



IJSRM

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An Official Publication of Human Journals



Human Journals

Research Article

September 2018 Vol.:10, Issue:3

© All rights are reserved by P.C. Sabumon et al.

Assessing the Problems in Agriculture in Indian Context for Farmers with Small Holdings and Potential Remedies



Chaitanya Barbade¹, Hars hit Agrawal¹, Himank Mehta¹, Nikhil Chandra Shahi¹, Dhivya L¹, P Bhargav¹, P.C. Sabumon^{2*}

*1-B. Tech Pre-Final Year Civil Engineering Students
(Pres enter)*

*2-Professor, School of Mechanical & Building Sciences,
VIT Chennai Campus -600127, Tamil Nadu, India.*

Submission: 22 August 2018

Accepted: 30 August 2018

Published: 30 September 2018



HUMAN JOURNALS

www.ijsrm.humanjournals.com

Keywords: Awareness, Farmers, Survey, Agriculture, Government Schemes

ABSTRACT

The lack of awareness of the farmers of India is a crucial issue as the farmers when left uneducated and uninformed leads to decline in growth of the economy and to the high rate of suicide among them. A study was conducted based on data collected through a survey of farmers from different parts of the country. This research mainly focuses on farmers with a cultivable land area of less than 5 hectares. The survey predominantly questioned about the issues faced by an Indian farmer and the benefits they receive from various organizations and government schemes. The data/information collected was then analyzed and common problems were looked upon. It was found that the lack of awareness amongst farmers regarding the working of schemes and the system, lack of a redressal system, and lack of credit were some of the reasons for an inefficient working. Appropriate solutions/methods to these issues are discussed in the paper. These solutions/methods are expected to increase the productivity and efficiency of farms on implementation and could bring the financial growth thus benefiting the farmers and the economy in conjunction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has been seen to have found its roots in the history of mankind since the beginning and plays a vital role in Indian economy. It is our primary duty to increase the agricultural capacity as much we can. Rural households depend on agriculture as their major means of livelihood.

Agricultural export constitutes 10 percent of the country 's exports and is the fourth-largest exported principal commodity [1]. Agriculture is more than a farmer sowing the seeds, watering the plants or harvesting the crops. It takes a whole ecosystem and many actors to work together to produce the food we need for the population of our country. This intricate system of agricultural production has developed over time through technological discoveries and other inventions. It is this resurgent nature that will prepare our agriculture system to cope with the challenges of food and safeguard ing the nutrients, improving lifestyle, fighting the climate change and handle natural resources viably.

The population of India is increasing day by day, which has led to an increase in new challenges as well. India is equipped with only 4% of total available fresh water, whereas there are 1.3 billion people who depend upon it [2]. There is a high inequality in the availability of fresh water which is drawn out by the high demand of water for various activities all over the country. The next problem is soil degradation and pollution. The harmful and toxic wastes from industries pollute the soil along with water in canal and river. Soil erosion is also a major problem faced by the people, which causes land degradation. Nutrients are lost due to improper use of pesticides, insecticides, and fertilizers which cause agricultural produce to be disease prone. Other problems faced by farmers include illiteracy, lack of awareness poor socioeconomic background, corruption, etc. due to which the quality of produce goes down. Also high income gap between the rich and poor farmers contributes to the pathetic situation.

2. METHODOLOGY

We critically analyzed two sectors of farmers, with the land more than 5 hectares and land less than 5 hectares and concluded to focus on the latter. A comprehensive study was done to get a basic information upon the conditions of the Indian farmers and their problems after which we began constructing our questionnaire for the survey.

The questions were generally based to know the intricate problems faced by the farmers in day-to-day life at ground level. After creating the questionnaire, a survey was conducted in different parts of India. Farmers from Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh were contacted and were interviewed to fill the questionnaire.

The answers were further scrutinized and severity of the problems faced by the farmers were highlighted. Critical analysis of several solutions was done and suitable suggestions were made.

3. QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions were framed to know about the basic details such as the source of their information regarding the agricultural matters to more detailed ones like the biggest problem faced by Indian farmers today. Each question was framed to know about the current situation of the farmer and their farming techniques, their grievances and government's help available to them. Various government schemes and policies were studied and analyzed which promised a healthy agricultural output for the farmers as well as the common people. But, these results were not up to the mark as seen in the recent times by the increased suicide rates and farmers protesting almost every day about their issues. Thus questions were prepared to examine the voids between schemes being theorized and being implemented practically which only a farmer on the ground can shed light upon.

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

a) Problems

1. Most of the farmers receive help for their agricultural related problems and queries from their friends and relatives and complain that the government is not actively involved in offering help to them.
2. Very few of the farmers that took the survey have actually contacted the Kisan Call Centre regarding their agricultural queries. The ones who did call did not receive any assistance from the officer attending to them due to the lack of field knowledge. Other farmers did not contact them due to lack of awareness about such a facility.
3. Some of the farmers believe in insuring their crops which would help them in times of crisis, but many of them have not availed such schemes.

4. Traditional methods of farming are extensively used by most small scale farmers as they are well aware of the old methodologies and could not shift to the modern methods due to lack of knowledge and funds to purchase the equipment.

