

Constraints in tomato production in western Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

Tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*) is an important vegetable crop in India and is grown on an area of 4.58 million hectares with the production of 74.62 million tonnes. Maharashtra is major tomato growing state with an area of 0.36 million hectares and production of 1.18 million tonnes with the productivity of 33.20 t/ha. Multistage sampling design has been used for selection of district, tehsil, villages and tomato growers. Sample size 30 each of 3 seasons *i.e.* *kharif*, *rabi* and summer *i.e.* 90 respondents were selected for present investigation. The results revealed that, problems faced by farmers in production of tomatoes were non-availability of labour in time which was reported by (70.00 per cent) farmer which was severe in summer followed by *kharif* and *rabi* season. Non-availability of seedlings in time (53.33 per cent), non-availability of loan facilitate in time (45.55 per cent) etc. In case of marketing of tomatoes the problem faced by farmers were low and fluctuating prices (78.88 per cent), cost of packaging material (72.22 per cent), high transport cost (70.00 per cent), high commission charges (62.11 per cent) etc.

Key words : Seasonal, Constraints, Perishable, Production, Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*) is an important vegetable crop in India and it is grown on an area of 4.58 million hectares with the production of 74.62 million tonnes. Maharashtra is major tomato growing state with an area of 0.36 million hectares and production of 1.18 million tonnes with the productivity of 33.20 t/ha.

In the wake of trade liberalization and globalization, the agriculture sector in India faces an uphill task of meeting global competition, reducing unemployment and enhancing income in rural area. Diversification of agriculture towards selective high value crops like tomato has been recommended as one of the strategies for meeting these challenges.

Many studies on marketing of agricultural products showed that it is not as efficient as it should be to harmonize interest of the producers and consumers and thereby to provide an impetus for sustained growth of agricultural production. The system of marketing in India is supposed to be exploitative, collusive, economically inefficient and operating with high profit margin of intermediaries. The system consists of various malpractices and also deduct unauthorized charges for various reasons which results in the lower prices for produce.

Due to perishable nature of tomatoes, the quick and safe disposal of it over long distance with minimum wastage is very important.

The prices are ruled by demand and supply conditions in the market. Price received by producer mainly depends on proper time and stage of harvesting, grading packing and forwarding. The seasonal nature of tomato also affects the price in the market. The different systems of sale

such as sale in assembling market, terminal market with or without involving intermediaries also affects the prices of tomatoes received by the prices of tomatoes received by the producers. Under some situations growers are forced to accept the prices offered by traders. The producer can realize higher share only when the marketing system as a whole is effective and efficient.

Prosperity of the cultivators depends not only on the increased rate of production but also on the method and efficiency with which they dispose of their produce to their greatest advantage. It assumes greater significance in marketing of highly perishable commodities like tomato. However, tomato marketing has continuous to be inefficient on account of highly seasonal nature of production and extreme perishability of the produce.

Under these circumstances, it was felt necessary to study the cost of production and marketing of tomato in this area. Keeping this point in view, it was proposed to undertake a study "Constraints in tomato production in Western Maharashtra" with specific objective *i.e.* to ascertain constraints in production and marketing of tomatoes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Multistage sampling design was used for selection of district, tehsil, village and tomato growers. At the first stage, Ahmednagar district was selected purposively on the basis of the highest area under tomato crops. In the second stage, Sangamner tehsil in Ahmednagar district of Western Maharashtra was selected. In third stage, ten villages from tehsil were selected randomly. In fourth stage, from each of selected villages, the list of tomato cultivators was obtained. The list was stratified into three