



AWARENESS OF FARMERS TOWARDS RYTHU BHAROSA KENDRAS (RBKS) PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN KURNOOL DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

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The present study was conducted to analyse farmer's awareness towards products and services offered by Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs), particularly in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. A total of 120 farmers from six RBKs were purposively chosen for the study. The results of the study indicated that the sample farmers had high level of awareness towards products and services offered by RBKs for statements such as availability of agriculture and veterinary assistant staff for guidance, operations of RBKs confined to a revenue village and availability of agri inputs (seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, *etc.*) services. The majority of sample farmers (65.83%) had medium level of awareness towards RBKs products and services, followed by 21.67 per cent and 12.50 percent with high and low awareness level towards RBKs products and services.

KEYWORDS: Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs), farmer's awareness, products and services.

INTRODUCTION

Andhra Pradesh is India's rice bowl and one of the country's most important agricultural states. Andhra Pradesh rural population is around 63 per cent (Statista, 2021). In 2021-22, the Gross Value Added (GVA) is 18.8 per cent. While agricultural and allied sectors reported a growth rate of 14.50 per cent, while agriculture alone contributed to a growth rate of 6.30 per cent. The horticulture and livestock sector witnessed a growth rate of 13.24 per cent and 11.46 per cent respectively. With the increase in population, the demand for agricultural commodities has been increasing day by day. Thus, to gain its viability by bringing it on a higher growth track, there is an urgent need to recognize the magnitude of problems faced by the agriculture and allied sectors.

Andhra Pradesh government launched Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) for the farmers as one-stop solution for all agriculture and allied firm's products and services on May 30, 2020. RBKs is one of the Andhra Pradesh Government interventions towards increasing the farmer's income.

The products offered at RBKs includes the supply of good quality and certified inputs like seeds (OPV's), hybrid seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals, micronutrients,

bio-fertilizers, livestock feed and services like enrollment and processing of input subsidy, enrollment of Crop insurance, E-Karshak (Digital Crop Records), Polambadi (Farm School), MSP Procurement services, yield and damage Assessment, farm advisory services, technology transfer (Agriculture Extension Service), market price information, weather forecasting information, soil and seed testing services, JLG (Joint Liability Groups) formation and credit linkage, custom hiring centers and veterinary services etc. Based on the crop area and allied sectors, Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) are led by a Village Agriculture Assistant/ Horticulture Assistant/ Veterinary Assistant.

The extent of farmer's awareness towards the products and services offered by RBKs is essential for Andhra Pradesh government in taking policy decisions for improving the availability of products and services at RBKs, further the findings will aid academics, and the department of agriculture, Andhra Pradesh in developing strategies for successful penetration and functioning of RBKs. In this context, the present study is aimed to analyze farmer's awareness towards products and services offered at Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs), particularly in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.

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MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ex post facto research design was followed for conducting the study. This design was appropriate because the phenomenon has already occurred. Kerlinger (1973) defined *Ex post facto* research design as any systematic empirical enquiry in which the independent variables have not been directly manipulated because they have already occurred or they are inherently not manipulable. He further stated that *Ex post facto* studies can be devised to deduce theories, identify behavioural phenomenon and explore conditions under which a phenomenon occurs.

Andhra Pradesh state was selected purposively for the study as the researcher hails from the same state and is familiar with the local language. Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively for the study as the researcher hails from the same district. Nandyal revenue division was selected as the researcher hails from the same Nandyal revenue division. Out of 29 mandals in the Nandyal revenue division, two mandals were selected randomly namely Bandi Atmakuru and Mahanandi. Three villages were selected from each of the selected mandals based on the number of farmers in the villages. The villages selected from Bandi Atmakuru mandal were Banda Atmakuru, Santha Juturu, and Parnapalle. From Mahanandi mandal, Bukkapuram, Thammadapalle and Abbipuram villages were selected. A total of six RBKs were purposively chosen based on larger number of farmers in RBK's for the study. Beneficiaries of Rythu Bharosa Kendras were listed and 20 farmers from each Rythu Bharosa Kendras were randomly selected for the survey thus making the total sample size to 120.

Farmers Awareness towards RBKs products and services

The awareness of sample farmers towards Rythu Bharosa Kendras products and services was measured by a schedule that comprised of 3 dimensions namely unaware, aware and completely purchased/ experienced. The responses were taken on a 3-point continuum with dimensions of unaware, aware and completely aware or experienced.

The awareness score of the respondents was then classified into 3 categories based on mean and standard deviation as shown below.

| S. No. | Category | Score |
|--------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Low level | Below mean – S.D. |
| 2. | Medium level | Between mean \pm S.D. |
| 3. | High level | Above mean + S.D. |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Awareness of farmers towards Rythu Bharosa Kendra's products and services in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh

Farmer's Awareness towards products and services offered by RBKs was intended to know about farmer's general awareness towards products and services offered by RBKs in the sampled area.

