A Study on Satisfaction Level of Farmers Towards Production and Marketing of Agricultural Products

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Indian farmers are unable to secure a fair deal at the marketing and production stages of their produce and an average farmer is denied the full fruits of his industry. The farmers need the services of well- organized marketing system supported by marketing co-operatives, integrated means of transport and scientific storage facilities. For a long time, production and marketing conditions in India were primitive and farmers were exploited by the traders and middlemen. The farmers feel that they are not in a position to get competitive prices for their output as the prices are fixed by commission agents and retailers. They cannot fix sale price over and above their cost price. They face the problems of unsatisfactory irrigation methods, fertilizer prices, market prices of agricultural products etc.

Very few countries have experienced rapid economic growth without agricultural growth either preceding or accompanying it. Agricultural growth is a catalyst for broad based economic development in most of the low-income countries. Over the last few decades, the share of agriculture in GDP has steadily declined in India from over 50 per cent in the 1950s to 18.5 per cent in 2006-07. In contrast, the share of industry and services has increased to 26.4 and 55.1 per cent respectively due to greater focus of Indian economy as nearly 72 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and over 70 per cent of the rural population depends upon agriculture and allied activities for livelihood. The National Agriculture policy (NAP) of India envisages a growth rate of 4 per cent per annum in the agriculture sector, so as to achieve a target of over 300 million tones of food grain production by the year 2020. Against the targeted production of 230 metric tones for X plan, the actual production has never crossed 212.9 metric tones. Gap between the target and actual production is a matter of serious concern as the growth rate of Indian agriculture during the past decade has sharply decelerated from 3.2 per cent per annum during 1980-81 to 1996-97 to an average rate of only 1.5 per cent thereafter against 4 per cent as envisaged in the NAP. With about 16.8 per cent of the world's human population (1100 million, 2006 estimates) and 15 per cent of the world's livestock population, India has only about 4 per cent of the of its area to meet the ever increasing demand of food grains, fodder, fuel wood and fiber of its growing populations. The net sown area in the past 30 years has remained static between 138 million ha to 142 million ha. Consequently, the size of land holdings is continuously reducing. Between 1971-72 and 2002-03, it declined from 2.2 ha to 1.4 ha.

The proportion of small holdings (<2) ha in the total number of holdings increased from 68 per cent to 86 per cent, which in actual terms has more than doubled from 38 million to 87 million during this period. The steady growth of human as well as livestock population, widespread incidence of poverty, and current phase of economic and trade liberalization, are exerting heavy pressures on India's limited land resources for competing uses in forestry, agriculture, pasture, human settlements and industries thus leading to severe land degradation problems.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The National Commission on Agriculture defined agricultural marketing as the process which starts with a decision to produce saleable farm commodities and it involves all aspects of market structure or system both functional, institutional based on technology and academic consideration including pre and post harvest operations, grading, storage, transportation and distribution.

B. Bhushan defines agricultural marketing as performance of activities that direct the movement of agricultural commodities/services from the farm-gate to customer.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The economic development of a country depends on the development of the core industry in which the majority of its people have been engaged for quite a long time. Indian economy has been largely based on agriculture from time immemorial. Therefore, systematic package practices in agricultural production will greatly improve productivity and enable the farmers to reach the maximum benefits. Similarly, a well -organized marketing system for agricultural products will give a suitable reward to people actually participating in the system.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Fruits and Vegetables are a good source of carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals. Fruits and Vegetables are easy to digest, free from fat and cholesterol and are also used as a medicine to cure several ailments. It helps in

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reducing the risks of heart diseases when used regularly.

This study will help to formulate a suitable framework to analyze the various elements of satisfaction level of production and marketing of agricultural products. Such a study will ensure proper resource combinations to improve agricultural production and thereby increasing the profit.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to examine the satisfaction level of production and marketing of agricultural commodities

1. To analyze the satisfaction levels of farmers in production, marketing, government advice etc.,
2. To offer suggestions to improve the production and marketing of agricultural products.

AREA OF THE STUDY

Agriculture is a predominant occupation in Karur District and it occupies an important place in the district economy. Most of the labour force is engaged in agriculture and its allied activities. The paddy, beetle nuts, banana, crops are grown widely in the district.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been framed in the light of the above objectives.

1. There is no significant relationship among the types of farmers and their satisfaction regarding agricultural production.
2. There is no significant relationship among the types of farmers and their satisfaction regarding agricultural products marketing.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study is a combination of both descriptive and analytical data analysis.

SAMPLING DESIGN

The present study is empirical and hence field survey method and personal interview technique were adopted. Random sampling has been adopted for the present study in Karur District.

Sample framework in Karur District

Sl.no.	District	Taluk	Villages	Small Farmers	Medium Farmers	Large farmers	Total
1.	KARUR	Kulithalai	All villages	163	62	25	250
		Krishnaraya-puram	All villages	160	71	19	250
	TOTAL			323	133	44	500

Source: Compiled by the researcher.

