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Study of socio-economic characteristics of pomegranate growing farmers in Solapur District of Maharashtra State

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Sangola, Pandharpur and Mohol tehsil of Solapur district of the western region in Maharashtra were selected randomly, because in these tehsils more number of pomegranate producers are linked for economic activity. The data were collected from 144 respondents were selected for the study. While studying constraints perceived by the respondents and suggestions made by them to overcome the Constraints, It is concluded that Majority of the farmers faced the constraints lack of storage facilities, malpractices in market, lack of knowledge about export, Fluctuation in market price, Unavailability credit at low interest rate, irregular supply of electricity, unavailable technical labour and trained worker. Similarly, more than three forth of the farmers made suggestions like, precooling and cold storage facility, minimum support price to the produce, timely availability of credit, About two fifth of farmers suggested like training to labours and Near about one third farmers suggest about provision of infrastructural facilities for transportation.

Keywords: constraints, suggestions, Pomegranate cultivation

Introduction

Pomegranate (*punica granatum*) is a multipurpose fruit. The importance of this fruit from dietic point of view can hardly be emphasized. Pomegranate fruit provides proteins, lipids, sugar and minerals, which are essential for the maintenance of the health. Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) is grown in tropical and subtropical regions of the world. The centre of origin of this fruit crop is thought to be Iran where it was first cultivated in 2000 B.C. It is extensively cultivated in Spain, Morocco, Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan, China, Japan, USA, Russia, Pakistan, India and other Mediterranean countries. Pomegranate occupies 18th place based on production among the world's main fruit crops. Pomegranate is commercially grown for its sweet acidic taste. Fruits are mainly used for dessert purpose. This fruit also has wide consumer preference, for its attractive, juicy sweet, acidic and refreshing fruits. Fruits are used for both fresh consumption and processing. The fresh fruit is of exquisite quality, while its processed products such as bottled juice, syrups and jelly are highly appreciated and nourishing. The fruit is a good source of carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins. Pomegranate plant and fruit are prized over centuries for their medicinal properties. Chatterjee (1992) defined an entrepreneur as one who creates something new, undertakes risk, organizes production and handles the economic uncertainty. He termed entrepreneurship as the mission and entrepreneur as the missionary.

In India, fruit crops are cultivated in an area of 6982 thousand ha with a production of 81285 thousand Mt of fruits (Indian Horticulture Database 2013).

The total area under cultivation of pomegranate in India is 113.00 thousand ha and production is around 745.00 thousand tons. (NHB-2012-13). India is one of the leading country in pomegranate acreage and production worldwide. The area under cultivation of Pomegranate in India has grown by 10.73 per cent during last seven years from 96.9 thousand hectare to 113 thousand hectare. Maharashtra experienced a rapid growth in Pomegranate area during the last 20 years from 4.6 thousand ha to 82.0 thousand ha and accounts for 76.40 per cent of the total cultivated area under pomegranate in the country.

Other major pomegranate growing states are Karnataka (13.6 thousand ha), Andhra Pradesh (2.8 thousand ha) and Gujarat (5.8 thousand ha). In recent years, pomegranate cultivation has also been started in Rajasthan, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh. Although India is the largest producer of pomegranate in the world, its productivity (6.9 t/ha) is far below to Turkey (27.25 t/ha), Spain (20.00 t/ha), USA (16.7 t/ha), Israel (12.5 t/ha) and Iran (10.8 Mt/ha). During the year 2011-12. India exported 30,000 Mt of Pomegranate to the

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global market as compared to 86,000 Mt by Turkey and 60,000Mt by Iran. Therefore, India has a tremendous potentiality to bridge this huge yield and export gaps (NRCF Annual report, 2012-13).

Maharashtra is the leading producer of pomegranate followed by Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Ganesh, Bhagwa, Ruby, Arakta and Mridula are the different varieties of pomegranates produced in Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, pomegranate is commercially cultivated in Solapur, Sangli, Nasik, Ahmednagar, Pune, Dhule, Aurangabad, Satara, Osmanabad and Latur districts.

The development of any nation depends primarily on the important role played by entrepreneurs. Hence, the part played by entrepreneurs is of vital importance in a developing country like India. Thus in all economic development activities more attention is being given to entrepreneurship development. An entrepreneur is primarily concerned with changes in the formula of production over which he has full control. Further, it is commonly believed that an entrepreneur is basically an intelligent person and has a definite ability to create something new to prove its worthiness. The entrepreneurial behaviour is not necessarily doing new things but also doing things in a different way that already have been done. The entrepreneur is essentially an economic man, who strives to maximize his profits by adoption of innovations. However, entrepreneurs are not simply innovators, they are men with a will to act, to resume risk and to bring about changes through organization of human efforts (Dannof, 1949). Now, it is increasingly being felt that, the economic growth and development of the advanced countries is largely due to entrepreneurship quality among their community rather than to capital. Chaudhary (2006) in a study about Indian dairy farmer's entrepreneurial values established

innovativeness, termed entrepreneurship as the mission and entrepreneur as the missionary.

