



Production and marketing constraints faced by cashew growers in Ariyalur district of Tamilnadu

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Abstract

Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale* L., family Anacardiaceae) often referred as “Gold mine of waste land”. The primitive reason to cultivate cashew is to prevent soil erosion as it binds the soil particles firmly. The cashew nuts are loaded with lots of nutrition. The present investigation “Production and marketing constraints faced by cashew growers in Ariyalur district of Tamilnadu” was designed to study constraints by the cashew in the aspects of cultivation and marketing. Constraint analysis is rapidly becoming an integral part of extension research. Without an analysis of the limitations, it will be difficult to disseminate the necessary technologies to the agricultural community. A sample size of 300 respondents was selected by using proportionate random sampling technique. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The significant production constraints reported were, lack of training in cashew cultivation (90.33 per cent), high labour cost (78.33 per cent) and the important marketing constraints reported by the respondents were exploitation by middleman (95.67 per cent), high commission charges (88.33 per cent) and uncertainty of market (76.00 per cent).

Keywords: cashew growers, constraints, production, marketing

Introduction

Cashew cultivation and processing offers employment opportunities to the marginalized people situated in rural areas. This indicates that the crop cashew plays a very vital role in the economic development and upliftment of rural poor as it serves as the source of income for rural poor. Cashew production is potentially an important value for small farmers in emerging countries. Further, an immense potential for cashew by-product exploitation exists in India that adds value to cashew agribusiness (Akshath, 2015) [1].

Cashew production is a better value for small holder farmers from developing countries. Despite the importance of cashew production in the international markets and the potential for enhancing rural expansion and reducing poverty (Dendena *et al*, 2014) [3]. Cashews from Vietnam are considered more important due to its superior qualities and consumer preferences, which is accepted as the “World Tastiest Cashew” in the worldwide market. Cashew is one of the cash crops which contribution in GDP is 0.03%. National yield at present stagnated at as low as potential level. (Dendena, 2014) [3]. Cashews were marketed in Tamil

Nadu using an inventory network in which numerous stakeholders act as middleman. The Commission agents, who collected Rs.25 to Rs.35 per sack of crude nuts as commission from the processing industries, serve as a link between the farmers and processors.

Research Methodology

The study was carried out in selected villages of Andimadam, Jayankondam, Sendurai, T.Palur and Thirumanur blocks of Ariyalur district of Tamil Nadu. The sample size consisted of 300 cashew growers. The respondents were interviewed personally through a well structured and pre-tested interview schedule. Arithmetic mean, percentage analysis, cumulative frequency, zero order correlation and multiple regression were used to analyze the collected data. The salient findings of the study are detailed below.

Findings and Discussion

Constraints faced by the respondents in cashew cultivation

Table 1: Constraints experienced by the farmers in the production and marketing of cashews (n=300)

S. no	Constraints	Number of respondents	Per cent
1. Production constraints			
1.	Heavy pest and disease incidence in intercrops	155	51.67
2.	Labour scarcity	213	71.00
3.	Non-availability of inputs	87	29.00
4.	Poor storage facilities	189	63.00
5.	Lack of knowledge to identify pest and diseases	220	73.33
6.	Lack of knowledge about application of plant protection chemicals	193	64.33
7.	High cost of inputs	219	73.00
8.	High cost of labour	235	78.33
9.	High rate of interest for credit	177	59.00
10.	Lack of subsidy for inputs	197	65.67
11.	Lack of training in cashew nut cultivation	271	90.33

12.	Lack of technical guidance	215	71.67
2. Marketing constraints			
1.	Uncertainty of market	228	76.00
2.	High fluctuation in price	214	71.33
3.	Exploitation by middleman	287	95.67
4.	High commission charges	265	88.33
5.	Delayed cash payment	199	66.33
6.	Lack of transport facilities	189	63.00
7.	Lack of reasonable support price	192	64.00

The constraints faced by the cashew growers in cashew cultivation are presented in the Table -1.

Production constraints

Lack of training in cashew cultivation (90.33 per cent) was the most pre-dominant production constraint. This might be due to the fact that training programs are conducted in a very limited number. High labour cost was reported as predominant constraint by 78.33 per cent of the cashew growers. Since, there exists a huge demand for labour, it generally increases the daily wages of the labours. This finding is in line with the findings of Selvam (2018) [14].

73.33 per cent of the respondents found that they were lacking knowledge in identifying the pests and diseases. Farmers usually find this as common practice to get acknowledge with the local agriculture clinics and agro centers. Greater number of the respondents (73.00 per cent) reported that raised cost of inputs as a major constraint. High cost of inputs includes cost of fertilizers, manures and other inputs which in turn available to the farmers at a very high cost. This finding is in line with the findings of Sivapriyan (2018) [15].

Lack of technical guidance is recorded as a predominant constraint by 71.67 per cent of the cashew growers. This in turn clearly portrays the minimal availability of support by the extension agents. Since the technical guidance were provided by them through various methods, they gain knowledge about various practices. As the guidance reduced this in turn leads to lack of knowledge for the respondents. This finding is in line with the findings of Jenila Stephency (2018) [10].

Labour scarcity (71.00 per cent) was the pre-dominant constraint expressed by majority of the cashew growers. There exists a wide scarcity for labour in the study area due to advent of MNREGA and most of the agricultural labour engage themselves in the MNREGA works.