Collection of Primary Data

Primary data required for the study were collected from the 500 selected respondents of Karur district in order to analyze the technical efficiency of the farmers.

Statistical tools

Descriptive statistics

The following descriptive statistics- Percentages, mean and standard deviation, scaling techniques, preliminary analysis of data were used for the study.

Measurement of variables

a. Small farmer: Farmers having land upto 2.50 acres

b. Medium farmer: Farmers having land from 2.51 acres to 5.00 acres

c. Large farmer: Farmers having land more than 5.00 acres

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

SATISFACTION LEVEL OF FARMERS WITH THE CULTIVATION OF THEIR CROPS

Table 1 is illustrative of the satisfaction level of the farmers who cultivate agricultural products .Of the small farmers, only 10.5 percent are satisfied, 33.4 percent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The percentage of dissatisfied farmers seems to be very high- at a level of 56 percent. Among the medium farmers, 15 percent are satisfied, 20.3 percent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. But here also, the percentage of the dissatisfied

SATISFACTION LEVEL OF AGRICULTURAL CULTIVATION

Table 1 shows the details of the satisfaction of farmers who cultivate Agricultural products

TABLE 1

		SATISFACTION LEVEL						TOTAL	
		Dis Satisfied		Neither satisfied nor Dis Satisfied		Satisfied		No	%
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
TYPE OF FARMER	Small farmers	181	56	108	33.4	34	10.5	323	100
	Medium farmers	86	64.7	27	20.3	20	15	133	100
	Large farmers	17	38.6	16	36.4	11	25	44	100
TOTAL		284	56.8	151	30.2	65	13	500	100

farmers is very high at a level of 64.7 percent. Among the large farmers, 25 percent are satisfied, 38.6 percent are dissatisfied and 36.4 percent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The percentage of dissatisfied farmers seems to be the highest among the medium farmers and small farmers.

The chi-square test is applied to find out whether the satisfaction level is influenced by the type of the farmers.

Null Hypothesis: The satisfaction due to cultivation is not influenced by the type of the farmer.

The Table 1.a shows that the calculated value is more than the tabulated value and hence the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that the satisfaction level is influenced by the type of the farmers. Among the satisfied farmers, majority of the farmers belong to large farmers category.So, it is understood that the satisfaction level increases with the type of the farmer.

TABLE 1.a : SATISFACTION OF CULTIVATION

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	Table Value	Df	Sig.
Chi-Square	16.845	13.277	4	**

Source: Primary Data** 1% Significance

SATISFACTION LEVEL OF CULTIVATION

From the table 2, it is inferred that 47.0 percent of the farmers were not satisfied; 49.2 percent of the farmers were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Only 3.8 percent of the farmers were satisfied.

TABLE 2 : SATISFACTION LEVEL OF CULTIVATION

SATISFACTION LEVEL	No.	Percent
Satisfied	**19**	**3.8**
Neither Satisfied Nor dissatisfied	**246**	**49.2**
Dissatisfied	**235**	**47.0**
Total	**500**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

USING NEW/ADVANCED TECHNIQUE FOR CULTIVATION

From the table 3, it can be inferred that the majority of the farmers were not interested in using new/advanced techniques for cultivating agricultural products (95.6). Only 4.4 percent of the farmers were using new techniques in the cultivation.

NEW/ADVANCED TECHNIQUES USED FOR CULTIVATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

The following table shows the opinion of the farmers regarding the use of new advanced agricultural techniques in the cultivation of agricultural products

TABLE 3

	No.	Percent
NO	**478**	**95.6**
YES	**22**	**4.4**
Total	**500**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

GOVERNMENT ADVICE

The table 4 shows the satisfaction level of cultivators regarding Government advice. It is presented in the table given below.

Table 4 shows the satisfaction level of the cultivators for the advice/suggestions they received from the government. 86.6 percent of the farmers were not satisfied, 7.0 percent of the farmers were neither satisfied not dissatisfied, 4.2 percent of farmers were satisfied, 2.2 percent of the farmers were not at all satisfied.

TABLE 4 : GOVERNMENT ADVICE

	No.	Percent
Satisfied	21	4.2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	35	7.0
Not satisfied	433	86.6
Not at all satisfied	11	2.2
Total	500	100.0

Source: Primary Data

SATISFACTION LEVEL OF MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

The Table 5 shows the satisfaction level of marketing of agricultural products by the Sample farmers.

Table 5 gives a description of the satisfaction level of marketing of agricultural products by the farmers. Among the small farmers, 323 farmers were taken for study. Out of which only 5.6 percent were satisfied, 53.6 percent are dissatisfied and 40.9 percent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Among the 133 medium farmers, 2.3 percent alone were satisfied, 71.4 percent (quite a high percentage) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 26.3 percent express dissatisfaction. Among the 44 large farmers, 22.7 percent are satisfied, a high percentage of 47.7 are dissatisfied and 29.5 percent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Table 5 : LEVEL OF SATISFACTION IN THE MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

		Types of farmers						*TOTAL*	
		Small farmers		Medium farmers		Large farmers		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Satisfaction level	Satisfied	18	5.6	3	2.3	10	22.7	31	6.2
	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	132	40.9	95	71.4	13	29.5	240	48
	Dissatisfied	173	53.6	35	26.3	21	47.7	229	45.8
Total		323	100	133	100	44	100	500	100

Source: Primary Data

Chi-square Test is applied to find whether there is any relationship between the types of farmers and their satisfaction regarding the marketing of products.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the satisfaction level of the agricultural products market and the types of farmers.