Material and Methods

The study was conducted in Sangola, Pandharpur and Mohol tehsil of Solapur district of the western region in Maharashtra. A list of farmers who produces pomegranate and have 3 yrs old pomegranate orchard from each selected village was prepared with the help of Gramsevak, Agril. Assistant and Sarpanch. Thus a total sample of 144 farmers, 12 from each selected villages was drawn. The data from 144 farmers were collected by contacting them personally with the help of structured interview schedule. Expost-facto design of social research was made in the present investigation. The data was collected with the structured interview schedule from randomly selected 144 farmers. The data were tabulated and processed through the primary and secondary tables. Frequency, percentage, Mean and S.D. were employed for the analysis of data.

Result and Discussion

Constraints perceived by the respondents and suggestions made by them to overcome the constraints in pomegranate cultivation:

It was observed that 88.19 per cent respondents faced the constraints of malpractices in market substitute block system. It was indicated that 75.69 per cent respondents faced the constraints of lack of knowledge about export. About 65.27 per cent farmers faced the problem of fluctuation of market price. It is assumed that 54.16 per cent respondents could not easily available credit at low interest rate. It is observed that 45.13 per cent of respondents faced the problem of unavailability of technical labours.

Table 1: Constraints perceived by pomegranate growers

Sr no.	Constraints	No. of Respondents (N=144)	Percentage	Rank
1	Lack of storage unit	138	95.83	I
2	Malpractices in market substitute block system	127	88.19	II
3	Lack of knowledge about export.	109	75.69	III
4	Fluctuation in market price	94	65.27	IV
5	Unavailability of credit at low interest rate.	78	54.16	V
6	Unavailability of technical labour	65	45.13	VI
7	Irregular supply of electricity	59	40.97	VII
8	Lack of transportation facilities.	47	32.63	VIII
9	High incidence of pests and diseases	42	29.16	IX
10	Non availability of adequate water	38	26.38	X

It was concluded that 40.97 per cent respondents faced the constraints of irregular supply of electricity. It was revealed that 32.63 per cent respondents faced the problem of lack of transportation facilities. It was observed that 29.16 per cent

respondents faced the constraints of high incidence of pests and diseases. It was found that 26.38 per cent respondents faced the constraints of non availability of adequate water.

Table 2: Suggestions made by the pomegranate growers to overcome constraints

Sr no.	Suggestions	No. of Respondents (N=144)	Percentage	Rank
1	Government should made pre cooling and cold storage facility.	138	95.83	I
2	Government check over substitute block system.	120	83.33	II
3	Government should start cluster scheme for exporters and should give information about export of produce.	109	75.69	III
4	There should be minimum support price to the produce.	90	62.50	IV
5	Credit should be made available to the farmers at low interest rates.	78	54.16	V
6	Training to labours should be provided.	58	40.27	VI
7	Intervention of government in resolving power problem	55	38.19	VII
8	Provide proper infrastructure facilities like road and transportation	47	32.63	VIII
9	Supply of healthy planting materials and insecticides, pesticides at a subsidised rate by State Department of Agriculture.	38	26.38	IX
10	Govt should provide more subsidies for farm ponds and wells, tubewells, irrigation materials etc.	35	24.30	X

It could be noticed from Table.2 that a large majority of the farmers (95.83%) suggested that government should provide pre cooling and cold storage facility followed by 83.33 per cent of the farmers suggested that government check should be made available over substitute block system.

The data also reveals that 75.69 per cent of them suggested to government to starts cluster scheme for exporters and should provide information about export of produce. While 62.50 per cent suggested that there should be minimum support price for produce, 54.16 per cent of them suggested that government credit should be made available to the farmers in time and with low interest rates, and 40.27 per cent suggested that training for labours should be provided. 38.19 per cent suggested that regular supply of electricity should be made available to farmers by government interventions in power supply.

Near about one third i.e. 32.63 per cent farmers suggested to provide proper infrastructure facilities like road and transportation, while 26.38 percent of farmers suggested to supply healthy planting materials and insecticides, pesticides at a subsidised rate by the Department of Agriculture of state government. Only 24.30 per cent of farmers suggested that government should provide subsidies for farm ponds and wells, tubewells and irrigation materials etc.

The study was conducted in Sangola, Pandharpur and Mohol tehsil of Solapur district in Maharashtra. It is concluded that Majority of the farmers faced the constraints lack of storage facilities, malpractices in market, irregular supply of electricity, Unavailability credit at low interest rate, lack of knowledge about export, unavailable technical labour and trained worker. Similarly, more than three fourth of the farmers made suggestions like, precooling and cold storage facility, minimum support price to the produce, timely availability of credit, and training to labours, and provision of infrastructural facilities for transportation. The study implies that intensive training programmes need to be conducted by government and nongovernment agencies to create awareness about entrepreneurial opportunities, decision making, innovativeness, participation in implementation of government schemes, time and financial management, which would enable the pomegranate growers for efficient utilization of their potential.

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