



# TENANT FARMERS

# STUDY REPORT 2022

# ANDHRA PRADESH

Implementation of Crop Cultivator Rights Act,  
Inclusion in Rythu Bharosa & other Schemes

**PART 1**



## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

If there is a segment of farmers in Andhra Pradesh that simply cannot be ignored, a segment that plays a most important role and yet is most vulnerable, it is the tenant farmers who carry out cultivation on leased land. Sometimes known as “lessee cultivators” or “leased-land cultivators”, they are still popularly known as tenant farmers or ‘*koulu raitulu*’ in Telugu.

The tenant farmers face a dire situation as they are victims of a triple whammy. Firstly, in addition to the regular costs of cultivation, they bear the additional expenditure of very large land rents. Secondly, they are excluded from most government support systems which are essential to make agriculture a viable livelihood. These include low-interest or interest-free crop loans, crop insurance, disaster compensation, crop procurement, marketing facilities and cash support schemes such as Rythu Bharosa. Thirdly, the tenants become dependent on the land owners or input and output dealers for loans and they are caught in a cycle in which they not only pay high interest but also lose their bargaining capacity when purchasing inputs or selling the produce.

A large number of tenant farmers commit suicide every year. Analysis by Rythu Swarajya Vedika showed that 75% of all farmer suicides in Andhra Pradesh are by tenant farmers.

### ***Tenant Farmer Suicide during our Study***

A stark reminder of the situation of tenant farmers came to us during our study in East Godavari district on February 13, 2021. As the team reached Nedunuru village in Ainavilli mandal, we were informed that Isukupatla SatyaNarayana had died by suicide the previous day i.e February 12, 2021. Satyanarayana has been cultivating leased land for the past 10 years and has been facing extreme crop loss for the past 3 years. He could not pay the land lease in the form of bags of paddy since he had lost his entire crop in Kharif 2021 season. The land owner visited his home earlier that day publicly pressurizing him to pay the land lease. Weighed down by the debt and insult, he consumed pesticide and died by suicide.

### **Legal Framework for Recognition of Tenant Farmers**

The newly elected A.P. government led by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy in 2019 reiterated its commitment to ensure recognition and inclusion of tenant farmers in all its schemes including the newly announced Rythu Bharosa scheme of Direct Cash Transfer to farmer households. In July 2019, the Assembly approved the A.P. Crop Cultivator Rights Act 2019, thereby repealing the A.P. Land Licensed Cultivators Act 2011. The new Act provided for the issuance of Crop Cultivator Rights Cards (CCRC) to ‘cultivators of leased land’ or ‘lessee cultivators’, popularly known as tenant farmers or sharecroppers.

The earlier Land Licensed Cultivators Act 2011 had provided for the recognition of lessee cultivators (tenant farmers/sharecroppers) as ‘licensed cultivators’ and issuance of ‘Loan Eligibility Cards’ (LEC) to them. This Act required the cultivators to submit a simple application to the Revenue officials specifying the details of the land being taken on lease for a period of one year. After receiving all the applications from a village, the Revenue officials were required to then hold gram sabha in the village and verify that the cultivators who applied had indeed taken the respective lands on lease for the upcoming crop year. Thereafter, the LEC cards are issued to the cultivator, based on which they become eligible for agricultural loans, crop insurance and other schemes.

Subsequently the A.P. (Andhra Area) Tenancy Act 1956 was also repealed – thereby seeking to allay the fears of land owners that their rights to the land title would be in jeopardy due to the provisions of the Tenancy Act.

### ***Key changes brought about through the A.P. Crop Cultivator Rights Act (2019):***

- The signature of the land owner is required on the application for Crop Cultivator Rights Card (CCRC). The CCRC itself is specified in the Act as an agreement between the land owner and the cultivator, for a maximum period of 11 months.
- Under the earlier 2011 Act, the application for LEC did not require the signature of the land owner. The application required the tenant to provide details of the land taken on lease, and it was the responsibility of the revenue officials MRO and VRO to verify through the Gram Sabha and issue the card.
- The A.P. Crop Cultivator Rights Rules (2019) issued under the Act prescribe in Section 3 that the Village Revenue Officer or Village Volunteer shall facilitate bringing together the Land owner and Cultivator to obtain the signature on CCRC. The Village Secretariat is also expected to facilitate obtaining Consent of Land owner through a Video Link or by obtaining a scanned copy of the signed CCRC from the owner.
- The benefits to be received by CCRC holders are specified as Entitlements in the Act which makes the government accountable to ensure that these benefits including crop loans, Rythu Bharosa, disaster compensation and so on reach the tenant farmers. Moreover, the Act also stipulates the “Banker’s Obligation” in Section 7: “(a) This Crop Cultivator Rights Card is sufficient for the Cultivator to obtain crop loan. The banker shall sanction and disburse the crop loan without insisting any other documents from the holder of this Crop Cultivator Rights Card. (b) Bankers shall not attach the scheduled land for recovery of any dues of the Cultivator.”

### **Estimated Number of Tenant Farmers and Number of Cards Issued**

The large proportion of tenant farmers in the state has been long recognized officially by the government.

***Radhakrishna Commission, 2014:*** The Commission on Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural Development of Andhra Pradesh, chaired by Prof. R.Radhakrishna, estimated on the basis of the NSSO 70<sup>th</sup> Round survey of Land and Livestock Holdings that there are 24.25 lakh tenant farmers, out of whom 6.29 lakh are landless tenants and 18.03 lakh are mixed tenants who own some land. It was estimated that out of 60.73 lakh hectares of operational area, 27.15 lakh hectares, i.e. 44% was being cultivated by tenants.

### ***Departmental Estimates and CCRC Targets***

The estimates of the district-wise number of tenant farmers by Revenue department in 2015 and by the Agriculture department in 2021 (as reported by Sakshi newspaper, June 12, 2021) are given in the table below. The total number estimated around 16 lakhs is significantly lower than 24.25 lakhs as per Radhakrishna Commission report. The final column gives the official targets set by the government for CCRC cards in 2021, as specified in the brochure issued by the Revenue department. It should be noted that the targets are only a fraction of even the departmental estimates of the tenant farmers.

