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Perception and utilization of Rythu Seva Kendra (RSK) services by the farmers of Eluru district

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Abstract

This study was conducted in Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh during the year 2024 which examines farmers profile, perception and utilization of Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs), formerly RYTHU SEVA KENDRAS, in Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh. A well-structured interview schedule which has undergone pre-testing was designed in the light of objectives and data was collected from the 60 farmers selected following random sampling technique in three mandals and six villages of Eluru district. For the present study *ex-post facto* research design was followed as the independent variables selected for the study were already existed. Descriptive and other appropriate statistical tools were used for data analysis. The respondents are predominantly middle-aged, small- and medium-landholders, with low education and limited formal extension contact, relying heavily on input dealers and informal networks. Findings reveal that 75% of farmers have a medium level of perception towards RSK services, while only 10% perceive them as highly effective and 15% as low. Similarly, 78% report medium utilization, 7% high utilization, and 15% low utilization, indicating that RSKs function mainly as input-distribution points rather than full-service hubs. Major constraints include non-procurement of entire produce, lack of credit-based inputs, no individual machinery supply, absence of cold storages, and limited livestock-related services. Farmers' suggestions emphasise need for assured procurement, credit-linked inputs, storage, and timely information and payments.

Keywords: Perception, utilization, Rythu Seva Kendra, constraints, suggestions

Introduction

Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs), (earlier RYTHU SEVA KENDRAS) were launched on 30 May 2020 by the Government of Andhra Pradesh as a flagship institution-building initiative aimed at transforming the state's agrarian economy by bringing comprehensive support services to farmers at the village level. In November 2024, the Andhra Pradesh government initiated the modification of Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) by renaming them Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs). This change was formalized through The Andhra Pradesh Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which substitutes the

term "RBKs" with "RSKs" across existing legislative frameworks. Positioned as "one-stop shops," RSKs integrated the supply of government-certified agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, cattle and fish feeds, farm machinery) with knowledge-based advisory services, technology dissemination, and linkages to public-distribution systems and post-harvest schemes (Indian Express, 2022) ^[10]. The RYTHU SEVA KENDRAS (RSKs) is one of the six initiatives nominated for awards by the United Nations Organizations (UNO), receiving international recognition and enhancing the pride of the nation. The initiative has revolutionized the agriculture

sector by meeting farmers' needs from seed to sale. (Anuhya et. al, 2022) ^[1]. To keep this in view, an extension study has been conducted on Farmers perception and utilization of RSK services in the Eluru district.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the profile characteristics of farmers
2. To study the perception and utilization of RSKs services
3. To study the constraints faced by farmers in reach of RSKs services
4. To elicit the suggestions of farmers for strengthening of RSKs

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted during 2024 in Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh. A total of 3 mandals were selected randomly i.e., Tadepalligudem, Bhimavaram and Akiveedu. A total of 6 villages has been selected from those 3 mandals i.e. Pentapadu, T.P. Gudem, Athili, Rayalam, Akiveedu and Undi. Respondents are selected following random sampling technique resulting in a total sample size of 60 farmers. For the study *ex-post facto* research design was used. Data was collected through personal interviews, organized, and analyzed to determine the results and draw conclusions. The analysis employed various statistical tools such as frequency distributions, percentage, Standard Deviation and was used.

Results and Discussion

1. Profile characteristics of Farmers

The profile of respondents in the study reveals important characteristics that shape their interaction with Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs) and their overall capacity to utilize agricultural information and services. Table 1 reveals that a majority of the respondents (58.34%) belong to the middle-age group (36–54 years), indicating an active and experienced farming cohort that is likely to be more receptive to modern inputs and advisory services. Only 16.66% are young farmers below 35 years, while 25.00% are above 55 years, suggesting a relatively mature age structure with limited youthful participation in farming in the study area.

Majority (60%) of the respondents have primary or less education (illiterate + primary), while only 17% are literates with high school, intermediate/polytechnic, or graduate level, which may limit their ability to fully comprehend and utilize technical information and digital platforms associated with RSKs. (Naik et al, 2024) ^[7].

