

Agricultural Investment Scheme in Reference to the Rythu Bandhu Scheme

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Abstract: *Indian agriculture is a critical area not just for the policy makers but also for the producers who are engaged in this business. Even today, Indian economy is vastly dependent on its agricultural needs and therefore, this paper tries to understand the problems that persist in the domain of the agriculture, reflecting upon the situations and conditions in the state of Telangana in particular. It deals with the need of an Agricultural Investment Scheme like Rythu Bandhu Scheme that was implemented by the Telangana government. This article deals with the reasons that led the government to adopt this policy. Further, it highlights about the implementation of the scheme by the administrators, the drawbacks that are still left for the welfare of the farmers in the state and critical perspective regarding the policy. The paper also highlights about the vision of the state to break and stop the vicious cycle of the 'debt trap', which is the biggest concern for any farmer suicides. Thus in totality, it presents a holistic viewpoint regarding the agricultural investment scheme.*

Keywords: Agricultural Investment Scheme, Rythu Bandhu Scheme, Farmer Suicide, Debt Trap

1. Introduction

Agriculture or Farming is the backbone of Indian economy and society. It is the main occupation in India in which almost 2/3rd of the population is directly or indirectly dependent on it. It is 'heart and soul' of the people because it is not just the means to livelihood but is also the way of life for them. Jawaharlal Nehru had rightly said that 'agriculture needs top most priority of government because both government and nation would fail to succeed if agriculture could not be successful.' Agriculture is a state subject and the state Governments are primarily responsible for the growth and development of this sector. The government supports the efforts of states through various policy or administrative measures and through monetary support as well. Recently, the approach of the policy makers have shifted from production centric to income centric platform in the agricultural sector and various schemes are being implemented for making farming viable.

Similarly, in the 29th state of India, that is Telangana, agriculture has attracted considerable attention in the past few years, mostly because of the suicides of hundreds of cotton farmers due to their monetary debt. Agriculture provides livelihood to more than half of the state's workforce and is crucial for restoring rural economy. However, agriculture sector in the state is prone to frequent droughts, resulting in distress among farming community. Thus, droughts in agriculture are disastrous for the livelihood of the people and for the economy. This led the state to adopt measures regarding the farmers concern, like adopting direct investment support schemes which will help in increasing agricultural production.

As a result, investment will lead to agricultural productivity and increased income to the farmers will be provided, apart from breaking the vicious cycle of rural indebtedness. A new scheme called "Agricultural Investment Support Scheme" ("Rythu Bandhu") had been implemented in the State of Telangana to take care for the investment needs of the farmers so that farmers do not fall into the debt trap again. Thus, the study overall deals with relevance of agricultural investment schemes and Rythu Bandhu scheme

is one of the means to promote investment in agriculture. The Telangana Government had provided for the budget of Rs.12000 crores for the financial year 2018-19.

2. Review of Literature

Theodore W. Schultz (1953) had expressed his views regarding the need for income payments to farmers. When there is a failure on the part of fiscal and monetary policy to keep the agriculture sector stable, then it is necessary to emphasis on income payments to farmers directly. This direct support to the farmers keep up with the aggregate income of the agriculture and thus the falling demand of this sector can be curtailed. This method, in addition can also increase the demand for agricultural inputs which are used by the farmers which would open the channels for trade.

Swerling (1959) is of the view that direct investment in agriculture through cash would not be a permanently supported but rather is a temporary act. The benefits would not be attached to the farm land but it would be attached to the person (farmer) and therefore it would not be transferable. The benefits enjoyed out of it can comply with the non-farm income as well. He advocates the idea that the main purpose of an income support scheme or an approach is to protect commercial farmers against unstable incomes and to raise farm income levels according to justifiable standard. A special merit of this approach is that it encourages a more careful differentiation of particular farm problems.

Bhaumik (2008) highlights the direct support scheme or an investment scheme is an alternative to MSP (Minimum Support Price). The scheme involves direct transaction of money through which the farmers will be compensated for the income that had been lost to them due to price or yield collapse at the pre-decided price or market price during that year. For him, the implementation of the scheme is quite complex in the Indian context as this scheme is largely prevalent in the European Union.

