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SATISFACTION LEVELS OF GROUND NUT FARMERS ON GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMMES IN ANANTAPURAMU DISTRICT

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Abstract
Agriculture plays a significant role in the economic development and livelihood security of rural households in Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. Groundnut is one of the major commercial crops cultivated by farmers in the district, particularly under rain-fed conditions. However, groundnut farmers frequently face several challenges, including irregular rainfall, drought conditions, rising input costs, pest attacks, inadequate irrigation facilities, market fluctuations and indebtedness. To address these problems, the Central and State Governments have introduced various agricultural development programmes, subsidies, financial assistance, crop insurance schemes, irrigation facilities and farmer welfare initiatives. The present study aims to examine the satisfaction levels of groundnut farmers regarding the implementation and benefits of various governmental programmes in Anantapuramu district. It also focuses on farmers' awareness, accessibility, utilisation and perceptions of government support. The study highlights the importance of government interventions in improving agricultural productivity, reducing cultivation risks and strengthening the economic conditions of farmers. The findings are expected to provide useful insights into the effectiveness of existing agricultural programmes and suggest appropriate measures for improving their implementation and ensuring sustainable agricultural development in the study area.

Keywords: Groundnut Farmers, Governmental Programmes, Farmers' Satisfaction, Agricultural Development, Anantapuramu District.

Introduction

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy and provides livelihood opportunities to a significant proportion of the rural population. Among various agricultural crops, groundnut occupies an important position because of its economic value, nutritional importance and contribution to the oilseed industry. Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh is widely recognised for its groundnut cultivation, which is predominantly dependent on rainfall. The district experiences frequent droughts, irregular monsoons, inadequate irrigation facilities and fluctuations in agricultural production. These conditions create considerable uncertainty in the income and livelihood of groundnut farmers, particularly small and marginal farmers. Increasing costs of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, labour and other agricultural inputs further affect the profitability of groundnut cultivation. Therefore, government intervention is essential to protect farmers from agricultural risks, improve productivity and ensure economic stability in the rural farming community.

The Central and State Governments have introduced several programmes and welfare measures for the development of the agricultural sector and the improvement of farmers' living conditions. Important initiatives include financial assistance under PM-KISAN, crop insurance under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, soil health cards, subsidies for agricultural inputs, micro-irrigation facilities, crop diversification, agricultural extension services and support through Rythu Bharosa Kendras in Andhra Pradesh. These programmes aim to provide financial security, reduce cultivation risks, promote modern agricultural practices and improve farmers' income. However, the success of these programmes largely depends on farmers' awareness, accessibility, and timely delivery of benefits, transparency and effective implementation at the grassroots level. In this context, the present study

makes an attempt to assess the satisfaction levels of groundnut farmers regarding various governmental programmes in Anantapuramu district and to identify the major factors influencing their satisfaction. The study also seeks to offer suitable suggestions for strengthening government support and promoting sustainable agricultural development in the district.

Research gap

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 the coping up mechanisms of the families of the farmers. Hence, the present study is focusing on only groundnut farmers because of large size of the farmers in Anantapuramu district have been cultivating the commercial crop especially groundnut.

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

1. To identify the status of Indian agriculture in the world's economy and also study the initiatives of the Government (both Central and State) for the development of agriculture and farmers.
2. To know the status of suicides of farmers and also analyse the causes for their suicides.
3. To review and analyse the measures taken by the Government (both Central and State) to mitigate the incidence of suicides among the farmers.
4. To examine the impact of select groundnut farmers suicides on their families in the study area.
5. To offer suitable policy interventions and rehabitative measures to prevent suicides of farmers in general and groundnut farmers in particular.

Hypotheses

H_0: There is no significant effect on suicide of farmers with their debt position
H_0: There is no positive relationship between failure of governmental programmesand suicide 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 been were 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 Anantapuramu district. In this study, the researcher has distributed 400 interview schedules, but all interview schedules do 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, this topic was taken for study for an in-depth analysis and for formulating suitable policy measures.

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 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.

Overview of Finances

The Ministry of Agriculture allocated Rs 1, 25,036 crore in 2023-24, 5 per cent greater than the revised estimates for 2022-23. This is accounted for 2.8 per cent of the total Union Budget. The increase in expenditure is on account of marginal increase in the allocation for schemes such as Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (5 per cent) and the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (10 per cent).

