

**Communication and marketing suggestions expressed by
the Paddy growers in Thanjavur District:
An approach towards food security**

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the areas where communication and marketing behaviour could be improved by getting the suggestions expressed by the Paddy Growers. The present study was taken up in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu. The district has fourteen blocks and out of fourteen blocks one block was objectively selected for the study. Orathanadu block is the high potential block in paddy production. A well-structured, pre – tested interview schedule was used to gather the data from the respondents. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the respondents of sample size of 300 and percentage analysis was carried out. The results revealed that there are eleven suggestions given by the farmers. Acceptable percentage of moisture content (95.00 per cent), Seniority in Procurement Schedule (92.66 per cent), Storage godowns must be constructed and made available to farmers (91.00 per cent), Transport facilities made available from Direct Procurement Centres (DPC's) to the farmer's field (88.33 per cent), Timely Procurement of produce (83.33 per cent), Market intelligence services must be provided (81.66 per cent), Open storage points to be avoided in low lying areas and places adjacent to river beds (77.00 per cent), Man power to be increased in Direct Procurement Centres (76.00 per cent), Provision of good remunerative price (75.00 per cent), Supply of adequate storage materials to be ensured well in advance (73.00 per cent), Hustle – free paddy movement chain from Direct Procurement Centre to Main Godown (54.00 per cent) Through this study farmers have expressed their valuable suggestions to improve the communication and marketing behaviour which will spur Paddy Cultivation to meet the food security. It's a bottom-up approach with ground level realism.

Key words : Farmers, communication, Marketing, Minimum support price, Paddy growers.

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Thanjavur, the food basket of Tamilnadu is primarily an agrarian district. Agriculture plays an important role in the culture and economy of Thanjavur district. The farmers of this region, despite the luring opportunities of modern world and the Overseas, choose to remain in their home towns, villages and raise paddy to feed the millions in the state. The national commission on agriculture estimated that India's food grain requirement by the end of the century will be around 225 million tonnes⁴. In recent studies researchers have discussed only about the constraints in communication and marketing behaviour of paddy farmers. So, the purpose of this study is to bring out the suggestions expressed by the farmers to overcome the communication and marketing constraints. So that it could help the policy makers to evolve an implementable action plan which is in need of the hour. The main limitation of the present study arises from the fact that the suggestions were expressed by the paddy growers experiences and not supported by any records. Above 32.7 per cent Indian labour force had been associated with Rural Area³. The rural folks of the region, continue with agriculture as their prominent-vocation inspite of incurring losses due to the vagaries of monsoon, non- remunerative prices for their produce, inadequate storage. The issues in storage of harvested produce and its transportation, furthermore makes it a favourable shift to buyers' market⁷. Communication is the process of exchanging/transmitting news, views, information and gain common understanding¹. In the present scenario, communication is considered to be a powerful tool in all spheres of activity. Communication is a social process and it is found to be common for all the people in the society irrespective of the literacy level.

In the process of communication, the final and important element is audience response, so the present study gives an exposure to the personalized suggestions given by the farmers. Marketing is a systematic process of reaching the agricultural produce from cultivable land to the people for consumption. It is the process of combination of both agriculture and marketing. The lacuna still exists in analyzing the constraints faced by the growers in communication and marketing process. Hence, contemplated discussion is needed with the redressal committee formed by the Agriculture Department to sort out the limitations on communication and marketing channels. Taking into consideration of the contacted respondents in the selected area of the study, Communication and marketing of the agriculture produce is in a chain link starting from sowing to till marketing. By keeping the above view, the communication and marketing suggestions of paddy growers in Thanjavur district was studied.

Research gap :

The primary objective of this proposed study was done to identify and collect valuable suggestions offered by the respondents on grounds of communication and marketing behaviour. This study would help the administrative resource persons in getting the real time response from the paddy growers to revamp the communication and marketing channels.

Research methodology :

The research study was conducted in Thanjavur District of Tamilnadu. The district has fourteen blocks and out of fourteen blocks

one block was purposively selected for the study. Orathandu block is the high potential block in paddy production in Thanjavur district. The research study was undertaken to analyze the communication and marketing suggestion of paddy growers.

A well-structured, pre-tested interview schedule was used to gather the data from the respondents. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the respondents of sample size 300 during the period 2021 – 2022. Mean percentage analysis was carried

out. For each question the scores are allotted and the scores obtained by the respondents are summed up. The respondents are categorized into low, medium and high by using cumulative frequency. Further, the percentage analysis was worked out for the suggestions expressed by the respondents in communication and marketing behaviour of paddy growers.

Totally eleven suggestions expressed by the respondents are presented in the following table-1.

Table-1. Suggestions expressed by the respondents in communication and marketing behaviour

(n=300)

S.No	Suggestions	Number	Percentage
1	Acceptable percentage of moisture content.	285	95.00
2	Seniority in procurement schedule	278	92.66
3	Storage godowns must be constructed and made available to farmers.	273	91.00
4	Transport facilities made available from Direct Procurement Centres(DPC's)to the farmer's field.	265	88.33
5	Timely procurement of produce	250	83.33
6	Market intelligence services must be provided	245	81.66
7	Open storage points to be avoided in low lying areas and places adjacent to river beds	231	77.00
8	Man power to be increased in Direct procurement centres	228	76.00
9	Provision of good remunerative price.	225	75.00
10	Supply of adequate storage materials to be ensured well in advance.	219	73.00
11	Hustle – free paddy movement chain from Direct procurement centre to Main Godown	162	54.00

From Table-1 it could be inferred that, Acceptable percentage of moisture content (95.00 per cent) as the first and foremost suggestion given by the respondents. Though the farmers demanded the government to procure the paddy with higher moisture content during the procurement in monsoon period. But the government is inclined to consider the request of the farmers since higher moisture content would lead to fungal formation.

