ISSN No: 2249-894X

Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Review Of Research Journal

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2249-894X

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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REVIEW OF RESEARCH



ISSN: 2249-894X IMPACT FACTOR: 5.2331(UIF) VOLUME - 7 | ISSUE - 3 | DECEMBER - 2017



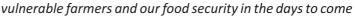
FARMER'S ACCESS TO MARKET'S IN ANDHRA PRADESH: NEED FOR A DYNAMIC AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGY— A CASE STUDY OF PULAKUNTA VILLAGE

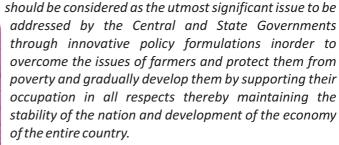
Dr. M. Veera Prasad

Dept. of Political Science & Public Administration, Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapuramu, Andhra Pradesh.

ABSTRACT: -

lacktrianglerightlobally, all the nations are marching ahead giving more priority to the growth of $\,$ secondary sector and lacktriangled tertiary sector. The primary sector i.e., the agricultural sector in fact is not neglected but is generally not treated alike the other sectors. Agriculture was considered as the main occupation in majority of the nations until the late half of the nineteenth century. The nations that follow a balanced approach in the gradual development of all the sectors will prosper in all the dimensions. Almost each and everyone of us are from the agricultural society in the past but today after moving to the cities and settling down we are forgetting our roots and looking down upon the agricultural societies and their issues. The farmers play a significant role in producing the food grains, vegetables and other products that are very essential for the survival of the human beings. If there happens to be a severe shortage of the food products then the human society gradually perishes within a short span of time. Several decades ago the primary agricultural society was given high priority but due to the gradual development of the industrial and service sector the agricultural sector is losing ground and the farmers depending on it is under severe threat. In India, many farmers are committing suicides due to the debts taken by them from the banks and money lenders for the sake of agricultural needs. He is finding it difficult to repay it due to low produce mainly due to the low rainfall as it is majorly rainfed crops, secondly inspite of the inputs the produce from the land is not upto the mark due to the climatic changes especially due to global warming, thirdly the fertilisers on one hand help the farmers but on the other hand are affecting the health of the soil thereby reducing the produce gradually, fourthly due to the financial inability of the farmers to transport and sell his produce for the actual market price at the market has been forcing him to sell it to the middle men at lower price and thereby suffer loss and further being dragged into clutches of poverty in this society. The need of the hour to protect these





KEYWORDS: Farmer suicides, Debt, Agriculture, Global Warming, Fertilisers, Pesticides, Markets, Poverty, Food security, Private money lenders, Issues of farmers.



INTRODUCTION:

In India majority of the farmers own a small portion of land viz., 2-4 acres. This small piece of land is not sufficient to fulfil their family needs. Several fortunate farmers have borewells in their fields which enables them to get two crops per year. As the land holdings are meagre the surplus production is also very low. The transportation of this low produce is composed of huge expenditure through private sector vehicles along with more labour inputs. The poor farmer due to poverty and debt situations doesn't dare to move the produced crops to the market and wait until the price will rise, so he/she are motivated to sell it to the Dalals or the Middle men for low price at his farm or home in the village. The middle men inturn earns more as profit within a short span of time by selling the goods for attractive prices in the market. The farmer inspite of hardwork and heavy expenditure is at a great loss as he is unable to access the markets at the right time.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To understand the awareness of the farmers about the marketing system.
- To identify the issues of transportation and storage from villages to the market yard.
- To identify the role of dalals or middle men in between the farmer and the markets.
- To analyse the issues of farmers in the study area.
- To suggest measures for the marketing issues of the farmers in the study area.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the study area the distance from the village leading to the highway and thereby to the market is a difficult task for the farmer. The rural roads are not up to the mark and are not regularly maintained and there is no adequate facility for the transportation of goods to the market. The private vehicle owners are charging high and the income of the farmer is meagre. The middle men are trying to exploit the farmers by buying their produced goods at a lower price. The government price regulating mechanism is not bothering about the marketing related activities of the poor farmers. There is no adequate storage facility at the village or at the market with advanced and hygienic infrastructure. The perishable goods of the farmers are in a vulnerable situation and on several occasions the farmers are forced to sell them at one or two rupees per kilo. The poor farmers are suffering from debt issues and have issues to take loans from banks due to corruption and other issues.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY AREA

