

## Marketing Issues Faced by Potato Growers and Intermediaries in Parwan, Afghanistan

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper investigated the marketing challenges faced by potatoes growers and market intermediaries in Parwan province, Afghanistan. The study analysed the field level problems of farmers, consumers, wholesalers, and retailers. The study revealed that farmers encounter various obstacles in potato marketing, with the far-off location of selling markets 40.80 percent, lack of grading facilities 35.80 percent, and transportation issues 35.00 percent strongly agree, and that were being prominent concerns. Additionally, market information gaps 26.70 percent and malpractices by buyers 30.80 percent impact the marketing process. The study also examined consumers' difficulties in purchasing potatoes, indicating issues with timely product availability 18.80 percent strongly agree. Price fluctuations 37.50 percent strongly agree, and inadequate packaging 18.80 percent strongly agreed. Furthermore, consumers expressed concern about potato grading 37.50 percent agreed and quality 37.50 percent strongly agree. Another aspect of the study investigated wholesalers' challenges, identifying the absence of grading facilities 80.00 percent strongly agree. Storage 80.00 percent strongly agreed, and transportation issues 60.00 percent strongly agreed, as key constraints. Wide price fluctuations 70.00 percent strongly agreed, and inaccurate weighing 80.00 percent. Lastly, the research explored retailers' obstacles in potato marketing, highlighted issues with grading facilities 90.00 percent strongly agreed, storage 80.00 percent strongly agreed, and transportation 70.00 percent strongly agreed. Additionally, retailers face challenges with price fluctuations 80.00 percent strongly agree, and selling lower-grade potatoes 70.00 percent strongly agree.

**Keywords-** Potatoes, Marketing challenges, Parwan province, intermediaries, Afghanistan.

### I. INTRODUCTION

In the present scenario, Afghanistan is witnessing a rise in food and water insecurity attributable to a multifaceted interplay of persisting social, political, and economic uncertainties. Moreover, the exacerbating impacts of climate change further compound the situation (Poole et al., 2022). Despite its significant impact on both the economy and the daily lives of its people, Afghanistan's vegetable marketing system has received

inadequate attention. (Jamali, AJ. et al). The availability of natural, organic food has also emerged as a concern on both a national and global scale (Beniwal & Patil, 2022). Marketing of potato crops is very complex and risky due to the perishable nature of the produce, seasonal production, and bulkiness. The spectrum of prices for potato from producer to consumer, which is an outcome of demand and supply system, is also different from other crops. To ensure successful marketing, well-organized markets are essential. In the process, farmers typically sell

their produce to commission agents or middlemen, which contributes to the overall high marketing costs associated with vegetables (Pavithra & Singh, 2020). Vegetable crop marketing is intricate and precarious due to the perishable nature, seasonal production, and bulkiness of the produce. The price spectrum, resulting from transactions among intermediaries at different levels, is distinctive for vegetables, determined by demand and supply. Additionally, marketing arrangements at different stages significantly influence price levels from farm gate to the end consumer (Dastagiri et al. (2013). The cultivation of vegetables is a highly profitable venture, particularly for small and marginal farmers, as it yields substantial production in a short period. This contributes significantly to agricultural development and the country's economy by generating farm income. Vegetables are not only affordable but also rich in minerals, vitamins, and calories. Their popularity in both domestic and export markets creates a substantial demand, presenting an opportunity for India to earn valuable foreign exchange. That emphasized by (Patel and Pundir in 2016).

## II. METHODOLOGY

### Research Design:

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design, combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The mixed-methods design enabled a comprehensive understanding of the marketing challenges by gathering data from multiple perspectives.

### Data Collection Methods:

**Surveys:** Structured questionnaires was designed to collect quantitative data from potatoes growers and

market intermediaries, such as wholesalers and retailers. The surveys was included closed-ended questions with Likert scales, and multiple-choice items to gather standardized responses. The questionnaire covered aspects related to marketing challenges, transportation, storage, pricing, and the overall marketing experience.

**Interviews:** In-depth interviews conducted with key stakeholders, including potato growers, market intermediaries, the interviews provided valuable insights into the complexities of the marketing challenges, their underlying causes, and potential strategies for improvement.

### Sampling:

**Potatoes Growers:** A stratified random sampling method was employed to select a representative sample of 40 each potatoes growers from each three districts of Siyagar Ghorband and Shinwari, of Parwan province. The stratification was based on factors such as farm size, cultivation practices, and years of experience in potato farming.

