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A STUDY OF FARMERS' PROFILE AND PROBLEMS IN NORTH GOA DISTRICT

DR. GAJANAN MADIWAL
HEAD
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
SSA GOVERNMENT COLLEGE OF ARTS & COMMERCE
VIRNODA

ABSTRACT

Goa is a small and beautiful state on the Western Coast of India. It was given statehood on 30th May 1987. The state has population of about 1.45 million and area of 3702 sq. kms. Tourism and mining are the major areas of revenue. Goa has rich history of intimate culture. The State of Goa was ruled by Portuguese for nearly 450 years till it was liberated in 1961. Prior to the formation of the state, Goa was a major district of the former Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu. Goa attained the full-fledged statehood on 30th May 1987 under the Goa, Daman and Diu reorganization Act 1987. At the time of liberation, nearly 70 per cent of the population was involved in agriculture as their full time occupation. Paddy was the predominant crop of the State followed by Cashew and Coconut. Goa receives rain from the South - West monsoons. The average rainfall is 3,000 mm. rainy season is spread over four months from June to September. Important Fruits Crops of Goa are Mango, Cashew, Coconut, Banana, Pineapple, Jackfruit and Arecanut and field crops are Paddy, Ragi, Sugarcane and Groundnut. In spite of huge budgetary allocation goan youths are not showing much interest in agriculture activities which is their family occupation. Moreover, educated young generation also not interested to enter in the said occupation. The study revealed that the main reasons for declining interest are these youths get jobs easily in the tourism sector land mining areas. Apart from these causes increasing cultivation costs and shortage of labour are other two factors affecting agriculture activities in Goa.

KEYWORDS

agriculture, crop, farmer, Goa, land.

INTRODUCTION

GOA AT A GLANCE



Goa, the 25th youngest state of the Indian Union, located on West Coast of India, spread over in an area of 3702 sq. km. The State is surrounded on the East by Sahyadri Mountains and on the West with Arabian Sea. The Northern tip of Goa border is attached with Maharashtra State while Southern area is bordered by Karnataka State. The State of Goa was ruled by Portuguese for nearly 450 years till it was liberated in 1961. Prior to the formation of the state, Goa was a major district of the former Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu. Goa attained the full-fledged statehood on 30th May 1987 under the Goa, Daman and Diu reorganization Act 1987.

AGRICULTURE SCENARIO OF GOA

In the last 54 years after Liberation, the State has made a remarkable progress in agriculture sector besides various other spheres of economic developments. Tourism and mining are at forefront in terms of employment generation and the agriculture has been providing livelihood support to almost 14.50 Lakh population and the three fold tourist visitors to the state. The agriculture along with forests in Goa is instrumental in keeping Goa green and covers nearly 65 per cent of the total area of the State. The records shows that after liberation, nearly 70 per cent of the population was involved in agriculture as their full time occupation. At that time Paddy was the predominant crop of the State followed by Cashew and Coconut. The cropping pattern is changing. At present, Cashewnut is cultivated in nearly 55,000 hectors and Paddy in about 31,000 hectors in the state. The cultivation of horticultural crops is gaining importance due to the better returns, lower risk and part time farming. Important Fruits Crops of Goa are Mango, Cashew, Coconut, Banana, Pineapple, Jackfruit and Arecanut and field crops are Paddy, Ragi, Sugarcane and Groundnut; spices grown are Black Pepper, Nutmeg, Kokum, Turmeric, Cinnamon, etc.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS IN GOA

Goa receives rain from the South - West monsoons. The average rainfall is 3,000 mm. rainy season is spread over four months from June to September. Occasional thunder showers are experienced in May and October. Goa experiences warm and humid tropical climate. The summer temperature ranges from 24° C to 36° C. In winter, the mercury hovers between 21°C and 30°C. The average relative humidity is 75.90 per cent. About 81per cent of soils of Goa are lateritic, sandy loam to silt-loam in texture, well drained and highly acidic. In Goa traditional sources of irrigation are storage tanks, small ponds, natural springs and wells. After Liberation, the Government of Goa commissioned number of lift irrigation schemes. Irrigation wells were also opened. Further commissioning of Salaulim Irrigation Project at Sanguem and Anjunem Irrigation Project, State has added to irrigate an area of more than 10,000 hectors.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMME TAKEN UP BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GOA

The Government of Goa is providing assistance to agriculture at all levels to provide substantial returns to rural people. The Department of Agriculture provides assistance for farmers from land preparation to the extent of marketing of the produce. The Department has plant production centres in their agricultural farms; machinery provision centres at the taluka Level and Training Centre at District Level. The Department of Agriculture with its head quarter at Tonca, Panaji implements developmental programme through Zonal Agricultural Offices located in each taluka of Goa and the Soil Testing Laboratories are located at district level. The land holding of farmers of Goa is small and nearly 80 per cent of farmers own less than one hactor of land. The smaller machines are preferred and government provides financial assistance for such machines. Cashew kernel processing, Feni extraction are important agro industry in the State. The marketing of the agriculture produce is done in the Govt. market yards, co-operative societies, private dealers and local markets.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research scholars in India have done a sizable quantum of research in the field of agriculture, farmers, land pattern, agro based industry, etc. In order to support research problem and find out the research gap, a few research works done on agriculture farmers have been referred. Two of them are given below.

