

CONSTRAINTS IN VEGETABLE CULTIVATION

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Introduction

The country's urgent requirement is to enhance the production of nutritious food in a sustainable manner and improve the farm family income in order to ensure household food security, national security and economic security. The country's population is increasing at the rate of 1.8 per cent. Our vegetable requirement in 2010 will be around 135 million tones. Besides the domestic consumption, India exports sizable quantity of vegetables and processed products and earns foreign exchange. However, the productivity of different vegetables in our country is comparatively lower than the world's average productivity. This may be due to the various constraints hindering the production and marketing of vegetables. The constraints in vegetable cultivation are as follows.

Labour Scarcity and High Labour Cost

Labour scarcity and high labour cost are the major constraints experienced by majority of the grower. Vegetable cultivation requires more number of labourers from sowing to harvesting operations. The labour requirement for harvesting operation is more

as it involves frequent and more number of harvests. Nowadays labour scarcity is a common problem due to their diversified employment opportunities. Even when they are available, they have to be paid with higher wages.

Good quality seed is a must for getting high yield in vegetable cultivation. The farmers could not get high yield because they use the seeds of their own field year after year. They are in need of good quality seeds, but they could not get it.

Inadequate Power Supply

During summer farmers face the problem of power cut. Power is supplied only on shift basis i.e., 5 to 6 hours per day and hence they are not able to make use of power when they are in need. Moreover the power supply during summer season is erratic.

Inadequate Water Potential

During summer, the water level would go down and hence the availability of water for irrigation would be limited. Therefore, the farmers could not undertake cultivation in large area.

Inadequate Credit Facilities

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The farmers could not avail of the credit facilities from banks because of its tedious and time consuming procedure. They could not borrow money from non-institutional sources because of high interest rates.

Pest and Diseases Attack

Fruit flies and fruit borers are the major pests in brinjal and bhendi causing damage at the time of harvest leading to poor quality of vegetables.

Constraints in Marketing

1. Fixation of Price by Commission Agents

Regarding price fixation, it is done mostly by the commission agents. They fix very low prices without considering the production cost and hence, the farmers suffer like anything. Also, the weighing procedures followed by commission agents and middlemen are improper.

2. Lack of Cold Storage Facilities

Vegetables are highly perishable in nature. If there is lack of demand for vegetables or where they are produced in excess, there is a need for cold storage facility. But there are not cold storage facilities available to store the vegetables. Because of this constraint, the wastage will be in more resulting in poor net returns. In addition, the export opportunities are also very much limited due to lack of organized efforts.

3. Price of Fluctuation

The demand for vegetables is seasonal and hence, the prices fluctuate day by day. Due to this fluctuation in prices, the farmers could not get good returns.

Inadequate Transport Facilities

The growers with small farm size face this kind of problem because they produce only little quantity and they could not make exclusive transport arrangement.

Suggestions to overcome the Constraints

- In order to overcome the constraint of labour scarcity, it is necessary to utilize the labour saving implements and machinery to do farm operations.
- Government should arrange for the supply of good quality seeds at sales depots in time.
- Credit facilities at reasonable interest rate may be arranged by the Government institutions.
- The vegetable researchers may concentrate on releasing pest and disease resistant varieties.
- Keeping in view the 'perishable nature of vegetable's and lack of cold storage facilities, it is suggested that the Government should arrange for cold storage facilities for vegetables at different locations.



The growers should be encouraged to organize themselves so that they can fix the price for their produce.

