



A STUDY ON THE PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF CULTIVATING AND MARKETING THE CASHEWNUTS BY THE FARMERS IN SELECT DISTRICTS OF TAMILNADU

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INTRODUCTION

In olden days, India was very backward in agriculture as the farmers followed the traditional methods of farming and lack of adequate knowledge among the farmers. Further, at the time of independence we suffered lot even for food, as there was no self-reliance in agriculture to our nation. Hence, the government was in a position to find measures to overcome these problems. After that, the then governments took initiative to find innovations and new technology in farming, which was resulted in continuous and steady growth in the agriculture income of the farmers and the income of the country as a whole. At present we are exporting many commodities from agriculture like wheat, cotton, tea, rubber etc. cashew nut is one of the familiar crops, which are cultivated in Tamilnadu. Though it is cultivated in the dry land where there are limited sources of water and poor rainfall, the farmers work hard to grow the cashew crop from ploughing of land, cultivating the cashew nut and marketing the same.

Normally in all area the farmers are suffering lot to bring out their produce in to market and to sell the same to the merchants. Irrespective of the nature of produce and the volume of the cultivated products, the farmers are frequently confused in marketing their produces due to various causes affecting the sales of the products. The increasing rate of transport charges and labour charges and the problems of the intermediaries are the main factors affecting the sales of the agricultural produces. The farmers dealing in cashew nuts are also facing similar problems in marketing the produces. Further, there is no proper and stable price for the products. Though the government takes initiatives to safeguard the interest of the farmers in many ways, the problems of the farmers is going increasing every year, the economical condition of majority of the farmers is in a pathetic condition and questionable. How this problem can be solved? What are the real causes for the issues faced by the farmers in marketing? To know all these a thorough study is to be undertaken. By considering the above views in mind, the researcher selected the topic “A study on the problems and prospects of cultivating and marketing the cashewnuts by the farmers in select districts of Tamilnadu”.

Statement of the problem

The people are engaged in various activities with a view to earn money to meet their requirements and the requirements of their dependents. Farmers are also engaged in agriculture with the same attitude. All the people except the farmers lead a decent life and gradually increase the standard of living year by year. The business people and employees of the government and private sectors get regular and reasonable income to satisfy their needs. However, the farmers who involved in cultivation of cashew nuts could get much income because various factors and could not lead a normal life like others. In many occasions, they face serious in cultivating and marketing the produces since from cultivation to harvesting and marketing the cashew nuts to the wholesaler and merchants. Their necessities are going on increasing year by year. The input rate for farming also is going on increasing. They have to incur more amounts to carry the produces in to market and sell them to the merchants.

Significance of the study

It is the duty of the state to bring overall development in the domestic area of the country. Further, the government should see that there must be balanced growth among the public and region irrespective of the community, caste, colour and the people involved in various activities for earning the income. Every year the government allocates reasonable funds to agricultural sector. Many schemes have been also introduced and implemented to bring growth and development of the farmers. The result is always negative. The experts for unfavouring the farmers in many aspects always criticize the government. Further, the cultivation and marketing of cashew nuts is tedious work to all farmers because of various factors, which further made the farmers weak and weaker. Role of intermediary in the market creates problem to the farmers in marketing their products. There are many factors affecting the yielding of the cashew nuts. Therefore, a thorough study is to be undertaken to elevate the farmers dealing in cashew nuts. It is inevitable in modern scenario.

Objectives of the study

The following are the main objectives, for which the research work is undertaken by the researcher.

1. To identify the existing method of cultivating the cashew nuts in the study area



2. To evaluate the system followed by the farmers for marketing the cashew nuts
3. To find out the areas in which the cashew nut is cultivated in Tamilnadu
4. To examine the problems faced by the farmers in cultivating and marketing of cashew nuts
5. To know the causes for the problems faced by the farmers
6. To recommend remedial measures to solve the issues faced by the farmers in cashew nut cultivation and marketing.

Scope of the Study

The research study covers only the problems faced by the farmers who cultivate the cashew nuts in Tamil Nadu State. The study deals with different dimensions of the issues in cashew nut cultivation and marketing such as transport problems, problems of getting fertilizers and labour problems and availability of inputs to the farming, issues related to the middlemen and brokers in cashew nuts.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses have been framed and tested.

1. The farmers' perception above the problems in cultivating the cashew nuts does not vary irrespective of different classifications of customers' age, gender, education, occupation, income level, and the acres of land used for cultivating the cashew nuts
2. The farmers' perception in stating the reason for their problems does not vary irrespective of different classifications of farmers age, gender, education, occupation, income level, types of farming system followed by the farmers.
3. The farmers' opinion regarding the initiatives taken by the government to safeguard the interest of the farmers does not vary irrespective of different classifications of farmers' age, gender, education, occupation, and income level.
4. The farmers' opinion regarding the subsidy loan provided to the farmers by the government does not vary irrespective of different classifications of farmers age, gender, education, occupation, income level of the respondents
5. The farmers' attitude regarding the transport charges for carrying their produces into market does not vary irrespective of farmers' age, gender, education, occupation, income level.
6. The farmers' opinion regarding the price offered by the wholesaler in the market does not vary irrespective of different classifications of farmers' age, gender, education, occupation, income level,

Methodology

The researcher followed multi-stage sampling in the selection of samples. The farmers who cultivate the cashew nuts in Tamilnadu will constitute the sample for the study. The sample for the study was selected through a three-stage sampling procedure. The first stage involved the choice of area in which the cashew nuts are cultivated. Then the sample respondents were selected from the total population for the research work.