Soni and Malhotra (2015) mentions in their book that it is better to have income transfers to the farmers that are direct

rather than indirectly through market price measures. The compensation to the farmers in this way can be based on the prices or the incomes. This will help in allocation of resources and thus income will be generated to all the factors of the production.

Ashok Gulati (2018) is an agricultural economist who holds the view that loan waivers are nothing but the “Poll Bait”. The need of an hour is to have a stable income support scheme. Towards this direction Rythu Bandhu Scheme is an alternative to the loan waivers to the farm sector. The beneficiaries of the scheme are farmers having small land holdings. The scheme by Telangana strikes the right balance between the consumers and the farmers.

The above mentioned studies have supported the idea of direct income scheme or in other words the agricultural investment scheme to farmers. These studies highlights on the situation of farmers when such a scheme or a program is being initiated by the government. But there exist certain gaps which are needed to be filled through the study of the paper. The paper is different from the researchers done above as this paper brings out the “reasons” that led to the implementation of an agricultural investment scheme apart from analyzing it. This paper is in the reference to the ‘Rythu Bandhu Scheme’ launched by the state government of Telangana of India.

3. Central Question

What are the reasons behind the launch of Agricultural Investment Scheme like Rythu Bandhu Scheme in the state of Telangana?

4. Related Questions

- What is the process of the implementation of the scheme in the state by the government?
- Have the farmers been really benefited from the scheme?
- Why the scheme is one of its kinds in the country like India?
- What are the gaps that are still left within this scheme?

5. Hypothesis

The reason behind the launch of Agricultural Investment Scheme like Rythu Bandhu Scheme in Telangana is because of the misery of the farmers in the state.

6. Objectives

There are various objectives behind the writing of this paper, which are as follows:

- To examine the situations of the farmers in the state of Telangana.
- To identify the decade old problems that is present in the agricultural system of the state.
- To overlook at the possible solutions to address the farmers crisis.
- To evaluate the policies made by the government in order to counter the agricultural plague.

- Finally, to analyze the conditions of agricultural sector in the state of Telangana.

7. Methodology

For the following paper, the secondary sources of information was used which includes content analysis of the information from various research articles and journals. For the updated content, various news articles were referred. The paper in its nature is descriptive and analytical. Further, an attempt has been made to analyze the situations in the Indian agriculture with special focus in the state of Telangana.

8. Analysis of an Agricultural Investment Scheme

An Agricultural Investment Scheme is being launched to take care of the investment needs of the farmers. The scheme provides financial assistance and the direct finances to farmers, it then work as a source of income for them because due to limited incomes farmers are not capable to invest his/her earnings for the agricultural land that they possess. The main aim for any state behind the launch of this scheme is not only to provide financial assistance to the farmers but also to compensate for the losses that had been incurred by them due to crop failure.

Even, from the standpoint of poverty alleviation, and hence inclusive growth, not only development of agricultural sector is necessary but improvement in well being of people engaged in the sector is rather more urgent. One of the major factors that have aggravated the situation of agrarian distress is farmer’s suicides. Hence, it is a necessary to throw upon the light on this issue and to understand the conditions of the most drown-trodden farmers who are committing suicides due to unavailability of the natural and economic resources. It is also essential to acknowledge that there has been an agrarian crisis in the state, because of the suicides that were committed by the farmers.

Farmer Suicide

A farmer suicide is a bane to the society. It is the worst that could happen to the society that is socially and economically dependent on its agricultural needs. This crisis is beyond the family of farmers and their community. An income is the source of the livelihood for them, if they fail to generate it; then it leads to their suicide.

Telangana as an agrarian state has diversified itself to the production of rice, maize/corn, jowar, cotton, groundnut, soyabean to mention a few, despite uncertainties in the weather conditions. Although, this diversification has led to increase in the income levels of the poor farmers due to increase in output, but on the other side this has exposed them to the price fluctuation risks. Moreover, with the trade liberalization under which the prices are volatile all over the world and as a result affect India, these risks have been further exacerbated (Bhalla and Singh, 2009). These risks as a consequence pose grave problems for the livelihoods of these rice and cotton farmers in the state leading to their suicides. These crises have been further aggravated by neglect of certain policy decisions.

Thus the government's program to invest in the agriculture by increasing the income of the farmer can help in curtailing the agrarian distress. Hence, in context with India particularly in case of Telangana the main aim behind this scheme is to tackle the problem of farmer suicide which itself occurs due to various factors from natural calamity like droughts to economic factors like lack of availability of credit to the unavailability of water resources.