A striking 90% of the respondents are engaged in full-time farming, which underlines that agriculture is the dominant occupation and the main source of livelihood in the study area. Only 10% combine farming with other business

activities, indicating limited diversification in income sources. In terms of caste, 43% belong to Other Communities (OC), 35% to Backward Classes (BC), and 22% to Scheduled Castes (SC), with no Scheduled Tribe (ST) respondents; this shows a largely agrarian and socially heterogeneous population where service-delivery through RSKs must address differential social-status constraints. Regarding landholding, 72% fall in the small and medium categories (up to rupees one lakh), while 28% are relatively larger landholders, implying that the majority are small and marginal farmers who are often more dependent on institutional support and input subsidies.

More than half of the respondents (58.00%) have 10–20 years of farming experience, and an additional 37.00% have more than 20 years, indicating a well-experienced farming population that can assess and compare different sources of information and service providers, including RSKs. Only 5.00% have less than 10 years of experience, which may reflect limited entry of new or young farmers into agriculture. Family structure is predominantly nuclear (92.00%), which suggests faster decision-making at the household level but possibly limited traditional support networks compared with joint families (8.00%). The high proportion of nuclear families may also influence the pattern of information-seeking and extension-contact behaviour (Naik et al, 2024) ^[7].

Input dealers are the most important source of information (30.00%), followed by MPEOs/VAAAs (27.00%) and farmers/others (23.00%), indicating that private and peer-based channels dominate over formal government extension channels such as AO (18.00%) and scientists (2.00%). This highlights that extension contact through official machinery is relatively weak, and a large share of knowledge and input supply is mediated through dealers and informal networks. With respect to extension contact, only 13.00% of respondents reported frequent contact, while 50.00% contact extension agents sometimes and 37.00% rarely, suggesting limited and irregular interaction with formal extension, which may constrain the effective utilization of RSK services.

The vast majority of respondents (93.00%) have no membership in any organization, indicating low social participation and possibly limited collective action or group-based learning among farmers in the study area. Only 7.00% are members of any association, which may weaken their bargaining power and access to collective information, training, and schemes. Family size is largely small or medium, as 90.00% of the households have fewer than five members, which may affect labour availability and resource-mobilization capacity, thereby influencing both participation in RSK-related activities and the intensity of service utilization.

Table 1: Distribution of farmers by profile characteristics

S. No.	Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	<35 yrs (Young age)	10	16.66
		36-54 yrs (Middle Age)	35	58.34
		> 55yrs (Old age)	15	25.00
2.	Education	Illiterate	12	20.00
		Primary	24	40.00
		Highschool	14	23.00

		Inter/poly	03	5.00
		UG	06	10.00
		PG	01	2.00
3.	Occupation	Farming	54	90.00
		Farming+ Business	06	10.00
4.	Caste	ST	00	00.00
		SC	13	22.00
		BC	21	35.00
		OC	26	43.00
5.	Farming Experience (Years)	<10	03	5.00
		10-20	32	58.00
		21-30	13	22.00
		>30	09	15.00
6.	Land Holding (ha)	<50,000	19	32.00
		50,000-1,00,000	24	40.00
		>1,00,000	17	28.00
7.	Source of Information	Scientists	01	2.00
		ADA	00	00.00
		AO	11	18.00
		AEO	00	00.00
		MPEOs/ VAAs	16	27.00
		Farmers/Others	14	23.00
		Input dealers	18	30.00
8.	Family size	< 5 Members	54	90.00
		>5 Members	06	10.00
9.	Family type	Joint	05	8.00
		Nucleus	55	92.00
10.	Social participation	No membership	56	93.00
		Membership	04	7.00
11.	Extension Contact	Frequently	08	13.00
		Sometimes	30	50.00
		Rarely	22	37.00

2. Perception and Utilization of RSKs Services

The table 2 and figure 1 on level of perception of Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs) services reveals that the majority of the respondents hold a medium level of perception, while only a small proportion have a high or low perception. A striking 75.00% of the respondents fall in the medium level of perception, indicating that most farmers have a moderately positive view of the services provided by RSKs. This suggests that while RSKs are recognized as a useful institutional support mechanism, there is still scope for improvement in service quality, awareness generation, and timely delivery.

