

Problems of Sugarcane Growers in Kalaburgi District of Karnataka



Economics

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Vijaykumar Hebbal

Asst. Professor, Dept. Of Economics Govt. Degree College & P.G.Center Kalaburagi -585106 - Karnataka

ABSTRACT

The farmers are vital role players in agro-based production units, hence only the consolidated results of financial, cost and technical performance of such units cannot be considered as total performance, unless the performance of key role players is added with such performance. Based on this statement, an attempt has been made in this chapter to analyse profiles and problems of sugarcane growers of selected units. The primary data relating to the farmers have been collected through a pre-tested structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of three parts viz., sugarcane growers' personal profile, agriculture profile and problems faced by the sugarcane growers.

Introduction

Sugar Industry is the second largest agro based industry in India, next to textile. This is the only industry, located in the rural part of the country. About five crores of sugarcane farmers, their dependants and a large mass of labourers are involved in sugarcane cultivation, harvesting and other related ancillary activities. This constitutes 7.5 per cent of the rural population. Besides, over a five lakhs of skilled and semi-skilled workers, mostly from the rural areas, are employed in the sugar industry, and the annual wage bill of the industry is around `1,000 crores, per year. Presently, Indian sugar industry contributes 15 per cent of the world sugar production.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To know the socioeconomic conditions of the sugar industry farmers in study area.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The study is restricted to the Kalaburagi District of Karnataka state. Since the researcher belongs to a farming community, interested in the economic development of Kalaburagi District.

METHODOLOGY

Primary source, collected through structured questionnaire from farmers the researcher has visited personally, to some of the sample respondents.

Secondary Source

Researcher collected the secondary data through books journals website etc.

Problems Faced By Sugarcane Growers

The sugarcane growers in India face two-dimensional problems viz., off the fields and on the fields, in other words problems encountered during cultivation as well as marketing of sugarcane.

The farmers of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory's have pointed out that non availability of sufficient finance was the first major problem (ranked as the first problem) for them followed by other problems such as insufficient water supply, seeds, additional labour, fertilizer, non-availability of technical guidance from concerned authority and no stable demand for sugarcane.

The farmers of Abzalpur have given stress to only four problems faced by them. The farmers' first and foremost problem was non-availability of additional labour force. It was evident that the average number of adults in the family was 4 of which just 2 were observed to have engaged in agriculture activities, which indicated the ratio between work force available and actually engaged in agriculture was reduced to half. Further, these farmers specified that insufficient supply of water was their second constraint, non-availability of finance was the third problem and fluctuating demand for sugarcane was the fourth one.

The sugarcane growers in Aland also indicated that non-availability of additional work force was their first problem followed by non-availability of sufficient water. Other problems (as raked by the farmers) were non-availability of financial help, technical guidance from sugar mill, Government agriculture departments, pesticides and fertilizers in time.

the following table. It is evident (Table -01) that 93 percent of the farmers of the.

Table no -01
Problems Faced by Sugarcane Growers

S.No.	Problems	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory		Renuka Sugar Factory	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
i.	Low rate for sugarcane	93	7	100	0
ii.	Waiting in a long queue	97	3	3	97
iii.	Dishonest in weighing at weigh bridge	70	30	0	100
iv.	Unnecessary deductions in the name of toll, charges, etc.	60	40	0	100
v.	Delay in payment of installments	17	83	0	100
vi.	Shortages of sugarcane buyers	7	93	0	100

Source: Field Survey

Bhusnoor Sugar Factory felt that low rate for sugarcane was the major problem, waiting in a long queue was another problem faced by 97 percent of the cane suppliers, 70 percent of the farmers observed dishonesty in weighing at the mill's weigh-bridge, 60 percent of them were expressed unhappiness with unnecessary deductions in the name of toll and other charges. Delay in cane bill payment (17%) and shortage of sugarcane buyers (7%) were other problems as experienced by the farmers.

Cent percent of the farmers from Renuka Sugar Factory, strongly felt that they did not get appropriate price for their sugarcane. The difference between cost of cultivation and cane price was very low, resulting in low rate of return. A meagre percentage of the farmers were observed to have faced problem of waiting in a long queue. None of the respondents has experienced any other problems except those.

Factors Preventing Farmers from Visiting Banks and PACS

It was a common phenomenon that the Indian farmers prefer to visit local moneylenders because of easy and quick availability of loans. But these moneylenders charge very high rate of interest and exploiting the poor and illiterate farmers. Looking at this problem, Government of India and Reserve Bank of India introduced various agriculture loan schemes for farmers through various financial institutions. Apart from all these efforts, sizable group of farmers do not come forward to take agriculture loan from legally approved institutions. In order to ascertain the fac-

tors that have prevented sugarcane growers from visiting banks and PACS, nine possible reasons were identified and allowed the farmers to give their views.

Table no -02

Factors preventing Framers from Visiting

S.No.	Factors Preventing	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	Renuka Sugar Factory.
		YES	NO
i.	No need of bank loans	1	30
ii.	Never approached banks before	3	0
iii.	Do not know the bank loan procedures	7	0
iv.	Unnecessary / lengthy loan procedures	3	0
v.	High rate of interest	13	0
vi.	Inadequate security / Security problem	3	0
vii.	Unclear title of the land	3	0
viii.	Non-cooperation from bank staff	7	0
ix.	Do not get the loan in time	10	0
X	Other reason	0	0

Source: Field Survey

As far as the farmers of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory were concerned (Table -02), 7 percent of the farmers felt that they were not in need of bank loan and 3 percent of them never approached banks before, 7 percent of the farmers did not know bank loan procedure, 3 percent of them felt that bank loan procedures were time consuming and lengthy, 13 percent felt that lending rate of interest was high, 3 percent of them could not get loan due to inadequate security, the same number of farmers could not apply for loan because of unclear title of lands, 7 percent of the farmers opined that they did not get co-operation from the bank employees and 10 percent of farmers applied for loan but did not get in time.

