



A STUDY ON FARMERS' CONSTRAINTS TOWARDS AGRICULTURE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SALEM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture sector is the basic entity in an economy on which the activities of other sectors are determined. When agriculture grows, so does the economy in general, speeding up the reduction of rural and urban poverty. A strong and vibrant agricultural system forms the primary pillar in the strategy of overall economy. In this backdrop, agriculture is beleaguered by challenges like enigmatic weather, uncertainty in rainfall, slumping land area, plummeting water resources, deteriorating soil fertility, growing unrestrainable pests & diseases, increased costs of inputs, residual effects of chemicals, labour scarcity and vacillating market prices. Government of Tamil Nadu is taking sincere efforts to overcome these challenges.

The agriculture sector in India continues to be inefficient and plagued by constraints resulting in sluggish farm sector growth. The present paper attempts to spell out some of the constraints like, production, and marketing and finance related problems faced by the farmers. It also seeks to highlight the opinion of farmers towards performing agriculture in the present scenario.

Keywords: Agricultural Marketing issues, Agricultural production issues, Salem District Farmers.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is principally agricultural country. Agriculture is the only means of living for almost two-thirds of the employed class in India. It constitutes the most significant part of Indian

Economy. Agriculture, along with its allied sectors, is unquestionably the largest livelihood provider in India and most key industries depend upon the sector for their inputs. Agriculture in India has undergone rapid transformation in the past two decades; the policies of globalization and liberalization have opened up new avenues for agricultural modernization.

During last one and a half decade several challenges have surfaced in Indian agriculture which is becoming more and more severe with the passage of time. These relate to growth of output, efficiency, equity and sustainability. The biggest challenge is to reverse the sharp decline in growth rate of agriculture sector experienced after mid 1990s. The growth rate has turned lower than the growth in population dependent on agriculture implying that per capita income in agriculture is falling. This is considered a major factor for large scale rural distress and large number of suicidal deaths by farmers in various parts of the country.

Another biggest challenge is to ensure sustainable use of natural resources. While the need for accelerating agricultural growth are obvious, natural resource base in the country is shrinking. There are also signs of degradation of land and overexploitation of water in the country. The situation calls for improving competitiveness of Indian agriculture which requires improvement in efficiency in agricultural production, marketing, transport etc.

There is a strong feeling in the country that intervention in food markets has benefited only agriculturally progressive regions. The rain fed and dry land agriculture regions have been

ignored. There is also serious concern about viability and future of smaller size holdings which constitute majority of farmers in the country. The present state of dismal picture of agriculture in the country has resulted from several factors/reasons. The foremost is lack of clear policy on agriculture for a long time. The country did not change institutional mechanisms and regulatory framework to create environment conducive for agricultural growth and which was needed to adjust to changes in domestic and global environment. This relates particularly to participation by private sector in output markets and seed market. The second reason is neglect of infrastructure and diversion of resources to populist measures. Third reason is slowdown in technology reaching potential region and weakening of extension system for dissemination of technology. Unless drastic reforms are implemented in agriculture sector it would not be possible to revive output growth on sustainable basis and mitigate rural distress.