Only 10.00% of the respondents show a high level of perception, implying that a limited segment of farmers perceives the RSK services as very effective, reliable, and beneficial to their farming operations. On the other hand, 15.00% of the respondents are in the low level of perception, indicating that a sizeable minority remain dissatisfied or unconvinced about the utility of RSK services due to limited awareness, poor accessibility, perceived service delays, or lack of trust in the system, which can hinder their effective utilization of RSK facilities. (Mathew, 2024)

Table 2: Perception of farmers towards RSKs services (n=60)

S. No.	Level of Perception	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (<52.7)	09	15.00
2	Medium (52.7- 61.4)	45	75.00
3	High (>61.4)	06	10.00
	Total	60	100.00

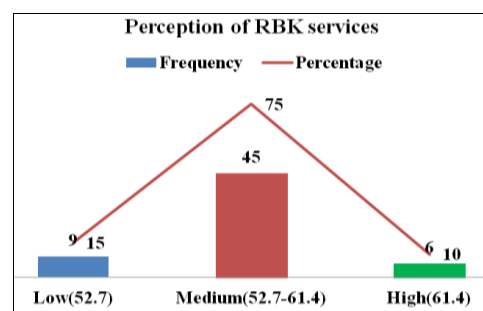


Fig 1: Perception of farmers towards RSKs services

The table 3 and figure 2 on level of utilization of Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs) services shows that the majority of respondents use these services only to a moderate extent, while a small proportion report either low or high utilization. A large majority of farmers (78.00%) fall under the medium level of utilization, indicating that they access RSK services but not intensively or comprehensively. Only 7.00% of respondents show a high level of utilization, which agrees with RSK-related studies where only about 10–15% of farmers were found to be intensive or high-level users of such institutional centres. This segment usually includes farmers who are better informed, more frequent visitors to RSKs, or those who actively participate in multiple schemes such as advisory meetings, soil–health services, and market linkages. (Rao, *et al*, 2024) [8].

At the same time, 15.00% of the respondents exhibit a low level of utilization, farmers rarely or minimally used extension or input-delivery facilities due to factors such as

inadequate awareness, distance, or lack of trust. Low utilization often goes hand-in-hand with low perception and limited participation, reinforcing the need for targeted orientation, awareness campaigns, and improved last-mile outreach.

Table 3: Utilization of RSKs services by farmers (n=60)

S. No.	Level of Utilization	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (<34.9)	09	15.00
2	Medium (34.9- 41.3)	47	78.00
3	High (>41.3)	04	7.00
	Total	60	100.00

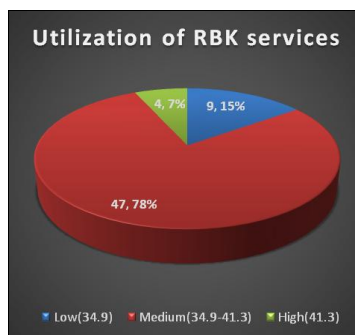


Fig 2: Utilization of RSKs services by farmers

3. Constraints faced by farmers in reach of RSKs services

Table 4 depicts the constraints faced by farmers in availing Rythu Seva Kendra (RSK) services. Non-procurement of the entire produce at RSKs, non-availability of inputs on credit basis, non-supply of farm machinery/implements/equipment on individual basis, absence of cold storages/godowns for storage of inputs and produce and non-availability of information on crop-loan eligibility from bank mitra/representative at RSK were each reported by 100% of respondents (Rank I). Disruptions in selling paddy at Paddy Procurement Centres (PPC) at RSKs along with late payments for marketed produce were reported by 82% of farmers (Rank II), while non-availability of micro-nutrients at RSK was cited by 70% (Rank III). Non-availability of cattle feed, non-issuance of animal health cards, and absence of milk collection centres at RSKs were reported by 57% (Rank IV) and non-availability of inputs on subsidy basis at RSK was mentioned by 43% (Rank V). Overall, these findings indicate that RSKs are functioning mainly as input-distribution points rather than as integrated service hubs, with limited support in procurement, credit, storage, information, and livestock-dairy services, thereby constraining their effective utilization by farmers. (Kishore *et al*, 2025)

