

Constraint Analysis in Mesta Production in North Coastal Zone of A.P.

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Abstract:- Mesta (*Hibiscus sabdarifa*) is an important fibre crop next to cotton and jute. Its fibre used in manufacture of many fabric products. The study was carried out in Vizianagaram district and Srikakulam districts of North Coastal Zone of Andhra Pradesh. the total sample size was 90. The data were collected with semi structured interview schedule. The data were analysed with suitable statistical tools. The constraints elicited by the farmers were categorized into Production Constraints, Marketing Constraints and Socio-Psychological Constraints. Nearly 90-100 per cent of the selected farmers expressed the majority constraints related to marketing constraints particularly Low price and non regulated market(100%), low MSP declared by Jute Corporation of India(96.67%) and lack of storage facilities and rural go downs(83.33) and Socio-Psychological constraints particularly Labour scarcity & High wage rate(97.78%), Superseding of maize /Cotton to Mesta crop(94.44%), Use of plastics in place of Mesta based products(93.33%) and Non availability of water for retting(90%). It could be noticed that these constraints were due to policy matter decisions and improper implementation of govt. policies and schemes. It is the dire necessity to increase the price for Mesta produce (fibre) and establishment of regulated market particularly at vizianagaram and srikakulam districts of Andhra Pradesh to prevent the extinction of mesta crop.

Keywords:- Mesta Crop, Constraint Analysis, Retting, MSP, JCI, Adoption And Non Adoption

I. INTRODUCTION

Mesta (*Hibiscus sabdarifa*) is an important fibre crop next to cotton and jute. Its fibre used in manufacture of many fabric products. It can be used as raw material for pulp

industry instead of bamboo. Mesta plants absorb CO₂ two times more than other trees. Mesta is cultivated mostly in shallow and less fertile light red sandy loamy soils under rainfed conditions in north coastal zone particularly Vizianagaram and Srikakulam of Andhra Pradesh. A.P. occupied 1st place in area as well as production of mesta but too dwindled its area from 58,000 ha in vizianagaram district and 19,000 ha in Srikakulam district during 2001-02 to 19,000 ha in vizianagaram district and 5,000 ha in Srikakulam district during 2011-12. Average productivity 16.35 Q/ha out of its potential of 25 Q/ha .Keeping this in view an extension study has taken up with an objective of “Constraint Analysis in Mesta Production in North Coastal Zone of A.P”.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Vizianagaram district and Srikakulam districts of North Coastal Zone of Andhra Pradesh. Four mandals from Vizianagaram district viz., Parvathipuram, Garugubelli, Balijipeta and Merakamudidam and two mandals from Srikakulam district, viz., Vangara and Santhakaviti. Three villages from each mandal were selected purposively based on the criteria of area of mesta cultivation. Five farmers from each village were selected randomly for the study. Thus the total sample size was 90. The data were collected with semi structured interview schedule. The data were analysed with suitable statistical tools.

The constraints elicited by the farmers were categorized into Production Constraints, Marketing Constraints and Socio-Psychological Constraints.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No.1 Constraints as Perceived by the farmers in Mesta Production

S. No	Constraint Particulars	Frequency	Per centage	Rank
Production Constraint:				
1	Delayed onset of monsoon and uneven distribution of rainfall early withdrawn of S W monsoon.	78	86.67	IX
2	Non adoption of line sowing/ seed drill sowing	53	58.89	XIV
3	Non adoption of recommended fertilisers	48	53.33	XV
4	Lack of proper timely weed management practices in the early stages of crop	46	51.11	XVI
5	Long duration of the crop	27	30.00	XX
6	Uprooting of the plants (with out cutting to base level)	30	33.33	XIX
7	Incidence of Foot & Stem rot disease	80	88.89	VII

8	Incidence of Sucking pest complex	70	77.78	XII
9	Non adoption of seed treatment for pests and diseases	63	70.00	XIII
10	Non adoption of Sprayings for plant protection measures	79	87.78	VIII
11	Non adoption of improved retting technologies	72	80.00	XI

