

Problems of Small Farmer of Rural Area: A Study of Dibrugarh District, Assam

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ABSTRACT

Assam economy is based on agriculture, where around 85% people live in rural area and agriculture is the main occupation of the people of the state. But agriculture of the state is fully rainfed, farmers have lots of problems. Small farmer plays a significant role in the economy of the state. So the purpose of this study is to identify the problems of the small farmers of rural area of Assam with reference to the Dibrugarh district and try to put solution suggested by farmers This study is consists of primary data. Purposive random sampling technique is used to select the sample. Data are obtained by questionnaire, focus group discussion & personal interview of the small farmer. Major problem are found like small & fragmented land holdings, non availability of irrigation facilities, lack of awareness of government program, none availability of quality seeds, low crop intensity, poor transport system, lack of proper marketing facilities, inadequate storage facilities, lack of formal credit facilities, lack of training, natural calamities, lack of social recognition, lack of support from family members etc.. Solution suggested by the farmers such as provide irrigation, subsidize agriculture loan, pension to the small farmer, training of modern agriculture technology, cold warehouse etc.

Key words: small farmers; rural area; agriculture; problems; solution etc..

Introduction

Small farmer is defined as those marginal farm households that own less than two hectares of land and constitute about 86.21% of the total land holdings (Agricultural Census 2015-16). The marginal farmers are those who lives in rural area and depends on agriculture and involves in farming and carry out other related farming activities in rural area. These farmers cultivate food crops, mono crop, livestock, engage in finishing etc. but they depend on seasonal and natural conditions for their farming activities. But the problems faced by these farmer barriers in development of the rural economy of the state where majority people are lived in rural area. In India, agriculture is the base of the country's economy. The rural society of India is totally dependent on agriculture and its allied activities. Most of the farmer are marginal in rural area and faced difficulties to survive of family on limited land. They have been suffering with many problems, cannot overcome and therefore not only standard of living goes down, but also social and economical status of the farmer is below average level.

In Assam, more than 75 % of the population involved in agriculture and allied activities for their survival. The traditional type of agriculture carried out of way of life of the people of the state. The principal crops of the states are rice, tea, various fruits, vegetables, turmeric etc. More than 90% agriculture is depended on monsoon rainfall because absence of irrigation facilities in the village area. Majority of the

small farmer of Assam live in village area and act as a farmer. So, it needs to investigate the major problems of the small farmers of rural area like lack of irrigation facilities, poverty, illiteracy, lack of knowledge of proper market system, lack of need based training, unavailability of warehouse, lack of infrastructure, flood and drought problems, post-harvest technology and lack of knowledge of modern technology etc. So this study attempts to investigate the problems of small farmers of rural area with reference to the Dibrugarh district, Assam and try to give solution of these problems.

Objectives

The specific objective of this study is to identify the problems of small farmers in rural area of Assam and centralize some suggestive measures to solve these problems.

Methods and Materials

The present study is descriptive in nature and based on primary data. The primary data was collected by the investigator through self-structured questionnaires, focus group discussion & personal interview of the respondents. Total Sixty (60) farmers were selected from the study area randomly. The purposive random sampling technique has been used while selecting the sample. Other relevant information was collected from various related books, journals, research publications, news papers etc. Design of the study: The design of the method was selected keeping in view the objective of the study. A set of common problems faced by the farmers were prepared after studying and focused group discussion with farmers.

Rationale of the study

The rural small farmers plays significant role in Assam economy. But these farmers are unable achieve maximum yield from the agriculture production because of many problems. So it is necessary to study about the problems of marginal farmer of rural area in recent times. In Assam, Agriculture is the primary sector of economic activity, which contribute major portion to national income and provide 75% of employment. The present study was conducted in Dibrugarh District of Assam. For study, we purposively select two villages namely Rohmaria (Dibrugarh east circle) and Dadhia (Chabua circle) of Dibrugarh district of Assam. More than 90% population depends on agriculture and allied activities and most of the farmers are marginal in nature.

Findings:

Problems of the small farmers

The marginal farmers have limited land and therefore the expected production from cultivation is low. It is the main cause of various problems of these farmers. Lower agriculture production, less land holding and high expenditure leads depression and various socio-economic problems. These small farmer has been faced a lots of problem in their agriculture activities. The following major problems are found during the study classified as:

- ❖ **A number of Social problems are faced by these farmers.** It is said that Indian farmer is born in debt, lives in debt and dies in debt, leaving behind debt. The main causes of social problems are as lack of support from family members, lack of appreciation from other members of society and lack of social recognition, lack of saving, lack of supplementary side business, bad habit and laziness, highly

dependence on agriculture, use traditional method of cultivation, expenditure made on unwanted activities and modern life style, conflict dispute among family members.

