

**AWARENESS OF FARMERS ABOUT CROP INSURANCE SCHEME IN KHATAV
TALUKA OF SATARA DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)**

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Abstract

The Government of India has introduced the innovative schemes of crop insurance but most of the farmers unaware of it. Unfortunately, crop insurance in the country has not made a noticeable contribution in agriculture sector even though the need to protect Indian farmers from uncertainty & risk. The farmers of Khatav Tahsil are facing the problems of drought over a period of several years & due to natural calamities they are suffering losses in their agriculture activities. It is necessary to evaluate the crop insurance scheme implementing in Khatav Taluka & also check the awareness of farmers about crop insurance scheme. Agricultural development is important to economic development of people in study area. The present paper is significant for potential beneficiaries from those villages which have not much awareness of crop insurance scheme. It's also helpful to small & marginal farmers to protect their interest in crops against natural calamities & getting benefits under this scheme. It also assists the insurer's bankers & policy makers for policy prescription & policy intervention.

Key words: *Agriculture, Crop Insurance, Awareness, Farmers.*

Introduction

Indian agriculture is dependent on monsoon which is always flexible. It leads to operating risk in cultivation of different crops. Natural calamities may affect on the yield from agriculture sector. To cover the risk which may occur in future, there is need to some provision and crop insurance is only mechanism available to safeguard against production risk in agriculture. For fulfilling this need the Government of India has made experiments & efforts by introducing various schemes of crop insurance such as First individual approach scheme (1972-1978), Pilot Crop Insurance Scheme (1979-1984), Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme (1985-1999), Experimental Crop Insurance Scheme (1997-1998), Pilot Scheme on Seed Crop Insurance and National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (1999-2000-Till Date).

Agriculture & Farm incomes in India are frequently affected by natural disasters such as drought, floods, cyclones, storms, winds, hail, frost, winterkill, fire, lightning excessive, plant diseases and any other unavoidable perils not caused by neglect or failure to follow established good farming practices etc. All these events severely affect farmers through loss in production & farm income & they are beyond the control of the farmers. There is need to recover this loss. Crop insurance is one method by which farmers can stabilize farm income & investment & guard against disastrous effect of losses due to natural hazards or low market prices crop insurance not only stabilizes the farm income but also helps the farmers to initiate production activity after a bad agriculture year. It spreads the crop losses over space & time helps farmers make more investments in agriculture.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the awareness of farmers about crop insurance scheme in study area.
2. To study the procedure & significance of crop insurance scheme.
3. To suggest the possible remedies on the identified problems.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Khatav taluka of Satara District (Maharashtra) by interviewing 150 insured and non- insured farmers spread over 10 villages in Khatav taluka. The stratified random sampling method was used for data collection. The sampled farmers were from the categories of marginal to large farms cultivating all important crops in one or two seasons. The data was processed with the help of tabular analysis method as well as Simple statistical techniques like measures of Central Tendency, Percentage are used with the help of different graphs and charts. The researcher has also used software's like MS Excel and SPSS etc.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1
Awareness of Farmers about Crop Insurance

Sr. No	Awareness	Insured Farmers				Non-insured Farmers			
		Respondents		Percentage		Respondents		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Do you know the information about crop insurance?	98	02	98	02	24	26	48	52
2	Do you know the procedure of taking crop insurance?	81	19	81	19	12	38	24	76

3	Do you know the information about other agricultural insurance?	73	27	73	27	09	41	18	82
4	Can workshop/orientation program arranged to provide crop insurance information?	48	52	48	52	09	41	18	82
5	Need for arrangement of workshop/orientation program?	97	03	97	03	37	13	74	26
6	Do you know information about crop secured under NAIS?	79	21	79	21	12	38	24	76

Source: Field Survey

Note: This data is related to selected insured farmers from Khatav Taluka

The table 1 shows the awareness of farmers about crop insurance scheme. The awareness of farmers and benefits received by them is correlated.

1. 98% out of total insured farmers and 26% out of 50 non-insured farmers know the crop insurance scheme. It indicates most of the farmers are know the crop insurance however they are less interested to take up crop insurance. After discussion with the farmers it is observed that the farmers are not willing to take crop insurance because they thinks there may be corruption at the time of compensation, it will be lengthy process and the services of financial institutions are not satisfactory.

