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Sustainable Food Systems & Zero-Waste Agricultural

[1]Rajesh Kumar Sharma, [2]Priya Verma, [3]Anil Kumar Singh and [4]Neha Gupta

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Home Science and Rural Livelihoods, Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar, Haryana, India

[2]Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Management, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

[3]Professor, Department of Extension Education, Rajasthan Agricultural University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

[4] Assistant Professor, Department of Agronomy, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab, India.

Corresponding Author: Rajesh Kumar Sharma

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Abstract
Agriculture is really important for making sure we have food creating jobs and helping the economy grow in all countries whether they are rich or poor. A lot of the food that is grown is lost after it is picked because it is not handled properly stored in bad conditions transported badly not processed and not sold well. When food is lost after it is picked it not means that farmers do not get as much money but it also means that people do not have enough food and it harms the environment and wastes water, land and energy.

The study called "Sustainable Food Systems & Zero-Waste Agricultural" was done to see how important it is to have systems for handling food after it is picked to have technologies for processing food and to have ways to reduce waste that are good for the environment. The main goals of the study were to find out why much food is lost after it is picked to see how processing food can add value to it to look at ways to reduce agricultural waste and to suggest ways to make farming businesses more sustainable.

The people doing the study used two kinds of data: secondary. They got data by asking 220 farmers, food processors, traders and warehouse operators' questions and by observing what was happening in the fields. They got data from government reports publications from the Food and Agriculture Organization, research journals and industry databases. They used tools like percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation and other tests to analyze the data.

What they found out was that the most food is lost when it is fruits, vegetables, cereals and pulses. The main reasons for this are storage, damage during transport, pests and selling the food too late. The people who used storage and packaging systems lost less food than those who used traditional methods. When food is processed, like when it is dried, canned, frozen or made into juice it can be kept for longer. The farmers can earn more money. The study also showed that when farmers use technologies for handling food after it is picked they can make more money. The study says that handling food properly after it is picked and processing it are very important, for reducing waste increasing the money that farmers make making sure people have food and helping rural areas develop in a sustainable way. It is an idea to invest in cold storage, processing industries, packaging systems, training and technologies that can turn waste into something valuable. This helps cut down on waste. It also makes life better, for farmers and other folks.

Keywords: Women, sustainable food systems, zero-waste agricultural, agricultural development, packaging systems

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1. Introduction

This phase is about cleaning, grading, sorting, and packaging, storing, transporting, processing and selling our produce. If we do not do these things in a way a lot of food will be wasted before it even reaches the people who will eat it. Around the world about one-third of the food we grow for people to eat is. Wasted every year. This is a problem that affects our economy it also affects our society. It affects our environment. The problem affects our economy in ways. Our society is also affected by the problem. The problem is bad, for our environment too. In countries like India we often lose a lot of food after it is harvested. This happens with things like grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, fish and pulses. We do not have enough storage facilities our roads are not good our cold storage systems are weak and many farmers do not know how to handle their crops properly. They also use methods that are not very good. When we lose food there is less of it to sell so farmers do not make much money. This also makes food more expensive. Means that people do not get the nutrients they need.

Food processing companies can really help with this problem. When we process food it lasts longer creates jobs keeps prices stable and reduces waste. When we pick our crops this is not the end of production. Picking crops is actually the beginning

of an important phase called post-harvest management of crops. During-harvest management of crops people take the food that will go bad quickly and turn it into things that will last longer like flour, oil, juice, pickles and frozen foods. They also make things like dried vegetables and ready-to-eat meals. We can also use the waste from farms like leftover parts of crops fruit peels and rotten food to make compost, gas, animal food and packaging materials.

So this study is, about harvest management of crops and how managing food after it is harvested and processing food and reducing waste can help make agricultural production more sustainable. We will look at how these things connected and how they can help us have a better food system. Agricultural production and harvest management and food processing are all very important, for sustainable agricultural development.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

- We need to find out why agricultural produce gets lost after it is harvested.
- Food processing can really help produce. It can add value to the produce and make the agricultural produce last longer, on the shelf.
- We need to think about reducing waste in farming. A lot of food gets wasted in agriculture.
- We want to know how using harvest methods can affect the income of farmers who grow crops.
- We should come up with some ideas for policies that can help make agricultural systems more sustainable, for the farmers and the environment and the agricultural produce.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Materials

We looked at cereals, pulses, fruits, vegetables and oilseeds. The people we talked to were farmers, warehouse owners, traders, transporters and food processors.

2.2 Methods

We used a research design that described and analyzed things. We got information from 220 people through surveys, interviews. By observing them in the field. We did this in districts of Uttar Pradesh, India.

2.3 Statistical Tools

- Percentage analysis.
- Mean and standard deviation.
- Chi-square test.
- Correlation analysis.
- ANOVA.
- Multiple regression analysis.

