



Farmers Perception on Farm Mechanization Status in Vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh

Key words : Farmers perception, Mechanization.

Indian agriculture is characterized by significantly small holdings due to higher population density and nearly two thirds of its population residing in rural areas coupled with unabated land fragmentation due to the inheritance laws of the country and nearly 62 per cent of the estimated 142 m hectare area is rain fed. The major source of farm power includes both inanimate sources such as diesel engines, tractors and electronic motors. Green revolution in India began in the mid 60,s was achieved through ensuring the availability of high yielding varieties, fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation sources and farm machinery. The country was facing acute food shortage till eighties , now it become self sufficient and it is in a position to export the agricultural commodities. But to introduce second green revolution to full fill India's future food requirement to benefit the small, medium and large farm size needs farmmechanization.

The study was conducted in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh . The specific objective of the study was to assess the farm machination status of the district to strengthen the mechanization process in farm operations. A total number of 120 farmers from selected 12 mandals of vizianagaram were interviewed for the study. The data were collected through personal interviews, observation and group discussions methods.

This section presents the results and discussion of the study on Perception of the farmers about status of Farm Mechanization in vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh. Availability of implements and farm machinery, quality of the implements under farm mechanization scheme, availability of repairing facilities for farm machinery, skilled labour availability for operating the machinery, Know-how of modern equipment, need for the location specific implements which are useful in reducing drudgery and availability of

custom hiring facilities were some of the parameters taken in to consideration for analyzing the status of farm mechanization in the district.

Availability of required implements and farm machinery:

It is observed from the Table.4 that majority of the farmers perceived that the availability of the required implements/machinery was medium extent (40.83%) followed by low (35.83%) and high extent(35.85%). Requirement and use of farm machinery is greatly depends on the soil type, crops grown, size of the landholding and socio- economic status of the farmers. It was evident from above table that majority of the farmers perceived that the availability of the required farm implements was medium to low extent, this might be due to the fact that as majority of the farmers were small and marginal farmers their requirements were different as compared to big and large farmers. Some of the farmers expressed that department of Agriculture was providing multi crop threshers, 9 tine cultivators disc puddlers, double disc harrows, rotovators, power tillers and maize shellers on subsidy basis in this district but they could not able to avail this opportunity because of the small holdings and lack of purchasing power of expensive farm machinery. Small farm size and scattered holdings of the farmers stand in the way of farm mechanization. As the heavy machinery have large turning radius and thus require comparatively larger farms for economical use. Majority of the farmers opined opined that they cannot afford heavy farm machinery like combined harvester, shellers etc and due to seasonal nature of the agriculture , the farm machinery remains idle for much of the time. Under such conditions, a majority of the farmers can benefit from technical superiority of farm machinery only through establishing custom hiring centres at district level. Late allocation of the funds

for the farm mechanization is another limitation as expressed by few farmers in the district. Hence timely release of funds ensures the successful implementation of farm mechanization programme in the district.

Quality of the implements under farm mechanization scheme:

Results revealed that nearly half of the respondents perceived that the quality of the implements supplied under farm mechanization scheme was some extent good. Some of the farmers expressed that the poor quality attachments and parts (e.g., nuts, bolts, ball bearing, elbow joints, blades, shafts, etc.) is one of the problem for the farm machinery supplied on subsidy. Hence, it is important to ensure the availability of critical inputs while implementing farm mechanization programmes.

Availability of repairing facilities for farm machinery:

It is observed that nearly half of the farmers perceived that availability of repairing facilities for farm machinery was low extent (49.16%) followed by some extent (40.83 %). The reason for this finding might be due to the fact that majority of the farmers were exclusively depending upon the private dealers for repair and maintenance of any farm machinery. Lack of repair and replacement facilities and after sales services in close proximity (especially in the remote areas of the district) was another hindrance in efficient small farm mechanization.

Skilled labour availability for operating the machinery:

Majority (51.83%) of the farmers felt that the availability of the skilled labour availability for operating the machinery was medium. There is a need to conduct more capacity building programmes for young farmers and women in the areas like, precautionary measures to be taken, operation and maintenance of farm machinery.

Know how of modern equipment:

Majority (41.66%) of the farmers felt that the Know-how of modern equipment was low followed by (31.66 %) . All most all the farmers

said that they did not receive any kind of training on safety measures, operation and maintenance of the equipment. Technical know-how should be provided to the farmers according to appropriateness of farm machinery for the situation and for its proper utilization.

Need for the location specific implements:

It is clear that majority (65.00%) of the farmers felt that there is a need for location specific implements to address needs in the district. The reason might be due the fact that highly diverse farm sizes and soil types resulting in the need for customized farm machinery .Some of the farmers were making some alteration or modifications to the farm machinery according to their needs. Hence there is a great need to identify, import , fabricate or modify farm machinery according to the needs of the farmers to cut down the expenditure and effective utilization of farm machinery

Availability of custom hiring facilities:

Nearly 85 per cent of farmers felt that establishment of custom hiring centers at panchayat level will increase the availability of high cost farm machinery to the farmers on hired basis. Majority of the farmers felt that, most of farm machinery were uneconomical for single farm operation. Under such conditions, a majority of the farmers could be benefitted from the technological superiority of the modern farm equipment and more such developments in future only through custom hiring.

CONCLUSIONS:

Farm Mechanization is one of the crucial inputs to ensure timely agricultural operations, reduce the cost of production, reduce the drudgery, and improve the quality of produce in the context of globalization and commercialization of Indian agriculture. Promotion of farm mechanization exclusively depends on various socio-economical and situational factors like crops grown in the area, land holding, income, availability of machinery and skilled personnel etc.;. Hence, it is very important to assess the existing status of farm mechanization to identify gaps in the process of farm mechanization. The future mechanization strategy may have to be based on the ecological diversity and socio- economic status of the farmers. Since

majority of the farmers in the study found to be marginal and small farmers , by keeping the challenges in mind there is potential need for establishment of farm machinery banks for providing custom hiring and other require support.

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