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A study on socio economics characteristics of Kisan call centre beneficiaries and non- beneficiaries in Mahaboobnagar district of Telangana

S Kavitha and Anandaraja Nallusamy**Abstract**

In India, the telecom sector is growing rapid speed. Due to the various service provides, the tele-density rate in increasing month by month. As per TRAI, the total number of mobile phone subscribers in India by the end of November, 2018 was 117.18 crore. Considering the tele-services, a research study was conducted to understand the socio-economic condition of Kisan Call Centre beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Mahaboobnagar district of Telangana State. Primary data was collected with the help of interview schedule specifically developed for the study from beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries farmers. The findings revealed that majority of the beneficiary respondents were belong to young agecategory(46.67%) and followed double cropping pattern (37.78%), had canal (38.89%) as major source of irrigation. Majority of beneficiaries had medium level of education (31.11%), contact with extension and other agencies (67.78%). Majority of the beneficiaries had high level of perception towards mobile phone in farming (61.11%) but they had low level of farming experience (68.89%). With respect to non-beneficiary respondents, they belong to middle age category (43.33%), had illiterate (23.33%) to medium level of education (23.33%). Majority of non-beneficiary respondents had medium level of farming experience (70.00%) and they were possessed single cropping pattern (60.00%) and had canal as major source of irrigation (36.67%). Majority of non-beneficiary respondents had low level of contact with extension and other agencies (46.67%), perception towards mobile phone in farming (46.67%). The clientele system and their background are essential before devising any form of Technology Transfer initiatives among the farmers. Awareness programme on KCC especially to younger generation farmers by using mass media tools like Television, News Papers and Social Network platforms to be explored. It may also be considered an exclusive mobile app with two interactive platform on sharing image and short video based voice query system with toll free system in regional languages.

Keywords: Socio-economic characteristics, Farmers, Perception, Mobile phones, Extension Methods**Introduction**

Indian farmers are facing many problems from seed treatment and germination stage of crop to till marketing of farm produce because, they were not getting needed information timely because of less number of officials available at ground level and face to face dissemination of information would be costly. Another problem is that the extension officials find difficulty to reach the targeted audience on time. With the availability of telephone and internet, it is now possible to bridge this gap to quite a large extent by using an appropriate mix of technologies. The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India has launched Kisan Call Centers (KCC) with a view to leverage the extensive, expensive and large public extension network (Prabuddha Ray and Sarthak Chowdhury, 2015).

KCC services is playing a major role in disseminating agro advisory services to the farmers at right time. It extends the services and providing information to the farmers at three different levels. At Level-I, Agricultural graduates respond to the queries raised by the farmers. In Level-II, the scientists providing solution to the critical problems faced by the farmers over lane and mobile connectivity. The Level -III is the management group that ensure the ultimate response and resolution of all quires not resolved by either Level-II or Level-I. Considering the importance of KCC, the present study was undertaken with specific objective to study the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers.

The people living in 21st century with the revolution of information communication technology which is responsible for wide spread access of computer technology as well as mobile services in to the social structure. The technology is turn influenced the society, development and social environment (Manoj D., 2006). NSSO (2005) reported that the

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proportion of farmers with access to information was found to increase with an increase in the size of holding. Sharma *et al.* (2011) have observed that Kisan Call Centre are effective in hill agriculture where extension outreach is difficult.

Any product which reaches in the market, it is mandatory to study the customer needs and preferences. Besides, lot of promotion and outreach advertisement are periodically scheduled to influence the mindset of end users. In the case of KCC, Government of India is initiating huge action and put lot of effort on promoting various services of KCC. In this connection, a study was conducted to understand the various socio-economic characteristic of KCC beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The outcome will be useful on reshaping the further out reach modules.

Methodology:

The research study was conducted in Mahaboobnagar district of Telangana State. It was selected purposely for the study because of the highest registered numbers of calls from call centre during 2014-15. Two mandals (blocks) were selected from Mahaboobnagar district by using simple random technique. In each mandal three villages selected for the study comprises of six villages. Ex-post facto research design was followed for the study. Again by adopting the simple random sampling technique, 15 KCC user farmers (beneficiaries) were identified and the total were 90 respondents. Further, 30

respondents of non-beneficiary (5 persons from a sample village) farmers were identified as in the same village. Thus, the total sample size comprising of KCC beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were 120. The data were collected and analyzed through well-structured, pre-tested interview schedule and data was presented through percentage analysis method.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic factors include, income, savings, education, contribution to human development, societal development, health and others determine the standard of living of a being (Agbaje & Bolaji, 2013). Business Dictionary (2016) Socioeconomic characteristics of a population expressed statistically, such as age, sex, education level, income level, marital status, occupation, religion, birth rate, death rate, average size of a family, average age at marriage. The results of the analysis regarding profile characteristics of respondents are presented in this section.

