

**A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS MARKETING IN INDIA: A  
CASE STUDY OF TELANGANA SONA/RNR-15048 MARKETING AND PROMOTION  
STRATEGIES THROUGH MASS MEDIA.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This present study has reveals that, the social (WhatsApp, Face Book, YouTube) has becomes more effective medium to popularize the unique characteristics of the sugar free rice among the consumers. According to this qualitative study, in the marketing and branding of the Sugar free Rice (Telangana Sona) TV, word of mouth, print media, social media platforms are found to be very effective in spreading the information regarding the characteristics of the Sugar free Rice. To ascertain the results of the qualitative analysis, the interview schedule had been prepared to collect the best possible data from the four agencies who have been involved in marketing of the sugar free rice (Telangana Sona) in India as well Telangana. These channels have tremendous potential in the dissemination of information. Word of mouth, Television, Print media and social media had equal roles in the dissemination of information.

**Keywords:** Sugar free rice, Telangana Sona (RNR-15048), Agricultural Marketing, Mass Media, Glycemic Index levels, marketing agencies.

**Introduction:**

India is an agricultural based economy and it provides livelihood for two third population in the country. Agriculture is backbone for Indian economy since times several years. If agriculture is prosper and other sectors will also perform accordingly. The contribution of Agriculture for countries GDP is around 20% according to the Economic Survey report of 2020-21. The conducive agro climatic conditions India is the second largest producer of the world. Rice is the main staple food for Indians as well many other Asian countries in the world. Due to the changing food habits and consuming of junk foods obesity, diabetes and other lifestyle diseases prevalence increasing in India. India has an estimated 77 million people (1 in 11 Indians) formally diagnosed with diabetes, which makes it the second most affected in the world, after China. Furthermore, 700,000 Indians died of diabetes, hyperglycemia, kidney disease or other complications of diabetes in 2020. One in six people (17%) in the world with diabetes is from India (Wikipedia15-11- 2022). To curtail increasing trend of diabetes in the world many agricultural scientists are putting efforts to develop low Glycemic index rice varieties which are very much suitable for diabetic patients. Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU), has put its efforts to develop the low Glycemic rice variety which is having Low GI value of 51.5. The variety was released by the PJTSAU in 2015, after all the statutory approvals got from the various institutions in the name of 'Telangana Sona' or 'RNR-15048'. This rice has been a great market potential in India along with many of rice eating countries in the world. The present paper has been studied the market potential and marketing strategies adopted for the popularization of the rice variety among the consumers by the chosen marketing firms in India.

**Status of Rice production in the world:**

The United States of America (USA), Department of Agriculture (USDA) has estimated the world rice production in the year 2016-2017 was about 480.13 million Metric Tons. In the year 2015-

2016 rice production was 472.04 million Metric Tons, there is an increase of rice production in the world about 1.71%. In case of India, in 1950 -1951 India's rice production was 20.58 million tons and by 2012-2013 rice production increased to 104.40 million tons. India is the second largest producer of the world. Increasing of irrigation facilities developing of high yielding varieties were contributed for increase of production & productivity in the country. The global rice production is increasing year by year is about 18%. And rice production is expected to improve in other Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. China, Japan, Republic of Korea is in the decreasing of rice production (FAO.2013-2014).

**Top 10 Leading Rice Producing Countries in the World (2019-20)**

S.No	Country	Production In(Metric Tons)
	China	146.73
	India	118.87
	Indonesia	34.7
	Bangladesh	35.83
	Vietnam	27.1
	Thailand	17.66
	Burma	12.7
	Philippines	11.93
	Japan	7.61
	Brazil	7.6

Source: Statista, 2021.

In Asia – Pacific region rice is the major crop. The projected demand in the world by the year 2025 is mind boggling (Hossain, 1995), the consumption of rice will be increased about 51 % by the year 2025. At the same time, the consumers' population will grow, and the rice producers will decrease dramatically. The current demand is about 524 million tons, is increased to 700 million tons by the year 2025.

