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A STUDY OF PROBLEMS AND MEASURES OF ECONOMIES OF ONION IN MAHARASHTRA**R. S. SALUNKHE****HEAD****ARTS, COMMERCE & SCIENCE COLLEGE****PALUS****ABSTRACT**

Today, prices of onions are hiking between Rs.60 and Rs.80 per kg in major metro cities across the country. Maharashtra's onion production which is almost 28% of country's output, impact prices all over the country. Nashik district alone yields 70% of Maharashtra's onion production. In 2011-12 Nashik district has produced 25 lakh tones of onion. But this year-2012-13, it has reduced upto 16 lakh tones due to drought and less cultivated area. Nashik district has marketing onions in twelve states of India. The country's production in the year 2013 was 166.45 lakh tones with productivity of 16.78 ton/ ha. Maharashtra's production was around 47.63 lakh tones. Prices this year are rising primarily due to last year's severe drought in Maharashtra, since the area under onion cultivation in the state was considerably reduced from 382,000 hectares (ha) in year 2012 to 2.62 lakh ha in year 2013, a drop of 31%. However, Maharashtra's politicians do not seem keen on reforming the system of buying and selling agriculture goods. The cost of production of onion has increased rapidly in last decade therefore it may not be possible to sale onions below 30 to 40 rupees per kilogram. In the present study the modest attempt has been made to know how the problems arise about onion prices, economies behind onion cultivation and to study trend and growth of area, production and productivity and also variability analysis of onion in all over Maharashtra.

KEYWORDS

Onion, Price, Area, Production, Productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Onion is grown in India since remote times. Its reference is seen in the *Charaka Samhita* and in *Kautilya's Arthashastra*. It has undergone several modifications and its original form is not known. The important states cultivating onion are Maharashtra (Nashik), Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Orissa, Karnataka, etc. all states cultivate onion in homestead land for domestic purposes. Some states cultivate onion in fields for commercial purposes. In Maharashtra, onion is produced in three seasons i.e. June, August and March. Seasons held at Kharif June to 15 August, late Kharif – September end and Rabi October to January. 40% production came in Kharif season and 60% production came in Rabi season. 'Lasalgaon' Tal-Nifhad, District- Nashik is huge onion market hub in Asian continent

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know how the problem of onion price has arise?
2. To study the trend and growth of area, production and yield of onion.
3. To analyse the production and productivity status of onion in Maharashtra and India.
4. To study economies behind onion cultivation in Maharashtra.
5. To give appropriate measure pertaining the price volatile in Maharashtra.

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from primary as well as secondary sources. For understanding the cost of production, primary data has been collected from Nashik and Sangli district by personal interview method. 50 samples have taken of which 40 samples are from Nashik district and 10 samples are from Sangli district on the basis of convenient sampling. The secondary data is collected from the news paper, Internet, National horticulture database 2012 and Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of India and Department of Agriculture, Maharashtra State, Journals and paper articles. The data has been collected from the period 2003-04 to 2012-13. The basic statistics tools like Arithmetic mean, standard deviation and co-efficient of variation were estimated to know the average position and variability in the area, production and productivity of onion in Maharashtra in comparison with India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumbhar (2000) studied, "Economic of production and marketing of rabbi onion in Pune district". The major items' cost of cultivation were seeds, hired human labour, manure, bullock charges, fertilizers and rental value of land. Mohaptra and Romeo (2007) studied that the average per hectare cost of cultivation of onion in Bolangir district of Orissa. Shah (1999) conducted study on an economic evaluation of onion production and its marketing in Maharashtra. The analysis of cost structure revealed that total cost of onion production was found much higher in rabbi season compared to that of Kharif season. This finding was true for all categories of onion producers. Market price of input that was prevailing at the time of their use was considered for working out of cost of cultivation. The gross return was calculated on the basis of market price of the produce at the time when the produce is ready for sale. Net returns per hector were calculated by deducting the cost of cultivation from the gross income.

