



A Study of Agriculture Marketing in India

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ABSTRACT

In India, organized marketing of agricultural products has been promoted through a network of controlled markets. The majority of state governments, as well as UT administrations, have established rules governing the control of agricultural produce markets. As of March 31, 2006, there were 7566 regulated markets in the country, up from 286 at the end of 1950. In addition, India has 21780 rural periodical marketplaces, 15% of which are controlled. The introduction of regulated markets has helped to lessen the disadvantages in terms of competition that producers and sellers at the wholesale assembling level still face. However, it continued to fall outside the developmental reach of the rural periodic markets in general and the tribal markets in particular.

KEYWORDS: Marketing of Agricultural, Agricultural Produce Markets, Regulated Markets, Periodic Markets, Agricultural Product, Grading and Standardization

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is distinctive from industry and plays an important role in the economic maturity of a nation. India's prosperity depends largely upon the agricultural prospect. Agriculture and associated sectors participate nearly 22% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India. However, around 65-70% of the population are reliant on agriculture for their living. 60% of the total personal is engaged in the agriculture sector. Agriculture is still the key economic sector and plays an important role in the overall socioeconomic advancement of the nation. Almost 43 percent of India's geographical area has been occupied by the agriculture sector. It is still the only greatest provider to India's GDP even after a decline in the similar in the agriculture share of India.

According to Kotler (1999, p. 8). Marketing is a social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and freely exchanging products and services of value with others. Marketing is not only an expansion of the production process but its only purpose as Adam Smith emphasized when, in his text *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), he said that: "Consumption is the sole end purpose of all production: and the interest of the producer ought to be attended to only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer."

The term agricultural marketing is a combination of two words agriculture and marketing. In the broadest meaning Agriculture means activities aimed at the consumption of natural resources for human well-being, and marketing brings a chain of activities involved in moving the goods from the place of production to the place of consumption. The subject of agricultural marketing contains marketing functions, agencies, channels, efficiency and cost, price range and market integration, producer's surplus etc.

The marketing of farm produces is a multiplex procedure. In our country, the farmers produced various and varied types of agricultural commodities. Agricultural marketing can be explained as the marketable professions participating in relocating agricultural products holding of the farm, horticultural and other similar products from producer to consumer.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Johnston and Mellor, (1961) in their paper stated that commercial demand for agricultural produce increases due to income and population growth, urbanization, and trade liberalization. Marketed supply simultaneously rises due to productivity improvements in production, post-harvest processing, and distribution systems.

2. Kashyap and Raut, (2006) in their paper suggested that, marketers need to design creative solutions like e-marketing to overcome challenges typical of the rural environment such as physical distribution, channel management promotion and communication. The "anytime-anywhere" advantage of e-marketing leads to efficient price discovery, offers economy of transaction for trading and more transparent and competitive setting.

3. Grosh (1994), believed that since the turn of the millennium, attention has shifted toward more micro-level and institutional policies. In particular, contractual arrangements with downstream processors, agro exporters and retailers, often orchestrated through farmer groups, are increasingly seen as a means of overcoming the market imperfections that led to the failure of macroeconomic and sectoral adjustment policies.

4. Godara, (2006) in his study described that the positive trend of economic liberalization and associated opening up of Indian economy have significantly reduced the structural rigidities in the system, this trend should be premise of India's future agricultural reform. Agricultural business has come under strong and direct influence of international market. Indian farmers have to produce quality goods to meet the international standard.

5. Brithal, et.al., (2007) in their study suggested that by building efficient and effective supply chain using state of the art techniques it is possible to serve the population with value added food, while simultaneously ensuring remunerative prices to farmers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Creation of statewide agriculture produce marketing infrastructure, comprising of various market yards, purchase centers, link road etc.
- Profit maximization for formers by ensuring best possible price for their produce at the various market yards, sub yards and purchase centers.
- Collection of market fee and other levies from the purchasers on various transactions taking place at the mandis.
- Creation of additional facilities, along with expansion and maintenance works on behalf of various market committees.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

- The research design adopted is descriptive. The secondary records were collected from specific sources. That includes the Articles, Text-books and websites.

Major Constraints of Present Agricultural Marketing System in India

1. Infrastructure Problems

Indian economy is characterized by poor infrastructure which is the biggest challenge for agriculture marketing to develop. An effective infrastructural facility is necessary for increasing agricultural productivity. For the modernization of agriculture through technological innovations, the most essential components of infrastructure are rural electrification, transport and communication, marketing facility and education. Rural electrification is the most important infrastructure for the development of agriculture.

Most of the markets lack adequate infrastructure for storage, sorting, grading or post-harvest management. For instance, one fourth of the Markets have common drying yards for commodities, grading facilities are available in only one-third markets and cold storage in only 9 per cent of the markets. Trader modules (shop-godown and platform in front of shops) exist in only two-third of the Markets. One-third of the markets do not have covered or open auction platforms. The Private sector is unwilling to invest in logistics or infrastructure of the Market under prevailing conditions. (Report Committee of State Ministers, 2013).

