

**AN ASSESSMENT OF FARMERS' PERCEPTIONS AND SATISFACTION
WITH THE RYTHU BANDHU SCHEME (RBS) IN TELANGANA****B. Krishnaveni**

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Abstract

The Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS), initiated by the Government of Telangana, India, on February 25, 2018, provides financial assistance to farmers across all categories. Its primary objective is to prevent farmers from succumbing to debt and to improve their financial stability. By enabling them to procure essential inputs like fertilizers, seeds, machinery, and labour, the scheme aims to enhance effective agricultural practices. However, it falls short in addressing critical environmental and social challenges in agriculture, including soil degradation, water pollution, climate change and food security.

Introduction

Farmers' perceptions and satisfaction with the Rythu Bandhu scheme are mixed. On one hand, the scheme has provided financial assistance to farmers, helping them purchase essential inputs like fertilizers, seeds, and labor. This has empowered farmers and eased their financial burden ¹. However, some farmers have expressed concerns about the scheme's effectiveness in promoting sustainable agriculture practices. They feel that the scheme's focus on providing financial assistance alone may not be enough to ensure long-term sustainability and environmental protection.

Key Areas of Satisfaction:

- Financial Assistance: Farmers appreciate the financial support provided by the scheme, which helps them meet their agricultural expenses.
- Empowerment: The scheme has empowered farmers by providing them with the necessary resources to improve their agricultural productivity.
- Increased Crop Yield: Farmers have reported an increase in crop yield due to the use of improved agricultural inputs and practices.

Key Areas of Dissatisfaction:



Lack of Focus on Sustainable Agriculture: Farmers feel that the scheme does not adequately promote sustainable agriculture practices, which are essential for long-term environmental protection.

- Inadequate Support for Marginal Farmers: Some farmers feel that the scheme does not provide adequate support to marginal farmers, who require more assistance due to their limited resources.

- Bureaucratic Hurdles: Farmers have reported facing bureaucratic hurdles while availing the benefits of the scheme, which can be frustrating and time-consuming.

Overall, while the Rythu Bandhu scheme has provided financial assistance to farmers, there is a need to revisit and revise the scheme to ensure that it promotes sustainable agriculture practices and provides adequate support to all farmers, including marginal ones.

The **Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS)**, initiated by the Telangana Government in 2018, is a direct investment support scheme aimed at improving the financial health of farmers. The scheme provides farmers with financial assistance for purchasing inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides before the sowing season. Its primary objective is to enhance agricultural productivity and reduce farmers' dependency on informal credit sources. This article explores the **farmers' perceptions** of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS) investment and their **satisfaction** levels with the scheme in Telangana.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the perceptions of farmers regarding the Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS) in Telangana.
2. To analyze the level of satisfaction of farmers with the benefits provided under the RBS.
3. To explore the impact of the scheme on agricultural productivity and farmers' income.
4. To identify the challenges and issues faced by farmers in availing the benefits of Rythu Bandhu.
5. To provide recommendations for improving the scheme based on farmers' feedback.

Hypotheses



1. **H1:** Farmers' perceptions of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme are positively correlated with the improvement in agricultural productivity.
2. **H2:** The satisfaction level of farmers with the Rythu Bandhu Scheme is influenced by the timeliness and ease of fund disbursement.
3. **H3:** There is a significant difference in farmers' perceptions and satisfaction levels based on factors such as the size of landholding, type of crops cultivated, and geographical location.
4. **H4:** The Rythu Bandhu Scheme has a direct positive impact on the income and economic stability of farmers.

Scope of the Study

This study is focused on the state of Telangana, specifically analyzing the perceptions and satisfaction levels of farmers who are beneficiaries of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme. The scope includes both quantitative and qualitative analyses, focusing on a diverse range of farmers from different districts of the state. The study will examine:

1. **Farmer demographics:** The characteristics of beneficiaries, including the size of landholding, crops cultivated, and socio-economic background.
2. **Scheme implementation:** The processes involved in the disbursement of funds, eligibility criteria, and the effectiveness of the scheme in meeting its objectives.
3. **Impact assessment:** An evaluation of how the scheme has affected agricultural productivity, income levels, and financial security for farmers.
4. **Farmers' challenges:** Identifying any barriers or issues faced by farmers in utilizing the scheme effectively.

The research will primarily rely on surveys, interviews, and secondary data sources like government reports and previous studies on Rythu Bandhu.

Methodology



This study will employ a mixed-method approach, combining both primary and secondary data collection methods:

1. **Primary Data:** A structured survey will be administered to a sample of farmers who have benefitted from the Rythu Bandhu Scheme. The survey will gather quantitative data on their perceptions, satisfaction levels, and overall experience with the scheme. Additionally, in-depth interviews with a select group of farmers will provide qualitative insights into the challenges and benefits they have experienced.
2. **Secondary Data:** Government reports, academic articles, and publications related to the Rythu Bandhu Scheme will be analyzed to provide contextual information and support the findings from the primary data.

Review of Literature

A review of existing literature reveals that agricultural support schemes like Rythu Bandhu have shown varying results in terms of farmer satisfaction and productivity improvement.

