

CONSTRAINTS IN MARKETING OF AGRO FORESTRY PRODUCTS IN WESTERN U.P.

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ABSTRACT

The success of agroforestry largely depends upon the marketing of agroforestry products. In the present study farmers' constraints related to marketing of agro-forestry products were investigated. The study was conducted with the twin objectives i.e. (i) to find out the problems faced by farmers in marketing of agro-forestry products and (ii) to study farmers' opinion about marketing of agroforestry produce. The present study was conducted in four villages namely Ladva, Lakhanauti, Chandrolli and Devla at Puwarka block of Saharanpur district of western Uttar Pradesh. The data were collected with the help of a structured and pre-tested interview schedule from one hundred and twenty randomly selected farmers. More agro-forestry marketing activities need to be organized to inculcate the importance of agroforestry among the common farmers. Government regulations on felling of trees from agroforestry lands and transport of agroforestry produce has to be carefully deregulated to benefit various strata of farming community. The various problems related to marketing of agroforestry products reported were: illegal charges by forest officials on the route; police department creates obstacles even for the permitted items; non availability of co-operatives of agroforestry practicing farmers; lack of market information to the farmers e.g. price announcement, seasonal changes in prices, rate of agroforestry products, etc., lack of risk bearing ability resulted in the sale of produce to the village level local traders. There is a need for organized agroforestry marketing efforts to get the benefits of agroforestry systems among farming community. Farmers desired financial assistance necessary for marketing of agroforestry products.

Key words: Agroforestry; Land management; Marketing; Agroforestry products

INTRODUCTION

Agroforestry involves deliberate retention, introduction, or mixture of trees or other woody perennials to benefit from the resultant ecological and economic interactions (Nair, 1992). About 50 per cent of the total agricultural land in the country, is estimated to be marginal land and could be more productively used by revegetating with suitable species of trees and grasses in association with crops. Dwivedi (2002) stated that status of agricultural extension perspectives in agroforestry research in India is determined by the very character of the problems to be solved by the land-use technologies. In this context farmers' problems about marketing of agroforestry products will be the important dimension of research. The theoretical perspectives of the contributions that social sciences can make to agroforestry have been superbly reviewed by Burch (1992). The success of agroforestry largely depends upon how it is accepted by our clientele- the farmers.

Considering the newness of the concept it was thought worth while to probe into farmers' problems related to marketing of agroforestry products, with the following specific objectives:

- (i) To find out the problems faced by farmers in marketing of agroforestry products
- (ii) To study farmers' opinion about marketing of agroforestry produce.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in four villages namely Lakhanauti, Chandrolli, Devla and Ladva at Puwarka block of Saharanpur district of Western Uttar Pradesh. The data were collected with the help of a structured and pre-tested interview schedule from 120 randomly selected farmers (at the rate of 30 farmers per village of which 20 farmers were land holder and 10 were landless). The respondents were selected by using random sampling technique. Since the present study was of an exploratory nature, the questions pertaining to the problem were mostly of an open-ended nature avoiding pro-categorization. This was done to allow for maximum freedom of responses and to include all shades of opinion. The data were analysed on a nominal level, using numbers and percentage to express the responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings in respect of perception about objectives, benefits and importance of agroforestry, suggestions and problems faced by the farmers in marketing of agroforestry produce are presented in the following pages.

Perception about the objectives of agroforestry : Perception among farmers about agroforestry was studied and the findings are presented in Table 1.

It is observed from the findings that majority (61.67%) of farmers perceived the agroforestry system as providing fodder, fuel and small timber. The other components of agroforestry like maintaining balance of nature and creating permanent clus-

ters of trees as well as creating job opportunities were perceived by 20.83% and 17.5% farmers, respectively.

