

## Economics of production of *kharif* potato in Satara, India

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### ABSTRACT

Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) is one of the most important tuber crops in India. A study was conducted in Satara district of Western Maharashtra. Two tahsils viz., Khatav and Koregaon in Satara district were selected for the study. For selection of the sample cultivators, a list of *kharif* potato growers along with their operational holdings for each of the selected villages was prepared. For each village, the potato growers were categorised into three predetermined classes as, small (0.01 to 2 ha), medium (2.01 to 4.0 ha) and large (above 4 ha.). Eighteen potato growers i.e. six for each of the above three predetermined classes were selected randomly from each selected village. Thus the total sample consisted of 90 *kharif* potato growers and 30 potato growers of each small, medium and large size classes of holdings spread over five villages of two tahsils.

**Key words :** Economics, Production, Potato

### INTRODUCTION

Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) is one of the most important tuber crops in India. Poverty and large population are significant and persistent problems in India. These problems besides having close relationship with food insecurity are also related to poor health and malnutrition. Food security in India is therefore an important national priority. A short duration crop like potato produces more dry matter, edible energy and edible protein per unit land and time and is the most potential and nutritionally superior crop for fighting hunger and malnutrition. Short crop duration and wide flexibility in its planting and harvesting time are potatoes valuable traits that help in adjusting the crop in various intensive cropping systems.

Potato can be grown even under rainfed conditions in certain parts of the country. Use of right varieties, good quality seed and recommended dose of fertilizers coupled with proper irrigation and phytosanitary measures will boost up the yield to feed the millions. The picture on the agricultural front is also not encouraging in view of increase in population, urbanization, and manmade creation of wastelands, shrinking arable land and depleting water resources. In such conditions, potato deserves a much more important place than what it occupy. Potato is a crop which has always been a "poor man's food". Apart from starch, it provides essential body buildings substances such as vitamins, minerals and proteins. It also provides most of the trace elements.

India is the fourth largest among the five major potato

producing countries. In India, potato is being grown on about 13.7 lakh hectares, which contributes about 0.80 per cent of the total cropped area. The production of potatoes in India during 2001-02 was 24.97 million tonnes with the average yield of 18.23 tonnes per hectare.

In Maharashtra, potato is one of the major cash crops. Pune and Satara districts are major potato growing districts in Maharashtra state, which account for 72 per cent of area and 76 per cent of production. Total area under potato in Maharashtra was 15800 lakh hectares with 70800 tonnes production with average yield of 4.48 t/ha

In Khatav and Koregaon tahsils of Satara district, Potato is grown as a principal cash crop. However, as yet per hectare yield of potato has not reached to its maximum due to various reasons such as lack of cultural and manurial requirements of the crop in relation to type of soil, climate, problem of dormancy, storage and utilization and heavy losses due to diseases and pests both in the field and during storage. There is a need to understand per hectare resource use, productivity, costs and returns of *kharif* potato. However, very few research studies were carried out in Maharashtra exclusively on this aspect. It was therefore proposed to take up the present study viz., economics of production of *kharif* potato in Satara district with following objectives:

1. To study per hectare resource use and productivity of potato.
2. To estimate per hectare costs and net returns of *kharif* potato on sample farms.

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