

Strategies Followed by Farm Women in Marketing of Horticulture Produce in Telangana State

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ABSTRACT: In the development of agriculture and allied sectors, women play a key role. They were also playing a significant role in the horticulture sector and could play a greater role in the further development of the horticulture sector. The present study was conducted to study the strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce. A total sample of 120 farm women was selected through the purposive random sampling method. The Ex-post research design was used for the study. The study was conducted using a structured interview schedule. The data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean percent scores. In the study, the results revealed showed that majority (MPS 77.80) of the farm women expressed that they sold their produce to 'wholesale markets' followed by marketing produce through 'rythu bazaars (MPS 65.80), 'to large urban markets'(MPS 64.40), 'to local market' (MPS 63.60), 'to government markets'(or)'agencies' (MPS 61.10), 'to middlemen' (MPS 55.80), 'to local traders' (MPS 51.40), 'to processors' (MPS 49.20), 'through roadside stands and markets'(MPS 48.60), 'to neighbors' (MPS 41.30) and to local merchants in field (MPS 11.90). The results found that more than three quarters (MPS 77.80) of the respondents were selling produce to wholesale markets followed by rythu bazaars (MPS 65.80), selling to urban markets (MPS 64.40), selling to the local market (MPS 63.60), selling to government markets (or) agencies (MPS 61.10). Those strategies were followed to fetch a better price when compared to that of local places. Half of the respondents were selling their produce to middlemen due to the reasons of lack of time to go to the markets, the perishable nature of the produce, and the lack of available transportation and storage facilities.

Keywords: Farm women, Horticulture, Farm produce, Marketing, Strategies.

INTRODUCTION

In India, agriculture is the backbone of the country and is recognized as a significant sector due to its long-term contributions to employment, income, and national food security. As it was considered the largest sector of the country's economy, it contributed almost 20 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP) of our country. (Economic Survey 2020-2021). Over the last few decades, Indian agriculture has registered impressive growth. Food grain output climbed from 51 million tonnes (MT) in 1950-51 to 250 MT in 2011-12, the greatest level since the country's independence. At present the country holds second position across the world in terms of agriculture production. Agricultural production in India encompasses field crops, fruit crops, plantation crops, livestock and forestry, etc. The rural population of our country is primarily dependent on agricultural activity.

In comparison to field crops, horticulture crops have the potential to generate greater income and jobs per unit

area. Horticulture includes a wide range of value-addition opportunities in addition to creating jobs and increasing income, which benefits both farm families and landless households, especially women. In all aspects of horticulture development, including production, post-harvest management, and value addition, women play a substantial and essential role. 'Feminization' of the agriculture sector was taking place due to the migration of men from rural to urban areas, which resulted in increased participation of women as cultivators, laborers, and entrepreneurs. (Economic Survey, 2017-18).

The involvement of women was high in field preparation, plucking, weeding, and post-harvesting operations. Women are usually involved in tasks that require less skilling and training but a lot of drudgery. Marketing operations are a male-dominated sphere (Kumari and Pandit 2020). The majority of vegetable growers selling their produce to wholesalers through commission agents followed by produce directly to the

consumers, to the traders through co-operative societies, and to government agencies such as hotels. (Maratha and Badodiya 2017). The role of women in horticulture has not been appropriately highlighted. Women were generally engaged in multiple occupations ranging from unpaid family labor to self-employed in their home or village or outside to generate income for themselves. However, women in rural areas have an affinity towards farming and as high as 75 per cent of the rural women were found participating in different farm and allied sectors (Sadangi *et al.*, 1996). Nearly 87.00 percent of vegetable growers had high input cost as the major production constraint followed by non-availability of institutional credit, high land rent, lack of farm mechanization, labor shortage and yield loss were the major production constraints of the farmers. On the other hand, almost 92.00 per cent of the vegetable growers reported lack of remunerative price as the major marketing constraint followed by no market access, high transportation cost, non-availability of market information, and distressed sale of produce (Bhangu and Gohain 2021).

