

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RYTHU BANDHU SCHEME: AN ANALYSIS OF BENEFICIARY PROFILE AND DETERMINANTS IN TELANGANA

Chintawar Shraddha¹, Basavaprabhu Jirli², M. Chenna Madhava³

1 Research Scholar, Dept. of Extension Education, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, BHU, Varanasi - 221005

2 Director, Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research, Dharwad Karnataka - 580 004

3 Ph.D. Scholar, Dept. of Extension Education, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, BHU, Varanasi - 221005

Email : shraddhachintawar909@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Agriculture plays a critical role in India's economy, engaging over half of the workforce and contributing significantly to the national GDP. Despite impressive achievements in foodgrain production and allied sectors, Indian agriculture faces challenges such as land fragmentation, limited institutional credit access (Mallappa et al., 2023), dependence on rainfed farming, and uneven technology adoption. The Telangana government's Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS) aims to mitigate these issues by providing direct investment support to farmers irrespective of landholding size. This study, conducted in Adilabad district of Telangana, employed an ex-post facto research design and sampled 220 beneficiaries to assess the profile characteristics influencing the scheme's effectiveness. Results indicate positive and significant relationships between scheme effectiveness and variables such as extension contact, awareness of government schemes, achievement motivation, and socio-political participation, while landholding size showed a significant negative relationship. These findings highlight the importance of targeted extension services, awareness programs, and grassroots engagement to enhance the impact of agricultural support schemes, particularly for small and marginal farmers.

Keywords: achievement motivation, effectiveness, farmers' profile, landholding, rythu bandhu scheme.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture, a primary sector activity, plays a pivotal role in the economies of developing countries like India. The total geographical area of the country is 328.7 million hectares, with 42.4% of it under net sown area (MoA&FW, 2022-23). About 54.6% of the workforce is employed in agriculture and allied activities (Census, 2011). As per the Second Advance Estimate of 2022-23, agriculture and allied sectors contributed 18.3% to India's Gross Value Added (MoSPI, 2023). India continues to be a leading producer of rice, wheat, cotton, sugarcane, and pulses. The production of food grains reached a record 315.7 million tonnes in 2021-22 despite climate challenges (Economic Survey, 2022-23). The First Advance Estimates of 2022-23 show food grain production at 149.9 million tonnes (kharif season), exceeding the five-year average (2016-21). Indian agriculture faces multiple challenges including declining landholding sizes, inadequate institutional credit, dependence on rainfed farming, limited irrigation, low awareness of micronutrient use, and uneven adoption of agricultural technology. Land fragmentation continues, with average holding size declining from 2.28 hectares (1970-71) to 1.08 hectares (2015-16), alongside a notable increase in marginal farmers owning

below one hectare (Agriculture Census, 2015-16). This has a direct impact on credit access, as formal loans often require land titles, leaving many farmers dependent on non-institutional credit sources like moneylenders, which increases financial vulnerability. To address such challenges, both central and state governments have introduced schemes aimed at providing support for credit and agricultural investments. The Telangana state government pioneered the Agriculture Investment Support Scheme (Rythu Bandhu) in 2018-19. This scheme provides direct benefit transfer (DBT) of Rs.5,000 per acre per season (Rs.10,000 annually), irrespective of landholding size (Telangana Socio-Economic Outlook, 2023). In 2023 kharif season alone, Rs.7,500 crore was disbursed to over 70 lakh farmers (The Hindu, June 26, 2023). Around 91.3% of beneficiaries were marginal and small farmers.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To study the beneficiaries' profiles in the selected areas of study
- (2) To study Relationship of Profile Characteristics of Beneficiaries with the Effectiveness of the 'Rythu Bandhu' scheme

METHODOLOGY

An ex-post facto research design was employed for the study, as the selected variables had already occurred. Telangana state was considered as the study's universe. Adilabad district of Telangana was purposively selected for the study as it ranks among the top 10 districts with the highest number of cultivators and also keeping in view the resource availability and familiarity of the researcher with the study area. Two mandals (Narnoor & Gadiguda) from the Adilabad district were selected using random sampling technique. From each mandal, five villages were selected using a random sampling technique, resulting in a total of ten villages. For selecting respondents, a proportionate random sampling method was adopted, considering 10 percent of the population in each village as the sample. This yielded a total sample size of 220 (Umri=20, Malangi=26 Kothapalli-H=12, Gundala=26, Narnoor=34, Lokari(B)=30, khadki=17, Jhari=10, Gadiguda=21, Lokari(K)=24) respondents.

