



Strategies For Agricultural Development In Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

Andhra Pradesh is one of the largest states of India in terms of area and population. It is the 8 th largest state in terms of area and 10 th largest state in terms of population. The economy of Andhra Pradesh is primarily agriculture dominant and above 60% of the people depend on agriculture and allied activities.

The state of AP is enriched with natural and human resources and it has socio-economic advantage to the state. There are 26 districts in the state. The state has 160.2 lakh hectares of land among 41% is cultivable and 21.8% covered with forests. AP is the second largest coastline in the country after Gujarat.

Agriculture is not only a major occupation of the people but also a way of living to the people of Andhra Pradesh. The average size of holdings is low. It is only 0.86 hectares in 2021-22. (it is 0.94 hectares in 2015-16). Even the small land holdings the farmers continue to cultivate the lands to get their livelihood with the help of agriculture allied activities mainly focus on live stock rearing. Total food grain production in 2022-23 is 126.30 lakh tones both Kharif and Rabi seasons

The central and State government introduced financial assistance of Rs. 13,500 (PM Kisan Rs. 6000/) per farmer family from the Rabi season of the year 2019. Crop insurance, interest free loans, 9 hours free power, guaranteed support price etc. facilities are offering to the farmers of Andhra Pradesh.

The government of AP established “Andhra Pradesh State Agriculture Mission” to address the challenges in agriculture services. Organization of Polam Badi, Integrated Crop Management Services, Soil Testing Labs are also working for the farmers in the State. For safeguarding the benefits of the tenants the government of AP made “Andhra Pradesh Crop Cultivator Rights Act 2019” to provide banking, insurance and other government benefits to the tenant farmers without harming the actual owner of the land.

Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA), Externally Aided Projects, AP Irrigation Livelihood Improvement Project with the help of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) are working for the increase of agriculture production. Centrally sponsored schemes like digitalization of Primary Agriculture Credit Societies, Agriculture Infrastructure (AIF) Scheme, Integrated Cooperative Development Projects (ICDP) are providing financial assistance directly and indirectly to the farmers in the Andhra Pradesh.

The objectives of the paper is to provide the role of agriculture in Andhra Pradesh, to provide the information regarding the agriculture strategies implemented in Andhra Pradesh and suggest measures to improve the effectiveness of the existing agriculture schemes in the state.

Key Words: Agriculture, Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA), Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming, Crop Insurance, Agriculture Infrastructure.

Introduction

In Andhra Pradesh agriculture sector play prominent role in providing food security, livelihood to 60 of the people and 30 % Of GSDP. The government of Andhra Pradesh has implemented several agriculture schemes to support farmers, improve productivity, and promote sustainable

table 1 (area and food grain production in Andhra Pradesh)

year	Area (Lakh Hect.)			Production (Lakh Tonnes)		
	Kharif	Rabi	total	Kharif	Rabi	total
2023-24	18.13	15.11	33.24	79.00	64.31	143.31
2024-25	20.36	17.15	37.51	88.10	73.76	161.86
% change	12.30	13.50	12.85	11.52	14.69	12.94

Source AP Economic Survey 2024-25

The table show that the food grain production in terms of Area and the quantity in the state for the years 2023-24 and 2024-25. The cropped area in lakh hectares increased for Kharif and rabi season by 12.85 percent. The production in lakh tonnes area increased for Kharif and rabi season by 12.94 percent. It witnessed the growth of agriculture sector with new strategies in Andhra Pradesh.

AP Irrigation Livelihood Improvement Project

To improve the agricultural productivity, expanding existing irrigated facilities the Andhra Pradesh government implement AP Irrigation Livelihood Improvement Project in 2017. This project is assisted with the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). The funding of the project with the ratio of 84:16 with 84% funded by JICA and the remaining 16% should be bared by the state government. this project has 5 components, out of the 5 components two activities are implemented by the agriculture department namely, Promoting Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Establishing Agriculture Mechanization Training Centers (AMTCs).

