

A STUDY ON CULTIVATION AND MARKETING PROBLEMS OF COCONUT GROWERS IN THALI PANCHAYAT, UDUMALPET

Dr.R.VANAMADEVI,

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMMERCE,

SRI G.V.G. VISALAKSHI COLLEGE FOR WOMEN,

UDUMALPET-642128

ABSTRACT

Agriculture has been playing a predominant role in the economic development of all developed and developing countries. The green revolution of the 1960's ushered in rapid increases in food crop production such as wheat, rice and other cereals. Efforts were also taken to achieve similar increases in non-food crop production viz., coconut, groundnut, sugarcane, cotton etc. In recent years a large number of national programs for coconut development have been launched in many Asian and Pacific countries, particularly in India because coconut occupies a unique position in commercial agriculture as a fiber, food, oilseed and beverage crop. Coconut plays a significant role in the agrarian economy of India. Apart from the importance of copra and coconut oil which is widely used in the manufacture of soaps, hair oil, cosmetics and other industrial products, its husk is a source of fiber which supports a sizable coir industry. The tender nut supplies coconut water, a popular thirst quencher of health and hygienic value. Virgin coconut oil (VCO), extracted from fresh coconut kernel without any chemical processes is abundant in vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants, thus making it the 'mother' of all oils.

Coconut is grown in more than 93 countries of the world and Indonesia, Philippines, India are the major producing countries of the world. Coconut is grown in more than 18.95 lakh ha in the country with an estimated 16943 million nuts during 2014-2015 with an average productivity of 8937 nuts per ha. Traditional areas of coconut in India are the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Goa, West Bengal, Pondicherry, Maharashtra and Islands of Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar. The high oil content of the endosperm of the coconut is widely used in both food and nonfood industries like margarine and soaps. The coconut palm and its products are a major source of livelihood to a sizeable section of rural folk in the tropics and also contribute substantially to the total export earnings. It is unique among horticulture of India because of the diverse uses of coconut products. Therefore, coconut production, productivity and marketing have become an integral part of economic development of a country. In this paper an attempt is being made to study the cultivation and marketing problems of coconut growers in Thali panchayat, Udumalpet.

Key words- Non-food crop, coconut kernel and endosperm

INTRODUCTION

Coconut is considered to be the most important and useful tree among the tropical palms which gives coconut water, kernel, oilcake for cattle etc. It has been in cultivation in India from time immemorial. It perhaps yields more products of use to mankind than any other tree. Each and every part of the coconut palm is used in India. Since it is one of the leading commodities in agricultural exports, the production programme of the crop is of critical importance in improving the efficient use of resources. The cost of production and net return obtained per unit, would determine the profitability of the crop. Though production is the initiation of the developmental process, it could bring less gain to the producers unless they exist an efficient marketing system.

Coconut production play major role in forming the agro base industries namely production of coconut oil and other byproducts of coconut like coir industries, husk production etc. In view of the changed scenario in the coconut sector, it was felt necessary to revise the report on production and marketing of coconut and make fresh appraisal of the changing pattern of coconut production, trade and its ancillary industries. The coconut growers adopt the different methods of selling the coconut and facing a number of problems is also encountered. In Tiruppur district, Thali panchayat of Udumalpet is one of the rich coconuts producing town panchayat and hence the present study is taken up to analyze problems of cultivation and marketing of coconuts in Thali panchayat.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has been undertaken with the following specific objectives:

1. To understand the socio-economic background of the coconut growers in Thali panchayat.
2. To find out the method of marketing of coconuts.
3. To analyze the problems faced by the farmers for coconut cultivation.
4. To analyze the problems faced by the farmers for marketing of coconuts

METHODOLOGY

"A Study on cultivation and marketing problems of coconut growers in Thali panchayat, Udumalpet" was carried out with the following methodology. The sample consisting of 150 respondents were drawn adopting convenience sampling technique. The study is purely based on the primary data collected through well-established interview schedule. The study was conducted with the help of a pre – structured interview schedule. Analysis and interpretation were made based on the data collected from the respondents. The collected information were reviewed and consolidated into a master table. For the analysis of the data following statistical tools like percentage, ranking table and scaling techniques were used.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- The research area was restricted to Thali panchayat at Udumalpet only.
- The analysis was based on the primary data collected and all the limitations of primary data are applicable to the study.
- The findings of the study are applicable only to selected samples and they cannot be generalized.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The results of the analysis of the collected primary data are presented below:

TABLE 1

Age of the Respondents

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below 30 years	11	8
31-40 years	30	20
41-50 years	44	29
Above 50 years	65	43
Total	150	100

The above table shows that out of the total 150 respondents 43 percent of the respondents were in the age group of above 50 years, 29 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 41-50 years, 20 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 31-40 years and 8 percent of the respondents were in the age group of below 30 years. From the above table, it is clear that most (43 percent) of the respondents were in the age group of above 50 years.