Table: 1 Budget Allocation by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (in Rs crore) towards farmers' welfare and agriculture research

	21-22 Actuals	RE 22-23	BE 23-24	% change (RE to BE)
Farmers' Welfare	1,14,468	1,10,255	1,15,532	5%
Agriculture Research	8,368	8,659	9,504	10%
Ministry	**1,22,836**	**1,18,913**	**1,25,036**	**5%**

Sources: Demand for Grants 2023-24, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

About 77 per cent of the Ministry's estimated expenditure is allocated towards three schemes (Table 2). Allocation for Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), is the largest scheme under the Ministry and has remained the same as the revised estimates of 2022-23 at Rs 60,000 crore. Allocation was reduced from the actual expenditure of 2021-22 to budgeted expenditure for 2022-23.

Table 2: Budget Allocations by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' welfare towards Major Schemes (in Rs crores)

	Actuals 21-22	RE 22-23	BE 23-24	% change (BE over RE)
PM KISAN	66,825	60,000	60,000	0%
Interest Subsidy*	21,477	22,000	23,000	5%
Fasal Bima	13,549	12,376	13,625	10%

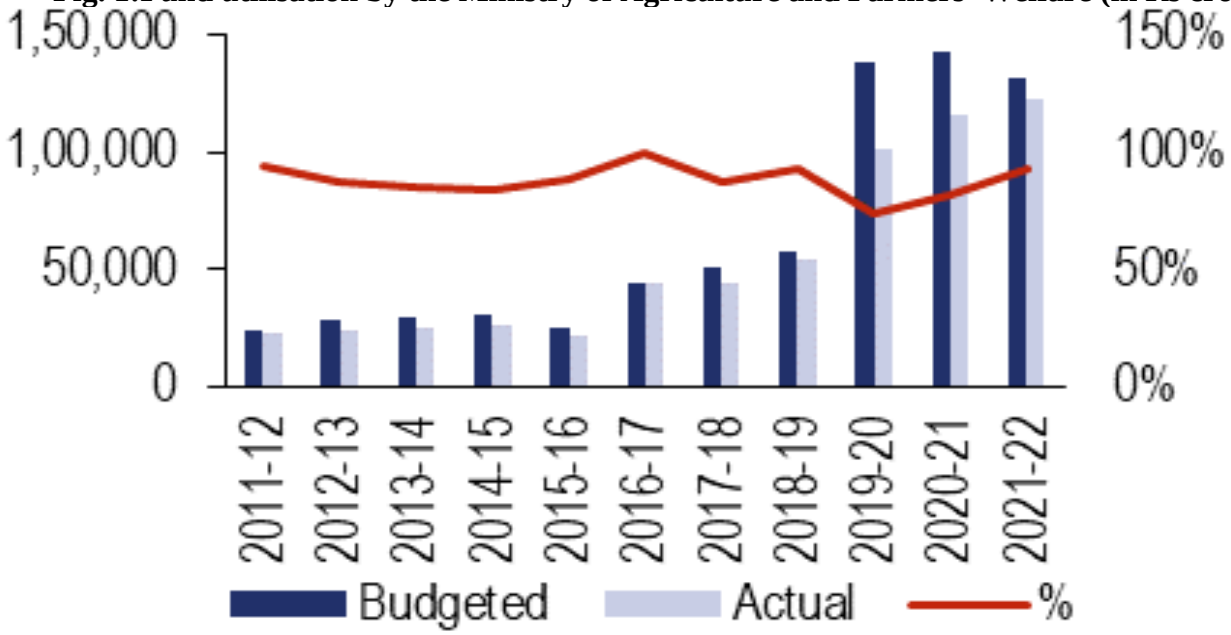
Note: Interest subsidy for short term credit to farmer's scheme was restructured in 2022 to the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme.

Sources: Demand for Grants 2023-24, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

Utilisation of Funds

In the past 10 years, fund utilisation of the Ministry has been above 70 per cent. The Ministry was able to utilise 100 per cent of the allocated funds in 2016-17. Allocation to the Ministry increased by 141 per cent in 2019-20 on account of PM-KISAN and 48 per cent of the allocation to the Ministry in 2023-24 is towards PM-KISAN. However, utilisation of funds reduced from 93 per cent in 2018-19 to 73 per cent in 2019-20. Utilisation was 93 per cent in 2021-22.

Fig. 1:Fund utilisation by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (in Rs crore)



Sources: Expenditure Budget for various years.

