Vol 6 Issue 5 Nov 2016 ISSN No :2231-5063

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595 **ISSN No.2231-5063**

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ISSN: 2231-5063 Impact Factor :4.6052(UIF) Volume - 6 | Issue - 5 | November - 2016

GRT Golden Research Thoughts

PROFILE AND PROBLEMS OF SUGARCANE GROWERS

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The farmers are vital role players in agro-based production units, hence only the consolidated results of financial, cost and technical performance of such units cannot be considered as total performance, unless the performance of key role players is added with such performance. Based on this statement, an attempt has been made in this chapter to analyse profiles and problems of sugarcane growers of selected units. The primary data relating to the farmers have been collected through a pre-tested structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of three parts viz., sugarcane growers' personal profile, agriculture profile and problems faced by the sugarcane growers.

2. AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF FARMERS

To analyse the age group of sugarcane growers, the farmers were classified into three groups viz., farmers below 35 years (young), in between 36 to 50 years (middle age) and above 51 years (old)

Units	Below 35 years	35 to 50 year	Above 51 years
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	20	37	43
Renuka Sugar Factory	10	43	47
Total	30	80	90

Source: Field Survey

Table 1 revealed that 20 percent of the farmers of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory were young, 37 percent of the farmers were middle aged and 43 percent have crossed 50 years.

In case of Renuka Sugar Factory, just 10 percent of the farmers were found to have fallen under the category of young farmers, 43 percent represent the middle aged and the rest 47 percent were under the old age category.

3. FARMERS' FAMILY SIZE AND OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

The size of the farmer's family also influences the sugarcane

cultivation. It is observed that whenever more number of family members directly involved in cultivation activity, a higher amount of output and better quality crops were produced in such fields.

The survey report revealed that on an average there were 5 adults, 2 children of below 14 years, altogether 7 members in a farmer's family of Bhusnoor Sugar Factory So far as maximum numbers were concerned, a few families have 10 adults and 6 children; maximum membership was 13, out of which on an average 4 members were found to have directly participated in agriculture activity; one person out of every two families was observed to have gone for outside job.

All the families responded that their main occupation was agriculture except 3 percent of the farmers who have trading business and it was their main family business.

4. FARMERS' EDUCATIONAL PROFILES AND THEIR FAMILY

The educational qualification of farmers and their family members certainly has its own influence on the quality of agriculture activities. The educated farmers generally gather more information relating to the crops that they grow and about the markets where they sell their agriculture produce. It was also observed that more number of educated farmers approached financial institutions for agriculture loans rather than village based moneylenders.

Educational level of farmers and other family members can be observed from the Table 5.2.

Table-2: Farmer's and Their Family Member's Educational level

	Level of Education				
	Illiterate	**VII**	**X**	**XII**	**Graduate**
1. Farmer					
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	3	37	33	20	7
Renuka Sugar Factory.	0	17	17	23	43
Total	03	54	50	43	50
2. Spouse					
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	47	33	17	3	0
Renuka Sugar Factory.	7	30	40	10	13
Total	**54**	**63**	**57**	**13**	**13**
3. Children					
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	--	24	43	20	13
Renuka Sugar Factory.	--	30	11	14	45
Total	--	54	44	34	58

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 revealed that the consolidated survey report of Bhusnoor Sugar Factory showed that 3 percent of the farmers were illiterate, 37 percent of them have completed their primary education, 33 percent of the farmers finished their secondary education, 20 percent of them cleared pre-university courses and the rest 7 percent of the farmers particularly young ones were graduates.

It is very unfortunate to know that about 47 percent of the farmers' spouses were illiterate, 33 percent studied up to primary school, 17 percent of them were metric passed, 3 percent of them cleared XII the standard and none of them have seen college education. The educational level of the farmers' children was concerned, 13 percent of them completed graduation, 20 percent of them were XIIth standard, 43 percent of them in high school and the rest 24 percent were in primary schools.

The educational level of Renuka Sugar Factory.'s farmers was concerned, none of the farmers was found illiterate, 17 percent of them finished primary education and the same number cleared S.S.0 examination, 23 percent of the farmers cleared their pre-university examination and 43 percent of them were graduates.

So far as their spouse educational level was concerned, 7 percent were illiterate, 30 percent of them completed their primary education, 40 percent cleared S.S.C. 10 percent cleared Pre-university examination and

13 percent of the farmers' wives were graduates.

