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AGRICULTURAL MARKETING POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN ODISHA: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

The present paper assesses the various agricultural marketing policies and programmes implemented in Odisha and their usefulness in meeting the marketing needs of agricultural produce in the state. The nature of rural marketing system and adequacy of marketing infrastructures have also been assessed. The study is based on secondary data and literature reviews. The major agricultural marketing institutions in Odisha are Odisha State Agricultural Marketing Board (OSAMB), Directorate of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) and Regulated Market Committee (RMC). It is observed that the ownership and functioning of the markets is not uniform with the physical markets being owned by different agencies such as RMCs, Municipalities, Panchayats and also purely private persons. The Agricultural Produce Markets Regulation (APMR) Act is loosely implemented in the state, which has very limited impact on the ground. The markets under different type of ownership prevailing in the State are not conducive to adoption of good marketing practices. Since most of the agricultural markets are private and unregulated, the farmers have been hard hit in the state. The study highlights the need for professional management of markets.


KEYWORDS

Odisha, agricultural market regulation, agricultural marketing policies and programmes.

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INTRODUCTION

 Odisha is an agrarian state where Agriculture and Animal Husbandry sector provides employment directly or indirectly to 60 percent of total work force. Thus, agriculture plays a critical role in the economy of the state and livelihood of majority of its populace. The share of Agriculture Sector in the State's GSDP, however, has been declining over the years and it was 15.6 per cent in 2013-14 (GoO, 2014). The total cultivated area of the state is 61.80 lakh hectares, of which 29.14 lakh ha are High land, 17.55 lakh ha Medium land and 15.11 lakh ha Low land. About 34% of cultivated area is irrigated and rest 66% is rainfed and exposed to the vagaries of the monsoon. So, the production of agricultural crops in the state depends very much on occurrence of a favourable monsoon. Due to better irrigation and other infrastructural facilities and presence of vast tracts of plain and fertile land comprising alluvial soil, the coastal districts of Odisha such as Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam have exhibited better agricultural growth compared to northern plateau zone (comprising Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Sundergarh), and backward districts of KBK (Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput) of western Odisha. A significant proportion of gross cropped area in these backward districts is rainfed and drought prone (Swain et al 2009).

Agricultural Marketing is the prime mover of the growth of the agriculture sector and market driven production is the order of the day. Agricultural marketing comprises all activities associated in movement of goods from producers to buyers which include assembling, transport, sorting, cleaning, grading, storage, packing, financing, selling. The problems in agricultural marketing in India as observed by many economists are: poor quality of output, absence of proper grading, inadequate storage and warehousing facilities, lack of adequate transport and marketing facilities, lack of market information, a long chain of intermediaries, unethical practices, multiplicity of charges on the seller, debt obligation and distress sales. Government has taken multiple measures to improve efficiency in agricultural marketing such as establishment of regulated markets, expansion of market yards, extension of storage and transport facilities, provision of credit facilities, standardisation and grading of products and market information on output prices.

Union Government had prepared a Model APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) Act in 2003. The principal objectives of the Act were to provide mechanism to ensure an efficient marketing system, to promote agri-processing and agricultural exports, to lay down procedures to build up infrastructure for marketing of agricultural produce. An APMC is a marketing board established by a state Government in India to ensure that farmers are not exploited by intermediaries or moneylenders who compel farmers to sell their produce at the farm gate for an extremely low price and all food produce are first brought to a market yard and then sold through auction. A review by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare and also the NITI Aayog in the year 2016 brought to surface, glaring shortcomings in adoption of the Model Act across the country (GOI, 2017). In this backdrop the major objective of the paper is to examine the various agricultural marketing policies and programmes implemented in Odisha and their usefulness in meeting the marketing needs of agricultural produce in the state. The nature of rural marketing system and adequacy of marketing infrastructures have also been assessed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of research studies have been undertaken to examine the problems in marketing of agricultural produce in India. A study on price determination, price policy, and marketing policy by Kahlon (1991) finds that in developing countries market price tends to decline proportionately to the increase in production during periods of plentiful harvest and thus there is a need for an incentive support price policy to protect the farmers against insecurities arising from unfortunate slumps in rice price. But a support price policy for an agricultural commodity is a complicated process to be decided in isolation. An efficient agricultural price policy requires a coordinated approach. Policies relating to production including supply of inputs, credit and marketing including grading and standardization need to be

formulated. Conclusions made in the study emphasises that the task of agricultural price policy is much more than just determining appropriate prices in the short run.