- (i) H. H. Bharadi, (2013), focused on agriculture farmers and their financial aspects, concluded that how bank play a major role in agriculture.
- (ii) S. Radha Krishna, (2013), analysed the nature and extent of agriculture tenancy.

NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Goa is heavily depending on neighbouring Maharashtra and Karnataka states for food grains, cereals, vegetables, milk etc., to feed visiting tourists. The Salaulim dam provides irrigation to a command area of 11,749 hectares in south Goa. Anjunem irrigation project provides irrigation facilities to 2,100 hectares. The Tillari dam construction, which is a joint venture between the State of Goa and the State of Maharashtra, is expected to irrigate 16,978 hectares of land in North Goa. In spite of larger fund allocation in budget and efforts, goan people are not showing much interest in agriculture activates. This is an alarming sign to the Government

of Goa to take precautionary step before it goes beyond control. Hence, the need is felt to study the problems of farmers and find out causes for problems, possible solution if needed.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The results of the pilot study revealed that young generation, who have studied XIIth and more prefer to go for job though they sufficient land for cultivation. The larger share of revenue comes from tourism and mining, which also generated ample job opportunities, which attract young generation. The farmers in Goa have different problem as compare to entire nation. Here the cost cultivation is very high and shortage of agriculture labour. The Government promotes large scale cultivation of various crops for which assistance for seed, pesticides and manures are provided. Goa is perhaps the only State where the farmers are assured of the price for their produce. The State provides assurance of support price in case of Paddy, Coconut, Arecanut, Oil Palm, Sugarcane, which safeguard the farmers against any losses due to collapse in market price to keep farming at its prime level. With this back ground study, a survey was conducted in the North Goa district of Goa State to find out genuine problems of farmers and to analyse the causes for declining interest in the agriculture activities in the minds of young farmers in agriculture activates.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse profiles of farmers of North Goa district.
2. To study the land holding and irrigation pattern of farmers.
3. To study the agriculture related problems of farmers of North Goa district.
4. To analyse the causes for declining interest in the agriculture activities in the minds of young farmers of North Goa district.

HYPOTHESES

After doing pilot study the following hypotheses were recognised and put for test.

1. Young generation in North Goa district prefer to go for any type of salaried or wage earning jobs rather than opting for agriculture.
2. Increasing in cultivation cost and easy availability of jobs are the main causes of neglecting agriculture activities in North Goa.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present study is based on primary data collected through pre-tested questionnaires, issued to the farmers of North Goa district and also taken views of agriculture department. The secondary data is collected from books and web site of Government of Goa, to give introduction to research study.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

(i) AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF FARMERS

In order to find out the age distribution of farmers and to segregate them according to their age groups the farmers have been classified into three groups viz., the farmers below 35 years have been categorised as (young), in between 36 to 50 years (middle aged) above 51 years (old). The survey revealed that 49 per cent of the farmers observed to have completed half of their life span falls under the category of old farmers, 42 per cent of the farmers are in the middle age and rest 9 per cent farmers are young. Generally old farmers follow age old tradition of agriculture. Another observation is young farmers are very less in percentage, may be due to attraction towards salaried jobs.

(ii) FARMERS' FAMILY SIZE

The survey report revealed that 55 per cent of the farmers had 5 to 8 members and 34 per cent of the farmers have a small family of 4 members or less and just 11 per cent have larger families consist of 9 to 12 members or more.

(iii) FARMERS' EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

The educational qualification of farmers and there family member certainly has its own influence on the quality of agriculture activity. The educated farmers generally gather more information relating to the crops that they grow and about the market where they sell their agriculture produce. The survey revealed that 20 per cent of the farmers were illiterate, 35 per cent of them have completed their primary education, 32 per cent of them have finished their secondary education, just 8 per cent of them cleared pre-university courses and 5 per cent of them particularly young once were observed to have gone college and completed their graduation.

(iv) FARMERS' OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

In order to ascertain whether the farmers have taken agriculture as their main occupation or also involve in other profession, a question regarding this asked to farmers. About 50 per cent of the farmers do only with agriculture and the rest 50 per cent farmers have taken up agriculture as a profession side by side also have other business and the family members also go for jobs.

(v) NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE ACTIVITY

It is observed that 70 per cent of the families have deputed less than 3 members for agriculture and rest 30 per cent of the family have deputed 4 to 8 members towards the agriculture activity.

