



Problems faced by the farmers in availing subsidies under National Food Security Mission

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Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy and over two third of population is dependent upon agriculture in a direct way for its subsistence. Indian economy is predominantly an agrarian economy and its prosperity depends upon the progress of agriculture. The cost of production is increasing day by day and as such agriculture is becoming an unprofitable business. To get more yields the farmers are investing more and more to carry out their agricultural operations and to purchase the costly machinery. The subsidy is usually given to remove some burden and is often considered to be in the interest of the people. Incentives and subsidies are considered to be the most powerful instrument for accelerating the growth of agricultural production. The social justification of the subsidies lies in the fact that they should be equally distributed among the regions and groups of society for achieving the goal of rapid growth in agricultural development. During the last two decades, agricultural subsidies in India have increased tremendously. Some of the subsidies being given to farmers are subsidy on pesticides, subsidy on herbicides, subsidy on fertilizers, subsidy on purchase of pest-control equipment, subsidy on improved agricultural implements, subsidy on improved seeds. It plays a vital role in facilitating development of indigenous production capabilities and in turn ensuring the required low cost food supplies on a sustained basis. The National Food Security Mission launched during October, 2007 has begun

well in its initial phase of implementation. The experiences of administering this scheme during the first year of its implementation was very satisfying in terms of ensuring quality of delivery of agricultural services to the farmers and good outcome achieved in the process. The present study was conducted to know the problems faced by the farmers in availing the subsidies under the mission.

A list of farmers who had availed subsidies under National Food Security Mission was collected from the office of Chief Agriculture Officer, Ludhiana. All the 12 blocks of Ludhiana district were taken and from every block ten farmers who had availed the subsidies were selected randomly. So the total sample size was consisting of 120 farmers. Data were collected using interview schedule.

Results of the study have been discussed under the following headings

Profile of the farmers:

It relates to the information regarding socio-personal characteristics of respondents which included age, education, operational land holding, mass media exposure, extension contacts and social participation. Data pertaining to profile of the farmers according to their socio-personal characteristics have been presented in Table 1. The details of each of these characteristics have been described as under:

Age:

It referred to the chronological age of respondents in terms of completed years and categorized into three age groups on the basis of range method *i.e.* 25-40 years, 40-55 years and 55-70 years. Data in Table 1 indicate that age of the respondents varied from 25-70 years. A little more than half of the respondents (50.83%) belonged to the age group of 40-55 years, about 36 per cent respondents were in the age group of 55-70 years and rest (13.33%) of the respondents were in the age group of 25-40 years.

Education:

It referred to the number of years of formal schooling completed by the respondents. The educational qualification was categorized into five categories *i.e.* illiterate, primary, matric, senior secondary, graduation and above on the basis of their education level. Data regarding education of the respondents are presented in Table 1. Data revealed that about 6 per cent of the respondents were illiterate, 7.50 per cent had gained education up to primary level, a less than forty five per cent of the respondents (43.33%) were matriculates while 21.66 per cent were educated up to senior secondary, graduate and above. Since majority of the respondents belonged to age group of 40-55 years and lived in villages, when they were young, higher education was not thought to be a necessity and social obligation. So, it might be the reason that only 21.66 per cent of the respondents were educated

up to graduate and above level. The other possible reason could be rural social environment in which they live might not have encouraged them to have higher education.

Operational land holding:

Operational land holding of the respondents was categorized into five categories. The study findings revealed that respondents' operational land holding ranged from 5 to 100 acres. It can be inferred from data given in Table 1 that 62.50 per cent of the respondents had large (> 25 acres) operational land holding whereas about 36 per cent of the respondents had medium land holding *i.e.* 10-25 acres and it is interesting to note that only 1.67 per cent of the respondents had their semi-medium land holding *i.e.* 5-10 acres. Majority of the respondents fell in the category of large land holding (> 25) acres.

