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ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF GROUND NUT FARMERS IN ANANTAPURAMU DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract
As economic reform and liberalization saw the Government vacating several areas to let private sector entrepreneurship flourish and contribute to the high growth rate of the economy in recent years, a similar paradigm shift is needed to transform NGOs from their dependence on said and grans from within and outside for transforming the rural scenario in the country. This is sought to be achieved for the NGOs by engaging them in micro-finance, micro insurance, and micro entrepreneurship activities for the overall development of the rural areas and to promote the welfare of the people of rural India. Hereunder an attempt is made to outline the role played by some of the NGOs for development agriculture and also the farming community in the district.

Key words: NGOs, Agriculture, Ground Nut.

Introduction

Groundnut (Arachis hypogaea L.) haulms are an important source of fodder in mixed farming systems in the semiarid zones of Andhra Pradesh and other states of India. In south-western Andhra Pradesh, which includes the Anantapur district, cattle production depends mainly on this source of fodder (ISPA, 1997). Groundnut is also grown as a food-feed crop in other developing countries, providing pods for human consumption and haulms for livestock feeding (Larbi et al, 1999; Omokanye et al, 2001). India ranks first in the extent of groundnut cultivation, with 6.7 million ha, followed by China, Nigeria and the USA. In total production, it ranks second, with 5 million t, behind China, which produces 10 million t (Talwar, 2004). Among the states of India, Gujarat tops the production list with over one million t, closely followed by Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh (AP), with slightly less than one million t each (AP Oil Federation, 2005). Within AP, Anantapur district is the highest groundnut producer, with 0.28 million t, or about 34% of the production in the state. However, productivity is low (0.27 t ha–1) Mean rainfall in the district is about 550 mm, which is erratic both in space and time. The monthly potential evapotranspiration is more than the monthly normal rainfall, which reduces the soil moisture and makes agriculture a risky proposition in this district (Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2004).

The results from dual-purpose usage, groundnut crop improvement and livestock nutrition programmes conducted by ICRISAT/International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) have shown that choosing appropriate cultivars could substantially improve the food and fodder situation in mixed crop–livestock systems (Ramakrishna Reddy et al, 2004; Blummel et al, 2005a). For instance, significant differences have been reported for organic matter digestibility, organic matter intake and live weight gain in sheep fed with 13 different cultivars of groundnut with a three-fold variation in live weight gain across the cultivars. It was concluded from these findings that livestock productivity in mixed crop–livestock systems could be substantially improved through the provision of superior dual-purpose cultivars (Vellaikumar et al, 2004). Similarly, relationships between haulm fodder quality traits and pod and haulm yields in 860 genotypes suggested that high pod yield and superior haulm quality were compatible traits (Blummel et al, 2005b). Participatory evaluation trials of nine improved varieties and a local control, carried out during the rainy seasons of 2002 and 2003 in two villages of Anantapur district, indicated that, of the new varieties, ICGV 91114 gave higher fodder yields of 7.7% and 12% in

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the two seasons respectively, and stable or increased pod yields of 0% and 17% respectively. Other benefits observed included greater disease resistance, shorter maturation times and higher shelling percentage (ICRISAT, 2004). About 70% of rural households in India keep livestock, and income from livestock accounts for 15–40% of total farm household income (World Bank, 1999). It might be assumed, therefore, that improved cultivars of groundnut that promise higher pod and haulm yields are likely to be adopted by farmers, as they would help improve livestock-based livelihoods. A project entitled 'Enhancing Livelihoods of Poor Livestock Keepers through Increasing Use of Fodder', supported by the UK Department ForInternationa

Development (DFID), was started in September 2002 in India. Its main objective was to increase the productivity of livestock and the sustainability of farming systems through adoption of fodder innovations. The project, which involved both civil and public-sector organizations, began with diagnostic surveys and participatory varietal selection (PVS) including focus group discussions to identify farmer practice and understand farmer needs, followed by researcher-designed, farmer-managed onfarm trials.