District	#Tenants Departmental Estimate, 2015	#Tenants Departmental Estimate, 2021	Target for CCRC in 2021
Srikakulam	64,000	65,199	20,500
Vijayanagaram	62,000	63,453	21,000
Visakhapatnam	40,000	31,802	7,500
East Godavari	2,50,000	2,43,742	85,500
West Godavari	3,20,000	3,55,716	1,45,500
Krishna	2,00,000	1,96,372	42,000
Guntur	2,30,000	1,61,338	51,000
Prakasam	1,20,000	1,20,146	35,000
SPS Nellore	90,000	1,09,643	40,000
Chittoor	40,000	1,37,761	18,000
YSR Kadapa	50,000	17,348	5,000
Anantapur	40,000	54,941	20,500
Kurnool	1,19,000	43,022	8,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,25,000</b>	<b>16,00,483</b>	<b>5,00,000</b>

**Table 1: Departmental Estimates of Tenant Farmers & Targets for CCRC**

***Actual Numbers of CCRC and LEC issued to tenant farmers***

The district-wise numbers of CCRC and LEC issued during the years 2019-20 and 2020-21, as obtained by RTI by Rythu Swarajya Vedika.

District	LECs June-July 2019	CCRCs Oct 2019 - Mar 2020	CCRCs Apr 2020 - Mar 2021	Estimated Tenants 2021	CCRC % of Estimated Tenants
Srikakulam	20,754	10,412	3,721	65,199	6%
Vijayanagaram	18,354	10,158	10,728	63,453	17%
Visakhapatnam	12,579	4,534	5,801	31,802	18%
East Godavari	1,63,718	76,593	1,11,045	2,43,742	46%
West Godavari	2,60,510	66,160	1,08,527	3,55,716	31%
Krishna	64,609	31,706	76,840	1,96,372	39%
Guntur	98,376	28,884	53,101	1,61,338	33%
Prakasam	18,035	11,207	18,136	1,20,146	15%
Nellore	11,400	5,082	5,297	1,09,643	5%
Chittoor	3,551	1,192	1,344	1,37,761	1%
Ysr Kadapa	7,332	5,965	2,424	17,348	14%
Anantapur	6,140	3,290	1,073	54,941	2%
Kurnool	28,662	17,496	16,758	43,022	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,14,020</b>	<b>2,72,679</b>	<b>4,14,795</b>	<b>16,00,483</b>	<b>26%</b>

**Table 2: Number of CCRC and LEC issued, compared to the estimated tenants**

## ABOUT THE STUDY

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of the study is to examine the situation of the tenant farmers in the context of the Crop Cultivator Rights Act, 2019, and the recognition and benefits promised by the present government. It seeks to establish the extent to which tenant farmers are being issued the Crop Cultivator Rights Cards (CCRC) and are receiving benefits from various government schemes including the Rythu Bharosa scheme, crop loans, disaster compensation, crop insurance, etc. The study also seeks to understand why certain tenant farmers are not receiving CCRC cards, and why the tenant farmers who received CCRC are not getting all the benefits meant for CCRC holders.

### **METHODOLOGY BASED ON DOOR-TO-DOOR VILLAGE SURVEY**

The key element in the study is that in each of the selected villages, a door-to-door survey is done in the entire village to identify every single tenant farmer and obtain answers to the questionnaire. Thus, the study seeks to establish who the tenant farmers are in each village, going beyond the rough estimates given by the residents or the official lists of CCRC holders or crop cultivation records of the government departments. In other words, the survey provides an enumeration of all tenant farmers in the village.

Through the responses to the questionnaire from each of the tenant farmers, the study obtains the field-level information about how many of them have received CCRC cards, the reasons for not receiving CCRC cards, the benefits received when they get the CCRC cards, the level of indebtedness and access to bank loans, the extent to which disaster compensation is received by the tenants, and so on.

In addition, small focus group discussions are held in the village to obtain more general information about the village, the specific problems faced, and the social dynamics within the village which have a bearing on the situation of the tenant farmers. A small number of land owners have also been interviewed in each village to get a sense of how they see the issue of identification of tenant farmers.

Having obtained detailed information about the village through the survey, the study analyzes these findings along with secondary data obtained at the village level and state level.

#### ***Aggregate Level:***

1. What proportion of the actual tenant farmers are receiving CCRC cards? How does this vary from district to district and based on the social category (BC/SC/ST/OC/Minority), and based on land ownership of the tenant farmers?
2. What are the key reasons why the tenant farmers who are not receiving CCRC cards are not getting them? How do the reasons vary based on districts and social profile?
3. To what extent does the requirement of the signature of land-owner on the CCRC application become a hurdle to obtaining CCRC? If some land-owners are not cooperating with their tenants in obtaining CCRC, what are the main reasons? How far do the tenants and land owners understand the 2019 Act and the abolition of the A.P. Tenancy Act, 1956?
4. Is the relation between the tenant and the land-owner purely short-term? How many tenants are leasing the same land from the same owner for more than 5 years?

5. What proportion of tenant farmers are landless? How many of the landless tenant farmers are not receiving Rythu Bharosa benefit? Among the landless tenant farmers who are not receiving Rythu Bharosa, what are the reasons for the same?
6. Comparison between the situation with CCRC cards under the 2019 Act, and the earlier system of LEC (Loan Eligibility Cards) under the 2011 Act?
7. Among those who received CCRC cards, how many are receiving various benefits such as Rythu Bharosa, Crop Loans, Disaster compensation, and marketing? If they are not receiving benefits despite getting CCRC, what are the reasons?
8. To what extent are the Village Secretariat, Village Revenue Officers and Village Volunteers fulfilling their facilitating roles as required by the Rules of CCRC Act?
9. What are the key problems being faced by tenant farmers? What are the changes and specific solutions desired by the tenant farmers?
10. What is the situation of Indebtedness of tenant farmers? How far are they dependent on private high-interest loans vis-à-vis institutional agricultural loans?

***Village Level:***

1. How many tenant farmers and sharecroppers are actually present in the village?
2. How many of the surveyed tenants received CCRC cards in the past 3 years?
3. How does the number of reported CCRC cards of actual tenants compare to the official number of CCRC cards issued in the village? If there is a mismatch, what is the explanation?
4. What are the main obstacles in obtaining CCRC cards? Have they found it easier to obtain LEC cards in the past?
5. What are the specific social, economic and power dynamics influencing the situation of tenant farmers in the village? What is the caste profile of land owners and tenants?
6. What are the crops being grown and the specific terms of tenancy in the village?
7. What are the key problems being faced by tenant farmers in this particular village? How far are the tenant farmers being included in the various support schemes – particularly, Rythu Bharosa, Crop loans, Disaster compensation and marketing?

**COVERAGE OF THE STUDY**

Total number of surveyed tenant farmers included in this study is 3855 in 31 Gram Panchayats in 9 districts of Andhra Pradesh. Within a district, the gram panchayats were chosen to cover different regions in the district or different cropping pattern or different social profile. For example, in West Godavari district, we chose Bhimavaram mandal near the delta area, Pentapadu mandal in the Tadepalligudem area which is canal irrigated with paddy cultivation, and Penakanametta village in Kovvuru mandal where banana and vegetables are extensively cultivated with borewell irrigation. In Visakhapatnam district, we chose Butchayyapeta mandal which is in dryland area, Munagapadu mandal in irrigated area with high incidence of tenancy, and G.Madugula Mandal in the tribal area.