Involvement of women (60 to 80) percent is more in manure application, harvesting, cleaning, and collection of vegetables. Less than 50 percent participation of women was found in the cleaning of bunds, irrigation, fertilizer application, crop watch, application of insecticides, pesticides, and marketing (Tripathi *et al.*, 2017). Major constraints faced by women in agriculture and allied sectors were access to land, access to water, in decision-making, access to credit and other agricultural inputs, access to technology, new practices and extension services and access to education (Patra *et*

al., 2018).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Two districts in Telangana State, Ranga Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri, were chosen at random to participate in the current study. A purposeful sample of 120 farm women were chosen for the study; these women were those who owned agricultural property and were engaged in the production and sale of horticultural products, such as fruits, vegetables, and flowers. For this study, an ex-post facto research design was used. In order to determine the challenges farm women had when promoting produce grown in horticulture, a structured interview schedule was created. The statements were evaluated along a three-point continuum: very much, somewhat, and not at all. The respondents in two Telangana districts provided primary data. To rank the statements, a Mean Percentage Score calculation was made.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Marketing strategies followed by the farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce. Marketing strategies included the various modes through which the farm women sold their horticultural produce in the market. The different marketing strategies followed were selling to neighbors, to local markets, to visiting traders, to local merchants while in the field, to middlemen, to wholesale markets, to processors, to large urban markets, through roadside stands and markets, house to house sale, peddling and to government markets (or) agencies.

Table 1: Marketing strategies followed by the respondents in the selling of horticulture produce n =120.

Sr. No.	Marketing strategies for the sale of produce	MPS	Rank
1.	To neighbors	41.30	IX
2.	To local market	63.60	IV
3.	To local traders	51.40	VII
4.	To local merchants while in the field	11.90	XI
5.	To middlemen	55.80	VI
6.	To wholesale markets	77.80	I
7.	To processors	49.20	VIII
8.	To large urban markets	64.40	III
9.	Through rythu bazaars	65.80	II
10.	Through roadside stands and market	48.60	X
11.	House-to-house sale	0.00	-
12.	Peddling	0.00	-
13.	To government markets(or)Agencies	61.10	V

Table 1 shows that the majority (MPS 77.80) of the farm women expressed that they sold their produce to 'wholesale markets' followed by marketing produce through 'rythu bazaars (MPS 65.80), 'to large urban markets' (MPS 64.40), 'to a local market' (MPS 63.60), 'to government markets' (or) 'agencies' (MPS 61.10), 'to middlemen' (MPS 55.80), 'to local traders' (MPS 51.40), 'to processors' (MPS 49.20), 'through roadside stands and markets' (MPS 48.60), 'to neighbors' (MPS 41.30) and to local merchants in field (MPS 11.90).

The results found that more than three quarters (MPS 77.80) of the respondents were selling produce to

wholesale markets followed by rythu bazaars (MPS 65.80), selling to urban markets (MPS 64.40), selling to local markets (MPS 63.60), selling to government markets (or) agencies (MPS 61.10). Those strategies were followed to fetch a better price when compared to that of local places. Half of the respondents were selling their produce to middlemen due to the reasons of lack of time to go to the markets, the perishable nature of the produce, and the lack of availability transportation and of storage facilities.

These results were in accordance with Baban (2012) in his study on the marketing behavior of vegetable

growers and revealed that the majority (85.50%) of the respondents indicated that they sold their produce to wholesalers through commission agents followed by traders (65.00%) through co-operatives (35.00%) and to the government agencies (9.00%).

Correlational analysis profile characteristics and strategies followed by farm women in marketing of

horticulture produce. In order to study the relationship between the profile characteristics and strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce, the Correlation coefficient, 'r' values were computed and values were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation analysis of profile characteristics with strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of Horticulture produce n =120.