In the initial design of the project, it was envisaged that the most promising of the farm-tested varieties would be scaled up through farmer-to-farmer transfer of technology. However, constraints to scaling up arose, and it became clear that there were issues beyond the farm gate that had to be considered. This paper is an attempt to present the change-of-learning approach adopted by the initiative. It is organized into five sections. The next section summarizes the sample survey conducted to characterize the crop–livestock farming system. The subsequent two sections, respectively, provide information obtained through PVS and explore the lessons learnt from a multistakeholder workshop conducted in preparation for the scale-up. Impact pathways for the groundnut scale-up based on an innovation systems analysis are presented in the penultimate section. Finally, a strong case is made for the Innovation Systems approach in the concluding section.

Role of NGOs in agriculture development

As economic reform and liberalization saw the Government vacating several areas to let private sector entrepreneurship flourish and contribute to the high growth rate of the economy in recent years, a similar paradigm shift is needed to transform NGOs from their dependence on said and grans from within and outside for transforming the rural scenario in the country.

This is sought to be achieved for the NGOs by engaging them in micro-finance, micro insurance, and micro entrepreneurship activities for the overall development of the rural areas and to promote the welfare of the people of rural India. Hereunder an attempt is made to outline the role played by some of the NGOs for development agriculture and also the farming community in the district.

Rural Development Trust (RDT)

India is considered to be the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change. In Anantapuramu district, wherein 75 per cent of the population live in rural areas and 80 per cent of all workers are engaged in agriculture. This poses a direct threat to the survival of thousands of workers who depend on the weather conditions and water availability. Due to the lack of sufficient rain and its changing pattern (average annual rainfall of 535 mm) as well as waning forest cover, the ground water has been depleting year after year in the district, and forcing thousands of agricultural labourerinto seasonal migration or into leaving the lands uncultivated.

Water preservation and responsible consumption: Through the construction of 13 percolation tanks and 20 Check Dams enables to promote the conservation of rainwater for domestic consumption as well

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as for crops and to grow fodder for the cattle. The construction of these infrastructures is done in co-ordination with the 179 ecology development committees and carried out by locally available masons and materials. During 2021-22, the RDT support as many as 2253 farmers from Rayalaseema area shifted to drip and micro irrigation system.

Environment Regeneration activities

Anantapuramu district forest and trees cover at about 13.5 per cent, still far from the country's forest policy targeted at 33 per cent. Afforestation and conservation offer watershed protection, prevent soil erosion and mitigate climate change. For this purpose, 4,03,247 plants have been dibbled during year 2021-22 for afforestation purposes through a massive plantation campaign. An awareness campaign was also conducted celebrating international days and essay competitions for children in the villages.

Agriculture, food security and diversified livelihoods

In order to promote food security, reduce rural migration and ensure economic stability for the families living in rural areas, RDT supports farmers to access diversified livelihoods programmes and promotes crop diversification and rotation. During 2021-22, 1,555 farmers have shifted from groundnut mono-cropping to diversified crops, 1,157 women farmers joined the livelihood programs and 4,08,737 fruits tress were distributed with a double goal to generate permanent income and to contribute to fight out global warming.

Land development

RDT supports farmers to carry outland development activities to prevent soil erosion and to increase its fertility. During 2021-22, as many as 1,433 families completed the boulder clearance in 5,942 acres in 28 villages while 625 farmers have been actively involved in border bunds tasks and 390 farmers have used tank silt application in 1,388 acres of land. All these activities enabled to protect the top soil of the land, increase its water retaining capacity and improve its productivity.