Table 4: Constraints faced by farmers in reach of RSKs services (n=60)

S. No.	Constraints faced by the farmers in reach of RSK services	Yes		No		Rank	Total
		F	%	F	%		
1	Non procurement of whole produce in RSKs	60	100	0	0	I	60
2	Inputs are not providing on credit basis	60	100	0	0	I	60
3	Non supply of farm machinery/implements/equipment on individual basis	60	100	0	0	I	60
4	No cold storages/godowns for storage of inputs/produce	60	100	0	0	I	60
5	Non availability of information on crop loan eligibility from bank mitra/representative at RSK	60	100	0	0	I	60
6	Disrupts faced by the farmers in selling of produce at Paddy Procurement Centres (PPC) at RSKs and late payments for the marketed product	49	82	11	18	II	60
7	Non availability of micro nutrients at RSK	42	70	18	30	III	60
8	Non availability of cattle feed, non issue of animal health cards and milk collection centres at at RSKs	34	57	26	43	IV	60
9	Non availability of inputs on subsidy basis at RSKs	26	43	34	57	V	60

4. Suggestions of farmers for strengthening of RSKs

Table 5 represents the suggestions provided by farmers for strengthening Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs). All 60 respondents (100%; Rank I) recommended that RSKs procure the entire produce from farmers, provide inputs on credit by linking Paddy Procurement Centres at RSK level, supply farm machinery and implements on individual basis, establish cold storages and godowns near RSKs for storage of inputs and perishable products, and ensure timely dissemination of information on crop loans and other bank benefits through bank representatives at RSKs. These suggestions highlight that farmers view RSKs primarily as a missing link in the value chain where procurement, credit, storage, and information services are expected to converge.

In addition, 82% of farmers (Rank II) emphasized that money for marketed produce should be disbursed at the earliest possible date, underlining the need for prompt and transparent payment mechanisms to build trust in RSKs. About 43% of respondents (Rank III) suggested that subsidized supply of tarpaulin, oil engines, sprayers, and other farm machinery should be strengthened. Overall, the findings show that farmers want RSKs to function as full-fledged service hubs integrating assured procurement, credit-linked input supply, subsidized machinery, storage infrastructure, and timely information and payments, rather than as mere distribution centres, in order to enhance their effectiveness and utilization.(Haritha *et al*, 2023) ^[3].

Table 5: Suggestions of farmers for strengthening of RSKs (n=60)

S. No.	Suggestions of the farmers for strengthening of RSKs	Yes		No		Rank	Total
		F	%	F	%		
1	Procurement of whole produce from the farmers by RSKs	60	100	0	0	I	60
2	To provide inputs on credit basis by linking PPC at RSK level	60	100	0	0	I	60
3	To provide farm machinery/farm implements on individual basis	60	100	0	0	I	60
4	To make provisions for establishment of cold storages/godowns nearby RSKs for storage of inputs and especially for perishable products	60	100	0	0	I	60
5	Timely information on crop loans and other benefits issued by banks to the farmers should be provided by bank representative at RSKs	60	100	0	0	I	60
6	Money disbursement for the marketed produce to be made at an earliest possible date	49	82	11	18	II	60
7	To emphasize on supply of tarpaulin, oil engines, sprayers, farm machinery etc., on subsidy basis.	26	43	34	57	III	60

Conclusion

The study concludes that RSKs are perceived and utilised only moderately by farmers in Eluru district, despite their potential as one-stop service centres. The profile characteristics—low education, limited extension contact, and dependence on dealers—constrain awareness and trust in RSKs. Constraints such as absence of credit-based inputs, machinery, cold storage, and poor value-chain linkages push farmers to view RSKs primarily as input-distribution points rather than integrated service hubs. To enhance effectiveness, the study recommends strengthening awareness campaigns, ensuring timely procurement and payments, expanding credit-linked and machinery-support services, and integrating livestock and post-harvest facilities at RSKs so that they become full-fledged service platforms “from seed to sale” for small- and medium-scale farmers.

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