



Research Paper

Problems of *Rabi* potato production and marketing in Pune district of Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT : *Rabi* potato cultivation is getting increasingly popular among farmers. In this context, the present investigation was carried out to study the production and marketing of *Rabi* potato in Pune district. The major production problems faced by the cultivators in production were non-availability of quality tubers in time at low rates, high fertilizer cost and wage rates, non-availability of loan facility in time and in marketing major difficulties expressed by farmers were price variation, high commission rate, high transport cost etc. The non-availability of loans at cheap rate at the time of sowing was the major problem as reported by 54.17 per cent of the farmers. Good crop output cannot be expected without sowing good quality seed. About 73.00 per cent of farmers complained that despite their best efforts they are not able to procure good quality seed. High seed price was also a common complaint reported by 65 per cent of farmers. Another major problem was high wage rates, about 60 per cent of farmers complained about it. The transportation was a major bottle neck in efficient marketing of potatoes. About 70 per cent farmers complained that transportation charges were high. The price variation emerged as an important problems as 66.37 per cent farmers complained about it. About 63.00 per cent farmers faced the problems of high commission charges.

KEY WORDS : *Rabi* potato, Problems production and marketing

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INTRODUCTION :

Potato belongs to the family Solanaceae, Genus *Solanum* and Species *Tuberosum*. Potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) is one of the important tuber crops in India. Potato popularly known as 'The king of vegetables'. It has emerged as a fourth most important food crop in India after rice, wheat and maize. Indian vegetable basket is incomplete without potato. Potato is native of the High Andes in South America. It occupies the largest area under any single vegetable in the world. India is the fourth largest potato producing countries in the world which

include USSR, China, Poland and USA. Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar are the largest producers and account for nearly 75 per cent of area and 82 per cent of production. In Maharashtra state, potato is one of the major cash crops, grown in Pune and Satara districts and account for 87 per cent of area and 72 per cent of production. The marketing problems arise due to existing fluctuating potato prices, seasonal and perishable nature of the crop and the limited cold storage facilities in Pune district. In the peak, marketing months after harvest, the supply is much more than the market demand. This results in glut conditions and causes a crash in prices. One of

the important problems of agricultural marketing is the existence of a large number of intermediaries between the producers to the consumer. The nature of these intermediaries is often exploitative. They charge high price from the consumer, but share only a small part of it with the producer. However very few research studies were carried out in Maharashtra exclusively on this aspect. Thus, the present investigation on "Problems of production and marketing of *Rabi* potato in Pune district has been undertaken at farmers' level.

Objective :

To assess the problems in production and marketing of *Rabi* potato.

MATERIALS AND METHODS :

Primary data :

The source of primary data for the present study was the selected sample potato growers. The data for problems of production were obtained through survey method from the potato grower in Ambegaon and Khed (Rajgurunagar) tehsils of Pune district for the year 2012-2013.

Market data :

The data for marketing were obtained from commission agent, wholesaler and retailer by personal interview method in year 2012-2013.

Problems faced by the growers with regard to production and marketing of potato:

The number of selected cultivators facing different

problems in production and marketing in different size groups of holding was listed, enumerated and studied.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS :

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

Problems faced by potato growers in production and marketing of *Rabi* potato :

The potato crop is more sensitive to various of weather and other pest and diseases as compared to other field crops. This requires very careful upkeep of the crop. Potatoes are perishable in nature and therefore, require speedy and efficient marketing. Further, growers face various problems, in production and marketing of potatoes.

From the Table 1, it is seen that the non-availability of quality seed at the cheap rate at the time of sowing was the major problem it was reported by 72.50 per cent of the farmers. High seed cost can with good quality seed about 65.00 per cent of farmers complained that despite their best efforts they are not able to procure good quality seed. High wage rate was also a common complaint reported by 60 per cent of farmers. Another major problem was high fertilizer cost, about 55.00 per cent of farmers complained about it.