It is evident that majority of the farmers (43%) and their spouses (13%) were graduates. It was also observed that most of the farmers preferred to give professional education to their children. More than 45 percent of their children completed graduation and majority of them were B.E, B.Tech, B.Ed and a few of them were M. Tech. M.D. post-graduates. 14 percent of the children were in XIIth standard and 30 percent were in primary standard, 1 percent were in X schools.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURE INCOME

It was observed that the INCOME disclosed by the farmers did not tally with their quantum of sugarcane produced. The income (Net income) generated after deducting the cost of cultivation was considered for this study. Based on their annual income, the farmers were classified into five income slabs viz., less than Rs.50,000, Rs.50,001 to Rs.1 lakh, Rs. 1,00,001 to Rs.2 lakh, Rs. 2,00,001 to Rs.4 lakh and above Rs.4 lakh.

Table- 3: Distribution of agriculture income

Units	Above Rs. 50,000	Rs.50,000 To Rs. 1 lakh	Rs. 1 lakh To Rs. 2 lakh	Rs. 2 lakh To Rs. 4 lakh	Above Rs. 4lakh
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	40	37	10	3	10
Renuka Sugar Factory.	37	33	27	3	0

Source: Field Survey

It is evident that 40 percent (Table 5.3) of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory's farmers earned less than Rs.50,000, 37 percent were in between Rs.50,000 and Rs.1 lakh, 10 percent of the farmers income was in between Rs.1 lakh and Rs.2 lakh, 3 percent earned more than Rs.2 lakh but less than Rs.4 lakh and 10 percent of the farmers income was more than Rs.4 lakh per annum. So far as the farmers of the Renuka Sugar Factory. were concerned, 37 percent of the farmers earned less than Rs.50,000, 33 percent of farmers were in between Rs.50,000 and Rs.1 lakh, 27 percent of the farmers income was more than Rs.1 lakh but less than Rs.2 lakh, 3 percent of the farmers income was more than Rs.2 lakh but less than Rs.4 lakh and none of the farmer in Aland area earned more than Rs.4 lakh per annum.

6.1 Area under Cultivation, Irrigation and Under Sugarcane Crop

In order to ascertain the total area of land under cultivation, portion of cultivated land under irrigation and cultivated land allotted for sugarcane crop, three inter linked questions were put before the respondents. Further to know reasons behind the portion of land left out idle without cultivation, an additional question was asked to the respondents. The responses of the respondents pertaining to these three variables are displayed in

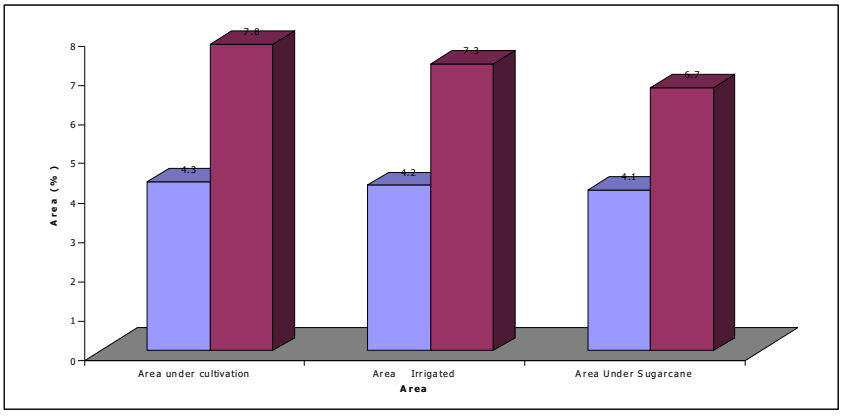
Table. 5.4.

Table-4: Area under Cultivation, Irrigated and Under Sugarcane Crop

Units	Area under cultivation	Area Irrigated	Area Under Sugarcane
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	4.3(100%)	4.2(97%)	4.1(95%)
Renuka Sugar Factory.	7.8(100%)	7.3(93%)	6.7(85%)

Source: Field Survey

Figure 1: Area under Cultivation, Irrigated and under Sugarcane Crop



On an average, Bhusnoor Sugar Factory's farmers (Table 5.4) have 4.3 (mean value) acres of land of which 4.2 acres (97%) of land was irrigated in which 4.1 acres (95%) of land was allotted for sugarcane crop. The farmers of the said area opined that lack of water supply, non-availability of labourers in time and shortage of electricity were the main causes for the portion of land left out either idle or not used for sugarcane crop.