2. Out of total insured farmers 98% knows what crop insurance is? But only 81% insured farmers know the procedure of insuring crops. Similarly 26% non-insured farmers heard about crop insurance scheme and 24% know the procedure of it. The reason is the farmers are not well educated hence they don't know the procedure. They insured their crops with the help of other educated persons or sometimes they insured their crops due to banks pressure, hence they not interested to understand the procedure of crop insurance scheme.

3. In spite of crop insurance, other agricultural insurance schemes are available to the farmers to recover agricultural losses. Out of total insured farmers 73 respondents have the information about other agricultural insurance and 9 out of 50 respondents (18%) heard about other agricultural insurance schemes. It indicates insured farmers are aware about crop insurance scheme as well as other agricultural insurance schemes.

4. Workshops and orientation programs are needed to provide basic information about crop insurance scheme and its procedure. Out of 100 insured farmers only 48% respondents mentioned that workshop/ orientation programs are arranged to provide information about crop insurance scheme, whereas only 18% non-insured farmers know about workshop/orientation programs.

5. In above point 48% respondents said that workshop/ orientation programs are arranged but 97% insured farmers and 74% non-insured farmers are said that there is a need of arranging such type of program.

6. All types of crops are not insured by NAIS. Only few crops jowar, Bajra, onion, potato, and groundnut are secured under NAIS in Khatav Taluka. Only 79% respondents know the crops which can be secured under NAIS. On other hand 24% non-insured farmers has not information about different crops secured under NAIS.

Table 2
Farmer's Awareness about Other Agricultural Insurance Scheme

Sr. No	Agricultural Insurance	Insured Farmers		Non-insured Farmers	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Farm Income Insurance	26	14.29	04	6.90
2	Live-Stock Insurance	55	30.22	05	8.63
3	Weather Based Crop Insurance	10	5.49	03	5.17
4	Farmer Insurance	47	25.82	03	5.17
5	Seeds Insurance	16	8.79	01	1.72
6	Can't Say	28	15.39	42	72.41
Total		182	100	58	100

Source: Field Survey

Note: This data is related to selected insured farmers from Khatav Taluka

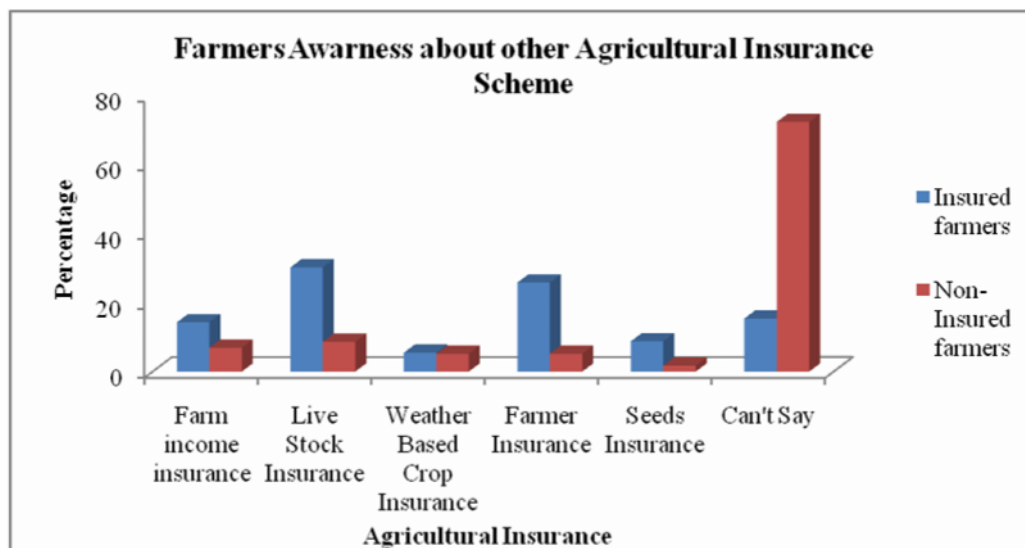


Fig. 1

Other agricultural insurance schemes are important to the farmers. Table 2 shows the known agricultural insurance schemes to the farmers. 30.22% insured farmer's familiar with

Live-stock Insurance and 25.82% insured farmers have information about Farmer Insurance. The Farm income insurance (14.29%), Weather Based Crop Insurance (5.49%) and Seeds Insurance (8.79%) are other Agricultural insurance schemes known by farmers in Khatav Taluka.