5. Most farmers sell their stock through a broker (middleman) which leads to chances of middle men exploiting them, which is a serious crisis prevailed in the agricultural industry.

6. The Government has not been up to its mark

regarding creating and spreading awareness on their latest policies that leaves farmers clueless about the current policies.

7. Farmers complained about not having adequate storage facilities which left them with damaged crops due to pests, insects, rainfall, etc. and forcing them to sell at any immediately available price.

8. They complained about not having proper transportation facilities due to which it is very difficult for them to take their crops to the selling place which is usually very far from the villages.

9. Some of the farmers complained about the kuccha roads being flooded at the time of the monsoon season which cuts them from nearby markets and hence leaving them vulnerable and helpless.

10. Dissatisfaction towards Minimum Support Price (MSP) was expressed by as much as 79% of the farmers in the nation. But the number of farmers who wanted MSP to continue was 94% [3]. This means that even though the MSP is a good measure to provide incentives and prevent losses, it needs to undergo a few changes to satisfy the needs of the farmers.

From Figure 1, it can be incorporated that the problems faced by farmers generally comprises of lack of awareness, Middlemen Looting and Lack of knowledge about modern techniques. Hence steps must be taken to mitigate these problems.

b) Solutions and recommendations

i) Minimum Support Price (MSP)

The MSP is fixed such that the farmers get at least

50% margin on the cost of production which varies

substantially from state to state. This could be due to the difference in the wages of labor, availability of water, conditions of the soil and weather, etc. Normally, a national average of the production cost is calculated to fix the MSP. It could be possible that a price at which a farmer in UP can make a 60% profit, but a farmer in Karnataka could not make any. Thus, MSP can be fixed on the production cost incurred by a farmer in a specific part of the country rather than the national average. For example, the average daily wage rates for agricultural occupations in Tamil Nadu for the sept-2016 was 378 rupees whereas it was as low as 175 rupees in Madhya Pradesh [4].

This price should be given based on the region of cultivation and not on the region of sale. This is to discourage farmers from selling their crop in the neighboring region to get a higher price.

ii) Middlemen Looting

The main problem arises when the middlemen start to take advantage of the poor and needy farmers. The farmers not being educated enough leads to the middlemen looting onto them and suck their profit and growth. Middlemen can be eliminated by establishing a direct contact between the producers and the consumers. By doing so the farmers can get the maximum profit for their products. For example: In case of sugarcane in Maharashtra, tokens are provided to the farmers before sowing so that there is no deficit or surplus production.

iii) Expensive Transportation

Transportation in rural areas is expensive due to lower competition, reluctance of transportation agencies to serve in rural areas, monopolies and cartels, etc. Dedicating a specific percent of their services to the rural people at a regulated price can be made compulsory for the transport agency in order to get a license or to renew the existing ones. Transport agencies should be given incentives in the form of Tax benefits and other privileges so that they are willing to provide their services in rural areas.

Another way that could increase the competition is by government's incorporation of its own transport system or agency to provide services at a cheaper price in areas where a few players dominate the market.

iv) Storage facility

Warehousing has been an integral part of the supply

chain where goods are not only stored for safekeeping but also for process implementation and hence minimizing cost and wastage. For example, when a farmer harvests wheat bulb, it has to be stored before threshing which the farmers usually store at their own house which makes vulnerable to pests and rain. Hence warehousing should be made essential because that would help farmers to thresh the harvest easily. For storage facility, a public private partnership is recommended where private companies are encouraged to build the facilities through means such as Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT), Build - Own-Lease-Transfer (BOLT), Build-Own Operate (BOO), Lease-Develop-Operate (LDO), Joint Ventures, etc. Government in return can provide subsidy and tax incentives to such companies [5].

v) Fertilizer Quality

It was noted that the knowledge regarding the proper use of fertilizers is generally provided by the fertilizer dealer and not by an authorized personnel. If the knowledge and dosage of fertilizers to be used is provided after soil inspection by a certain specialist, it could help the farmers save resources and to prevent the deterioration of soil productivity. Soil health card scheme was brought for this purpose, but the lack of awareness and delayed test results have made the farmers to continue with the traditional ways. Through this comprehensive study, we found out that China has less cultivation land than India but still their production is way much more than India. It is generally due to their soil quality is much better and their farmers are provided multiple options of fertilizers.

Many times, more than a third of the produce of the farmers does not meet the quality standards specified by the government agencies. In such a case the farmer has to sell their produce through a dealer at an unregulated price. Thus a price floor should also be established for standard II/III quality of produce.

vi) Lack of awareness

Agricultural modernization and mechanization have a potential to increase the productivity to a vast extend. But due to lack of awareness regarding the usage and benefits of these techniques, the farmers do not tend to practice these.

The Agricultural Awareness Initiative program is being held for promoting the agriculture and agrifoods sector across the Northwestern territories of United States which provide information to all residents on the benefits of agricultural development. It raises funds for producers, commodity organizers, agribusiness, and public and private agencies for developing and implementing agriculture awareness and education activities. Following steps should be taken to spread awareness.