**Review of Literature:**

Mass media are essential ingredients needed for effective transfer of technologies that are designed to boost agricultural production. For farmers to benefit from such technologies, they must first have access and learn how to effectively utilize them in their farming systems and practices. Mass media are important in providing information for enabling the farming community to make informed decision regarding their farming activities (Saleh et al., 2018). The success of agricultural development programmes largely depends on the nature and extent use of mass media for development. According to this study, Radio and Television have been acclaimed to be the more potent media in spread of the information (knowledge) to the farmers. This paper indicated that, the use of print media in information dissemination in agriculture could not be suitable because of low literacy levels of the farmers.

Kulakarni Aaditi (2020), has revealed that, "A study about Influence of Social Media in Agriculture marketing with reference to India". This study indicates the conventional interchange of agricultural information has been controlled by newspapers, television and magazines. Since the emergence of the social media platforms like face book, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube the communication has become more virtual than physical and these platforms have more handy tools for consumers as well as sellers of agricultural products with a little investment. This study has found that, WhatsApp has most popular social media platform for participants. Pandemic forged innovative opportunities for use of social media in agricultural marketing.

Similarly, Indian School of Business (ISB) had studied and evolved the marketing strategy for Telangana Sona. This study has recommended enhancing the market share of the Telangana Sona

among rice eating people in the country. The report of the ISB opined that there is a need of the creating awareness among the consumers; presently it has been popular and spreading through the word of mouth among the friends and family members (ISB, 2020). It also finds that, to communicate the variety through mode of advertising is identified as one of influential factor. Print and Electronic media can be utilized effectively, and media plans must be evolved. Mass media tools like pamphlets and print advertisements were also suggested for enhancing of the visibility of the Telangana Sona in the untapped market.

### **Methodology & Data presentation:**

The present study has been adopted both qualitative and quantitative methodology to get the in-depth analysis about the sugar free rice of Telangana Sona (RNR-15048). To ascertain the marketing and media strategy of the Telangana Sona/RNR-15048 rice marketing agencies/firms were interviewed by using the interview schedule. Four Agencies/firms have been identified for this study. Which are entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the PJTSAU, for providing marketing and the selling of the rice to the consumers in the name of the sugar-free rice. Because of this variety had a low Glycemic Index level, which is suitable to consume even by diabetic patients. The interview schedule was prepared with 26 questions mostly are open-ended to collect the most possible data from the business firms. Due to the Pandemic situation interview schedule was sent to Google form to all the four firms and recorded their interviews online. Based on the feedback received through Google forms from the marketing agencies, one to one telephonic conversation was also held with them for further improvement of the data. The Respondents are in the cadre of CEOs, Chief advisor for the company, Marketing Manager, Director of the companies was shared their views. All the respondents are 26 to 45 years of age group. All are enthusiastic entrepreneurs.

### **Details of the Interviewees and their Agencies/companies**

1. Mr. Mithilesh, Director, Deccanmudra Agri.Pvt, Ltd, Madhapur, Hyderabad.
2. Mr. Vamshi, Chief Advisor, SPV Specialty Foods LLP, 1-2-170/5, Rajamuralidhar Street, Secunderabad – 500003, Telangana State.
3. V Ravinder Reddy, Marketing Manager(Agricultural Officer), Mulkanoor Cooperative rural Credit & Marketing Society Ltd, Mulkanoor, Karimnagar District.
4. Mr. Rajesh N.Saraf, Co-Founder, CEO, BEFACH 4X, PVT Ltd, 1-1-31/336, Saket Colony, Hyderabad-500002.

### ➤ **Profile of the companies/Agencies**

The Companies/Agencies which are started marketing for Telangana Sona are budding entrepreneurs. Among the Four Agencies/firms, 2 firms are started their business operations with the marketing of the RNR/Telangana Sona rice in the name of sugar-free rice. All the agencies were having marketing experience of 2 to 8 years in Agri products selling online and offline. The Agencies /firms were identified as the potential market for the Telangana Sona rice within the state, the country as well as outside the country. All the firms/agencies are located their business operations in Hyderabad and Secunderabad cities except the Mulkanoor cooperative society which is operating from the Mulkanoor, but they have opened their store in the Agricultural University campus.