Research Gaps

The studies outside India have identified farming as a high stress profession that is associated with a higher suicide rate than the general population. This is particularly true among small scale farmers and after periods of economic distress. Their review claims a wide range of reasons behind farmer's suicide globally including mental health issues, physical environment, family problems, economic stress and uncertainties. The studies not concentrated on the measures takes or to be taken for the prevention of farmer's suicides. The literature which addresses farmer suicides in India is focused mostly on listing socio-economic causes and state- level policy recommendations rather than addressing the mechanisms behind the rise in suicides. The Indian studies reviewed above were made during the crisis period and were neither intensive nor extensive and were made to grasp the crux of the crisis and to tenable the government to rush with intervention to stem the problem. Some studies examined relatively smaller samplers and brought out generalizations. The very fact occurrence of farmers' suicides even now, even after these studies and interventions, only pointed that these studies had not grasped through reality of farmers' suicide in its totality and the governmental interventions that were initiated had not stemmed the suicides. These studies have also not gone into the issue of how the families of the farmers are coping up with suicides of their bread winners. Any effective intervention should not only try to prevent any further suicide among the farmers and also suicides among the family members of the farmers. In a country, where more than 70 per cent of the population, are dependent on agriculture, suicide of the farmers cannot be ignored as individual's response to distress. Looking large in the coming decades is the agriculture running into much more deeper crises owing to economic and ecological factors.Therefore, there is a dire need for a deeper understanding of the suicides of the farmers and also

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the coping up mechanisms of the families of the farmers. Hence, the present study is focusing on only groundnut farmers and impact of NGOs on them inAnantapuramu district.

Objectives of the Study: The following are the objectives of the present study.

1. To study the importance of agriculture in Indian economy
2. To analyse the important role of Non-Governmental Organisations for development of ground nut farmers

Sample Design

For an indepth study on the role of central and state governments to mitigate farmer's suicides multi-stage random sampling method was followed. In the first stage, four drought ridden revenue divisions were selected in Anantapuramu district of Rayalaseema Region. In the second stage the small, medium and big farmer's family members who have cultivated groundnut crop beenwere selected on the basis of landholdings of deceased/victim farmers. In third stage it is decided to select 140 small, 120 medium and 100 large farmers from the Anantapuramudistrict. In this study, the researcher has distributed 400 interview schedules, but all interview schedule does not provide adequate data (inadequate data). Hence, the researcher has confine 360 sample from the study area.

Relevance of the Study

A large number of cases of farmers' suicides have been reported in Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema region in particular over the last decades. These suicides are considered to be symbolic evidence of the deeper agrarian crisis. Many factors have been attributed for this case. Most prominent ones are growing indebtedness, crop failure, drought etc. These have been coupled with socio-psychological problems like break-up of joint family system etc. The governments of the day have accepted occurrence of farmers' suicides as a fact. In fact, the government of Andhra Pradesh from 2004 onwards declares as special package to the bereaved farmer's families. But these packages and other initiates taken by the Central and State Governments failed to arrest the ever-increasing suicides of farmers in the study area. These issues are very much pertinent for evolving suitable agrarian policy. Farmers' suicides are not isolated cases of deaths by individuals but symptoms of larger agrarian crisis, which need to be addressed urgently. Hence, present paper is highlighted for the role of NGOs on development of ground nut farmers in the study area.

Sources of Data

Primary Data

For evaluating the specific objectives of the study, necessary primary data have been obtained from the families selected suicide farmers, through personal interviews with the help of well-structured interview schedule. The data collected from the respondents includes general information about suicide farmers, their resources position, land holding, cropping pattern, debt condition, sources of income, asset position, sources of credit, purpose of credit, mental status of person, addictions, if any, reasons for suicide and any other information family wished to share etc. The researcher has interacted with the next of kin of the deceased in the family and also other members of the family. The method of personal interview has adopted to ensure that the data obtained from the respondents were relevant, comprehensive and reasonably correct and precise.

Secondary Date

Secondary data on the number of suicide cases in the districts have collected from the District Collectorate and Office of the Joint Director of Agriculture Anantapuramu district. The data relating to total number of cases reported, cases eligible for compensation and actual compensation paid were

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collected from National Crime Records Bureau, New Delhi. Data was also collected from periodicals, published and unpublished theses, from various libraries of Universities, Dailies, and Official websites which are related to agriculture.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of achieving the specific objectives of the proposed study the data collected subjected to the statistical analysis. For this purpose, tabular presentation with averages and percentages etc., employed to present the data regarding demographic features, socio-economic profile, cropping systems, costs and returns of the farmers. The collected data were presented in tabular form to facilitate easy comparison. Similarly, data pertaining to different sources of income also was computed by tabular method.