Acharya's (2000) study found that benefit of the agricultural subsidies had been shared by all the sections of the society including farmers, landless labourers, urban consumers and the industry. This study reviewed the subsidies in Indian agriculture and presented an assessment of as to who benefited from the subsidy given by the government. In the study various types of subsidy programmes such as input, output and food subsidy are taken into account for analysis. The conclusions of the study shed light on the price support policy and it said that it would need to be placed even in a liberalized environment in all the areas of the country. An agency would have to undertake price support purchases, maintain food grain buffer stock and undertake public distribution of food grains at least for the families below the poverty line.

The study by Deshpande and Gopalappa (2003) reviewed agricultural marketing policies in India. Policies were reviewed under policy intervention, market regulations, institutions in agricultural marketing sector, market infrastructure, agricultural marketing under the WTO regime and suggestions for new policy regime. Market regulations were divided into two, viz., regulations governing functioning of primary agricultural produce markets and a series of legal instruments. Documentation involved in marketing was made under public, cooperative and farm sector. Some states like Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Gujarat have better infrastructure facilities and states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Assam and West Bengal need a lot of improvement. The study found that there is lack of private sector investment in this area. There are three challenges to face the WTO regime. They are clearing the existing inefficiencies, connecting the domestic market with international trade and creating suitable safety nets in the system.

A study by Gulati and Landes (2004) finds the performance of agricultural policy since the 1991-92 reforms and identifies key areas where achievement of agreement on reform could have constructive impacts. During 1995-96 – 2001-02 period the government set Minimum Support Price (MSP) above the recommendation made by the Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) in four out of seven years for rice. Despite declining per capita consumption, the real price of rice in India has an increasing trend since 1990s, accumulating huge public stocks and falling world market rice prices in real terms. This study focused on the failure of price policy which has created a number of impacts. First, price of rice increased due to higher MSP and reduced consumption. Second, public expenditure on storage and transport increased. Third, MSP policy has not been made an effective tool for stabilizing producer prices for other crops and supporting the diversification of agriculture. Fourth, subsidy outlays are crowding out new investment needed to boost productivity and marketing efficiency. Finally, the strong price incentives for rice are contributing to the rapid deterioration of ground water resources and rising concern with deteriorating soil fertility. The major conclusion was that as long as producer price policy attempts to meet both income and price stabilization goals, it would be difficult to serve the efficient allocation of resources in the sector.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the status of agricultural marketing in Odisha
2. To examine the various agricultural marketing policies and programmes implemented in Odisha and their usefulness in meeting the marketing needs of the farmers in the state.
3. To analyse the nature of rural marketing system and adequacy of marketing infrastructures in the state.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN: The present paper is descriptive in nature and the study has been done through secondary sources.

SOURCE OF DATA: The present paper is based on secondary data. The maximum information is collected from secondary data through websites and from various books, reports and journals.

TOOLS OF ANALYSIS: The data collected for the study was analysed logically in order to arrive at a meaningful conclusion.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETS IN ODISHA

Orissa Agricultural Produce Markets (OAPM) Act 1956 & Its Amendments

Market Regulation Scheme in Odisha State came into force after the enactment of Orissa Agricultural Produce Markets (OAPM) Act 1956 and the Rules made thereunder in 1958. There were only 15 Market Committees during 2nd Five Year Plan which have now gone up to 65. As envisaged under the OAPM Act, the Odisha State Agricultural Marketing Board (OSAMB) started functioning during the year 1984 to exercise supervision and control over the working of the Regulated Market Committees (RMCs) in the State. The OAPM Act and the Rules have also been amended from time to time during the year 1974, 1975, 1984, 1996, 2005 and 2006. The salient features of the latest amendment in 2006 are as follows:

A. Establishment of Private Markets

Any person or body of persons may establish a private market for the purpose of sale or purchase of agricultural produce. This will include a Company registered under the Companies Act, a Co-operative Society or an Individual. For establishing the market, a license from the State Government will be required and the Market will be located in an area to be specified by the State Government. The license will also impose certain conditions and restrictions which the State Government shall determine. A license shall not be granted for setting up a market within one kilometer from an existing Market Yard. Also, a license for a private market shall not be given for trading in common varieties of paddy and rice.

B. Contract Farming

Any Individual, Partnership Firm, Company registered under the Companies Act, Co-operative Society or Government Agency can take up contract farming in the State. Every sponsor of contract farming will have to be registered with the local Regulated Market Committee (RMC). There will be a written Agreement between the Contract Farming Sponsor and the Contract Farming Producer (Farmer). The Agreement will contain the terms and conditions and will be in a form which will be specified by the State Government. The Director, Agriculture Marketing will act as the dispute settlement authority between the contract farming producer (farmer) and contract farming sponsor. There shall be a right to appeal before the Secretary to Government, Co-operation Department. The agricultural produce covered under the Contract Farming Agreement may be sold by the producer to the contract farming sponsor outside the Regulated Market Yards.

STATE AGRICULTURE POLICY 2008 AND 2013

There was not much difference in approach towards agricultural marketing in State Agriculture Policy 2013 over 2008. The State Agriculture Policy has taken note of all recent amendments in OAPM Acts that have allowed 'Establishment of Private Markets' and 'Contract Farming' by any person or Company or a Cooperative Society. The State Agriculture Policy 2013 says that the reforms in the legal framework for agricultural marketing will enable private sector investment in agribusiness and permit contract farming activities which will be immensely beneficial for the farmers of the State.

The State Agriculture Policy 2013 states that Contract farming in Cotton has already started in the districts of Rayagada, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Bolangir, Ganjam and Gajapati. Contract farming in oilseeds has also started in the districts of Sambalpur, Deogarh, Sundargarh and Nuapada. Steps will be taken to extend it to other crops as well. Other important measures for promoting the agricultural marketing in the state were as follows (GoO, 2013):

- Rural Producers' Organizations will be formed for specific commodities to enable them to have appropriate market linkages through Federations.
- The State Government is establishing two state of the art Integrated Cotton Markets with Ginning & Bale Pressing Units at Digapahandi in Ganjam district and Paralakhemundi in Gajapati district. Upgradation of other existing Cotton Mandis will also be taken up by the State Government for providing cotton farmers good infrastructural facilities for selling their produce at remunerative prices.
- Maize is the main cash crop of Nawarangpur district and is grown abundantly by the tribal farmers. The State Government is establishing 2 special Mandis at a cost of Rs 150.00 lakh each for Maize at Umerkote and Raighar in Nawarangpur district for the benefit of tribal farmers.

- It has been decided that for the benefit of farmers, market yards will be established under the RMCs within the next three years covering all the 118 blocks in the State which do not have market yards so far.
- Physical linkage of production centres to the markets by rural link roads shall be taken up in a phased manner to ensure that the farmers' produce can reach the markets.
- For promoting marketing facilities for horticultural produce such as production of fruits, vegetables and flowers in the state, the Terminal Markets (TM) have been conceptualized. It was proposed that the Terminal Market Complex (TMC) would operate on a Hub-and-Spoke format wherein the Terminal Market (the Hub) would be linked to a number of Collection Centres (thespokes). Three Terminal Market Complexes will be set up in the State, one each near Cuttack, Sambalpur and Berhampur. These TMCs will be set up over an area of 50-60 acres with investment of Rs 60-70 crores each. These TMCs will be set up under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode.
- Agri-export Zones (AEZs) would be established in PPP mode for agricultural and horticultural produce having export potential. Consequent upon dismantling of quantitative restrictions on imports as per WTO Agreement on Agriculture, commodity wise strategies and arrangements for protecting the grower from adverse impact of price fluctuations in world markets and for promoting exports will be formulated. In order to protect the interest of farmers, a WTO cell at the State level has been established under the Directorate of Agriculture

Though many appropriate measures were proposed in the State Policy documents, no significant progress has been observed on ground so far.