The analysis was conducted using a three-point rating scale and scores of 1, 2, and 3 were assigned to the levels of unawareness, awareness, and completely

Table 1. Overall Farmer's awareness of Rythu Bharosa Kendras products and services

(n = 120)

| S. No. | Participatory category | Participatory criteria | Participatory score | Farmers | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------|
| | | | | No. | Percentage (%) |
| 1 | Low | < (Mean – SD) | < 36.07 | 15 | 12.50 |
| 2 | Medium | (Mean \pm SD) | 36.077 – 38.68 | 79 | 65.83 |
| 3 | High | > (Mean + SD) | > 41.28 | 26 | 21.67 |
| Total | | | | 120 | 100 |
| Mean | | | | 38.67 | |
| Standard deviation | | | | 2.52 | |

Table 2. Farmer's awareness of Rythu Bharosa Kendra's products and services

(n = 120)

| S. No. | Awareness about RBK | Unaware | Aware | Completely aware (or) purchased (or) experienced | Mean Score | Rank |
|--------|---|---------|-------|--|------------|-------------|
| 1. | Agriculture & Veterinary (Technical) staff are available at RBK for guidance. | 0 | 11 | 109 | 2.91 | I |
| 2. | RBK area of operations are confined to Revenue village as a Unit | 0 | 16 | 104 | 2.87 | II |
| 3. | RBK also supplies agri inputs to the farmers (seeds, fertilizers etc.) | 5 | 20 | 95 | 2.75 | III |
| 4. | E-Karshak (Digital crop records) is maintained by RBK staff by capturing crop images and geo-tag the location of the crop | 6 | 23 | 91 | 2.71 | IV |
| 5. | There are agriculture & allied audio- visual aids like charts, boards, books are displayed at RBK to create awareness regarding current works & new technological advancements. | 8 | 25 | 87 | 2.66 | V |
| 6. | Enrollment and Processing for Input Subsidy and crop insurance is done at RBK | 0 | 46 | 74 | 2.62 | VI |
| 7. | RBK is one stop solution for agriculture and allied activities | 0 | 49 | 71 | 2.59 | VII |
| 8. | RBK assess the yield and damage of crops and those records are maintained? | 6 | 46 | 68 | 2.52 | VIII |
| 9. | RBK has all the information about agriculture & allied supporting schemes offered by the state government | 6 | 52 | 62 | 2.47 | IX |
| 10. | RBK provides extension services like farm school, weather forecasting information, soil, seed and water testing services etc. | 9 | 49 | 62 | 2.44 | X |
| 11. | Digital kiosk is available at RBK for placing order of agri inputs | 20 | 44 | 56 | 2.30 | XI |
| 12. | RBK provides marketing services like market price information and MSP procurement services. | 21 | 61 | 38 | 2.14 | XII |
| 13. | RBK disseminates information related to agriculture & allied firms via WhatsApp groups. | 14 | 89 | 17 | 2.03 | XIII |
| 14. | Veterinary services like medication, guidance regarding maintenance and feed etc. | 60 | 36 | 24 | 1.70 | XIV |
| 15. | RBK supplies livestock feed to the farmers | 66 | 36 | 18 | 1.60 | XV |
| 16. | Formation and credit linkage of 4S groups (JLG) is done at RBK | 92 | 19 | 9 | 1.31 | XVI |

purchased (or) experienced, respectively. Mean scores were determined and the aspects were assigned rankings based on the mean score. Table 2 shows the results of a simple percentage analysis performed on the data gathered.

Table 2 showed that the sample farmers had high level of awareness towards aspects of availability of agriculture and veterinary assistant staff for guidance, operations of RBK are confined to a revenue village, supply of Agri inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.), e-Karshak, a digital crop records database maintained by RBK staff by taking crop images and geo-tagging the location of the crop as evidenced from the mean scores of 2.91, 2.87, 2.75 and 2.71 respectively followed up by the aspects that audio-visual aids such as charts, boards, and books to raise awareness about availability of new technological advancements are available at RBK, enrolment and processing for input subsidy and crop insurance, RBK was one-stop solution for agriculture and allied activities and assessment of the crop and yield damage by RBKs, RBK has all of the information about agriculture and allied activities followed up by the provision of extension services like weather forecasting information, Polambadi (farm school), soil and seeds testing services, digital kiosk availability at RBK for placing orders of agri inputs. RBK provides market price information and procurement services and also disseminates information regarding agriculture and allied activities with mean scores of 2.66, 2.62, 2.59, 2.52, 2.47, 2.30, 2.14, and 2.03 respectively. The sampled farmers had low level of awareness towards provision of veterinary services like medication and guidance availability, RBK supplies livestock feed to the farmers due to veterinary staff were unavailable at RBK and for the formation and provision of credit linkage to 4S groups (JLG) at RBK with low mean scores of 1.70, 1.60 and 1.31 respectively.

Overall Farmer's Awareness towards Rythu Bharosa Kendra's Products and Services

Overall farmer awareness towards Rythu Bharosa Kendra's products and services was collected from respondent farmers in the current study. This refers to farmer's interpretations towards awareness aspects concerning general aspects of products and services offered by RBKs.

The scale was developed to assess farmers awareness towards Rythu Bharosa Kendras' products and

services. The scale contained 16 assertions about RBKs, covering general aspects, products, and services offered by RBKs. The responses were collected on a three-point scale: known, well-known, and completely experienced/ Purchased, with each receiving a score of one, two, and three respectively. The lowest and highest levels of awareness were 16 and 48, respectively. The awareness score of a respondent was calculated by adding the scores he or she earned on all 16 items/statements. The respondents were classified into three groups based on their total score: "low," "medium," and "high," with the mean (38.67) and standard deviation (2.52) serving as a check to measure.

Table 1 revealed that sampled farmers had 65.83 per cent of sampled farmers had medium level of awareness towards Rythu Bharosa Kendras, while 21.67 per cent of the sampled farmers had high level of awareness and remaining 12.5 percent of the farmers had low level of awareness. Therefore, it showed that majority of the sampled farmers had medium to high level of awareness towards products and services offered by Rythu Bharosa Kendras with 87.50 per cent. Farmers were less familiar towards formation and credit linkages of 4S groups (JLG) and livestock feed supplied to the farmers by RBK respectively.

CONCLUSION

Majority of the sample farmers (86.83%) had medium to high level of awareness towards products and services offered by RBKs. Therefore, RBKs no need to modify their behaviour to raise awareness. It should continue to be consistent in its campaigns to raise awareness of Rythu Bharosa Kendra's products and services offered.

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