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Dr. Swapnali Kulkarni Associate Professor: PCET's S. B. Patil Institute of Management, Pune
Email: swapnalik.2003@gmail.com

Dr. Dipti V. Sharma Associate Professor: Faculty of Management, Marwadi University Morbi Rajkot,
Gujarat :: vs.dipti@gmail.com

Abstract

Present study was confined to 10 talukas situated in one district of Maharashtra known for its agricultural-progressiveness, dynamic agricultural marketing and consumer with reasonable awareness and proportionate sensitivity for agricultural marketing in particular. The sociological and psychological research is called for to gain understanding psychology of Producers i.e. the farmers of the land. The economic status and the situational profile of the land tillers were also studied in detail. The present study is an attempt to understand the various features and profile of the producers of the distribution channel in the agricultural marketing system.

Keywords: socio – economic, psychological, situational features, producer, distribution channel.

Introduction

Producer is a vital component initiating the process of agricultural marketing and therefore assumes greater significance. This makes us to understand him in his overall perspective. With a view to receive realistic picture producer respondents were further grouped into three categories – Big producer, medium producer and small producer based on their size of land holding possessed. Therefore information pertaining to his personal, social, economic, psychological and situational features was gathered and the same is depicted in the study below.

Personal, social, economic, psychological and situational features of the respondents (members of distribution channel) involved in the Agricultural Marketing system – Personal Features

Personal features were broadly grouped into – personal features consisting of age, education, native background, type of family and size of family.

Gunawardana and Sharma (2007) conducted a study on identifying the information seeking behavior of various categories of producers in actual field condition. During the study the personal features of producers considered were type of the family, size of the family and age, education, level of extension contacts and size of land holding.

Kishore Kumar and A Sailaja (2012) in their study on personal traits of model farmers in technology dissemination selected profile characteristics as age, education, farming experience, farm size, and training received, mass media exposure and extension contact were measured using scales developed for study. Social capital and achievement motivation were measured using scale developed for study.

Social and Economic Features

The social feature of the respondent is very important to understand the social connects of an individual and hence the producer respondents were asked if they were involved in any type of social participation. A monetary return received by the producer respondent from producing of the crops is taken to mean as the income.

Ani etal (2004) in his study titled Relationship between Socio-Economic Characteristics of Rural Women Farmers and Their Adoption of Farm Technologies in Southern Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Joseph et al (2013) conducted a study on the effect of socio-economic characteristics on small scale producers in Apa local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The different socio-economic characteristics considered were age, family size, education, income, farm size, poverty status and farming experience. They concluded that most of the farmers live on less than one US dollar per day. Human capital development and training opportunity if provided will not only enhance the acquisition of more human capital, but also more income that will combat poverty.

Psychological and Situational Features -

In order to understand the psychology of the respondents the psychological features were grouped into economic motivation, risk bearing capacity and attitude towards agricultural marketing. In an attempt to understand the situation in which the respondent takes efforts to produce his yield the following parameters were considered like availability of irrigation, source of irrigation, agricultural implements owned, market infrastructure, distance from market place and co-ordination between the channel members.

Cropping Pattern in use by the producer respondents –

Cropping pattern means the proportion of area under different crops at a point of time. A change in cropping pattern implies a change in the proportion of area under different crops. The producer respondents were interviewed to know the cropping pattern in Nasik. The different categories were

- i. jowar,
- ii. wheat,
- ii. cotton,
- v. soyabean,
- v. pulses,
- i. oilseeds,
- ii. fruit crops,
- ii. vegetables including onion

One of the interesting studies in this regard is by (Mruthyunjaya and Praduman Kximar, 1989) who extensively worked on cropping pattern changes in Indian agriculture, to examine the changes in input use, productivity cost of production, profitability and employment in crops. He identified and explained the cropping pattern changes, by suggesting ways and means for controlling the imbalance in the cropping pattern and thereby widening the base for crop production in India.

Marketing System used for sale of Agricultural Produce by the producers -

Generally the producers sell their produce through wholesaler, retailer, agent or themselves. These different marketing systems of sale of agricultural produce are used by the producers to fetch good price to their products. In the present study, the author tried to understand the marketing system worn by the big, medium and small producers. The different groups of the respondents for marketing system for sale of agricultural produce were –

- i Self
- ii Through Wholesaler
- iii Through Retailer

Sharma and Mittal (2011) in a study on knowledge level of producers on agricultural marketing in India reported that, about 72 per cent of the sample producers were not aware on the reforms in agricultural marketing. The study further revealed that only about 30 per cent of the producers were aware of the alternative marketing methods. This might be due to inadequate knowledge level of personnel working in agricultural marketing, who are responsible for market- led extension as per Model APMR Act.