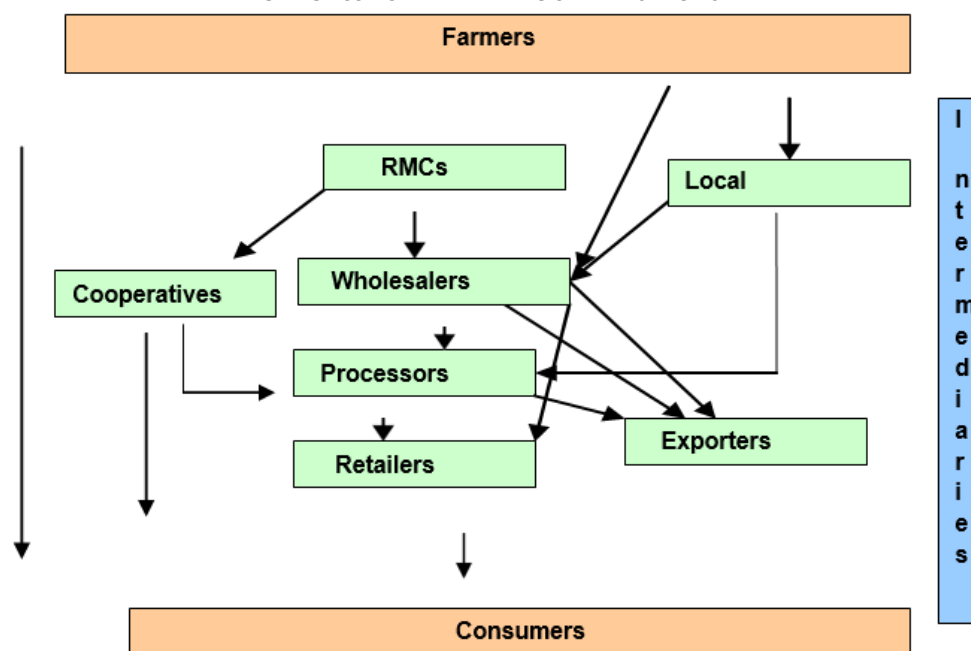
PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING INSTITUTIONS AND CHANNELS

The major agricultural marketing institutions in the state are Odisha State Agricultural Marketing Board (OSAMB), Directorate of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) and Regulated Market Committee (RMCs). The OSAMB was set up in 1984 and has been functioning as the apex Agricultural Marketing Institution in the state. The OSAMB is responsible for creation of marketing infrastructure and exercises supervision and control over the working of Regulated Market Committees of the state. A separate Directorate of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) has been established that started functioning independently from 1996. The Directorate of Agricultural Marketing is headed by the Director of Agricultural Marketing and has six Marketing Regions, each headed by a Regional Marketing Officer. The Directorate implements the schemes/programmes of the Government of India / State Government for providing marketing support to farmers for marketing of their produce, creating and strengthening of infrastructure for marketing of agricultural produce for increasing market efficiency thus enhancing farmers' incomes. Under the provisions of the Orissa Agricultural Produce Market Act, 1956, Regulated Market Committees (RMCs) have been established in the State for regulation of buying and selling of agricultural produce. There are 65 RMCs covering 55 Revenue Sub-Divisions of the State. The Collectors/ A.D.Ms/ Sub-Collectors are nominated to work as chairman of RMCs.

