

Original Research Article

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE PADDY FARMERS IN PRODUCTION AND MARKETING DURING COVID-19 REGIME IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Abstract: Rice is the main food for about 800 million people in India, which constitutes about 65% of its population. The unexpected imposition of lockdown, with very little preparation, obstructed farming and the food systems in numerous different ways. Rice was majorly affected by the restrictions during COVID-19; hence present study was designed. Multistage sampling design was adopted for selection of sample. Garrett's ranking method used to prioritize challenges and results revealed that high input cost, high wage rate of labour, high transportation cost and Nonavailability of farm labour. Govt. Should provide adequate inputs to the farmers at judicious time on need basis through RBK's, high need to encourage farmers towards mechanization, Labour scarcity should be reduced by employing MGNREGA workers in operations, Govt. should provide required inputs at lower/ judicious prices by establishing the manufacture industries, Govt should ensure that correct and reliable market information to reach the farmers.

Key words: Challenges, COVID-19, Paddy production, Paddy marketing,
Garretts ranking Technique

INTRODUCTION:

Rice is the main food for around 800 million people in India, which constitutes about 65 per cent of its population. Its role is detrimental to the nutrition, economy, employment, culture, and history. Rice contributes to approximately 40 per cent of India's total food grain production. The total area under rice in India was 43.77 million hectares with 169.14 million tonnes of production and 3860 kg ha⁻¹ productivity (NRRI, 2020). The unexpected imposition of the lockdown, with very little preparation or arrangement, has obstructed agriculture and the food systems in numerous different ways. Rice was majorly affected by the restrictions during COVID-19 since timely and non-availability of inputs, high wage rate and scarcity of labour due to social distancing measures, high input cost and non-availability of the required inputs was observed hence the present study was designed with the objective to analyse the challenges faced by paddy farmers in production and marketing during COVID-19 regime in Andhra Pradesh

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sampling Design

Multistage sampling design was adopted for selection of sample at different levels of district, mandal and villages for the present study. Andhra Pradesh was selected for the study as it is one of the major rice producing state in India. West Godavari district was selected from Andhra Pradesh since it is having highest area under rice cultivation. Three mandals and two villages with 20 respondents from each village was selected thus constitute of total 120 farmers for collecting necessary information related to the objective of the present study.

Methods of data collection:

The present study focused mainly on the primary data collected from the sample respondents. However, the data necessary for selection of district, mandals and villages were collected from secondary sources. primary data collected from the sample of paddy farmers through a pre-tested and well-designed questionnaire developed for the study in accordance with the objectives. The secondary data pertaining to the area, production and productivity of the rice cultivation in the selected district for the year 2019-20 were collected from the Agriculture Statistics at glance 2019-2020.

Methods of data analysis:

The Garrett's ranking method used to prioritize the challenges faced by the farmers both in production and marketing of paddy during covid-19 pandemic. The paddy farmers in the selected villages were enquired to rank the challenges encountered by them in production and marketing during COVID-19 regime. These ranks were converted into per cent position by using the formula

$$\text{Percentage position} = \frac{100(R_{ij}-0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where,

R_{ij} = Rank given for the i^{th} item by the j^{th} individual

N_j = Number of items ranked by the j^{th} individual

The per cent position of each rank was converted to score by referring to tables given by Garrette and Woodsworth (1969). By referring to the Garrett's table, the per cent positions estimated were converted into score. Thus, for each problem the mean score was estimated. The problem with the highest mean value was considered as the most important one and the others followed in that order. The challenges were initially included in the pre structured

schedule by reviewing the articles on problems faced by the paddy farmers in paddy production and marketing during COVID-19 regime. The challenges faced by the paddy farmers in paddy production and marketing during COVID-19 regime were as follows: Lack of accessibility to market, non-availability of inputs, high input cost, non-availability of farm labour, high wage rate of labour, high transportation costs, non-availability of required information on price/prices in other market, lack of warehousing facility, non-availability of packaging material, No financial assistance, lack of storage facilities, lack of adequate extension support, middlemen malpractices and Delay in payments after selling the produce.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Challenges faced by farmers both in paddy production and marketing during the COVID-19 regime. The major challenges faced by paddy farmers have been presented in Table 1. It could be detected from the results that the major challenges faced by farmers both in paddy production and marketing during the COVID-19 regime were high input cost (rank I) followed by High wage rate of labour (rank II), High Transportation cost (rank III), Delay in crediting the amount by govt. after procurement (rank IV) and Nonavailability of farm labour (rank V). these were the major constraints encountered by paddy farmers during COVID-19 regime in Andhra Pradesh because of the sudden imposition of lockdown.

CONCLUSION:

It could be detected from the results that the high input cost (rank I) followed by High wage rate of labour (rank II), High Transportation cost (rank III), Delay in crediting the amount by govt. after procurement (rank IV) and Nonavailability of farm labour (rank V) were key constraints faced by paddy farmers during COVID-19 regime in Andhra Pradesh. Hence the following suggestions were made after getting the results were Govt. Should provide adequate inputs to the farmers at judicious time on need basis through RBK's, high need to encourage farmers towards mechanization, Labour scarcity should be reduced by employing MGNREGA workers to the farm operations, Govt. should provide the required inputs at lower/ judicious prices by establishing the manufacture industries, Govt should ensure that correct and reliable market information to reach the farmers, should encourage online and e-NAM marketing.

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Table 1. Challenges faced by paddy farmers during COVID-19 regime

S. No	PROBLEMS	AVERAGE	RANK
1	High input cost	77.23	I
2	High wage rate of labour	76.11	II
3	High Transportation cost	68.73	III
4	Delay in crediting the amount by govt. after procurement	67.26	IV
5	Non availability of farm labour	59.78	V
6	No financial; assistance	55.70	VI
7	Lack of adequate extension support	51.48	VI
8	Lack of storage facilities	46.17	VIII
9	Non-Availability of inputs	45.96	IX
10	Non availability of required information on Price in market	42.80	X
11	Lack of warehousing facility	34.02	XI
12	Non availability of packaging material	33.41	XII
13	Lack of accessibility to market	26.30	XIII
14	middlemen malpractices	17.84	XIV