

Matir Katha Guidelines

By Jitendra Roy, Joint Secretary, Agriculture Department

Background:

Agriculture is the chief source of employment for the rural population. West Bengal is predominantly an agrarian State. Comprising of only 2.7% of India's geographical area, it supports nearly 8% of its population. There are 71.23 lakh farm families of whom 96% are small and marginal farmers. The average size of land holding is only 0.77 ha. The cropping intensity is 184%. There is surplus production of rice, vegetables and potato but a huge gap between requirement and production of Pulses, Oilseeds and Maize.

The agriculture sector is wrought with challenges of irregular monsoons and the vagaries of nature, pest attacks and dwindling natural resources necessary for production. However, there is growing demand for agricultural products, which offers opportunities for producers to sustain and improve their livelihoods. In these circumstances, assisting the farmers with appropriate agriculture extension services is of paramount importance for ensuring agricultural income. However, the biggest challenge for agriculture extension is to reach out to the millions of farmers to collect information about farm problems and deliver specific solution within appropriate time.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have an important role to play in addressing this challenge and facilitating upliftment of livelihoods of the rural poor. ICT in agriculture can also establish the much needed link between extension and research on a real time basis.

Matir Katha:

Matir Katha – the ICT enabled Agri-extension services of the Agriculture Department, Govt. of West Bengal provides a unique solution to the above problem by ensuring last mile connectivity through Hand-held Tablet PCs provided to the Field Staff and an interactive cloud platform. 'Matir Katha' is a farmer centric mobile-Governance (G2C) application project. It combines Mobile Telecommunication, Software Technology and Agriculture Science for delivering agri-extension services to the farmers. It was launched in October 2013 on a pilot scale in selected Blocks of six districts and later extended to the whole State in June 2015.

The aim of Matir Katha is to empower the farmers with the knowledge of government recommended package of practices, latest innovations and advisories, 24/7 crop protection solutions on the field so that farmer can produce more, sell the produce at right price and earn more. Another aim is to provide G2G services for MIS generation and fast communication. The farm problems reported from the field may form the basis for future planning and research. For proper implementation of the Project, every stakeholder is expected to fulfil his/her responsibility with due diligence.

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Responsibilities of different stakeholders regarding Matir Katha (MK):

Trainers:

The Officers trained in the TOT programme held at ATC, Chinsurah on 24-25 February, 2016 will act as Master Trainers at the district level for training the Asst. DA(Block), Asst. DA(SM), Asst. DA(Farm) and other Officers. These Officers in turn will act as trainers for the Field Staff.

Block Level:

The Asst. DA of the concerned block is responsible for implementation of MK at the Block level. The potentials of this technological tool has to be utilized optimally to extend agri-extension services to the farmers. He has to ensure that the KPS, **BTM & ATM** go to the field with the Tablet PCs regularly and meet the farmers to capture their problems and also to report about ongoing activities. He should give the answers to farmers' questions within 24 hours. In case of any problem in answering, he can refer the question to the higher authority.

The Asst. DA(Block) and Asst. DA(Farm) should give necessary training to concerned KPS, **BTM & ATM** for operating MK Apps. The Asst. DA(Farm) shall also upload all activities of the Govt. Farm through the MK Tab.

KPS, BTM & ATM at Field Level:

For Matir Katha program, each **KPS** (in-charge of a GP), **BTM & ATM** (working under ATMA scheme at block) will go to farmers' field at least 2 days in a week with the hand-held Tablet PC. After discussing with the farmer they will upload farmer's problem in the form of question along with images of affected crops in the Tab. They may give primary suggestions to the farmer using information already available in the Tab and also refer the question with photograph to the higher authority through the Tablet PC. Each KPS, **BTM & ATM** will refer at least 10 questions per day through Tab.

Sub-Division Level:

Asst DA(SM) at Sub-Division looking after Matir Katha should visit the MK portal on daily basis and track the questions/ activity reports being uploaded and will answer the unanswered questions within next 24 hours. He will also monitor and co-ordinate with concerned Asst. DA(Block) for time bound answering of farmers' questions raised through **Matir Katha** Tab.

District Level:

Asst.D.A (PP) or other Officer looking after Matir Katha project at the district as Nodal Officer will co-ordinate with the concerned Asst DA(SM)/other officials for timely solution of farmer's problems. He will answer the unanswered questions if any referred by Asst. DA(SM) within next 24 hours. He should provide necessary training of Matirkatha program to concerned officials and maintain inventory of Tabs issued to the district. Matters of faulty Tabs

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has to be coordinated by him with WTL/Ingreens. Hardware/software mending services for faulty Tabs will be provided at the district level.

The Deputy Director of Agriculture (Admn) of each district will convene and preside over the **District Knowledge Centre (DKC)** meeting in his office premises or any suitable place as decided by him on every Wednesday or on the next working day in case of holiday in every week for monitoring the progress of Matir Katha program.