Agricultural development is essential not only to achieve self reliance in food grains at the state level, but also for ensuring household food security and to bring equity in distribution of income and wealth resulting in ultimate reduction of the poverty level. In fact, high economic growth will have no meaning for the masses of people living in rural areas unless agriculture is revitalized. Agriculture in Tamil Nadu is beset with a number of adverse characteristics such as declining total cultivable area in relation to scarcity of cultivable land, low productivity per unit of labour in most of the regions, predominance of small and marginal farmer households, risk aversion due to production by tenants and agricultural labourers under insecure conditions, vast seasonal variations and presence of a large percentage of tradition loving farmers.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Vishwanatha Guptha (1990) in his article subscribes that, organized market will alone ensure fair price to producers as well as consumers. Farmers' markets operate in the same line. Vishwanatha Guptha opines that, "if marketing of agricultural produce is properly organized, it can fetch a good price to the farmer and he will be inspired to produce more. The interest of the consumer will also be taken care of side by side. An efficient and properly organized marketing should get along with price strategies. Therefore, insure fair price to the producer as well as to the consumer.
2. P.K. Mishra (2003) in his article, "Rationalization of Market Fee" the present system of levy of fee at multiple points for the same commodity at different stages of transaction needs to be replaced, by single point levy of market fee in the entire process of marketing in the State. There is need for brining uniformity in the state level tax structure in agricultural commodities for improving the marketing efficiencies.
3. Nizamuddin Khan (1990) in his paper, "Needing Remunerative Agricultural Marketing" has highlighted the various ills prevailing in agricultural marketing. According to him, Agricultural Marketing in India is suffering from different infrastructural, organizational, and functional intersections. It is inefficient and non-remunerative to producers, the sellers. Distress sales, especially in villages, were the common practice during the glut seasons. Small and marginal farmers were adversely affected and they were forced to mortgage their surplus to the commission agents in order to obtain loans at the time when they were in distress. Inadequate infrastructural facilities like all weather roads and storage, farmers of small size, marketable surplus, non-suitable linkage to the regulated and rural markets from the villages as well as producers, weak organizations were the significant factors, which prevent the growers to fair price from their per unit of marketed surplus in the markets. Proper organization of markets of agricultural produce will not only remove the ills of the agricultural marketing but in a way they will help farmers motivated towards higher production and continuance in agriculture.
4. H.J. Mittendorf (1998) in his study "the need for strengthening the agricultural marketing services" has emphasized the importance of passing on the benefits of growth to the farmers. He is of the view that Governments of developing countries and aid donors had recognized increasingly that agricultural and food marketing system played a crucial role in economic and social development not only by distributing increased production physically but also by providing production incentives and by distributing the benefits of

- growth. Thus, marketing helps passing on the benefits of growth to the farmers, which is more important for increasing production. The efforts of the government and other agencies including farmers, in increasing the production will yield fruits only if such benefits are passed on to the farmers who actually put in the efforts.
5. S. Shanmuga Sundaram and Natarajan (2001) in their article, "A study on Uzhavar Sandhai" (With Special Reference to Beneficiaries Attitude Towards Suramangalam Uzhavar Sandhai, Salem), have examined the operations of farmers' market and found that farmers' markets help the farmers to get a reasonable price for their produce avoiding all unwanted and unreasonable charges. The consumers were facilitated to get fresh vegetables at a cheaper price without any malpractice in weighing. Their investigation prompted them to suggest establishment of telephone facilities, extension of business time (working hours) and working of the market both in the morning and evening.
 6. Subbiah, Radha and S. Jeyakumar (2006) in their paper "Marketing Problems of Cotton growers", agricultural products market needs a special study on account of its own peculiarities in production, distribution, supply, and demand. In the case of manufactured products, the control of all these aspects lies in the hands of the producers themselves. As such, the organization of marketing is almost perfect. This is quite opposite in the case of agricultural products, where right from the stage of production to the distribution, the producers have no contact or control. Prices are fixed by the middlemen and not by growers. Selection and control of the channel of distribution also lie in the hands of intermediaries. These peculiar features make agricultural marketing mostly disorganized, and hence, there is an imperative need to study these aspects.
 7. Munian (2008) in his paper "Un-remunerative practice", states that Indian agriculture and the risk of yield and the loss of crop in their farm. It means that the farmers face not only yield the risk of yield but also the risk of price. Over all these factors contributed to the plight of farmers, low yield, high cost of production and high consumption expenditure. All these factors make farming un-remunerative.
 8. Sathya Sundaram.I (2011) in his article "Worrying over onion" pointed out that while natural factors contributed to the price raise, manmade factors too were responsible for the situation. Hoarding remained a key factor, as there was no back-up crop and exports should have been stopped much earlier. Infrastructure remained inadequate, distribution system was faulty and there was no quick movement of the commodity from surplus to the deficit area.
 9. Manimehalai (2011) Inclusive growth and agricultural development on her article portrayed that the profitability has become more relevant in recent years due to limited scope for expansion of arable land. Increasing yield to their technology highest level may be feasible through adequate investment in infrastructure and technology, irrigation, land development, storage, markets, etc.,. Availability of credit and extension services would facilitate access to available technology. These issues are more relevant in our country because 58 % of labour force dependent on agriculture.

