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A CASE STUDY

Constraints in the production and marketing of maize in Punjab

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to examine constraints in the production and marketing of maize in Punjab. A representative sample of 300 maize growers was drawn from the three districts of Punjab by using multi-stage random sampling technique on the basis of concentration of area under maize. The findings of the study reveled that the selected maize growers faced constraints as the maize crop specific technology adoption was concerned. The institutional, marketing and socio-economic constraints were found to be impediments in the production of maize. More specifically the sample farmers suffered on account of non-availability of credit, poor marketing facilities, lack of storage facilities, non-availability of seed suitable to the local needs, late sowing of crop etc. The detailed analysis of the constraints impediment to production and marketing of maize reflect the urgent need for overhauling of the entire marketing system. This in turn helps in the allocation of resources to maize crop in the state like Punjab where groundwater is depleting very fast, needs to be diversified in favour of less water requiring crops like maize.

Key words : Credit, Marketing, Constraints, Adoption, Institutional, Socio-economic status

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INTRODUCTION

In India, maize has traditionally been grown as a staple food primarily for home consumption. However, in recent years, as a result of the increasing commercial orientation of the agricultural economy and rising demand for maize on account of diversification in its end uses, maize production scenario has undergone myriad changes. The demand for maize, as a feed resource, has been increasingly realized because of the structural changes in consumption pattern, as a consequence of rising per capita income, which has boosted up the demand for livestock and poultry products. In India, at present, about 35 per cent of the maize produced in the country is used for human consumption, 25 per cent each in poultry feed and cattle feed and 15 per cent in food processing (corn flakes, popcorns etc.) and other industries (mainly starch, dextrose, corn syrup, corn oil, etc.). With agriculture getting more and more commercialized, there have been drastic shifts in cropping pattern of the country. The crops like pulses, oilseeds, maize, etc. have per force taken the back seat in the agricultural production scenario of the country. Even the crop like maize, which used to be the important cereal crop of the country, has lost its ground and more so, the growth rate of production has not been uniform in different states. It has been estimated that the demand for maize in the developing countries will overtake the demand for wheat and rice by 2020 A.D. Asian maize demand will rise from 138 million tonnes in 1993 to 243 million tonnes, accounting for 60 per cent of the global increase in maize consumption by 2020 A.D. (Kumar and Singh, 2003). Under the circumstances, there are two feasible options to increase agricultural production. One is to raise production per unit of area on cultivated normal soil through optimal allocation of available resources by utilizing the full potential of existing technology. The other possibility is through external land augmentation without shrinking the area and productivity of any other activity (Datta and Joshi, 1992). In order to meet the challenges of increased demand of maize in the future, efforts have been made to evolve the technology that could bring break through in production front. As a result of these efforts, the yield of maize has increased from 547 kg/ha in 1950-51 to 1723 kg/ha by the year 2002-03 (*www.agricoop.nic.in*) in India.

Looking at the commendable overall performance of the Indian agriculture in general and Punjab agriculture in particular, the challenge of meeting the increased demand for maize successfully, should not look like a distant dream. But the lopsided growth of agriculture, in the sense that there has been substantial inter crop and inter regional inequality, seems to be a major hurdle in the way of realization