

RESEARCH ARTICLE :

Constraints faced in production and marketing of sugarcane in Parbhani district of Maharashtra

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SUMMARY : The present paper entitled, constraints faced in production and marketing of sugarcane in Parbhani district of Maharashtra state was studied by selecting a sample of 60 sugarcane growers from 12 villages. Multistage sampling design was used in selection of district, tehsil, village and sample growers. Relevant data on various types of constraints faced and solutions anticipated were collected using a pre-tested structured schedule by personal interview method. The results of the study revealed that in Parbhani district at large, several constraints such as extreme drought condition, lack of finance and credit facilities, delay in transportation of cane, payments not done in time, non remunerative price of the produce, trouble by harvesting gang, poor road conditions, non-availability of ready use FYM, and inadequate irrigation facilities were amongst the major constraints faced by the growers. In order to overcome these constraints, 100 per cent of the respondents suggested that government should provide drip irrigation facility under strict monitoring scheme to all sugarcane growers in the region. Majority of the farmers strongly suggested that adequate provisions must be in place to ensure remunerative price is paid for the produce. In addition, a large number of growers submitted request if bank loan facility could increase at nominal interest rate at times when it's required the most.

KEY WORDS :

Constraints,
Production,
Marketing

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Sugarcane is among most important cash crops grown in Parbhani district of Maharashtra. Maharashtra is the second largest producer of sugarcane in India. In this terrible drought which has been in place since 2014, huge water consumptive sugarcane crop stands on 2,37,014 hectares of land in Marathwada. Shockingly, the current area under sugarcane is higher than last year, in

2013-14, which was 2,30,530 hectares! About 2 million farmer's livelihood in Maratawada depends on sugarcane and this implies the significance this crop holds to the interest of the people in the region. Although area and production under sugarcane had increased in 2014-15 compared to 2013-14, the increase was only slight because farmers face number of challengers in producing this crop.

An attempt has been made in this study to understand the problems faced by the

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growers in production and marketing of sugarcane in the region. It is with a view that if constraints faced by growers in the area are identified, then feasible solutions could be developed to address these problems. This will help to increase the production of sugarcane in Parbhani district. In view of this, present study was undertaken with given objectives to examine constraints faced in sugarcane cultivation and to obtain suggestions made by the respondents to overcome constraints faced by them.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Parbhani district of Maharashtra state, where two Tehsil namely Selu tehsil and Parbhani tehsil were selected for the study. Following this, lists of sugarcane growing villages were obtained from District Agricultural Officer and six villages from each tehsil were selected randomly. Hence, total numbers of villages selected were twelve. The list of sugarcane producers cultivating sugarcane for last one year was obtained from Gram Sewak and using simple random sampling technique, five growers from each village were selected randomly. Thus, the sample size was worked out to 60. A pre tested structured schedule was used to collect related data for year 2013-14. The respondents were interviewed at their homes and in some cases at common place in the village. The purpose of the study was also explained to the respondents.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the present study as well as discussions have been summarized under following heads:

Constraints faced by sugarcane growers :

The constraints faced by sugarcane growers were divided in three broad categories namely socio-economic constraint, production constraint and marketing constraint.

Socio economic constraints :

The various types of socio-economic constraints faced by the sample growers were evaluated and presented in Table 1.

Results (Table 1) highlight that major socio-economic constraints faced by the sample growers were poor road facilities (46.67 %), small and fragmented land

holdings (45 %), low soil fertility (21.67 %), crop damage by stray animals (18.33 %) and young members showing no interest in farming (13.33 %). Poor road facility was of great concern to farmers because it hindered the transportation of sugarcane to mills and denied better access to farm connectivity with respect to transportation of manures and fertilizers. Crop damage by stray animals to affected farmers was of considerable matter, since most of the farmers had small area under sugarcane cultivation and in each invasion about 2-3 tonnes of cane were destroyed. This resulted in huge loss to the farmers. Farmers were of opinion that these factors were greatly affecting their production and submitted their recommendations to address the issue with urgent attention.