Reliability test was conducted for Economic orientation and mass media exposure as the scales were modified. Reliability of the items was tested by split half method. The scores obtained by odd number of respondents were taken on one set and the scores of even number of respondents as the second set of values for calculating the correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient for Economic motivation is 0.83 and for mass media exposure is 0.78, indicating a high degree of dependability of the scale for measuring the same of the respondents.

Content validity test was done for Economic orientation and mass media exposure as the scales of these variables were modified. For economic motivation, out of six statements, only five statements were accepted as the i-CVI score was greater than 0.78 for these statements. For mass media exposure, out of eight statements, seven were accepted and one statement was rejected as the i-CVI score for this statement was 0.66.

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the profile characteristics of the respondents. Inferential statistical tools including Pearson's correlation coefficient and Chi-square (χ^2) test were employed to study the relationship between profile characteristics and the effectiveness of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme. The statistical analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 30 and Microsoft Excel 2018.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile characteristics of respondents

From the Table 2, it can be interpreted that, Majority of the beneficiaries were belonged to the category of middle age (56.8%) which was followed by young age (33.6%) and old age (9.5%). Among the respondents, 80.0% were male and 20.0% were female. In Level of Education, majority of the beneficiaries were illiterate (29.1%). 27.7 percent of the beneficiaries had studied up to primary school followed by high school (15.9%), middle school (10.5%), intermediate (10.0%) and only 4.5 percent of the beneficiaries were under the category of read and write only and only 2.5 percent of the beneficiaries had education up to graduation. 50.5% of the beneficiaries were marginal and small farmers, followed by semi medium (38.6%) and medium (10.9%) and no farmer was having land holding of more than 25 acres i.e., no large farmer was there in my sample. Most of the beneficiaries possessed a medium level of experience as the medium aged respondents formed the major portion of the sample. The findings of the study indicate that the majority of beneficiaries (63.6%) cultivated crops exclusively during the kharif season, 25.5 percent of the beneficiaries were cultivating the crops both in kharif and rabi seasons, 6.8 percent of the beneficiaries were growing crops in kharif and summer seasons and only 4.1 percent of the beneficiaries were cultivating crops in all the seasons. The majority (69.1%) of the beneficiaries of the scheme were having medium level of annual income. It is observed that a major portion of the sample were having medium level of socio-political participation which is because of their participation in various sociopolitical organization. Among beneficiaries about two third (65.9%) had medium level of extension contact followed by high (18.6%) and low level (15.5%). 62.3 percent of the medium category of the beneficiaries were aware about the different state and central government schemes followed by high (20.5%) and low (17.3%) category. Major portion (63.6%) of the beneficiaries had medium level of achievement motivation followed by high (18.6%) and low (17.7%) level.

The findings of Economic orientation shows that a major part of the sample (80.9%) of beneficiaries had medium level of economic motivation followed by low (11.8%) and high (7.3%) level of economic motivation. Results of mass media exposure shows that 61.8 percent of the beneficiaries had medium exposure to mass media followed by low (26.8%) and high (11.4%) exposure. A major (67.3%) part of the sample had medium level of decision making followed by low (17.7%) and high (15.0%) level.

Table 1. Profile characteristics of the beneficiaries

(n=220)

Sr. No.	Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Young age (below 35 years)	74	33.6
		Middle age (35-55 years)	125	56.8
		Old age (above 55 years)	21	9.5
2	Gender	Male	176	80.0
		Female	44	20.0
3	Level of Education	Illiterate	64	29.1
		Can read and write only	10	4.5
		Primary school	61	27.7
		Middle school	23	10.5
		High school	35	15.9
		Intermediate	22	10.0
		Graduate	5	2.3
4	Land holding	Marginal	38	17.3
		Small	73	33.2
		Semi medium	85	38.6
		Medium	24	10.9
		Large	0	0.0
5	Farming experience	Low	34	15.5
		Medium	148	67.3
		High	38	17.3
6	Cropping Pattern	Kharif	140	63.6
		Kharif+Rabi	56	25.5
		Kharif+Summer	15	6.8
		Kharif+Rabi+Summer	9	4.1
7	Annual income	Low (<43584)	28	12.7
		Medium (43585-126669)	152	69.1
		High (>126670)	40	18.2
8	Socio-political participation	Low	21	9.14
		Medium	173	78.6
		High	26	11.8
9	Extension contact	Low	34	15.5
		Medium	145	65.9
		High	41	18.6
10	Awareness of government schemes	Low	38	17.3
		Medium	137	62.3
		High	45	20.5
11	Achievement motivation	Low	39	17.7
		Medium	140	63.6
		High	41	18.6
12	Economic Orientation	Low	26	11.8
		Medium	178	80.9
		High	16	7.3
13	Mass media exposure	Low	59	26.8
		Medium	136	61.8
		High	25	11.4
14	Decision making	Low	39	17.7
		Medium	148	67.3
		High	33	15.0