Across the 65 RMCs in the state at present there are 428 market yards in the State, which include 53 Principal Market Yards, the rest being sub-market yards. Besides, there are 567 temporary market yards for paddy procurement. Out of 314 Blocks, 111 Blocks do not have any RMC. The RMCs are making efforts to upgrade the facilities in the existing market yards and the Gram Panchayat markets under their control and efforts are also made to establish new market yards. These market yards have gained importance since they are being utilized for the paddy procurement operations throughout the state.

A study by World Bank (2007) summarized Existing agricultural marketing system in Odisha schematically in the following diagram (Fig.1). The study reveals that the proportion of marketing through various channels differs from commodity to commodity. Regulated Market Committees are set up to facilitate marketing of surplus from farmers. But in Odisha the average percentage of surplus marketed through RMCs stands at only 20% and rest of the marketable surplus is routed through other channels.

FIG.1 AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CHANNELS IN ODISHA



A peculiar situation prevails in the state of Odisha in terms of ownership and management of agricultural markets. The markets are under different modes of ownership such as RMCs, Local Bodies like Municipalities and NAC, Gram Panchayats (GPs), and private persons/ associations. GP and Municipal markets are managed either by Municipality itself or leased out to private persons. The lessees dominate the markets for providing space to the farmers for selling their produce. The prevailing marketing system is grossly inefficient one, where farmers do not have access to market for selling their produce and are constrained to sell their produce to local traders at abysmally low prices (Sharma, 2012). This dampens their zeal to produce. Consumers also have to pay higher prices for the commodities they purchase.

MARKETING INFRASTRUCTURES

The infrastructure available at the RMC market yards, sub-yards and other markets are not subject to regular use, as there is no enforcement for the buyers and sellers to assemble at the earmarked market yards. The infrastructure situation is worse in case of markets under Gram Panchayats, municipal and other local body markets, and private markets. Majority of the haats do not even possess basic infrastructure required for trading of agricultural commodities.

SYSTEM OF SALE IN MARKETS AND PRICE DISCOVERY

It was observed that the open auction system of sale is in practice for cotton, where procurement agencies and mills purchase cotton at RMC markets through open auction. Paddy is procured at Minimum Support Price declared by the Government at RMC markets, PACS by procurement agencies. Open auction method of sale is not being followed in any of the markets operated and managed by local bodies (Municipality, NAC), Gram Panchayat and private markets.

In many of the markets due to lack of infrastructure and dedicated staff at market level for conducting open auction, this method of sale is non-existent, and hence, affecting the process of price discovery process. There should be proper infrastructure, and designated and trained staff appointed at the market level for effecting open auction of agricultural produce brought to the market yards. Due to lack of bargaining power in such markets, the farmers are not able to get reasonable profit.

Vaswani et al. (2011) conducted a study of vegetable marketing system in erstwhile Cuttack and Puri districts of Orissa. The study reveals that the common channels in marketing of vegetables areas follows:

1. Farmers – Local traders/ Assemblers – Traders/ Wholesalers – Retailers – Consumers
2. Farmers – Traders/ Wholesalers – Retailers – Consumers
3. Farmers – Retailers – Consumers
4. Farmers – Consumers

The study further reveals that the prominent channel for marketing of vegetables in the study area was Channel 1 (53% of produce marketed through this channel) and Channel 2 (33% of produce). The farmers share in consumers' rupee has been worked out to 33% to 57% as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: MARKETING COST AND FARMERS SHARE IN CONSUMER PRICE

Commodities	% share of farmers in Consumer Price	% margin of intermediaries	% marketing cost of intermediaries
Brinjal	35	20	45
Cucumber	33	22	44
Okra	35	15	50
Bitter Gourd	45	25	30
Ridge Gourd	41	36	23
Pointed Gourd	36	28	36
Green Chilli	57	20	23

Source: Vaswani et al. (2011)

Market functionaries: Different RMCs have granted license to traders, trader-cum-commission agents, warehouseman, brokers for livestock markets, etc. Only 4-5 RMCs have issued licenses to weighmen. There are also many unlicensed village traders and commission agents operating in the marketing movement of agricultural produces. Majority of such traders operate at village level and in markets managed by GPs, local bodies and private markets, and RMCs do not have any control over these markets.

