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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON COMPLEXITIES FACED BY FARMERS IN KODAVASAL TALUK, THIRUVARUR DISTRICT

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INTRODUCTION

India which is a developing country and is the first largest country in cultivation with 169,463,000 hectares of cropland area. The United States of America and China follow on with 160,436,800 and 134,900,000 hectares of cropland area respectively. In India, Tamilnadu ranks 4th or 5th tentatively in crop cultivation with 59.71 lakhs hectares of crop land. In Tamilnadu, the Kaveri (Cauvery) delta region plays a very vital role in crop cultivation. The Kaveri Delta region includes Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Myladuthurai and Nagapattinam districts. In India, farmers have largely been turned into paupers. Producers of crops which means the farmers are still facing poverty. They are lacking nutritional foods due to this poverty. Agriculture has a significant role for the contribution of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in developing countries and provides employment to the bulk of the people surpassing the contribution of the other sectors. The contribution of agriculture as a proportion of GDP was more than 50 per cent in 1950's and it declined to 29 per cent during 1980's. The share of agriculture in GDP was only three per cent during the 1980s and two per cent in late 1990s in high income countries. But the same agriculture is not benefiting the farmers. The own producer of a crop is forced to buy or purchase for more price in the market for his/her livelihood. That's why the farmers are turning towards other professions. In Tamil Nadu, particularly in the Thiruvarur district, agriculture plays a crucial role in sustaining rural communities.

Kodavasal taluk, a prominent agricultural region in Thiruvarur, is known for its paddy cultivation, which is the primary crop grown in the area. However, despite its agricultural significance, farmers in Kodavasal taluk face numerous challenges that hinder their productivity and economic stability. This study aims to explore the complexities faced by farmers in this region, shedding light on the socio-economic, environmental, and institutional factors that impact their livelihoods. One of the primary challenges faced by farmers in Kodavasal taluk is water scarcity. Although the region is part of the Cauvery delta, known as the "Rice Bowl of Tamil Nadu", inconsistent rainfall and over-

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reliance on monsoon rains have led to water shortages. The irregular release of water from the Mettur Dam, which is crucial for irrigation, intensifies the problem.

Farmers often struggle to secure adequate water for their crops, leading to reduced yields and financial losses. Another significant issue is the rising cost of agricultural inputs. The prices of seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides have increased substantially over the years, putting a strain on farmers' budgets. Many small and marginal farmers, who constitute a large portion of the farming community in Kodavasal taluk, find it difficult to afford these inputs. As a result, they are forced to take loans from informal sources, leading to indebtedness and financial instability.

Climate change has also emerged as a major concern for farmers in the region. Inconsistent weather patterns, including unseasonal rains and prolonged droughts, have disrupted traditional farming practices. These climatic uncertainties make it challenging for farmers to plan their cropping cycles, often resulting in crop failures. Additionally, the increasing frequency of extreme weather events, such as cyclones (Gaja) and floods, has caused significant damage to crops and infrastructure, further compounding the difficulties faced by farmers. Institutional challenges, such as inadequate access to credit and insurance, also contribute to the complexities faced by farmers. While government schemes and subsidies are available, many farmers are unaware of these programs or face bureaucratic hurdles in accessing them. Moreover, the lack of timely and fair compensation for crop losses under insurance schemes discourages farmers from adopting risk-mitigation measures.