The farmers of Renuka Sugar Factory owned 7.8 (average) acres of land of which 7.3 acres (93%) of land was under irrigation and sugarcane was grown in 6.7 acres (85%) of cultivated land. The farmers also expressed the same problems as revealed by the Aland farmers for their inability to cultivate entire land.

The average land holding by the farmers in Afzalpur was almost two times (8.6 acres) as compared to Aland area farmers (4.3 acres) but just 5.1 acres (59%) of land was under irrigation out of which sugarcane was grown in 4.7 acres (55%) of the cultivated land. Nearly 50 percent of the land was left out without cultivation due to hilly area, rocky land, and lack of water during summer and flood during monsoon.

6.2 Farmers' Classification Based on Land Holding

In order to ascertain the farmers' land holding status, the farmers were grouped into three categories viz., marginal (less than 2.5 acres), small (more than 2.5 acres but less than 5 acres) and others (more than 5 acres).

The survey revealed that in case of Bhusnoor Sugar Factory, 47 percent of the farmers were marginal, 30 percent were small and 23 percent of them did fall under other group (more than 5 acres). In case of Renuka Sugar Factory., the land holding pattern was observed to be quite different. Just 7 percent of the farmers were marginal, 43 percent fall under small group and 50 percent of them held more than 5 acres.

7 Crop Pattern

In order to know, what other crops that the farmers grow in their field besides sugarcane crop, information was sought from the farmers in this regard and the same is depicted in the Table 5.5.

Table-5: Sugarcane and Other Crops Grown By Farmers

Crops	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	Renuka Sugar Factory
i. Sugarcane	100	100
ii.Cotton	0	3
iii. Palaces	0	0
iv. Rice	13	67
v. Toor	13	3
vi. Jowar	10	17
vii. Oil seeds	50	3
viii. Fruits	0	17
ix. Vegetable	20	10
x. Others	67	0

Source: Field Survey

It can be witnessed from the Table 5 that farmers from all the selected area were found to have cultivated sugarcane as main crop. The farmers of Aland area cultivated maize (67%), oil seeds (50%), vegetable (20%), rice (13%), Toor (13%) and Jawar (10%). The farmers of Renuka Sugar Factory cultivated rice (67%), Jawar (17%), fruits (17%), vegetable (10%), cotton (3%), Toor (3%) and oil seeds (3%).

8 CATTLE WEALTH

Indian farmers generally keep cattle in their home because these cattle consume agriculture waste and produce manure for fields. These cattle full fill farmers' requirement of milk, fuel, fertiliser and some time provide transport (bullock cart) services. It is a common phenomenon among sugarcane growers that they maintain hybrid cows and buffalos without incurring additional green fodder cost and earning a good amount of return by selling cattle milk.

Table-6: Cattle Population Maintained by the Farmers

Units	Cows	Ox	Buffalos
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	50	20	77
Renuka Sugar Factory.	50	57	50

It is evident (Table 6) that almost all the farmers were observed to have had cattle in their houses. The farmers of Bhusnoor Sugar Factory have got hybrid cows (30%), ox (20%) and buffalos (77%). Fifty percent of the Renuka Sugar Factory farmers were observed to have had cows, 57 percent of the farmers have ox and 50 percent of them have got buffalos.

9 TYPE OF FERTILIZER USED

All farmers of the selected units were observed to have used fertilizer in their fields and the old farmers preferred to use only cattle manure to reduce the cost and avoid the damage caused by chemical fertilizer. A large number of farmers have used both cattle manure and chemical fertilizers.

Table-7: Type of Fertilizer used by the Farmers

Units	Cattle Manure	Chemical	Both
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	17	3	80
Renuka Sugar Factory.	0	20	80

Source: Field Survey

It is evident (Table 7) that 17 percent of the Aland farmers used only cattle manure, 3 percent of them have used only chemical fertilizer and rest 80 percent of them used both type of fertilizers. The farmers of Aland area were observed to have not used only cattle manure; 20 percent of the farmers have used only chemical fertilizer and the rest 80 percent of them put both types of fertilizers in their sugarcane fields.

