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Knowledge level of farmers about gherkin contract farming in Dharmapuri district, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

The study was conducted to assess knowledge level of contract farmers about contract farming in Dharmapuri district. A sample size of 120 contract farmers was selected from the district of Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu. Data was collected through personnel interview method with help of semi structured interview schedule. A teacher made knowledge test was used for the study. The findings revealed that more than half (56.70 per cent) of the contract farmers had medium level of knowledge about contract farming; whereas, 23.30 per cent of contract farmers had low level of knowledge while, 20.00 per cent of contract farmers had high level of knowledge about contract farming.

Keywords: Knowledge level, contract farmers, gherkin growers

Introduction

India has today emerged as the origin of the finest gherkin cultivation, processing and exporters to the every-growing world requirement. Gherkin cultivation, processing and exports were started in India during the early 1990s with a modest beginning in Karnataka State in South India and later extended to the neighboring states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and now has reached an impressive tonnage of 2, 25, 000 Mts. and value is around Rs.700 crores.

The export of processed gherkin is done by about 51 companies located in Karnataka. Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Gherkins are grown in contact with small and marginal farmers. Currently there are more than 1, 00, 000 small and marginal farmers who are engaged in the production of gherkins. The contract farmers receive all inputs and technical support from the companies and also the farmers are assured guaranteed buy back of crop at pre-declared prices. Initially processed gherkins were exported in bulk packing and since 2001 gherkins are being exported in "Ready-to-eat Jars".

Methodology

The study was conducted in Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu. Palacode and Pennagaram block was purposively selected based on maximum area under gherkin crop, under Palacode and Pennagaram block eight villages were purposively selected viz., (Thirumalvadi, Malaiyur, Nagamarai, Manneri, Puhupettai, Marandahalli, Periyannur and Panchapalli). 120 contract farmers were purposively selected as respondents for the study. Primary data from the farmers were collected with the help of a pre tested interview schedule through personal interviews. A total of 120 gherkin growing farmers were randomly interviewed at the rate of 60 farmers per block. A teacher made knowledge test was developed to measure the knowledge level of respondents about contract farming. The results were analyzed using percentage analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Overall knowledge of farmers about contract farming

S. No	Overall knowledge	Number	Percentage
1.	Low	28	23.30
2.	Medium	68	56.70
3.	High	24	20.00
	Total	120	100.00
	Mean		17.86
	SD		1.69

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The findings from above table revealed that more than half (56.70 per cent) of the contract farmers had medium level of knowledge about contract farming; whereas, 23.30 per cent of

contract farmers had low level of knowledge while, 20.00 per cent of contract farmers had high level of knowledge about contract farming.

Knowledge of farmers about different aspects of contract farming

S. No	Knowledge statement	Contract farmers	
		Number	Percentage
A)	General aspects of contract farming		80.01
1.	What is contract farming	105	87.50
2.	Contract farming is suitable to all types of crops	84	70.00
3.	Types of contract farming	101	84.20
4.	Contract farming agencies which are working in your area	96	80.00
5.	Crops which are grown under contract farming in your area	120	100.00
6.	Advantages of contract farming	113	94.20
7.	Contract farming beneficial to both	97	80.80
8.	Contract farming had separate package of practices	86	71.70
9.	Contract farming ensures Quality production	62	51.70
B)	Knowledge about agreement		91.00
10.	Type of agreements involved in contract farming	106	88.30
11.	Aspects which are covered under contract farming agreements	92	76.70
12.	Documents required for contract farming agreement	120	100.00
13.	Types of pricing methods offered by the company for agreement	120	100.00
14.	Ensure of Government registration in contract farming	108	90.00
C)	Knowledge about technical aspects		87.38
15.	Criteria required to select the farmer for contract farming	106	88.30
16.	Services provided by contract firms	120	100.00
17.	Extension services provided free of cost	99	82.50
18.	Provision of extension services for non-contract crops	110	91.70
19.	Parameters considered to assess the quality of the produce	81	67.50
20.	Firm does not buy all material irrespective of quality/grade	107	89.20
21.	The crop which is grown under contract farming creates monopoly	111	92.50

General aspects of contract farming

The findings about the knowledge related to general aspects of contract farming from showed that majority (80.00%) of contract farmers had knew general aspects of contract farming. Of which 87.50 per cent of contract farmers knew about what is contract farming whereas, 70.00 per cent of contract farmers thought that contract farming is recommended for all types of agriculture crops while, 84.20 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about types of contract farming.

It was observed that 80.00 per cent of contract farmers having knowledge about contract farming agencies working in their area and also it could be seen that cent per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about which are the crops grown under contract farming.

Further 94.20 per cent and 80.80 per cent of contract farmers knew the advantages of contract farming, beneficial offers of contract farming to both contractors and farmers and 71.70 per cent of contract farmers knew that contract farming had separate package of practice for cultivating the crops and 51.70 per cent of contract farmers aware that the contract farming ensures quality production.

Knowledge about agreement

The results from above table indicated that 91.00 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about agreement. Of which knowledge about agreement aspects, 88.30 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about types of agreement involved in contract farming, 76.70 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about aspects which are covered under contract farming agreements, cent per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about documents required for contract farming agreement and types of pricing methods offered by the company for agreement.

Further 90.00 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about ensure of government registration in contract farming.

Knowledge about technical aspects

The findings about the knowledge related to technical aspects of contract farming showed that 87.38 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge regarding technical aspects of contract farming. Of which knowledge regarding technical aspects, 88.30 per cent of contract farmers were aware about criteria required for the selection of contract farmers whereas, cent per cent of contract farmers were aware about services provided by contract firms and 82.50 per cent of contract farmers were aware about the extension services provided at free of cost.

About 91.70 per cent of contract farmers were aware about the provision of extension services for non-contract crops, 67.50 per cent of farmers were aware about the parameters considered to assess the quality of produce, 89.20 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge regarding firm does not buy all material irrespective of quality and 92.50 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about the crop which is grown under contract farming creates monopoly.

Conclusion

The study revealed that more than half (56.70 %) of the gherkin contract farmers had medium level of knowledge about contract farming. Majority (80.01 %) of respondents had know general aspects of contract farming. The reason for this may be because of their participated in contract farming system and they had regular touch with activities of contract farming. 91.00 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about agreement aspects. This is because contract farmers knew which type of pricing methods offered by the company for agreement, type of agreement involved in contract farming

and which are the aspects covered by agreement when doing agreement in contract farming and 87.38 per cent of contract farmers had knowledge about technical aspects.

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