Table 5.a shows that since the calculated value is greater than the tabulated value, the null hypothesis is rejected i.e., the satisfaction level depends on the type of farmers.

TABLE 5.a : LEVEL OF SATISFACTION IN THE MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Chi - Square Tests				
	Value	Table Value	df	Sig.
Chi-Square	59.989	13.277	4	**

Source: Primary Data ** 1 % level of Significance

PROBLEMS FACED IN THE MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS-MULTIPLE RESPONSE

From the table 6, it is observed that price fluctuations, absence of grading, lack of storage facility, lack of

market information and seasonal glut are the major problems faced by the majority of (more than 90 %) the farmers. Heavy commission charges are the next major problem. It is found that there is no organized market for agricultural products and hence all farmers prefer the pre- harvest contractors.

PROBLEMS FACED IN THE MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS -MULTIPLE RESPONSE

The table 6 shows the reasons for problems faced in Marketing of Agricultural Products

TABLE 6

Problems faced in the Marketing of AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS -multiple response		
	No.	%
Indebtedness to traders	371	74.2
Heavy commission charges	400	80.0
Inadequate finance	89	17.8
Price fluctuations	465	93.0
Absence of grading	467	93.4
High transport cost	375	75.0
Lack of storage facility	467	93.4
No regular payment	316	63.2
Lack of market information	464	92.8
Seasonal glut	471	94.2
Malpractices	10	2.0
Absence of co-operative marketing	5	1.0

Source: Primary Data

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. SATISFACTION LEVEL OF CULTIVATION

The study is a combination of both descriptive and analytical data analysis.

2. SATISFACTION LEVEL OF CULTIVATION

It is inferred that 47.0 per cent of the farmers are not satisfied, 49.2 per cent of the farmers are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and only 3.8 per cent of the farmers were satisfied.

3. NEW/ADVANCED TECHNIQUES TO CULTIVATE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Majority of the farmers are not in favour of using new techniques for cultivation (95.6). Only 4.4 per cent of the farmers are using new techniques for cultivation.

4. GOVERNMENT ADVICE

86.6 per cent of the farmers were not satisfied, 7.0 per cent of the farmers were neither satisfied not dissatisfied, 4.2 per cent farmers were satisfied and 2.2 per cent of the farmers were not at all satisfied.

5. SATISFACTION LEVEL IN THE MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

This means that when landholdings (type of farmers) increase, the satisfaction also increases.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1.The size of the farm holdings has a direct effect on the output of agricultural products. Sub-divisions and fragmentation of the farms leading to uneconomic holdings result in lower output. Necessary steps should be taken to consolidate the smallholdings of the farmers to make the agricultural holdings more economic so that it will increase the output. The uneconomic holdings may be converted into economic holdings through co-operative farming.

2. Since the availability of water is insufficient, the purchase of water from fellow farmers is inadequate. As a result, there is a sizable reduction in the output. In order to increase the water resources, the government should come forward to help the farmers through subsidy for digging well or bore well.

3. The farmers are usually following the traditional methods of cultivation that have been prevalent since ages. The advanced techniques like soil testing and seed testing are not used by the farmers as they are not aware of them. Therefore, the laboratories for these tests are to be established in every panchayat union of karur district.

(Cont on page 54)

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4. The farmers should be encouraged to follow intercrop cultivation as it not only increases the total income, but also the intercrops are used for natural manure.
5. During the period of non-availability or inadequacy of water, the land is kept uncultivated. The farmers should be educated to undertake crop diversification.
6. The officials of the horticultural department at the taluk levels should visit the farms and give their suggestions regarding the availability of hybrid seeds, pest management, water management, use of manures and fertilizers and methods to increase production.
7. The cultivation is higher in Karur District. But the produce fetches low price. If a co-operative marketing society is established in this district, it will be beneficial for agricultural producers as it undertakes the procurement, processing and other marketing functions for the benefit of the members.

CONCLUSION

The agricultural growth strategy of the past has intensified the interclass inequalities. The Government can pay attention by providing transport facilities, maintaining good roads and providing subsidiaries for suckers and fertilizers, so that the small and medium farmers may be benefited. The Government can take necessary steps to release Cauvery water at an appropriate period (i.e. during cultivation period) which will enable the farmers to get a good yield of agricultural products.

In the areas chosen for the research, two-third of the population are agriculturalists. Their agricultural lands depends on monsoon rains. The majority of the lands are rain-fed areas. If the monsoon fails, then the farmers will be in trouble. In this situation, the Government should give financial support to farmers, especially to the small and medium farmers.

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