DATA ANALYSIS**TABLE NO- 1 WORLD SCENARIO OF ONION- 2011-12**

Countries	Area in 000 hector	Productivity 000 MT	Productivity MT/Ha
China	1015.2	24763.4	24.4
India	1087.2	17511.0	16.1
U S A	59.7	3353.1	56.1
Iran	69.7	2467.7	35.8
Egypt	63.7	2304.2	36.2
Turkey	65.4	2141.3	32.7
Russian Federation	95.5	2122.7	22.2
Pakistan	147.6	1939.6	13.1
Netherlands	29.8	1540.9	51.6
Brazil	63.4	1523.3	24.0
Others	1570.2	27260.1	17.4
Total world	4267.7	86956.6	20.4

Source: National Horticulture Database-2012

The table no-1 reveals country wise area, production and productivity of onion during the period 2011-12. India has ranked first regarding the area of onion cultivation But China has ranked first in production of onion in the world. About the productivity U.S.A and Netherlands have been ahead of all countries in the world. India (16.1) and Pakistan (13.1) have very low productivity in the world. World has produced 86 956.6 metric tones of onion in the area of 42677.7 thousands hectors with the productivity of 20.4 MT/ha. India has produced 20.13% onion of world onion production on area of 25.47%. It has indicated that entire world is depending on India and china for onion.

TABLE NO- 2 ONION SCENARIO OF INDIA AND MAHARASHTRA DURING 2009-10 to 2012-13

Year	Area in 000 hector		Production in MT		Productivity in MT/H	
	India	Maharashtra	India	Maharashtra	India	Maharashtra
2003-04	553.8	121.0	6267.6	1427.00	11.3	11.8
2004-05	613.8	134.0	7760.6	1645.00	12.6	12.3
2005-06	703.6	177.0	9432.5	2469.00	13.4	13.9
2006-07	768.0	229.9	10847.0	2812.36	14.1	12.2
2007-08	821.0	204.7	13900.0	2713.28	16.9	13.2
2008-09	834.0	202.3	13565.0	2948.6	16.3	14.6
2009-10	756.2	200.0	12158.8	3146.0	16.1	15.7
2010-11	1064.0	415.0	15118.0	4905.0	14.2	11.8
2011-12	1087.2	382.0	17511.0	5638.0	16.1	14.8
2012-13	992.2	262.0	16654.9	4763.0	16.8	18.1

Source: Indian Horticulture Database 12-13

The table no-2 reveals area, production and productivity of onion in Maharashtra and India during the period 2003-04 to 2012-13. In 2003-04, the area under the crop was 553.8 thousand hectares in India it has increased upto 1087.2 thousand hectares in 2011-12. The area has almost doubled in a decade. But production has tripled in the same decade and increased from 6267.6 MT in 2003-04 to 17511 MT in 2011-12. Productivity has also increased from 11.3 to 16.1 MT/Ha expect 2010-11. It has been observed that area, production and productivity of onion in India and Maharashtra have shown continuous increasing trend throughout last decade. Maharashtra has recorded highest area under onion crop (415 thousand hectors) in 2010-11 which has 39% of country's area. About production, the state has highest production (5638MT) in 2011-12 which has 33.15% of country's production. In 2012-13, area and production have been decreased compared to last year due to drought conditions through out the state. Incredibly, the productivity of onion has increased in India (16.8) as well as in Maharashtra (18.1) in the same year. It was observed that the production and productivity of onion in the state has shown decreasing trend throughout the year of 2010-11. Besides, Maharashtra had the least performance in all sector of onion crop during the year 2006- 12. Considering the state having more area compared other states there is need of improvement in productivity like America and other countries. It is necessary to adopt new technology and devices for improvement in production and productivity.