The Farmer Producer Organizations formed with minimum 300 members are to be mobilized to form a group of 15 to 30 members which were call as Farmer Interest Group (FIG). These Farmer Interest Groups were also nemed as Self Help Groups, Farmers Clubs, Joint Liability Groups, Rytu Mitra Groups. Financial Support for Incubations, Equity Grants, Credit Guarantee Fund will be provided by the government to the FPOs

Rythu Bharosa PM KisanScheme: it provide financial assistance for input subsidy to the farmers of Andhra Pradesh Under this financial assistance scheme Rupees 13,500 in three spells will be provided by the government. the central government give Rs. 6000 and the remaining 7,500 will be funded by the State Government. This scheme reduces the debt burden on the farmers. Rs. 3043.84 crores disbursed to 53.58 lakh farmer families including tenant farmer families in the year 2023-24. This scheme benefits farmers in providing zero interest loans, constructing cold storages, establishing food processing units for the eligible farmers in the state.

Rytu Seva Kendras of the State work as one step centres to provide diversified services for the farmers. These centres provide seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other subsidiary services. These kendras equipped with modern agriculture support services like Kiosks and Smart TV in the village level. These Rytu Seva Kendrs provided services as “Vittanam nundi Vikrayam varaku “ (Seed to Sale) of agriculture and allied services at village level.

Farmer Field Schools or Polam Badi

Farmer Field Schemes give field oriented training to the 30 farmers in a village for a period of 14 weeks. Crop surveillance procedures, Integrated Crop Management Technology are the main components in this Polam Badi scheme. The Farmer Field Schools containing Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Integrated Nutrient Management (INM), Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Integrated Water Management (IWM), Farm Mechanization, Post Harvest Technologyetc. By the year 2023-24 1104 Farmer Field Schools organized and 33,120 farmers have been trained.

Soil Health and Fertility

Under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana the government of Andhra Pradesh introduced Soil health card and soil health management schemes to reduce the dependency on chemicals and pesticides. The ideal organic matter in the fields is 2.5% but, it is less than 0.5% in majority of lands in the state. The Soil Health Cards provide the comprehensive information of the soil and it help to the farmers in improving the soil fertility. Under this scheme collected soil samples may be tested both offline and online and suggest the farmers with suitable measures of their soil. During 2023-34 2.83 soil health cards were issued to the farmers in the state.

Crop Cultivators Rights Act 2019: the majority of the actual cultivators in the state are Tenant farmers. To safeguard the benefits of the tenant farmers the government of Andhra Pradesh brought Crop Cultivators Rights Act 2019 and it came in to force from 17-08-2019. Under this act Crop Cultivator Rights Cards (CCRC)

were issued to the tenant farmers with the mutual agreement of land owner and cultivator for a period of 11 months, which entitles the tenant farmers to avail bank finance. The CCRC to provide various services like Rytu Bharosa, Sunna Vaddi Panta Runalu, Free Crop Insurance, input subsidy, Seed and Farm Machinery on subsidised prices, Minimum Support Price and Crop Loans to the tenant farmers. 8,31,884 Crop Cultivator Rights Cards were issued in 2023-24, among 37,243 card holders were disbursed Rs. 323.70 crore rupees.

Crop Insurance (PMFBY - Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana)

Climate changes, extreme weather, droughts, flooding and other natural calamities badly affect the agriculture production in the state. To overcome, these uncertainty the state government implemented free crop insurance Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bhima Yojana (PMFBY) and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance (RWBCIS) in the state. This crop insurance scheme covered 43.42 lakh hectares, with 50.01 lakh farmers covered. In the event of crop failure this scheme provide financial relief to the farmers.

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)

The Government of India introduced National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture in 2014-15. Under the NMSA Rain-fed Area Development (RAD) is introduced for Agriculture and Allied services. It mainly focussed on improving the agriculture productivity by adopting Rain-fed technologies. Financial support will be shared by centre and state ratio of 60:40. It is being implemented in the areas where rain fed agriculture is more prevalent. In Andhra Pradesh 9 districts namely Kurnool, Nandyal, Anantapuramu, Sri Satya Sai, Kadapa, Annamayya, Chittoor, Tirupathi and Prakasham were selected for this scheme in 2023-24. Rupees 30,000 will be sanctioned as subsidy to the farmer family.