1. Age

Age is the factor which decides to take up of multiple enterprises in farming with shorter span of time. The distribution of beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents according to different age groups is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to Age Categories (n = 120)

S.No.	Age categories (In years)	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries	
		No. (n = 90)	Per cent	No. (n = 30)	Per cent
1.	Young (<35)	42	46.67	6	20.00
2.	Middle (35-45)	39	43.33	13	43.33
3.	Old (> 45)	9	10.00	11	36.67
	Total	90	100.00	30	100.00

From table 1, it indicated that less than half (46.67%) of the beneficiary respondents were found to be young aged, followed by 43.33 per cent middle aged, and the remaining 10.00 per cent were old. With regard to non-beneficiary respondents, 43.33 per cent were middle aged, followed by 36.67 per cent old aged and the rest 20.00 per cent were young. It could be inferred from the results that 46.67 per cent of the beneficiary respondents were young when compared with non-beneficiaries. This might be due to the reason that young generation having more interest in using KCC services to access the new technologies. Other reason behind is that,

younger generation were reported under higher education status with mobile phone connectivity. They require more farm related information in order to adopt new technology ideas through KCC.

2. Educational status

Education brings desirable changes of the individual behavior in terms of Knowledge, Skill and Attitude. The distribution of beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents according to their level of education is furnished.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents according to Educational Status (n = 120)

S.No.	Educational Status Categories	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries	
		No (n = 90)	Per cent	No (n = 30)	Per cent
1.	Illiterate	0	0.00	9	30.00
2.	Primary (1-5 th Standard)	18	20.00	6	20.00
3.	Middle (6-8 th Standard)	28	31.11	7	23.33
4.	High school (9-10 th Standard)	25	27.78	5	16.67
5.	Higher Secondary (11-12 th Standard)	13	14.44	3	10.00
6.	Collegiate	6	6.67	0	00.00
	Total	90	100.00	30	100.00

The Table 2, shows that nearly one-third (31.11%) of beneficiary respondents had middle level education, followed by 27.78 per cent who had educated up to high school, 20.00 per cent studied upto primary school education, 14.44 per cent with Higher secondary education, and the rest (6.67%) had Collegiate education. With regard to non-beneficiaries respondents 30.00 per cent of the non-beneficiary

respondents were illiterates, followed by 23.33 per cent had middle school education, 20.00 per cent of the non-beneficiaries had primary school education, 16.67 per cent had high school, 10.00 per cent had higher secondary level of education and none had gone to college. It could be concluded from the results that 31.11 per cent of beneficiaries had middle to high school education. The possible reason

might be due to existence of fair school facilities which motivated them to study. Further, non-beneficiary farmers

educational status was poor, due to the non-utilization of educational infrastructure facility at their native locality.

3. Farming Experience

The experience of individual on farming leads to make strong decision on the sustaining the profession with various alternatives. The classification of respondents into different categories based on their farming experience and the corresponding frequency distribution is presented.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents according to Farming Experience (n = 120)

S.No.	Farming Experience Categories (in years)	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries	
		No (n = 90)	Per cent	No (n = 30)	Per cent
1.	Low (<10)	65	72.22	5	16.67
2.	Medium (10-15)	8	08.89	21	70.00
3.	High (> 15)	24	26.67	4	13.33
	Total	90	100.00	30	100.00

The Table 3, explains that less than three fourth (68.89%) of the beneficiary respondents were found with low level of farming experience, followed by less than one fourth (22.22%) with high and the remaining 8.89 per cent with medium level of farming experience. With regard to non-beneficiary respondents, majority (70.00%) of the respondents had medium level of farming experience, followed by 16.67 per cent with low and the rest 13.33 per cent had high level (13.33%) of farming experience. It may be possible due to their young aged nature and they have been in agriculture for

just 5 to 8 years when compared to their old aged counterparts. Hence, they were having low level of farming experience.

4. Cropping Pattern

The source of irrigation decides normality of crop sown in the field condition which may facilitates to follow array of cropping pattern. The results on the distribution of beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents under different categories with respect to their cropping pattern is presented.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents according to Cropping Pattern (n=120)

S.No.	Cropping Pattern Categories	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries	
		No. (n=90)	Per cent	No. (n=30)	Per cent
1.	Single crop	32	35.56	18	60.00
2.	Double crop	34	37.78	10	33.33
3.	Multiple crop	24	26.67	2	06.67
	Total	90	100.00	30	100.00

The Table 4 reveals that more than one third (37.78%) of the beneficiary respondents cultivates double cropping followed by 35.56 per cent single cropping, 26.67 per cent possess multiple cropping as their cropping. With regard to non-beneficiary respondents, majority (60.00%) of the non-beneficiary respondents grows single cropping, followed by 33.33 per cent double cropping, and 6.67 per cent had multiple cropping as their cropping pattern. It could be established from results that higher number (37.78%) of the beneficiaries were cultivates double cropping. In the case of non-beneficiaries three-fifth (60.00%) of the respondents

under the single crop system, which is not a remunerative source of income. The KCC beneficiaries were aware of more profits through double, mixed cropping than mono cropping. Other reason behind is that double cropping gives subsidiary income to the farmers as the water source is available.

