



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Commerce

PROBLEMS OF SUGARCANE CULTIVATORS IN GULBARGA DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA

KEY WORDS: Farmer, sugarcane, problems, profit, Economic conditions.

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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:

Agriculture is one of the most significant sector of the Indian Economy. Agriculture is the only means of living for almost two thirds of the workers in India. The agriculture sector of India has occupied 43% of India's geographical area, and is contributing 16.1% of India's GDP. Agriculture still contributes significantly to India's GDP despite decline of its share in India's GDP. There are number of crops grown by farmers. These include different food crops, commercial crops, oil seeds etc., sugarcane is one of the important commercial crops grown in India.

Need o the study

Sugar industry, being an agro based industry, boosts the rural development, by providing employment opportunities, directly and indirectly. Millions of people get benefitted, by this industry. The facilities, such as road, water, power, transport, education, hospitals and much infrastructural facilities are made, if there exists a sugar mill. The country's economic development is possible, only if the mills run profitably. India, with huge population, has the largest consumers of sugar, in the world.

Objective of the study

1) To know the socioeconomic conditions of the sugar industry farmers in Gulbarga District.

Study Area

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

Methodology

In this study, the research work is based, mainly on primary, as well as, secondary sources of information. As a part of **primary source**, collected through structured questionnaire from farmers

Researcher collected the secondary data through books journals website etc

Sample Design

There are two sugar industries in Gulbarga district; both are selected for the study. For the study and observation of socioeconomic position of the farmers will be studied on the basis of primary data.

Primary data

1. Two sugar industries in Gulbarga district has been studied thoroughly.
2. 100 farmers from the catchment area of each sugar industry will be randomly selected for the study for their socioeconomic development.

Data analysis:

Age-wise Distribution of Farmers

To analyse the age group of sugarcane growers, the farmers were classified into three groups viz., farmers below 35 years (young), in between 36 to 50 years (middle age) and above 51 years (old).

Table .1 revealed that 20 percent of the farmers of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory were young, 37 percent of the farmers were middle aged and 43 percent have crossed 50 years.

TABLE NO. 1 Age-wise Distribution of Farmers

Units	Above 35 years	35 to 50 year	Above 51 years
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	20	37	43
Renuka Sugar Factory	10	43	47
Total	30	80	90

Source: Field Survey

In case of Renuka Sugar Factory, just 10 percent of the farmers were found to have fallen under the category of young farmers, 43 percent represent the middle aged and the rest 47 percent were under the old age category.

Distribution of Agriculture Income

It is a common phenomenon that farmers and businessmen do not want to disclose their real income. It was observed that the income disclosed by the farmers did not tally with their quantum of sugarcane produced. The income (Net income) generated after deducting the cost of cultivation was considered for this study. Based on their annual income, the farmers were classified into five income slabs viz., less than Rs.50,000, Rs.50,001 to Rs.1 lakh, Rs. 1,00,001 to Rs.2 lakh, Rs. 2,00,001 to Rs.4 lakh and above Rs.4 lakh.

Table No.2 Distribution of agriculture income

Units	Above Rs. 50,000	Rs.50,000 To Rs. 1 lakh	Rs. 1 lakh To Rs. 2 lakh	Rs. 2 lakh To Rs. 4 lakh	Above Rs. 4 lakh
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	40	37	10	3	10
Renuka Sugar Factory.	37	33	27	3	0

Source: Field Survey

It is evident that 40 percent (Table.2) of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory's farmers earned less than Rs.50,000, 37 percent were in between Rs.50,000 and Rs.1 lakh, 10 percent of the farmers income was in between Rs.1 lakh and Rs.2 lakh, 3 percent earned more than Rs.2 lakh but less than Rs.4 lakh and 10 percent of the farmers income was more than Rs.4 lakh per annum. So far as the farmers of the Renuka Sugar Factory. were concerned, 37 percent of the farmers earned less than Rs.50,000, 33 percent of farmers were in between Rs.50,000 and Rs.1 lakh, 27 percent of the farmers income was more than Rs.1 lakh but less than Rs.2 lakh, 3 percent of the farmers income was more than Rs.2 lakh but less than Rs.4 lakh and none of the farmer in Alandarea earned more than Rs.4 lakh per annum.