### Market Intermediaries:

Purposive sampling was used to select market 10 consumers and 10 each intermediaries (Wholesalers and Retailers) representing various segments of the potato supply chain, including wholesalers, retailers, transporters, and storage facilities.

### Analytical tools used:

SPSS descriptive statistics (Frequency and percentage)

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1. Problems faced by farmers in marketing of potato in Parwan province. (N=120)**

S. No.	Particulars	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	Far off location of selling Market	40.80	34.20	19.20	1.70	2.50
2	Lack of transportation facility	35.00	35.80	21.70	2.50	4.20
3	Lack of market information	26.70	26.70	29.20	3.30	12.50
4	Malpractice of buyers	30.80	27.50	22.50	10.00	8.30
5	Lack of grading facility	35.80	26.70	12.50	14.20	9.20
6	Lack of packing Facility	39.20	26.70	12.50	7.50	13.30
7	Lack of proper storage facilities	39.20	21.70	15.00	10.00	10.80
8	Limited Market Access	40.00	24.20	16.70	7.50	7.50
9	Lack of wholesale market	37.50	27.50	16.70	8.30	5.80
10	Lack of regulated market	38.30	31.70	13.30	5.00	9.20
11	Dependence on Middleman	38.30	28.30	12.50	4.20	12.50

(Note: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; N-Neutral; DA- Dis-Agree; SDA- Strongly Dis-Agree)  
Field survey (2023)

Table 1 represented the Problems faced by farmers in marketing of potato: The table highlight the challenges faced by farmers in marketing potatoes. A considerable number of farmers strongly agree and agree

that various factors hinder the marketing process. Notably, a significant portion of them, around 40.80 percent, find the far-off location of selling markets to be a major obstacle. Similarly, 35.80 percent strongly agree

that the lack of grading facilities poses a significant challenge. Transportation facilities are also a pressing concern, with 35.00 percent strongly agreeing and 35.80 percent agreeing that their absence hampers potato marketing. Moreover, the lack of market information worries around 26.70 percent while malpractices by buyers are an issue for 30.80 percent of farmers. Similar findings were reported by Vinayak et al. (2013) and Maru and Gibramu (2014). Furthermore, the inadequate packing facilities are noted by 39.20 percent as a notable problem, and a similar percentage finds the absence of

proper storage facilities concerning. Additionally, limited market access affects 40.00 percent, and the lack of a wholesale market is deemed important by 37.50 percent, lastly, the absence of a regulated market is a noteworthy challenge for around 38.30 percent, and a significant portion, 38.30 percent, also express concern about their dependence on middlemen in the marketing process. Similar findings conducted study by Farida and Fariya (2014) focused on the challenges faced by tomato growers in marketing their produce in the Sonipat and Panipat mandi.

**Table 2. Problems faced by consumers in purchasing of potato in Parwan (N=10)**

Sr. No	Particulars	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	No timely availability of products in the market	18.80	18.80	0.00	12.50	12.50
2	Price Fluctuations	37.50	18.80	0.00	0.00	6.30
3	No proper packaging	18.80	12.50	12.50	12.5	6.30
4	No Proper Grading of Potato	18.30	37.50	19.20	19.20	5.80
5	Quality Concerns	37.50	12.50	6.30	6.3	0.00
6	Limited availability of Potato	18.80	12.50	6.30	0	25.00
7	Dependence on middleman	31.30	12.50	0.00	18.8	0.00
8	Poverty and economic problems to afford potato in off season	31.30	18.80	6.30	6.3	62.50
9	Limited market access	31.30	6.30	6.30	12.50	6.30

Field survey (2023)

Table 2 represent the problems faced by consumers in purchasing potatoes in Parwan province, based on responses from 10 participants. The table highlights the percentage distribution of their perceptions on various issues. The summary of the findings was as follows: No timely availability of products in the market: 18.80 percent of consumers strongly agree and another 18.80 percent agree that the timely availability of potato products in the market is an issue. Some consumers 12.50 percent remain neutral, while 12.50 percent disagree and 12.50 percent strongly disagree. Price fluctuations: A significant portion of consumers 37.50 percent strongly agree that price fluctuations are a problem, while 18.80 percent agree. No proper packaging: 18.80 percent of consumers strongly agree, 12.50 percent agree, and another 12.50 percent are neutral about the lack of proper packaging for potatoes. However, 12.50 percent disagree. No proper grading of potatoes: 18.30 percent of consumers strongly agree and 37.50 percent agree that the absence of proper grading of potatoes is a concern. Additionally, 19.20 percent remain neutral, while 19.20