AP Community Managed Natural Farming (APCMNF): it is formerly known as Zero Budget Natural Farming. For the expansion of Natural Farming in the state government of AP implemented Community Managed Natural Farming which promotes capacity building of the farmers. It adopts best agricultural practices to conserve agriculture. This programme receives financial support under Central Sector Schemes (CSS) of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI). Under this scheme different natural farming initiatives will be adopted.

PMDS (pre monsoon dry sowing) and 365 days green cover. It enable to take three crops in a year. Grade A multi cropping models for all major crops in each of the three seasons, ATM model – 20 cents model for small, marginal and landless farmers, drought proofing models for restoring fallow lands and degradable lands. In the yaer 2023-24 10. 37 lakh farmers are practicing Natural Farming in 4.86 lakh hacteres.

By the implementation of Natural farming the farmers experienced that reduction of cultivation costs, increased yields, produced safe and nutritious food, reduced the youth migration to urban and improved soil health, water conservation etc.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Scheme (AIF)

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Scheme is supported by the Atma Nirbhar Bharat of the central government and it focus on providing farm gate infrastructure in the state and it will refinanced by the NABARD. Under the AIF 695 godowns were constructed and provided 3.98 lakh million tonnes storage capacity.

Modernization of Agriculture sector across the world

Fruits and vegetables processing 70% in Brazil, 23% in China but it is 2% only in India. Modernization of agriculture reached up to the mark in Brazil, Thailand, Israel. The Precision Agriculture combination of Sustainable and Organic Cultivation) should be adopted in a large scale in India to improve the incomes of the farmers. Adopting technology in agriculture like usage of Robots, censored machines will improve the efficiency of the cultivation eg. Alex in Australia, Agrilinks in America.

A start up in Netherlands called “Free Soil” works for conservation of soil fertility by using advanced techniques. The Start up prepares best quality compost in natural and eco friendly manner. A start up Octerra of Canada prepares compost which fully melts in the roots of the plants and it absorb the residual chemicals in the soil. A Start up of Bulgaria named “Agreela” works with sensors which give comprehensive and continuous reports of the crops during the cultivation period. Farmers Hive of Canada works for Green Houses in Horticulture. Arva Intelligence of America works for conserving soil fertility. India combined with the Start ups in Israel, Belgium to combat the plant diseases. ICRISAT of India worked for genetic crops a long time ago.

Measures to improve the effectiveness of New strategies in Agriculture sector in Andhra Pradesh

- The steps to be taken for developing certification programmes in practicing sustainable agriculture.
- Market linkages should be improved for the organic production wide range of publicity should be done.
- Rain water harvesting practices will give more results in agriculture production. Rain water conservation methods thoroughly practiced in the rainy season and the preservation of rain water must be done.
- Publicity on Precision farming should be give priority.
- Promote composting and bio fertilizers to reduce chemical usage in the fields.
- The soil testing results should be given in time to the farmers and assistance must be provided to the farmers as recommended by the Soli Testing Agencies.
- The crops which need less water encouraged by the agriculture department and incentives must be provided to the farmers who adopt these methods.
- Practice of renewable energy sources like solar, wind, tidal energy which reduce the pollution.
- Promote farm to market linkages to sell the products directly to the consumer and it will ensure better prices to the farmers.
- The alarming methods and strategies should be implemented in weather related risks for agriculture production.
- The usage of modern devises like drones, small agri-tech machines should be provided on the subsidy or rent basis to the farmers.
- The awareness on sustainable agricultural strategies should be given by the farmers rather than the employees of agriculture department.

Conclusion

The economy of Andhra Pradesh is primarily agriculture dominant and above 60% of the people depend on agriculture and allied activities. The average size of holdings is low. It is only 0.86 hectares in 2021-22. The government of AP established “Andhra Pradesh State Agriculture Mission” to address the challenges in agriculture services. Organization of Polam Badi, Integrated Crop Management Services, Soil Testing Labs are also working for the farmers in the State To improve the agricultural productivity, expanding existing irrigated facilities the Andhra Pradesh government implement AP Irrigation Livelihood Improvement Project in 2017. Rytu Bharosa Scheme, Polam Badi, Crop Insurance, Natural Farming, Sustainable Agriculture Development schemes, Crop cultivators rights act, soil fertility labs are some important strategies implemented to improve the state to improve the effectiveness of agricultural sector in the state.

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