Factors Leading to the Farmer Suicide

(A) Droughts

The Indian agriculture is always at mercy of nature and as whole is still monsoon dependent. The droughts have led to the problems of reducing groundwater and drinking water shortages. Although the droughts are not surprising to farmers anymore but what still lacks is the investment in the technology like irrigation in this dry land region and to manage the water resources, farmers look upon the system of bore wells and wells. These droughts have claimed a lot lives of the farmers (Devulapalli, Singh and Avadhani, 2017). The natural calamity can turn out to be very bad for the initial phase of growing crops. For an agricultural economy to sustain, it is viable to have a favorable weather conditions. Researchers have found that with a rise in temperature there is an increase in the numbers of suicides committed by the farmers and on the other hand, an increase of a one cm of rainfall have led to decline in the suicides.

(B) Water Resources

Water being the necessity for crop production is one of the most demanded natural resources in agriculture. Furthermore, the problem of droughts in the state can also be linked to the climate change that is the recent happening around the world. Due to certain environmental factors, changes are occurring to the Indian monsoons that are further aggravating the situation. However, with the rapid development and urbanization, and increasing consumption needs of the middle class driving the domestic and industrial demand, the demand for this natural resource is going to be altered significantly in future (Bera, 2018). Thus, various initiatives are being taken up the government to spread the awareness regarding the depleting water resources. Water management must be highest priority by bringing micro-irrigation and promoting agro-climatic based cropping pattern.

Certain reports have also suggested that lack of water resources have led to farmer suicides in the state. Low and erratic rainfall, ineffective water-harvesting structures, depleted water storage in reservoirs etc, have affected the agricultural production in these regions leading to farmer suicides. Still, the farmers are dependent on traditional way of extracting water from the bore wells or wells for irrigation. To invest in these wells, farmers look forward towards the informal credit and thus end losing their agricultural land. There is a strong case to provide perennial water source connectivity to these regions where there is water scarcity, along with the effective implementation of water efficiency techniques.

A citizen's report (Galab, Revathi and Reddy2010) studied the conditions of farmers in Warangal District (Telangana)

of farmers. This study analyzed that due to inadequate water resources there was major crop failures in the district because majority of the farmers are dependent on the groundwater sources while others were dependent on tanks when the monsoon fails to shower their fields. The major problem of depletion of groundwater table soon started to arise. This further worsened the situation due to the unsustainability of the groundwater dependence.

(C) Credit Needs of the Farmers

Due to the technological advancements and the growing needs of the society, the burden of this growing demand falls on the shoulders of the farmers. And to meet this demand, farmers have to make credit available. These credit requirements of the farmers are for productive and unproductive purposes. The former includes activities which are related to agricultural productivity while the later includes the activities that are associated with health, education and other needs (Ahuja, 2006). Thus to meet these social services there has been an increased pressure on the farmers to have a higher incomes.

It is imperative to know that after the launch of Green revolution in India which provided for high technology in agriculture, still there are certain poor farmers who were excluded to these developments of various pesticides and fertilizers or even high yielding variety seeds due to their income constraints.

Due to the limited outreach of the formal credit like commercial banks and regional rural banks, farmers are more dependent to the informal sources of credits like moneylenders, commercial agents and rich landlords of an area. These middlemen charge a very high rate of interest with no or very limited paperwork which is nothing but a bait for the poor and the illiterate farmer. Thus, when a farmer is unable to repay the loan, it increases their debt towards their masters and led to the viscous cycle of 'debt trap'. In most of the cases, farmers have to sell their land to repay their debt and work as a tenant on the land that had once belonged to them.

Various studies have found out that there is nothing new in the rural indebtedness, but what are revealing are the suicides to this growing indebtedness. Hence, the main reason that pushed the breadwinners to this tragic action of suicide is the collapsing of agricultural credit and financial system.

(D) Big Problem of Small Lands Holdings

There is difference between the incomes that are earned by farmers which are having large land holdings and small land holdings (Chandra, Prasanna and Singh, 2011).The farmers with higher incomes certainly have large land holdings than those farmers with marginal and small lands. The other difference is that small farmers earn more from the wages whereas the big farmers receive their income mainly from crop cultivation. His analysis on per hectare income from various sources brings out that per hectare wages, total income and investment decrease with increase in size of holdings.