Socio-economic factors, including fragmented land holdings and lack of alternative income sources, further exacerbate the challenges. Many farmers in Kodavasal taluk own small plots of land, which limits their ability to achieve economies of scale. Additionally, the absence of diversified income opportunities forces farmers to rely solely on agriculture, making them vulnerable to market fluctuations and crop failures. Farmers in Kodavasal taluk face a multitude of challenges that threaten their livelihoods and the sustainability of agriculture in the region. Addressing these complexities requires a multi-faceted approach, including improved water management, affordable access to inputs, climate-resilient farming practices, and better institutional support. By understanding and addressing these issues, policymakers and stakeholders can work towards ensuring the long-term prosperity of farmers in Kodavasal taluk and the broader agricultural sector in Tamil Nadu.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

S. Karthick et al.(2020): The authors explore the production, consumption and marketing of Paddy in Cauvery delta region. He unveils the problems of marketing of Paddy and the production and Marketing problems of paddy growers. He related the relationship between the income earned through agriculture businesses and their overall dimensions of marketing problems. He mainly focused his study on marketing problems of farmers in agriculture activities. He concluded that the educational qualifications of respondents place a vital role on various dimensions of stress vulnerability and lack of Technological awareness.

Dnyandev C. Talule (2022): The author exhibits the suicides committed by farmers for various reasons and unavailabilities of inputs for farming in Vidharbha and Marathwada which are situated in Maharashtra. Author did an empirical research on this issue and collected the first hand data from the registered FIRs from the police stations. He identified that the main reason for the suicides are water shortages, weakest rural connectivity and domination of Multi National Companies in cropping patterns. He specified that the Land, weather, irrigation and monsoon conditions of those areas are like Bundelkhand in Central India. The author vehemently emphasizing that the dominations of MNC leads to poor farming activities consequently farmers suicides.

R. Jayakumara Varadan & Pramod Kumar (2015): The author sheds the agricultural vulnerabilities in Tamil Nadu due to inconsistent temperature. In this context, the authors assume significance as it sets out to identify the relatively vulnerable districts of Tamil Nadu State in India to climate change with respect to agriculture. In the process it endeavours to evolve appropriate methodology for vulnerability mapping which will go a long way in guiding the policy makers to formulate suitable adaptation strategies to overcome the adverse impacts of climate change on the typical sector of the State. The thrust of this work is to add impetus to the vulnerability assessment methodology developed by many ingenious researchers.

Dr. M. Raju (2019): The author differentiated the Black gram seed production in Cauvery delta region from other crops. He made a unique research on the constraints and adoption of black lentils. He listed out about field preparation, seed treatment, fertilizer application, sowing of seeds, water management, Spraying of diammonium phosphate or urea, salicylic acid, weed management and Harvesting for black gram cultivation in Cauvery delta region.

Jeyanth K. Newport et al. (2019): The authors explained the impact of Gaja Cyclone on agriculture in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu is on the fertility status of the soil apart from loss of standing

crops. They explained the effect of the Gaja cyclone on farmers, agricultural labourers and land. The authors stepped in to suggest alternative livelihoods for the victims of the Gaja cyclone in Tamil Nadu.

RESEARCH GAP

The existing literature highlights several advancements in understanding problems in agricultural marketing, suicides of farmers in some regions of Maharashtra. Some literature unveils the problems of climatic changes, Black gram production and the effects of cyclones in delta regions, but critical gaps remain. This paper deals with various complexities of farmers like invasion of insects, transportation challenges, problems in accessing agricultural equipment, financial losses, effects of globalization in Kodavasal taluk, Thiruvarur district. Furthermore this paper explains the significant challenges faced by farmers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Agriculture plays a primary role in the process of economic development of developing countries including India. The Indian economy is basically agricultural in nature and the very economic structure of India rests upon agriculture. It is the most competitive sector and is considered as the backbone of the Indian economy. In general, the importance of agriculture in the economic development of any country, rich or poor, is borne out by the fact that it is the primary sector of the economy, which provides the basic ingredients necessary for the existence of the human race and also provides most of the raw materials to many industries.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To examine the various complexities faced by farmers in Kodavasal.

To analyse the impact of Globalisation on farming activities in Kodavasal.