Seniority in Procurement schedule (92.66 per cent) was the second suggestion given by the respondents. The government is following the practice of registering the names of farmers in consonance with date and extent of cultivation and projected production per acre. However, the farmers have felt that the seniority must be strictly followed without any overlapping by the intervention of paddy merchants by producing false documents.

Storage godowns must be constructed and made available to farmers (91.00 per cent) as the third suggestion from the respondents. The government has to take necessary actions in constructing proper infrastructure facilities in the process of procurement of paddy. Thanjavur district is located in the delta region of Tamilnadu and the procurement process in monsoon season is a risk-taking work. Similar findings were reported by Prusty *et al.*,⁸

Transport facilities can be made available from Direct procurement centres to the farmer's field (88.33 per cent) was given as a suggestion by the farmers. The transportation of produce from the field to Direct procurement centres was done by farmers. But the farmers felt that if the transportation

was arranged from their field to Direct procurement centres it would be beneficial as it will cut down the transportation cost. Similar findings were also reported by Phenica *et al.*,⁶

Timely Procurement of produce (83.33 per cent) is the suggestion expressed by the farmers. Even though the procurement was done based on seniority basis, farmers expect their produce should be procured on time without any further delay. Because one cannot store all the produce in his home, due to lack of storage structures.

Market intelligence services must be provided (81.66 per cent) was the suggestion given by the respondents. To ensure the availability of food grains to the weaker sections at affordable price and the Minimum Support Price was normally announced before the harvesting season based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agriculture costs and Prices (CACP). The government has to make an advance announcement about the market price through television, radio and other means. So as to ensure transparency in price and the farmers will have clear knowledge about the Minimum support price of each season. This finding is along with the findings of Tengli & Sharma.⁹

Open storage points to be avoided in low lying areas and places adjacent to river beds (77.00 per cent) is the suggestion expressed by the farmers. Open storage points must be ensured with safe storage materials during the monsoon season and also open storage points nearer to the river beds to be avoided as these places are prone to high wind pressure during cyclone.

Man power to be increased in Direct procurement centres (76.00 per cent) is the suggestion given by the respondents. The farmers expressed that there is inadequate man power in the Direct procurement centres to carry out the procedures during procurement. Moreover, there is a need to take the helping hands of the fellow farmers. So, they felt that enough man power should be allotted by the government in each Direct procurement centres during procurement period.

Provision of good remunerative price (75.00 per cent) has been expressed by the farmers. Most of the respondents have emphasized the need for enhancement of Minimum support price, since the cost of seed, fertilizer, pesticides are all on the increasing side and also to look after the essential expenditure towards education and health care of the family members. They also requested the government to fix the Minimum support price for the year starting from September to August instead of October to September. Since maximum percentage of harvest operation is carried out in this area during the month of September. This is in line with the findings of Narayana *et al.*,⁵

Supply of adequate storage materials to be ensured well in advance (73.00 per cent) has been expressed as the suggestion by the respondents. Respondents are of the opinion that they have no source to store the paddy other than the gunny bags supplied by the Direct procurement centre. In certain occasions they will have to wait for long time to get the gunny bags to move the paddy from the field to the Direct procurement centre. Therefore, they have suggested the availability of gunny bags on permanent basis without

causing any inconvenience to the farmers. They have also suggested the timely availability of gunny bags based on procurement plan.

Hustle – free paddy movement chain from Direct procurement centre to main godown (54.00 per cent) is the suggestion given by the farmers. The farmers viewed that the procurement is not carried out in Direct procurement centre due to lack of enough space and there is weak link in the chain of paddy movement from Direct procurement centre to main godown/ hulling mills. During monsoon season there is always huge stock of Paddy in Direct procurement centres, with the result procurement could not be carried out as per the schedule. If the Hustle-free movement is ensured, procurement would be carried out and the paddy farmers will not be put in stressful situation.

The results revealed that Acceptable percentage of moisture content, Seniority in Procurement Schedule, Storage godowns must be constructed and made available to farmers, Transport facilities can be made available from Direct procurement centres to the farmer's field, Timely procurement of produce, market intelligence services must be provided, Open storage points to be avoided in low lying areas and places adjacent to river beds are the major suggestions expressed by the farmers. The suggestions listed out can be fine-tuned in relation to the procurement system in the rice-barn of Tamilnadu-the prestigious Thanjavur district, for the benefit of paddy growers are sure to go a long way in addressing the issues/ challenges faced by them and getting the real-time response will pave the way for better agriculture in future.

1. The suggestions enumerated on the basis of fieldwork and thorough bred research would definitely plug the shortcomings and loopholes in the system of procurement currently in practice.

2. The moisture content of paddy still needs to be discussed in the decision-making board of government side as farmers keep on making demand to increase the percentage of moisture content during the time of unusual downpour of rain.

3. Construction of more storage godowns and avoidance of storage points in low lying areas or nearer to riverbeds will strengthen the quality of storage.

4. Timely procurement directly from farmers' fields would help to eliminate the hardships of farmers in their marketing efforts.

5. Marketing intelligence is yet another area that needs an attention and improvement. This schedule of suggestions has to be looked into, assessed and acted upon in the overall interests of the farmers and this would ultimately improve the communication and marketing behaviour. Since agriculture still and will ever remain as the backbone of the Indian economy. Food security is a multifaceted concept and it can be achieved at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels, when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to adequate, safe and nutritious food to fulfill their intake needs and food choices for an active and healthy life². The above suggestions have to be taken into consideration for ensuring food security which is the basic and fundamental need of the people. Ensuring food availability, accessibility and affordability

to the entire population is a great task but it has to be accomplished by a target driven approach so as to attain the objective of hunger free, malnutrition – free India.

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