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) The scheme was launched in 2007 to promote comprehensive growth in agriculture and related sectors. It is a centrally funded initiative that allows states to select agricultural development projects according to their specific plans. In the 2022-23 budget, it was restructured to incorporate other initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojna-Per Drop More Crop, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna, National Project on Soil and Health Fertility, Rainfed Area Development and Climate Change, and the Sub-Mission on Agriculture Mechanization, which includes Crop Residue Management. For the fiscal year 2023-24, an allocation of Rs 7,150 has been designated under RKVY for distribution to states and Union Territories, representing a 2 percent increase from the revised estimates of 2022-23. From 2019-20 to 2021-22, projects totaling Rs 518 crore have been sanctioned across 18 states under this scheme.

Issues to Consider

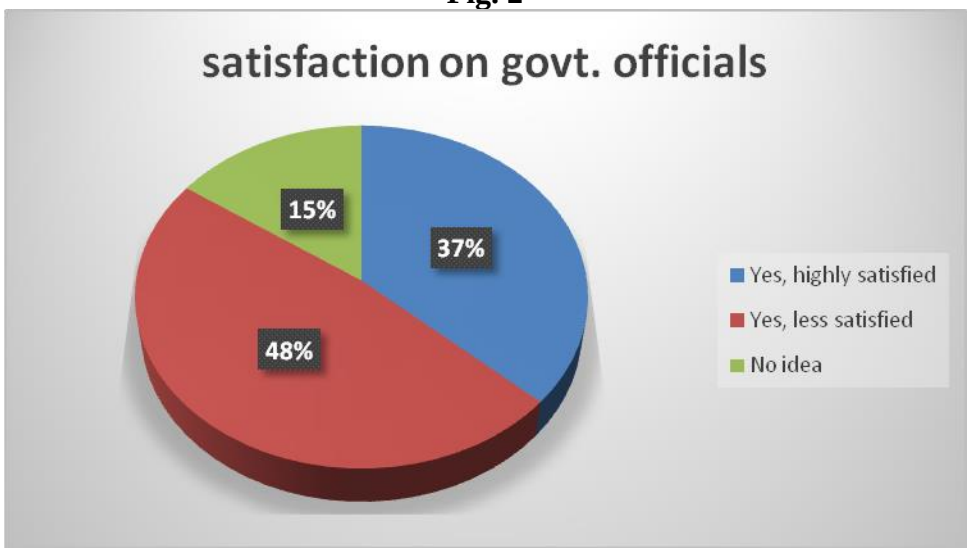
The agricultural sector faces several issues such as low growth, high incidence of indebtedness among farmers, high cost of inputs, fragmented landholdings, and a lack of capital investments in the sector.

Table 3: Level of Satisfaction on Proper Responses from the Government Officials

S.No	Levels of Satisfaction	Frequency	% To Total	Weighted Average
1	Highly satisfied	132	36.75	0.36
2	Less satisfied	173	48.00	
3	No idea	55	15.25	
	Total	360	100	

Source: Data collected compiled from the field survey

Fig. 2



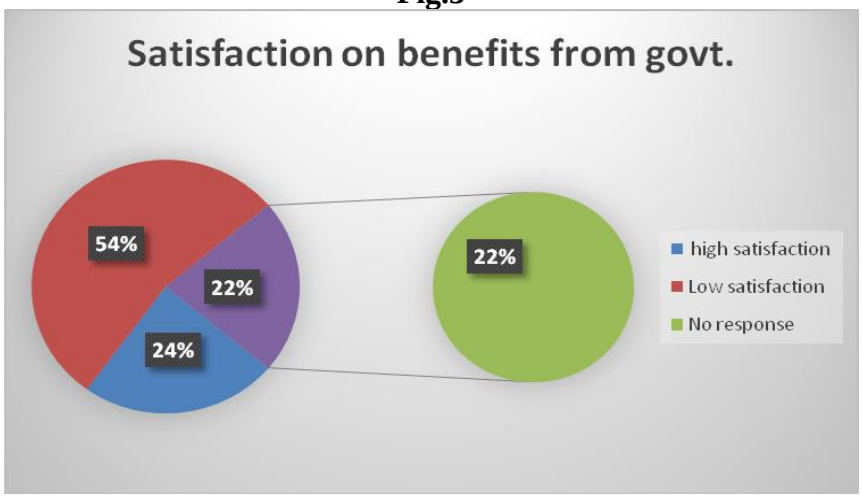
The opinions were collected from the members of the victim families of the groundnut farmers about the response by the Government officials. It is stated by 36.75 percent of the sample respondents that they have been highly satisfied with the reasons by the government officials. 15.25% of the respondents have given no response. It can be found that majority of the respondents have stated that they have low satisfaction. It indicates that there is no proper response by the government officials towards family members of farmers who have committed suicide in the study area. (Table 3)

