

Procurement of Ragi in Odisha: Ground Level Issues and Recommendations¹

Bijaya Kumar Nayak, Chita Ranjan Das, Srijit Mishra²

6 November 2019

Abstract: *This brief draws lessons from procurement in KMS 2018-19 under OMM. Some of the issues and concerns are limiting registration in the potential districts (particularly in areas where agronomic interventions are not happening under OMM), zero or low estimation of surplus production for sale at procurement centres, inadequate infrastructure facilities at procurement centres, farmers not being aware of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) norms, issuing advance token to all eligible farmers, and easy access of farmers to procurement centres. These have been discussed with stakeholders and some of them have already been addressed in the guidelines to procure ragi in KMS 2019-20. We hope that the guidelines and other concerns are addressed at the implementation stage and thereby encouraging farmers to sell ragi at the procurement centres and also to guard against distress sale.*

Introduction: The “Special Programme for promotion of Millets in Tribal Areas of Odisha” popularly known as Odisha Millet Mission or OMM is being implemented by the Directorate of Agriculture and Food Production, Government of Odisha with the state secretariat at the Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies (NCDS) consisting of the programme secretariat anchored by Watershed Support Services and Activity Network (WASSAN) and the research secretariat anchored by NCDS itself. The office of Deputy Director Agriculture (DDA)/Chief District Agriculture Officer (CDAO), Project Director, Agriculture Technology Management Agency (PD, ATMA) is the nodal agency for implementation of the programme at district level under the chairmanship of District Collector. Facilitating Agencies (FAs) implement the programme with the collaboration of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) at the block level. *Ragi* procurement was started in Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2018-19 with the support of Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation of Odisha Limited (TDCCOL) mainly to avail farmers minimum support price (MSP) conforming with fair average quality (FAQ) norms, ensure marketing support for enhancing production as well as support in *ragi* disbursement under public distribution system (PDS) or under supplementary nutritional programmes like the integrated child development and mid-day meal schemes. In KMS 2018-19, FAs and CBOs of the concerned OMM areas had supported in creating awareness and mobilizing farmers to

¹ This policy brief is the second on ragi procurement under Odisha Millets Mission (OMM). The first, [PB3NCDS](#), was prior to implementation of ragi procurement in Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2018-19. This has benefitted from engagement with different stakeholders at Institute on Management of Agricultural Extension (IMAGE), Bhubaneswar on 9th January 2019 and improves on an earlier [blog](#) by the first author.

² BKN is Research Scholar, Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies (NCDS), Bhubaneswar & Senior Project Executive, DHAN Foundation. CRD is Senior Research Officer, NCDS. SM is Director, NCDS.

sell at procurement centres. Based on some ground-level issues and engagement with different stakeholders some issues are being raised for policy consideration.

Targeting potential districts: In Table 1, it is observed that only 11.0% of estimated farmers were registered: it was least in Koraput (1.1%) and highest in Kalahandi (45.2%). From among the registered, only 21.7% sold at procurement centres: it was the least in Nuapada (11.5%) and the highest in Sundargarh (59.8%). In fact, in Nuapada the number of procurement centres functional in comparison to the numbers set-up (11/23, 47.8%) is among the lowest across the districts. Even in the districts where KMS 2018-19 was operational, the farmers registration was largely restricted to areas as also farmers facilitated by FAs under OMM. Efforts may be made to increase the proportion of registered farmers (particularly, in areas where intervention in agronomic practices are not happening under OMM) and also increase the proportion of those who sell at procurement centres from the registered farmers.

Table 1: Status of *ragi* procurement in KMS 2018-19

District	Procurement Centres		Number of Farmers			Registered/ Estimated (%)	Sold/ Registered (%)	Quantity, Quintal
	Set-up	Functional	Estimated	Registered	Sold			
Gajapati	4	4	15184	3010	703	4.6	23.4	671.8
Kalahandi	11	9	1318	2435	596	45.2	24.5	920.3
Kandhamal	12	10	7025	3759	1011	14.4	26.9	1365.0
Koraput	18	16	131080	8256	1434	1.1	17.4	8904.7
Malkangiri	4	4	21616	3166	754	3.5	23.8	1793.5
Nuapada	23	11	6674	2396	275	4.1	11.5	247.3
Rayagada	10	10	47217	2941	649	1.4	22.17	3589.8
Sundargarh	4	4	10250	532	318	3.1	59.7	493.4
TOTAL	86	68	240364	26495	5740	11.0	21.7	17985.8

Note and Source: Estimated farmers is for 2017-18. For Sundargarh, the number of estimated farmers is based on estimated area under kharif *ragi* with the assumption that a *ragi* farmer, on an average, cultivates *ragi* in 0.4 hectares. For the other districts, the estimated farmers are as per Policy Brief 3 of NCDS.

Simplifying process of registration and estimation of surplus production: The document on record of rights required for registration was a constraint for farmers cultivating inherited land or land without mutation. Different farmers having the same *khatiyani* number had difficulty in registering. Besides, there were instances when farmers recognized under Forest Rights Act (FRA) as well as with *Sestu* plot could not be registered.