The relative numbers of tenants surveyed in each district do not necessarily reflect the total numbers of tenant farmers in the districts. However, the density of tenant farmers

in the selected sample villages does provide an indication. For example, in Anantapur district, 6 Gram panchayats were covered for a total of 504 tenant farmers, whereas in East Godavari district, we surveyed 3 gram panchayats for a total of 709 tenant farmers.

<b>District</b>	<b>Tenants surveyed</b>	<b>Gram Panchayats</b>
<b>Visakhapatnam</b>	412	3
<b>East Godavari</b>	709	3
<b>West Godavari</b>	464	4
<b>Krishna</b>	171	2
<b>Guntur</b>	537	3
<b>Prakasam</b>	203	2
<b>YSR Kadapa</b>	611	5
<b>Anantapur</b>	504	6
<b>Kurnool</b>	244	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3855</b>	<b>31</b>

## STUDY FINDINGS PART I

### Implementation of Crop Cultivator Rights Act, 2019 and Inclusion of Tenant Farmers in government schemes including Rythu Bharosa: State-level Analysis

#### A. WIDESPREAD PREVALENCE OF TENANCY

It has been well accepted that there is high incidence of tenant cultivation in certain districts such as East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur. However, our study shows that the incidence of tenancy is significantly high in other districts too.

**Visakhapatnam district:** The government's target for issuing CCRC cards is only 7,500 for the entire district. However, we found that there is a high proportion of tenancy in the two non-tribal mandals that we surveyed – Butchayyapeta and Munagapaka. In the Butchayyapeta mandal, the Butchayyapeta village had 286 tenant farmers whereas the total number of agricultural households in the village is about 800. In Munagapaka mandal, the surveyed village was a relatively small hamlet of Mulapeta with 90 agricultural households, out of which 56 were found to be tenant farmer households. The total tenants in the district would well exceed the Table 1 estimate of 31,802.

**Anantapuram district:** The survey found that in 6 diverse panchayats in 6 different mandals, there were on an average 84 tenant farmers in each village. Considering that there are 1003 gram panchayats in Anantapuram district, the actual number of tenant farmers in the district could exceed 80,000.

Based on our study, the actual tenant farmers in the state would well exceed the departmental estimate of 16 lakhs.

#### A.1 Incidence of Tenancy based on Extent of Land owned

The table below shows that a large section of the tenant farmers are either landless or own less than 1 acre of land. This section can be considered almost entirely dependent on the leased land for their livelihood. 79% of all the tenants in the surveyed villages are in this section, out of which 47% are Landless tenants, whose land owned is less than 5 cents. We did not come across any explicit instance of reverse tenancy, i.e., large landholders leasing land from small landholders.

There is significant district-wise variation too. In certain districts, especially West Godavari, East Godavari and Krishna, the percentage of entirely landless tenants is very high, between 55% to 73%. When we combine the landless farmers with those owning less than 1 acre, the percentage is more than 90% in these three districts. In the other districts, the proportion of landless tenants is between 28% and 47%, and when we include those who own less than 1 acre, the percentage is between 55% to 80% in all these districts.

District	Landless	0 - 1 Acre	1 - 2.5 Acres	2.5 - 5 Acres	> 5 Acres
Anantapur	31%	23%	24%	20%	2%
East Godavari	55%	40%	2%	2%	0%
Guntur	47%	32%	12%	8%	2%
Krishna	68%	25%	1%	4%	2%



District	Landless	0 - 1 Acre	1 - 2.5 Acres	2.5 - 5 Acres	> 5 Acres
Kurnool	48%	23%	12%	13%	4%
Prakasam	28%	31%	13%	19%	9%
Visakapatnam	35%	58%	5%	2%	1%
West Godavari	73%	25%	1%	1%	0%
YSR Kadapa	43%	25%	19%	11%	2%
Andhra Pradesh (State-wide)	47%	32%	10%	8%	2%

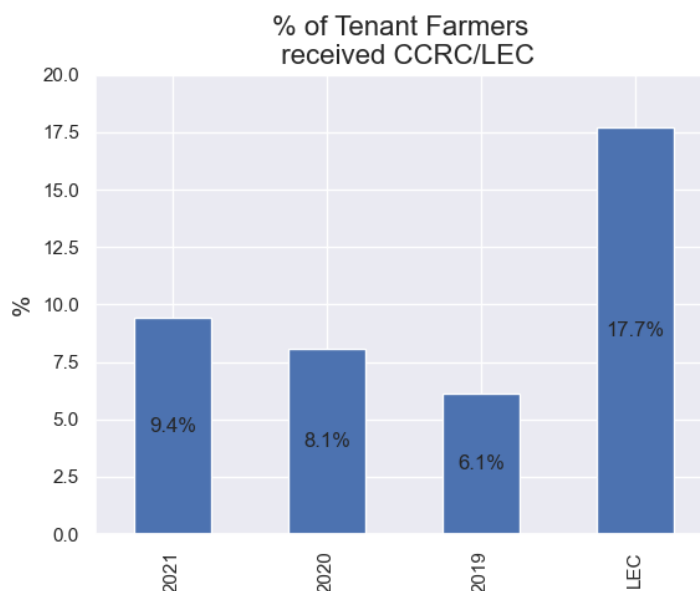
## B. IMPLEMENTATION OF CROP CULTIVATOR RIGHTS ACT 2019

The Crop Cultivator Rights Act, 2019 was brought in with the promise that all tenant farmers in the state will be issued Crop Cultivator Rights Cards (CCRC), and included in all government schemes such as Rythu Bharosa, interest-free crop loans, crop insurance, disaster compensation, crop procurement and more. One of the main purposes of our survey is to examine the extent to which tenant farmers are receiving CCRC cards and various benefits.

### B.1 Proportion of Tenant Farmers receiving CCRC

In 2021, out of the 3855 tenant farmers surveyed, only 364 received CCRC, i.e. only 9.4%. This number was only 6.1% in 2019 and 8.1% in 2020. The total number who received CCRC at least once during the past 3 years was 442. In comparison, 17.7% of the surveyed tenant farmers reported that they received LEC in 2019 or earlier, before the CCRC Act came into existence.

Did you get CCRC or LEC?	CCRC in 2021	CCRC in 2020	CCRC in 2019	LEC in 2019 or before
Received	364	306	228	639
Not Received	3491	3490	3484	2969
Not a tenant farmer in the year	-	59	143	247
Total number of tenants in the year	3855	3794	3712	3608
% of Tenant Farmers who got CCRC/LEC	9.4%	8.1%	6.1%	17.7%



The percentage of the tenants receiving CCRC cards is extremely low, given the high priority declared by the government to issuing the cards to tenants. The survey reveals the reasons why a large majority of tenants are not receiving CCRC.