### ➤ **Reasons for Entered into Telangana Sona Marketing**

As shared views by the marketing agencies and its representatives, the main reason for entering into this marketing is mentioned below.

1. Growing demand for Sugar-free rice in the state as well rice-eating countries.

2. RNR-15048/Telangana Sona is only the low Glycemic index rice is available in India there is a lot of scope for business.
3. Larger scope for export within and outside the country.
4. Wanted to expand their horizon by using the popularity growing for the Telangana sona Rice.

➤ **Different Rice varieties selling by the Marketing agencies.**

To attract and capture the Rice market and consumers, the four agencies are marketing their products by innovative means. These agencies are selling the Telangana Sona rice in different variations. Such variations are White Rice, Brown Rice, and Organic Rice. One among these four is planning to introduce all these three forms of rice to capture all kinds of consumers.

➤ **Mode of Business**

The main mode of business of all these organizations is mostly offline and online, particularly through e-Commerce. These are associated with Amazon and Flip cart for marketing online and also established stores in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mumbai, Vijayawada, Vizag, Warangal, and Hanmakonda cities. Two agencies are selling through the supermarkets.

➤ **Export of Rice**

Half of the agencies are exported the Telangana Sona rice to the Middle East Countries, the USA, Europe, especially the UK. Beach 4X Ltd had got permission from the US for exporting the Telangana Sona rice. Deccanmudra and SPV had tried to capture the local market within the state and country. The Mulkanoor cooperative society is confined to the domestic market of Telangana state. Through its network Mulkanoor society has been selling about 10 to 15 tons per month. According to these marketing firms, on average turnover of the Telangana Sona rice is about 50 to 60 tons per month.

➤ **How & Where Raw Rice is procured**

These agencies have their mode of procurement of raw rice from the farmers. One agency had taken the help of middlemen to procure the rice from the farmers, and another agency had approached rice millers for procurement as per their requirements. And two Agencies had entered the buy-back agreement with the farmers. Deccanmudra had an agreement with 500 farmers in Sultanpur village of Siddipet district, Telangana State. Deccanmudra had provided the farmers with all the inputs like seed and fertilizer etc. The final price of procurement from the farmers will be included in the agreement. Similarly, Befach had also entered the buyback agreement with, the farmers of Devarakadira, Mandal of Mahabunagar district. Mulkanoor cooperative society had encouraged their society members to cultivate the Telangana Sona/RNR-15048, and they procured the raw rice from farmers and processing done at the society godowns. As a result of this, farmers were also benefitted to get a good price for their produce and assured additional income between Rs 2000 to Rs. 5000 per quintal. Due to this buy-back agreement farmers were also found happy because they need not worry about the market fluctuation and other related issues. Farmers are getting more than the minimum support price (MSP).

● **Rice and Rice Products Marketing and Commercialization Strategy:**

While there are numerous aspects to consider, your marketing and commercialization strategy will ultimately be built around identifying and strengthening your differentiators from other rice and rice products businesses. The strategy will take into account your product quality, pricing, distribution, reputation, marketing communications, value proposition and many other factors to help the market differentiate your rice and rice products business. Fundamental to your marketing strategy will be to create an “angle” for your rice and rice products business. For example, you may want to claim that your

instant rice is “the world’s healthiest instant rice.” Or that your line of wontons will be the best wontons in the world. You must create a promotional strategy that is unique and meaningful to your ideal audiences. Another basic principle of the marketing strategy is to direct your **promotional resources** to the most effective outlets for your rice business. Which publications, websites, social media websites, blogs, Yahoo! groups, and other media are best qualified to reach your customers? The most efficient approach is to identify the top few outlets for your products and develop these media into powerful marketing channels to push your rice business.