TABLE 2
Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	121	81
Female	29	19
Total	150	100

The above table it is clear that out of 150 respondents, 81 percent of the respondents were male and 19 percent of the respondents were female. Majority (81 percent) of the respondents were male.

TABLE 3
Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	47	31
Up to SSLC	48	32
HSC	26	17
Diploma holders	19	13
Graduates	8	5
Post Graduates	2	2
Total	150	100

It is observed from the above table that out of 150 respondents 32 percent of the respondents were educated up to SSLC, 31 percent of the respondents were illiterate, 17 percent of the respondents had education up to higher secondary, 13 percent of the respondents were diploma holders, 5 percent of the respondents were graduates and 2 percent of the respondents were post graduates. Most (32 percent) of the respondents were up to SSLC.

TABLE 4**Number of Members in the Family**

Family Members	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1-3 members	67	44
4-6 members	43	29
7-9 members	24	16
Above 9 members	16	11
Total	150	100

It could be seen from the above table that 44 percent of the respondents family had 1-3 members, 29 percent of the respondents family had 4-6 members, 16 percent of the respondents family had 7-9 members and 11 percent of the respondent's family had above 9 members. The table indicates that most (44 percent) of the respondent's family consist of 1-3 members.

TABLE 5**Income of the Respondents**

Annual Income	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below Rs.100000	9	6
Rs.100001 – Rs.200000	27	18
Rs.200001 – Rs.300000	43	29
Above Rs.300000	71	47
Total	150	100

The above table indicates that 47 percent of the respondents had annual income of above Rs.300000, 29 percent of the respondents had annual income of Rs.200001 – Rs.300000, 18 percent of the respondents had annual income of Rs.100001 – Rs.200000 and 6 percent of the respondents family income ranged below Rs.100000. It could be seen from the above table that most (47 percent) of the respondents had annual income of above Rs.300000.

TABLE 6

Problems in Cultivation of Coconuts

Problems	Number of respondents								Total Score	Rank
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII		
	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
Labour problem	8 (64)	11 (77)	11 (66)	12 (60)	14 (56)	28 (84)	36 (72)	30 (30)	509	VIII
Lack of Quality saplings	6 (48)	21 (147)	13 (78)	17 (85)	25 (100)	22 (66)	30 (60)	16 (16)	600	VII
Lack of adequate finance	13 (104)	30 (210)	21 (126)	14 (70)	18 (72)	14 (52)	19 (38)	21 (21)	693	IV
High cost	10 (80)	16 (112)	22 (132)	31 (155)	24 (56)	18 (54)	14 (28)	15 (15)	632	VI
Lack of water	19 (152)	13 (91)	22 (132)	23 (115)	22 (88)	20 (60)	15 (30)	16 (16)	684	V
Trees wilt	22 (176)	19 (133)	33 (198)	15 (75)	18 (72)	23 (69)	10 (20)	10 (10)	753	II
Climatic condition	30 (240)	23 (161)	18 (108)	24 (120)	12 (48)	12 (36)	13 (26)	18 (18)	757	I

From the above analysis, it was found that climatic condition was the main problem faced by the cultivators of coconuts with highest score of 757, problem due to trees wilt was ranked as second problem with the score 753, pest and diseases ranked as third problem with the score of 742, lack of adequate finance ranked as fourth problem with the score of 693, lack of water ranked as fifth problem with the score of 684, high cost ranked as sixth problem with the score of 632, lack of quality saplings ranked as seventh problem with the score of 600 and labour problem was ranked as last with the score of 509. It is inferred that climatic condition was the major problem faced by the coconut cultivator in the study area.

MARKETING OF COCONUTS

TABLE 7

Method of Marketing

Method of marketing	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Direct selling	28	19
Intermediaries	122	81
Total	150	100

The above table shows the method of marketing of coconuts. out of 150 respondents, 122 respondents marketed coconut through direct selling and 28 respondents marketed through intermediaries. Majority (122) of the respondents marketed through intermediaries only.

TABLE 8**Reasons for direct selling of Coconuts**

Reasons for direct selling	Number of Respondents	Percentage
To get a good price	22	79
To avoid the intermediaries	2	7
To get the spot payment	4	14
Total	28	100

The above table shows the reasons for direct selling of coconuts. Out of 28 respondents, 22 respondents preferred for direct selling to get a good price, 4 respondents preferred to get the spot payment and 2 respondents preferred to avoid the intermediaries. Majority (79 percent) of the respondents preferred direct selling to get a good price.