3. Results

Table 1: Average post-harvest losses by the commodity

Commodity	Loss (%)
Fruits	18.4
Vegetables	16.7
Cereals	8.3
Pulses	7.2
Oilseeds	6.9

Source: Fruits and vegetables have losses after they are harvested

Table 2: Main Reasons for losses after harvest

Cause	Percentage (%)
Poor Storage	41.8
Transport Damage	27.6
Pest Infestation	18.9
Delayed Marketing	11.7

Source: Poor storage is the reason for these losses

Table 3: Effect of Food Processing on Income

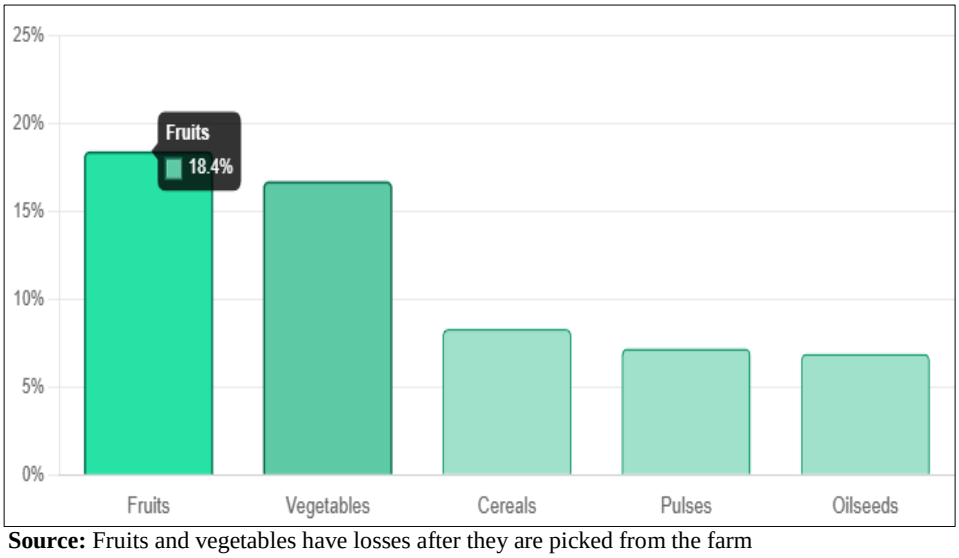
Processing Activity	Income Increase (%)
Drying	18.2
Pickling	24.5
Juice Extraction	31.4
Milling	22.7
Freezing	34.1

Source: Freezing and making juice from fruits and vegetables provide the income gains.

Table 4: Regression analysis for waste reduction

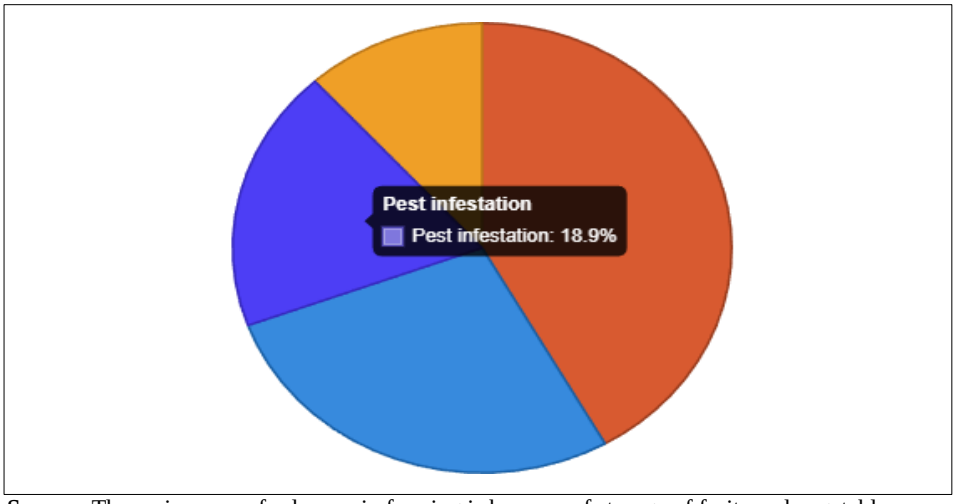
Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	P-Value
Storage Infrastructure	0.36	Significant
Processing Access	0.29	Significant
Cold Chain Availability	0.24	Significant
Farmer Training	0.19	Significant

Source: Good storage facilities helped reduce waste the most.