#### ***District-wise CCRC cards issued***

There is wide variation between districts in terms of how many CCRC cards are being issued. Most of the cards to the surveyed tenant farmers have been issued in East

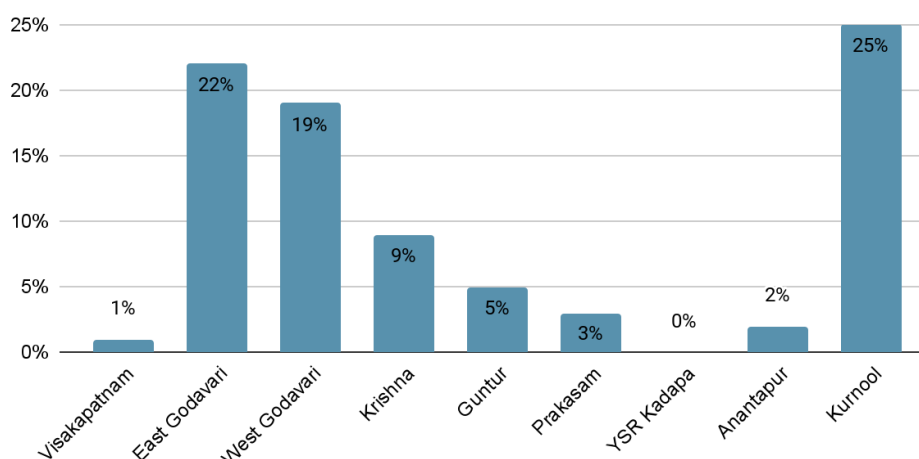
Godavari, West Godavari and Kurnool districts, whereas the least proportion of cards have been issued in Kadapa, Visakhapatnam, Anantapur and Prakasam.

Taking field observations also into account, it may be said that East Godavari and West Godavari districts have significantly better performance compared to other districts in terms of issuing CCRC, but even in those districts, only about one in five actual tenant farmers received CCRC. The numbers from Kurnool are an outlier within the Rayalaseema region, and this may be partially due to the small sample size and one selected village showing unusually good performance in issuing CCRC.

District	Received CCRC in 2021	Total tenants surveyed	% of Tenants getting CCRC
Visakhapatnam	4	412	1%
East Godavari	153	709	22%
West Godavari	86	464	19%
Krishna	16	171	9%
Guntur	28	537	5%
Prakasam	6	203	3%
YSR Kadapa	1	611	0%
Anantapur	9	504	2%
Kurnool	61	244	25%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>3855</b>	

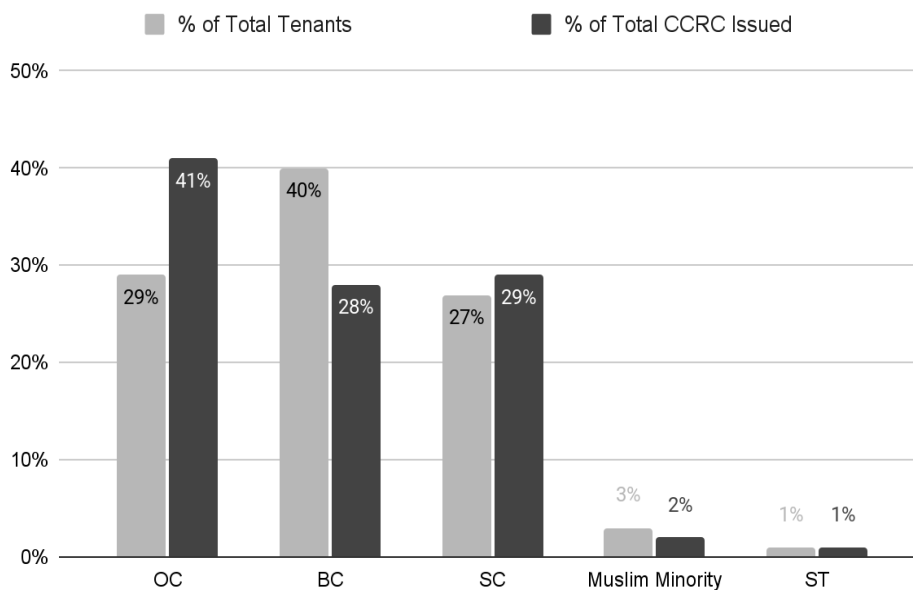
### DISTRICT-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF CCRC Cards

% of Tenants getting CCRC



### **Variation in CCRC cards issued based on Social Category**

Analysis based on social category (BC/SC/ST/OC/Minority) shows that while Other Castes (OC) constitute 29% of the total tenant farmers in these villages, they received 41% of the CCRCs issued. In contrast, Backward Castes (BC) constitute 40% of the total tenant farmers in these villages, but they received only 28% of the CCRCs issued.



**Variation in the CCRC issued based on Social Category**

## B.2 Reasons for not receiving CCRC

This is one of the key questions addressed in this survey. The reasons for the tenants not receiving CCRC cards are under four basic heads.

**1. Lack of Awareness:** This includes those who never heard about the tenant farmer cards and those who heard about the cards but did not know how to apply for them. The surveyors made sure to use colloquial terms for the cards such as ‘tenant farmer cards’ or ‘tenant certificate’ when they are not familiar with the term ‘CCRC card’. Even so, in some districts, there was a very large percentage which did not know about the cards.