TABLE 9**Reasons for Marketing through Intermediaries**

Reasons for Intermediaries	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Avoid labour problem	21	15
Avoid the risk of selling	38	28
Save time	43	31
Reduce physical work	20	26
Total	122	100

The above table shows the reasons for marketing the coconut through intermediaries. Out of 122 respondents, 43 respondents preferred to sell their coconut through intermediaries to save time, 38 respondents preferred to avoid the risk of selling, 21 respondents preferred to avoid labour problem and 20 respondents preferred to reduce physical work. Most (48 percent) of the respondents preferred to market through the intermediaries to save time.

TABLE 10**Problems Faced by the Respondents in Marketing of coconuts Through Direct Selling**

Problems	Number of respondents						Total score	Rank
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		
	6	5	4	3	2	1		
High risk	2 (12)	5 (25)	8 (32)	4 (12)	2 (4)	7 (7)	92	IV
Price fluctuations	8 (48)	6 (30)	4 (16)	2 (6)	5 (10)	3 (3)	113	I
Inadequate transport facilities	3 (18)	6 (30)	6 (24)	5 (15)	3 (6)	5 (5)	98	III
Lack of storage facilities	7 (42)	4 (20)	2 (8)	8 (24)	3 (6)	4 (4)	104	II
Lack of marketing information	6 (36)	2 (10)	3 (12)	4 (12)	7 (14)	6 (6)	90	V

It is from the above analysis, it is found that price fluctuations was the major problem in marketing of coconuts through direct selling (score of 113), problem due to lack of storage facility ranked as second problem (score 104), inadequate transport facilities ranked as third problem (score of 98), high risk ranked as

fourth problem with the score of 92 and lack of marketing information was ranked as last with the score of 90. It is inferred that price fluctuations was the major problem faced by coconut farmers while marketing of coconuts through direct selling.

TABLE 11**Problems Faced by the Respondents in Marketing of coconuts Through Intermediaries**

Problems	Number of respondents						Total score	Rank
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		
	6	5	4	3	2	1		
Irregular payment by agents	18 (108)	25 (125)	10 (40)	30 (90)	19 (38)	20 (20)	421	IV
High commission	23 (138)	19 (95)	28 (112)	23 (69)	15 (30)	12 (12)	456	II
Low price	27 (162)	16 (80)	20 (80)	22 (66)	25 (50)	12 (12)	450	III
Price fluctuations	5 (30)	25 (125)	22 (88)	33 (99)	25 (50)	12 (12)	404	V
Forced sales	44 (264)	18 (90)	16 (64)	13 (39)	28 (56)	3 (3)	516	I
Inefficient regulated market	9 (54)	17 (85)	21 (84)	6 (18)	26 (52)	43 (43)	336	VI

It is from the above analysis, it is found that forced sales was the main problem faced in marketing of coconuts through intermediaries with (score 516), problem due to high commission ranked as second problem with the score 456, low price ranked as third problem with the score of 450, irregular payment by agents ranked as fourth problem with the score of 421, price fluctuations ranked as fifth problem with the score of 404 and inefficient regulated market was ranked as last with the score of 336. Forced sales is the major problem faced by the farmers while marketing the coconuts through intermediaries.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the analysis of the study the following suggestions are made to improve the cultivation and marketing of coconuts in the study area.

1. Non – availability of quality saplings was one of the problems faced by the coconut cultivators. So, the Government should consider establishing nurseries in each Districts / Taluk to provide quality saplings to the farmers.
2. The coconut products are in great demand in domestic and international market. So the farmers should be educated about the manufacturing of the value added coconut products to increase the earnings.
3. Formation of Coconut Committee in each block / taluk consisting of representative from the Agricultural Department, Coconut board and farmers to discuss the production and marketing problems at regular intervals.
4. To create awareness among the farmers to take crop insurance policy against the loss of trees due to various diseases.
5. The study also found that due to storage problem, marketing of coconuts mainly done through intermediaries. So the Government should set up procurement centers in important places. This centre must have the capacity of speedy disposal of the procured commodity and must make speedy payment to the growers.

CONCLUSION

The present study made a systematic effort on studying cultivation and marketing problems of coconuts growers in Thali panchayat, Udumalpet. Regarding marketing of coconut spot payment and reasonable price was the major factor influencing the marketing of coconuts through direct selling. It is found that climatic condition was the major problem faced by the coconut growers in

the study area. Lack of storage facility and avoiding risk was the major factor influencing the marketing of coconuts through intermediaries. Price fluctuations and forced sales were the main problems faced by the farmers in the marketing of coconuts. The Agricultural department should undertake vigorous campaign to educate coconut farmers about improved method of cultivation and farming co-operative marketing for regulating the price of the coconuts.

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