To evaluate the financial losses incurred due to failure of crops by farmers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is based on both doctrinal and non doctrinal research. The sources of data collected from various newspapers, magazines, books, reports and e-resources. The data was collected from 50 respondents. This research was done by a stratified random sampling method. This research adopted the sum of the statistical tools, percentage method and average method and the jurisdiction of the research is to cover Kodavasal taluk in Thiruvarur District. The duration of the

research is 3 months. The methodology will yield a holistic understanding of how the farmers are facing problems in farming activities. This study is an exploratory study as well as follows both primary and secondary data. Structured schedule was used to collect primary data from the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PART I - DOCTRINAL RESEARCH

India is the largest country in cultivation of crops and agriculture is the primary work of people. In India, farmers are otherwise called as Food providing Gods. But the same farmers are facing lot of problems and issues which leads to the suicides. To prevent this, the Government should take some initiatives for the welfare of the agrarians. There is a comparative study between India and other countries as follows

China has fewer people involved in agriculture: 130 million households whereas India has over 200 million people which will actually mean 150 million or so households. This is a dangerous situation where China is less endowed by nature and India has such a large arable area. China may be much bigger in size than India but only 10% of its area is arable. Whereas India has 12% of the world's arable area. It has good sources of water and sunny weather all through the year. And our people have grown so many varieties of crops over thousands of years. That is one of the primary reasons that it has been attractive to the foreign invaders in the past. It was always agriculture which marked the biggest contribution to any economy, say 100-200 years ago and before that it would have been much more significant. China has only 130 million people involved in agriculture but by way of foodgrains it produces 30% more than us, more wheat and rice. It also exports. China is facing problems but despite so many problems it doesn't have the same kind of soil, weather, environment, and ecology. It has other tougher problems but it has produced so much more. It has organized itself so well that there are fewer people in China's agriculture who need income from China's agriculture. In China, the agricultural contribution to its GDP is 7%. It is going towards the western mode where fewer people are engaged in agriculture or fewer people need income from agriculture or are dependent on agriculture.

When you look at the United States of America, less than 1% GDP comes from farms. The total agriculture and related industries' contribution to GDP is not more than 5%, which means it is not the actual raw grain which gets such results. It is what is done to add value through processing, transporting etcetera. In the European Union also there are only 97 lakh people that are in farming. There again the contribution of agriculture to GDP is 1% or so. In eastern countries which are

also advanced, such as Korea and Japan, the same profile exists. In China, Korea and Japan, when you look at the economic sector-wise profile, industry plays a huge role in absorbing any new workers coming from the countryside. 39% of China's GDP comes from manufacturing; in Japan it is 29% or so; and in Korea it is a similar number. If you look at these people you realise the west is not such a suitable model.

There was a time when America had 70% of its people dependent on agriculture. That was in the 1800s. In 1840-70, 78% people were dependent on agriculture. By 1870, it was less than 50%. They progressed so fast. That has been a direct result of the industrial revolution. In the last 73 years the Indian farmer has produced more food than we need. 15-40% of all the food produced is wasted in one or the other way. Government quotes a conservative number, but we can safely say it is a lot. So, a lot of the food produced by the farmer is wasted but the farmer is fulfilling his duty. All the Bahujan farmers are fulfilling their duties. Are we fulfilling our duties towards them? That is the question that never arrives.

Agriculture is the backbone and primary livelihood for the majority of the population in Kodavasal Taluk, Thiruvarur District, Tamil Nadu. However, farmers in this region face numerous challenges, including climate variability, water scarcity, and institutional inefficiencies, which hinder agricultural productivity and sustainability. Agriculture in Kodavasal Taluk has traditionally been dependent on monsoon rains and canal irrigation. However, declining water availability and soil degradation have exacerbated farmers' struggles. Farmers in Kodavasal Taluk face low income levels, high indebtedness, and limited access to formal credit systems, which restrict their ability to invest in improved agricultural practices. Limited adoption of modern agricultural technologies due to high costs, lack of awareness, and inadequate training programs. Globalisation is the most impacting thing in Kodavasal and other Cauvery delta regions. Most of the people think that Globalization may affect their traditional and consistent farming activities. The invasion of insects and transportation of the yielded crops are the major challenges and complexities faced by the farmers. Some of the farmers are farming for daily wages. Compared to own land farmers, farmers for daily wages are more marginalized and they are very backward in socio-economic and educational status. Although this is a fertile land the frequent dispute regarding Kaveri river water between Tamilnadu and Karnataka is also a problem to irrigate properly. The lack of adoption of modern farming techniques and machinery limits efficiency. Inadequate government support, subsidies, and insurance schemes further leave farmers vulnerable. These interconnected issues threaten food security and rural livelihoods, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable solutions and effective policy interventions.