(vi) LAND HOLDING BY FARMERS

In order to ascertain the farmers' land holding status, the farmers were grouped into four convenient categories for study, viz., Marginal (less than 1000 sq. mts.), Small (more than 1001 and less than 2000 sq. mts.), Average (more than 2001 and less than 5000 sq. mts.) and others (5000 and above sq. mts.). The survey revealed that 50 per cent of the farmers observed to have fallen under marginal, 40 per cent were small, 5 per cent of them fall under category of average land holders and 5 per cent of the farmers holding more than 5000 sq. mts. or more. Looking at this one can say that land holdings status of farmers in Goa is very poor as compared to other states.

(vii) AREA UNDER IRRIGATION

It is evident that all the farmers, who have less than 1000 sq. mts. of land were observed to have irrigation facilities in the form of well, tube wells, ponds, etc., 97 per cent of them, who have more than 1000 and less than 2000 sq. mts. of land have irrigation facilities and 98 per cent of the farmers, who have more than 2001 and less than 5000 sq. mts. of land have irrigation facility. One can judge that almost all of them have irrigation facility but some of them are not going for second crop since the water is not sufficient during summer season.

(viii) CROP PATTERN

It is found that 61 per cent of the farmers preferred to grow paddy in their fields especially during monsoon by making use of rain water which is available in coastal belt. It is also found that 15 per cent of the farmers were preferred to grow vegetable which has a good demand in the local market. These vegetable grows throughout the year, other crops include red small chilly, cashew nuts, coconuts etc., which are grown by 12 per cent of the farmers in the North District. It is also observed that just 3 per cent of farmers in each category have shown interest in grains, sugar cane, oil seeds and fruits.

(ix) REASONS FOR NOT UTILISING THE AGRICULTURE LAND IN TOTAL

It is observed that 3 per cent of the farmers told that land is not suitable for agriculture due to slope, big stones, and 20 per cent of the farmers total that due to poor economic back ground they do not have capacity to invest in agriculture. 33 per cent of them have faced labour shortage problem, 7 per cent of them facing water problem and 37 per cent of the farmers observed to have faced other problems other than the stated main problems such as investment, labour problem and personal problems

(x) CAUSE FOR DECLINING INTEREST IN AGRICULTURE ACTIVITY

About one third of the total numbers of farmers have given other reasons other than the specified reasons. About 23 per cent of the farmers felt that government did not give them support in terms of support price, subsidies etc. 20 per cent of the farmers felt that jobs provides them better benefit rather than wasting their time in small field. Farmers nearby beaches prefer to give their agriculture land for commercial purpose and the earning from rent is more than the earning from the agriculture activity, 7 per cent of the farmers felt increasing cultivation cost made them not to venture in agriculture activities and the same percentage farmers also felt increasing cultivation cost is one of the cause of declining their interest in agriculture activity and concentrate on some other business activities.

FINDINGS

1. Large number farmers in North Goa district are old and level of education is also low. The educated famers generally gather more information relating to the crops that they grow and about the market where they can sell their agricultural products. It is observed that whenever more number of members in a family, such family members directly involved in cultivation activity.
2. An equal numbers of farmers in the district purely opted agriculture as their main occupation and the rest half, agriculture as occupation as well as other business and jobs
3. More than half of the farmers observed to have earned less than Rs. 30,000 p.a. from their agriculture activities, all together 85 per cent of the farmers observed to have earned less than Rs. 50,000 p.a., rest of the farmers earned in between Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 2,50,000 p.a. It indicates that earning of farmers in North Goa is not commercially viable so far earning from agriculture is concerned. It may be due to increasing cost of labour, cultivation etc.
4. Land holding of farmers in the district is very poor as compared to rest of India. Poor holdings of land indicate less income and not worth for agriculture cultivation.
5. Almost all farmers in in the district observed to have irrigation facility.
6. Increasing cost of cultivation, reduction in the government support and easy availability of jobs for young generation, these are the three main causes for declining interest in agriculture activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS / SUGGESTIONS

1. Since a large number of farmers told that they did not receive guidance from agriculture officers. It is suggested this stake holder should make note of it.
2. The Government of Goa must look into the various factors affecting farmers declining interest in agriculture activates, especially in minds of young generation.

CONCLUSIONS

The set hypotheses put for test proved positively.

1. Young generation in North Goa district prefer to go for any type of salaried or wage earning jobs rather than opting for agriculture proved positively.
2. Increasing in cultivation cost and easy availability of jobs are the main causes of neglecting agriculture activities in North Goa also proved positively.

LIMITATIONS

1. Since the study is conducted with limited sample size, the opinions of farmers cannot be generalised.
2. Since the sample size is selected at random and area covered is limited, the conclusions arrived cannot be considered as the opinions of the farmers of the entire North Goa district.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research can be taken up at state level with a sizable quantum of data and covering large number of farmers in the state of Goa, which may give concrete conclusions so that the Government Goa can make policy decisions on them.

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