

Rythu Bharosa Kendra- Andhra Pradesh's Revolutionary Step to Fulfill the Farmers Needs

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Introduction:

Andhra Pradesh known as “Rice bowl of India” with 37.35% area under agriculture and 62.17% of the working population is still dependent on agriculture and allied activities. Farmers used spend one day near mandal offices to get their seeds and used to spend a lots of amount on fertilizers and other inputs. It was very difficult to get suggestions from the field level staff because they were not available at field level at all the times. To solve some of these problems and to provide some other services at their doorstep Government of Andhra Pradesh launched RBKs on 30th may, 2020 with all the trained staff and other facilities. A total of 10,641 RBKs were launched during first phase. One RBK was established at every panchayat in Andhra Pradesh with the trained technical staff in Agriculture (VAA), Horticulture (VHA), Sericulture (VSA-in areas with intensive sericulture) and Fisheries (VFA-in areas with intensive fish culture). RBKs maintain stocks of inputs for Agriculture and allied sectors. They procure knowledge from institutions all over India. They provide a range of services such as Agri-input shop, Seed distribution, Product procurement and Polam badi etc.

Objectives of RBK:

1. To make available quality Agri-inputs, farm implements, fish feed, cattle feed, fodder seed etc. to farmers at right price, right time at their villages backed by integrated advisory through Farmer Knowledge Center.
2. To reduce duplicate and spurious products sale in market by allowing only sale of tested and certified products through Government Agri-input Shops.
3. To bring good practices in the sales of farm inputs and to act as a benchmark to the dealers in the market.
4. To channelize Government Schemes and create a reliable alternate channel for sale of quality farm inputs to the farmers.

Services of RBK:**(1) The Agri-input shop**

It operates in a Hub and Spoke model where hub is the RBK go-down and spokes are the RBKs. They supply quality inputs from multiple brands to farmers. It works as a virtual shop with one digital kiosk at every RBK to take orders from the customers. These kiosks display model products available at RBKs and they deliver them at a time if they are available in the go-down.

(2) Advisory Board and technical support:

Advisory arm was established at state level, district level, mandal level and RBK level for better crop planning and Marketing of Agriculture Produce based on the Agro Climatic Situations at Village Level. They were technically supported by Technical support unit with subject matter experts from Agriculture and allied sectors (Horticulture, Sericulture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, ANGRAU etc.). RBKs were equipped with trained technical staff who provide timely advice on crops in production, protection, marketing and carry out crop cutting experiments, e-crop booking and others. They are

1. VAA-Village Agriculture Assistant- Graduate or above in B.Sc (Ag.) and graduates of diploma in agriculture,
2. VHA-Village Horticulture Assistant- Graduate or above in B.Sc (Hort.) and graduates of diploma in horticulture,
3. VSA- Village Sericulture Assistant- Sericulture or related courses graduates and
4. VFA- Village Fisheries Assistant- Graduates in fisheries course.

(3) RBK Milk collection centres:

Government of Andhra Pradesh signed an MoU with Amul on 21.07.2020 to establish milk collection centres for the economic upliftment of milk producers in Andhra Pradesh with key objectives of (i) Socio-economic upliftment of milk producers in AP with special focus on empowerment of women, (ii) To offer the best possible milk price to the farmers and (iii) to offer quality milk and milk products to the consumers. The State Government has identified (9899) Milk Potential Villages which have significant milch animal population to promote Mahila Paala Uthpathidarula Sahakara Sanghalu (MPUSS) under AP Co-operative Societies Act 1964.

(4) Custom Hiring Centres:



It is one of the excellent services started in RBKs where a group of 15 farmers come forward and take a loan to establish CHCs. In this loan upto 15 lakhs will be provided based on the size of the group in 50:10:40 ratio by loan, farmer and subsidy. One CHC is permitted for every panchayat.

(5) Seed distribution:

RBKs distribute seeds which are needed in the locality at low prices in needed amounts at right time i.e., every season.

(6) Product Procurement:

They procure various grains including rice, maize, jowar, bajra, etc at MSP from the farmers in its locality. In some RBKs they procure vegetables like tomato and supply them to processing firms.