The key to every marketing strategy is **differentiation**. Your rice business must have a competitive advantage that allows it to stand out from the crowded sea of competitors in your industry. There are many ways you can differentiate your rice business. For example, if your rice business is only one of a few rice businesses catering to the growing health food market, you can limelight the health benefits of your products. Or if you are marketing organic or fair trade rice products, you can limelight social conscious nature of your rice business.

**Marketing communications** can include basically any form of communication to a targeted audience that you are trying to sell something to or position yourself relative to your competition. Marketing communications include television, radio, print ads, direct mail, email blasts, billboards, paid search, banner ads, display ads, online videos, web pages, and presentations. Depending on your marketing strategy, you may choose to advertise in multiple media. This can be an effective and low cost method of advertising. But it will take some diligent measuring of the various mediums you have employed to determine which strategies are the most effective and which may have a negative effect on your rice business. The most important thing you need to understand is that to create a successful **marketing mix strategy**, you must be able to characterize your target market and position your particular product or service to appeal to your target market.

#### ➤ **Major Constraints for RNR-15048 Marketing**

Even though tremendous demand for the Telangana Sona rice(Sugar-free rice), while selling it to the consumers some of the constraints faced on the aspects of confirmation for the basis for sugar-free quality. Some of the constraints were mentioned below.

- a. Low awareness of Telangana Sona/sugar-free rice among the consumers.
- b. The main important characteristic of this variety is the low Glycemic index (LowGI), this information has not been reached to consumers.
- c. Non-availability of Telangana Sona cultivating farmers’ database.
- d. Lack of publicity through the mass media.

Most all the firms were expressed the same opinion that the utilization of mass media by the developer accounts for zero. During the field performance of the variety was well received by the media reporters and published the special stories in Newspapers as well as in electronic media bulletins and special agricultural programs.

All the firms/agencies were expressed a similar opinion and seeking for the intervention of the information and public relations department of Telangana state has to make elaborate media campaign plan to get publicized of Telangana Sona/RNR-15048 rice variety. Because, the Chief Minister of Telangana state, K Chandrasekhar Rao is committed to increasing demand for sugar-free rice.

#### ➤ **Mass Media Campaign by the Marketing agencies**

Only a few agencies are doing the publicity campaign to increase their market share on Telangana Sona rice. The remaining agencies have not initiated any effort to promote sugar-free rice. The majority of the business firms have utilized the advantage of social media platforms for the dissemination of information. And they utilized the mass communication tools like brochures, pamphlets, folders,

handouts, newspaper articles, electronic media stories, spread messages through FM radios are found to be very effective in the dissemination of RNR-15048 information among literates and illiterate consumers.

➤ **Effective Mass media platforms**

As opinion expressed by the marketing firms/agencies, Television and word of mouth, print media, social media platforms are very effective to attract consumers' attention. These channels have tremendous potential in the dissemination of information. Word of mouth, Television, Print media and social media had equal roles in the dissemination of information.

Publicity Tools utilized by the marketing agencies are as follows:

- i. Brochures,
- ii. Pamphlets,
- iii. Outdoor publicity,
- iv. Advertisements in Newspapers, TV channels,
- v. Short video films,
- vi. Slide shows in cinema theaters.

Besides this, Marketing agencies were also initiated some other modes of publicity methods. Which is sending SMS to the consumer's mobiles, targeting the gated community localities in urban areas, and spreading the information through the street corner shops? Quickies prepared on rice variety and telecast in TV and made uploaded in the social media platforms and YouTube channels. FM radio services were also effectively utilized by the marketing firms.

➤ **Impact of the Campaign**

After a successful campaign through the above methods, consumers started enquiring about sugar-free rice. Repeated calls were also received by the agencies from consumers. Due to heavy telephone calls traffic, companies were started the call center to redressal of telephone calls. Deccanmudra, Beach 4X had started such call centers in their offices.