5. Source of Irrigation

Availability of water sources influences the option of growing crops in field. The details regarding classification of beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents with respect to their sources of irrigation is provided.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents according to Sources of Irrigation (n=120)

S.No.	Sources of Irrigation Categories (in Rs.)	Beneficiary		Non-Beneficiary	
		No. (n = 90)	Per cent	No. (n = 30)	Per cent
1.	Canal	29	38.89	10	36.67
2.	Open well	35	32.22	11	33.33
3.	Bore well	19	21.11	07	23.33
4.	Tank	07	07.78	02	06.67
	Total	90	100.00	30	100.00

The Table 5, indicated that 38.89 per cent of the beneficiary respondents possess canals as their source of irrigation followed by nearly one third (32.22%) of the respondents with open well irrigation, 21.11 per cent respondents with bore well irrigation and 7.78 per cent of respondents with tank irrigation. With regard to non-beneficiary respondents, more than one third (36.67%) of the respondents possess canal as their source of irrigation followed by one third (33.33%) of the respondents with open well irrigation, 23.33 per cent respondents with bore well irrigation and 6.67 per cent of

respondents with tank irrigation. The result revealed that the sources of irrigation like canal and well was predominant in study area, as they are basically endowed with Tungabhadra river. Apart from canal, there was considerable land under rainfed condition.

6. Contact with Extension and other Agencies

The Government of India and respective state Governments are implementing various scheduled and new schemes for the benefit of farmers through the official mechanism of

Agricultural Extension Centre functioning at block level. The distribution of respondents and level of contact with extension

and other agencies is furnished.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents according to Contact with Extension and other Agencies (n = 120)

S.No.	Contact with Extension and other Agencies Categories	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries	
		No. (n = 90)	Per cent	No. (n = 30)	Per cent
1.	Low (<15)	15	16.67	14	46.67
2.	Medium (15-22)	61	67.78	12	40.00
3.	High (> 22)	14	15.56	4	13.33
	Total	90	100.00	30	100.00

From Table 6, it is seen that more than two third (67.78%) of the beneficiary respondents had medium level of contact with extension and other agencies, followed by 16.67 per cent had low level of contact, 15.56 per cent had high level of contact. In the case of non-beneficiary respondents, 46.67 per cent were found with low level of contact with extension and other agencies, followed by 40 per cent had medium level of contact, 13.33 per cent had high level of contact. It could be concluded from results that KCC beneficiaries had high level extension agency contact than non-beneficiaries. The plausible reason might be that majority of the beneficiaries were young age as they need more information on new

technologies. Hence, they were contacting extension agencies regularly and contact enables the farmers to get different kinds of information, in-turn enlarge their sphere of knowledge about recent technology.

7. Perception towards Mobile Phone in Farming

Mobile availability is high among the farmers which needs to be tapped and used as new extension method to provide viable farming advisories. The classification of respondents based on their perception towards mobile phone in farming is furnished.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents according Perception towards Mobile Phone in Farming (n = 120)

S. No.	Categories	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries	
		No. (n = 90)	Per cent	No. (n = 30)	Per cent
1.	Low (<22)	10	11.11	14	46.67
2.	Medium (22-29)	25	27.78	11	36.67
3.	High (> 29)	55	61.11	6	20.00
	Total	90	100.00	30	100.00

The Table 7, explained that more than half (61.11%) of the beneficiary respondents had high level of perception towards mobile phone in farming, followed by 27.78 per cent had medium level of perception towards mobile phone in farming, and remaining (11.11%) had low level of perception towards mobile phone in farming. With regard to non-beneficiary respondents, 46.67 per cent of the respondents had low level of perception towards mobile phone in farming, followed by 36.67 per cent had medium level of perception towards mobile phone in farming, and the remaining (16.67%) had high level of perception towards mobile phone in farming. The results emphasized that majority (61.11%) of beneficiaries had high level and positive perception towards mobile phone in farming. This was due to the fact that most of the farmers are literate and were aware of the various farming related mobile applications, thus making their life much easier and better. Mobile phones helped the user for the quick transferring and receiving of farm technology information from the other sources.

Conclusion

Successful adoption of any farm technology needs strong socio-economic settings and infrastructure facility. Without these attributes, it is difficult to reach the farmers. In the case of KCC, it provides various services over phone call. At the same time, old aged farmers, low educational status and inexperience farmers may have fear and phobia on calling the KCC for availing right information. Further, KCC beneficiary and non-beneficiary may not be similar conditions. In this context, the study result revealed that most of the farmers were belongs to young age with high level of perception

towards mobile phone in farming. The young age people are well educated and can use mobile phones very easily to connect KCC centre for obtaining timely message. In addition, majority of non-beneficiary respondents were having low level of extension agency contact. Hence, it is recommended that more awareness programme on KCC especially to younger generation farmers by using mass media tools like Television, News Papers and Social Network platforms. It may also be considered an exclusive mobile app with two interactive platform on sharing image and short video based voice query system with toll free system in regional languages.

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