

# Digital Platform for Farmers : iffcobazar.in An Initiative of IFFCO

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## Abstract

IFFCO eBazar Limited, a 100% owned subsidiary of IFFCO, is in the business of retailing agri-inputs to farmers across India. The objective is to provide modern retail experience to the Indian farmers by delivering agricultural inputs and other services under one roof. Currently, there are more than 1200 modern retail outlets operating under the brand name of IFFCO BAZAR. The stores under operation are company owned company operated and franchise owned franchisee operated. IFFCO BAZAR also provides services like soil testing, health check-up, etc. at its outlets. The salient features of the same are discussed in this paper.

**Key words:** IFFCO BAZAR, objective, e-commerce, social media, toll free number, Chabot

## Introduction

In order to get the fruits of technology to the Indian farmers and to give them world class e-commerce experience in buying agri-inputs and also to provide a 24/7 connect to farmers to learn best practices in agriculture, IFFCO BAZAR started a digital platform [www.iffcobazar.in](http://www.iffcobazar.in) as well as a mobile app "IFFCO BAZAR" in android as well as iOS. During 2019-20, these stores sold 9.45 Lakh MT fertilizers (water soluble and specialty fertilizers) and other products such as, water soluble fertilizers, specialty fertilizers, bio-fertilizers, growth promoters, seeds, bio-protection, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, agri machinery, spray machine, gardening, etc. and registered a turnover of Rs.1222 crore. Since inception in 2016, IFFCO has expanded its operations in 26 States.

## Objective

IFFCO BAZAR aims to connect all the farmers and cooperative societies in the country, on a single digital platform. The objectives is to provide a digital platform to Indian farmers to buy agriculture inputs, implements and services along with home delivery facility and also to impart them latest and best practices in agriculture of the platform.

We at IFFCO BAZAR believe that until and unless any information to farmers is informed in their own language, the usefulness of that information cannot be achieved. Hence, the digital platform was developed in 10 different regional languages in addition to Hindi and English.

The portal is available in 12 languages

- |               |             |              |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. English    | 2. Hindi    | 3. Punjabi   |
| 4. Bengali    | 5. Gujarati | 6. Marathi   |
| 7. Telugu     | 8. Tamil    | 9. Kannada   |
| 10. Malayalam | 11. Odia    | 12. Assamese |

## E-Commerce for Farmers

On this digital platform, online buying facility to farmers for all the products of the society has been provided. Customers can select their required product and need to fill shipping address and make payment

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in advance to place the order. Once payment is successful, the order shall be confirmed to the user and material shall be packed within four hours in central warehouse and sent through the courier agency. Currently, urea, DAP and NPK are not available for sale online.

Farmers can pay through their debit card/credit card/net banking/UPI/ wallet, etc. to buy products online. Currently, free home delivery service is being provided to around 25,000 pin codes across the country. The ordered material is being delivered to the farmers within 7-10 days. Efforts are underway to reduce the delivery time to 3 days. There is very good response from the farmers to buy agri-inputs online. Within six months of launch of the portal, around 60 thousand shipments were delivered at farmers' doorstep. Orders were received from 35 states/union territories including Andaman & Nicobar and from Kargil in Jammu & Kashmir. In addition to product sales, IFFCO Bazar also provides services like soil testing, health check-up, etc. at its outlets.

## Engagement with CSC SPV

IFFCO BAZAR joined hands with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited a special purpose vehicle (CSC SPV) under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to faster the reach of this digital platform to villages and farmers through its expansive spread of 3.9 lakh village level entrepreneurs (VLEs) spread across the country. This initiative will provide an opportunity to VLEs to earn additional income by sale of agri-inputs to farmers in nearby villages. They can leverage the strong brand image of IFFCO to connect with farmers in nearby villages to inform them that now they can order the products from the CSC Center.

VLEs can sell entire IFFCO group company products. For each order, VLEs will get instant commission of 4% of the total order value.

## IFFCO BAZAR Social Media

IFFCO BAZAR has very active and popular social media handles on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram as shown in **Photo 1**. The Facebook page of