TABLE NO-3 VARIABILITY, TREND AND GROWTH ANALYSIS OF ONION

Statistical Tools	Maharashtra			India		
	Area	Production	Productivity	Area	Production	Productivity
Mean	232.79	3246.7	13.84	819.38	12321.54	14.78
S. D.	96.88	1407.2	2.02	188.88	3735.20	1.94
C.V.	41.61	43.34	14.59	23.05	30.31	13.12

The table -3 exhibits variability in area under onion which was more 41.61 per cent for Maharashtra state followed by 23.05 percent for over all India levels. This has indicated more instability in the area under onion in Maharashtra and India. The variability in the production of onion was more 43.34 percent in Maharashtra and 30.31 percent in India. It has indicated comparatively low instability in production of onion at India level than the Maharashtra. There has been variation in productivity 14.59 per cent for Maharashtra than 13.12 percent for India. In all three elements Maharashtra has more variability compared to India scenario. It might be drought, shortage of labour, unseen crop diseases like pod formation which caused decrease in productivity of onion.

HOW THE PROBLEM ARISEN ABOUT ONION?

There is a simple rule, shortage raises the price. You can see everywhere, if there is a boom in any agriculture product then the area under cultivation rises. Two years back due to boom in onion market, area under onion crop has been risen therefore record production has been made in that year. At the same time there was ban on export of onion and later the ban has been released but before that price of onion rapidly collapsed. In 2011, huge stocks of onions remain unsold. Recession introduced in the market, therefore, farmers stored onions till December, 2011 but they didn't get better prices and they have to bear big loss. At the same time, new Kharif production came into market and again onion market position became critical. New and old onions appeared into the market at the same time and again onion market collapsed, the farmers have to suffer from big trouble. They have lost their financial credit. Still, they have not reduced area of onion cultivation due to blind belief and over expectation of price inflation. They have considered possibility of boom in the market.

In the third year-2012 area under cultivation of onion has been considerably reduced and at the same time farmers have to face drought. Production and productivity has been decreased. 45% area has been reduced in that period in Nashik district alone. Therefore in December, 2012 there was shortage of onion and prices increased. Farmers considered about next month i.e. January 2013 Rabi season's yields of onions to come in the market, therefore, they have already sold their old onions instead of making storage upto June -July. Farmers did not take risk because they have secured prices as they wish in June-July. Very few farmers exceptionally stored onions and hence now they begin to earn better prices but most of the profit margin earned by traders only. Less production, more demand and short supply caused the hike in the price in short period with onion. Wholesaler purchase onion at lower prices in auction and packed the same into various sizes and sold them at high prices to retailers.

In April -May 2013, onion prices collapsed upto 700 per quintal. Shrewd traders has purchased huge quantity and stored. More than 70% farmers sold their onions during April to July, 2013. After that export permission is granted by Government and six lakh tones onions exported to various countries in the same period. Early monsoon affected production of onion in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. News of onion shortage spreads rapidly and price hiked from 1500 to 5000 quintal in very short period.

After onion prices started rising fast, Government clarified it has no moral right to intervene in the market as last year when prices came down to Rs.4 per kg in the wholesale market, and so the government did not come forward to save farmers. Why should it intervene now and prevent farmers from making an extra buck. But the, politicians, the bureaucratic machinery, farmers, traders and all other stake holders know it is not farmers who are real beneficiaries, but the cartels of a few big traders operating at various wholesale markets that become the biggest beneficiary of any upward or downward movement in farm goods. The system of agriculture produce market committee has been created to protect the interest of farmers. But this system not only works against the interest of farmers but also fails to give farmers a say in ruining of these markets.

