

Research Article

## Study on problems of cotton farmers in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra

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**SUMMARY :** This paper presents the study on the problems of the cotton farmers in Maharashtra with respect to effect of insecticides and unpredictable climate, labour problems, black marketing by the private traders, failure of Govt. policies and problem of electricity. The detailed information was collected on analysis about the total input cost required for producing cotton crop per acre for an average farmer .

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Cotton producers,  
MSP, APMC, MSC

### BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

In 1971, when Garibi Hatao and nationalization were in the flavour , Maharashtra launched the Cotton Monopoly Scheme(CMS). Its aim was to capture the whole economic value for the farmer ie from growing cotton to selling finished cloth. It was in 1984 that the state government set up The Maharashtra State Coop Cotton Growers Mktg Fed Ltd (MSC), an apex cooperative society. It administered the CMS for the state government and was responsible for procurement, processing, storage and sale of cotton. At the time of payment, the Kharidi Vikri Sangh (sub agent of MSC) deducted loans taken by farmers from Co-operative banks (up to a maximum of 50 per cent of payment) and paid the balance. Under CMS cotton traders gave way to 'Kheda Kharidi wale' (KKW). Numerous small farmers preferred to sell their produce to KKW at a discount to MSP(Nayyar, 2007). In Maharashtra, the cotton is known as the 'white gold' but the current situation of cotton producers is really very pathetic.

**Objectives :**

To examine the problems faced by the cotton producers in Vidarbha (Maharashtra)

**Problems faced by the cotton producers:**

*Effect of insecticides and unpredictable climate:*

The unpredicted nature of weather, various harmful insecticides (Lalya) had attacked the crop. This problem shows a direct effect on the seasonal period of cotton also *i.e.* normally the production and collection of cotton take place upto March 2012 but this period has been shortened till November 2011 only (less than 3–4 months). This shows a decrease in the productivity rate of about 25 to 30 per cent *i.e.* about a loss of Rs. 400 crores.

*Problem of electricity :*

There was a load shading of 16 hours a day which has forced the less productivity of cotton production. The farmers could not provide the crop the required and proper amount of water and at the end of the day, the yield of the crop got stagnant. The electricity board has outlined the time schedule of agricultural pumps for load shading but they were carrying this activity even beyond the time stated by them.

*Labour problems:*

There was steep hike in the labour charges. They are taking charges of about Rs 100 -150/- per day or Rs. 5–7 per kg . The Govt. provides around

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35 kg of pulses at a minimum rate of Rs. 2- 3 per kg, due to which the labourers become more lazy which indirectly affects their tendency to work in the farm. Currently, there is large shortage of skilled labourers which indirectly shows effect on the labour charges which they are taking.

#### *Black marketing by private traders:*

Marketing is one of the major aspects for consideration with the rise in agriculture production (Prasad, 2003). But the local traders are purchasing the cotton at less MSP than normal rate by taking into consideration the economic condition of farmers. The farmers usually sell at the rate at which the trader demands so that they can get little relief from the loan which they have taken from various sources. The local traders took the license from Agriculture Product Marketing Committee (APMC) to purchase the cotton from various villages. In 2011, the APMC had permitted the local traders to purchase the cotton at Rs 4200 per quintal. But they were purchasing at Rs. 3500 to Rs. 3800. There is no direct control of APMC over these dealers. Uptil now, the 347 private traders of Western Vidarbha had purchased about 5.5 lakh quintal of cotton, summing the total amount to around Rs. 250 crores.

#### *Failure of Govt. policies:*

The basic ideology behind the failure of deciding the policies for the cotton producers was that there is a hardcore difference in the level of total output productivity and the input cost behind the cotton production. The decrease in the productivity of the cotton land was largely contributed to the policies decided by the Govt. from last 10-12 years. The ban on export of cotton was also the major decision behind it.

## **RESOURCES AND METHODS**

The survey was being carried out in three villages *i.e.* Shindi, Pathrot and Asadpur of Achalpur Taluka of Amravati district in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. The survey was based on those farmers having both dry and drip irrigation land of cotton crop. This survey covered the agricultural village with 300 households, nearly 1500 people. The data were collected through in depth personal interviews with the respondents. The final sample consisted of 60 farmers.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS**

The Maharashtra govt. should promote more organized

**Table 1: Data and analysis of total input cost required for producing cotton per acre for an average farmer**

Category	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Ploughing	700	800	1000
Prepare the proper plain land for seed sowing	850	1000	1200
Throwing useless wastes (4 workers )	250	300	400
One trolley natural fertiliser(transport + labour charges)	1800	2000	2500
Seeds for 1 acre (1 packet)	750	750	830
Cultivation (4 workers )	300	400	500
Gap filling (2 workers)	150	200	250
3 times weeding (total 12 workers )	900	1200	-----
Due to continuous rain (2 more weeding = 8 workers )	----	-----	1000
One time ploughing with traditional way using bullocks	350	400	500
Artificial fertiliser	1200	1300	1500
Minute nutrients	500	550	700
Providing fertiliser (3 times 3 workers each = 9 workers )	675	900	-----
Due to unpredictable rain (2 times fertiliser = 6 workers)	-----	-----	750
Spraying	3000	4000	5000
Collection of cotton:			
2009-10 (Rs. 5 or 3 per kg)	15000	-----	-----
2010-11 (Rs. 5 or 3 per kg)	-----	2000	-----
2011-12 (Rs. 2 or 5 per kg)	-----	-----	1000
Total	12,925	15,800	17,230
MSP in APMC market:			
2009-10 (Rs. 5000 or 3000 per quintal)	15000	-----	----
2010-11 (Rs. 5000 or 3000 per quintal)	-----	15000	----
2011-12 (Rs. 2000 or 3300 per quintal)	-----	-----	6600*

\* Figures collected in the month of Oct. -Nov. 2011.

G and P units so that the farmers can get the appropriate MSP for their cotton. There is a need of implementation of large irrigation projects in Vidharbha area. The utilization of the money sanctioned for irrigation projects should be done in more useful way. There should be an increase in extension services that could have advised farmers on modern cultivation practices. The entrepreneurial spirit amongst farmers and supply of spurious inputs should be encouraged. The crop insurance provided by Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited (AICI) under the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme should be more focused. Government must increase awareness about the programme. Local banks could piggyback rural promotional activities of FMCG companies or use free lancers to sell these policies. Three results are corroborated with the findings of Dubey *et al.* (1981) and Prasad (2003).

#### Conclusion :

This study examined the various problems faced by cotton farmers in Vidarbha region

The front Line Demonstrations should be encouraged on production technology whereby it demonstrates to farmers how cotton should be cultivated on one acre plot. The Govt.

should play a supportive role in Contract Farming. The way it works is that an informal association of farmers represented by selecting farmers signs a tripartite MOU with various multinational companies. Once the cotton policy in Maharashtra stabilizes the ill effects of the CMS would gradually get undone. Invest in creation of assets rather than doling out subsidies should be the mantra.

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