

A study on problems faced by small and medium scale farmers in marketing their agricultural products in Coimbatore city

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Abstract: Agriculture is the cultivation and breeding of animals, plants and fungi for foods, fibres, bio fuel, medicinal plants and other products used to sustain and enhance human life. Agriculture is a major part of the Indian economy. Over 70% of the rural household depends on agriculture for their proceeds directly or indirectly. 17-18% of total GDP for the Indian economy is contributed by agricultural sector. The agricultural division is acting an important role in the significant employment to people. This article studies about the various problems faced by small and medium scale farmers in marketing their agricultural products.

Key words: Agriculture, Economy, Farmers.

1. INTRODUCTION:

“Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian Economy” said Mahatma Gandhi. The times gone by the agriculture dates back thousands of years, and its growth has been driven and defined by significantly different climates, cultures, and technologies. India is agriculture based country. India ranks second in farm outputs in the world. As per 2018, agriculture engaged 50% of the Indian work force and contributed 17-18% to country's GDP. India ranks first in the world with highest net cropped area followed by US and China. Tamil Nadu has historically been an agricultural state and is a leading producer of agricultural products in India. In terms of production, Tamil Nadu accounts for 10% in fruits and six% in vegetables, in India. The state is the foremost producer of bananas, turmeric, flowers, tapioca, the second largest producer of mango, natural rubber, coconut, groundnut and the third largest producer of coffee, sapota, Tea and Sugarcane. Agriculture forms a major portion of state's economy. In Tamilnadu, Coimbatore is said to be Manchester of India. In Coimbatore most of the families in rural area depends upon agriculture, farming and agro based industries directly or indirectly. The Agricultural crops cultivated in Coimbatore are Millets, Pulses, Oil seeds, Cotton, Sugarcane and vegetables.

2. AGRICULTURAL MARKETING:

Agricultural marketing primarily refers to the buying and selling of agricultural produce. Agricultural marketing covers the services involved in moving an agricultural product from the farm to the consumer. Numerous interconnected activities are involved like planning production, growing and harvesting, grading, packing, transport, storage, agro and food processing, distribution, advertising and sale. In India, there are several central government organisations, who are involved in agricultural marketing like, Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices, Food Corporation of India, Cotton Corporation of India, Jute Corporation of India. There are also specialised marketing bodies for rubber, tea, coffee, tobacco, spices and vegetables. The Vision of the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business is to ensure fair price to the farming community who are left behind in the competitive marketing scenario and the mission of achieving this is by enforcing the existing act and rules most effectively and also by devising, implementing new technologies aimed at reducing pre and post harvest losses through appropriate methods and encourage value addition. The Department of Agricultural Marketing, which is functioning since 1977 in India, with the main objective of Regulation of Agricultural Marketing, was renamed in the year 2001 as Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri. Business in order to focus on other activities like Agri Export, Post Harvest Management and Food Processing.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Marketing of agricultural products has been posing a big problem to the small and medium scalefarmers. Even at the time of producing the crops and at the time of selling their products, they face a lot of hurdles and obstacles such as lack of seeds and saplings, monsoon failure, lack of fertilizers, Climatically conditions, interference of brokers and middlemen in marketing their products, lack of insurance facility, lack of finance, lack of subsidies from government, lack of warehouse with modern technologies, high cost of inputs, storehouses and transporting problems. Thus the

farmers face a number of problem from the initial stage of production and 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. This study focuses on the problems faced by the small and medium scale farmers starting from the cultivation of the product and till the problems in marketing of their agricultural products.

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To study the perspectives of small and medium scale farmers in agricultural production and marketing of their produces.
- To study the problems faced by the farmers from cultivation till marketing of agriculture products.
- To provide suitable suggestions to improve the socio economic status of the farmers and to overcome the problems faced by the farmers in agriculture marketing.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study has taken effort to explore the various problems face by the small and medium scale farmers in agricultural marketing of Coimbatore district. The data has been collected from four blocks of Coimbatore region. The researcher has collected data from 260 respondents using convenient sampling technique. The researcher has used structured questionnaire cum interview schedule for the purpose of data collection. The researcher adopted analytical tools like percentage analysis, Garret ranking and mean score test to analyse the data.

6. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study has been confined to particular blocks of Coimbatore region
- Time period is restricted only to three months
- The result is fully dependent on information given by the respondents.