(7) CMAPP (Comprehensive Monitoring of Agriculture Price and Procurement):

CMAPP is mobile application developed to monitor the agriculture needs of farmers and it displays data relating to cost, Procurement and marketing facilities of the farmers for their produce. It is the only app in the country which gathers daily price information at village (RBK) level for all crops.

(8) CCRC (Crop Cultivator Rights Cards):

These are the cards provided to the tenant farmers who are cultivating lands on lease. Through these cards tenant farmers will get input subsidies, crop insurance and rythu bharosa instead of land owner. These cards will be given only to the tenant farmer who is minority caste than the owner. If tenant farmer is having some land and he is taking some land on lease, he can't get YSR Rythu Bharosa but he will get crop insurance and input subsidies. Tenant farmers need to get owner's signature to get these cards. These cards are valid for 11 months and again they have to redo the process. Because of these difficulties of getting signature and redoing the whole process this excellent scheme is not so successful.

(9) YSR Rythu Bharosa Magazines:

Dr.YSR Rythu bharosa monthly magazine was launched on the eve of Rythu Dinotsavam i.e July 8th, 2020. They will be distributed on pre subscription of Rs.600/- per year. They furnish information on latest technologies in agriculture and allied sectors and success stories, etc.

(10) RBK You Tube Channel:



RBK you tube channel provides videos of package of practices, pests and diseases, poultry and veterinary, new technologies in agri-allied sectors, schemes and its benefits and success stories of farmers. Knowledge is dispensed by scientists from various disciplines. At present RBK channel possess 190k subscribers and uploaded more than 830 videos.

(11) Dr.YSR Polambadi:

The polambadi programme is conducted during all stages of crop from seed to seed i.e., from selection of seed to crop protection, harvesting and marketing opportunities. Along with this Dr.YSR thotabadi is also conducted for increasing awareness on horticultural crops.

(12) Integrated Call Centre

A dedicated Call center for addressing the grievances and Suggestions from the farmers by use of ICT is provided at each RBK with toll free number 155251.

Recognitions:

The Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBK) have been nominated for the United Nations Award by the Centre for Champion Awards (CCA) of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Uses of RBK:

1. Seed distribution became hassle free and less time consuming.
2. Crop insurance, input subsidies and rythu bharosa are being transmitted to beneficiaries at right time.
3. Advisory board is available at the level of reach of farmers.
4. Inputs became available at the level of panchayat and at affordable cost.
5. Soil and water testing facilities are available for each and every farmer.
6. Income level of the milk producers has increased in the areas wherever Amul milk collection centres were introduced.
7. Most of the farmers are selling their produce at MSP level avoiding middlemen.
8. Tenant farmers are getting benefits because of CCRC.

Shortcomings of RBK:

1. At some places input delivery is not timely as they couldn't maintain stocks of inputs.
2. CCRC couldn't be implemented well because of disagreement of owner farmers.
3. CHC scheme also couldn't be implemented well because of farmer's lack of awareness and initiative.

4. Lack of infrastructural facilities and funds for RBKs.

A case study:

For the purpose of study farmers from three villages under Gudugu RBK were interviewed to know their level of awareness and adoption. They were medially aware of all the services provided by RBK's and their adoption of services of RBK's was also medium as farmers were medially aware of the services provided by the RBK's. From this study we can conclude that they were useful for the farmers in simplifying some tasks like seed procurement and product RBK's and some of the services like timely input supply should be improved.

Conclusion:

Rythu Bharosa Kendra's made easy tasks like getting seed, selling output, getting advises, getting better price for milk producers, soil and water tests etc for the farmers. RBK's being at the reach of the farmers at their panchayat level they visit it frequently to solve their queries regarding cultivation of crops or others. They act like wholesale stores/Comprehensive stores which fulfill all the needs of local people at one place. They were nominated for United Nations Award by the Centre for Champion Awards (CCA) of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for their remarkable service for the farmers of Andhra Pradesh. They still lack some infrastructural facilities but are operating successfully and government is planning to update and make them responsible for implementing some more services.

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