1. Planning information documents, training, and education campaigns.
2. Planning, organizing, or hosting workshops and conferences.
3. Recruiting and training spokespersons.
4. Developing awareness resources such as: websites, videos, displays, publications, etc. [6].

Awareness has to be created in this regard. Moreover, for the farmers with a small area of farm, it is difficult to implement these modern methods. Awareness regarding the consolidation of farmlands and cooperative farming could help the farmers to embrace modern methods. Yet another obstacle is the unavailability or lack of capital needed to implement these.

Even though subsidies are provided in most of the modern farm instruments, their delayed transfer discourages the farmers. Instead of subsidies to be transferred directly, it would be better if discounts are provided at the time of purchase.

vii) Lack of information about technology

In this modern era, there are several technologies and applications available for the farmers to check the amount of nutrients and water present in the soil. They are available very easily, but the problem arises because the farmers don't know about these technologies. These technologies can be put to use by farmers, which can be very beneficial to them and reduce the amount of resources as well as increase the productivity.

ix) Special Agricultural Zones

In general, all of these problems can be eliminated by privatization of the agricultural sector as followed in all developed and developing countries. After the privatization, government needs to focus on two factors – Governance and Building infrastructure. Special Agricultural Zones (SAZs) are a specially carved out zones in which farmers are promoted to use advanced technologies and hence enhance crop productivity by using better facilities. SAZs programme would supply better irrigation possibilities, all time electricity for agricultural purposes, high quality seeds, soil treatment, better market and processing hub, subsidy on agricultural machinery, etc. SAZs main aims is to enhance the crop productivity thereby increasing the overall income of the farmers. SAZs has already shown satisfactory results in Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Karnataka and Government should take more initiative to expand this integrated farming approach and bring better outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

In India, farmers are facing various problems which they cannot overcome unless the government establishes awareness programs to educate them about these drastic problems. In order to overcome these problems, it is necessary that the public private partnership model is set up to ensure an efficient farming system throughout the country. Exploitation by middlemen needs to be eliminated at all costs to help the farmers get maximum profit for their produce. A lot of modern technologies are readily available all over the world but sufficient initiatives to implement these techniques have not been taken in India. Storage facilities should be provided to every village so that their crops do not get damaged and they do not have to sell at an immediate available price due to which farmers have to incur losses. Lack of transportation facilities hampers the connectivity between the market and the farmers cannot sell their produce which leads to a loss.

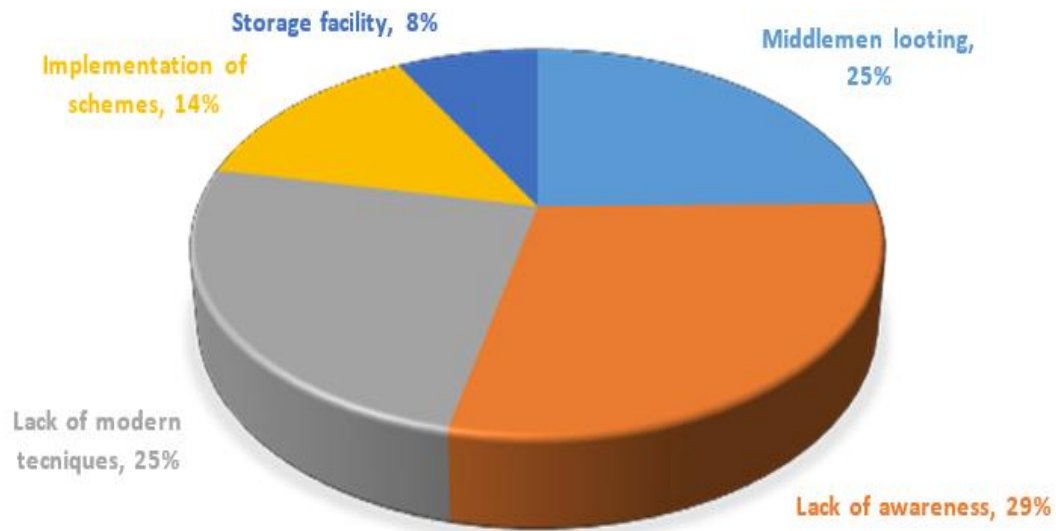


Figure 1: Depiction of Problems faced by farmers

REFERENCES

- [1] <https://www.ibef.org/industry/agriculture-india.aspx> - Visited on 13th January, 2018
- [2] <http://www.preservearticles.com/2012021323179/complete-information-on-fresh-water-resources-of-india.html> - Visited on 27th January, 2018
- [3] Evaluation Study On Efficacy of Minimum Support Prices (MSP) on Farmers, (*DMEO Report No.231, NITI Aayog, Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office, Government of India, New Delhi-110001, January, 2016.*)
- [4] National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development report on Average Daily Wage Rates for Agricultural Occupations in Rural India (sept-2016)
- [5] Mushtaq Ahmad Shah 2015, Accelerating Public Private Partnership in Agricultural Storage Infrastructure in India J. Global Journals Inc. 15(13): 6-8
- [6] <http://www.itn.gov.in/services/agriculture-awareness-initiative> - Visited on 2nd March, 2018