Mass media exposure:

Mass media exposure of the respondents was studied in terms of viewing farm telecast, listening to radio programmes and reading farm literature. It was measured on three point continuum *i.e.* always, sometimes and never with scores of 2, 1 and 0, respectively. The respondents were placed into three categories *i.e.* low, medium and high by using range method. It is quite clear from the data placed in Table 2 that majority of the respondents had medium (55.83%) to high (41.67%) mass media exposure, whereas

Sr. No.	Socio-personal characteristics	Range/category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age (years)	25-40 (young)	16	13.33
		40-55 (middle)	61	50.83
		55-70 (old)	43	35.84
2.	Education	Illiterate	7	5.83
		Up to primary	9	7.50
		Up to Matric	52	43.33
		Senior secondary	26	21.66
		Graduation and above	26	21.66
3.	Operational land holding (acres)	Marginal (< 2.5)	-	-
		Small (2.5-5)	-	-
		Semi medium (5-10)	2	1.67
		Medium (10-25)	43	35.83
		Large (>25)	75	62.50

Sr. No.	Characteristics	Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Mass media exposure	Up to 6	Low	3	2.50
		6-12	Medium	67	55.83
		12-18	High	50	41.67
2.	Extension contacts	Up to 4	Low	36	30.00
		4-8	Medium	80	66.67
		8-12	High	4	3.33

only 2.50 per cent of them had low mass media exposure regarding agricultural subsidies. These findings are in consonance to Kaur (2002).

Extension contacts :

Extension contacts of the respondents were studied on the basis of number of contacts made in the previous one year with different extension officials for getting agricultural information. It was measured on three point continuum *i.e.* always, sometimes and never with scores of 2, 1 and 0, respectively. The scores of extension contacts of the respondents ranged between 0-2. A close examination of data given in Table 2 points that majority of the respondents *i.e.* about 67 per cent of the respondents had medium level of extension contacts, whereas, more than one fourth per cent of the respondents (30.00%) had low level and rest (3.33%) of the respondents had high level of extension contacts. These findings are in line with the findings of Chandergowda and Jayaramaian (1990), Roy *et al* (1992) and Ranganatha *et al* (1993).

Social participation:

Social participation of the respondents was taken as a membership of any formal or informal organization or holding of any post in the organization. Social participation of the respondents is set in Table 3. It is obvious from Table 3 that most of the respondents (67.50%) were members of co-operative society. This may be due to the reason that respondents were agriculturists and for getting services from the co-operative society, membership is compulsory. About 11 per cent of the respondents were members of village clubs/committees whereas only 8.33 per cent of them were members of Village Panchayat. It was also observed that about 7 per cent of the respondents were the members of advisory committee at block level under ATMA scheme. Table 3 further reveals that only 2.50 per cent and 1.67 per cent of the respondents availed membership of PAU farmers club and Punjab Dairy Farmers Association (PDFA), respectively. Similar results were reported by Kaur (2001) but are contrary to the findings of Sekhon (1996) and Sharma (1999).

Table 3: Distribution of respondents on the basis of social participation

Members of social organization	Frequency*	Percentage
Co-operative society	81	67.50
Members of village club/committee	13	10.83
Village Panchayat	10	8.33
Members of advisory committee at block level	8	6.67
PAU farmers club	3	2.50
PDFA member	2	1.67

*Multiple Response

Different crops grown:

The respondents were investigated about the different crops grown by them. The various crops grown by the respondents were wheat, rice, pulses, potato, fodder crops, sugarcane and maize. The responses are figured in Table 4. A critical look at Table 4 reveals that wheat and rice were main crops of all the respondents. Pulses, potato and fodder shared 31.67 per cent, 24.17 per cent and 18.33 per cent cultivation, respectively. It was also observed that more than 12 per cent of the respondents had grown sugarcane while maize was grown by 2.50 per cent of the respondents.

Table 4 : Distribution of the respondents on the basis of crops grown

Crops	Frequency*	Percentage
Wheat	120	100
Rice	120	100
Pulses	38	31.67
Potato	29	24.17
Fodder	22	18.33
Sugarcane	15	12.50
Maize	3	2.50

*Multiple Response

Area under crops:

Data given in Table 5 reflect that wheat and rice were the main crops of respondents followed by pulses, potato, sugarcane and maize. A little more than half per cent of the respondents (50.83%) had 6-24 acres of area under cultivation of wheat. Only 6.67 per cent of respondents used 42-60 acres for the production

Sources of information regarding subsidies:

The respondents were inquired about sources of information from which they became aware about subsidies. The various sources were officials of State department of Agriculture, fellow farmers, newspapers, field officers and *Kisan-Melas*. The responses are tabulated in Table 6. It can be seen from the Table 6 that majority of respondents (72.50 %) came to know about agricultural subsidies from officials of State Department of Agriculture followed by fellow farmers (32.50%) and newspapers (29.17%). A minor role was played in the advertisement of agricultural subsidies by field officers of IFFCO/KRIBHCO (4.16%) and *Kisan melas* (4.16%).