Table 4: Satisfaction of Victim Families on Getting Benefit from the Government

S.No	Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	% to total	Weighted average
1	Highly satisfied	86	24.00	0.24
2	Highly not satisfied	194	53.75	
3	No response	80	22.25	
	Total	360	100	

Source: Data collected compiled from the field survey

Fig.3



Satisfaction levels of the groundnut victim families getting benefits on various dimensions like insurance, government compensation and other benefits. According to this, present table 4 discloses that the satisfaction levels of the victim family members on various benefits after suicide of their family members. It can be inferred that 24% of the respondents have stated high satisfaction, 22.25 percent did not express their opinion and the rest 53.75% of the respondent families have held that low satisfaction on above stated issue. It is statistically proved that the weighted average is also calculated (0.24). It is nearer to zero, and hence, this statement indicates negative dimensions.

The relief packages of the government will yield desired results only when it enables the deceased farmers' family to sustain their livelihood rather than as a relief to families of groundnut farmers who have committed suicide.

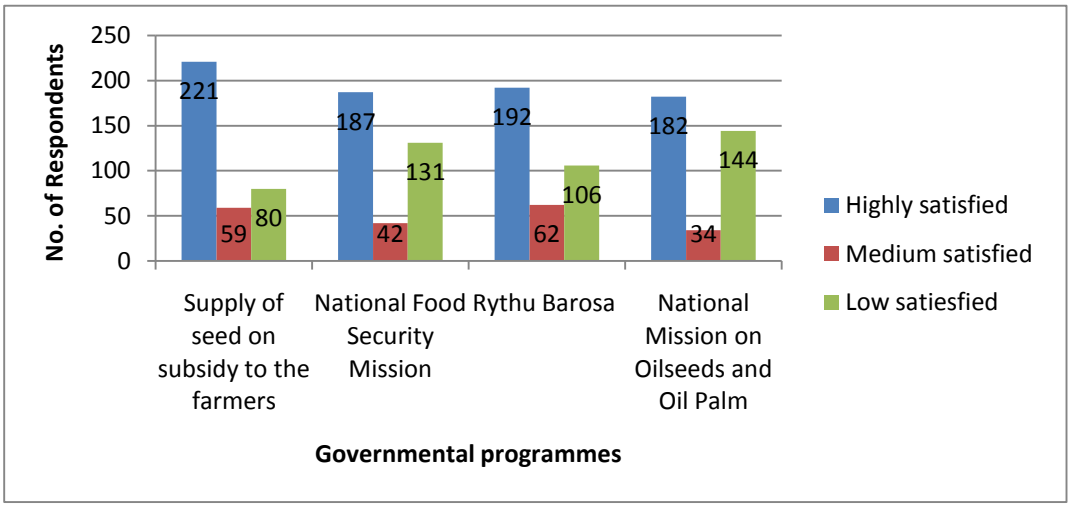
Table 5: Responses of Groundnut Victim Families on Various Programmers Provided By Govt.

S. No	Programmes	Highly Satisfied	Medium Satisfied	Low Satisfied	Total
1	Supply of seed on subsidy to the farmers	221	59	80	360
2	National Food Security Mission	187	42	131	360
3	RythuBarosa	192	62	106	360
4	National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm	182	34	144	360
	Total	782 (54.30)	197 (13.68)	461 (32.02)	1440 (100)

Source: Data collected compiled from the field survey

Chi-square value = 36.559
P value = 0.00001
Significant = P<0.05 level

Fig.4



The researcher has identified and raised a statement to the groundnut victim farmers on providing various governmental programmes in the study area. In this regard the researcher put a statement to the

sample respondents and collected the opinion from them. The table 5found that 54.30 per cent of the respondents are highly satisfied, 32.02 per cent of the respondents are low satisfied and 13.68 per cent of the respondents are medium satisfied. It can be concluded from the table that majority of the sample respondents have stated that the government has been providing better schemes for rural farmers in the study area.