7. LITERATURE REVIEW:

A substantial amount of research has been done on the problems of agricultural marketing in India, by the academicians and researchers. A brief study on literature reviews would be helpful to the researcher in gaining insight into the selected problem. The reviews are Brithal, et.al., (2007) in their study suggested that by building efficient and effective supply chain using state of the art techniques it is possible to serve the population with value added food, while simultaneously ensuring remunerative prices to farmers. Tripathi and Prasad, (2009) reported that Indian agriculture has progressed not only in out-put and yield terms but the structural changes have also contributed. Pathak, (2009) in his research paper stated that the contribution of agriculture in growth of a nation is constituted by the growth of the products within the sector itself as well as the agricultural development permits the other sectors to develop by the goods produced in the domestic and international market. Modeling work done by Fischer et al. (2009) indicated that use of high inputs and improved soil and water management had the potential to more than double crop yields in semi-arid tropics. Abdul Haque Ahmed (2011) has done his work on “Production and Marketing of Banana: A case study of East Garo Hills and Goalpara district” which explains the marketing process of banana in Assam. On the other hand, Nyathi et al., (2011), studied about crop residues that are a by-product of the cropping system provide feed for livestock during the dry season when fodder is limited in smallholder agriculture. Singhal et.al (2011), discusses the use of a mobile-based android application known as ‘Krishi Ville’ that was designed to supply farmers with information such as weather forecasts, agricultural commodities and agricultural news. A. Vadivelu1 and B.R. Kiran2 (2013), in their article “Problems and Prospects of Agricultural Marketing in India: An Overview” stated that there are many challenges for the farmers in agricultural marketing. Biswas & Prakash (2015) also proposed an agricultural based “sensorics and indicative system technology” for the Indian region, the system was designed to read soil moisture levels, standing water levels, PH levels of soil, Humidity &temperature.

8. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The data collected from the samples have been systematically applied and presented in the tables under various heads.

Table: 1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic characteristics		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percent
GENDER	Male	206	79.23	79.23
	Female	54	20.77	100
AGE	19-30 years	49	18.85	18.85
	31-40 years	53	20.38	39.23

	41-50 years	98	37.69	76.92
	Above 50 years	60	23.08	100
MARITAL STATUS	Single	19	7.31	7.31
	Married	241	92.69	100
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	School level	101	38.85	38.85
	Diploma	84	32.31	71.16
	UG degree	47	18.08	89.24
	PG degree	28	10.76	100
MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME	Up to Rs.10000	79	30.38	30.38
	Rs10001-Rs.50000	98	37.69	68.07
	Above Rs.50000	83	31.92	100

Table: 2 Problems in agricultural marketing

FACTOR	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Too Many Intermediates	32	26	31	93	78	2.39
Defective Weights and Scales	54	12	14	88	92	2.42
Lack of Unity among Farmers	112	99	8	32	17	3.05
Lack of Financial Resources	67	73	43	52	25	3.40
Lack of Organised Marketing System	48	62	21	45	84	2.79
Lack of Standardization	36	68	70	49	37	3.07
Lack of Warehouses	59	74	28	61	38	3.21
Lack of transport facilities	42	55	23	76	64	2.75
Producer does not determine the price	88	75	25	38	34	3.56
Poor quality of product	12	17	16	109	96	1.88

Table: 3 Conditions for Satisfactory development in Agricultural marketing

FACTOR	RANK
Eliminating Middlemen	1
Adequate Transport Facility	4
Loan Facilities	2
Storage Facility	3
Regulated Markets	8
Use of Standard Weight	5
Grading and Standardization of Products	6
Provide market information	9
Unity among farmers	10
Training about new technologies	7

9. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

Demographic Profile of the respondents

The maximum 79.23% of the respondents are Male. It is found that highest percentage (47.69%) of age group is 41-50. The highest percentage 92.69% of respondents are Married. Maximum 38.85% of respondents are with Educational qualification up to School level. 37.69% of the respondents are in the monthly income group of 10,001-50000.

Opinion about Problems faced by the farmers in Agricultural marketing

The analysis shows that majority of the respondents agrees that, Too Many Intermediates, Defective Weights and Scales, Lack of Organised Marketing System, Lack of transport facilities and Poor quality of goods are the major problems faced by the farmers in Agricultural marketing.

Conditions for satisfactory development in Agricultural Marketing

The analysis shows that most of the respondents gave least rank for the reasons Unity among farmers, Provide market information, Regulated Markets, Training about new technologies, Grading and Standardization of Products.

Towards Use of Standard Weight majority of respondents assigned rank five and they assigned rank four for the reason adequate transport facility. Majority of the respondent's gave rank two for "proving loan facilities" and among these satisfactory factors majority of the respondents assigned rank one for the factor "Eliminating Middlemen".

10. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions are made

- In Agricultural marketing Middlemen should be eliminated to protect the small and marginal farmers.
- Lack of finance, lack of storage and transport facility is found to be the major problems affecting the farmers. So these problems if taken care, it will help the farmers to overcome the problems.
- Awareness and training regarding new technologies and market information should be given to the small and medium scale farmers.

11. CONCLUSION :

Agriculture is the most important sector of our Economy. In India, there are four systems of agricultural marketing like sale in village, sale in mandi, sale in market and cooperative marketing. In agricultural marketing transportation cost, inadequate market infrastructure, lack of market information, lack of processing units, storage facility, price fluctuation are the major problems. Eliminating middlemen, enough storage facility, freedom from moneylenders, adequate transportation facilities, availability of loan and training facilities etc. are required for satisfactory agricultural marketing. Some people have suggested that crop insurance and technical guidance should be provided for improvement in agricultural marketing in India. . If the focus would be given on these problems we can completely get freedom from these problems in agricultural marketing. The government must examine its policies and regulations with view to strength the agriculture sector and protect the farmers.

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