The DKC will consist of DDA(WBP) or DDA(WM), Asstt. DA(PP), Asstt.DA(Fertiliser), Asstt.DA(Information), Representative of FPI&HorticultureDeptt., Marketing Deptt., Disaster Management Deptt., KVK, ICAR, SAU etc of respective district. The DKC may also co-opt any other expert as per need.

State Level:


At State Level, a review-cum monitoring meeting for Matir Katha project is held every Thursday from 3.00 PM at Nabanna to monitor the progress of Matir Katha project.

A State Level Knowledge Centre (**SLKC**) has been formed with experts from different section under Directorate of Agriculture, Horticulture and SAUs for providing solution to specific problems that may be referred by the districts.

General:

1. The MK Tabs should not be kept idle. However, these Tabs should be utilized for Government work only.
2. All tabs have 3G enabled SIM with 1GB Data limit/ month. After completion of 1 GB, internet speed will be slow. So playing videos/ movies/ games online is not desirable.
3. Calling facility is enabled in all tabs and unlimited CUG is enabled between all MK SIMs of same service provider. Calls to other service provider are free upto 150mins/month but chargeable beyond that limit. Cost against extra calls will not be borne by the Department.
4. Please do not install any memory booster app/ junk file cleaning app/ anti-virus app etc. This will affect efficiency of the Tab.
5. All Officers and Field Staff should handle the Tab PCs with care. Maintenance services for Hardware/ software related issues of Tabs will be dealt at the district level by WTL. However, physical damage of screen/theft/loss of Tabs is not covered under warranty. Such costs will not be borne by the Department.
6. In the event of his/her transfer or retirement, the Officer/Field Staff concerned shall deposit their respective Tabs with the concerned Asst.DA (Block)/DDA (Admn.) of the district against proper receipt. At the State level, it should be deposited with the Joint Secretary in-charge of Matir Katha.

N.B. : Please see Annexure –I for pointwise operational responsibilities.


Joint Secretary
Agriculture Department
Govt. of West Bengal

Annexure – I

Primary responsibility of Officers and Field Staff regarding usage of Matir Katha

ADA (Block):

- Ensuring all Tablet PCs of his/ her Block are assigned to KPS/ BTM/ ATM
- Ensuring all Tablet PCs of his/ her Block remain in working condition with updated software and ID-Password for KPS/ BTM/ ATM
- Ensuring Min. Avg. 10 Posts raised from Each Tablet PC of the Block/ Day through KPS/ BTM/ ATM
- Ensuring daily answering of Block questions at Portal (<http://matirkatha.net>)
- Publish weekly Block MIS (Downloadable from Analytics module) and review the same with Block KPS/ BTM/ ATM
- Ensuring all Soil samples of the Block are assigned to District STL at Portal as soon as they are sent to STL
- Ensuring knowledge based modules are optimally used for regular knowledge upgradation
- All issues related to Hardware/ Software has to be logged immediately to District Nodal Officer & Matir Katha Help Desk

Although posts can be repetitive in nature (Same problem for many farmers), since Answer will reach to individual farmers mobile, all types of Field Activity has to be posted on Krishi Katha Module

KPS /BTM/ ATM

- Ensuring his/ her Tablet PCs remain in working condition with updated software, Charged up Battery and ID-Password
- Ensuring Min. Avg. 10 Posts raised from his/ her Tablet PC/Day
- Ensuring knowledge based modules are optimally used for regular knowledge upgradation
- All issues related to Hardware/ Software has to be logged immediately to ADA Block

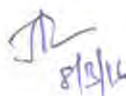
Although posts can be repetitive in nature (Same problem for many farmers), since Answer will reach to individual farmers mobile, all types of Field Activity has to be posted on Krishi Katha Module

ADA (SM):

- Ensuring all Tablet PCs of his/ her Sub-Division remain in working condition with updated software
- Ensuring daily answering of Sub-Division questions at Portal (<http://matirkatha.net>)
- Checking Sub-Division MIS at Analytics modules and keep a tab on the progress

MK Nodal Officer of Districts:

- Ensuring all Tablet PCs of a District are assigned to individuals through ADA SM & ADA Blocks
- Ensuring all Tablet PCs of a District remain in working condition with updated software
- Ensuring Minimum Avg. 10 Posts raised from each Tablet PC/ Day through KPS/ BTM/ ATM
- Ensuring daily answering of District questions at Portal (<http://matirkatha.net>)
- Checking District MIS at Analytics modules and keep a tab on the progress
- Ensuring knowledge based modules are optimally used for regular knowledge upgradation
- Ensuring holding the meetings of District Knowledge Center regularly to monitor MK implementation.
- All issues related to Hardware/ Software has to be logged immediately to Matir Katha Help Desk.


8/9/16