TABLE NO- 4 COST OF PRODUCTION OF ONE ACRE ONION DURING 2001-02 TO 2012-13 ONE ACRE OF ONION CULTIVATION

Sr. No.	Particulars	Expenses in 2001-02	Expenses in 2012-13 in Rs.
1	Land preparation	1200	5000
2	Seeds & Nursery rising	1000	7000
3	Plantation charges	1000	7000
4	Manures & Fertilizers	3500	10000
5	Disease & Pest Management	1500	5000
6	Labour charges	1500	10000
7	Other expenses	300	1000
8	Total	10000	45000

Source: Field Survey

Note: supervision, irrigation, electricity charges and fixed cost are not considered

The above facts reveal the cost of production of onion for every acre of land during 2001-02 and 2012-13. 50 Samples were taken from Nashik and Sangli district for the data collection by interview method. On an average 50 samples are considered. Normally, before ten years ago, cost of production for one acre of onion cultivation was Rs. 10000 only and farmers earned by the rate of 8-10 per kilogram. Production was 200 to 250 quintal in one acre of which 25% onions are of grade one quality and remaining second and third grade quality onions. Considering all the expenses and production they have got 40000 to 50000 per acre of onion crop. But in 2012-13, expenses are increased 4.5 times more compared to last ten years. Apart from this production and productivity has decreased upto 150 to 200 quintal per acre.

Cost of production is Rs.10000 in 2001-02 and Rs. 45000 in 2011-12. The percentage of change in expenses as Land preparation slightly reduced from 12% to 11% in total cost production, Seeds and nursery rising increased from 10% to 16%, manures and fertilizers reduced from 35% to 22%. Labour charges include plantation charges, transplanting, weeding, hoeing, harvesting and curing were increased from 25% to 38%. Labour charges were significantly increased in last decade. Among the different items of cost, the rental value of land, bullock charges and machinery charges, total hired human labour charges, seeds, manures, fertilizers, plant protection and irrigation, transport cost were the major items of cost of cultivation of onion.

MEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS

1. It is the urgent need that the Government should alert the farmers regarding market situation and also motivate them like American government as they are doing in their country.
2. If Government could publish the monthly report about demand- supply on onion, the farmers could get guidelines about onion cultivation, storage and other decisions.
3. Like Maharashtra, there is need of mechanism storage arrangement in other states such as Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Bihar etc.
4. For better marketing in cities, there should be horizontal mechanism apart from local market committee.
5. Vegetable production scheme of central Government of India should include onion which is developing near big cities.
6. In commodity market in Stock exchange, transactions about onion should be included which could be beneficial for cultivators about knowing price situation in future and they could take decision about to cultivate or not to cultivate onion crops.
7. Government should collect season wise data about onion such as net sown area, Production and productivity etc.
8. Farmers should supply the onions step by step into the market to see that the price remains constant.
9. Cultivator, traders and consumers are three significant elements of onion markets. There is need to maintain psychology of all these elements for each other.
10. There is need to introduce direct market system more effectively.
11. There is need of minimizing the big gap between cultivator and consumer. At present consumer pay Rs. 60-70 per kilogram other side cultivator receives only 25 to 30 per kilogram.
12. Consumer should give minimum price to cultivator which can compensate the cost of production so that they can produce onion pleasantly.

CONCLUSION

Government, traders, consumers should think about cultivators' financial situations. Farmers have to purchase cultivation inputs with fixed cost but after cultivation final product sales remain unfixed and prices unsecured. On the other hand rates of other household and industry products are increased five to six times more than that and no one appeals against it. But the farmers are facing too much problem from drought to over monsoon, shortage of labour, newly introduced diseases and insects, and over costing on this management even they are not taking their own salary or wages and instead they are working day and night without caring of winter, rain and summer. Farmers want minimum price which is over the production cost with additional minimum profit and their salary. The drought earlier this year resulted in a bad crop which led to a decline in supply of onions. Situation regarding onion price may change in coming days. Farmers have faced major loss only due to improper news spread among them and market. They have faced loss from last two years. Is there any reimbursement? They have sold onion on throw away price even lots of onions spoiled in the farm. Shortage of water, labour, rate below production cost, volatile market, dominance of traders and market committee, unaffordable commission charges, are major problems faced by onion cultivators therefore they may think about, 'Crop Holiday'

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