2. Lack of Storage Facilities

An inherent characteristic of agricultural production is that it is seasonal whilst demand is usually endless throughout the year. Hence, the need for storage to allow a smooth, and as far as possible, uninterrupted flow of product into the market. It would be an exaggeration to propose that a producer can turn production on and off to meet demand, they too have their constraint, but they have more substitutes than does the agricultural producer. Two-third of the societies has been facing the problem of raw material scarcity.

3. Financial Problem

Indian farmer, being poor, tries to sell his produce as soon as after the crop harvesting to the traders and moneylenders for taking the loan at unfavorable terms and conditions. They also borrow the money from private money lenders at the tied condition for cultivation. Absence of working capital, the high cost of operation, price fluctuations in agricultural produce, higher employee cost and over dependence on loans from apex bodies are the major problems of financial nature to the co-operative marketing societies in India. When the problems like over acceptance of deposits and huge interest cost are existing at the moderate level, the problem of bad debts is at very lower level.

4. Lack of Transportation Facility

The transport function is primarily one of making the product available anywhere it is needed, without adding irrationally to the overall cost of the produce. Satisfactory performance of this function requires consideration of alternative routes and types of transportation, with a vision to achieving timeliness, maintaining produce quality and minimizing shipping costs. Many of the rural areas don't have proper road and rail facilities. This creates difficulty in transporting the agro produce to the marketplace within required time. Hence, Indian farmers cannot reach nearby mandis to sell their produce at a reasonable price. Due to this reason, they prefer to sell their produce at nearest local markets itself. It is the main difficulty in the way of well-organized marketing. A lot of agricultural product is wasted due to transport problem in our country.

5. Marketing Problems

Agricultural marketing still continues to be in a bad form in rural India. In the non-appearance of normal marketing facilities, the farmers have to depend upon local traders and middlemen for the disposal of their farm produces, which is sold at a throw-away price. In most cases, these farmers are enforced, under socio-economic circumstances, to carry on suffering sale of their produce. In the maximum of small villages, the farmers sell their produce to the money lender from whom they frequently borrow money. In order to meet his commitments and pay his debt, the poor farmer is

enforced to sell the produce at whatever price is offered to him. The Rural Credit Survey Report rightly remarked that the producers, in general, sell their produce at an unfavorable place and at an unfavorable time and mostly they get unfavorable terms.

6. Market Information Asymmetry/Lack of Market Information

As much as is possible marketing decisions should be built on sound information. The process of collecting, interpreting, and circulating information pertinent to marketing decisions is known as market information. The role of market information is to reduce the level of risk in decision making. There is the absence of market intelligence or information system in India, it is often not possible for the farmers to obtain information on exact market ruling prices of their produce dominant in different markets. Thus, they accept, any remunerative price for their produce as offered by traders or middlemen to them. In India, most of the farmers are illiterate and ignorant of the exact prices ruling in the markets. They depend upon inaccurate information. They depend on hearsay reports of village traders who never reveal correct price.

7. Lack of National Integrated Markets

Under the prevailing system, the marketable surplus of one area moves out to consumption centers through a network of middlemen, traders, multiple market areas and recognized agencies. Although there survives a national level physical market, there is no national level rule for the same and the prevailing regulation does not provide for a barrier-free market in the country. There is a huge variation in the density of regulated markets in different parts of the country, which varies from 118.78 sq km. in Punjab to 11215 sq km. in Meghalaya. The all-India average area served by a regulated market is 487.40 sq km, against the recommendation of the National Farmers Commission (2004) that a regulated market should be available to farmers within a radius of 5 Km (corresponding market area of about 80 sq. km.).

8. High Incidence of Market Charges

The rate of commission charged by the licensed commission agents is excessive because different direct taxes, which are taxed on the net income, the commission is charged on the whole value of the produce sold. The license fee charged from several markets licensed operators is normal but the small number of licenses granted creates a premium, which is believed to be paid in cash.

9. Licencing Problems

The compulsory requirement of owning a shop/godown for licensing of commission agents/traders in the regulated markets has led to the monopoly of these licensed traders who are acting as a major entry barrier in existing APMCs for new entrepreneurs thus, preventing competition. It is argued that the monopoly of Government regulated wholesale markets has prevented development of a competitive marketing system in the country. The system does not provide any help to farmers in direct marketing. It also does not assist in organized retailing and smooth raw material supply to agro-processing industries (Report Committee of State Ministers, 2013).