Data Collection: Both the primary and secondary data were collected for the research work

Primary data: Primary data was collected from the respondents by framing suitable questionnaire related to the study. The questionnaire was given to guide and experts for making necessary correction and deletion if necessary to make the questionnaire effective for the successful completion of the research work. Interview schedule was arranged with the respondents for collecting the data.

Sample selection: The respondents for the sample was selected at random from the total population by using convenient sampling. The selection of farmers formed the last stage of the sampling process. 110 respondents were selected from the population of selected districts all over Tamilnadu. Representation of the respondents for the study was based on the area of acres of land utilized for cultivation of cashew nuts in all over Tamilnadu.

Secondary data: Secondary data was collected from the books, journals and magazines published in the study area for the research.

Study period: The study period cover three-month period starting from November 2016-January 2017

Framework of analysis

The perception of farmers towards the problems in cultivation and marketing of cashew nuts in Tamilnadu– based on their age, gender, education and other socio-economic status have been used as variables and ANOVA and 't' – tests have been applied appropriately.



Dimension mean is the mean of individual rating of the items coming under respective dimensions, which is computed for each respondent. This average is used to represent the dimensions and used along with the individual item wise ratings to compute mean and standard deviations.

Correlation analysis was used to find out the degree of relationship in the various dimensions of farmers in stating the problems faced by the farmers in cultivation and marketing of cashew nuts.

Limitations of the Study

The study is subjected to the following limitations.

1. Due to cost and time constraints, the researcher will select the respondents from the districts in which the cashew nuts are cultivated considerably both in volume of farmers and in land area.
2. Since the study has considered only individual farmers of cashew nuts, the perception of farmers who cultivate other crops in the study area will not be taken in to account.
3. The findings of the research is based on the information provided by the respondents in the selected districts only as the cashew nuts are cultivated only in few districts of Tamilnadu. It may not be considered for other districts

Table No.1

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age group		
< 30 years	3	2.70
30-49	58	52.70
>50	49	44.60

Total	110	100.00
Sex		
Male	93	84.50
Female	17	15.50
Total	110	100.00

Level of education		
No formal education	53	57.30
Primary	41	28.20
Secondary	11	10.00
Tertiary	5	4.50
Total	110	100.00

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No formal education	53	57.30
Primary	41	28.20
Secondary	11	10.00
Tertiary	5	4.50
Total	110	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table-2. Distribution of respondents based on varieties used for planting.

Varieties	Frequency	Percentage
Local varieties	89	80.90
CRIN improved varieties	10	9.10
Brazilian Jumbo nuts	11	10.00
Total	110	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2016



Results and Discussions

Selected personal characteristics

The selected personal characteristics of the farmers are presented under the following sub-headings: Age distribution of the respondents, Sex and educational level.

Age is an important factor in farm work. Increase in number of years of farmer might result in additional experience of the farmer, to improve upon their level of productivity and income. The result in Table-1 shows that most (52.7%) were between the age range of 30 and 49 years. 44.6% were above 50 years while 2.7% are less than 30 years. This implies that most of the cashew farmers in the study area were in their prime age and could be vulnerable to rural urban drift in search of white collar job which can adversely affect cashew production.

Cashew farming requires labour, which is also gender sensitive. Table-1 shows that most (84.5%) of the Cashew farmers are male while 15.5% are female. The male domination of cashew farming activities as observed in the study area could be attributed to the fact that women are given opportunity to cultivate arable crops on the their husband's plots while access to permanent crop production is usually restricted to men (Abubakar, 2003). In a similar study Bzugu (1995) reported that men are generally considered as head of family decisions with regards to resources acquisition and utilization in Ogbomoso area. This could be a constraint to cashew production as these women would have contributed their quota.

It is generally believed that farmer's level of education would enhance their farming activities and level of awareness. Most (53.3%) of the respondents have no formal education while (28.2%) had primary education which is an indication that the farmers level of education in the study area is very low which could affect their level of receptivity of improved technologies hence their high dependency on the use of local varieties based on the findings of this study. This could reduce their yield and consequently result in low income of the farmers. However, some (10%) and (4.5%) of the respondents have secondary and tertiary education, respectively

Conclusions

Cashew production in Guddalore of Tamilnadu state is male dominated (84.5%) of the farmers are males. The cashew farmers are relatively young with low level of education. There is inadequate capital (finance) that can be used to expand their farm land as 65.5% of the respondents cultivate 0.10-5.99 ha which is too small for commercially sized farm. Majority of the farmers are using local varieties on their farms, which they claim is the available planting materials in the area. Other problem of importance are insufficient price information, high cost of transport, low farm gate price, insufficient labour, lack of processing industries and lack of good roads. These problems can be ameliorated by formulating and implementing economic policies aimed at increasing the level of education, which could increase their level of receptivity of improved technologies of cashew production. The government should provide soft loan to the cashew farmers to enable them establish cottage industries in order to alleviate the constraints of inadequate capital (finance) and lack of processing industries. There should be a collaborative work between CRIN and ADP to enhance awareness creation and easy access to adequate information such as recommended improved varieties by cashew farmers in the study area

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