Prakash Bakshi, chairman of National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) believes that “With smaller land at disposal, there is a decrease in farmer’s capacity to invest in land; with average land holding halved, the cost of getting inputs and time consumed has doubled. If these are not tackled now, it will be difficult to maintain agriculture as a feasible profession.” (Darji and Dhandeo, 2013) Therefore, this problem of small land holdings is a socio-economic factor. It is deeply rooted within the agricultural society of India. It is the disturbing factor because it is very difficult for small land owners to have an access to formal credit sources. This in return attracts them towards the informal sources. This problem is a part of social structure as well because then farmers are being divided into the land-owning classes. The increasing population is creating a heavy pressure on the land and had affected per capita availability of land. Thus it is necessary to consolidate the land holdings which will automatically increase the crop production.

Thomas Jefferson once said that “agriculture is the wisest pursuit, because in the end, it will contribute the most to real wealth, good morals and happiness.” Henceforth, an Agricultural Investment Scheme is certainly the solution to the above mentioned problems. Today, in a state the worst sufferers are small and marginal farmers. Until and unless they are not uplifted and does not acquire a real and just wealth then the notion of the agriculture as the wisest pursuit will be null and void in context with India. There are only few of the rich farmers who are dominating the agricultural market and are acquiring the poor farmers land by false means. Hence, a direct financial assistance to the small and marginal farmer in the state shall be implemented to their rescue and unburden them from the never ending “debt trap”.

Rythu Bandhu Scheme

The Government of Telangana launched Rythu Bandhu Scheme, an agricultural investment scheme, on 10th May 2018 to relieve the farmers from the debt burden and to pull them away from the ‘debt trap’. The scheme is beneficial for the farmers as this scheme intends to provide Rs. 4000/- per acre to farmers for each season, that is Kharif and Rabi season. Thus, it will provide the farmers with an income of Rs. 8000/- per acre annually (Government of Telangana, 2018). From this income farmers can purchase or upgrade their existing factors of production like seeds and machine equipments, to increase the production in the agriculture. This would also provide them a base to have a good start for the following season.

In the villages of Warangal, Telangana farmers have benefitted from this scheme (Jebaraj, 2019). The investment scheme can be beneficial only to the land-owning farmers. A farmer can have a landholding having a small size or can also have multiple landholdings as there is no cap on the numbers of hectares or acres owned by the farmer. The budget of the scheme is of Rs. 12000/- crore for the year 2018-19.

This scheme was the need of the hour due to the financial crisis for the farmers which were leading to their suicides as well. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

(NABARD) in its 2016-17 survey has mentioned that the farmers of Telangana have the highest debt rate in the country with 79% of the agricultural households in debt, whereas the national rate is 52.5%. Earlier, the state with the major focus on Warangal was famous for its suicide cases.

In 2014, the state of Telangana was created from its bifurcation from the state of Andhra Pradesh, following which in Devanoor (Warangal), the cultivable land covered under irrigation is less than 15%. (Jebaraj, 2019). The area mainly consists of marginal and small farmers having maximum piece of land of up to one and two hectares respectively. Thus, the scheme is beneficial to those 90% farmers of the state having their own land. Various case studies have presented the situations where a widower having her own land had leased it to her tenants, but due to the severe conditions of the agriculture in the state, the tenants were unable to pay for the lease. Situations like these, results in losses for the tenants as well as for the landowner. Thus the scheme implemented by the government, comes to the rescue of these farmers by providing them direct income earnings. With these initiatives, she is more dependent on the government led policies.

There were around 1,000 farmer suicides in Telangana since 2014, every year. This data has been presented by Beeram Manjeera, president of Telangana Manjira Rythu Samakyi, which is the state wide farmer organisation. The income support scheme was part of the election manifesto of the current Chief Minister of Telangana, K Chandrashekhar Rao. According to the report by State Bank of India in June 2018, the Rythu Bandhu Scheme is the most expensive farmer welfare scheme by a state in the country.