The scope of the study is limited to Pulakunta village in Anantapuramu District of Andhra Pradesh. This study covers the poor farmers and agricultural labourers directly and indirectly depending on agriculture and belongs to below poverty line category.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The issues of the market related agricultural goods needs to be addressed because it is not only the issue of Pulakunta village but throughout the country. The perishable goods of the poor farmers are vulnerable and sometimes are forced to sell it at very low price. The government transportation facilities are totally absent. The APSRTC passenger vehicles are hesitating to transport the agricultural goods to the market. Majority of the farmers are illiterate and falling a prey to the private money lenders. The loan facilities from the rural banks branches are available at the cost of paying corruption or percentage to the bank officials or staff dealing with them and there is no transparent approach by the banks.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will throw a light on the market related issues of the Below Poverty line farmers and so on depending on agriculture. This study will address the direct and indirect issues of farmers in selling their produce. It highlights the low infrastructure facilities at the market yards. This will provide adequate information to the

policy makers and political parties who are making promises to protect the farmers and addressing their issues and preventing them from committing suicides. It will help the researchers to focus not only on production of crops but also on marketing activities of the poor farmers with the help of the latest technology.

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

In Anantapuramu District the Pulakunta Village is one of the largest villages located at Gummagatta. As per the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raaj Act the Pulakunta Village is being administered by the Village Sarpanch who is an elected representative of the study area.1

2011 Census Data of Pulakunta Village

Table: 1

Sl.No:	Particulars	Male	Female	Total
1.	Total number of houses			618
2.	Population	1698	1601	3299
3.	Child (0-6)	299	297	596
4.	Schedule Caste	214	211	425
5.	Schedule Tribe	1	1	2
6.	Literacy	45.68 %	27.45 %	36.88 %
7.	Total Workers	954	877	1831
8.	Main Worker	-	-	1749
9.	Marginal Worker	37	45	82

Source: Census of India 2011.²

As mentioned in the above Table 1 the total number of houses in the study area are 618. The total population is 3299 and among them the male population is 1698 and the female population is 1601. The child population is 596 and among them 299 are male and 297 are female. The total Scheduled Caste population is 425 and among them 214 is male population and 211 are females. The Scheduled Tribe population is 2 and among them one is male and the other is female. The total literacy rate of the village is 36.88 per cent and among them the male literacy is 45.68 per cent and 27.45 per cent is female literacy rate. The total working population in the study area is 1831 and among them 954 are male workers and 877 is female workers and among them 206 were cultivators (Co-owner or Real owner) while 1300 are the agricultural labourers. The main workers (Earning for more than six months) in total consists of 1749. The marginal working population (Earning for less than six months) is 82 people and among them 37 are male and 45 are female marginal workers respectively as per the census report of 2011.³

ROLE OF WHOLESALE PURCHASERS OF THE AGRICULTURAL GOODS AT THE STUDY AREA

The wholesalers or middlemen or Dalals are able to purchase 87 per cent of the agricultural goods and animal products either at the market yard or at the doorsteps of farmers at a very low price. The farmers are at the most able to sell the goods at the market in the nearby town and they are not having enough money to sell their produce at Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai in Tamil Nadu. The farmers do not have adequate information of the retailers in far off places outside the Andhra Pradesh State boundaries due to language problem. Several farmers are debted to the local wholesalers and due to repayment pressures they are having no other option but to sell the produce to them at the lower price.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study is descriptive in nature. The data for the study was collected from the primary and secondary sources. The universe of the study is one hundred rural respondents in Pulakunta Village of Anantapuramu District in Andhra Pradesh State. The research technique used in this study is simple random sampling method. This study is both exploratory and analytical in approach.

