

Farmers' attitude towards Direct Marketing of farm produce in relation to doubling income in South Gujarat

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Abstract: India is agriculture dominant country. The majority of the population directly or indirectly depends on agriculture. A huge number of the population is doing farming as an occupation. The income of farmers is very important for the growth of the whole agriculture sector. The government is also focusing on doubling farmers' income. Farmers' income largely depends on land holding size, type of farming, technologies used by farmers, price of agri inputs and the prices of farm produce farmers getting in the market. Marketing of farm produce is very important in relation to raise farmers' income. Generally, farmers sell their farm produce in market yard. It is big issue for farmers to get rational prices of their farm produce due to arrival of huge quantities of farm produce in the market yard. Wholesalers and retailers buy these farm produces from the market yard and sell it to consumers at high prices to earn high margins. If farmers adopt direct marketing by removing intermediaries, then farmers can achieve good prices of their farm produce and their income can be raised at a noticeable level. This study attempts to study the Farmers' attitude towards the Direct Marketing of farm produce with concern to doubling their income. The result of the study indicated that farmers have have moderately favorable towards direct marketing of their farm produce.

Key Words: Farmers, Direct Marketing, Farm Produce, Doubling Income

Introduction:

India is one of the major players in the agriculture sector worldwide and it is the primary source of livelihood for ~55% of India's population. India has the world's largest cattle herd (buffaloes), the largest area planted for wheat, rice, and cotton, and is the largest producer of milk, pulses, and spices in the world. It is the second-largest producer of fruit, vegetables, tea, farmed fish, cotton, sugarcane, wheat, rice, cotton, and sugar. The agriculture sector in India holds the record for second-largest agricultural land in the world

generating employment for about half of the country's population. Thus, farmers become an integral part of the sector to provide us with a means of sustenance.

Foodgrain production in India touched 330.5 million metric tonnes (MT) in 2022-23 (3rd Advance Estimate). India is the world's 2nd largest producer of food grains, fruits and vegetables and the 2nd largest exporter of sugar. A total of 521.27 LMT rice has been anticipated for procurement for the upcoming KMS 2023-24, up from 496 LMT produced during the previous KMS 2022-23.

The Agriculture and Allied industry sector witnessed some major developments, investments, and support from the Government in the recent past. Between April 2000-December 2023, FDI in agriculture services stood at US\$ 4.78 billion. (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2024)

Farming in India is characterized by small and fragmented holdings and high dependence on monsoon rains. Operating small holdings is often unviable and farming is not a profitable business or enterprise. It is an occupation in a sector marked by large-scale disguised unemployment and unending uncertainties at every stage of farm operations. In order to double farmers' income, there is a need to increase farm productivity, improve market access, and also to develop the industrial and service sectors, where the surplus farmers can find work. (NABARD, 2022)

The income of farmers is very important for the growth of the whole agriculture sector. The government is focusing on doubling farmers' income. Farmers' income largely depends on land holding size, type of farming, technologies used by farmers, price of agri inputs and the prices of farm produce farmers getting in the market. Marketing of farm produce is very important in relation to raise farmers' income. Generally, farmers sell their farm produce in market yard. It is big issue for farmers to get rational prices of their farm produce due to arrival of huge quantities of farm produce in the market yard. Wholesalers and retailers buy these farm produces from the market yard and sell it to consumers at high prices to earn high margins. If farmers adopt direct marketing by removing intermediaries, then farmers can achieve good prices of their farm produce and their income can be raised at a noticeable level.

Literature review:

Karmakar *et al.* (2022) found that technical support has more positive relationships with farmers' direct marketing. Raghuraja and Devaraja (2022) found that the marketing aspects left untouched and bringing marketing orientation to farmers is not easy task because farmer thinks that production is his only duty and depends on somebody for marketing of his

produce. Sharma (2021) suggested various strategies like group marketing, retail chain linkage, direct marketing, processor marketing, spot marketing, export marketing, development of mega markets and organic farming for enhancing farm income. Maji and Biswas (2018) concluded that increase in farmers' income is easily attainable through better price realization, efficient post-harvest management, competitive value chains and adoption of allied activities.

Research methodology:

I. Research Problem Statement & Operational Definitions

The present study attempts to study the Farmers' attitude towards the Direct Marketing of farm produce in relation to doubling their income and suggest measures to prepare an appropriate marketing strategy for improve the income level of the farmers.

II. The Operational Definitions of various constructs

Farmers: This refers to the full-time farmers who are doing farming on their own land in the randomly selected three districts of Gujarat.

Direct Marketing: The way of marketing that relies on direct communication or distribution to individual consumers by removing intermediaries.

Farm Produce: The commodities like fruits, vegetables, grain, cereals etc. which are produce by farmers on their farm.

Farmer's Income: It refers to the earning of farmers from their farm by cultivating various crops

III. Research Objectives:

- To study the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers.
- To study the Farmers' attitude towards the Direct Marketing of farm produce.
- To provide suggestions for preparing an appropriate marketing strategy for improve the income level of the farmers.

IV. Research Design:

As per the objectives of the study, Descriptive-Cross Sectional Research Design was used for the study as it focuses on the Farmers' attitude towards the Direct Marketing of farm produce.

V. Data Collection:

(i) Primary Data: The study is mainly based on Primary Data collected from the farmers of randomly selected districts of South Gujarat by using a pre-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in Gujarati language for batter convenience of the farmers.

(ii) **Secondary Data:** Secondary data have been collected from relevant literature like journals, books, reports, and government websites.

VI. Sampling Design

For sampling, multistage sampling technique was used in this study. At first stage, three districts of South Gujarat were selected randomly. At the second stage, two talukas from each district were selected randomly. At the third stage, five villages from each taluka were selected randomly and at the last stage, ten farmers from each village were selected randomly.