Marketing Constraints:				
12	Low price for the produce due to non-regulated market	90	100.00	I
13	Low MSP declared by Jute Corporation of India (JCI)	87	96.67	III
14	Lack of storage facilities/rural godowns	75	83.33	X
15	Lack of quality based price for the produce	45	50.00	XVII
Socio-Psychological Constraints:				
16	Labour scarcity & High wage rate	88	97.78	II
17	Superseding of maize /Cotton to Mesta crop	85	94.44	IV
18	Use of plastics in place of Mesta based products	84	93.33	V
19	Non availability of water for retting	81	90.00	VI
20	Lack of demand for mesta sticks at village level	36	40.00	XVIII

The results in the table no.1 indicated that Cent percent of the selected farmers expressed their dissatisfaction towards the price prevailed in the market and high fluctuations in price from time to time vexed the farmers about the mesta cultivation and perceived as most de motivating constraint placed Ist rank. Nearly 90-100 per cent of the selected farmers expressed the majority constraints related to marketing constraints particularly Low price and non regulated market(100%), low MSP declared by Jute Corporation of India(96.67%) and lack of storage facilities and rural go downs(83.33) and Socio-Psychological constraints particularly Labour scarcity & High wage rate(97.78%), Superseding of maize /Cotton to Mesta crop(94.44%), Use of plastics in place of Mesta based products(93.33%) and Non availability of water for retting(90%). Labour scarcity might be due to migration to other sectors rather than agriculture.It could be noticed that these constraints were due to policy matter decisions and improper implementation of govt. policies and schemes.

It can be gleaned from the above table 70 to 89 per cent respondents expressed the constraint related to production aspects particularly Incidence of Foot & Stem rot disease(88.89%), Non adoption of Sprayings for plant protection measures(87.78%), Delayed onset of monsoon and uneven distribution of rainfall early withdrawn of S -W monsoon(86.67%) which hinders the cultivation of mesta crop as it was a long duration crop and non adoption of improved retting technologies(80.00%) like use of microbial consortium for hastening the retting process and fibre quality and non adoption of bundle erection from bottom to top in water while retting for 4-5 days. Incidence of sucking pest complex(77.78%) and non adoption of seed treatment to encounter the pests and diseases(70%).

Majority of the farmers (50-70%) perceived the agronomic practices viz., Non adoption of line sowing/ seed drill sowing(58.89%), Non adoption of recommended fertilizers(53.33%) and Lack of proper timely weed management practices in the early stages of crop(51.11%). It might be due to lack of awareness and ignorance on good agronomic practices.

Least perceived but contribute allot to the constraints were lack of demand for mesta sticks as domestic fuel purpose in the villages(40%) and long duration of the crop(30%)

IV. STRATEGY TO COMBAT THE CONSTRAINTS IN MESTA CULTIVATION

On interaction with Scientists, Department officials and farmers during the study, certain following suggestions arrived and laid out as strategies to overcome the constraints in mesta production

1. It is the dire necessity to increase the price for Mesta produce (fibre) and establishment of regulated market particularly at vizianagaram and srikakulam districts of Andhra Pradesh to prevent the extinction of mesta crop
2. To solve the problems of scarcity and drudgery, there is a need of use of farm machinery/implements particularly for the operations sowing, hoeing, harvesting and extraction of fibre. Extension wing of the Agricultural University particularly District Agricultural Advisory and Transfer of Technology centers(DAATTC) and Krishi vignana kendras (KVKs) with the collaboration of State Department of Agriculture should take up field demonstrations on use of farm machinery in Mesta cultivation at different locations .
3. Incidence of sucking pest complex and foot and stem rot in Mesta may be reduced by timely joint field diagnostic visits of Agriculture Scientists along with the Department Agriculture Officials and by conducting Front Line Demonstrations on seed treatment and prophylactic sprays for management of sucking pest complex incidence and foot and stem rot in Mesta .
4. Research on development of new varieties particularly high yielding and short duration and resistant to sucking pest complex and should have good fibre quality
5. Jute Corporation of India may fix the price of the fibre in account with the cost of cultivation and transport cost
6. Storage facilities may be increased with the support of NABARD, which provide financial assistance for rural go downs.

7. Grama panchayats may take steps to encourage retting tanks for retting and extraction of fiber with the help of MGNREGS

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