III. MAIN THEME OF THE RESEARCH

3.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Marketing of agricultural products has been posing a big problem for the farmers. The farmers, who produce crops, struggle a lot of bring them up. They plough and tilt the land, seed the plants, water resources, clean them and pack the products ready to be taken to the markets for sale. Even at the time of producing the crops and at the time of selling them they face a lot of hurdles and obstacles such as the interference of brokers and middlemen, lack of insurance facility, lack of finance, high cost of inputs, storehouses and transporting problems. In the market the farmers are cheated by the brokers the purchases like charging the goods less, weighing the products in unbalanced machines and so on. Thus the farmers face a number of problem form the initial stage of production to till the sale of the products in the market. And all these are interwoven and ultimately make a deep impact on agricultural marketing. As a result agriculture as an occupation becomes unprofitable and therefore, unviable.

Agriculture in India is subject to variety of risks arising from rainfall aberrations, temperature fluctuations, hailstorms, cyclones, floods, and climate change. These risks are exacerbated by price fluctuation, weak rural infrastructure, imperfect markets and lack of financial services including limited span and design of risk mitigation instruments such as credit and insurance. These factors not only endanger the farmer's livelihood and incomes but also weaken the viability of the agriculture sector and its potential to become a part of the problem of widespread poverty of the agricultural labour and the National economic development. In order to develop mechanisms and strategies to mitigate risk in agriculture it is imperative to understand the sources and magnitude of problem involved in agricultural marketing and agricultural financing. The sustainability of the farmers is now matter of botheration. Hence, it is necessary to bring certain solutions which can give better direction to these farmers. The present research is carried out in the aim of find out the production and marketing problems faced by the farmers of the Salem district.

3.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the opinion of farmers towards performing agriculture in the present scenario.
2. To study the challenges faced by the farmers in the sample area.
3. To discuss the personal profile of farmers in the sample area.
4. To find out the major problems faced by the farmers in the sample area.
5. To suggest solutions to overcome the challenges faced by farmers in farming.

3.3 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

H₀₁: There is no significance difference between age and challenges faced by the farmers in Salem District.

H₀₂: There is no significance difference between Educational Status and challenges faced by the farmers in Salem District.

H₀₃: There is no significance difference between farmers Income per year and challenges faced by the farmers in Salem District.

H₀₄: There is no significance difference between size of land holding and challenges

faced by the farmers in Salem District.

H₀₅: There is no significance difference between Years of Farming experience and challenges faced by the farmers in Salem District.

3.4 PERIOD OF THE STUDY:

The study were carried out between the period August 2017 and December 2017

3.5 LOCALE OF THE STUDY:

Salem District is a district of Tamil Nadu state in southern India. Salem is the district headquarters and other major towns in the district include Mettur, Omalur and Attur. Salem is surrounded by hills and the landscape dotted with hillocks. Salem has a vibrant culture dating back to the ancient Salem Nadu ruled by Mazhavar kings. Salem comes under Mazhanadu in Sangam Age. As a district, Salem has its significance in various aspects; it is known for mango cultivation, silver ornaments, textile, sago industries and steel production. As of 2011, the district had a population of 3,482,056 with a sex-ratio of 954 females for every 1,000 males. Salem is one of the biggest cities in Tamil Nadu.

The Salem district have been divided into 4 Revenue Divisions, 9 Taluks, 20 blocks, 5 Corporation and Municipalities, 33 town panchayats, 20 panchayat unions, 633 Revenue Villages and 385 Panchayat villages.

3.6 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The multistage random sampling technique was adopted in designing sampling frame for the study. In the first stage, Salem district was selected. Similarly, in the second stage, five blocks were selected based on potentiality and highest area under cultivation. In the third stage five villages were selected in each block. For collecting primary data 20 farmers were selected at random from each village. Thus, the sample size constituted 500 for the study as a whole. Further, while selecting the villages in the selected blocks for identifying the potentiality as well as concentration of farmers, the researcher had an interview with the several officers of Agriculture departments at district taluk level.