Relationship of Profile Characteristics of Beneficiaries with the Effectiveness of RBS

From the Table 2, it can be interpreted that, for the variables like Extension contact, Awareness on government schemes, Achievement motivation, null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted as the calculated 'r' values exceed the table 'r' value at the 0.01 level of significance. For socio-political participation, the calculated 'r' value is higher than the table 'r' value at the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternate hypothesis. From the above values, we come to the conclusion that there is a positive and significant relationship between the variables extension contact, awareness on government schemes, achievement motivation, socio-political participation and effectiveness of Rythu Bandhu Scheme as perceived by the respondents. For the variable land holding, r_{cal} value is greater than r_{tab} value at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, we accept the alternate hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis which implies the negative and significant relationship between land holding and effectiveness.

Table 2: Relationship of Profile characteristics with the Effectiveness of Rythu Bandhu Scheme

(n =220)

Sr. No.	Profile characteristics	Correlation coefficient (r)
X ₁	Age	0.085
X ₂	Level of education	-0.22
X ₃	Land holding	-0.135*
X ₄	Farming experience	0.032
X ₅	Annual income	0.017
X ₆	Socio-political participation	0.145*
X ₇	Extension contact	0.386**
X ₈	Awareness on government schemes	0.442**
X ₉	Achievement motivation	0.212**
X ₁₀	Economic Orientation	-0.004
X ₁₁	Mass Media Exposure	-0.099
X ₁₂	Decision Making Ability	0.085

**Significant at 0.01 level

*Significant at 0.05 level

NS = non-significant

For the variables age, level of education, farming experience, cropping pattern, annual income, economic orientation, mass media exposure and decision-making ability, r_{cal} value is less than the r_{tab} value. Hence, alternate hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis is accepted. It shows there is no relationship between the above-mentioned

variables and effectiveness of Rythu Bandhu Scheme as perceived by the respondents.

The findings showed the significant negative correlation between landholding and effectiveness of RBS. There was a positive and significant relation between Socio-political participation and effectiveness. Extension contact had positive and significant correlation with the effectiveness. A strong positive and significant relationship was observed between awareness of government schemes and effectiveness of RBS. It was observed that achievement motivation and effectiveness had positive and significant correlation.

Chi square analysis was done for the profile characteristics (Gender and cropping pattern) towards effectiveness and the results have been presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Chi square analysis of profile characteristics (Gender and cropping pattern) towards effectiveness
(n =220)

Sr. No.	Variables	Calculated value χ^2	Table value	Phi value	Remark
1	Gender	3.916 ^a	5.99	0.133	NS
2	Cropping pattern	6.008 ^a	12.59	0.165	NS

NS-Non significant

The results in the table 3 shows that the calculated values χ^2 for Gender and cropping pattern were less than the table values. Hence there was no significant relationship was observed between the above-mentioned variables and the Effectiveness of RBS.

The results have shown that majority of the respondents are of middle aged followed by young age. The young people of the sample area were also continuing the agriculture as a profession because of the lack of other employment opportunities. The outcomes supported the conclusions made by Krushnpalsinh (2020), Badodiya et al., (2012), Navadeep et al., (2014), Mohapatra and colleagues (2016) and Dilip (2019). It is clear that majority of the respondents were male because of the reason that, in rural regions, the land title is typically in the name of the family head, who is a man rather than a woman. The results are in line with the results of Prakash (2010), Dhakre (2014), Kumar (2015) and Bandaru and Ravikumar (2021).

For the variable Level of Education, it can be concluded that the illiteracy rate was high in the sample area. This tendency may be caused by the fact that the respondents, who were middle-aged and older, were unable to receive an education since there were no educational facilities in their area and they were not well-off. However, a number of

