



Transportation in Agriculture

A Case of Kisan Rath App

Policy Brief

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CAME, MANAGE

Introduction

Transport is regarded as a key factor in improving agricultural development all over the world. In transport, it is not only about development of infrastructure and transport facilities but also about appropriate integration of different stakeholders. Accordingly, the Government launched Kisan Rath Mobile Application to facilitate farmers and traders in getting linked with the appropriate mode of transportation for movement of farm produce. The App could not maintain the interest generated among different stakeholders initial on as suggested by the declining downloads over time. According, a survey was undertaken by MANAGE in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (GoI) to analyze different aspects of Kisan Rath App. The information was collected from a total of 5919 respondents including 3199 existing users and 2716 Kisan Call Centre (KCC) users spread across 31 states/UTs. The information was collected in the month of September 2020 by administering a well-structured Schedule designed specifically for the purpose using KCC network with the help of Extension Division of the Ministry. The respondents were selected randomly from a list provided by National Informatics Centre (NIC) of existing users and KCC users as available with the Ministry.

Findings of the Study

Level of Awareness

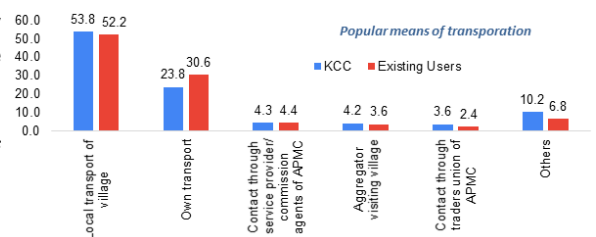
The survey suggested that only 17.14 percent of the farmers from non-existing user group are aware about the Kisan Rath Application, whereas the level of awareness is 47 percent in case of users like traders, wholesalers and other service providers. The level of awareness is again not uniform across the states. The states like Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra were observed to be having better awareness which may be related to the diversification of crops and enterprises prevailing in these states.

Source of Information

KCC respondents are relying mainly on traditional sources like Department and TV/ Radio for information, whereas, major proportion of respondents in case of existing users relied on social media and internet. In the existing user group, more than 55 percent respondents came to know about the App from internet and social media. It appears that there is a category of farmers who are information technology (IT) literate and relying on such sources for their information requirements. Hence, there is need to concentrate on such farmers to popularize the use of Kisan Rath App.

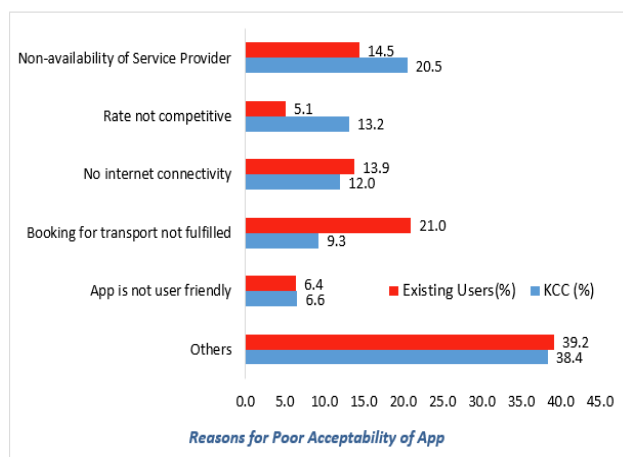
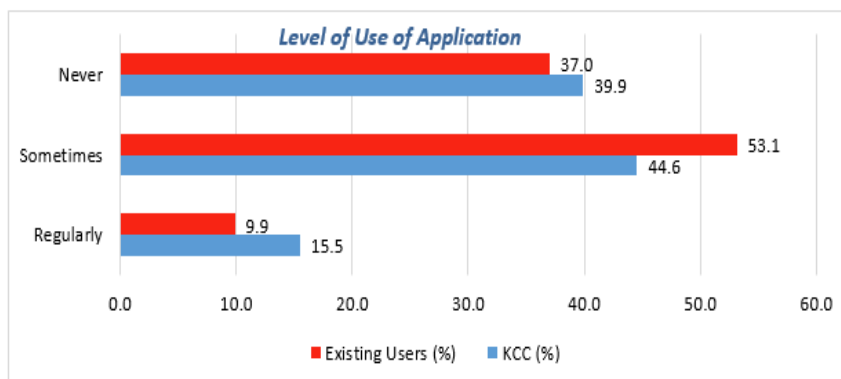
Popular means of Transportation

Local transport and own transport are the major mode used by farmers for transporting their produce. More than three-fourth of the respondents under both the categories are either having their own transport or availing locally available transport and probably this limited their use of Application. This may be due to availability of limited surplus with farmers for marketing and therefore, aggregation may have a role to play in facilitating farmers integration with distant markets.



Level of use and poor acceptability of Mobile App.

About 40 percent of the KCC Respondents having downloaded the mobile App. have never used it whereas, 45 percent are using occasionally. Only 15 percent of such respondents are using the App regularly. In case of existing users, 37 percent have never used the application whereas about 53 percent are using occasionally. Only 15 percent KCC respondents and 10 percent existing users are availing the transportation services using App on regular basis.



The figure also suggests that more than one-third of the respondents across both the categories have downloaded the App but never used the App. This reveals that either the application is difficult for them to follow or is not able to offer services as per their expectations. The major limitation as expressed by respondents are non-availability of service providers, poor internet connectivity and lack of booking being honored. Some of the respondents have also expressed the issue of rate not being competitive mainly the KCC Respondents. Overall, 68 percent of the respondents across both the groups perceive the application to be beneficial in long run. Through, only a limited number of FPOs participated in the Survey but were able to foresee the benefits to the tune of 90 percent.

Conclusion

The market players like traders, wholesalers and logistic service providers who are well versed with the market and have access to market information seems to be proportionately more aware about the app in comparison to farmers. Better awareness among farmers group may enhance the usages of Kisan Rath App as suggested by the ability of FPOs to foresee the benefits offered by the App. As more than 50 percent of the users are relying on locally available transportation facility, it is important to integrate such service providers to bring in more efficiency in the delivery of service. IT infrastructure may also need strengthening as internet-connectivity has been suggested as one of the major limiting factors by many respondents. There is need to make the App more user friendly and wide in terms of integration with other services like market information and registration from different kind of service providers mainly from local environment so as to make it more comprehensive for the end user.

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