Production constraints :

The production constraints include those factors which hindered production of sugarcane in fields. The distribution of the respondents with respect to their production constraints are presented in Table 2.

The major constraints (Table 2) under this category were severe drought problem (100 %), high cost of fertilizers and chemicals (73.33 %), inadequate irrigation facilities (71.67 %), none availability of easy credit facilities (68.33 %), non-availability ready use FYM (46.66 %) and high labour costs (13.33 %). The non availability of easy credit facilities spearheaded other problems since use of FYM, laborers, chemicals, fertilizers and planting sett's came with a cost and absences credit facilities made situations more stressful to growers (Anil *et al.*, 2015 and Adelani, 2011).

Marketing constraints :

The harvested sugarcane should be transported to mills on time to ensure better sugar recovery and at the same time minimize losses to farmers. Various marketing problems faced by the growers were identified and presented in Table 3.

Results in Table 3 revealed that non remunerative price of the produce were a major problem faced by the growers in the area (83.33 %). Even though the B.C.R. was worked out to be 1.35, farmers were of view that they were not paid adequately with respect to the efforts and inputs deployed in sugarcane farming. Other problems under marketing constraints include payments not done on time (60.00 %). Farmers from Parbhani tehsil

expressed their disappointments that some of them had not received their payments from last two years (2013). This had huge impact on farmers on the ability to manage their financial capacity and remain actively involved in sustainable sugarcane farming. Table 3 further highlights that trouble by harvesting gang was another major problem faced by the growers (56.67 %). An insight on the issue revealed that harvesters even though hired by

kaar khana, demand additional cash from farmers. And if their demands are not met, canes are harvested few centimeters above the ground level leaving part of the stock standing on the ground. About 55 per cent of the farmers favored delay in transportation of cane to mills as another hurdle they face in marketing of their produce. Results revealed that truck drivers as above, also demand money from farmers and if their demands are not met,

Table 1 : Distribution of sugarcane growers according to their socio-economic constraints

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
1.	Poor road facilities	28	46.67	I
2.	Small and fragmented land holdings	27	45.00	II
3.	Low soil fertility	13	21.67	III
4.	Crop damage by stray animals	11	18.33	IV
5.	Young members show no interest in farming	8	13.33	V

Table 2 : Distribution of sugarcane growers according to the production constraints

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
1.	Drought problem	60	100	I
2.	High cost of fertilizers and chemicals	44	73.33	II
3.	Inadequate irrigation facilities	43	71.67	III
4.	No credit facilities	41	68.33	IV
5.	Non-availability of FYM	28	46.66	V
6.	High labour cost	8	13.33	VI

Table 3 : Distribution of sugarcane growers according to their marketing constraints

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
1.	Non remunerative price	50	83.33	I
2.	Payments not done on time	36	60.00	II
3.	Trouble by harvesting gangs	34	56.67	III
4.	Delay in transportation of canes	33	55.00	IV

Table 4 : Summary of suggestions made by sampled growers to overcome constraints

Sr. No.	Suggestions	Frequency	Per cent
1.	Provision of drip irrigation facility with subsidy by the government	60	100
2.	Provision of minimum support price of the produce	50	83.33
3.	Subsidy on chemicals and fertilizers by the government at planting time	44	73.33
4.	More credit facilities should be made available to farmers at nominal interest rate	41	68.33
5.	Government to regulate private millers to ensure cane payments done on time	36	60.00
6.	Government should provide subsidy on mechanized farming	8	13.33
7.	Private millers to enter into binding agreements with private truck drivers in carting of cane to mills	33	55
8.	Subsidy on mechanized harvesting should be provided by government in conjunction with private millers in crushing seasons	34	56.67
9.	Government to improve road facility to provide better connectivity around the farms and to mills	28	46.67
10.	Agricultural officers to prepare soil health cards for individual farms to make appropriate fertilizer recommendations	13	21.67
11.	Government to assess crop damage by stray animals and make appropriate compensation for losses incurred	11	18.33
12.	Farming to be made rewarding enterprise through easy accessible of information and provision of adequate credit facilities at the time of need to entice young farmers	8	13.33

they do not show up to cart harvested canes to mills. The harvested cane sits long in the field, drying away losing its sugar recovery capacity and gross weight loss, which eventually results loss on farmers part.

