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Bharat-VISTAAR: Transforming Agricultural Extension through Artificial Intelligence in India (2026)

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Foram Joshi

Senior Research Assistant, Community Radio Station, ASPEE College of Nutrition and Community Science, Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agricultural University, Sardarkrushinagar – 385506, Gujarat, India

In 2026, the Government of India officially launched Bharat-VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources), a multilingual AI-powered advisory platform designed to provide real-time, personalized, and location-specific agricultural guidance to farmers (The Times of India, 2026; The Indian Express, 2026). Announced in the Union Budget 2026–27 and inaugurated on 17 February 2026 by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, the platform aims to bring scientific advisories, weather alerts, market data, and government schemes into a single digital interface for farmers (The Times of India, 2026; The Indian Express, 2026).

The Need for Digital Transformation in Agricultural Extension

India's agricultural extension services—traditionally delivered through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), field extension officers, and state agriculture departments—have struggled to meet the growing information demands of over 140 million farmers. Challenges such as delayed advisories, climate risks, pest outbreaks, and limited outreach to remote villages have constrained the impact of traditional extension systems (The Times of India, 2026).

Bharat-VISTAAR was introduced to overcome these constraints by leveraging artificial intelligence and integrated data sources, thereby strengthening the efficiency and reach of agricultural extension services.

What is Bharat-VISTAAR?

Bharat-VISTAAR is an AI-driven digital agriculture platform that integrates multiple government agricultural databases, scientific practice packages, and machine-learning models to provide tailored and actionable advice to farmers. It functions as a unified digital gateway for agricultural information, simplifying access to key resources that farmers

previously had to obtain from multiple systems (The Indian Express, 2026).

Key Components Integrated

- AgriStack portals: Core digital ecosystem for farmer records, credit, inputs, and services (Moneycontrol, 2026).
- ICAR practices: Verified crop-specific guidance from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- Weather data: Real-time forecasts from IMD APIs for sowing, irrigation, and climate-risk management (Skymet Weather, 2026).
- Market intelligence: Live mandi prices and advisories for better marketing decisions.
- Government schemes: Eligibility checks, applications, tracking, and grievance redressal integrated into a single platform (Mint, 2026).

Voice-Based AI Assistant "Bharati"

A key innovation of Bharat-VISTAAR is its voice-enabled AI assistant named "Bharati", which allows farmers to interact with the platform using simple language through phone calls or digital interfaces (The Indian Express, 2026).

This feature is particularly beneficial for farmers with limited literacy and limited experience using smartphone applications (The Times of India, 2026).

Features and Innovations of Bharat-VISTAAR

AI Advisory Capabilities

The platform uses machine learning to analyze soil health, crop stages, climate data, and real-time inputs to generate personalized recommendations for sowing, pest control, fertilization, and irrigation. This approach goes beyond generic advisories and supports precision farming across diverse agro-climatic zones (Global Agriculture, 2026).

Multilingual Voice Access

Voice-based interactions in Hindi, English, and several regional languages allow farmers with low literacy levels to access advisories through toll-free calls (155261) or mobile applications using natural speech. This feature improves inclusivity by removing internet and smartphone barriers (ET Now Hindi, 2026).

Unified Services Hub

Farmers can access eligibility checks, applications, and tracking for government schemes such as PM-KISAN and crop insurance through a single interface. The system also provides grievance redressal and subsidy guidance.

Real-Time Intelligence

Integrated IMD weather APIs provide hyper-local forecasts, extreme weather alerts, and mandi price updates. These insights help farmers optimize planting, harvesting, and marketing decisions.

Open Innovation Platform

Designed as a plug-and-play digital public infrastructure, Bharat-VISTAAR provides APIs that allow agritech companies to build customized tools such as drone analytics, farm monitoring systems, and blockchain-based traceability solutions. The platform was piloted in Rajasthan for scalable implementation.

Integrated Agricultural Knowledge Base

By combining data from AgriStack, ICAR recommendations, soil health databases, and weather information, the platform ensures that advisory content remains scientifically validated and context-specific (Mint, 2026).

Implications for Agricultural Extension

Bharat-VISTAAR has the potential to revolutionize agricultural extension by digitizing and personalizing advisory services while supporting both farmers and extension workers.

Enhanced Decision-Making

Personalized advisories on sowing, irrigation, nutrient management, and crop protection help farmers make timely and science-based decisions, reducing dependency on intermediaries.

Improved Risk Management

Real-time alerts on weather fluctuations, pest outbreaks, and climate risks promote proactive adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, minimizing crop losses.

Reduced Fragmentation

The platform consolidates weather data, market intelligence, government schemes, and ICAR recommendations in one place, simplifying access to information that was previously scattered across multiple portals.

Focus on Women Farmers

Bharat-VISTAAR has significant potential to support women farmers, who constitute nearly 75% of India's agricultural labor force but often face barriers in accessing extension services.

Addressing Access Barriers

Voice-enabled interactions allow women farmers to seek agricultural advice, market updates, and scheme information from home, overcoming literacy and mobility constraints (The Times of India, 2026).

Empowering Daily Operations

Real-time diagnostics, pest alerts, and price information enable women to manage crop production, livestock activities, and small enterprises more effectively.

Extension Impact

By expanding access to personalized information, the platform promotes climate-smart practices, financial inclusion, and economic empowerment among rural women.

Challenges and Considerations

Connectivity Gaps

Many rural areas still experience unreliable internet connectivity, which may limit access to real-time digital services. Strengthening initiatives such as BharatNet is essential for effective implementation.

Literacy and Digital Awareness

Limited familiarity with digital technologies, especially among elderly farmers and women, requires training programs and demonstrations through extension agencies.

Building Farmer Trust

Adoption may initially be slow due to skepticism toward AI-based recommendations. Demonstrations, field trials, and integration with Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) can help build credibility.

Data Privacy Concerns

Protection of farmer data stored within AgriStack requires strong governance frameworks, consent mechanisms, and transparent data policies.

Conclusion

Bharat-VISTAAR represents a significant step toward modernizing India's agricultural extension system through the integration of artificial intelligence and

national agricultural databases. By delivering personalized, real-time, and data-driven advisories, the platform enhances farmers' decision-making capacity, productivity, and climate resilience.

Its multilingual and voice-enabled interface improves accessibility for smallholder and women farmers, fostering greater inclusion in the digital agricultural ecosystem. When effectively implemented and widely adopted, Bharat-VISTAAR has the potential to become a foundational pillar of India's digitally empowered and knowledge-driven agricultural sector.

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