In addition, many farmers who were registered could be allowed to sell at procurement centres based on a defined estimation of surplus production (3 quintals per hectare based on the assumption that production is 10 quintal per hectare and 7 quintal is for self-consumption) as per recorded dangar area (type 1, 2 and 3) and paddy land type 3 in Bhulekh portal. In fact, there have been instances where the estimated surplus production was zero or in few kilograms. Farmers cultivating *ragi* in paddy land type 1 & 2 were also not



eligible for estimation of surplus production, as there was no system for physical verification and entry of data at Large Area Multi-purpose Society (LAMPS). However, the production level varies with agro-climatic conditions as well as land type. The millet procurement automation system (MPAS), as indicated earlier, is pre-defined, and hence, farmers with more production were not eligible to sell at the procurement centre. The spelling differences or entry errors in different documents (registration form/bank passbook/Aadhaar) also acted as a barrier during registration and also for surplus production.

Issue of non-registration on account of multiple farmers having same Khatiyani number, FRA land/*Sestu Patta* land may be considered. Registration of farmers who have cultivated *ragi* in paddy land type 1 and 2 may also be allowed. In fact, these have been addressed in the guidelines by KMS 2019-20 through a provision of physical verification by FAs, agriculture/revenue department officials or Sarapanch of the Gram Panchayat. If implemented properly, this will facilitate registration of more farmers.

The limits on surplus generation based on data from crop cutting experiment (CCE) could be block or district specific. The authorities may look into this.

Mismatch due to spelling differences and entry errors also need to be addressed. Awareness programmes and capacity building will help address some of these.

Improving infrastructure at procurement centres: In KMS 2018-19, paucity of gunny bags and non-availability of labourers at the procurement centres led to farmers waiting in queues for longer time, sometimes late into the night. The procurement centres, more often than not, also did not have sitting arrangement and drinking water facilities. In some instances, moisture meter's also did not function properly. The absence of a sieve (if not grader) and space for drying *ragi* to adhere to FAQ norms meant that farmers had to return, which many a times led to distress sale of their produce in the open market.

Adequate provision should be made at procurement centres to provide gunny bags and labour support to reduce waiting time. Provisioning of sitting arrangement and drinking water facilities may also be considered. If volume of procurement is high, the procurement centre may have at least two moisture metres. Mechanisms need to be put in place to replace a moisture metre, at the earliest, if it becomes non-functional. The procurement centre should consider having a sieve (or a grader if volume of procurement is high) to remove foreign matter and a tarpaulin (or two, if volumes are high) to facilitate drying.

FAQ norms: Only 21.7% of the registered farmers had sold 18,000 quintals of *ragi* at the procurement centres in KMS 2018-19. Some of the registered farmers could not sell because their produce fell short of the FAQ norms. There was some confusion on procurement of *ragi* with natural colour being black. Awareness programme to farmers and to staff of procurement centres on *ragi* FAQ norms, which is also indicated in the KMS 2019-20 guidelines, will be of help.



Unscheduled holiday/closure at procurement centre: In KMS 2018-19, at times, the farmers came to know that the procurement centre is closed for the day only after they come to the centre. Having incurred the transportation costs the farmer ends up selling the produce in the open market at lower than the prevailing minimum support prices. Putting in place a system that informs the farmers in advance that the procurement centre will be closed will be useful.

Issuing advance token: The procurement centre issued advance tokens to farmers. However, this was limited by the capacity of the storage facility and other infrastructure at the procurement centre. Based on estimation of surplus production after successful registration, adequate facilities need to be provided and all eligible farmers should be issued with advance token.

Distance of procurement centre: In KMS 2018-19, some farmers had to travel long distances (20 kilometres or more at times) to sell their ragi at procurement centres. This increases their transportation cost, which also increases the possibility of distress sale. It would help the farmer if the procurement centres in KMS 2019-20 are kept within 5-10 kilometres of distance. One way to address this is by using, wherever feasible, paddy procurement centres as ragi procurement centres. In addition, community institutions like self-help groups (SHGs), farmers' producer companies/organisations (FPCs/FPOs), and CBOs may also be considered as procurement centres.

Concluding Remarks: Based on ground level issues observed during KMS 2018-19 and engagement with different stakeholders, this policy briefs raises some concerns on ragi procurement. The specific issues are registration being limited to only 11% of estimated farmers, estimation of surplus production is not linked to block- or district-specific yield, inadequate infrastructure at procurement centres, need for greater awareness of FAQ norms, issue of advance tokens to all eligible farmers, and reduction of distance to procurement centres. Some of the issues have already been addressed by the guidelines for KMS 2019-20 and the others may also be considered. Their successful implementation will be important for ragi procurement in Odisha.

-0-X-0-



Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies (NCDS)
(An Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) institute
in collaboration with Government of Odisha)
Bhubaneswar - 751013, Odisha, India

Phone: +91-674-2301094, 2300471

Email: ncds_bbsr@dataone.in

Web: <http://ncds.nic.in>

Facebook: [@ncdsbhubaneswar](https://www.facebook.com/ncdsbhubaneswar)

Twitter: [@ncds_bbsr](https://twitter.com/ncds_bbsr)

Google Maps: [NCDS Bhubaneswar](https://www.google.com/maps/place/NCDS+Bhubaneswar)