Suggestions made by sampled growers to overcome given constraints :

The distributions of respondents for the suggestions made to overcome the given constraints are presented in Table 4.

Results (Table 4) revealed that provision of drip irrigation facilities on subsidy by government at the time of planting was a major request put forward by all 100 per cent of the respondents. Non remunerative price was also a major challenge faced by the growers therefore, 83.33 per cent of the growers suggested government to regulate all private millers so that minimum support price of the produce is paid to the farmers. The input cost such as fertilizers and chemicals were having significant impact on overall cost of production, so 73.33 per cent of growers suggested that government should provide subsidy of fertilizers and chemicals to ease the burden of production costs. Non-availability of easy credit facility (bank loan) at nominal interest rate was also hindering production of sugarcane in the region; therefore, 68.33 per cent of the growers suggested more credit facilities are to be made available to farmers at low interest rate. Another 60 per cent of the respondents demanded that all cane payments due to farmers should be paid on time. To address the problem of delay in transportation of cane, 55 per cent of the growers suggested that millers should engage in binding agreement with private truck and tractor drivers for carting of cane to mills soon after harvesting. 56.67 per cent of the growers demanded government and private millers to work together and provide mechanized harvesting facilities to all growers in order to address the problems created by harvesting gangs. With respect to poor road facilities, 46.67 per cent of growers suggested government should improve road connectivity around the farms and access to mills. Fertilizer costs were considerably high, therefore, using of FYM was an option at a cheaper rate, some 46.66 per cent of growers suggested that well decomposed FYM should be available to all growers at planting time. 21.67 per cent of the growers suggested that agricultural officers should prepare soil health card for individual farms in order to make appropriate fertilizer recommendations

(Phuse and Atkare, 2008). The problem of stray animals was suggested to be addressed by the government. 18.33 per cent of the growers suggested that crop damage by stray animals should be assessed by Agricultural Officers and accordingly desirable compensations should be made to the growers. In summary all sampled growers strongly suggested that above recommendations should be taken onboard with top priority if sugarcane farming is to improve to a better standard in Parbhani district. Similar work related to the present investigation was also done by Patel (1999); Tuteja and Tuteja (1999).

Conclusion and Policy Implication :

The constraints faced by sugarcane growers Parbhani district as whole were mainly severe drought problem (100 %), non remunerative price of the produce (83.33 %), high cost of fertilizers and chemicals (73.33 %), inadequate irrigation facilities (71.66 %), lack of credit facilities (68.33 %), payments not done on time (60 %), trouble by harvesting gang (56.67 %) and delay in transportation of cane (55 %). As per the result of the study, 100 per cent of the growers were facing prolonged drought problem. It is therefore, highly recommended that Government should urgently provide drip irrigation facilities on subsidy to all growers at the time of planting. Since 83.33 per cent of growers raised problem of non remunerative price, relevant policy makers should emphasize this issue and make appropriate provisions in ensuring minimum support price of the produce is paid to the growers. The cost on fertilizers and chemicals, as indicated by 73.33 per cent of growers, should be eased by the Government with subsidies provided on it. Furthermore, to address the problem of cane payments not done on time, it is recommended that Government should regulate all private millers and enter into binding agreements which ensures all payments are done on time and failures to result in necessary actions taken against them. It is also recommended government should provide subsidy on mechanized harvesting since most of the farmers (56.67 %) were facing problems with manual harvesters.

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