10. Restrictions in Licensing

The licensing of commission agents in the regulated markets has controlled to the monopoly of these licensed traders substitute as the main entry the barrier in prevailing APMCs for a new entrepreneur hence, avoiding competition. New licensing of commission agents have need of space for shops within the market yards. As many of the market yards being started long back don't have adequate space for construction of shops, the issue of the new license is not encouraged in many cases. The traders, commission agents, and other functionaries organize themselves into associations, which generally do not allow easy entry of new person, restrictive the very spirit of competitive functioning.

11. Large Number of Middlemen

Attentiveness procedure is very important for agricultural goods. A long channel of distribution is needed and hence there are large numbers of middlemen. The long chain of middlemen taking a large amount of the agriculturist's share from the consumers' rupee. The middlemen sells the agricultural goods to the consumers at a higher price and give lower earnings to the agriculturist.

12. Large Number of Marketing Channels with Long Supply Chain

Agricultural goods, perhaps, have the extensive chain of middlemen. Traditionally, the normal agricultural marketing chain in the country is fairly long with a large number of intermediaries between the producers and the consumers like the wholesalers, brokers, commission agents, retailers and so on. The agricultural goods pass among all these people before they reach the final consumer. As it passes through each individual, they add up more of costs without adding significant value and the price of goods increase automatically. So, it is only the consumer who is finally made to bear the burden. Thus, the high price paid by the consumer does not reach the grower. It is pocketed only by the market intermediaries.

13. Malpractices in the Market

There is a vast number of unregulated markets which adopt various malpractice. Prevalence of false weights and measures and lack of grading and standardization of products in the village market in India are always going against the interest of ignorant, small and poor farmers. In the market, the intermediaries indulge in a number of unwanted practices to make quick money at the cost of the producer and the consumer.

14. Less farmer's Price Realization

The share of the farmer in consumer's price is extremely low mostly in perishables due to a number of intermediaries, lack of infrastructure and poor holding capability. In order to offer remunerative prices to the farmers, there is a need to decrease intermediation by providing alternative marketing

channels like direct marketing, contract farming, etc. for which restructurings in agricultural marketing system are necessary.

15. Inelastic Demand

The demand for agricultural goods is not manipulated by a fall or rise in their price. Accordingly, the producer will suffer on account of fall in the price during bumper harvest.

16. Price Fluctuation

There is price fluctuation in agricultural products in the market because of the imbalance in supply and demand.

17. Poor Quality of Product

Improved quality of seeds and fertilizers are not properly used by the farmers in India. However, the quality produce goods very poor and its prices are low in the market.

18. Unfavourable Mandis

The condition of the mandis is also not at altogether helpful to the farmers. The farmers have to wait for disposing of their produce for which there is no storage facilities are available in most of the mandis. Hence, the agrarians have to take assistance of the dealer or dalal who take away a major percentage of the profits and settles the sale either in his favor or in favor of arhatiya or brokers.

19. Lack of Organisation

There is the absence of co-operative organization on the part of Indian farmers. A very small amount of marketable surplus is being transported to the markets by a huge number of small farmers leading to a high transportation cost. Accordingly, the Royal Commission on Agriculture has rightly observed, "So long as the farmer does not learn the system of marketing himself or in co-operation with others, he can never bargain better with the buyers of his produce who are very shrewd and well informed."

20. Lack of Grading/Standardisation and Grading

enables the producer of consumer or industrial goods to get the accurate price for his products. Standardization has no importance for agricultural goods. In spite of this, they can be categorized according to their size, shape and so on. However, in the market, slightly importance is given for grading the produce and as a result, the producer gets the same price for different varieties of goods. Indian farmers do not give importance to the grading of their produce. They hesitate to distinct the qualitatively good crops from bad crops. Hence, they fail to get a good price for their quality product.

CONCLUSION

Even after Sixty Five years of Independence and 11(eleven) Five Year Plans completed, Indian agriculture is still at the crossroads. There is an eminent need for the Agri-marketing initiatives to be large and organized. They require to strength the regulated market system result from changing nature of connexions between agriculture and markets. The most important requirement is to improve the quality standard, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of our agricultural products. The agriculture sector needs well-functioning markets to drive growth, employment, and economic prosperity in rural areas of India. In order development of post-harvest and cold-chain infrastructure nearer to the farmers' field.

In order to keep away from the isolation of small-scale farmers from the benefits of agricultural produce, they need to be integrated and informed with the market knowledge like fluctuations, demand and supply concepts which are the core of the economy. Marketing of agriculture can be made effective if it is looked at the collective and integrative efforts from various quarters by addressing to farmers, middlemen, researchers, and administrators. It is high time we brought out significant strategies in agricultural marketing with innovative and creative approaches to bring fruits of labor to the farmers. Using modern ICT can bring out better solutions as it can facilitate agricultural marketing functions and processes include buying and selling, payment, grading, standardization, transportation in an efficient manner.

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