PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN PUNJAB: A CASE STUDY OF PATIALA DISTRICT

Abstract

India is one of many important fruit and vegetable producing countries in the world. In production, it ranks second after Brazil in the case of fruits and secures same position in the case of vegetables after China. The main aim of the study is to critically analyse the production and marketing structure in terms of production, marketable surplus, seasonal variations in arrivals and prices, marketing costs, marketing margins and to identify the constraints in the production and marketing of fruits and vegetables in Punjab. For this purpose, Patiala district in Punjab has been selected. The primary as well as secondary data has been used to achieve the objectives of the study. The study was conducted on a sample of 150 farmers, 25 commission agents/wholesalers and 25 retailers. Three fruits, i.e., guava, ber and mango and three vegetables, i.e., potato, tomato and peas were finally selected for the study. Appropriate statistical techniques like time series analysis, regression analysis, correlation analysis, simple averages, etc. were used for the analysis of data. The study of growth trends of area, production and yield of fruits and vegetables in Punjab state as well as in Patiala district reveals that in the case of fruits both at the state and district level, the growth in production owes itself primarily to enhancements in yield, whereas production growth performance of vegetables separately and of fruits and vegetables combined together in Punjab state as
well as in Patiala district is mainly attributable to changes in area, whereas yield revealed no such positive role. So, enhancement in yield is observed to be the need for fruits and vegetables production growth. The study of arrivals and prices showed that the bulk of the produce by the sampled farmers reached in the Patiala district markets soon after the harvest, which leads to sharp fall in prices during the post-harvest season and affect the producers of Patiala district adversely. The major reasons are the perishable nature of the produce and non-availability of cold stores and storage techniques. The results of study on marketing costs, margins and price spreads reveal that there are large number of intermediaries who operate between the producer and consumer, resulting into a wide gap between the producer and consumer price of these commodities. The study also highlighted that the farmers in Patiala district face several constraints, such as ignorance to new methods of cultivation, high cost of inputs, financial difficulties, prevalence of large number of intermediaries and malpractices adopted by them during the production and marketing of their produce. On the basis of above findings it is recommended that government should enter in fruit and vegetable trade as in the case of wheat and paddy. The government should create awareness among the fruit and vegetable growers regarding modern/advanced agricultural practices and technology. To improve the marketing of both fruit and vegetable crops, there should be adequate procurement policy.