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Bharat-VISTAAR: An Introduction to AI-Powered Farm Advisory

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture depends on weather, soil fertility, seed quality, pest and disease management, irrigation, and market prices. At each stage, farmers need timely, reliable information, from choosing a suitable variety and planning irrigation to identifying crop problems, checking mandi prices, and accessing government schemes. However, this information is often scattered across departments, websites, mobile applications, and extension services, making relevant advice difficult to find.

To address this challenge the Government of India launched Phase I of Bharat-VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources) that brings agricultural information and advisory services together through an artificial intelligence (AI) powered platform. Farmers can ask questions through voice or text, while the platform draws on connected government and scientific information sources. It is designed to make agricultural information more accessible and relevant to the farmer's location and needs.

Bharat-VISTAAR

Bharat-VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources) is an AI-powered national Digital Public Infrastructure platform under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Announced in Union Budget 2026-27 with an allocation of Rs.150 crore, its first phase was launched on 17 February 2026. It brings together government information and scientific knowledge, including ICAR crop recommendations, IMD weather forecasts, and Agmarknet market prices, through a single digital gateway for agricultural advice and support services.

Designed as a 24×7 digital farm adviser, it follows a "voice-first" approach, allowing farmers to speak their questions rather than rely only on typing or reading. By dialling 155261, farmers can interact with "Bharati," its AI voice assistant, even from a basic mobile phone. Hindi and English were available at launch, with additional languages planned in phases. The platform uses AI to help farmers access and understand relevant information without searching multiple sources separately.

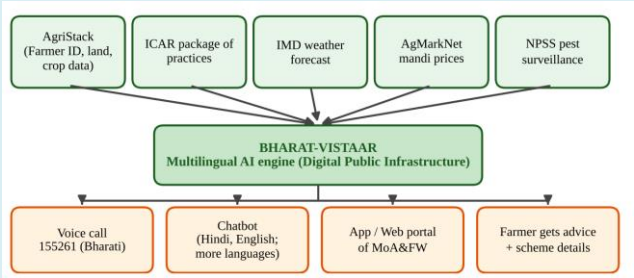


Fig. 1: How Bharat-VISTAAR works: from data sources to the farmer

The Need for Bharat-VISTAAR in Modern Agriculture

- Fragmented information: Agricultural information is distributed across multiple platforms and departments.
- Timely decisions: Farmers need information at the appropriate time for sowing, irrigation, nutrient management and pest control.
- Local-language communication: Advice is more useful when farmers can understand it in a familiar language.
- Access to government schemes: Farmers need to understand scheme eligibility, application procedures and benefit status.

- Digital inclusion: Voice-based access can help farmers who have limited experience using smartphone applications.

Bharat-VISTAAR is intended to help address these challenges by integrating information and making it more accessible.

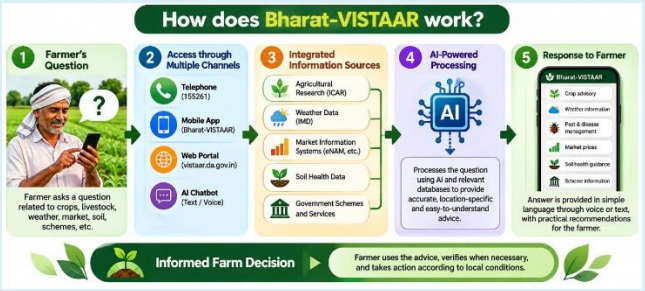
Objectives of Bharat-VISTAAR

1. To provide easier access to agricultural information through an integrated digital platform
2. To support informed farm decisions using scientific and data-based advice
3. To improve access to weather forecasts, crop advisories and market information
4. To facilitate access to agricultural schemes and related services
5. To promote the use of AI and digital technologies in agricultural extension

Major services offered through Bharat-VISTAAR



1. Crop and livestock advisory	• Based on the ICAR package of practices. • Access to scientific guidance on crop management and livestock-related practices, based on available agricultural knowledge and advisory services.
2. Weather information	• Weather forecast from IMD. • Weather forecasts and weather-based advisories can help farmers plan sowing, irrigation, spraying and harvesting operations.
3. Pest and disease management	• **pest alerts** from the National Pest Surveillance System. • Access to pest and disease advisories can support early identification, timely intervention and more informed crop-protection decisions.
4. Agricultural market prices	• **Market prices** from AgMarkNet • Market-price information can help farmers compare available price information and plan the sale of their produce.
5. Soil health and nutrient management	• Soil-health-related information can help farmers understand nutrient-management recommendations and make better use of agricultural inputs.
6. Government schemes and support services	• **Scheme information** – eligibility, benefit tracking and grievance help for 10 central schemes such as PM-KISAN, PM Fasal Bima Yojana, Soil Health Card and Kisan Credit Card. • The platform provides access to information about agricultural schemes, with services such as eligibility, application and benefit-status information being integrated progressively.