PART II - NON-DOCTRINAL RESEARCH

Non-doctrinal research, also known as empirical or socio-legal research, focuses on analyzing the practical impact and application in society rather than interpreting doctrines or statutes. Non-doctrinal research aims to provide insights into the effectiveness, efficiency, and social consequences, bridging the gap between theoretical and its practical implementation. This approach examines how laws affect individuals, institutions, and communities, often incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives from sociology, economics, or political science. The author did some research by using both primary and secondary data. This part includes the first hand statistical data which was directly collected from the concerned respondents. The primary data is nothing but collecting the data directly from the targeted respondents. The complexities and problems faced by farmers in Kodavasal taluk is analysed in this part from the selected respondents. By this non doctrinal research and with some primary data we can easily unveil the complexities and disputes faced by farmers in Kodavasal taluk in Thiruvarur District.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was only limited to 50 respondents. This study is only within Kodavasal taluk and excludes other cauvery delta regions. Findings may disproportionately reflect large and marginalized farmers with resources to implement technology, neglecting challenges faced by small and medium farmers. Lack of objective metrics (e.g., production time, error rates) may weaken validity. Weather conditions are an uncertain thing and we cannot wholly believe it at all times, such as while taking intellectual, rational and moral decisions. The study only focuses on the problems of the farmers but this excludes the employee welfare such as daily wages in working hours. The limitations of the study stems from using fewer articles.

FINDINGS

30 - 50 years aged people are largely involving in daily farming activities (60.00 percentage)

Some graduate students are also inquisitively involved in farming activities (20.00 percentage)

All the respondents have faced the problems caused by invasion of insects, mainly Mealybug.

It was found that establishment of SIPCOT is largely affecting the farming activities in Kodavasal and in some other Cauvery delta regions. This is one of the effects of Globalisation.

Middlemen are largely interfering with the farmers and marketing of produced crops. It causes losses to the farmers economically.

Lot of people incurred losses due to crops failures by heavy rainfall and other climatic changes (76.00 percentage)

Cauvery water dispute between Tamilnadu and Karnataka is the main problem in water shortages.

CONCLUSION

The empirical study on the problems faced by farmers in Kodavasal Taluk, Tiruvarur District, reveals significant challenges impacting agricultural productivity and farmers' livelihoods. Key issues include water scarcity due to erratic rainfall and over-reliance on groundwater, high input costs, fluctuating market prices, and limited access to modern technology and credit facilities. Additionally, climate change has exacerbated problems like soil salinity and unpredictable weather patterns, further straining farming activities. The study highlights the need for immediate and targeted interventions to address these issues. Improving irrigation infrastructure, promoting water conservation techniques, and providing access to affordable credit and insurance schemes are crucial steps. Encouraging the adoption of sustainable farming practices and modern technologies can enhance productivity and resilience. Strengthening the implementation of government schemes and ensuring timely dissemination of market information can also empower farmers. Collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, and the farming community is essential to create sustainable solutions. By addressing these challenges holistically, it is possible to improve agricultural outcomes, enhance farmers' livelihoods, and ensure long-term food security in Kodavasal Taluk. This study serves as a call to action for policymakers and stakeholders to prioritize the needs of farmers and work towards a more sustainable and equitable agricultural system.