To collect the primary data the interview schedule method personal observation has been used to analyse the perception of respondents in the study area. The secondary sources are collected from various

government websites, Wikipedia, books, journals, local newspapers, district statistical information with respect to annual reports and concerned department websites. The collected data has been tabulated and analysed through simple statistical tools and thereby the inferences have been drawn based on this in the study area.

Gender-wise distribution of the respondents

Table: 2

N=100

Sl. No.	Gender-wise distribution	Percentage of the respondents (%)	Total (%)
1.	Male	50	
2.	Female	50	100

Source: Computed from the primary data

Table 2 indicates that the total universe of the study is 100 respondents. The male respondents constitute 50 per cent of the population and the female respondents represent 50 per cent of the population in the study area respectively. The total universe of the study constitutes 100 respondents in Pulakunta Village of Anantapuramu District.

Age wise distribution of respondents

Table: 3

N=100

Ag e group	% of respondents
Children (Below 18 years)	10
Youth (18-31)	40
Middle age (32-50)	40
Aged (50-60)	5
Senior Citizens (60 and above)	5
Total	100

Source: Computed from the primary data

Table 3 depicts the distribution of the respondents in the study area according to their age. The table reveals that the total respondents in the study area constitute 100 members, the children below the age of 18 years cover 10 per cent, the youth in the age group of 18-31 constitute 40 per cent, middle age respondents in the age group of 32-50 cover 40 per cent, aged respondents in the age group of 50-60 represent 5 per cent, and the respondents belonging to the age group of 60 and above are recognised as the senior citizens by the Government of India and constitute 5 per cent in the study area respectively. The different age groups were selected for the study mainly to provide an overall scenario of the affected people in the study area.

Caste-wise distribution of respondents

Table: 4 N=100

Caste	% of respondents
Upper castes	40
OBC's	38
Scheduled Caste	20
Scheduled Tribes	02
Total	100

Source: Computed from the primary data

In Table 4, it is shown that 40 per cent of respondents belong to upper castes, 38 per cent belong to other backward communities, 20 per cent of them belong to Scheduled Castes, 02 per cent of them belong to the Scheduled Tribes respectively.

Literacy wise distribution of the respondents Table: 5

N=100

Sl. No.	Literate (%)	Illiterate (%)	Total (%)
1.	32	68	100

Source: Computed from the primary data

Table 5, indicates that the 32 per cent of the respondents are literate and the rest of the 68 per cent respondents are illiterate in the study area respectively.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study based on the analysis of the primary data are mentioned below:

Table:6

Sl. No.	Perception of the respondents in the study area	
1.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that they are the residents of Pulakunta Village.	
2.	100 per cent of the respondents belong to BPL category	
3.	68 per cent of the respondents own a land for the cultivation and the rest 32 per cent of them do not own land but work as an agricultural labourer in Pulakunta Village.	
4.	65 per cent of the land owners replied that they have the borewell facility in their agricultural land where as 35 per cent of them said that they do not have the borewell as they were not able to afford for it.	
5.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that they cultivate vegetables/fruits/flowers.	
6.	Only 37 per cent of the respondents sell the crop at the market to market agents and the rest 63 per cent of them sell it to the wholesalers or to the local buyers at low price.	
7.	63 per cent of the respondents replied that they sell the crop to the wholesaler at a cheaper price compared to the market price where as 37 per cent of them replied that they don't sell it to the middlemen at the study area.	
8.	100 per cent of them replied that they don't sell the crop to the wholesaler at the market price?	
09.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that they are not able to afford to stay at the market until your crop is sold for a better price.	
10.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that they are not able to utilise the internet services to sell their crops to online customers.	
11.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that there are no cold storages provided by the government at their village or at the market yard.	
12.	75 per cent who approached the banking institution were told to pay corruption at the bank for availing loan or claiming crop insurance by the agents and the rest 25 per cent of them replied that they are dependent on wholesalers or the local moneylenders.	
13.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that they don't take the help of experts to access the websites for the purpose of selling their crops to online customers at the price expected by them.	
14.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that they are not satisfied with the provision of rural road facilities provided by the Government.	
15.	43 per cent of them replied that they have mortgaged their land for the borrowed money for their own consumption to the money lenders by mortgaging the land or immovable property that they own. 57 per cent of them replied that they did not mortgage land but have accepted several terms with the money lenders.	

