



Major Problems Faced by Farmers of Ambedkarnagar District of Uttar Pradesh in Sugarcane Cultivation

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Abstract

Sugarcane cultivation is a cornerstone of the agricultural economy in Uttar Pradesh, particularly in Ambedkarnagar district. Despite its significance in providing raw materials for sugar, Gur and other by-products, farmers face numerous challenges that limit productivity and profitability. This study identifies the major issues encountered by sugarcane farmers, including financial constraints, lack of high-yielding varieties, adverse climatic conditions, pest infestations and insufficient irrigation facilities. Furthermore, deficiencies in extension services, transportation infrastructure and policy support exacerbate these problems. Addressing these challenges is critical to improving yield, ensuring sustainable farming practices and enhancing farmers' livelihoods. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions by policymakers, researchers and agricultural stakeholders to address these barriers effectively.

Keywords: Sugarcane cultivation, Ambedkarnagar district, financial constraints, high-yielding varieties, pest management, irrigation challenges, sustainable farming.

Introduction

Sugarcane cultivation plays a pivotal role in India's agricultural economy, serving as a major source of sugar, Gur (Jaggery) and other by-products. It significantly contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provides livelihood to millions of farmers across the country. In Uttar Pradesh, which is one of the largest sugarcane-producing states, districts like

Ambedkarnagar are heavily reliant on this crop for economic sustenance. Despite its importance, sugarcane cultivation faces numerous challenges that affect both productivity and sustainability.

Ambedkarnagar district, characterized by its fertile alluvial soil and conducive climatic conditions, holds significant potential for sugarcane farming. However, farmers in this region often encounter hurdles such as financial constraints, inadequate access to modern farming technologies and climatic adversities. These challenges not only impact yield but also limit the overall profitability of sugarcane farming (**Alam *et al.*, 2005**). Furthermore, issues related to irrigation, pest management and availability of high-yielding varieties exacerbate the difficulties faced by farmers (**Rahman *et al.*, 2010**).

Studies have highlighted that a lack of extension services and proper training further compounds the problems, leaving farmers unaware of efficient cultivation practices and modern agricultural innovations (**BBS, 2012**). Additionally, delays in payments from sugar mills and inadequate transportation infrastructure undermine the economic viability of sugarcane farming (**BBS, 2014**). Addressing these issues is crucial to unlocking the full potential of sugarcane farming in Ambedkarnagar and ensuring sustainable agricultural growth.

This article aims to identify and analyze the major problems faced by sugarcane farmers in Ambedkarnagar district, with a focus on financial, technological, environmental and institutional challenges. By understanding these issues, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions to enhance productivity, improve farmers' livelihoods and contribute to the growth of the agricultural sector.

Major Problems Faced by Sugarcane Farmers

1. **Capital and Financial Constraints** Farmers in Ambedkarnagar often lack access to adequate financial resources and affordable loans. This limits their ability to invest in essential inputs such as high-quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. The high cost of labor further exacerbates these financial difficulties. Additionally, delayed payments

from sugar mills create liquidity issues, leaving farmers unable to cover their immediate farming expenses and personal needs.

2. **High-Yielding Varieties (HYV)** The availability of high-yielding and disease-resistant sugarcane varieties is limited in the region. Farmers often remain unaware of or lack access to these improved breeds due to insufficient extension services and a lack of distribution networks. As a result, productivity remains stagnant and susceptibility to diseases and pests increases.
3. **Adverse Climatic Conditions** Unpredictable weather patterns, including droughts and excessive rainfall, negatively affect sugarcane growth in Ambedkarnagar. Climatic extremes not only reduce yields but also increase the vulnerability of crops to diseases and pests. Farmers are often unprepared to mitigate these risks, further impacting their livelihoods.
4. **Insect and Pest Infestation** Pests such as borers and aphids are a significant concern for sugarcane farmers. Frequent infestations lead to substantial crop losses, while the unavailability of effective pest control measures exacerbates the problem. The lack of awareness regarding integrated pest management practices further limits farmers' ability to protect their crops.
5. **Fertilizer and Pesticide Availability** Farmers face challenges in accessing quality fertilizers and pesticides. The high prices of these inputs discourage optimal usage, which hampers crop nutrition and protection. Moreover, the availability of counterfeit or substandard products in the market adds to the issue.
6. **Irrigation Challenges** Insufficient and unreliable irrigation systems are a major bottleneck in sugarcane farming. Many farmers rely heavily on rainfall, which is inconsistent and often inadequate. The lack of proper irrigation infrastructure limits water availability during critical growth stages, leading to reduced yields.
7. **Skilled Labor Shortage** A shortage of skilled laborers for planting, maintenance and harvesting activities increases inefficiencies in sugarcane farming. High labor costs

further strain the economic viability of the crop, forcing farmers to compromise on certain aspects of cultivation.

8. **Relay Crop Failures** The practice of relay cropping often fails due to soil nutrient depletion and improper crop rotation methods. These failures reduce the overall productivity of farming systems and impact the sustainability of sugarcane cultivation.
9. **Extension Services and Training Deficiencies** Limited access to agricultural extension services leaves farmers unaware of modern techniques and best practices. The lack of sufficient training facilities prevents them from adopting innovations that could enhance productivity and profitability.
10. **Logistics and Transportation Issues** Poor transportation infrastructure increases the cost and time required to deliver harvested cane to sugar mills. Delays in transport reduce the quality and sugar content of the crop, leading to lower returns for farmers.
11. **Policy and Institutional Gaps** Inefficient policies and weak institutional support are significant obstacles for sugarcane farmers. Many lack a unified platform to voice their concerns or seek assistance. Inadequate policy interventions further limit the growth and modernization of the sugarcane sector.

Suggestions to Address Challenges in Sugarcane Cultivation

To tackle the challenges faced by sugarcane farmers in Ambedkarnagar district, a comprehensive strategy involving financial, technological and institutional support is essential. Financial empowerment through farmer-friendly credit schemes, timely payments by sugar mills and subsidies for essential inputs can alleviate the economic burden. Investments in developing and promoting high-yielding, disease-resistant sugarcane varieties, coupled with awareness campaigns and easy access to certified seeds, can significantly enhance productivity. Additionally, water management practices such as drip irrigation, rainwater harvesting and improved irrigation infrastructure will address water scarcity and ensure crop sustainability.



Equally important are training programs on integrated pest management, crop rotation and the use of eco-friendly biopesticides to combat pests and diseases effectively. Strengthening agricultural extension services and utilizing digital platforms will equip farmers with real-time guidance on modern farming techniques and market trends. Improved transportation infrastructure and organized supply chains will reduce post-harvest losses, ensuring better profits. By fostering farmer cooperatives, enforcing policy reforms and promoting accountability among sugar mills, stakeholders can ensure a fair and supportive ecosystem. These interventions collectively aim to empower farmers, boost yields and sustain the economic significance of sugarcane cultivation in the region.

Conclusion

Addressing the challenges faced by sugarcane farmers in Ambedkarnagar district is critical to increasing productivity, meeting the growing demand for sugar and gur and boosting national GDP. Strategic interventions, including financial support, improved access to high-yielding varieties, pest and disease management, efficient irrigation and enhanced training programs, are necessary. By minimizing these problems, policymakers, researchers and farmers can collectively ensure sustainable growth in the sugarcane sector.

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