Market charges: The prescribed market charges are duly enforced in the RMC markets particularly for paddy and cotton procurement. But at other markets, farmers report that lessees of the markets and traders charges at higher rates and there are unauthorized deductions in the sense that a part of the farmers' produce brought to the market for sale by farmers is illegally taken away by the lessees.

Spot payment: Many farmers in different districts and markets complained about the late payment for their produce. Since traders do not operate in RMC markets and other markets are not under the control of RMCs, effective implementation of market regulations is not possible.

Weightment: In majority of RMC markets weighing equipments are provided for proper weighing of agricultural produce brought for sale. But only in few of the markets licenses have been issued to the weighmen. Providing electronic weighing scales at the entry gate of the market manned with trained staff, free weighing of produce brought by farmers, will ensure correct weightment for the farmers' produce, a basic objective of regulated marketing.

Trade allowances: As per RMC Bye-Laws the trade allowances and deductions are prescribed. Trade allowances are being followed properly in case of RMC markets and paddy and cotton procurement. But in case of markets under GP and other local bodies, where markets are leased out on annual contract to private parties, these private persons are taking a part of produce on the top of the sitting fee from the sellers in the name of market charges which is illegal as per OAPM Act.

Market information & intelligence: Market committees provide information through notice boards of RMCs at the main market yards only and RMCs are also uploading price information onto AGMARKNET. However, majority of farmers in the state depend on their peers for access of information related to marketing of produce.

Direct marketing: Though provisions for contract farming and private markets have been made under the OAPM (Amendment) Act, 2005 but the Act is silent on direct marketing. Direct marketing concept for Krushak Bazaars is by executive order of the Govt of Odisha. Under the Chief Minister's 12 point programme, 43 Krushak bazaars were established in the state. Presently 32 Krushak bazaars are functioning.

Contract farming: Contract farming in cotton was taken up over 14,000 hectares of land in the district of Rayagada, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Ganjam, Bolangir and Sonepur involving around 20,000 farmers. The issues in contract farming are that the most of the firms involved in contract arrangement with farmers have fixed agents to procure the produce from the farmers who often under-evaluate the quality of the harvest and the farmer ultimately gets lower price for his produce. Required infrastructure for assessing the grades and standards need to be put in place, so as to reduce disputes on account of quality and quantity standards. The provision for making payment to a producer under contract farming by a sponsor is to be made within such period not exceeding three days after the purchase of the produce.

Private markets: As per amendment in Act, provision has been made for providing license for establishing a private market. Till date OSAMB has given license to National Spot Exchange for trading in Maize to operate in the whole state under the provisions of the Act. No other application has been received by the authorities for providing license for set up of private markets in the state. There are several private markets operating in the state like Barabati in Jajpur RMC market area, Panichhatra market in Bargarh RMC area. As per legal provisions of OAPM Act and Rules, the private markets operating in the state without taking license are illegal entities. The authorities may initiate the process of issuing license to the associations managing these markets and insist on improving the infrastructure also.

As per the Act every license granted shall remain valid for a period of three years from the date of its issue and it may be renewed, from time to time, for a further period of one year on payment of such fee, in such manner and on fulfillment of such conditions as may be prescribed. License of very short duration is discouraging private sector to invest in the sector. This should be for a period of at least 10 years.

SHG Initiative by ORMAS: Orissa Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) is an apex body that was constituted by the Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Odisha and registered under the Societies Registration Act (1860) in 1991. It was formed with the objective of supporting rural producer groups, by eliminating the gaps that existed between the producer and the market, under the Poverty Alleviation Programme. The project helped in developing sustainable livelihood for 1779 selected Self Help Groups (Table 3).