Area Under Cultivation, Irrigation and Under Sugarcane Crop

In order to ascertain the total area of land under cultivation, portion of cultivated land under irrigation and cultivated land allotted for sugarcane crop, three inter linked questions were put before the respondents. Further to know reasons behind the portion of land left out idle without cultivation, an additional question was asked to the respondents. The responses of the respondents pertaining to these three variables are displayed in Table. 3.

Table no .3 Area Under Cultivation, Irrigated and Under Sugarcane Crop

Units	Area under cultivation	Area Irrigated	Area Under Sugarcane
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	4.3(100%)	4.2(97%)	4.1(95%)
Renuka Sugar Factory.	7.8(100%)	7.3(93%)	6.7(85%)

Source: Field Survey

On an average, Bhusnoor Sugar Factory's farmers (Table 3) have 4.3 (mean value) acres of land of which 4.2 acres (97%) of land was irrigated in which 4.1 acres (95%) of land was allotted for sugarcane crop. The farmers of the said area opined that lack of water supply, non-availability of labourers in time and shortage of electricity were the main causes for the portion of land left out either idle or not used for sugarcane crop.

The farmers of Renuka Sugar Factory. owned 7.8 (average) acres of land of which 7.3 acres (93%) of land was under irrigation and sugarcane was grown in 6.7 acres (85%) of cultivated land. The farmers also expressed the same problems as revealed by the Aland farmers for their inability to cultivate entire land.

The average land holding by the farmers in Abzalpur was almost two times (8.6 acres) as compared to Aland area farmers (4.3 acres) but just 5.1 acres (59%) of land was under irrigation out of which sugarcane was grown in 4.7 acres (55%) of the cultivated land. Nearly 50 percent of the land was left out without cultivation due to hilly area, rocky land, lack of water during summer and flood during monsoon.

Farmers' Classification Based on Land Holding

In order to ascertain the farmers' land holding status, the farmers were grouped into three categories viz., marginal (less than 2.5 acres), small (more than 2.5 acres but less than 5 acres) and others (more than 5 acres).

The survey revealed that in case of Bhusnoor Sugar Factory, 47 percent of the farmers were marginal, 30 percent were small and 23 percent of them did fall under other group (more than 5 acres). In case of Renuka Sugar Factory., the land holding pattern was observed to be quite different. Just 7 percent of the farmers were marginal, 43 percent fall under small group and 50 percent of them held more than 5 acres

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.

On the fields: Timely availability of basic requirements such as seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, etc. in sufficient quantity is one of the important factors influencing sugarcane cultivation. There are nine main factors affecting sugarcane production viz., fertility of land, seeds, supply of water, labour, finance, fertilizer, pesticides, technical guidance and demand for sugarcane. Non-availability of any one of these factors may hamper the sugarcane cultivation and yields in terms of quality and quantity. The farmers of the selected units were asked to rank all these nine major factors as per their nonavailability or as problem. The survey revealed the following facts.

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 were 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.

Off the fields: Indian farmers face many marketing problems. The sugarcane growers encounter different problems right from cutting of cane to till they receive their payments from sugar mills. All types of marketing problems were identified and grouped into six common problems in the following table.

It is evident (Table 4) that 93 percent of the farmers of the.

Table no.4 Problems Faced by Sugarcane Growers

S. No.	Problems	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory		Renuka Sugar Factory.	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
01	Low rate for sugarcane	93	7	100	0
02	Waiting in a long queue	97	3	3	97
03	Dishonest in weighing at weigh bridge	70	30	0	100
04	Unnecessary deductions in the name of toll, charges, etc.	60	40	0	100
05	Delay in payment of installments'	17	83	0	100
06	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 an 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.

All the respondents of the Bhusnoor Sugar Industry, felt that they were not happy with the present sugarcane pricing policy, 27 percent of the farmers did not receive their cane bill in time, 10 percent of the farmers complained about waiting in a long queue for their turn to unload sugarcane, 10 percent of the farmers felt about the unnecessary deduction and non-availability of competitive buyers in Aland.

Suggestions:

1. Government should provide the financial assistance to the sugarcane grower.
2. Sugar industries provide the appropriate price for their sugarcane.
3. Sugar industries stop the unnecessary deductions in the name of toll, charges, etc.
4. Government agriculture departments provide the technical guidance to the farmers.

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