This scheme is one of its kind in the country like India as it is the first ever Agriculture Investment Support Scheme that had been never been launched in any of the states and that too in such a massive scale. According to the statistics presented by the government, the scheme will benefit around 57 lakh farmers with which every farmer will be provided with the Dharni Pattadar Passbooks. Along with this, the farmers will be introduced with the new and upcoming technologies for better crop production. The scheme assures them to have a financial assistance which will not be just limited to production but will also be a part of their health and education. If implemented as per the norms, then it will celebrate agriculture as a festival. It also supports the initiative by the central government of “Doubling of Farmers Income by 2022”, which will represent India as the seed bowl of the world, in which Telangana will be recognized as the seed bowl of the country.

Implementation of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme

A scheme is null and void without its proper implementation. To implement it properly the government had updated and digitized paper based land records between September 2017 and March 2018. Along with it, to over 50 lakh farmers, it distributed cheques and patta passbooks. There is no application process involved. The farmers that are not included are those whose lands are disputed and these farmers comprise around 3% of the state (Venkatesh, 2018).

The government had formed a committee that would coordinate with the farmers at the grass root level to carry out various welfare initiatives (Press Trust of India, 2018). The committee is known as Rashtra Rythu Samavaya Samithi (TRRSS). It is a non-profit organisation which will allocate the funds to finance this scheme for better results. The government also had planned to form a committee for farmers' coordination at village, mandal and district level. The composition of the committee is such that at least 51% of the seats or the membership will include the farmers from the weaker sections, including women farmers. Furthermore, inclusion of the most deprived farmers will throw up the light on those issues which are not yet into the mainstream like the farmer's education and the role of women in the domain of agriculture. The State Farmer's Coordination Committee will also help farmers to export their agricultural produce. This will surely help farmers in a more holistic way.

There are several Village Revenue Officers in the district who are the government employee and had the task to update the land records of the villages allocated to them by the administrators. They are the lowest link in the hierarchy of the officers who are involved in the implementation of the scheme. Before the launch of this scheme, they had updated the land records due to which the policy was planned and prepared.

According to the Telangana Government, the scheme had been implemented in 30 districts with 108 divisions and 568 Mandals. Within this, the scheme covers 2,245 clusters and the total of 10,874 villages of the state. To make farmers rely on the formal institutions for their credit needs, government is working in collaboration with the banks such as State Bank of India, Andhra Bank, Syndicate Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Canara Bank. To inculcate the participation of banks at the ground level banks such as Telangana Grameen Bank and AP Grameen bank will also providing financial assistance to the farmers. This will directly reduce the role of moneylenders in village areas where they provide loans at the high interest rate to the farmers. Thus, the farmers decreased dependence on the informal credit institutions and the increased dependence on the formal institutions will result in to breakdown of the cycle of debt.

Rythu Bima Scheme is an extension to the Rythu Bandhu Scheme. It was launched on 15th August 2018. The idea behind the launch of the scheme is to provide an insurance cover to farmers of Rs. 5 lakh during the emergency crisis to their family members. In case of a death of the farmer, the family would receive the amount within 10 days. To make the implementation effective, the state had joined hands with the Life Insurance Company (LIC) of India. A farmer who is eligible for the Rythu Bandhu Scheme is automatically eligible for the Rythu Bima Scheme and vice versa. Both these schemes working in collaboration with each other, provides a social security to the farmers and their families because mostly these schemes will cover those farmers that are the worst sufferers in the society.

9. Drawbacks of the Scheme

Although the state government had the right reasons to launch and implement the scheme through various measures, but somehow there are certain gaps that are still needed to be filled. The scheme is only beneficial to those farmers who are the owners of an agricultural land. The farmers who work as a tenant on the land of the others do not fulfill the criteria for its eligibility. Henceforth, the tenant farmers did not receive the monetary assistance given by the state. But the policy makers should have included the tenant farmers under the ambit of the agricultural investment scheme. A policy like that would include larger number of farmers and would lead to the equal distribution of income among all the sections of the farmers (Gulati and Terway, 2018).

The Rythu Bandhu Scheme provides the financial assistance to the farmers for two seasons of the year, that are kharif season (which include the summer crops) and the rabi season (which include the winter crops). But, the land cultivated during the rabi reason is 70 per cent less than the land cultivated during the kharif season. With this the problem arises as majority of the land owners would still receive the same benefit.