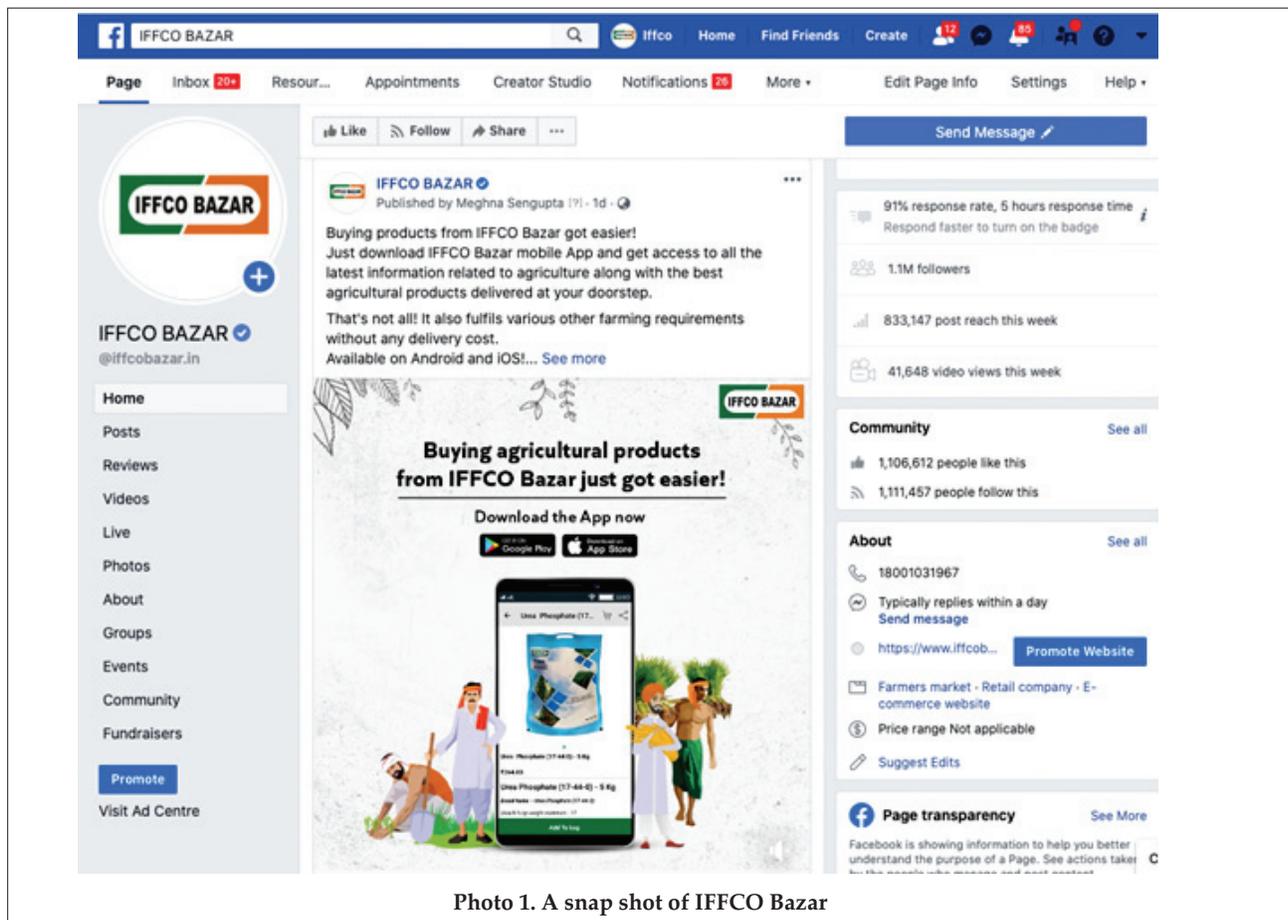


Photo 1. A snap shot of IFFCO Bazar

IFFCO BAZAR is followed by 1.1 million users and is full of activity. The YouTube page of IFFCO BAZAR features several videos on product knowledge and product usage made in multi-regional language.

It has been noticed that, often farmers purchase material in excess of their requirement and are unaware of right use of the product. Hence, this is a step in that direction to curb excessive usage/expenditure by farmers. IFFCO always believes in right use in right quantity of fertilizers in order to curb wasteful expenditure of foreign exchange by importing excessive quantity of fertilizers and also to preserve the soil health.

Therefore, a farmer can get to know how to use a particular fertilizer/agro-chemical or any other material by simply watching a short video about it on YouTube before buying a particular product on this platform.

Toll Free Helpline Number

**1800 103 1967**

IFFCO BAZAR has started a Toll-Free Helpline Number *i.e.* 1800 103 1967 for answering queries of all Indian farmers.

Information services on this number is available in

10 different languages.

- ◆ English
- ◆ Punjabi
- ◆ Gujarati
- ◆ Telugu
- ◆ Kannada
- ◆ Hindi
- ◆ Bengali
- ◆ Marathi
- ◆ Tamil
- ◆ Malayalam

The toll-free number is operational on six days a week from Monday to Saturday from 9 am to 6 pm. Farmers can get information related to all products, price/availability and business opportunities with IFFCO and group companies. Farmers can also get information related to any topic/issue in agriculture. Customers can also ring-up this toll-free number to register their feedback and lodge complaints.

#### Future Roadmap

IFFCO BAZAR resolved to bring the fruits of state of the art technology to the doorstep of farmers. Use of voice assisted AI based multilingual Chabot to enable farmers to check which store within his proximity has the desired stock (fertilizers) available in real-time. Using the Chabot, a farmer would be able to get relevant agricultural information about soil, weather, and irrigation. This will cater to all farmers of the country in their local languages. ■