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Constraints in paddy marketing and suggestions to overcome them: A study of Kolhapur district of Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the constraints faced by 120 paddy growers in Radhanagari and Bhudargad talukas of Kolhapur district, Maharashtra, along with growers' suggestions to overcome these constraints, using an ex post facto research design. Findings show that unavailability of labour (87.50%), fluctuation in market price (81.67 %), and High cost of transportation (75.83%) were the foremost constraints, while growers overwhelmingly recommended Standardising the price of the produce (76.67%) and Decentralization of market places (70.83%) as remedial measures. The results align with recent literature that also identifies price volatility, weak market infrastructure, and middlemen exploitation as persistent challenges in Paddy value chains across India.

Keywords: Paddy marketing, Marketing constraints, Kolhapur, Producer Organizations (FPOs)

Introduction

Paddy (*Oryza sativa* L.) is the most widely grown cereal in the world and is staple food for more than 60 percent of world's population. Millions of people's cultures, diets, and economies have been influenced by paddy. One of the most common ways to eat is by cooking rice. There are numerous domestic use options, including khichdi, pulav, kheer, idli, and dosa etc. Paddy starch is used in making ice-cream, custard powder, puddings, gel, distillation of potable alcohol, etc. Broken rice is used for making food items like breakfast cereals, baby foods, rice flour, noodles, rice cakes etc. And also used as a poultry feed.

Efficient marketing plays an important role in converting farm-level production into improved household income. However, cereal marketing systems in India continue to face challenges such as fragmented markets, lengthy marketing channels, inadequate price information, and weak infrastructure. Recent studies on paddy and other cereal crops have identified price fluctuations, exploitation by intermediaries, delayed payments, high transportation costs, and limited access to market information as major marketing constraints. Understanding these problems from the growers' perspective, along with identifying locally suitable solutions, is important for developing effective extension interventions and policy measures, including minimum support price mechanisms and cooperative marketing arrangements.

Objective

To identify the constraints faced by paddy growers in marketing their produce and to elicit suggestions from growers to overcome these constraints.

Review of literature

Constraint studies across cereal crops in India reveal recurring patterns. Saravana and Kiruthika (2015) [1] found that High costs associated with various marketing responsibilities, delayed payments, the remote location of government procurement facilities and a lack of market information and intelligence services are all preventing growers from achieving larger returns. Gangisetty et al. (2016) [2] documented high marketing costs, unscientific weighing and poor market information as leading groundnut marketing problems. Similarly, Bidasagar et al. (2017) [3] conducted a study on rice marketing in the Nallbari area of Assam and examined various marketing-related constraints. The study emphasized the need for better transportation facilities through improved road connectivity in rural areas. The authors also highlighted the importance of adequate processing and storage facilities for improving the marketing of rice.

Specific to paddy and related cereal crops, As per Gohain et al. (2018) [4], Some of the important constraints of agricultural marketing system in the country are lack of infrastructure like storage, transportation, quality control, packaging, paddy risk management, cool chains, market led extension, and conducive framework for

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promotion of contract farming. A 2018 study on paddy growers found Low price for produce (Rank I), MSP after official and unofficial cut due to quality discrepancy (Rank II), and Marginal size of holding leading to lesser production (Rank III) to be the principal marketing and production constraints. More recent work reinforces these findings: According to [Elangovan et al. \(2019\)](#) [5] The major marketing constraints faced by the farmers in the study area were high marketing costs, the distant location of the DPC, and inadequate awareness about market information and market intelligence services. Studies from Punjab and other regions further note the shortage of labour and poor market organization as chronic problems in paddy marketing. On the suggestion side, growers across studies consistently call for minimum support price fixation, cooperative and collective marketing arrangements, decentralisation of procurement centres and better dissemination of market information.

Methodology

An ex post facto research design was used since the marketing behaviour under study had already occurred. In Kolhapur district, two talukas — Radhanagri and Bhudargad — were selected, and from each, three villages were chosen based on paddy area and production. Twenty paddy growers were randomly selected from each of the six villages, yielding a total sample of 120 respondents. Constraints were studied on a three-point continuum (very much a problem, somewhat a problem, not a problem), scored 2, 1, and 0 respectively. Total scores for each constraint were tabulated, and constraints were ranked in descending order of score. Suggestions to overcome these constraints were elicited separately and expressed as frequencies and percentages.

Results and Discussion

Constraints faced by paddy growers

Table 1. Constraints faced by paddy growers in marketing ($N = 120$)

Rank	Constraint	Frequency	Percentage
I	Unavailability of labour	105	87.50
II	Fluctuation in market price	98	81.67
III	High cost of transportation	91	75.83
IV	Lack of awareness of price at other market	83	69.16
V	Irregularity of power supply	77	64.17
VI	High cost of fertilizers and plant protection chemicals	55	45.83

Unavailability of labour was the most important constraint faced by the paddy growers (87.50%), indicating the shortage of labour during the peak harvesting period. Similar findings have been reported among paddy growers in Sindhudurg and Amritsar districts, where labour scarcity and high labour wages were major constraints. Fluctuation in market prices was the second major constraint (81.67%). This may be attributed to the absence of assured prices or forward marketing arrangements, which exposes growers to price uncertainty. Another problem of High cost of transportation (75.83%) indicating that transportation expenses reduce the net returns of grow-

ers, particularly when markets are located far from the production area. Lack of awareness of price at other markets (69.16%) suggesting inadequate access to timely market information and limiting growers ability to select better-paying markets.

The relatively lower ranking of "Irregularity of power supply" (10.33%) in this study contrasts with several other regions, where Irregularity of power supply rank much higher. High cost of fertilizers and plant protection chemicals (45.83%) forms another major problem.

Suggestions to overcome marketing constraints

Table 2. Suggestions offered by paddy growers ($N = 120$)

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency ($N = 120$)	Percentage
1.	Standardising the price of the produce.	92	76.67
2.	Decentralization of market places.	85	70.83
3.	Link organized farmer groups with food-processing companies.	79	65.83
4.	Set up cooperatives for collective marketing.	65	54.17
5.	Provide access to market information.	41	34.16

The highest proportion of paddy growers (76.67%) suggested standardising the price of the produce, indicating their need for assured and remunerative prices. Similar observations have been reported among cereal crop growers, who have emphasized support prices and government procurement as effective measures to minimize price fluctuations. Decentralization of market places (70.83%) was another major suggestion, as it could reduce the distance to markets and lower transportation-related difficulties. Further, 65.83 per cent of the respondents recommended linking organized farmer groups with food-processing companies, which may provide better marketing opportunities and promote value addition. About 54.17 per cent suggested setting up cooperatives for collective marketing, as collective selling can strengthen the bargaining position of growers and help reduce marketing costs.

Some suggested providing better access to market information (34.16%), indicating that this was considered another important sug-

gestion along with price stabilization and market linkage. Extension strategies should therefore focus on promoting Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) for collective bargaining, establishing forward linkage facilities, and advocating paddy-specific price support mechanisms.

Conclusion and implications

The observed constraints and suggestions highlight the need to promote paddy growers' cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) as institutional support mechanisms in Kolhapur district. Collective marketing, decentralized market facilities and enhanced bargaining power can help reduce major problems faced by growers, particularly labour shortages, price fluctuations and high transportation costs. Strengthening these collective institutions may contribute to better marketing efficiency, improved price realization and higher profitability among paddy growers in the study area.

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