10 TRANSPORT AND AGRICULTURE TOOLS

Indian farmers use tractors, power tillers (also called as cultivator) and bullock carts to sow their agriculture land as well as for transportation purpose. In order to know how many farmers have tractors, power tillers, bullock carts and traditional tools, required for cultivation, gathered information from the farmers in this regard is disclosed in Table No. 8.

Table-8: Type of Transport Mode and Agriculture Tool with Farmers

Units	Tractor	Power Tiller	Bullock Cart	Traditional tools
Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	83	7	73	40
Renuka Sugar Factory.	40	0	33	67

Source: Field Survey.

It can be learnt from the Table 8 that 83 percent of the farmers of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory have got tractors, 7 percent have power tillers, 73 percent of them have bullock carts and 40 percent of the farmers have all

types of traditional tools. The consolidated survey of M.K. Hubli area revealed that 40 percent of the Renuka Sugar Factory.'s farmers have tractors, 33 percent of them have bullock carts, 67 percent have traditional tools and none of them has got power tiller.

11 CAUSES FOR DECREASE IN INTEREST IN AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES

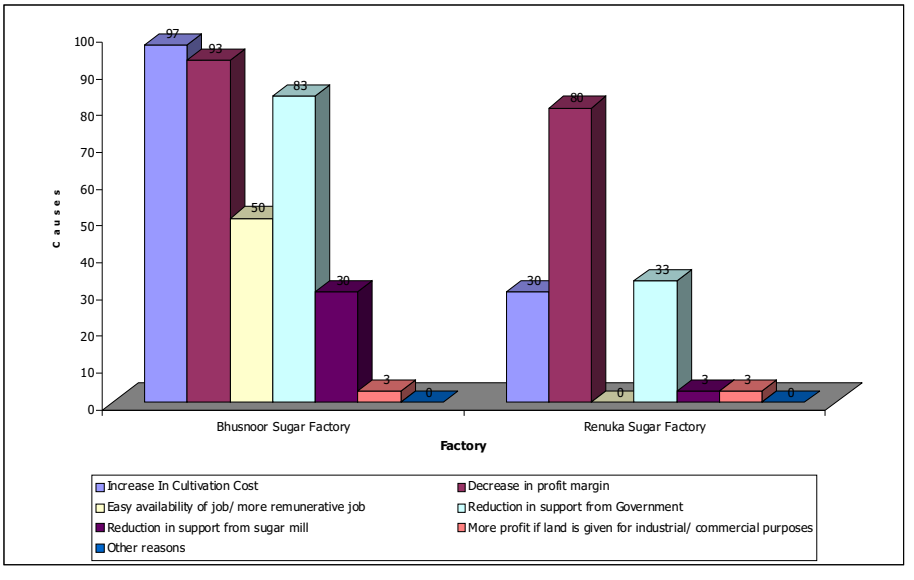
Majority of the farmers were observed to be interested to go for outside salaried jobs rather than doing their family occupation i.e. agriculture. In order to find out 'why our young generation prefer to go for jobs?' and 'what are the genuine reasons that (the farmers think) behind the declining interest in agriculture activities, six possible reasons were identified and put before the farmers to elucidate. An open-ended question was also asked to the farmers so that they can disclose other reasons, which were not included in the possible six alternatives.

Table-9: Causes for Declining Interest in Agriculture Activities

S. No.	Causes	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory	Renuka Sugar Factory
i.	Increase In Cultivation Cost	97	30
ii.	Decrease in profit margin	93	80
iii.	Easy availability of job/ more remunerative job	50	0
iv.	Reduction in support from Government	83	33
v.	Reduction in support from sugar mill	30	3
vi.	More profit if land is given for industrial/ commercial purposes	3	3
vii.	Other reasons	0	0

Source: Field Survey

Figure-2: Causes for Declining Interest in Agriculture Activities



Bhusnoor Sugar Factory's farmers felt (Table 5.9) that increase in cultivation cost (97%), reduction in profit margin (93%), reduction in Govt. support (83%) and easy availability of remunerative jobs (50%) were the main causes for reduction in the interest in agriculture activities. A few farmers indicated that the reduction in support from sugar mill itself (30%) and alternative use of land (3%) were also affected the farmers' interest.

