

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 222
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 08/08/2025

**SPECIAL PROGRAMMES TO PROVIDE ADVISORY AND TRAINING IN LOCAL
LANGUAGES**

*222. SHRI DHAIRYASHIL MOHAN PATIL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry's digital platforms, such as the mKisan SMS portal have been able to effectively reach out to farmers in remote and tribal areas of Maharashtra;
- (b) whether any special programmes are being run in these areas to provide advisory services and training in local languages; and
- (c) if not, whether the Ministry is planning to develop culturally and linguistically appropriate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) platforms in collaboration with local institutions or Panchayati Raj bodies?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
(SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN)

- (a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 222 FOR 08/08/2025 REGARDING ‘SPECIAL PROGRAMMES TO PROVIDE ADVISORY AND TRAINING IN LOCAL LANGUAGES’

(a) to (c): The Government has taken various steps to provide advisory and training in local languages through various digital platforms to reach out to all the farmers in all the States/UTs, including the state of Maharashtra. The various initiatives taken in this direction are as follows:

- i. mKisan: mKisan is a digital extension platform to reach every farm household. It delivers tailored agricultural advisories, via SMS and voice, leveraging mobile services in the preferred languages and locations of such farm households. It has been designed to provide crop-specific, geo-targeted advisories via SMS and allows for farmers to seek information. Advisories are currently being delivered in 12 Indian languages; including Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Telugu, Tamil, and Urdu.
- ii. Kisan e-Mitra: ‘Kisan e-Mitra’ is a voice-based AI-powered chatbot; developed to assist farmers with responses to their queries on the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme. This solution currently supports 11 Regional languages and is evolving to assist with other government programs. At present, it handles over 20,000 farmer queries daily; and more than 95 lakh queries have been answered till date.
- iii. Artificial Intelligence (AI) based, National Pest Surveillance System, for tackling the loss of produce due to climate change, utilizes AI and Machine Learning to detect pest infestation in crops, enabling timely intervention for healthier crops. This tool, currently used by over 10,000 extension workers, allows farmers to capture images of pests to help them mitigate pest attacks and reduce crop losses. At present, it supports 61 crops and over 400 pests’ combinations.
- iv. An AI-enabled chatbot, viz. the “Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) WhatsApp Chatbot” has been initiated to assist the farmers regarding the PMFBY scheme.
- v. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has set up 731 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in the country, including 50 KVKs in Maharashtra, to promote new technologies for agriculture and allied sectors through technology assessment, demonstration and capacity development among the extension functionaries of the various State Governments and farmers in the local language.
- vi. Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has established the “Kisan Call Centres” (KCCs) with the aim to answer farmers’ queries on a telephone call in their own language. These call centres are working in 17 different locations in the country covering all the States and UTs. A countrywide common eleven-digit Toll Free Number 1800-180-1551 has been allotted for Kisan Call Centre.

- vii. To mitigate the impacts of adverse weather on agriculture, India Meteorological Department (IMD) runs a scheme viz. Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa (GKMS) to render weather forecast-based operational Agrometeorological Advisory Services (AAS), involving several leading organizations viz. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), State Agriculture Departments, NGOs etc. for the benefit of the farming community. This GKMS scheme assists farmers in making informed decisions regarding their day-to-day agricultural operations for minimizing crop damage and losses due to unusual weather and taking advantage of benevolent weather and climatic conditions. Agromet advisories are disseminated through multi-channel dissemination system, including print and electronic media, Doordarshan, Radio, internet, and SMS through Kisan Portal and various other Public-Private Partnership (PPP) initiatives.
- viii. IMD, in collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), has recently launched Panchayat-level weather forecasts covering nearly all Gram Panchayats in India. These forecasts are accessible through digital platforms such as e-Gramswaraj, Meri Panchayat app, e- Manchitra of MoPR, and Mausamgram of IMD.
- ix. The Farmers' Field School (FFS) model is widely used by field-level extension personnel. All training programmes and FFS sessions are conducted in local languages to ensure better comprehension and impact. These trainings are crop-specific and seasonal, providing farmers with timely advisories on pest and disease management. In Maharashtra, during the Kharif 2025 season, a total of 959 FFS sessions were conducted across the State, including 199 sessions - exclusively for women farmers - underlining the State's commitment to inclusive capacity-building in agriculture.
- x. Project VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System To Access Agricultural Resources) aims to develop a unified, federated digital ecosystem for agriculture by integrating reliable, validated and up-to-date resources across various platforms. It focuses on enhancing scalability, accessibility and inclusivity of digital solutions while enabling two-way communication to incorporate farmer feedback. This includes leveraging AI enabled chatbots deployed at the ground level and subsequent integration with AgriStack. The Government of Maharashtra has entered into an agreement with the Government of India to participate in the VISTAAR initiative and has launched its first digital advisory platform—MahaVistaar-AI—to provide real-time, localized support to farmers. This digital tool aims to empower farmers with timely and relevant information, improving decision-making and productivity at the farm-level.