There have been a number of success stories created by ORMAS in Odisha. Some of them are dal processing in KBK districts and vegetable marketing in Angul. As far as dal processing activities in KBK districts are concerned, earlier, villagers from interior locations used to collect Raw Kandul (Arhar) and sell it to local agents of traders of millers from Raipur and Nagpur at very low prices, since there was no competition for buying of this produce. But through initiative by ORMAS for organized processing and marketing of pulses by SHGs, farmers are getting remunerative price. ORMAS has provided technical and capacity building support to SHGs and arranged for institutional credit support to farmers which saved them from the clutches of traders.

In Angul, looking into the problems in marketing of fruits and vegetables by farmers in the area and booming organized retailing in agri-products, DSMS, Angul has started initiatives to link farmers to the market. ORMAS started to identify some SHGs or Farmers' Club who would work together to produce, procure and market

vegetables and fruits required by big retail outlets or chain stores. DSMS, Angul tied-up with Reliance Fresh Ltd. of Bhubaneswar for procuring farmers fruits and vegetables for sale in its stores.

MART (A Collective Marketing Model): The Collective Marketing Model was developed under the aegis of the Western Odisha Rural Livelihoods Promotion (WORLP) project. From a modest beginning in 20 villages the model was expanded to 100 villages in WORLP (ACCESS, 2011). Marketing methodology to drive efficiency in the supply chains of more than 32 commodities of both the agricultural and non-timber forest produce (NTFP) variety and subsequently replicated to other states. Collective Marketing has armed Community Based Organizations (CBOs) primarily SHGs with the knowledge, confidence and processes to operate in a non-exploitative channel for the marketing of products.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Agricultural marketing in Odisha state is mostly a free market system, though regulated market committees have been notified and set up for regulating the marketing of agricultural produce but not much have been done in terms of regulation. It is observed that the ownership and functioning of the markets is not uniform with the physical markets being owned by different agencies such as RMCs, Municipalities, Panchayats and also purely private persons in the state. Since the APMR Act is loosely implemented in the state, it has very limited impact on the ground. The markets under different type of ownership prevailing in the State are not conducive to adoption of good marketing practices in the state. Since most of the agricultural markets are private and unregulated, the farmers have been hard hit in the state. Thus there is a need for professional management of agricultural markets in the state.

It is suggested that the existing markets should be modernized by providing proper infrastructure and facilities. The PACS/ Rural Haats may be developed as collection centres equipped with required infrastructure and facilities. These collection centres may be, in turn, linked to SHGs/ CIGs to have backward linkages in place. For providing the forward linkage, these collection centres should be linked to the wholesale markets.

Various studies (Singh et al., 2004; Sarangi, 2009; Vaswani et al., 2011; Sharma, 2012) reveal that private wholesale markets are operating on daily basis without any infrastructure. Under such circumstances, there is a scope for RMCs to modernize the existing markets by providing requisite infrastructure. The RMCs may take control of private markets which are operating illegally. The markets under GP or other local bodies should also be taken over by RMCs/ Directorate of Agricultural Marketing for operation and management on revenue-share basis. This will induce effective regulation and proper management of the markets. These markets may be converted as collection centres and further may be linked to organized wholesale markets.

The professional management of markets concept has to be started by recruiting qualified staff for managing different categories of markets. The OSAMB and Directorate of Agricultural Marketing has to be properly staffed and strengthened with professionals with properly laid down job specification and job descriptions. The system should concentrate on core activities of agricultural marketing. Presently, RMC markets are managed by market sarkar or yardman, who is not qualified for proper management of the markets. The major function of RMCs should be to professionally manage the markets.

The state has given permission for Electronic spot exchange operations in the state, and the spot exchange have started contracts for maize crop only. The electronic spot exchange should start contracts in other crops like pulses and oilseeds for the benefit of all the stakeholders.

Public private partnership in management and operation of wholesale markets should be piloted at important markets for professional management of markets. Provision for such arrangement need to be made in the Act and rules may be framed for effective partnership. This would help in promoting competition in the agricultural markets. It is time to move away from pure regulation and development approach to promotion and facilitation-centric platform, so as to create a conducive environment for competition, by enabling multiple channels of marketing without letting anyone including Government led APMCs to hold sway as a monopoly.

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