percent disagree. Quality concerns: 37.50 percent of consumers strongly agree that they have concerns about the quality of potatoes, while 12.50 percent agree. However. Limited availability of potatoes: 18.80 percent of consumers strongly agree and 12.50 percent agree that limited availability of potatoes is a problem. Dependence on middlemen: 31.30 percent of consumers strongly agree that their dependence on middlemen is an issue, while 12.50 percent agree. Poverty and economic problems to afford potatoes in off-season: 31.30 percent of consumers strongly agree and 18.80 percent agree that poverty and economic problems in off-season affect their ability to afford potatoes. Limited market access: 31.30 percent of consumers strongly agree and 6.30 percent agree that limited market access is a concern. Similar findings; The study found that 57.50 percent of farmers sold potatoes to cover household expenses and 55.00 percent to finance agricultural inputs. Additionally, 45.00 percent sold them for loan repayment, and 52.50 percent cited limited storage space as a significant factor in their immediate selling decisions (Lalzai, F. et al)

**Table 3. Problems faced by wholesalers in marketing of potato in Parwan province of Afghanistan (N=10)**

Sr. No.	Particulars	SA	D	N	D	SDA
1	Absence of grading facilities	40.00	40.00	10.00	10.00	0.00
2	Absence of storage facility	50.00	30.00	10.00	10.00	0.00
3	Lack of transportation Facility	10.00	20.00	40.00	20.00	10.00
4	Wide price fluctuations	40.00	30.00	10.00	10.00	0.00

5	Inaccurate weighing	50.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
6	Difficulty in selling second third grade Potato	30.00	30.00	20.00	10.00	10.00
7	Non acceptance of fixed Price by the customers.	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8	Perishability of potato	20.00	70.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
9	Inadequate physical facilities	40.00	50.00	20.00	0.00	10.00
10	No availabilities of associations (Councils)	20.00	60.00	20.00	0.00	0.00

Field survey (2023)

(Note: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; N-Neutral; DA- Dis-Agree; SDA- Strongly Dis-Agree)

Table 3 demonstrated the Problems faced by wholesalers in marketing of potato in Parwan province of Afghanistan: majority of the respondents said that the Absence of grading facilities: 80.00% of wholesalers 40.00 percent strongly agreed, and find the lack of grading facilities to be a significant problem in potato marketing. Absence of storage facility: 80.00 percent of wholesalers 50.00 percent strongly agreed. Consider the absence of proper storage facilities as a major concern. Lack of transportation facility: 60.00 percent acknowledge the lack of transportation facilities as a challenge. Wide price fluctuations: 70.00 percent of wholesalers 40.00 percent strongly agreed, 30.00 percent agreed view wide price fluctuations as problematic in the potato market. Inaccurate weighing: 80.00 percent of wholesalers 50.00 percent strongly agree, 30.00 percent, see inaccurate weighing as a problem during transactions. Difficulty in selling second-third-grade potato: 60.00 percent of wholesalers 30.00 percent strongly agreed, 30.00 percent agreed, face challenges in selling second-third-grade

potatoes. Non-acceptance of fixed price by customers: 100.00 percent of wholesalers 50.00 percent strongly agreed, 50.00 percent agreed find that customers' non-acceptance of fixed prices is a concern. Perishability of potato: 90.00 percent of wholesalers 20.00 percent strongly agreed, 70.00 percent agreed consider the perishability of potatoes to be a problem. Inadequate physical facilities: 90.00 percent of wholesalers 40.00 percent strongly agreed, 50.00 percent agreed view inadequate physical facilities as a concern in the potato marketing process. None availabilities of associations (Councils): 80.00 percent of wholesalers 20.00 percent strongly agreed, 60.00 percent agreed find the lack of available associations or councils to be an issue. Overall, the study highlights several critical challenges faced by wholesalers in the potato market, including the need for grading and storage facilities, reliable transportation, stable pricing, accurate weighing, and improved physical facilities.