How can farmers access Bharat-VISTAAR?

The Government of India's Phase I announcement identified the following access channels:

- Telephone: Dial 155261 for the Bharat-VISTAAR telephone service.
- Mobile application: Use the official Bharat-VISTAAR app.
- Web portal: Visit the official Bharat-VISTAAR portal.
- AI chatbot: Submit agricultural questions through the available digital interface.

The platform was initially launched in Hindi and English for the telephone service, with regional-language expansion planned in phases. The latest government update reports that the telephone service is available in two languages, while the chatbot, web portal and mobile application are available in ten languages. Farmers should check the official platform for current language and service availability.

Facts and figures: Bharat-VISTAAR at a glance

- Farmers served: More than 3 lakh, as reported in September 2026
- Farmer queries addressed: More than 72 lakhs, as reported in September 2026

- Language availability: 10 languages for the chatbot, web portal and mobile application, as reported in September 2026

The foundation: Digital Agriculture Mission and AgriStack

Bharat-VISTAAR runs on the Digital Agriculture Mission, approved in September 2024 with an outlay of Rs.2,817 crore (central share Rs.1,940 crore). Its AgriStack has three registries: Farmers Registry, Geo-referenced Village Maps and Crop Sown Registry.

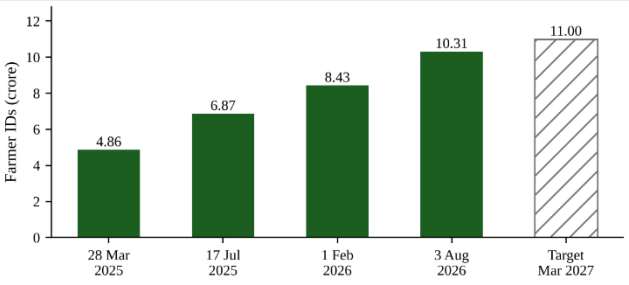


Fig. 2: Growth of Farmer IDs (crore) under AgriStack

The Mission targets 11 crore Farmer IDs by March 2027. As of 3 August 2026, more than 10.31 crore had been created, and the Digital Crop Survey covered 648 districts and over 31.3 crore plots in Rabi 2025-26 (Lok Sabha, 2025a, 2025b, 2026; Rajya Sabha, 2026). Farmer data is collected with consent under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

Practical example: How can a farmer use AI-powered advice?

Consider a maize farmer who notices unusual spots on crop leaves.

Sl. No	Steps		Description
1.		**Identify the problem**	The farmer observes unusual leaf symptoms and seeks guidance through the available Bharat-VISTAAR service.
2.		**Seek relevant information.**	The farmer asks about possible causes and suitable management practices. The information available through the platform can help guide the next steps.
3.		**Verify the recommendation**	If the symptoms are unclear or the problem is serious, the farmer consults a local agricultural extension officer or a qualified crop specialist before applying pesticides.
4.		**Take appropriate action.**	The farmer follows the verified recommendation, observes the crop and seeks further guidance if needed.

Potential benefits of Bharat-VISTAAR for farmers

1. **Timely access to information:** Helps farmers obtain relevant agricultural information without having to search multiple sources independently.
2. **Improved accessibility:** Voice-based and multilingual services can make digital agricultural information easier to access for farmers with different levels of digital literacy.
3. **Better-informed farm management:** Weather, crop, pest and soil-health information can support decisions about agricultural operations and input use.
4. **Easier access to schemes:** Integrated scheme information can help farmers understand available support and the procedures for accessing it.
5. **Potential for more efficient farming:** Better-informed decisions may help farmers manage risks and use resources more efficiently. Actual benefits depend on local conditions, the accuracy of advice and its implementation.

Important precautions for farmers

AI-powered advice is a support tool, not a replacement for scientific judgement or field-level expertise.

- Provide accurate information about the crop, location, growth stage and observed problem.
- Verify pesticide and fertilizer recommendations with reliable agricultural sources and product labels.
- Consult agricultural experts when advice is unclear, contradictory or unsuitable for local conditions.
- Check the date and location of weather forecasts and market-price information.
- Never share passwords, banking PINs or one-time passwords (OTPs) with anyone claiming to provide agricultural assistance.
- Confirm scheme eligibility and application requirements through official government channels.

CONCLUSION

Bharat-VISTAAR represents an important step towards integrating artificial intelligence with agricultural extension and digital public services in India. By connecting farmers with agricultural knowledge, weather information, market prices and government scheme information, it aims to make reliable information more accessible and support informed farm-level decisions.

Its effectiveness will depend on the quality of information, regional-language accessibility, local relevance, digital awareness and farmers' ability to apply the recommendations correctly. Bharat-VISTAAR should therefore be viewed as a digital partner for farmers—complementing, rather than replacing, agricultural scientists, extension workers and local expertise.

Digital information becomes useful when it supports a well-informed decision in the field.

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