16.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that there is no any APSRTC passenger bus services early in the morning around 3.00 A.M., from their village to the market yard in the
	Anantapuramu town.
17.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that they are dependent on private passenger
	vehicle services for the transportation of crops to the market yard in the Anantapuramu
	town.
18.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that it is not profitable to rent the private goods
	transportation vehicles to the market yard inorder to sell their crops at the expected price
	by them.
19.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that that the APSRTC should provide a special
	goods transportation bus/lorry to move their agricultural produce early in the morning
	from their village to the market yard.
20.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that the local political leaders do not show any
	concern about the issues they face in transporting their crops to the market yard in
	Anantapuramu town.
21.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that the Non-Governmental Organisation are not
	concerned in addressing the issues faced in transporting their crops to the market yard in
	Anantapuramu town.
22.	100 of the respondents accepted that there is huge malpractice in the functioning of the
	market at Anantapuramu like hoarding, adulteration viz., replacing with more valuable
22	products with low quality products, false measurements etc.
23.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that the grading system of the products is not being done properly based on size and quality and all the goods are sold at normal prices from
	which the farmer is getting low price for his/her produce.
24.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that they sell the agricultural goods at the prices
	determined by the middlemen or Dalals at the market or the wholesalers and they can just
	demand for better price but the final decision is taken by the middlemen only.
25.	100 per cent of the respondents replied that they are not linked to any super market
	established in Anantapuramu town in selling their produced agricultural goods which is a major drawback.
26.	100 per cent of the farmers said that they lack the required skills to utilise the online
20.	market services and they are notable to afford the gadgets to utilise the ICT services.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data based on Interview Schedule

Farmer's accessibility issues to market's in the study area

The issues that have been identified during the research are stated below:

- Forecast news of markets is not easily available to the farmers.
- Inadequate storage facilities.
- Inadequate transportation facilities.
- · High storage costs at the market.
- Lack of adequate security at the market.
- Inadequate price to the goods.
- Low returns inspite of high inputs.
- The government owned passenger vehicles hesitate to transport huge goods from the villages to the market.
- Huge labour/Hamali cost to lift the goods from one place to another.
- Poor telecom network facilities.
- Lack of proper education and skills to utilise the technology to sell his goods at high price.
- Lack of proper gadgets that help to sell at high prices.
- Low quality of produced goods due to excessive use pesticides and unwanted residues on the crops.
- Lack of advanced machinery.

- Subsidies are not sufficient to solve their multifarious problems.
- Insurance from crop loss is a difficult process and it doesn't really solve his/her problem.
- Getting loan from any banking system is not so easy because of the corruption they need to pay to the Bank managers or the bank officials and involves a cumbersome procedure that is out of the knowledge of the poor and illiterate or ill-educated farmers.
- Inflation is rising at a rapid rate due to middlemen.
- Shortage of Cold storages.
- The market yards are not hygienic and are infested with pests and other insects.
- Lack of proper knowledge about the functioning of Jan Dhan Yojana because in majority of the cases somebody else is operating their accounts as they do not have proper education to understand about it and inturn are being exploited by one or the other way.
- Low quality pesticides and fertilisers are sold to the farmers or distributed freely by the fraudulent sellers further droving the farmer into the grip of poverty thereby resulting in low returns inspite of huge investment in his/her capacity.
- Farmers are not linked to any super market to sell their products regularly at market price.
- Climate Change has affected their corps drastically.
- Infrastructure related to ICT is not up to the mark in the study area.

SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME THE ISSUES OF FARMERS ACCESS TO THE MARKETS IN THE STUDY AREA

The suggestions to solve the issues of the farmers in the study area are mentioned below:

- Minimum land holdings of the farmers should be enhanced.
- Through MGNREGA the farmers/agricultural labourers under BPL category should be provided daily wages throughout the year.
- Government agricultural goods transportation facilities should be made to run to the village and to the market at appropriate time for agricultural goods and so on at a very minimum fare.
- The infrastructure in the village like roads, irrigation facilities, free distribution of fertilisers, varieties of pesticides should be distributed at the doorstep as per the requirement of the farmers.
- Online face to face interaction through video conferencing of selling goods at a particular place should be established at the village so that the farmer need not rush to the market.
- Crop loss insurance should be made transparent and corruption should be contained.
- Bank loan should disbursed through video conferencing at the village to avoid corruption by the Bank officials.
- Loans from the banking sector should be free of any interest to the BPL families.
- Quality package bags should be provided by the government free of cost to control the spillage of the agricultural goods due to low quality package bags with lot of holes.
- Seminars, conferences and workshops should be organised to educate the farmers to utilise the technology related marketing skills at the village.
- For every three to five villages a market yard should be established depending on the proximity of the villages.
- One permanent laboratory should be established equipped with all the latest technology and demo should be shown thrice a week about the functioning of the machines and its utilities.
- Food processing industry officials should be made to visit the farmers and make deals for the particular goods at market prices and 25 per cent pre-payment should be made compulsory to the farmers.
- Dissemination of up to date crop related suggestions to the farmers should be offered timely.
- Perishable agricultural goods should be sold through the video conferencing mode as soon as it is ready for dispersing and the payment for that should be made online transfers with no extra charge by the banks.
- Agricultural researchers should be allotted three to five villages for providing counselling to the village farmers on precautionary steps to produce more and the travelling and daily allowances should be paid to them on the day they visit to the villages.
- Inflation should be controlled through policy changes and containing the role of middlemen.

- Cold Storages should be established.
- New stringent Acts need to be made to overcome the issues related to markets.
- Educating in reducing wasteful expenditure of farmers/agricultural labourers on functions/festivals and so on.
- The farmers should be linked to the super markets under the supervision of the Government agencies transparently.
- Special government agencies should monitor the financial position of the farmers and take adequate steps thereby preventing him from committing suicide.
- ICT services should be improved in the study area and for that the corporate and the governmental sector should take effective steps to fulfil the lag.
- Self-Help Groups and NGO's should be encouraged to increasingly participate to learn the poor farmers issues and educate, motivate and create awareness in them from becoming a prey to poverty.

INFERENCE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY IN PULAKUNTA VILLAGE

There is an absence of a holistic approach towards the multifarious issues of farmers living below poverty line. It has also been identified that none of the IAS officers have ever visited the families of the farmers to know their issues and suggest policy makers to overcome them with special reference to the study area. Farmers issues will be solved to some extent if they get a fair price for their produce and access to the markets at the right time. The issues of the poor and vulnerable farmers are increasing due to numerous factors. In the British period they were exploited by the colonial rulers and now they are being exploited by the wholesale buyers or dalals or the middlemen who is exploiting their hard earned labour. The issues of farmers in India seem to be an unending process as the government is still trying to properly implement the traditional policies every year. The researchers and bureaucrats are lagging behind in proposing dynamic and innovative methods to be adopted to overcome the problems of the poor farmers thereby leaving them to suffer for generations due to numerous factors. The government should think on providing new innovative facilities like goods lorry facility to move the agricultural goods early in the morning from the Pulakunta village as per the changing needs of the people and due to their poverty to afford for a private agricultural goods transportation vehicle. The government should provide new infrastructure viz., providing video conferencing halls for the farmers at their village itself from where he/she can contact the real buyer inorder to save the poor farmer from the clutches of the middlemen and help him to get the actual market price for his/her produce.

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