Farmers of Peesara village in Warangal district had not received the financial assistance. They blame the administrators for not carrying out the proper task of up-gradation of the land records. Therefore, there are various issues regarding updating and digitisation of the land records undertaken by the state government (Venkatesh, 2018).

Some cultivators believe that the amount or the assistance is too low which adds nothing to their incomes. They believe that government could have increased the amount which they had sanctioned for the scheme, because Rythu Bandhu Scheme is covering only small part of the input cost of an agricultural field. This, negligence on the part of the state government could lead the farmers to turn towards the traditional or informal way of receiving credit from the moneylenders. Therefore, the cash support can cover an input cost, but cannot ensure the returns of the demand in the economy (Jitendra, Pandey, Mishra, Brahma and Nagaraju, 2019).

Arvind Subramaniam, former Chief Economic Advisor had criticized the scheme on the basis that it left out the two vulnerable agricultural groups that are agricultural workers and landless labourers. While on the other hand, the scheme is regressive since small landlords will receive small payments and big landlords will receive larger payments because the payments will be released according to the size of the land holding (IANS, 2019).

Various incidents have been taken into the account regarding the large scale corruption within the administration. The revenue officers, to make money, exploited the small scale farmers in Julurpad mandal of Kottagudem district. The presence of exploitation is there because of *Sada Binama* which provided land rights to the tribal farmers. It also made the farmers eligible for the Rythu Bandhu Scheme. But due to the lack of clarity regarding ownership of the land, officials did not issued *Sada Binama*

to the tribal farmers of the mandal. As the eagerness within the farmers for the benefits of the scheme grew, the revenue officials saw it as an opportunity to make the most out of it (Seshu, 2019). The Village Revenue Officers (VROs) asked farmers to pay a total sum of Rs. 10,000 per acre in return for Sada Binama and for the disputed land, they asked around Rs. 15,000 per acre. Hence for the better incomes to the farmers in the longer run the scheme by the government needs to be implemented properly without their exploitation. The government should take strict actions against such officials.

The other important aspect regarding an Agricultural Investment Scheme is that, although the government or the state provides for the direct transfer to the farmers, but it does not bring the required technology with it. This lack of technology does not solve the concern of crop output. Political activists in the region of Telangana, argued about the lack of investment for irrigation facilities. This could lead to the harmful effects on the agricultural productivity of the state which would also affect the price structures and the income of the farmers in the long run (Vakulabharanam, 2004).

10. Critical Perspective

The Rythu Bandhu Scheme is still a nascent policy in a country like India. As an agricultural investment scheme, this scheme has a potential to help farmers in taking a progressive crop decisions, leading to increase in their income levels, unlike in the policy of Minimum Support Price (MSP) in which there is generally no institutional arrangement managed by the government to purchase the produce at the stated prices from the farmers (Rath, 2008). Even with the new wave of the loan waivers in the country, as observed in various states (like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Karnataka) have in the long term led to the adverse effects to the rural credit institutions such as self help groups and cooperative credit societies, that extend the loans to farmers. As a result, their diminishing role as lenders, will gradually lead to increase dependency of farmers on the village moneylenders. It is also a time to recognize that MSP and loan waivers are not reaching to those farmers who face repeated trade shocks and are in the grip of a trader mafia. Thus, an agricultural investment scheme is an alternative to the loan waivers and MSP.

Nevertheless due to the certain complexities involved in the scheme as discussed above, in order to have an assured result, The Government of Telangana ought to revisit the eligibility criteria of its beneficiaries and should consider the inclusion of neediest and the poorest cultivators and agricultural laborers who were excluded from benefits of the scheme (Cariappa and Srinivas, 2019). This would ensure equitable distribution of the income among the farmers and would also bridge the gap between the large or rich farmers and the small or poor farmers.

According to Ashok Gulati, chair professor agriculture in Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), a quasi-universal basic income policy or a scheme like Rythu Bandhu is good option for the agriculture. The improved results can be seen if the entire

administration could work towards it (Venkatesh, 2019). He suggests that up-gradation of the records maintained by the government is the need of the hour. Some records of the agricultural laborers or the tenant farmers should be upgraded by the government so that inclusion of these poor and marginalized farmers can be seen. Furthermore, the data of the farmers can be linked to their Aadhaar numbers so that they can receive the proper amount.