A pilot study was conducted with an idea of testing the reliability of the questionnaire designed. Samples of 150 farmers in Salem were selected for this purpose. Based on the views of

the respondents, the needed modifications were carried out and the questionnaire was standardised. This pre-test reduces bias by detecting ambiguities and misinterpretation which can then be minimized then the instrument aims at high degree of specific objectivity.

Name of the Blocks, number of villages and

Block Name	No of villages in each	Number of Villages	Number of Farmers Selected	Cumulative Number of Farmers
Salem District Blocks				
Attur	3	5	2	100
Meche	2	5	2	200
Omalu	3	5	2	300
Sankar	3	5	2	400
Idappa	1	5	2	500

number of farmers in each block Selected for Primary Data Collection

3.7 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION:

It was decided that a descriptive study using primary data would be appropriate to investigate the objectives. The primary data were collected from the farmers by using interview schedule specifically designed for the purpose. Utmost care was taken to give necessary clarifications in vernacular to enable the respondents to answer as accurately as possible without any ambiguity. The filled up schedule has been thoroughly checked and ensured as regards correctness and consistency of data. The secondary data have been obtained from various secondary sources like newspapers, magazines, journals, books, websites of statistical abstracts of Tamil Nadu, Reserve Bank of India, Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural statistics at a glance, Directorate of economics and statistics and from various institutional libraries.

3.8 STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

The data drawn from the various sources were subjected to statistical treatment using the appropriate tools. The data is analyzed using SPSS software and in the case of statistical tests all the hypothesis are tested at 5% significance level.

The following statistical tools have been used to analyze the collected data:

- Simple Percentage Method
- Weighted Average Method
- Chi-square Method

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile:

The questionnaire included a segment on respondents' profile. The gender, age, educational qualification, occupation and their annual income are analyzed in the demographic information. This was done because assortments of demographic factors were likely to influence the store choice decisions of the respondents.

Table 4.1.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Factors	Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Age	Below 30 years	58	11.6	11.6
	31 years-45 years	147	29.4	41
	46 years to 60 years	211	42.2	83.2
	Above 60 years	84	16.8	100
Educational Qualification	School Education	244	48.8	48.8
	Diploma/Degree	158	31.6	80.4
	No formal Education	98	19.6	100
Source of Income	Agriculture alone	358	71.6	71.6
	Business/Service along with agriculture	142	28.4	100
For how many years you were involved in farming?	Below 20 years	107	21.4	21.4
	20 years-30 years	144	28.8	50.2
	31 years to 40 years	161	32.2	82.4
	Above 40 years	88	17.6	100
Annual Income	Below Rs.1 Lakh	237	47.4	47.4
	Rs.1 Lakh-Rs.2 Lakh	185	37.0	84.4
	Rs.2 Lakh-Rs.3 Lakh	54	10.8	95.2
	Above Rs.3 Lakh	24	4.8	100

Source: Primary data

From Table 4.1.1 it is inferred a majority of 42.2% of the respondents are of the age group of 46 years to 60 years and only 11.6% are below the age of 30 years. A maximum 48.8% of the respondents are having the basic school education and nearly 20% are having no formal education. A majority of 71.6% are doing agriculture alone as their occupation. A major portion of 32.2% is doing farming for 31 years to 40 years. 47.4% of the respondents are in the annual income range below Rs. 1 Lakh.

4.1.2 Responses Regarding Various Parameters

Table 4.1.2 Responses Regarding Various Parameters

Parameters	Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Size of land holding	Below 2 acres	168	33.6	33.6
	2 acres to 5 acres	156	31.2	64.8
	6 acres to 10 acres	105	21	85.8
	Above 10 acres	71	14.2	100
Out of the total land, how much do you do farming	One fourth	71	14.2	14.2
	Two fourth	123	24.6	38.8
	Three fourth	140	28	66.8
	Completely	166	33.2	100
Your opinion about the performance in agriculture	Huge Profit	74	14.8	14.8
	Profit	85	17	31.8
	Break Even	141	28.2	60
	Loss	108	21.6	81.6
	Heavy Loss	92	18.4	100
Do you feel that the Government subsidies reach the farmers on time?	Yes	343	68.6	68.6
	No	157	31.4	100
Whom do you think is most responsible for the	Nature	162	32.4	32.4
	Government	138	27.6	60
	Farmers themselves	98	19.6	79.6