Difficulties encountered by the producer towards Agricultural Marketing –

The producer is the starting point of the distribution chain. To enable the successful running of the chain all the participants have face some obstructions which needs to conquer. During the study the respondents were asked to tick the difficulties faced by them during the process of agricultural marketing. The respondents were grouped according to the difficulty were-

Frequent Fluctuations in Rates of Agricultural produce

i
ii
iii
iv
v
vi
vii
viii
ix
x
xi

Enhanced Prices of Chemical Fertilizers and Insecticides

Non availability of Fertilizers required (Type and Quantity)

Climatic Changes

Faulty Auction system

Non Co-operation of Intermediaries for provision of money as and when required

Unsatisfactory Transport Facilities

Lack of protection from human and inhuman factors

Non availability of cold storage facility

Lack of funding for storing agricultural produce in cold storage

Unpredictable rates of the agricultural produce in market

The study clearly delineates that the major difficulty faced by all the categories of producer respondents was frequent fluctuations in rates of agricultural produce which counts to 13.51 percent, 13.70 percent and 16.62 percent in big, medium and small producers respectively. The big producers reported other difficulties like Non availability of Fertilizers required (Type and Quantity), Lack of funding for storing agricultural produce in cold storage and unpredictable rates of the agricultural produce in market. The least of the experienced difficulty by the big producers was Non Co-operation of Intermediaries for provision of money as and when required. In case of medium producers the minimum reported difficulty was Unsatisfactory Transport Facilities (4.57 percent). In small producers the lowest difficulty reported was Faulty Auction system which amounted to 3.55 percent.

In a similar study conducted by Shahbaz (2010) on Problems Faced By Producers In The mountains Of Northwest Pakistan: Challenges for Agri. Extension. They concluded that the local producers were using time old traditional technology of crop and fruit production, and were obtaining very low yield. Due to small land holding and illiteracy, most of the producers couldn't access agricultural loans offered by the banks. Most of the producers were not satisfied with the services of provincial Department of Agriculture. Women share equal work with men in the crop and livestock farming. Keeping in view the conservative nature of the area, female extension workers from the local areas may be appointed who can communicate with the rural women.

Suggestions offered by the producers for ease and convenience in Agriculture and Agricultural Marketing system –

Knowing full well the difficulties in agricultural marketing process, it was thought appropriate to invite suggestions from the respondents to enhance the existing agricultural marketing system. As was anticipated author could receive suggestions from the members representing various categories under study. Suggestions offered by the producer respondents were

- i Implementation of crop insurance scheme in its most appropriate manner
- ii Fertilizers and insecticides should be made available as and when required at proper prices
- iii Irrigation water and Electricity should be provided at critical stages of crop production
- iv Electricity should be available at subsidized rate and more time should be allotted to pay the bills
- v Adequate storage facility should be provided by the Government
- vi Co-operation from Intermediaries should be solicited for advance Payment
- vii Protection from Human and inhuman calamities for Agricultural Produce should be provided at Market place

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Cursory look in the study conducted reveals that the 18.52 percent of respondents from big producer category suggested irrigation water and Electricity should be provided at critical stages of crop production and 18.52 percent and 18.97 percent from high producers and low producers category respectively suggested that protection from Human and inhuman calamities for Agricultural Produce should be provided at Market place. The suggestion which was given by minimum number (7.41 percent) of big producers and medium producers (9.49 percent) was fertilizers and insecticides should be made available as and when required at proper prices. By considering the data further we may infer that 18.97 percent of medium producers suggested Implementation of crop insurance scheme in its most appropriate manner which was the highest in their category. The suggestion which received the lowest percent (8.91) in low producers was co-operation from Intermediaries should be solicited for advance payment.

Kumar 2012 revealed in his study on Perception and Attitude of Producers and Agri Firms towards Commodity Finance that Commodity finance is availed by large producers and this facility has still not percolated to small producers. Majority of the producers (82%) borrow less than Rs 5 lakhs, and 18% borrow between Rs 5 – 10 lakhs on a per annum basis. Most producers (65.79%) arrange their money from banks, and 34.21% from middlemen. Most of the respondents are charged between 12-13% rate of interest. The agri firms feel that commodity finance is safe a more beneficial from other means of finance. Commodity finance has more benefits, but it is not easily available and it depends on the availability of warehouses. Producers and agri firms who avail of commodity finance are overall satisfied with the services and dealings with banks.

Findings –

1. Majority of the respondents from all the categories of farmer, put together were in between 41 to 50 years of age with formal education received upto HSC, reporting rural native background representing joint family system with 4 to 6 members therein having participated in variety of social activities. Majority of them fall into the category of income upto Rs 2.5 lakhs. They had high economic motivation and bearing medium risk capacity besides expressing favorable income towards agricultural marketing.
2. Frequent fluctuation in the rates of agricultural produce is the difficulty spelt out by majority of the farmers representing different categories in totality included in the study at hand.
3. Out of affinity and concern maximum number of respondents from different categories of farmers has rightly suggested necessary steps to be taken for protection of agricultural produce from human and inhuman disaster at market place.

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