As far as the Renuka Sugar Factory, farmers were concerned; 30 percent of the farmers expressed that they were not in need of bank loans and it is cleared that 30 percent of the farmers invested their own savings for sugarcane cultivation. It is also evident that those who applied for loans have got full amount.

Services Provided By The Factories

Most of the sugar mills in India provide many services to their member farmers in which two services play a vital role *viz.*, pre-harvest supply of basic materials and post-harvest transportation. In order to ascertain the types of transportation used by the farmers, amount of co-operation received from the sugar factory and the degree of trust that the farmers had in the materials supplied by the mills, the farmers of the selected units were sought their views and the farmers survey revealed the following facts:

Transportation: It is observed that the sugarcane was transported from the fields to the factory either by the farmers' own vehicles or hired vehicles or with the help of sugar factory's transportation service.

Table no -03

Type Of Transportation Used By The Farmers

S.No.	Type Of Transportation	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory		Renuka Sugar Factory.	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
i.	Own vehicle	0	100	20	80
ii.	Hired vehicle	0	100	0	100
iii.	Sugar factor's transport service	100	0	80	20

Source: Field Survey

A large number of farmers (Table -03) were observed to have made use of factory's transportation service because many farm-

ers did not have their own vehicles and they did not want to hire vehicles at high rent. In such circumstances, only the alternative left to the farmers was to make use of factory's transportation service.

Table no.-04

Degree of co-operation received from sugar factories

S.No.	Variable	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory		Renuka Sugar Factory.	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
i.	Do they come in time to pickup sugarcane?	93	7	100	0
ii.	Do they cooperate with you?	97	3	100	0
iii.	Do they ask some advance from you	60	40	0	100

Source: Field Survey

The survey revealed (Table-04) that all the farmers of Bhusnoor Sugar Factory made use of available factory's transportation facility; 93 percent reported that the cane cutting team with their vehicles reached the field in time, 97 percent agreed that factory's cane cutting team co-operated with them, 60 percent of the farmers were unhappy that cane cutting contractors asked some advances.

The farmers of Renuka Sugar Factory, have disclosed different views; 20 percent of the farmers made their own arrangements to transport sugarcane and the rest 80 percent opted for factory's transportation service. All those who opted for factory transportation facility have expressed that the cane cutting team was punctual and extended their co-operation. None of them said that the cane cutting contractors asked some advance to do work properly.

New Techniques and Technologies in Sugarcane Cultivation

The techniques and technologies of sugarcane cultivation are changing everyday. Sophisticated hybrid seeds and improved plantation methods have already entered in the global market. Because of inherent problems of agriculture, Indian farmers cannot adopt and adapt with those techniques and technologies within short span in their fields. There are seven common problems in sugarcane cultivation, which do not allow the farmers to go for or adopt new cultivation techniques and technologies. In this segment of investigation, an attempt has been made to ascertain the actual problems of farmers, which act as constraints in adopting new techniques and technologies in sugarcane cultivation of selected units.

Table No. -05

Constraints in Adopting New Techniques and Technologies in Sugarcane Cultivation

S.No.	Type of Constraints	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory		Renuka Sugar Factory.	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
i.	More Labour	43	57	73	27
ii.	Limited Land	93	7	60	40
iii.	High cost	100	0	83	17
iv.	Non-Availability of Materials	77	23	0	100
v.	Non-Availability of Technical Guidance	50	50	0	100
vi.	Lack of Co-operation from	40	60	0	100
vii.	Lack of co-operation from slip Boys / Field Boys	20	80	0	100

Source: Field Survey

The opinion survey revealed (Table -05) that 43 percent of the farmers of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory were observed to have not shown any interest in new technology which demanded more labour, 93 percent have felt that it was not suitable for

marginal and small farmers who have a limited land and all of them accepted that the adoption of new technology increases the cost due to additional investments, 77 percent of them have not shown any interest because of non-availability of required materials, 50 percent have felt that they may not get proper guidance from concerned agencies, 40 percent of them felt that the sugar mills did not extend co-operation, and 20 percent of the farmers were reluctant because of non-availability of co-operation from slip boys.

Conclusion:

Bhusnoor Sugar Factory felt that low rate for sugarcane was the major problem. Cent percent of the farmers from Renuka Sugar Factory., strongly felt that they did not get appropriate price for their sugarcane. The difference between cost of cultivation and cane price was very low, resulting in low rate of return. It was a common phenomenon that the Indian farmers prefer to visit local moneylenders because of easy and quick availability of loans. But these moneylenders charge very high rate of interest and exploiting the poor and illiterate farmers. Looking at this problem. Farmers do not come forward to take agriculture loan from legally approved institutions. Most of the sugar mills in India provide many services to their member farmers in which two services play a vital role viz., pre-harvest supply of basic materials and post-harvest transportation. Farmers cannot adopt and adapt with those techniques and technologies within short span in their fields. There are seven common problems in sugarcane cultivation, which do not allow the farmers to go for or adopt new cultivation techniques and technologies.

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