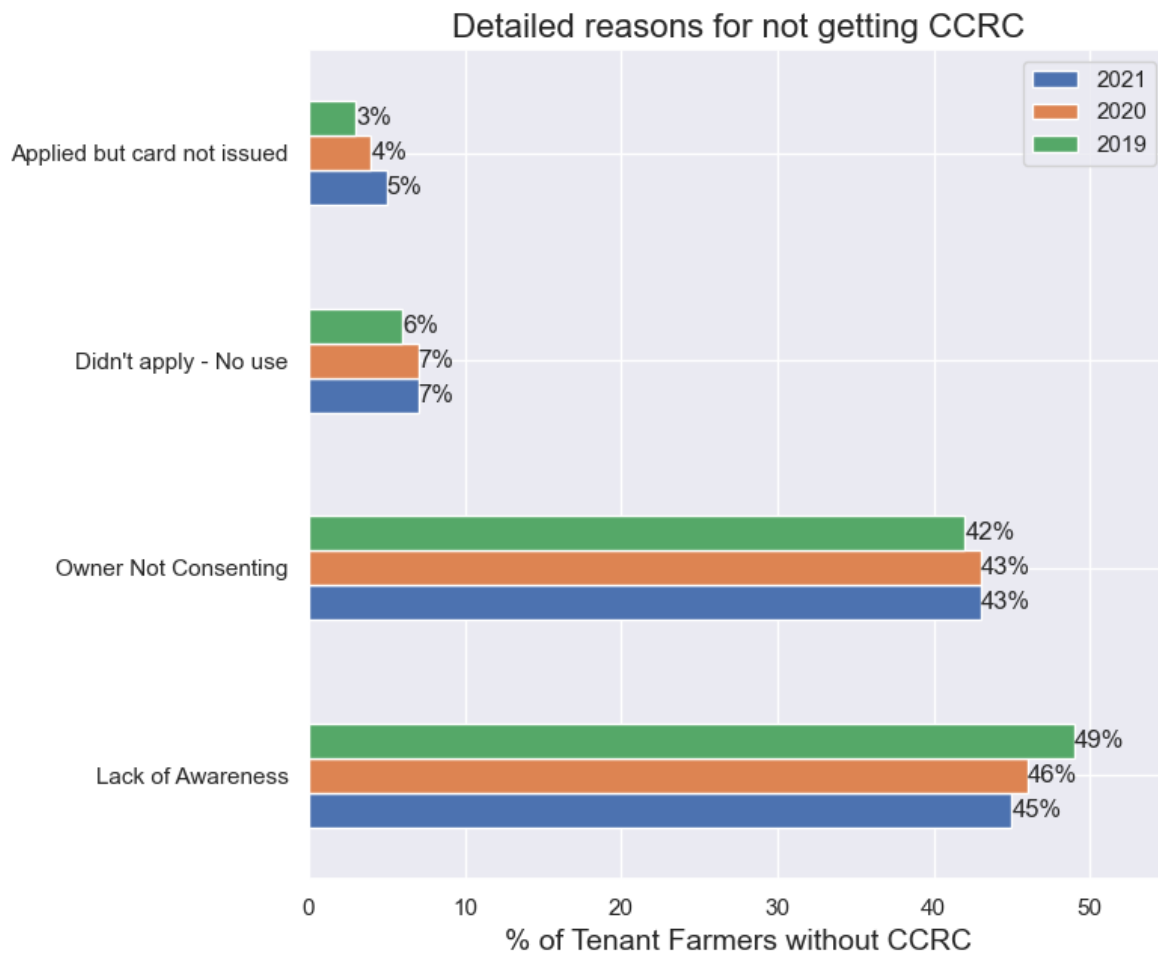
**2. Owner not consenting:** Obtaining the owner’s signature is the big obstacle to receiving CCRC. This included cases where the owner explicitly refused to sign the application when approached by the tenant, or the owner told the tenant that he or she would not be given land on lease next year if they ask for CCRC, or it was implicitly conveyed to the tenant that the owner would not consent to signing, or the owner was not available to be approached for his or her signature.

**3. Not applied – No use:** A small number of farmers decided not to apply because they felt that getting the card is not of use, either because they obtained CCRC earlier and did not receive any benefit, or because others in the village received CCRC but no benefits.

**4. Applied but card not issued:** There are a significant number of cases where the tenant made the application after successfully obtaining the signature of the owner, but was not issued the card. In most such cases, the tenant was not sure of the exact reason for being denied the card and believed that it is due to unfair treatment by the officials or due to the officials not performing their duty.

### ***State-level Distribution of Reasons for not receiving CCRC***

At the state level, in 2021, 45% of the tenants cited Lack of Awareness as the reason while 43% said it was due to Owner not Consenting. 7% decided not to apply because they believed it is of no use, and 5% applied but did not receive CCRC. However, it is important to note that there is a remarkable variation across districts.

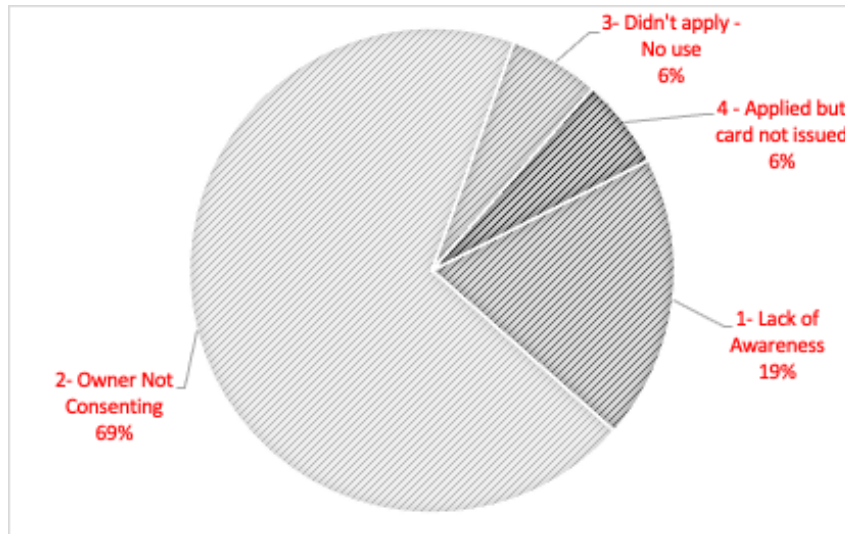


***District-wise variation in the Reason for not receiving CCRC***

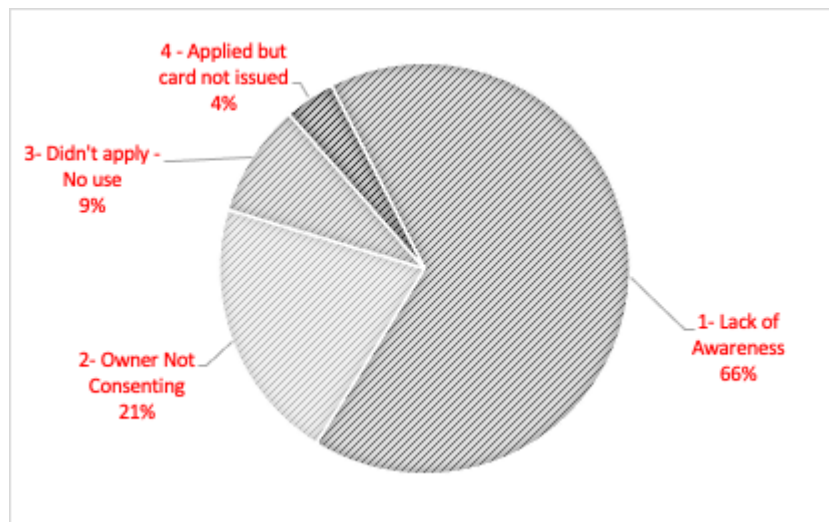
There is remarkable variation in the reasons cited in different districts. In some districts such as the Godavari districts, Krishna and Guntur, the level of awareness was very high, and the predominant reason was the owner signature or consent. In other districts, particularly in Rayalaseema or North Andhra, the lack of awareness was the predominant reason. The variation is so stark that the district may be seen as two distinct groups: Group 1 consisting of East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur, and Group 2 consisting of Visakhapatnam, Prakasam, Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool. The reasons when seen within these two District Groups show a clear picture.