On the other hand, 72.41% farmers can't hear about other agricultural insurance scheme. Mostly insured farmers are having good knowledge about agricultural insurance rather than non-insured farmers, because due to crop insurance scheme, they are easily accessing the information about other agricultural insurance scheme.

Table 3
Arrangement of Workshop/Orientation Programs

Sr. No	Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
1	Gram Panchayat	31	31
2	DCC Bank	32	32
3	Other Co-op Bank	-	-
4	GIC	-	-
5	Don't know	37	37
Total		100	100

Source: Field Survey

Note: This data is related to selected insured farmers from Khatav Taluka

The above table indicates the workshop/orientation arranging agency. Out of 100 respondents 37% said that workshops are not arranged to inform the farmers about crop insurance. 32% respondents mentioned that D.C.C. bank arranging programs whereas 31% respondents mentioned that Gram Panchayat arranging such programs. According to the above table, most of the farmers are unaware about orientation program/workshop arranging agency. The reason was farmers didn't information about such programs arranging by the agency. It is also found that such programs are arranged on paper.

Findings

1. The awareness about the schemes is poor due to lack of proper interaction with in local level, and due to the lack of effective image building and awareness of officers of implementing agency.
2. Most of the insured as well as non-insured farmers have information about crop insurance, but few of them know the procedure of getting crop insurance, because they illiterate and implating agency failed to advertise entire process in simple language which understandable to the illiterate people.

3. In spite of crop insurance scheme, the farmers in Khatav Taluka are familiar with other agricultural insurance schemes. Livestock insurance and farmers insurance are mostly known by farmers followed by farm income insurance, seeds insurance and weather based crop insurance.
4. The workshop, orientation programs and counseling camps was not conducting regularly to provide information about crop insurance to the farmers. The information of crop insurance is providing through notices and circulars published by government authorities. However these notices, circulars are not reaching to the farmers properly.
5. Interesting thing found that farmers are insuring their crops through NAIS. But most of them have not information about which crops are covered under NAIS. (NAIS not covered all crops in area. After crops cutting experiment, implementing agency decides the crops covered under NAIS in concern area). NAIS not covered all types of crops. They have providing security of few crops after crop cutting experiment. However most of the farmers have not detailed information about crop covered under NAIS in their area.
6. D.C.C. Bank and Gram Panchayat are the main source available to the farmers followed by friends and farmers meetings. Similarly D.C.C. Bank and Gram Panchayat inform farmers about workshop and orientation programs of crop insurance.
7. A financial institution fails to influence the farmers. They are unable to reach the farmers and inculcate the benefits of crop insurance. It is a major problem of crop insurance.

Suggestions

1. Most of the farmers in Khatav Taluka unaware about crop insurance scheme. But in case of non-insured farmers, they have known the crop insurance but they are less interested to insure their crops. Hence guidance should be required from the government authorizes, financial institutions and Gram Panchayat members to the farmers.
2. Regular orientation programs/ counseling camps should be arranged by banks and insurance authorities at village level to increase the awareness of crop insurance scheme.
3. Mutual efforts of NGOs, financial institutions and governments are required to improve the reach to the crop insurance scheme.
4. Information about crop insurance scheme should be provides to the farmers from concerned authorities. The information should be in published form and in easy language.
5. The insurance agents should be recruiting at the village level. They should help guide and provide information about crop insurance. Similarly they have a good knowledge of insurance to demonstrate the scheme of crop insurance to farmers and act as counselors also.

Conclusion

Now-a-days tremendous changes have been occurred in agricultural such as; Irrigation facilities, improvement in infrastructure and communication etc. But the risk in agricultural production has increased and this risk is very high for farm income and production. Most of the farmers are selecting the options of suicide rather than crop insurance. Hence, there is serious problem of sharing the risk of farmers and protecting their crops against adverse weather and natural calamity. To protect the farmers against such natural hazards there is need to aware them about crop insurance and its benefits.

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