Table 1. Farmers perception about the agroforestry

S. No.	Perception	Number (n=120)	%age
1.	Helping rural population in fulfilling their needs of fuel, fodder, timber and fruits.	74	61.67
2.	Increasing the area of forests for maintaining balance of nature.	25	20.83
3.	Creating permanent clusters of trees and creating job opportunities for local population.	21	17.5

Preference of land for agroforestry : The respondents were asked about their preferences about land which can be brought under agroforestry. The findings are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Preferences for land to be brought under agroforestry (N=120)

S. No.	Land preference	Number	% age
1.	Cultivated land	92	76.67
2.	Farm borders	28	23.33

It is observed from the findings that majority (76.67%) farmers preferred cultivated lands for agroforestry, while 23.33% farmers preferred farm borders for growing agroforestry trees. It indicates the change of attitude towards the agroforestry. Now the agroforestry has become the important component of agriculture in the western Uttar Pradesh.

Problems faced by farmers in marketing of agroforestry produce: The various problems faced by the farmers in relation to marketing of agroforestry products reported are mentioned in Table 3.

It is observed that the first and important problem in the marketing of agroforestry produce reported is Police department creates obstacles even for the permitted items (91.66%). There is non availability of co-operatives of agroforestry practicing farmers according to 87.5% respondents. Illegal charges by forest officials on the route were faced by 77.5% farmers. Lack of risk bearing ability in the farmers resulted in the sale of produce to the village level local traders by 61.67% farmers while the lack of market information to the farmers e.g. price announcement, seasonal changes in prices, rate of agroforestry products was faced by 57.5% respondents.

Opinion of farmers regarding marketing of agroforestry products: The suggestions of farmers for popularizing agroforestry were collected and are presented in table 4.

It is revealed that financial assistance is necessary for marketing agroforestry products. More agroforestry marketing activities need to be organized to inculcate the importance of agroforestry among the farmers. Sixty-five per cent farmers desired some financial assistance necessary for marketing of trees. More agroforestry extension activities need to be organized to inculcate the importance of agroforestry in the minds of

common farmers was suggested by 77.5% farmers. Government's regulations on felling of trees from agroforestry lands has to be carefully deregulated suggested by 89.17% farmers. Transport of agroforestry produce has to be carefully deregulated to benefit various strata of farming community as responded by 87.5% farmers. In this context, Dwivedi and Shukla (1998), stated that Government regulations on felling of trees from agroforestry lands and transport of agroforestry produce has to be carefully deregulated to benefit various strata of farming community.

Table 3: Problems faced by farmers in marketing of agroforestry produce (N=120)

S. No.	Problems	Number	%age
1.	Illegal charges by forest officials on the route.	93	77.5
2.	Police department creates obstacles even for the permitted items.	110	91.66
3.	Lack of market information to the farmers e.g. price announcement, seasonal changes in prices, rate of agroforestry products, etc.	69	57.5
4.	Lack of risk bearing ability in the farmers resulted in the sale of produce to the village level local traders.	74	61.67
5.	There is non availability of co-operatives of agroforestry practicing farmers.	105	87.5

Table 4. Farmers' opinion in respect of marketing of agroforestry products (N=120)

S. No.	Suggestions	Number	%age
1.	Some advance financial assistance necessary for marketing agroforestry products.	79	65.83
2.	More agroforestry marketing activities need to be organized to inculcate the importance of agroforestry in the minds of common farmers.	93	77.5
3.	Government regulations on felling of trees from agroforestry lands has to be carefully deregulated.	107	89.17
4.	Transport of agroforestry produce has to be carefully deregulated to benefit various strata of farming community.	105	87.5

CONCLUSION

The various problems related to marketing of

agroforestry products reported by the farmers were: illegal charges by forest officials on the route; police department creating obstacles even for the permitted items; non availability of co-operatives in agroforestry practicing farmers; lack of market information to the farmers e.g. price announcement, seasonal changes in prices, rate of agroforestry products, etc.; lack of risk bearing ability in the farmers resulted in the sale of

produce to the village level local traders. Farmers opined financial assistance for marketing agroforestry products. More agroforestry marketing activities need to be organized. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a need for organized agroforestry marketing efforts to inculcate the benefits of agroforestry systems among farming community.

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