Maximum number of Renuka Sugar Factory.'s farmers told that decrease in profit margin (80%), increasing cultivation cost (30%) and reduction in support from Government (33%) were the major causes. A few

of them told that the reduction in support from sugar mill (3%) and alternative use of agriculture land (3%) were other causes. Because of these reasons a large number of farmers of Abzalpur area have motivated their sons and daughters to go for higher education.

Increasing cost of cultivation (83%) and decreasing profit margin (57%) were the two major causes as felt by the farmers in Abzalpur. A few farmers specified that reduction in support from Government (20%), reduction in support from sugar mill (10%) and more profit could be earned if the same land was given for commercial purpose (10%) were the main reasons for reducing interest in agriculture.

12 PROBLEMS FACED BY SUGARCANE GROWERS

The sugarcane growers in India face two-dimensional problems viz., off the fields and on the fields, in other words problems encountered during cultivation as well as marketing of sugarcane.

12.1 on the fields

Timely availability of basic requirements such as seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, etc, in sufficient quantity is one of the important factors influencing sugarcane cultivation. There are nine main factors affecting sugarcane production viz., fertility of land, seeds, supply of water, labour, finance, fertilizer, pesticides, technical guidance and demand for sugarcane. Non-availability of any one of these factors may hamper the sugarcane cultivation and yields in terms of quality and quantity. The farmers of the selected units were asked to rank all these nine major factors as per their no availability or as problem. The survey revealed the following facts.

The farmers of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory's have pointed out that non availability of sufficient finance was the first major problem (ranked as the first problem) for them followed by other problems such as insufficient water supply, seeds, additional labour, fertilizer, non-availability of technical guidance from concerned authority and no stable demand for sugarcane.

The farmers of Afzalpur have given stress to only four problems faced by them. The farmers' first and foremost problem was non-availability of additional labour force. It was evident that the average numbers of adults in the family were 4 of which just 2 were observed to have engaged in agriculture activities, which indicated the ratio between work force available and actually engaged in agriculture was reduced to half. Further, these farmers specified that insufficient supply of water was their second constraint, non-availability of finance was the third problem and fluctuating demand for sugarcane was the fourth one.

The sugarcane growers in Aland also indicated that non-availability of additional work force was their first problem followed by non-availability of sufficient water. Other problems (asked by the farmers) were non-availability of financial help, technical guidance from sugar mill, Government agriculture departments, pesticides and fertilizers in time.

12.2 Off the fields

Indian farmers face many marketing problems. The sugarcane growers encounter different problems right from cutting of cane to till they receive their payments from sugar mills. All types of marketing problems were identified and grouped into six common problems in the following table.

Table-10: Problems Faced by Sugarcane Growers

S. No.	Problems	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory		Renuka Sugar Factory.	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
i.	Low rate for sugarcane	93	7	100	0
ii.	Waiting in a long queue	97	3	3	97
iii.	Dishonest in weighing at weigh bridge	70	30	0	100
iv.	Unnecessary deductions in the name of toll, charges, etc.	60	40	0	100
v.	Delay in payment of installments'	17	83	0	100
vi.	Shortages of sugarcane buyers	7	93	0	100

Source: Field Survey

It is evident (Table 10) that 93 percent of the farmers of the Bhusnoor Sugar Factory felt that low rate for sugarcane was the major problem, waiting in a long queue was an another problem faced by 97 percent of the cane suppliers, 70 percent of the farmers observed dishonesty in weighing at the mill's weigh-bridge, 60 percent of them were expressed unhappiness with unnecessary deductions in the name of toll and other charges. Delay in cane bill payment (17%) and shortage of sugarcane buyers (7%) were other problems as experienced by the farmers.

Cent percent of the farmers from Renuka Sugar Factory., strongly felt that they did not get appropriate price for their sugarcane. The difference between cost of cultivation and cane price was very low, resulting in low rate of return. A meagre percentage of the farmers were observed to have faced problem of waiting in a long queue. None of the respondents has experienced any other problems except those.

All the respondents of the Hallikhed Co-operative Sugar Industry, felt that they were not happy with the present sugarcane pricing policy, 27 percent of the farmers did not receive their cane bill in time, 10 percent of the farmers complained about waiting in a long queue for their turn to unload sugarcane, 10 percent of the farmers felt about the unnecessary deduction and non-availability of competitive buyers in Aland.

