriber-farmers. Village-wise list of subscriber-farmers was obtained from KVK, Deesa. Random sampling method was used in selection of respondents in proportion to 30 per cent of the subscribers from each selected village. Finally a sample of 123 farmers was drawn from the population. The data were collected with the help of structured-schedule by personal interview of the respondents.

The attitude in present study means positive or negative reaction of the respondents towards KMAS. To measure the attitude of farmer-subscribers towards KMAS a teacher-made scale was developed after consulting scientists and extension personnel.

Collection of statements

In initial stage of developing scale 50 attitudinal statements related to KMAS were collected from relevant literature and discussed with experts of concerned departmental heads and Sardarkrushinagar Agricultural University scientists. The statements so selected were then edited on the basis of the criteria suggested by Edward (1957). Thirty statements were found non-ambiguous and non-factual and hence selected.

Item analysis

The 30 selected statements (items) were converted into a schedule. The schedule was then distributed to a panel of 25 judges/experts drawn from a group of scientists, teachers and extension personnel of Sardarkrushinagar Agricultural University, Sardarkrushinagar, Gujarat. They were requested to judge each statement critically with regard to measure attitude towards KMAS and give their response about inclusion of each statement on five point continuum viz strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with the score of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Among 25 judges 24 responded in time. Frequency distribution of the score of individual statement was done and the mean score of each statement was calculated. The statements having mean score above the average mean score were selected for final scale. Finally the schedule consisted of eighteen statements. The final scale was administered to the KMAS subscribers and responses were obtained against each item in terms of their agreement and disagreement with the statement on a five point continuum viz strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The statements were scored as per Table 1.

The attitude score of an individual respondent was the sum of total score of all the statements in the schedule. The maximum score one could obtain was up to 90 and minimum 18. The respondents were classified on the basis of mean and standard deviation as having less favourable, moderately favourable and highly favourable attitude.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The results of the investigation carried out are presented in Table 2 showing the attitude of the farmer-subscribers towards KMAS who had opted KMAS

Table 1. Score awarded to the statements given by the respondents

Statement	Score				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Positive statement	5	4	3	2	1
Negative statement	1	2	3	4	5

Table 2. Distribution of the farmer-subscribers of KMAS according to their attitude towards Kisan Mobile Advisory Service

Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Less favourable (<48.08 score)	11	08.94
Favourable (48.08 to 59.53 score)	99	80.49
Highly favourable (>59.53 score)	13	10.57
Total	123	100.00

Mean= 53.81, SD= 5.72

as source of information and used it for information. It is apparent that a great majority (80.49%) of farmers had favourable attitude towards KMAS followed by 10.57 per cent with highly favourable attitude. Whereas only 8.94 per cent of them possessed less favourable attitude towards KMAS. Similar observations were also made by Patil (2016).

The study showed that almost all farmers possessed favourable attitude towards KMAS. The probable reason for this kind of results might be that majority of the farmers were aware of the various functions of mobile message service network like receiving and understanding of messages. They had been getting timely and accurate information from KMAS. At the same time the farmers were registered through KVK working in its area hence they frequently interacted with the scientists of the KVK. Less than 10 per cent of the farmers having less favourable attitude towards KMAS may be due to the reasons

that they were not having relevant technologies, lacked practical exposure and faced difficulties in clarification of doubts.

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