Sr. No.	Independent variables	Strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce 'r' value
1.	Age	0.107NS
2.	Education	0.239**
3.	Occupation	-0.167NS
4.	Annual income	-0.193*
5.	Marital status	0.067NS
6.	Family type	-0.044NS
7.	Family size	-0.121NS
8.	Landholding	0.234**
9.	Farming experience	0.078NS
10.	Type of farm produce marketed	-0.133NS
11.	Extension contact	0.105NS
12.	Information seeking behavior	0.293**
13.	Source of marketing information available	0.192*
14.	Socio-political participation	0.054NS

*=Significant at 0.05 level of probability; ** = Significant at 0.01 level of probability; NS = Non- significant

Education Vs Strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce. From Table 2 it could be observed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the education and strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce at the 0.01 level of probability. It indicated that as education increased, the strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce can gradually increase. An increase in the education of farm women had increased the utilization of marketing information available for them and this might have led to an increase in marketing knowledge of farm women on the use of various marketing strategies to market their produce.

Annual income Vs Strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce. Table 2 clearly indicated that there was a negative and significant relationship between the annual income and strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce at the 0.05 level of probability. This reflected that as the annual income increased, the strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce gradually decreased. This may be due to the reason that as the annual income was increasing the farm women were not as keen as low-income fetching farm women on making more profit and instead of carrying the produce to the market on their own, they sold it to the middlemen or to the local merchants which finally decreased their profits.

Landholding Vs Strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce. It could be observed from Table 2 that there was a positive and significant relationship between the landholding and strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce at the 0.01 level of probability. It

indicated that as the landholding had increased, the strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce gradually increased. This may be due to the reason that as the landholding increased, they may be producing different kinds of horticultural crops and they might be using different strategies to market the farm produce in order to have better profits.

Information-seeking behavior Vs Strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce. From Table 2 it was obvious that there was a positive and significant relationship between the information-seeking behavior and strategies followed by farm women in marketing of horticulture produce at the 0.01 level of probability. It indicated that as the information-seeking behavior increased, the strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce also increased. As there was an increase in information-seeking behavior, the farm women became aware of various marketing strategies available to them and tried to access those strategies to market their produce to gain more profits.

Source of marketing information available to farm women Vs Strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce. It could be concluded from Table 2 that there was a positive and significant relationship between the source of marketing information available to farm women and strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce at the 0.05 level of probability. It projected as the sources of marketing information available to farm women increased, the strategies followed by farm women in marketing also increased. The probable reason for this could be that as the sources of marketing information available to farm women increased, it improved their knowledge on marketing

skills which enabled them to choose the appropriate strategies to market their produce for better prices. The variables such as age, occupation, marital status, family type, family size, farming experience, type of farm produce marketed, extension contact, and socio-political participation were non-significant with the strategies followed by farm women in the marketing of horticulture produce.

Storage facilities available for storage of horticulture produce. Storage facilities available were defined as the facilities used for storage of horticulture produce by the respondents and were asked to indicate the type of storage facilities, they used for their horticulture produce.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents according to storage facilities available for horticulture produce.

Sr. No.	Storage facilities available	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Cool dry rooms with proper ventilation	26	21.7
2.	Bamboo racks	15	12.5
3.	Storage in pits	11	9.2
4.	Local cold storage	0	0.00
5.	Local storage building structures	0	0.00
6.	Local warehouses	0	0.00
7.	Any others	0	0.00

From Table 3 it was observed that the majority (21.70%) were using cool dry rooms with proper ventilation followed by bamboo racks (12.50%), and storage in pits (9.20%). None were using local cold storage, local storage building structures, local warehouses, etc. The probable reason for this trend could be that the majority of the respondents were not storing the produce because of the perishable nature of and the lack of proper storage facilities available in the vicinity of their farms and homes in the vicinity of their farm and home

The reasons expressed by the respondent for using the above storage facilities were easily available for the quantity produced, cost-effective, and easy to use and maintain. None of them were using local cold storage, local storage building structures, and local warehouses due to low income levels, The majority of them were illiterates and had a low level of awareness of those storage facilities, and these facilities were far from their village

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study hold implications for policymakers. Half of the farm women were selling their produce to middlemen due to a lack of proper marketing facilities. A better provision of market facilities by the government may help them to reduce middlemen's involvement while marketing farm produce and may also help them to market their produce with better profit.

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Conflict of Interest. None.

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