13 SOURCE OF FINANCE

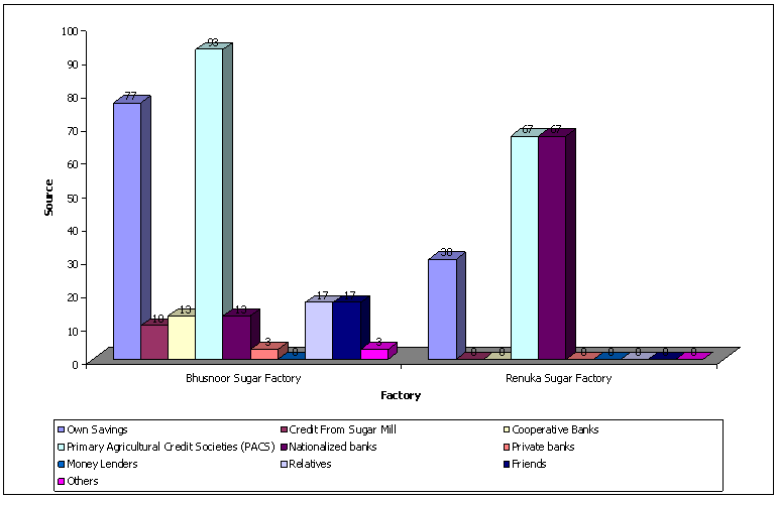
All farmers need money for seeds, labour charges, fertilizer, pesticides, etc. Majority of the farmers prefer to borrow money for agricultural activities from private moneylenders rather than approaching banks. The various sources of finance that were preferred by the farmers are displayed in Table No 11.

Table- 11: Sources of Finance

S. No.	Sources	Bhusnoor Sugar Factory (%)	Renuka Sugar Factory (%)
i.	Own Savings	77	30
ii.	Credit From Sugar Mill	10	0
iii.	Cooperative Banks	13	0
iv.	Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)	93	67
v.	Nationalized banks	13	67
vi.	Private banks	3	0
vii.	Money Lenders	0	0
viii.	Relatives	17	0
ix.	Friends	17	0
x	Others	3	0

Source: Field Survey

Figure-3: Sources of Finance



The survey revealed (Table 11) that 50 percent of the farmers of Bhusnoor Sugar Factory were found to have invested less than Rs.50,000 for agriculture purpose, 13 percent of them have spent in between Rs.50,000 and Rs. 1 lakh, 24 percent of the farmers spent in between Rs.1 lakh and Rs.1.5 lakh and rest the of them invested more than Rs.1.5 lakh in agriculture activities. The minimum and maximum expenditure made by the farmers was in between Rs.40,000 and Rs.4,00,000.

So far as the source of finance was concerned, 77 percent of the cane growers utilised their own savings, 10 percent of the farmers took credit from sugar mills, 13 percent of them approached Co-operative banks, 93 percent of them obtained loan from Primary Agriculture Credit Society (PACS), 13 percent availed from nationalised banks, 3 percent of them approached private banks, 34 percent of the farmers borrowed from relatives and friends, 3 percent of them made use of other source, other than the specified source of finance here and none of them observed to have approached money lenders.

The survey revealed that 53 percent of the sugarcane growers of Renuka Sugar Factory. were in need of finance less than Rs.50,000 for their agriculture activities, 24 percent of them did required between Rs.50,000 and Rs.1 lakh, 13 percent of them required Rs.1 lakh and Rs.1.5 lakh and rest 10 percent invested more than Rs.1.5 lakh. The minimum and maximum spending range was in between Rs.35,000 and Rs.2.5 lakh.

So far as the sources were concerned, 30 percent of the farmers invested their own savings in agriculture activities, 67 percent approached PACS and a similar percent of the cane growers stepped into the nationalised banks. No other sources have been exploited other than these three sources by the cane growers of Afzalpur.

CONCLUSION:

The farmers are vital role players in agro-based production units, hence only the consolidated results of financial, cost and technical performance of such units cannot be considered as total performance, unless the performance of key role players is added with such performance. Based on this statement, an attempt has been made in this chapter to analyse profiles and problems of sugarcane growers of selected units. The primary data relating to the farmers have been collected through a pre-tested structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of three parts viz., sugarcane growers' personal profile, agriculture profile and problems faced by the sugarcane growers.

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