Problems of farmers while availing agricultural subsidies:

Problems referred to the difficulties faced by the respondents in availing the subsidies. The respondents were investigated about the various problems faced during the process of availing agricultural subsidies. The various problems under consideration were lengthy documentation

Table 5 : Distribution of the respondents on the basis of area under different crops (n=120)

Crops	Area under crops (acres)	Frequency	Percentage
Wheat	6-24	61	50.83
	24-42	51	42.50
	42-60	8	6.67
Rice	6-24	64	53.33
	24-42	48	40.00
	42-60	8	6.67
Pulses	2-8	32	26.67
	8-14	4	3.33
	14-20	2	1.67
Potato	3-22	25	20.83
	22-41	3	2.50
	41-60	1	0.83
Fodder crops	2-8	19	15.83
	8-14	2	1.67
	14-20	1	0.83
Sugarcane	3-22	12	10.00
	22-41	2	1.67
	41-60	1	0.83
Maize	3-12	2	1.67
	12-21	-	-
	21-30	1	0.83

*Multiple Response

Table 6 : Distribution of respondents on the basis of sources of information regarding subsidies (n=120)

Sources of Information	Frequency*	Percentage
Officials of State Department of Agriculture	87	72.50
Fellow farmers	39	32.50
Newspapers	35	29.17
Field officers of IFFCO/KRIBHCO	5	4.16
<i>Kisan-Melas</i>	5	4.16

*Multiple Response

procedure, delay in release of subsidies, red-tapism and less amount of subsidy. The responses are given in Table 7. A scrutiny of the data set in Table 7 showed that 60 per cent of the respondents faced problem due to lengthy documentation procedure while 44 per cent of the respondents considered delay in release of subsidy. A section of respondents (36%) reported problems regarding lesser quantity of inputs followed by red-tapism (6.00%) and less amount of subsidy (8.00%).

Suggestions of the farmers regarding agricultural subsidies:

To make the subsidies provided by the State Department of Agriculture more effective, suggestions of the

Table 7 : Distribution of respondents on the basis of problems faced by them (n=25)

Problems	Frequency*	Percentage
Lengthy documentation procedure	15	60.00
Delay in release of subsidies	11	44.00
Lesser quantity of inputs	9	36.00
Red-tapism	6	24.00
Less amount of subsidy	2	8.00

*Multiple Response

respondents were recorded. The data are placed in Table 8. A perusal of data indicates that 30 per cent of the respondents suggested that there should be down payment only to provide them better criteria for giving subsidies which needs improvement. It was observed that 28.33 per cent of the respondents felt that subsidies should be given to small and marginal farmers only, whereas 26.67 per cent of the respondents suggested that there should be door to door information to small and marginal farmers regarding agricultural subsidies. A little less than one fourth of the respondents (24.16%) demanded that subsidy should be available on every agricultural machine. Data in Table 8 further revealed that about 21 per cent of the respondents suggested that subsidies should be given to them timely. Few *i.e.* 1/10th per cent of respondents (10%) suggested that the amount of subsidy should be more than 50 per cent, whereas, 6.67 per cent of the respondents stressed that there should be no political influence while distributing agricultural subsidies. A small proportion of respondents (5.83%) suggested that subsidies should be released as soon as possible, whereas 3.33 per cent of the respondents suggested that subsidies should be available on different crop seeds.

Table 8 : Distribution of respondents on the basis of suggestions given by them (n=120)

Suggestions	Frequency*	Percentage
There should be down payment only for availing subsidies	36	30.00
Subsidies to small and marginal farmers	34	28.33
Information regarding subsidies to small and marginal farmers	32	26.67
Subsidy should be on every machinery	29	24.16
Subsidy should be timely	25	20.83
Procedure should be simple	19	15.83
Amount of subsidy should be more	12	10.00
Subsidy should be available in every crop season	10	8.33
No political influence	8	6.67
Release of subsidies should be as soon as possible	7	5.83
Subsidy on different crop seeds	4	3.33

*Multiple Response

These results are in line with the findings of Malhi (1971), Balar and Patel (1973) and Bhatnagar and Singh (1973).

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