Reason for not receiving CCRC	Percentage of Farmers citing the particular reason	
	District Group 1 (East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur)	District Group 2 (Visakhapatnam, Prakasam, Kadapa, Anantapur, Kurnool)
1- Lack of Awareness	19%	67%
2- Owner Not Consenting	69%	21%
3- Didn't apply - No use	6%	9%
4 - Applied but card not issued	6%	4%

**District Group 1: Reasons for not Receiving CCRC**  
(East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur)



**District Group 2: Reasons for not Receiving CCRC**  
(Visakhapatnam, Prakasam, Kadapa, Anantapur, Kurnool)



***Understanding the Variation between the two District Groups***

The experience with District Group 1 shows that in districts where the awareness level about CCRC is very high and a large proportion of tenants actually make the effort to obtain CCRC, the difficulty in obtaining the owner's signature on the CCRC application proves to be the biggest stumbling block. From our field study, we can conclude that when the awareness level about CCRC increases even in districts in Group 2, such as the surveyed villages in Kurnool, the difficulty with owner consent becomes the biggest obstacle. Hence, we can consider "Owner not Consenting" to be the limiting reason for not obtaining CCRC across the state.

In the districts where Lack of Awareness is the main reason for not receiving CCRC, the study found lack of effort by the local government departments to spread awareness about the CCRC cards and encouraging the tenant farmers to apply for them. In the districts in Group 1, the awareness level among farmers was very high, and this strongly correlates with the attention paid by the government departments to the implementation of the CCRC Act.

It is evident that the government considered the four districts in Group 1 (East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur) as the districts where tenancy is primarily prevalent, and has focused its efforts on these districts. The study found the same prioritization before 2019 too, when the 2011 Licensed Cultivators Act was in force and LEC cards were being given to tenant farmers.

This prioritization is also reflected in the targets set by the government for issuance of CCRC in each year. The low targets in certain districts become a self-fulfilling prophecy because of low effort by the departments. The role of the local government departments becomes all the more important because of the inherent resistance from land owners.

### **B.3 Owner Signature Barrier**

In addition to the survey evidence showing the lack of owner's consent and signature as the predominant reason for not receiving the CCRC, the focus group discussions and interactions in all villages across the districts have established that obtaining the owner's signature is proving to be an insurmountable barrier for a large majority of tenant farmers. In fact, in some of the villages where higher number of CCRCs were issued, it was openly admitted that many cards were issued by the officials due to goodwill or the influence exercised by the tenant farmer even in the absence of the land owner's signature. A large proportion of the tenant farmers said that if they insisted that the land owner should consent to the CCRC, the owner clearly stated that he or she would not give the land on lease to the tenant.

The 2011 Act allowed LECs to be issued to tenant farmers without requiring them to obtain the land owner's signature. The local revenue officials had the power to ascertain the fact of the lease through field verification and Gram Sabha, and absence of objection from the land owner was treated as implicit consent. The fact that 17.1% of tenant farmers in our study received LEC while only 9.6% received CCRC is evidence that the new requirement of owner signature for CCRC has proved a big obstacle. This is also borne by the actual figures at the state level – the number of LECs issued during May-July 2019 for the year 2019-20 was 7,14,000 while the number of CCRCs issued in the entire 2020-21 year was only 4,16,000.

### **B.4 Views of the Land Owners**

When we interviewed land owners, most of them made it clear that they would not be ready to sign any document or piece of paper which confirms that they have given the land on lease. Two reasons were given: (a) The danger that their signature would affect their ownership rights on the land and make them vulnerable to lawsuits by tenants claiming rights over the land; (b) If they allow the tenants to get CCRC and the tenant takes a bank loan, the burden of repayment could fall on the owner because his land is involved in the cultivation.

Pointing out the actual legal provisions typically does not shift the position of the land owner – even when it is shown that the CCRC Act clearly specifies that the issuance of the card does not affect the land ownership rights, or that the banker is not allowed to recover the crop loans issued to the CCRC holding tenant by proceeding against the

owner's land. Most land owners are not aware that the A.P. Tenancy Act (1956) has been repealed, and they still hold the old Act as posing a danger to their land ownership. It is evident that in spite of the protections offered to the owner's rights by the new law, the owners do not feel that they should take the pro-active step of placing their signature.

An opinion expressed by some of the owners was that if the government wants to provide benefits to the tenant farmers, it should do so without involving the owners and requiring their signatures.

Another major reason why the land owners are reluctant to allow the tenant to be issued CCRC is that most of the owners are availing of significant benefits such as interest-free crop loans, disaster compensation, crop insurance payments, and even the benefit of the occasional loan waivers, based on their land title. Despite the bad situation of the tenant farmers, they are not ready to forego these benefits. Many owners stated that they would not be in favour of allowing the tenants to take any crop loans based on the cultivation.

### **B.5 Role of Village Secretariat and Local Officials**

The CCRC Act and the Rules state the importance of the role to be played by the Village Revenue Officer, Village Volunteers and Village Secretariat in facilitating the agreement between the land owner and tenant farmer. Therefore, the survey asked every tenant farmer about the kind of assistance or facilitation they received from the village officials.

Out of the 3855 tenant farmers, 86.5% or 3,522 tenants received no help from the village officials. 9.6% tried to facilitate but did not succeed. Only in 3.7% cases, the village officials successfully convinced the land owner to allow the tenant to be issued the CCRC. It is clear from our field interactions that the largest majority of VROs do not wish to enter into these uncomfortable interactions with the land owners who are often the more influential people in the village. As for the village volunteers, they are too young to even attempt to convince the land owners.