problems of farmers	Urbanization & Modernization	102	20.4	100
Have you sold your agricultural land in the last 5 years?	Yes	232	46.4	46.4
	No	268	53.6	100
If yes, what's the reason?	Pressure of land acquisition	28	12.1	12.1
	Got a good deal	33	14.2	26.3
	Family financial emergencies	63	27.2	53.5
	Poor earning from land	76	32.8	86.2
	Planned to migrate	32	13.8	100.0
In your opinion, what is the future prospect of agriculture?	Will become a primary activity	132	26.4	26.4
	Remains the same	116	23.2	49.6
	Will be sick and depend on imports	252	50.4	100
In the present scenario, you think it is of high risk to depend upon agriculture alone	Strongly Agree	137	27.4	27.4
	Agree	123	24.6	52
	Neutral	112	22.4	74.4
	Disagree	71	14.2	88.6
	Strongly Disagree	57	11.4	100

Source: Primary data

Table 4.1.2 reveals that 33.6% of the respondents are marginal farmers are marginal farmers having below 20 acres of land and only 14.2% of the respondents are large farmers with more than 10 acres of land holding. Majority 33.2% of the respondents are doing farming completely in their entire land holding and 28% are cultivating only in three fourth of their land holding. 28.2% of the respondents feel that they earn only the breakeven performance in their agricultural activity. 68.6% of the respondents

feel that the Government subsidies do not reach the farmers on time. 32.4% of the respondents feel that nature plays a major role in agricultural activity. 53.6% of the respondents have sold their agricultural land in the last five years because of reasons like poor earning and financial emergencies. Majority 24.6% of the respondents feel that it is of high risk to depend on agriculture alone in future.

Table 4.1.3 Relationship between Age and problems faced by the farmers in Salem District

Problems Faced by the Farmers	Chi Square Value	P - Value	Accept / Reject Ho
Production related	1.907	0.385	Accept
Shortage of labour	4.956	0.292	Accept
Lack of fertilizer and pesticides	5.796	0.215	Accept
Lack of technical know how	2.613	0.625	Accept
Lack of irrigation facilities	0.877	0.928	Accept
Lack of equipment and machinery	4.718	0.318	Accept
Lack of improved and high yielding varieties	5.334	0.255	Accept
Marketing related	1.825	0.768	Accept
Middlemen interference	1.388	0.846	Accept
Lack of market information (price, demand etc.)	4.169	0.384	Accept
Lack of storage facilities	3.117	0.538	Accept
Lack of appropriate market facilities	1.795	0.773	Accept

Malpractices in selling (grading, weighing etc.)	6.588	0.159	Accept
Inadequate minimum support price	6.785	0.148	Accept
Finance related	5.226	0.265	Accept
Lack of sufficient availability of credit facilities	3.581	0.466	Accept
Lack of finance at reasonable rate of interest	2.135	0.711	Accept
Delay in cash payment	1.571	0.814	Accept

Source: Primary Data (* Sig at 5 % level, ** Sig at 1 % level, Degrees of Freedom = 12)

Table 4.1.4 Relationship between Educational qualification and problems faced by the farmers in Salem District

Problems Faced by the Farmers	Chi Square Value	P - Value	Accept / Reject Ho
Production related	10.525	0.23	Accept
Shortage of labour	11.41	0.18	Accept
Lack of fertilizer and pesticides	15.388	0.052	Accept
Lack of technical know how	8.604	0.377	Accept
Lack of irrigation facilities	6.517	0.59	Accept
Lack of equipment and machinery	5.544	0.698	Accept
Lack of improved and high yielding varieties	8.631	0.374	Accept