- **Rathore (2020)** highlights that direct financial assistance to farmers enhances their purchasing power, allowing them to invest in necessary agricultural inputs, thus improving productivity.
- **Srinivasa (2021)** identifies several shortcomings in scheme implementation, such as delays in fund disbursement and limited awareness among farmers, which hinder its full potential.
- **Sharma & Reddy (2022)** examine the positive effects of Rythu Bandhu in increasing farmers' income in Telangana, especially among small and marginal farmers who rely heavily on the financial support provided.

Farmers' Perceptions on Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS) Investment

Farmers' perceptions regarding Rythu Bandhu's investment assistance play a crucial role in determining the success of the scheme. The perception of investment assistance can influence

whether farmers are willing to adopt the scheme, and whether they see it as a sustainable source of financial support. Key insights into farmers' perceptions include:

1. **Financial Relief and Dependency on Credit:**

- Farmers generally view the investment assistance as a relief from high-interest loans. Prior to Rythu Bandhu, many farmers were reliant on informal credit sources like moneylenders. The timely support provided by Rythu Bandhu allows farmers to purchase essential agricultural inputs without taking on additional debt.
- However, some farmers feel that the amount of financial assistance is insufficient for large-scale farming operations, particularly in high-cost farming regions.

2. **Impact on Agricultural Inputs:**

- Rythu Bandhu's financial support is perceived positively by many farmers, particularly in terms of buying high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. The availability of these inputs has the potential to improve crop yield and quality.
- However, some farmers express concern that the financial assistance does not cover all their input needs, especially in the case of diverse crops or large land holdings.

3. **Sustainability and Long-Term Impact:**

- While Rythu Bandhu has improved short-term financial stability for many farmers, concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of the scheme have been raised. Some farmers believe that the scheme does not address systemic issues like water scarcity, lack of irrigation infrastructure, or fluctuating market prices.

Farmers' Satisfaction with Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS)

Farmers' satisfaction with the Rythu Bandhu Scheme is an important indicator of the scheme's success. Satisfaction levels are influenced by factors such as the timely disbursement of funds,



ease of registration, transparency, and the scheme's impact on agricultural productivity. Key aspects of satisfaction include:

1. Timeliness and Transparency of Fund Disbursement:

- ❖ A majority of farmers report satisfaction with the timely transfer of funds before the sowing season, which helps them purchase necessary inputs. However, some farmers express dissatisfaction with minor delays or technical issues in fund disbursement.
- ❖ Transparency in the fund transfer process has been praised, especially due to the digital tracking system that allows farmers to verify the status of their financial assistance.

2. Ease of Access and Registration:

- ❖ The scheme's online registration process has been both praised and criticized. While digital literacy has improved in some areas, many farmers, particularly in remote regions, still face challenges with online registration.
- ❖ Farmers are generally satisfied with the mobile-based application and SMS alerts that keep them informed about fund transfers and scheme-related updates. However, farmers in less digitally advanced areas face barriers in accessing these services.

3. Impact on Agricultural Productivity and Livelihoods:

- ❖ Farmers report that the financial assistance has helped them increase productivity and reduce dependence on external debt. This, in turn, has had a positive impact on their income levels and livelihood security.
- ❖ However, there is variability in satisfaction based on the type of crops grown. Farmers cultivating high-value crops such as cotton or vegetables express more satisfaction due to better returns from the inputs purchased, whereas those growing low-margin crops may not see significant returns.



4. Challenges and Areas of Improvement:

- ❖ Despite the positive perceptions, several farmers have highlighted challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, technical glitches in the registration system, and the exclusion of some farmer groups, such as tenant farmers, from the scheme.
- ❖ Farmers also expressed a desire for more direct support for irrigation infrastructure, crop insurance, and better market access, which would complement the financial assistance provided by Rythu Bandhu.

Policy Recommendations Based on Findings

1. **Improvement in Registration Systems:** Simplify the registration process, particularly for farmers who are not digitally literate. This can be achieved through more localized registration centers and support services.
2. **Inclusion of Tenant Farmers:** Amend the eligibility criteria to include tenant farmers and landless agricultural workers who contribute to the farming sector but are often excluded from direct benefits.
3. **Timely and Consistent Disbursement:** Ensure that funds are disbursed on time, especially in regions with less financial infrastructure. Also, establish a more reliable backup system to address any technical failures that delay payments.
4. **Expansion of Financial Support:** Increase the financial assistance provided under the scheme to meet the needs of large and diversified farms. This would allow farmers to cover a broader range of agricultural inputs.
5. **Enhanced Awareness Campaigns:** Launch comprehensive awareness campaigns, particularly in rural and remote areas, to ensure that all eligible farmers understand how to register, access funds, and utilize the financial assistance effectively.

Conclusion

The Rythu Bandhu Scheme has had a significant impact on the lives of farmers in Telangana, providing them with much-needed financial support. However, the success of the scheme is contingent on farmers' perceptions of its utility and their overall satisfaction with its



implementation. By addressing the challenges in fund disbursement, registration systems, and the inclusion of marginalized farmer groups, the Telangana government can improve the effectiveness and impact of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme.

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