Table 1: Opinion of The Respondents on Ngos Role In Development of Ground Nut Farmers In The Study Area N=360

S.No	Aspects of development	Frequency	%
1	Enhancement of livelihood	312	86.67
2	Conservation	295	81.94
3	Sustainable production	332	88.85

Source: Data collected compiled from the field survey

The researcher has raised a question to the farmers belonging to suicide families regarding the role of Non-governmental Organisations for development of ground nut farmers in the study area. It can be found from the respondents that as many as 86.67 per cent stated that the RDT NOG has been concentrating on enhancement of livelihood of the ground nut farmers and 81.94 per cent stated that the NGO has been striving in the were expressed their opinion that how to conservation of all components in the process of cultivation.Similarly, 88.85 per cent of the respondents stated that the NGOs helped them in getting more production over the years consistently.

Table 2: Opinion of The Respondents on Various Programs of Ngos In Development of Ground Nut Farmers In The Study Area N=360

S.No	Programmes	Frequency	%
1	Training farmers	356	98.88
2	Skill development	251	69.72
3	Digital marketing of products	156	43.33
4	Creating awareness	298	82.77

Source: Data collected compiled from the field survey

The researcher has raised a question and sought opinion of the respondents under the study on various programmesconducted by NGOs aiming to empower the ground nut farmers in the study area. The NGOs organized various activities like (a) training farmers, (b) Skill development (c) Digital marketing of products and (d) Creating awareness etc. According to these programmes, majority of the sample respondentsopined that training programme is useful to them and enabled them in increasing productivity. It can also be found that 98.88 per cent, 82.77 per cent of the sample respondents and expressed that the NGO has initiated and conducted various awareness programmes on the development of agriculture and agricultural productivity, 69.72 per cent of the respondents stated that the NGOs have been providing skill development programme while doing cultivating by the ground nut farmers. It is also observed that 43.33 per cent of the respondent that NGO willing to provide awareness programmes on the digital marketing training programme to the rural farmers in the study area.

Table 3: Satisfaction Levels of Groundnut Victim Families on Ngos Activities For Development

S.No	Satisfaction Level	Frequency	% To Total	Weighted Average
1	High satisfaction	270	75.00	0.23
2	Low satisfaction	58	16.00	
3	No response	32	09.00	
	Total	360	100	

Source: Data collected compiled from the field survey

Satisfaction levels of the groundnut victim family members on Non-Governmental Organisationin the study area is shown in table 4.24. especially in drought prone area like Anantapuramu farmers have been facing number of problems including raining, finance, temperature, and seeds. For removal of these problems government and non governmental organization have been implementing various schemes and programmes for the development of the farmers in Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. Apart from this, the role of NGOs on development of farmers especially ground nut farmers and collected opinion and discussed hereunder. In this regard, the sample respondents have highly satisfied with 75 percent on NGOs. 16% of the respondents have low satisfied and 9 percent have stated neutral opinion.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), particularly the Rural Development Trust (RDT), have been playing a significant role in the development of groundnut farmers in Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. The study reveals that NGOs have contributed substantially to the enhancement of farmers' livelihoods, conservation of natural resources, sustainable agricultural production, and improvement of farming skills. The survey results indicate that 86.67 per cent of the respondents acknowledged the role of NGOs in livelihood enhancement, 81.94 per cent expressed their opinion on conservation activities, and 88.85 per cent recognized their contribution towards sustainable agricultural production. Further, 98.88 per cent of the respondents appreciated the training programmes, while 82.77 per cent recognized the importance of awareness programmes conducted by NGOs. The satisfaction analysis also reveals that 75 per cent of the respondents expressed high satisfaction with the activities undertaken by NGOs. These findings demonstrate that NGOs act as an important link between farmers, government institutions and agricultural development agencies by providing training, skill development, water conservation facilities, land development support, crop diversification and livelihood opportunities. However, greater attention should be given to digital marketing, access to institutional credit, modern agricultural technologies, crop insurance and climate-resilient farming practices. Therefore, effective coordination among NGOs, government departments and farmers' organisations is essential to improve agricultural productivity, strengthen the economic conditions of groundnut farmers and ensure sustainable rural development in the drought-prone Anantapuramu district.

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