respondents with intermediate and graduate-level education have chosen farming as their career due to a lack of work opportunities. The obtained results are same as that of the Bankey et al., (2012). The trend for land holding may due to the fact of fragmentation which resulted in the reduction of size of land holding. During interview farmers were reluctant to tell the acreage of land holding, their answers during the interview were taken into account while computing results. This caused the deviation in the results from the general reviews. The results were not similar to any of the reviews. For cropping pattern majority of the farmers are growing crops in the kharif season. The probable reason for this could be due to the dependence on rainfall and because of the lack of irrigation facilities. The probable reason for having medium level of annual income could be due to investing the credit support they get through the scheme in agriculture. The majority of the respondents were having the medium level of extension contact. The probable reason for this could be because of the frequent contact of the farmers with the AEOs, AOs, officials of horticulture department and occasional contact with the marketing officials and others. Similar results observed by Madhava (2021), Anuhya et al., (2022). The reason for the medium awareness may be due to the fact that the farmers were fully aware about the schemes like Rythu bandhu, Rythu bhima and crop loan waiver and less aware about the other schemes like PMKisan, NFSM, SHC and PMKSY. The results are in line with the results of Vidya et al., (2010). The tendency of Economic orientation may be explained by the respondents' unstable financial situation, which motivates them to make every effort to increase their income. The findings were similar to the findings of Patel (2011), Chavhan (2019), Suresh and Sreedaya (2022). Medium exposure to mass media was due to the reason that most of farmers were utilizing television and internet as source of information and very few people were using other forms of mass media like KCC, farm magazine and other publications. The results were similar to the results of Badakuri & Manjula (2020) and Rani et al., (2022).

Medium level of decision making may be due to the reason that most of the farmers were depending on the other farmers opinion regarding various operations like subscribing farm publications, trying new practice and switching to a new cropping plan. The results were in conformity with those reported by Raghuvanshi et al., (2017), Mohanty (2022), Suresh and Sreedaya (2022), and Rani et al., (2023); Priyanka et al. (2025); Lekha et al. (2025); Saifuddin et al. (2025); Priyanka et al. (2024); Akbari et al. (2023); Mallappa et al. (2023).

The results show the negative relationship between the landholding and effectiveness. Potential cause of this

relation possibly related to the fact that, small and marginal were using the entire credit provided to carry out the farm operations as they found difficulty in getting loan from the formal sources like banks. On the other hand, large farmers who benefited more from the scheme and had easier access to institutional credit could have used the credit for various other purposes besides agriculture. Positive and significant relation between Socio-political participation and effectiveness could be explained as beneficiaries' involvement in various socio-political organizations like panchayat, cooperative society, FPOs, SHGs, RMGs and self-help groups helped them to understand better about the scheme and to use the credit for which it is provided. Extension contact had positive and significant correlation. This might be because of the presence of Agriculture extension officers for every 4-5 villages and their regular meetings with the farmers which helped the beneficiaries in getting the knowledge regarding the scheme and suggestion related to farm. A strong positive and significant relationship between awareness of government schemes and effectiveness might be the result of the respondents' interest in knowing about various schemes to reap the advantages of it. Positive and significant correlation between achievement motivation and effectiveness may be the case because beneficiaries who exhibit high achievement motivation will always look for the opportunities to grow and they try to do their work with at most dedication to use the resources available to them in order to accomplish their goals.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that most of the respondents were middle-aged, male, illiterate or primary educated, and belonged to the marginal and small farmer categories. Majority had medium levels of farming experience, annual income, socio-political participation, extension contact, awareness of government schemes, achievement motivation, economic motivation, mass media exposure, and decision-making ability. Farmers were largely dependent on rainfall, cultivating crops mainly in the kharif season. Correlation analysis showed that extension contact, awareness of government schemes, achievement motivation, and socio-political participation had a positive and significant relationship with the effectiveness of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme, while landholding exhibited a negative and significant relationship. This implies that small and marginal farmers utilized the support more effectively than large farmers. Other variables such as age, education, farming experience, income, cropping pattern, economic orientation, mass media exposure, and decision-making ability did not show significant association with scheme effectiveness. Chi-square analysis also confirmed no significant relationship between age, gender, cropping pattern, and effectiveness. Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening farmers'

extension contact, awareness, motivation, and participation in local organizations can enhance the impact of Rythu Bandhu Scheme. Special attention is required for improving the literacy levels, irrigation access, and mass media reach among farmers to ensure broader benefits of the scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Strengthening extension services and awareness programs

Since extension contact and awareness of government schemes showed a positive and significant relationship with the effectiveness of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme, the government should strengthen village-level extension services, farmer trainings, and awareness campaigns. Special focus should be given to educating farmers about proper utilization of financial assistance and other complementary agricultural schemes.

(2) Targeted support for small and marginal farmers:

The negative relationship between landholding and scheme effectiveness indicates that small and marginal farmers utilized the scheme benefits more effectively. Therefore, policymakers should prioritize these vulnerable farmer categories through need-based financial assistance, easier access to institutional credit, and additional support for irrigation and input management.

(3) Promoting farmers' participation in local organizations

The positive influence of socio-political participation on scheme effectiveness suggests that strengthening farmer participation in cooperatives, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), self-help groups (SHGs), and local governance institutions can improve information dissemination, collective decision-making, and effective utilization of scheme benefits.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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