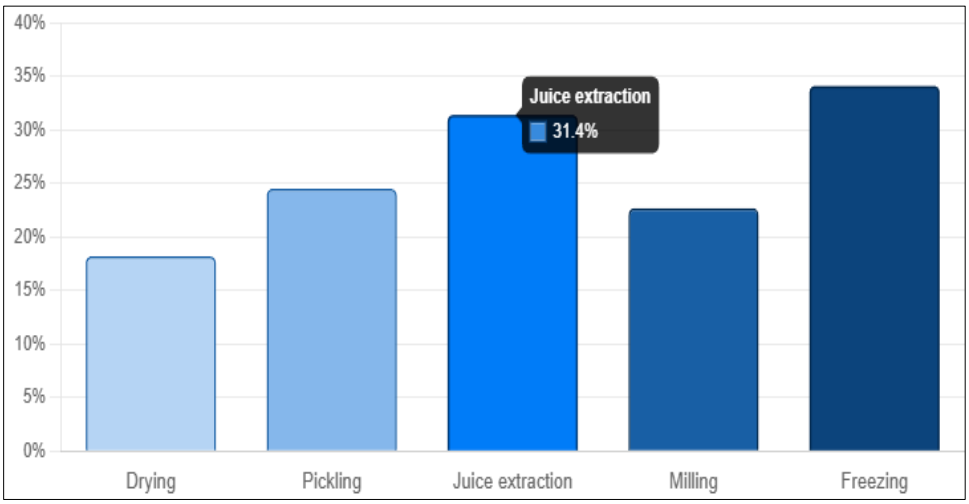
Source: Fruits and vegetables have losses after they are picked from the farm

Fig 1: Average losses after harvest, by type (%)



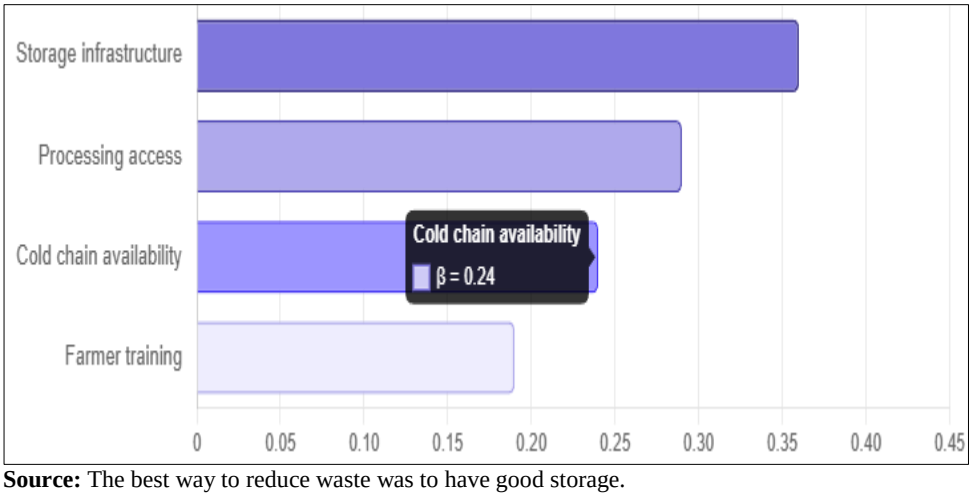
Source: The main reason for losses, in farming is because of storage of fruits and vegetables.

Fig 2: Major causes of losses after picking (%)



Source: Freezing and making juice from fruits and vegetables help farmers make a lot money from fruits and vegetables.

Fig 3: How processing food affects the money farmers make (% money)



Source: The best way to reduce waste was to have good storage.

Fig 4: What helps reduce waste the a measure of how strong the effect

3.1 Looking at the numbers

We found out that fruits and vegetables got lost a lot more than grains and beans. When we looked at how different things were related we saw that using technology after picking was connected to making more money. This relationship was pretty strong.

We also looked at how different ways of processing food affected how much money farmers made. We found that farmers who froze food or made juice from it made a lot money, than farmers who just dried their food the old way. Fruits and vegetables are the ones that get lost the most after they are picked whish's something that happens a lot. Regression analysis showed that storage infrastructure was the factor in reducing waste. Processing access and cold chain systems also played a role.

4. Discussion

The study found that losses after the harvest are still a problem in agriculture. This is really true for things, like fruits and vegetables. People are still losing a lot of fruits and vegetables after they are picked. Other studies have findings. They say that not having storage and poor logistics cause a lot of food losses in developing countries.

Food processing is a way to add value to produce. Making products like pickles, jams, flour, frozen vegetables and juices helps farmers get prices for their produce. It also reduces spoilage. This approach creates jobs in areas and strengthens industries based on agriculture.

We can reduce waste by composting crop residues. We can also reduce waste by converting fruit peels into food for animals. Producing biogas, from waste biomass also helps. Promoting packaging materials is also a good idea. These circular economy approaches reduce pollution. Improve sustainability. Storage infrastructure helps to reduce waste. Processing access is also important. Cold chain systems are crucial.

5. Conclusion

The current study says that managing food after it is harvested and processing it is very important for reducing waste from farms and making sure people have food. A lot of food is lost because it is not stored properly it gets damaged during transport pests eat it. It takes too long to get to the market.

If we use ways to store food keep it cold package it using science and process it using new technology we can really cut down on the amount of food that is lost.

Food processing does a lot of things. It makes food longer it makes food more valuable it helps farmers earn more money and it creates jobs for people. Also the waste from farms can be turned into compost, energy from living things, food for animals and materials that industries can use.

So the government, private companies, groups of people working together and places that do research should work together to invest in storing food in areas making food processing units teaching farmers new skills and systems to recycle waste. Managing food after it is harvested in a way that's good, for the earth is a very important way to make farming profitable reduce hunger and protect the environment.

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