**Table 4. Problems for the retailers in the marketing of potato in Parwan province of Afghanistan N=10**

S. No.	Constraints	SA	D	N	D	SD
1	Absence of grading facilities	20.00	70.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
2	Absence of storage facility	50.00	30.00	20.00	0.00	0.00
3	Lack of transportation Facility	20.00	30.00	20.00	20.00	10.00
4	Wide price fluctuations	40.00	40.00	0.00	10.00	0.00
5	Inaccurate weighing	70.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	Difficulty in selling / second third grade Potato	70.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	Non acceptance of fixed Price by the customers.	70.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8	Perishability of potato	70.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	Inadequate physical facilities	60.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10	No availabilities of associations (Councils)	60.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Field survey (2023)

Table 4 demonstrated the Problems for the retailers in the marketing of potato in Parwan province: Absence of grading facilities: A vast majority of retailers 90.00 percent expressed concerns about the absence of grading facilities, with 20.00 percent strongly agreed and 70.00 percent agreed that this is a significant constraint in potato marketing. Absence of storage facility: 80.00 percent of retailers highlighted the lack of proper storage facilities as a major problem, with 50.00 percent strongly agreed and

30.00 percent agreed. Lack of transportation facility: 70.00 percent of retailers face challenges due to the lack of transportation facilities for potato marketing. While 20.00 percent strongly agreed and 30.00 percent agreed. Wide price fluctuations: 80.00 percent of retailers viewed wide price fluctuations as a constraint in the potato market, with 40.00 percent strongly agreed and 40.00 percent agreed. Inaccurate weighing: All retailers 100.00 percent experience issues with inaccurate weighing

during transactions, with 70.00 percent strongly agreeing and 30.00 percent agreed.

Difficulty in selling second-third-grade potato: 100.00 percent of retailers faced challenges in selling second-third-grade potatoes, with 70.00 percent strongly agreed and 30.00 percent agreed. Non-acceptance of fixed price by customers: All retailers 100.00 percent find that customers' non-acceptance of fixed prices is a constraint, with 70.00 percent strongly agreed and 30.00 percent agreed. Perishability of potato: 100.00 percent of retailers consider the perishability of potatoes as a problem, with 70.00 percent strongly agreeing and 30.00 percent agreed. Inadequate physical facilities: 60.00 percent of retailers strongly agree that inadequate physical facilities are a constraint in the potato marketing process, while 40.00 percent agreed. No availabilities of associations (Councils): 90.00 percent of retailers find the lack of available associations or councils to be a constraint in the potato market, with 60.00 percent strongly agreed and 30.00 percent agreed.

Overall, the study highlights significant challenges faced by retailers in the potato market, including the absence of grading and storage facilities, transportation issues, price fluctuations, inaccurate weighing, difficulties in selling lower-grade potatoes, customers' non-acceptance of fixed prices, perishability concerns, and the need for better physical facilities and available associations to support their marketing efforts.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study showed that the significant marketing challenges faced by potato growers and market intermediaries in Parwan province, Afghanistan. The findings revealed that farmers encounter hurdles such as far-off location of selling markets, lack of grading facilities, and transportation issues. Additionally, market information gaps and malpractices by buyers impact the marketing process. Consumers, on the other hand, faced difficulties with timely product availability, price fluctuations, and inadequate packaging. Wholesalers and retailers also experience obstacles in the form of grading and storage facility absences, transportation challenges, wide price fluctuations, and inaccurate weighing. Moreover, retailers encounter difficulties in selling lower-grade potatoes and face non-acceptance of fixed prices by customers. Overall, this research emphasized the need to address these challenges to improve the marketing of potatoes in Parwan province. Solutions such as improving transportation infrastructure, establishing proper grading and storage facilities, and price fluctuations could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of potato marketing. Policymakers and stakeholders should collaborate to develop strategies and initiatives that will support the potato industry in the region, ensuring the sustainable growth of this vital agricultural sector.

#### SUGGESTION

- **Enhance Transportation Infrastructure:**  
Improving transportation facilities is essential for the efficient movement of potatoes from farms to markets. This includes investments in road networks, transportation vehicles, and logistics management.
- **Establish Grading and Storage Facilities:**  
The establishment of proper grading and storage facilities across the supply chain is vital for maintaining potato quality, reducing wastage, and ensuring a consistent market supply.
- **Tackle Price Volatility:**  
Measures should be taken to stabilize potato prices, providing predictability and minimizing the impact of price fluctuations on both producers and consumers.

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