Some scholars suggest that the government intervention in the agriculture sector should be limited and it's high time where private players should enter the domain and play their respective part. The inputs that are used by the farmers are mainly controlled by the government authorities such as the supply of water resources, electricity, seeds and fertilizers (Rajagopalan, 2018). Due to the inactive role of the private sector, the farmers are forced to depend on the subsidies announced. Even the supply of these basic resources is uncertain and unreliable due to the problem of shortages on the part of the government. According to them, farmers would rather pay for the regular supply of water and electricity if the prices are justifiable.

Consequently, an agricultural investment scheme is a long term solution to the agrarian distress in the state. It will not only solve the various problems that surround the small and marginal farmers but will also be helpful to the economy in the longer run. The investment in the education of farmers, research, small financial institutions and the participation of the women farmers needs to be strengthened. Moreover, the private players will also bring with them the required technology to increase the crop output and to tackle the impact of the climate change on Indian agriculture. The small and marginal landholders, agricultural labourers or tenant farmers will be able to access the technology and services with the competitive markets all around the world (Srinivas and Mehta, 2018).

Certain evidence suggests that from repeated loan waivers the credit discipline of the banks weakens. As a result the farmers would be the ultimate sufferers because of reduced public investment in rural areas and decreased agricultural lending. Better price and income levels, not blanket waivers, are what farmers really require today.

11. Findings of the Study

There are several findings that require the special mention, after having understood the above context.

- 1) The term 'misery of farmers' is not narrow in its nature. This term implies various problems that persist in the domain of agriculture. Its seriousness increases when the discussion regarding the farmer's suicide comes into light, which itself is due various reasons like lack of credit, droughts, the never ending role of middlemen, the small landholdings that are leading to poor incomes.
- 2) An agricultural investment scheme like that of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme is an alternative to the age old government policies like Minimum Support Price (MSP), subsidies and loan waivers. Henceforth, it tries to fill in the gaps that were left by these earlier schemes.

- 3) Rythu Bandhu Scheme is also a commendable example to the concept of quasi – universal basic income (UBI). It is better for the farmer to decide her own spending rather than having interferences from the policy decisions of the government because it is the farmer who is in better position with better understanding to limit their problems.
- 4) In order to curtail the drawbacks of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme, the policy administrators that is the village revenue officers, needs to play an active role towards their jobs without exploiting needs of the farmers, even the policy makers' needs to reconsider the eligibility criteria for the scheme and they should keep the land records updated at the earliest.
- 5) Rythu Bandhu scheme and Rythu Bima Scheme are complimentary to each other. Being the beneficiary to the former, the farmer can avail benefits by being the beneficiary to the latter as well. Thus, both these schemes can bring wonders in the lives of the farmers.

12. Policy Suggestions

- a) The tenant farmers should be the part of the scheme.
- b) There should be a proper monitoring system to analyses all kind of difficulties that are faced by the farmers under this scheme.
- c) The government should organize workshops and awareness programs regarding the benefits of formal institutions of credit like banks.
- d) The prediction for the sudden natural disasters should be communicated to the farmers in advances so that they can make alternative arrangements.
- e) The self-help groups should be concerned about the plight of the farmers and they can work as a mediator between the farmer and the government.
- f) The government should engage the private players in the agricultural sector under the PPP (Public-Private Partnership) model.

13. Conclusion

The hypothesis of the study proves to be true on the basis of this study. According to the study, the misery of the farmers was the major factors behind the launch of the scheme. The continuous farmer suicide due to the drought have had negative impact on the income generation of the farmers. Telangana is the first state in India that has come up with an agricultural investment scheme like Rythu Bandhu scheme. The idea and its approach in the state had led the other states of India to adopt the similar measures to address the concern of their farmers. Recently, Odisha, have announced the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme. With the success of these schemes at the state level, the central government has also announced a scheme on similar line, which is Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) for small and marginal farmers. The schemes like these are also supporting the initiative of doubling up of the farmers' income by 2022. They, if are implemented properly, can replace the Subsidy model by an Investment model. In spite of various challenges that are seen and faced by the beneficiaries, the Government of Telangana has showed leadership in setting the benchmark for other states as well.

It undertook the biggest land record management; it had tried to successfully implement the scheme so as to benefit the farmers. In its true essence, the scheme was aimed at empowering the farmers from the debt burden and reduced agrarian distress.

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