- ❖ **Small and fragmented land holdings:** This is more serious problems faced by the farmers in the area and it is found the average size of land holdings is less than two (2) hectare and in some parts it is less than one hectare. It is not feasible economically for the farmer to cultivate on a small area. And impossible to make profitable cultivation by the farmer as the some farmers are not the owners of land because a major portion of the profits go towards the payments of lease for the land owner.
- ❖ **Non availability of irrigation facilities:** The farmers are primarily depended on seasonal irrigation for their cultivation due to unavailability of irrigation facilities. Non availability of tank and canals, tube well and various irrigation system etc. were the major irrigation problems of the farmers. Absence of proper plan about the crop rotation among the farmers in the area.
- ❖ **Lack of awareness of Government program:** As the respondent stated they are not benefited from the government scheme. Most of the welfare program and subsidize schemes implemented by the central and state government does not touch these small farmers.
- ❖ **Poor transport system:** The transport system is too poor in the study area. The road condition is not sound and also the farmers does not have own vehicle therefore it cost high in the transportation. Farmers are mostly used bamboo baskets to transport their produce manually.

- ❖ **Lack of marketing facilities:** The farmers of the study area are not received a fair return from their produces. Due to poverty they cannot back the sale of their products for long period. Sometimes due to poor communication and transportation system and in the absence of storage and warehouse facilities, the cultivators sell their products at home or in the crop field itself at lower price to the intermediaries.
- ❖ **Inadequate storage facilities:** Storage or warehouse facilities in the study areas are absent. Lack of knowledge on post-harvest technology and unavailability of raw materials need for storage construction are major problem of farmers. Under such conditions the farmers are compelled to sell their produce immediately at the prevailing market prices which are bound to be low.
- ❖ **Lack of technical knowledge:** Most of the farmers are found illiterate. They are not aware about the use of new techniques in the cultivation. Farmers are traditional and cannot accept the challenges and innovation.
- ❖ **Lack of formal credit facilities** to the small farmer. Respondents stated that they have not received bank loan or government subsidize loan from any institutions for their agricultural activities.

Solutions:

Based on the above observations, the following suggestive measures may be put forwarded for solving the problems faced by the small farmers of rural area:

- **Provide Irrigation facilities:** Most of the farmers want irrigation facilities for their cultivation because they are not able to arrange irrigation facilities

due to small land holding. Government should take necessary step to provide irrigation to these marginal farmers to attain better yield.

- **Provide bank loan:** More than 70% respondent are not get any subsidize bank loan from nationalize bank or government institution for cultivation. So the government should provide agriculture loan facility to the rural farmer.
- **Provide pension facility to the farmer:** Sample respondent wants pension facility for bearing uncertainty due to climate change in cultivation. The government should give pension facility to all marginal farmers for the food security.
- **Provide alternative source of Income:** Most sample respondent states that the government should provide training to the farmers to acquire new skills to reduce the dependence on agriculture and allied activities.
- **Proper training facilities:** It is found that many farmers are lack of awareness about the use crop mechanism, use of new technology and rotation of crop. So government agencies should provide proper training and establish efficient mechanism for the farmers based on their needs.
- **Proper water management system:** Already available water facility could not cover the entire crop field. It is a reason of lack of proper water management which causes shortage of water. So, need to be improved modern methods of rainwater harvesting. If government connects the rivers throughout the nation definitely improved the irrigation facility and will save the farmers from the shortage of water.

- More than 70% sample respondent prefers to **implementation of modern agriculture** technique to reduce the cost of production.
- **Cold warehouse facilities:** Majority farmers want cold warehouse facility in the rural areas, where the farmers can preserve and store their produces for a long period and will get reasonable prices.

Conclusion

Small farmer plays a significant role in the economy of the state. So, it is necessary to focus on the problems of these small farmers and try to solve the problem as possible. From the study it is found, the small farmers are faced several problems. Without elimination of these problems the rural economy cannot grow up. Farmers are suggested some solution to solve of their problems like irrigation, modern training facilities and bank loan, alternative source of income etc. The small farmers of rural area strongly demand the pension facility only for their food security and expect probable solution of their problems from the government authorities.

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