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IMPACT OF PRADHAN MANTRI FASAL BIMA YOJANA (PMFBY) ON FARMERS OF TRIPURA

Email

¹Jagathjhuti Datta and ¹Sahanob Nath

jagathiyoti@gmail.com

¹Growing Seed, Dharmanagar, North Tripura, India

Agriculture in Tripura is predominantly rain-fed and characterised by small and marginal landholdings, making farmers highly vulnerable to climatic uncertainties such as erratic rainfall, floods, dry spells, pest outbreaks, and cyclonic disturbances. These risks often result in crop failure, income instability, and growing indebtedness among farming households. To address these challenges and provide a safety net against crop losses, the Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in 2016.

PMFBY aims to provide affordable crop insurance coverage to farmers, ensuring financial protection against yield losses due to natural calamities, pests, and diseases. In a state like Tripura, where agriculture remains a key livelihood source and climate variability is increasing, PMFBY holds significant relevance for stabilising farm income and encouraging farmers to continue agricultural activities with reduced risk.

Overview of PMFBY

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is a comprehensive crop insurance scheme implemented across India with the active participation of State Governments, insurance companies, banks, and local institutions. Under PMFBY, farmers pay a nominal premium—2% for Kharif crops, 1.5% for Rabi crops, and 5% for commercial and horticultural crops—while the remaining premium is shared by the Central and State Governments.

The scheme covers yield losses due to natural calamities, prevented sowing, post-harvest losses, and localized risks such as landslides and inundation. PMFBY uses an area-based approach supported by Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) and digital platforms for enrolment and claim settlement, aiming to ensure transparency and timely compensation.

Adoption of PMFBY in Tripura

Since its implementation, PMFBY has been adopted in various districts of Tripura, covering major crops such as paddy, maize, pulses, and oilseeds. Enrollment levels vary across districts depending on awareness, institutional support, and accessibility to banking and digital services. Farmers associated with cooperative societies, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and institutional credit systems show relatively higher participation.

However, adoption among remote tribal areas and marginal farmers remains inconsistent due to limited awareness, procedural complexities, and inadequate extension support. Despite these challenges, PMFBY has gradually gained recognition among farmers as a formal risk-management tool in Tripura.

Impact of PMFBY on Farmers of Tripura

1. Income Security and Risk Reduction: One of the most significant impacts of PMFBY in Tripura has been the provision of financial relief during crop loss years. Farmers who received timely claim settlements reported reduced dependence on informal credit sources and better capacity to reinvest in the next cropping season. The assurance of compensation has helped farmers cope with weather-induced crop failures and maintain livelihood stability.

2. Encouragement for Continued Farming: PMFBY has played a role in sustaining farmers' confidence in agriculture, especially among small and marginal farmers. The presence of insurance coverage encourages farmers to continue cultivation even after adverse seasons, thereby reducing distress-driven migration and crop abandonment in vulnerable areas.

3. Access to Institutional Credit: Enrollment under PMFBY is often linked with crop loans, which has improved farmers' access to institutional credit. Insured farmers are more likely to receive bank loans, enabling timely purchase of inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and plant protection chemicals, contributing to improved crop management.

4. Behavioural and Extension Impacts: From an extension perspective, PMFBY has increased interactions between farmers and extension agencies, banks, and insurance representatives. Awareness programmes, village meetings, and enrolment camps have enhanced farmers' understanding of risk management and formal financial systems. However, expectation gaps related to claim assessment methods continue to influence farmers' perceptions.

Constraints Observed in Tripura

Despite its benefits, several challenges limit the effectiveness of PMFBY in Tripura. Delays in claim settlement, lack of clarity on loss assessment procedures, and limited transparency in Crop Cutting Experiments are frequently reported concerns. The area-based assessment approach often fails to reflect individual farmer losses, particularly in heterogeneous and fragmented landholdings common in the state.

Digital barriers, limited grievance redressal at the local level, and inadequate extension manpower further restrict farmers' full utilisation of the scheme. These constraints highlight the need for stronger institutional coordination and farmer-centric implementation.

Role of Agricultural Extension

Agricultural extension plays a crucial role in improving the impact of PMFBY in Tripura. Extension personnel can bridge information gaps by conducting targeted awareness campaigns, training farmers on enrolment and claim procedures, and facilitating digital access. Strengthening Farmer Producer Organizations, SHGs, and community-based institutions can also improve collective enrolment and grievance redressal.

Participatory monitoring of crop loss assessment and regular feedback mechanisms can enhance farmers' trust in the scheme. Integrating PMFBY awareness with climate advisory services and crop planning programmes can further strengthen risk management at the grassroots level.

Conclusion

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana has emerged as an important risk-mitigation tool for farmers in Tripura, offering income protection and psychological assurance against crop losses. While the scheme has positively influenced income stability, credit access, and farming continuity, its full potential is yet to be realised due to operational and awareness-related challenges.

Strengthening extension support, improving transparency in loss assessment, and enhancing local grievance mechanisms are essential for maximising the benefits of PMFBY. With effective implementation and farmer-centric reforms, PMFBY can significantly contribute to sustainable agriculture and livelihood security in Tripura.

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