➤ **Information seeking behavior of Consumers**

As stated by the marketing agencies, consumers are mostly seeking information on Quality of rice, Price, Availability of rice in their locality, e-Commerce options, and seeking the certification for Low GI/ confirmation, the whether this rice reduces the diabetics, and so on.

A suggestion made by the Agencies to Improve the Visibility of the RNR-15048/Telangana Sona rice:

Further, to strengthen the visibility of the Telangana Sona rice among the consumers, marketing agencies were made some suggestions as mentioned below.

1. Deccanmudra, had expressed the widespread awareness campaign about Telangana Sona needs to be done for companies like budding entrepreneurs to grow. Even though, this variety is available in the market already as sugar-free rice, people /RNR-15048. The communication going out to the customer needs to be accurate. It is not sugar-free rice, but it controls the sugar levels in the body. A lot of people do not understand the meaning of Glycemic index or low GI. A widespread campaign needs to be done for this awareness as well.
2. SPV Specialty Foods suggested that the message spread from the university (PJ TSAU) experts, in explaining the best qualities of RNR-15048/Telangana Sona, in TV channels/Radio, FM radios. And additional assistance in the form of availability of supply – chain of RNR -15048 also ensures the customers. The customer is receiving the low GI rice at a very good price which is at par with Sona masoori rice.

3. Beach 4X had suggested, Low GI rice information must be given more publicity in media to educate the consumers.
4. Mulkanoor cooperative society had felt that there is a need to educate the educated people about RNR rice and its low GI values and its significance because in most of the cases they are the opinion leaders to motivate others to go for eating the rice by the consumers. Mulkanoor society had made a benchmark in using the low cost of communication tools like pamphlets, brochures to popularize the rice variety among the consumers. The method which is adopted was to educate the gated communities, apartment localities by distributing the publicity material. As a result, a positive feedback was received by the Mulkanoor society from the new consumers and existing consumers as well.

### **Results & Conclusions:**

#### **Results:**

- Lack of mass media campaign about Telangana Sona/RNR-15048 rice, it does not reach to the masses, even though, it has the high marketing potential in Indian rice market as well as in other rice eating countries. World's two highest populated countries China and India have stood 1<sup>st</sup>&2<sup>nd</sup> place in diabetic prevalence too. These two countries become the diabetic capitals of entire world with 196 million diabetic patients. There is much scope for Telangana Sona marketing in these two nations.
- This study had found the gap in related to the maintaining of the Telangana Sona/RNR-15048 cultivators data base.
- Based on the experience of the marketing firms the following communication tools are found to be more effective to reach the consumers. i. Brochures, ii. Pamphlets, iii. Outdoor publicity, iv. Advertisements in newspapers, TV channels, v. Short video films, vi. Slide shows in cinema theaters.
- The mass media campaign carried out by the marketing firms had yielded good feedback from the consumers', in results of that enquiry calls about the rice had been increased many folds.

#### **Conclusions:**

- The marketing firms of the Telangana Sona/RNR-15048 rice are seeking that, the information about the rice is always put in public domain for discussion, in result of that, the word will spread to larger area with little investment.
- After detailed presentation of the data, it reveals that there is need of widespread media awareness campaign should be taken up by the university and marketing firms. It will help to get attention of the consumers as well as the more and more marketing players to come forward into rice business.
- Telangana Sona variety is not sugar free rice, it has the quality of control the sugar levels in the body, and this information has to be reached to the customers.
- The communication going out to the customer needs to be accurate. It is not sugar-free rice, but it controls the sugar levels in the body. A lot of people do not understand the meaning of Glycemic Index or low GI. A widespread campaign needs to be done for this awareness as well.
- Marketing firms were expressed an opinion that they are seeking for the intervention of the Information and Public Relations department of Telangana state has to make elaborate media campaign plan to promote Telangana Sona/RNR-15048 rice variety. Because, the Hon'ble CM K Chandrasekhar Rao, is very particular to promote to create larger demand for sugar free rice and enhance the farmers income.

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