Lack of subsidy for inputs (65.67 per cent) was also expressed as economic constraint by most of the growers due to increased cost of inputs. As the price of inputs is found to be higher, farmers are in need of helping hands of the government through subsidy. This could be the most effective help that could be rendered by the government to the farmers. This finding is in line with the findings of Chengappa (2017) [4].

Lack of knowledge about application of plant protection chemicals was found as a problem by 64.33 per cent of the cashew growers. Plant protection chemicals and its names are not familiar with the farmers as they lack technical knowledge to understand the terminologies.

Poor storage facilities were noticed as a constraint by 63.00 per cent of those who responded. This could be due to the cause that the study area lacks warehouse facilities and government storage godowns. This finding is in line with the findings of Anusuya (2020) [2].

High rate of interest for credit (59.00 per cent) was expressed as a constraint by the cashew growers who availed the credit facilities from banks and private money

lenders. This higher rate of interest for credits hinders the borrowing nature of the respondents. This leads to lack of money with the respondents which in turn affect farming activities. This finding is in line with the findings of Mahalakshmi (2019) [13].

Occurrence of heavy pest and diseases in intercrop is also reported as a serious constraint by majority of the respondents (51.67 per cent). Since, intercrop attracts most of the pests and diseases it affects the growth and development of the cashew crop which in turn reduces the crop yield. This finding is in line with the findings of Sriramana (2014) [16].

Non-availability of inputs was reported as a major constraint by 29.00 per cent of the cashew growers. Inputs such as seeds, fertilizers are not availed by a limited number of respondents. This is due to the reason that the inputs are not available to the respondents at their village level. They have to travel to the nearby town to purchase agricultural inputs. This finding is in line with the findings of Janusia (2017) [9].

Marketing constraints

Exploitation by middleman (95.67 per cent) was the most pre-dominant marketing constraint as the produce from the farmers are procured by middleman with a very low margin for the farmers. Mostly the profits as earned only by the middleman. Only the marginal price are often obtained by the farmers. Sometimes they don't even get their marginal price because of the advent of middle man. This finding is in line with the findings of Chengappa (2017) [4].

Greater number of the cashew growers (88.33 per cent) acclaimed that high commission charges as their major constraints as mostly commission agents acquire the profit parts of farmers as their commission. As commission agents directly procure the products from the farmers field, they found that as a reason to determine the prices. They acquires a heavy commission from both the sides like the farmer and buyer. This finding is in line with the findings of Devika (2012) [5]. Uncertainty of market was reported as a constraint by 76.00 per cent of the cashew growers. This could be due to the reason that there exists a state of unstable market for cashew all over the state. This could be due to various reasons like excessive production, price changes, demand for the product, off season varieties, quality of the product etc. Hence, it paves way for uncertainty of market as a major constraint. This finding is in line with the findings of Karthikeyan (2017) [12]. High fluctuation in price was reported as a constraint by 71.33 per cent of the cashew growers. There exists a greater fluctuation in the prices of the cashew nuts in markets. Since, this uncertain price pushes farmers to a suffering state as they lack their marginal price most of the times. This in turn creates a sense of fear to market the cashews immediately after harvesting. This finding is in line with the findings of Jaisridhar (2009) [8].

Delayed cash payment was expressed as a constraint by 66.33 per cent of those who responded. This could be due to the reason that the cash payments are obtained by the farmers even after several months after sale of their produce. As soon as the product is harvested, the product is procured immediately by the local buyers and this lead to delayed payment from them. Sometimes, it takes about months to receive the payments. This finding is in line with the findings of Kannan (2013) ^[11].

As famers are unaware of the support price by the government, middleman and commission agents finds their opportunity to deceive their profits. This in turn leads to express lack of reasonable support price by 64.00 per cent of the respondents. Reasonable price or minimum support price is fixed by the state and central governments for the welfare of farmers. But due to the activity of commission agents and middleman the minimum support price was also not acquired by the local farmers. This finding is in line with the findings of Shekar (2018) ^[7].

Lack of transport facilities were expressed as a constraint by 63.00 per cent of those who responded. This could be due to the reason that there were no low cost transportation measures for transporting farmer's produces to market. Transporting agricultural products from farmer's field to the market is often found as a hard task, since the farmers lack transport facilities. Even though transport facilities are arranged by paying rent, the rental prices are often too expensive to be paid by the farmers. Hence, lack of transporting facilities is often found as a major constraint by cashew growers. This finding is in line with the findings of Dhara (2015) ^[6].

Conclusion

The significant production constraints reported were, lack of training in cashew cultivation (90.33 per cent), high labour cost (78.33 per cent), lack of knowledge to identify pests and diseases (73.33 per cent), high cost of inputs (73.00 per cent), lack of technical guidance (71.67 per cent), labour scarcity (71.00 per cent), lack of subsidy for inputs (65.67 per cent), lack of knowledge about application of plant protection chemicals (64.33 per cent), poor storage facilities (63.00 per cent), high rate of interest for credit (59.00 per cent), occurrence of heavy pest and diseases in intercrop (51.67 per cent) and non-availability of inputs (29.00 per cent). The important marketing constraints reported by the respondents were exploitation by middleman (95.67 per cent), high commission charges (88.33 per cent), uncertainty of market (76.00 per cent), high fluctuation in price (71.33 per cent), delayed cash payment (66.33 per cent), lack of reasonable support price (64.00 per cent) and lack of transport facilities (63.00 per cent).

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