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Contraints 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

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groups *i.e. kharif, rabi* and summer. From each of the categories, three tomato growers were selected from each village. Thus, from 10 villages 90 tomato growers were selected from this area, different middlemen were selected randomly for study of marketing of tomato. The sample size of wholesaler, retailer, distant trader and processor were selected as ten, respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems in production of tomato:

The efforts were made to study the problems in the production of tomatoes in the area under study. The problems reported by the sample farmers have been presented in Table 1. It was observed that one of the most important problems faced by the tomato growers was non-availability of labour in time (70.00 per cent) being a labour intensive crop. This problem was more acute in summer (83.33 per cent) followed by *kharif* and *rabi* season (66.66 and 60.00 per cent, respectively). The next important problem faced by the farmers was non-availability of seed in time which was reported by 53.33 per cent farmers. The seeds used were mostly hybrids and HYV and as such it was very costly which was the major problem in all the seasons. The growing of tomato is capital and labour intensive crop and required huge investment, the non-availability of loan, which was faced by 45.55 per cent farmers. This problem was also severe in the case of *kharif* (53.33 per cent) followed by summer and *rabi* with 46.66 and 36.66 per cent, respectively. As explained above as being a capital intensive crop, fertilizer expenditure is also more, which was faced by 43.33 per cent farmers and was more in case of *kharif* crop 46.66 per cent followed by summer and *rabi* were 43.33 and 40.00 per cent, respectively. The problem such as non-availability of hired bullocks and machine powers used for timely operations and know-how of use of insecticide were also reported by the farmers. 13.33 per cent and more in *kharif* 23.33 per cent followed by *rabi* and summer 10.00 and 16.66 per cent, respectively. The financial constraints in production of tomatoes in three seasons was noticed.

Table 1 : Problems of tomato growers in production

Sr. No.	Particulars	*Kharif* (n=30)	*Rabi* (n=30)	Summer (n=30)	Total (n=90)
1.	Non-availability of labour	20 (66.66)	18 (60.00)	25 (83.33)	63 (70.00)
2.	Non-availability of loan facility in time	16 (53.33)	11 (36.66)	14 (46.66)	41 (45.55)
3.	Non-availability of seedling	17 (56.66)	13 (43.33)	18 (60.00)	48 (53.33)
4.	Non-availability of fertilizers in time	14 (46.66)	12 (40.00)	13 (43.33)	39 (43.33)
5.	Knowledge of insecticide use	7 (23.33)	3 (10.00)	2 (6.66)	12 (13.33)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to total.

Problems in marketing of tomatoes:

In the present context, the development of agriculture does not merely depend on increasing the agricultural production and productivity but also on the promotion of better and well organized marketing system. The efficient system promotes the production as well as increases economic returns of the farmer. As such, problems of marketing are more serious in perishable commodities like tomatoes. The important problems faced by sample cultivators in marketing of tomatoes are given in Table 2.

It was observed that about 78.88 per cent producers opinioned that they were not getting prices as expected. The prices were always quoted on lower side and wide fluctuations in the prices. This problem was more severe for *kharif* tomatoes, 86.66 per cent followed by summer and *rabi* were 83.33 and 66.66 per cent, respectively.

The other problem reported was the costly material required for packaging, which was reported by 72.22 per cent growers and was more prominent in summer season, 80.00 per cent followed by *kharif* and *rabi* 70.00 and

Table 2 : Problems in tomato marketing

Sr. No.	Particulars	*Kharif* (n=30)	*Rabi* (n=30)	Summer (n=30)	Total (n=90)
1.	Non-availability of packaging material	10 (33.33)	15 (50.00)	20 (66.66)	45 (50.00)
2.	Costly packaging material	21 (70.00)	20 (66.66)	24 (80.00)	65 (72.22)
3.	High transport cost	25 (83.33)	20 (66.66)	18 (60.00)	63 (70.00)
4.	Absence of open auction sale	15 (50.00)	16 (33.33)	14 (46.66)	45 (50.00)
5.	High commission charges	17 (56.66)	18 (60.00)	20 (66.66)	55 (61.11)
6.	Malpractices adopted in market	15 (50.00)	13 (43.33)	17 (56.66)	45 (50.00)
7.	Low and fluctuating prices	26 (86.66)	20 (66.66)	25 (83.33)	71 (78.88)
8.	Non-receipt of payment in time	20 (66.66)	22 (73.33)	13 (43.33)	55 (61.11)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to total.

66.66 per cent, respectively. Many times, commission agents do not return packaging material to the producers which added the packaging cost. Almost 70.00 per cent farmers reported that the cost of transportation is very high in *kharif* 83.33 per cent followed by *rabi* and summer season. High commission charges was another important problem posed by 61.11 per cent farmers. It was also added that there were excessive involvement of intermediaries in tomato trade because of which their share was high. Producers opined that the malpractices were common. The other problem faced by the producers were unauthorized charges deducted by commission agents, improper weighment, deducting more breakage of packages and quantity of spoilage.

It was reported that traders forming syndicates among themselves in deciding the prices for particular day. Absence of open auction sale was reported by 50.00 per cent producers. Non-receipt of payments in time was another important problem faced by 61.11 per cent farmer, which was severe in *kharif* and *rabi* seasons.

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