

A STUDY ON MAIZE CULTIVATOR CHALLENGES AT PERAMBALUR TALUK, TAMIL NADU



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ABSTRACT

Maize is next to rice and wheat in respect of area and production in India. The importance of corn is due to its wide diversity of uses. It is used both as food for human and feed for animals. Corn is nearly directly consumed as feed and as an edible table vegetable. Corn is converted in to a variety of foods. Though maize cultivation occupies a significant position in recent years, it encounters many problems inherent in the field of production and marketing such as notorious fickleness of climate change, monsoon dependence, low productivity, wide fluctuations in price structure and the absence of a well organized trade network. Samples of 50 maize cultivators were selected from Perambalur Taluk. The convenient sampling technique was applied in collecting data from the maize cultivators. To analyse the socio-economic characteristics of the sample respondents, simple percentage analysis is used. Independent sample 't' test has been used to analyse the problems of marketing of maize and measures to overcome the problems of marketing of maize. So there is significant difference between Educational qualification and size of cultivated area of maize cultivator by their overall problems. Maize has its significance as a source of a large number of industrial products besides its uses as human food and animal feed. If the policy implications suggested are implemented properly, it will help to increase the levels of production and productivity in maize cultivation.

Keywords: *Cultivator Challenges, Maize Cultivator, Maize Farmers, Maize Producer.*

INTRODUCTION

India has been largely an agriculture oriented country with most of its teeming millions of people depending on it for employment, economy and even for survival for ages. They have been cultivating varieties of crops both as irrigated and rain fed ones. Maize is one of the crops grown in all states except Kerala. Maize is a 'grass' domesticated by indigenous people in Mesoamerica in pre-historic times. The Aztecs and Mayans cultivated it in numerous varieties throughout central and southern Mexico to cook or grind in a process called "nixtamalization". Maize production essentially provides the food needed for a growing population, the raw materials for industrial production and the wide market for the domestically manufactured products. Maize is used as whole grain and as an important component of many products that have become an essential part of our daily use in some form or the other. There is growing requirement from poultry sector, which uses corn as feed. Maize is an important cereal crop in world after wheat and rice. The importance of maize lies in its wide industrial applications besides serving as human food and animal feed. It is the most versatile crop with wider adaptability in varied agro-ecologies and has highest genetic yield potential among the food grain crops. Introduction of hybrids increased the yield of maize in Tamil Nadu and the productivity reached 6.04 tonnes per hectare. Maize is mainly grown in Perambalur, Dindigul, Coimbatore, Salem, Erode, Virudhunagar, Villupuram, Theni, Tiruchirapalli and Tirunelveli Districts. These districts together contribute 90 per cent of the total area and production of maize in Tamil Nadu.

REVIEWS OF LITERATURE

According to Kalaivanan (2002), "gross income" is the actual amount realized on the sale of the produce and he arrived at the net income by deducting cost of production from the gross income. According to Saha et al. (2009) residue management with maize stalk cover, organic manure like poultry manure and mulching with locally available weed ambrosia, special, not only conserves soil moisture so as to achieve a second crop but also improves productivity and water use efficiency of mustard during winter (rabi) season. According to Dilip Singh (2010), maximum net returns can be obtained from single cross hybrid high quality protein maize Nitrogen should be applied in 5 split application in ratio of 10:30:30:20:10 at basal, 4 leaf emergence, 8 leaf emergence, tassel emergence and early grain-filling stages. Chauhan et al. (2007) concluded that nearly one-half of the marketed surplus was mostly disposed off in second quarter (December – February) due to inadequate storage facilities at farmers' level and occurrence of the post harvest losses by insect pests attack during storage.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Maize is in demand as an industrial raw material and as an ingredient for various industrial products and is value addition. Therefore, a large number of farmers cultivate maize which consequently provides employment to a large number of skilled and unskilled labourers both in farming and industrial sectors. Maize cultivation is no exception to problems which are faced by any other agriculturalists in their operations. The problems encountered by the maize cultivators are 'increased cost of inputs', 'inadequate power supply', 'traditional cultivation practice', 'frequent monsoon failures', 'pest and diseases menace' and 'lack of efficient irrigation management'. Marketing of maize is one of the important factors which have a direct bearing upon the cultivators. The prevailing system of maize marketing is considered as "non-cultivator friendly" owing to factors like unethical market practices, unhealthy practice of the middlemen, weak channels of distribution and forced sale for clearing debts.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio-economic characteristics of the maize cultivators
- To analyze the various challenges encountered in the maize cultivators in the study area
- To offer suitable suggestions based on findings for improvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is mainly based on survey method. Both primary and secondary data were used. Interview schedule were prepared by the researcher and the same was pre-tested by circulating them among a few major maize cultivators in the study area. Samples of 50 maize cultivators were selected from Perambalur Taluk. The convenient sampling technique was applied in collecting data from the maize cultivators. To analyse the socio-economic characteristics of the sample respondents, simple percentage analysis is used. Independent sample 't' test has been used to analyse the problems of marketing of maize and measures to overcome the problems of marketing of maize.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D	Statistical inference
Age					
Below 40yrs	12	24	36.08	1.194	t=3.761 Df=48 P>0.05 Not Significant
Above 40yrs	38	76	37.31	0.817	
Educational Qualification					
Educated	29	58	42.67	0.965	t=11.213 Df=48 P<0.05 Significant
Uneducated	21	42	39.24	1.278	
Cultivated area					
Below 2acres	31	62	37.46	0.979	t=9.567 Df=48 P<0.05 Significant
Above 2acres	19	38	36.25	0.892	

Research hypothesis (H₁): There is no significant difference between age of maize cultivator by their overall problems.

't' test find out that vast majority (76 per cent) of maize cultivator (37.31±0.817) above 40yrs of age group and remaining 24 per cent (36.08±1.194) were below 40yrs. Therefore, there is no significant difference between age of maize cultivator by their overall problems. The calculated value is greater than table value (p>0.05). So the research hypothesis (H₁) is accepted.

Research hypothesis (H₂): There is no significant difference between educational qualification of maize cultivator by their overall problems.

't' test find out that more than half (58 per cent) of maize cultivator (42.67±0.965) were educated group and remaining 42 per cent (39.24±1.278) were uneducated. Therefore, there is significant difference between educational qualification of maize cultivator by their overall problems. The calculated value is less than table value (p<0.05). So the research hypothesis (H₂) is rejected.

Research hypothesis (H₃): There is no significant difference between size of cultivated are of maize cultivator by their overall problems.

't' test find out that majority (62 per cent) of maize cultivator (37.46±0.979) below 2acres of cultivated area and remaining 38 per cent (36.25±0.892) were above 2acres. Therefore, there is significant difference

between size of cultivated area of maize cultivator by their overall problems. The calculated value is less than table value ($p < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis (H_3) is rejected.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Export potential for maize from India may be explored so that the demand for the product can be sustained which in turn will ensure a support price during all the seasons. The farmers must be provided with information regarding all aspects of maize cultivation and marketing like innovative cultivation method, integrated pest management system, supply and demand, current price, market trend, value addition details and the like through all the media from which the farmers can access information and the extension service departments. Maize has its significance as a source of a large number of industrial products besides its uses as human food and animal feed. If the policy implications suggested are implemented properly, it will help to increase the levels of production and productivity in maize cultivation.

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