About 55 per cent of the farmers expressed non-availability of loan is very high. About 43 per cent of the farmers faced the problem of non-availability of new varieties in time of plantation. The non-availability of labour, cheap packing material and non-availability of

Sr. No.	Particulars	Size groups of holdings			
		Small (n=40)	Medium (n=40)	Large (n=40)	Overall (n=120)
1.	Non-availability of loan in time	28 (70.00)	21 (52.50)	16 (40.00)	65 (54.17)
2.	Non-availability of quality seed	32 (80.00)	30 (75.00)	25 (62.50)	87 (72.50)
3.	Non-availability of labour	16 (40.00)	14 (35.00)	11 (27.50)	41 (34.17)
4.	Non-availability of low cost packing material	19 (47.50)	17 (42.50)	10 (25.00)	46 (38.33)
5.	Difficulty of getting bullock and implements on hire for different operations	15 (37.50)	13 (32.50)	8 (20.00)	36 (30.00)
6.	Lack of technical knowledge about potato cultivation	19 (47.50)	14 (35.00)	9 (22.50)	42 (35.00)
7.	New varieties are not available at the time of plantation	21 (52.50)	16 (40.00)	14 (35.00)	51 (42.50)
8.	High fertilizer cost	26 (65.00)	22 (55.00)	18 (45.00)	66 (55.00)
9.	High seed cost	29 (72.50)	27 (67.50)	22 (55.00)	78 (65.00)
10.	High wage rates	30 (75.00)	24 (60.00)	18 (45.00)	72 (60.00)
11.	Non-availability of insecticides at low rate	21 (52.50)	15 (37.50)	9 (22.50)	45 (37.50)
	Total number of farmers	40 (100.00)	40 (100.00)	40 (100.00)	120 (100.00)

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages to the respective total

Table 2 : Problems faced by *Rabi* potato cultivators in marketing

Sr. No.	Particulars	(Numbers)			
		Small (n=40)	Medium (n=40)	Large (n=40)	Overall (n=120)
1.	High commission charges	28 (70.00)	26 (65.00)	21 (52.50)	75 (62.50)
2.	Faulty measures and weights	28 (70.00)	24 (60.00)	17 (42.50)	69 (57.50)
3.	Problems of price variation in the market	29 (72.50)	27 (67.50)	24 (60.00)	80 (66.67)
4.	Lack of market information	27 (67.50)	23 (57.50)	21 (52.50)	71 (59.17)
5.	High transport cost	30 (75.00)	28 (70.00)	26 (65.00)	84 (70.00)
6.	Payments are not a in time	28 (70.00)	22 (55.00)	20 (50.00)	70 (58.33)
7.	Lack of cold storage facilities in the producing area	25 (62.50)	19 (47.50)	14 (35.00)	58 (48.33)

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage to respective total

pesticides and insecticides at cheap rate was put forth by 34.17 per cent, 38.3 per cent and 37.50 per cent, respectively.

From 30 per cent of farmers reported the difficulty of getting bullock and implements on hire for different operations. Lack of technical knowledge about potato cultivation was also complained by 35 per cent farmers.

From the Table 2, it was observed that, the transportation was a major bottle neck in efficient marketing of potatoes. About 70 per cent farmers complained that the transportation charges were high. The price variation emerged as an important problems as 66.37 per cent farmers complained about it. About 63.00 per cent farmers faced the problems of high commission charges. The farmers were not getting adequate information about market and intelligence and also it was available for limited number of markets. These combined with adequate and mis leading information was hampering the market of produce directly to various unexplored markets of Maharashtra. About 59.00 per cent farmers faced the problems of market intelligence.

About 58.00 per cent of farmers had problems regarding faulty measures in weights. The farmers also had problems regarding proper storage facilities. About 48.33 per cent farmers complained about lack of cold storage facilities in the producing area.

The farmers showed their discontentment over procurement/support price policy of the central/ state government, low price, delay in announcing prices and making payments were the common complaints reported by the farmers. About 58.00 per cent of the farmers complained that payments were not made quickly.

The major constraints faced by the potato growers in production and marketing of *Rabi* potato were non availability of quality seeds at low rates, high fertilizers and wage rates, non-availability of loan facility in time etc.

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