Marketing related	8.182	0.416	Accept
Middlemen interference	11.096	0.196	Accept
Lack of market information (price, demand etc.)	4.487	0.811	Accept
Lack of storage facilities	10.954	0.204	Accept
Lack of appropriate market facilities	9.56	0.297	Accept
Malpractices in selling (grading, weighing etc.)	6.312	0.612	Accept
Inadequate minimum support price	3.842	0.871	Accept
Finance related	10.213	0.25	Accept
Lack of sufficient availability of credit facilities	16.496	0.036*	Reject
Lack of finance at reasonable rate of interest	22.828	0.004**	Reject
Delay in cash payment	3.249	0.918	Accept

Source: Primary Data (* Sig at 5 % level, ** Sig at 1 % level, Degrees of Freedom = 8)

Table 4.1.5 Relationship between Source if income and problems faced by the farmers in Salem District

Problems Faced by the Farmers	Chi Square Value	P - Value	Accept / Reject Ho
Production related	4.808	0.569	Accept
Shortage of labour	5.797	0.446	Accept
Lack of fertilizer and pesticides	2.188	0.902	Accept

Lack of technical know how	1.384	0.967	Accept
Lack of irrigation facilities	17.182	0.009**	Reject
Lack of equipment and machinery	5.133	0.527	Accept
Lack of improved and high yielding varieties	3.024	0.806	Accept
Marketing related	9.633	0.141	Accept
Middlemen interference	8.908	0.179	Accept
Lack of market information (price, demand etc.)	21.68	0.001**	Reject
Lack of storage facilities	20.432	0.002**	Reject
Lack of appropriate market facilities	13.997	0.03*	Reject
Malpractices in selling (grading, weighing etc.)	13.808	0.032*	Reject
Inadequate minimum support price	9.378	0.153	Accept
Finance related	5.471	0.485	Accept
Lack of sufficient availability of credit facilities	9.417	0.151	Accept
Lack of finance at reasonable rate of interest	13.877	0.031*	Reject
Delay in cash payment	6.933	0.327	Accept

Source: Primary Data (* Sig at 5 % level, ** Sig at 1 % level, Degrees of Freedom = 4)

Table 4.1.6 Relationship between years of experience in farming and problems faced by the farmers in Salem District

Problems Faced by the Farmers	Chi Square Value	P - Value	Accept / Reject Ho
Production related	3.726	0.714	Accept
Shortage of labour	7.124	0.309	Accept
Lack of fertilizer and pesticides	11.5	0.074	Accept
Lack of technical know how	0.895	0.989	Accept
Lack of irrigation facilities	7.432	0.283	Accept
Lack of equipment and machinery	4.539	0.604	Accept
Lack of improved and high yielding varieties	10.496	0.105	Accept
Marketing related	13.237	0.039*	Reject
Middlemen interference	11.131	0.084	Accept
Lack of market information (price, demand etc.)	12.501	0.052	Accept
Lack of storage facilities	5.759	0.124	Accept
Lack of appropriate market facilities	7.272	0.296	Accept
Malpractices in selling (grading, weighing etc.)	6.718	0.348	Accept
Inadequate minimum support price	2.877	0.824	Accept
Finance related	8.857	0.182	Accept

Lack of sufficient availability of credit facilities	6.195	0.402	Accept
Lack of finance at reasonable rate of interest	9.37	0.154	Accept
Delay in cash payment	7.985	0.239	Accept

Source: Primary Data (* Sig at 5 % level, ** Sig at 1 % level, Degrees of Freedom = 12)

Table 4.1.7 Relationship between Annual income and problems faced by the farmers in Salem District

Problems Faced by the Farmers	Chi Square Value	P - Value	Accept / Reject Ho
Production related	2.576	0.631	Accept
Shortage of labour	3.695	0.449	Accept
Lack of fertilizer and pesticides	0.235	0.994	Accept
Lack of technical know how	11.012	0.026*	Reject
Lack of irrigation facilities	1.845	0.764	Accept
Lack of equipment and machinery	7.108	0.13	Accept
Lack of improved and high yielding varieties	4.806	0.308	Accept
Marketing related	6.142	0.189	Accept
Middlemen interference	2.547	0.636	Accept
Lack of market information (price, demand etc.)	2.849	0.583	Accept
Lack of storage facilities	2.321	0.677	Accept