<b>Role of Village Officials in facilitating Land owner consent</b>	<b>No. of tenants</b>	<b>%</b>
No - They did not help at all	3,522	86.5%
They tried convincing but owner did not agree	389	9.6%
Yes - They convinced the owner to sign	150	3.7%
Instead, they told the owner not to sign	12	0.3%
<i>Total</i>	3,855	

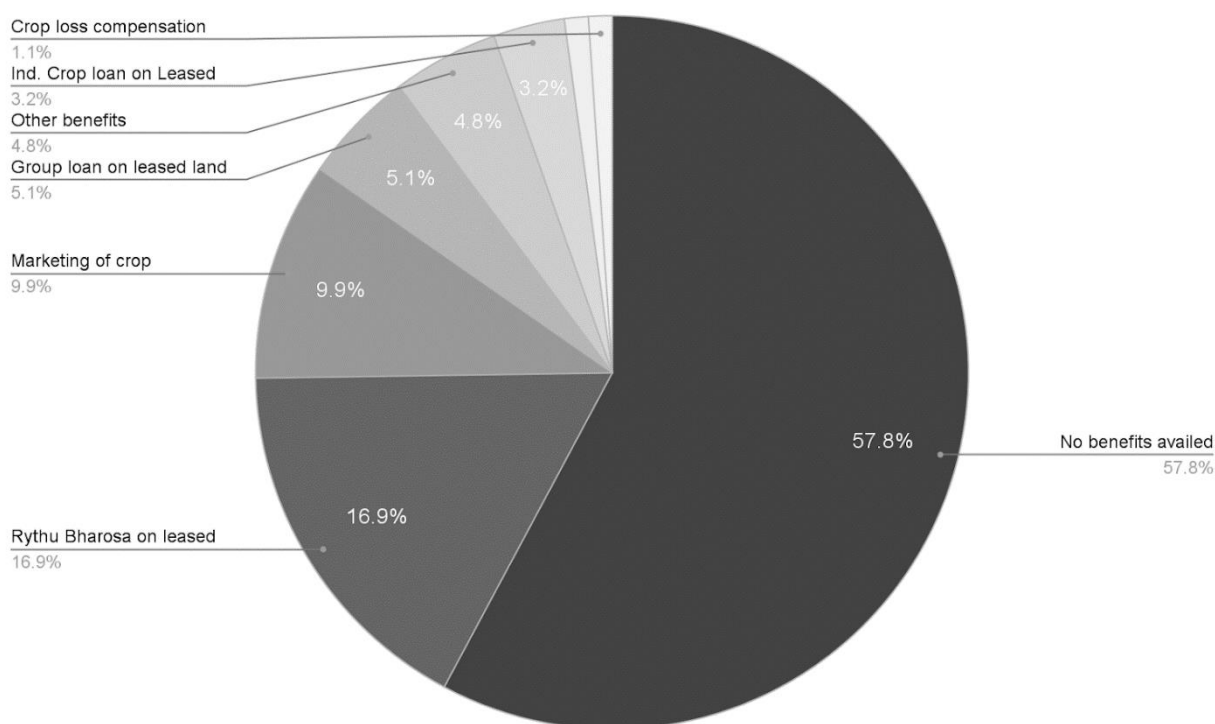


## C. RYTHU BHAROSA, CROP LOANS, DISASTER COMPENSATION AND OTHER BENEFITS TO TENANT FARMERS

The explicit promise of the present YSRCP government and the earlier TDP government was that they would ensure the inclusion of tenant farmers in all the government schemes and support systems. This means that the tenant farmers should be able to obtain zero-interest crop loans, crop insurance, disaster compensation, cash support schemes such as Rythu Bharosa, crop procurement and so on. In addition, the Crop Cultivator Rights Act, 2019 makes these benefits an entitlement to every tenant farmer who is issued the CCRC.

### C1. Benefits received by CCRC holders

Being issued the CCRC or the LEC (in the earlier regime), is the first essential step recognizing the tenant as a cultivator, entitling them to inclusion in the schemes. As we have seen, only 9.6% of all the tenant farmers in the surveyed villages received CCRC. However, even among those who managed to receive CCRC, only a few are being included in the various schemes and support systems. Most remarkably, 59% of the tenants who have somehow succeeded in receiving CCRC do not receive any single benefit from the card – not even for the procurement of their crop.



Benefits received by CCRC holders	No. received benefit in 2021	% of CCRC holders
No benefits received	215	59%
Individual crop loan on Leased Land	12	3%
Group loan on leased land	19	5%

Rythu Bharosa on leased land	63	17%
Crop insurance on leased land	4	1%
Crop loss compensation	4	1%
Marketing of crop	37	10%
Other benefits	18	5%
<i>Total Tenant Farmers with CCRC</i>	<i>364</i>	<i>100%</i>

## **C2. Rythu Bharosa to Landless Tenants**

One of the welcome features of the A.P. government's Rythu Bharosa scheme is that it is extended to landless tenant farmers, unlike some other cash transfer schemes for farmers such as the Centre's PM-KISAN and Telangana's Rythu Bandhu. However, the study has shown that out of the meagre number of 210 landless tenants who received CCRC, only 63 received Rythu Bharosa. This means that only 11.5% of the landless tenant farmers receive CCRC cards, and only 3% receive the Rythu Bharosa support.

In the case of about half of the landless tenants who receive CCRC but do not receive Rythu Bharosa, the reason is that only landless tenants belonging to BC, SC, ST and Minority categories are eligible for Rythu Bharosa. There is a significant population of OC tenant farmers, particularly belonging to the Kapu and Yadav community in the coastal districts, who are landless, and we found a strong resentment at being left out of the Rythu Bharosa scheme by design.

<b>Benefits to Landless Tenants</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total Landless tenants</b>
Total Landless Tenant Farmers	1828	100%
Not Received CCRC	1618	88.5%
Received CCRC	210	11.5%
Rythu Bharosa to Landless Tenants	63	3%

## **C3. Indebtedness and Access to Bank Loans**

One of the key problems pushing tenant farmers into indebtedness and even suicide is the lack of access to the bank loans. As seen in the above table, out of the entire set of 3855 tenant farmers surveyed, only 12 received individual crop loans based on their CCRC which is about 0.3%. 19 received group loans as part of Rythu Mithra Groups, amounting to about Rs.50,000 per year at 6% interest. To that extent, they could save money on high interest paid for private loans. Many tenant farmers, especially in East Godavari and West Godavari districts reported that Rythu Mithra Groups used to be very active in their villages in earlier years, but have either become defunct or not encouraged by the banks any longer, in the past 3 years.

The survey included questions on access to bank loans and extent of private loans being taken for cultivation. 82% of the respondents could not avail of any agricultural loans from banks. On the other hand, on an average, each tenant farmer was taking a private loan of Rs.1,20,895 every year for crop cultivation. The average interest rate was Rs.2 or Rs.3 per month, amounting to 24% or 36%. In many cases, the effective interest is much higher reaching beyond 50%.

#### **C4. Disaster Compensation**

Most farmers reported that they suffered a major crop loss at least once in the past 3 years. However, only 4 tenant farmers out of the 3855 surveyed reported that they received disaster compensation. This is a major cause for high indebtedness and distress among the tenant farmers.