"There is no positive relationship between failure of governmental programmes and suicide farmers". The results were shown like Chi-square value is 36.559, and P-value 0.00001. According to the above results, there is a positive relationship is between governmental programs and groundnut farmers. Hence, the Null hypothesis is rejected.

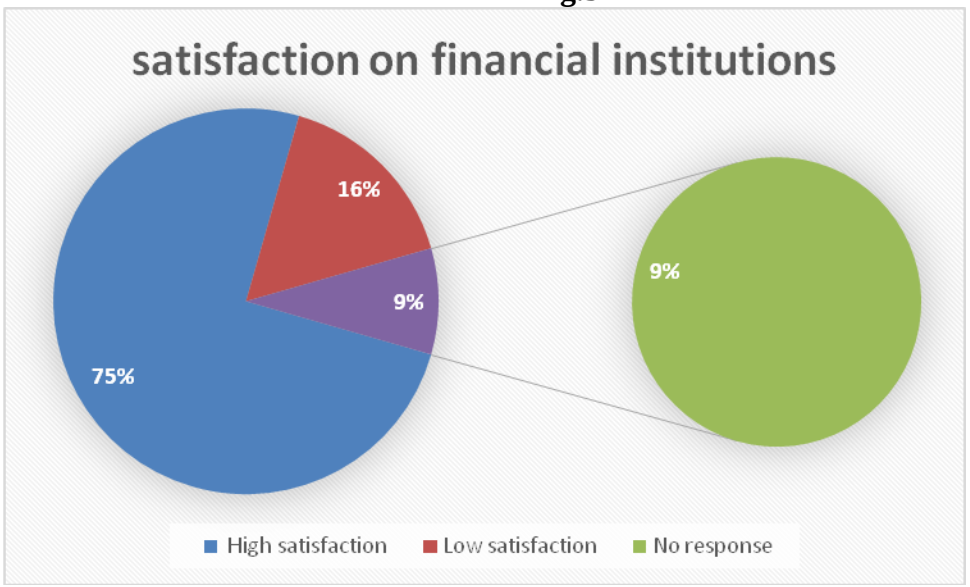
Table 6: Satisfaction levels of groundnut victim families on financial institutions like Commercial banks and RRBs

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 financial institutions like Commercial banks and Regional rural banks in the study area is shown in table 6. At present the financial institution did not lending finance with less interest rate to agricultural farmers. The financial institutions put a pressure on the debt groundnut farmers for repaying/clearing debt with in the stipulated period. So, the farmers have felt very sad and they attempted suicide. In this regard, the sample respondents have highly satisfied with 75 percent on treating of financial institutions. 16% of the respondents have low satisfied and 9 percent have stated neutral opinion.

Fig.5



The calculated weighted average (0.23) also showing negative opinion by the sample respondents through their dissatisfaction on the financial institutions. This is also one of the major problems for committing suicide by the groundnut farmers in the study area.

Conclusions

The present study concludes that government programmes play an important role in supporting groundnut farmers and improving their socio-economic conditions in Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. However, the findings reveal that the level of satisfaction among farmers varies across different government services and welfare initiatives. The study indicates that 48 per cent of the respondents expressed less satisfaction with the response of government officials, while 36.75 per cent were highly satisfied. Similarly, 53.75 per cent of the victim families expressed dissatisfaction with the benefits received from the government in the form of insurance, compensation and other welfare measures. Regarding various agricultural programmes, 54.30 per cent of the respondents expressed high satisfaction, 32.02 per cent reported low satisfaction and 13.68 per cent expressed medium satisfaction. Among the financial institutions, 75 per cent of the respondents expressed high satisfaction, although the calculated weighted average indicates certain concerns regarding financial support and credit facilities. The chi-square test result (36.559) with a p-value of 0.00001 indicates a statistically significant association between governmental programmes and the circumstances of farmer suicides in the study area. The study further highlights that indebtedness, crop failure, drought conditions, increasing cultivation costs and inadequate institutional support continue to affect the livelihood security of groundnut farmers. Therefore, the government should strengthen the effective implementation of agricultural welfare schemes, ensure timely delivery of financial assistance and compensation, improve crop insurance facilities, provide affordable institutional credit and establish an effective grievance-redressal mechanism. Special attention should also be given to the rehabilitation and livelihood security of families affected by farmer suicides. Thus, better coordination among government departments, financial institutions and agricultural development agencies is essential to improve farmers' satisfaction, reduce agrarian distress and ensure sustainable agricultural development in Anantapuramu district.

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