Sample Size: 300 Farmers from randomly selected three districts of South Gujarat have been surveyed in this study.

Results & discussion:

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of the farmers

Variables	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male - Female	281 - 19	93.67 - 6.33
Age	20-30 years - 31- 40 years	3 - 15	1 - 5
	41-50 years - 51- 60 years	127 - 120	42.33 - 40
	Above 60 years	35	11.67
Education	Illiterate - Below SSC	9 - 52	3 - 17.33
	SSC/Diploma - HSC	94 - 77	31.33 - 25.67
	Graduate - Post Graduate	55 - 13	18.33 - 4.33
Occupation	Farming Only		
	Farming + Livestock	90	30
	Farming + Service	83	27.67
	Farming + Business	67	22.33
	Farming + Livestock + Service	7	2.33
	Farming + Livestock + Business	47	15.67
Annual Income	Below 1 lakh	6	2
	1-3 lakh	98	32.67
	3-5 lakh	153	51

	5-7 lakh	41	13.67
	Above 7 lakh	4	1.33

As per the first objective of the study, data & information related to farmer's socio-economic characters was collected from 300 farmers. As presented in Table 1, the socio-economic characteristics of respondents were classified according to their gender, age, education, occupation and annual income. Out of 300 respondents, 93.67% were male and 6.333% were female. The highest number of respondents (42.33) belonged to the age group of 41-50 years. The majority of the respondents (31.33%) have education up to SSC/Diploma. Majority (30%) of the farmers were involved in farming only followed by 27.67 were involved in farming with livestock. Only 1.33% of farmers have an annual income of more than 7 lakhs and the majority (51%) of them have an annual income of 3 to 5 lakhs.

Table 2: Farmers' attitude towards direct marketing of farm produce

Sr. No.	Particulars	SA	A	N	DA	HDA	CS	Mean
1.	I Have sufficient knowledge about direct marketing of my farm produce	96(480)	102(408)	51(153)	32(64)	19(19)	1124	3.74
2.	Direct marketing of farm produce is simple and easy	39(195)	81(324)	111(333)	57(114)	12(12)	978	3.26
3.	I will earn more if I sell my farm produce directly to the customers	102(510)	78(312)	30(90)	54(108)	36(36)	1056	3.52
4.	Marketing of farm produce in a market yard is more convenient	163(815)	72(288)	29(87)	30(60)	6(6)	1226	4.08

	than direct marketing							
5.	I have an interest in direct marketing of my farm produce to the customers	14(70)	43(172)	96(288)	132(264)	15(15)	809	2.69
6.	Selling my farm produce directly to the customers is expensive in terms of transportation	89(445)	87(348)	72(216)	38(76)	14(14)	1099	3.66
7.	I think direct marketing of my farm produce is very risky	107(535)	85(340)	52(156)	32(64)	24(24)	1119	3.73
8.	I think Direct marketing of my farm produce is only possible if I have a personal vehicle for transportation	69(345)	165(660)	27(81)	24(48)	15(15)	1149	3.83
9.	I think direct marketing of my farm produce is very time-consuming	81(405)	92(368)	66(198)	41(82)	20(20)	1073	3.57
10.	Direct marketing is possible if I have cold storage facilities to	60(300)	69(276)	78(234)	30(60)	63(63)	933	3.11

	protect my farm produce.							
11.	Direct marketing of my farm produce only is possible if I have my own shop.	13(65)	42(168)	84(252)	119(238)	42(42)	765	2.55
12.	Direct marketing of my farm produce is a headache for me	54(270)	41(205)	81(243)	98(196)	26(26)	940	3.13

As shown in table 2, farmers attitude towards direct marketing is measured by collecting farmers reviews on various statements by using likert scale. It is noticed that the most important statement showed that “Marketing of farm produce in a market yard is more convenient than direct marketing” followed by statements “I think Direct marketing of my farm produce is only possible if I have a personal vehicle for transportation”, “I Have sufficient knowledge about direct marketing of my farm produce”, “I think direct marketing of my farm produce is very risky”, “Selling my farm produce directly to the customers is expensive in terms of transportation”, “I think direct marketing of my farm produce is very time-consuming”, “I will earn more if I sell my farm produce directly to the customers”, “Direct marketing of farm produce is simple and easy”, “Direct marketing of my farm produce is a headache for me”, “Direct marketing is possible if I have cold storage facilities to protect my farm produce”, “I have an interest in direct marketing of my farm produce to the customers”, “Direct marketing of my farm produce only is possible if I have my own shop” respectively.

Above discussion provides only statement wise attitude but to access the overall attitude of farmers towards direct marketing of their farm produce is very important. For access the overall attitude of farmers, the summative mean was calculated by making sum of mean scores of each statement and dividing it by number of statements. The summative mean of all 12 statement is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Farmers' attitude towards direct marketing of farm produce

Sr. No.	Statement-wise Mean Value	Summative Mean Value	Interpretation
1.	3.74	3.40	Moderately Favourable
2.	3.26		
3.	3.52		
4.	4.08		
5.	2.69		
6.	3.66		
7.	3.73		
8.	3.83		
9.	3.57		
10.	3.11		
11.	2.55		
12.	3.13		

Conclusion

The prices of farm produce is very important for farmer in term of their income. To get rational prices of farm produce is big issue for farmers due to arrival of huge quantities of farm produce in the market yard at specific season. Direct marketing is the best way to get good prices of farm produces. The study shows that majority of the respondent have moderately favorable attitude towards the direct marketing of their farm produces. It was suggested that farmers should focus on direct marketing to improve their income. Government also need to motivate farmers for direct marketing by developing necessary support mechanism.

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