## **D. CONCLUSION**

The findings documented in Part I of the study report focus on the aggregate results across the state including district-wise variations. The village level studies throw light on the nuances of issues faced by tenant farmers and the influence of local social, economic and political factors, which will be brought out in the Part II of the study.

The findings in this report show that despite the promise of the government to do justice to the tenant farmers and place major focus on ensuring that all tenant farmers receive recognition and all benefits, the real picture on the ground is dismal. Only 9.6% of the tenant farmers received recognition in the form of CCRC, and even out of this small number of CCRC holders, a meagre number receive any benefits at all.

The tenant farmers are in a dire situation on the edge of disaster. At a time when even the owner-cultivators are facing a major challenge to make a decent livelihood from agriculture, the tenants are much worse off. In the surveyed villages, we found the tenant farmers desperate for any support and weighed down by private loans to input dealers or land owners, lack of any bargaining capacity with land owners, major crop losses in disasters, lack of freedom to sell the crop at a remunerative price or MSP, and not even receiving the Rythu Bharosa benefit.

Assuming that the government is serious about implementing their promises to the tenant farmers, a major change of approach is required.

1. The Crop Cultivator Rights Act, 2019 should be amended to remove the requirement of the signature of the land owner, which is not only impractical but highly unfair.
2. The information about which tenant farmer is cultivating which land in the current year is known to almost everyone in the village, including the VRO and the agricultural assistant. Hence this is an easily verifiable information, for which a transparent mechanism should be put in place based on verification in Gram Sabha and putting up the list in the village secretariat. The responsibility for verification should rest with the local government officials with a robust mechanism for grievance redressal for the tenant farmers.
3. The government should take up a high visibility campaign to convey to the land owners that on the one hand, there is no threat to their land ownership title, and on the other hand, the government is seriously committed to ensuring that the benefits of various schemes reach the tenant farmer and will overcome any attempts by the land owners to deny or block these benefits for the tenants. Only this kind of a robust approach by the government will provide a scope to the tenant farmers to stand by their claim to recognition.
4. The government should work out an extensive mechanism for extending bank loans to tenant farmers, preferably as individual crop loans which is already stipulated in the Act as an entitlement for the CCRC holder and an obligation for the bank. The mechanism of group loans to tenant farmers in the form of Rythu Mithra Groups and Joint Liability Groups should be strengthened and made more extensive.
5. The government should take special cognizance of the extra burden faced by the tenant farmers, and extend special financial support to the tenants, going beyond the benefits extended to the owner-cultivators.

Only when such an approach is taken by the government will the tenant farmers receive justice and be able to continue their invaluable contribution to A.P. agriculture.

## Appendix 1: Survey Villages

<b>District</b>	<b>Gram Panchayats</b>	<b>No. of GPs</b>
Anantapur	Amaduguru, Amaduguru mandal Gopepalli, Nallamada mandal K.Kuntlapalli, Kadiri mandal P.Kotthapalli, N P Kunta mandal Somayajulapalli, Gandlapenta mandal Thangedukunta, OD.Chervu mandal	6
East Godavari	Donthamuru, Pithapuram mandal Kandikuppa, Katrenikona mandal Nedunuru, Ainavolu mandal	3
Guntur	Balusupadu, Pedakurapadu mandal Kothapally, Atchampeta mandal Vannayapalem, Bellamkonda mandal	3
Krishna	Kadavakollu, Vuyyuru mandal Katuru, Vuyyuru mandal	2
Kurnool	Bollavaram, Kallur mandal Padidempadu, Kurnool mandal RK Puram, Allagadda	3
Prakasam	Doddavaram, Maddipadu Rajampalle, Darsi mandal	2
Visakapatnam	Butchayyapeta, Butchayyapeta mandal Gaduthuru, G. Madugula mandal Mulapeta, Munagapaka mandal	3
West Godavari	Jeedigunta, Nidadavolu mandal Kumudavalli, Bhimavaram mandal Parimella, Pentapadu mandal Penakanamitta, Kovvur mandal	4
YSR Kadapa	Chemarlapalle, Kajipet mandal Madithadu, T Sundupalle mandal Seethampalli, Proddatur mandal Thimmasamudram, T Sundupalle mandal Thumukunta, Galiveedu mandal	5

## Appendix 2: Contributors to the Study

This study has been made possible by the collective effort of a large number of social workers, volunteers and students, over the period of January and February 2022. They participated in their individual capacity or as part of various organizations. As a token of our appreciation, we have listed the names of the individuals who have participated in conducting the study. We thank all the organizations which have supported the study and facilitated the participation of their members.

District	Volunteers who conducted the study
Anantapur	Bhanuja Cheruvu, S Anjaneyulu, C.Adhinarayana, C.Suryam, M.Nareshkumar, Obulappa, P Anjaneyulu, V.Mahesh, Ravindra, Roja, Yellappa Kathi, N Anita, Vishnu Kumar, Pavan, Vinod
East Godavari	Beeram Ramulu, Kondababu M, V Ganesh, Gadi Sreenu, Goverdhan Yerragunta, Gundluru Ram Mohan, Kiran Vissa, Narsimulu, Naveen Ramisetty, Sahith Goverdhanam, Sathapathi Nagababu, Ravi, Rajesh Yedida
Guntur	Nandamudi Venkateswararao, Rakesh, Shikha Narasimha, Ramu Shilamathi
Krishna	B. Kondal Reddy,, Rohit Gutta, Ravi Kanneganti, Kommu Nagarjuna, J Lakshmi Kumari, Merugu Vijaya, Praveen Kolanidu, Sujatha Kishore
Kurnool	A Krishna, K Bhaskar, Pothula Shekar, B Kondal, Kommu Nagarjuna
Prakasam	Ashok, Nagamani, Ravindra, Pothula Shekar
Visakapatnam	G Bhoolaka Naidu, K Dasaradha, K Ramu, Mathe Chittibabu, S Balaji, S Venkata Ramana, Daari Venkatesh, N Geethika, S Venkatesh, Seedari Srinu, Sathapathi Nagababu, R Bujjibabu
West Godavari	Dakshayani Thota, Jonagama Narsimulu, SRD Anusha, Avula Rakesh, Lakshmi Y, Kommu Nagarjuna, Pothula Shekar, Yerragunta Goverdhan, Gadi Sreenu
YSR Kadapa	Amarnath, Bhaskar, Jampangi Jayanna, Venkataiah, Venkatesh, Adinarayana, Putha Shivareddy, Mangali Sreenivasulu, Yellappa Kathi
Chittoor (in progress)	Haribabu, Rehamatullah, Kranthi Kumari

### **Analysis done by:**

KiranKumar Vissa, Naveen Kumar Ramisetty, Deepak Gupta, Sree Harsha Thanneru

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