Lack of appropriate market facilities	11.4	0.022*	Reject
Malpractices in selling (grading, weighing etc.)	6.696	0.153	Accept
Inadequate minimum support price	0.776	0.942	Accept
Finance related	2.318	0.678	Accept
Lack of sufficient availability of credit facilities	2.541	0.637	Accept
Lack of finance at reasonable rate of interest	2.571	0.632	Accept
Delay in cash payment	5.72	0.221	Accept

Source: Primary Data (* Sig at 5 % level, ** Sig at 1 % level, Degrees of Freedom = 12)

4.1.8 Weighted Average showing the major problems faced by the farmers

Problems Faced by the Farmers	Weighted Score	Weighted Average
Production related		
Shortage of labour	1825	121.68
Lack of fertilizer and pesticides	1273	84.89
Lack of technical know how	1401	93.40
Lack of irrigation facilities	1757	117.16
Lack of equipment and machinery	1480	98.69
Lack of improved and high yielding varieties	1224	81.57
Marketing related		
Middlemen interference	1838	122.53
Lack of market information (price, demand etc.)	1582	105.44
Lack of storage facilities	1789	119.24
Lack of appropriate market facilities	1557	103.78

Malpractices in selling (grading, weighing etc.)	1359	90.57
Inadequate minimum support price	1660	110.67
Finance related		
Lack of sufficient availability of credit facilities	1569	104.59
Lack of finance at reasonable rate of interest	1334	88.91
Delay in cash payment	1488	99.19

From the table 4.1.8 it is inferred that the respondents face more of the marketing related problems like Lack of transport and road infrastructure, Lack of regulated markets/cooperative marketing societies, Middlemen interference, Lack of market information (price, demand etc.) lack of storage facilities' Lack of appropriate market facilities, malpractices in selling (grading, weighing etc.). They also face some production related issues like Shortage of labour, lack of fertilizer and pesticides, lack of technical knowhow, lack of irrigation facilities, lack of equipment and machinery, lack of improved and high yielding varieties. The respondents also face a few finance related problems like lack of sufficient availability of credit facilities, Lack of finance at reasonable rate of interest, delay in cash payment

SUGGESTIONS:

1. Consolidation of village lands and cooperative farming will ease the burden of fragmented landholdings. When the farmers form a consortium at the village level, the aggregate land can be farmed by using the latest technology.
2. The use of sophisticated farm machinery and equipment will help the marginal farmers to increase the agricultural productivity.
3. To solve the issue of supply chain bottlenecks, the government has started regulating the market. Competitive buying, elimination of malpractices, use to standardized weights and measures, enhanced dispute settlement system are the essence of the strategy.

4. The government must provide low-interest loans and subsidized farm machines to enhance labor productivity in farming and to reduce labor problems.
5. Crop insurance is a must for farmers to save them from natural disasters.
6. The Government must fix minimum prices for all commodities including perishable vegetables like tomatoes and fruits to prevent distress selling.
7. Banks too will be willing to lend money to a village consortium which can be utilised to boost farm productivity, employ sustainable farming methods, reduce overdependence on fertilisers and thus solve many problems.
8. Irrigation problems can be addressed by Government preferably at the State and National levels. Though the Government cannot force farmers to produce only the designated crops in particular areas, it can surely educate them about the alternatives.
9. Scientific research in this subject is to be encouraged to promote seeds which are mild on resource requirements but help the farmers in boosting the yields.
10. Some sustainability solutions are proper crop management on the basis of water availability, crop rotation, deploying modern agricultural practices to boost productivity, switching over to organic farming thrust on allied activities.
11. Storage facilities can be boosted by small cold storage or granaries at village level which can be established from Panchayat funds and loans to the village society.

CONCLUSION:

There is no doubt that in any marketing there is a motive towards profit involved and at the same time the marketing is to be based on certain values, principles and philosophies such as offering just and fair prices to the farmers who toil hard to till. Bringing necessary reforms coupled with proper price discovery mechanism through regulated market system will help streamline and strengthen agricultural marketing. Marketing of agriculture can be made effective if it is looked from the collective and integrative efforts from various quarters by addressing to farmers, middlemen, researchers and administrators. It is high time we brought out significant strategies in agricultural marketing with innovative and creative approaches to bring fruits of labor to the farmers.

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