Role of KVK in Agriculture Extension

In order to draw true potential of farmers towards the state of the art technologies for the betterment of agriculture, Indian government has set up a big chain of over 700 krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) across the country.

Origin of KVK:

- The Education Commission (1964-66) recommended to establish specialised institutions named as ‘Agricultural Polytechnics’ to provide vocational education in agriculture and allied fields at the pre and post matriculate levels to cater the training needs of a large number of boys and girls coming from rural areas.

- ICAR mooted the idea of establishing Krishi Vigyan Kendras (Agricultural Science Centres) as innovative institutions for imparting vocational training to the practicing farmers, school dropouts and field level extension functionaries.
The ICAR Standing Committee on Agricultural Education, in its meeting held in August, 1973, observed that since the establishment of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) was of national importance which would help in accelerating the agricultural production as also in improving the socio-economic conditions of the farming community, the assistance of all related institutions should be taken in implementing this scheme.

The ICAR constituted a committee in 1973 headed by Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta for working out a detailed plan for implementing this scheme. The Committee submitted its report in 1974.

The concept of Krishi Vigyan Kendra was given by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, initiator of green revolution in India and the father of Indian agricultural research. Dr. Swaminathan convinced Government of India that there is a dire necessity to develop Krishi Vigyan Kendra in each district of India with an objective to cater activities such as technology assessment, refinement and demonstration of technology product.

In light of this inspiration, the government of India established the first KVK in Pondicherry during 1974 with the financial support and able guidance of Indian council of agriculture research (ICAR). In Kapgari Village of West Medinapur district, the first KVK in West Bengal and second in India was established in the year 1976. Since then, KVKs have been established in all Indian states and the number continues to grow. Presently, around 695 Krishi Vigyan Kendras are existing in different districts of India.
The distribution of KVKs under different institutions are given below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Universities</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICAR Institutes</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Governments</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSUs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Educational Institutions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>675</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Philosophy of KVK:**

A KVK can be created under a variety of host institutions including agricultural universities, state departments, ICAR institutions, other educational institutions or NGOs. A KVK must must own about 20 hectare of land for the purpose of testing advanced agricultural technologies. The KVK scheme is 100% financed by Govt. of India.

KVK is in fact agricultural extension centre in our country. The meaning of KVK is ‘farm science centre’. Usually associated with local agricultural university, these centres serve as the vibrant link between the Indian council of agricultural research and farmers, and aim to apply agricultural research and development in a localised ambience. ICAR has 11 **Agricultural Technology Application Research institutes (ATARIs)** throughout the country and all the Krishi Vigyan Kendras fall under ATARI. The objective of the ATARI is to plan, monitor, evaluate and guide the programmes of the KVK and judge the performance of KVKs time to time.

KVK, is an integral part of the **National Agricultural Research System (NARS)**, aims at assessment of location specific technology modules in agriculture and allied enterprises, through technology assessment, refinement and demonstrations.

**Objectives of KVK:**

*The mandate of KVK is Technology Assessment and Demonstration for its Application and Capacity Development.*

The objectives cum activities Krishi Vigyan Kendras can be summarised below.

**1. On Farm Testing of new technologies:**

KVK act as a small laboratory and extension centre of agricultural research. Each KVK operates on a small farm to test new technologies related to seed varieties or innovative farming methods, developed by ICAR institutes. Through this platform, new technologies
are tested at the local level before being transferred to the farmers. In this way, KVK serves as a centre to try and test forthcoming agricultural technologies.

2. **Frontline Demonstration centre:**

Because of the KVK’s farm and its proximity to nearby villages, it organises programmes to show the efficacy of new technologies on farmer fields. Such frontline demonstration outlets showcase new agricultural technologies to be introduced in the farming community.

3. **Capacity building:**

KVK also hosts capacity building programmes and workshops to discuss modern farming new technologies with groups of farmers and cultivators.

4. **Multi sector support and Advisory services:**

Krishi Vigyan Kendras offers support to various private and public initiatives through its local network and expertise. Government research institutes in general, leverage the network of KVKs while performing surveys with a wide range of farmers. Due to the growing use of ICT, KVKs have implemented technologies to provide farmers information such as weather advisories or market pricing through radio mobile phones and social media.

- KVKs also conduct training programmes for farmers to update their knowledge in modern agricultural technologies.

- KVKs also work resource and knowledge Centres of agricultural technology for supporting initiatives of public, private and voluntary sector for improving the agricultural economy of the district.

In addition, KVKs produce quality technological products (seed, planting material, bio-agents, livestock) and make it available to farmers, organise frontline extension activities, identify and document selected farm innovations and converge with ongoing schemes and programs within the mandate of KVK.

**Study to find Efficiency of KVK**

Aligned to strengthen the efficiency of KVKs a study was conducted by the National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (NILERD), an autonomous institute under NITI Aayog in the year 2017.

The study found that KVKs are playing a prominent role in transferring new technology at field level with beneficial impacts. They have an edge in technology transfer over other service providers by virtue of their having better technical expertise and demonstration units.

About 40% farmers reported that they implemented the technology immediately after its dissemination by KVK and that 25% did so from the next agricultural season. With the
intervention by KVKs about 80% of the farmers have modified their agricultural patterns which were related of diversification of crops and changes in cropping pattern, seed planting technique, use of fertilisers and pesticides, changes in machinery used and in water use pattern. More than 50% of the farmers have mechanised their farm operations; however ownership of farm machinery and technology adoption increased with the size of holdings and education level of farmers.

The KVKs are evolving as the future grass root level institutions for empowering the farming community. KVKs have made dent and has become part of decentralised planning and implementation instrument to achieve desired level of growth in agriculture and allied sector.

Reference:

*Kurukshetra Magazine, December 2018*

KVK portal

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