



A STUDY ON CONSTRAINTS FACED BY THE BANANA GROWERS IN THE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF BANANA

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ABSTRACT

The present study is a pioneering venture aimed to study the constraints faced by the banana growers in production and marketing of banana. The study was undertaken in one block of Tiruchirapalli district in Tamil Nadu. By resorting to proportionate random sampling method, 120 farmers were selected as respondents. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The farmers had experienced constraints in production and marketing of banana growers. The finding will be of great use for the planners, policy makers, extension specialist, administrators, sociologies and welfare economist while formulating entrepreneurial behavior by designing training programmes and strategies for development of banana production. The production constraints experienced by the farmers in production of bananas were labor scarcity, high labor cost, non-availability of good quality suckers, inadequate power supply, high cost of inputs, inadequate water supply during summer, insufficient credit facilities, pest and diseases attack. Fixation of price by commission agents, lack of cold storage facilities, improper weighing procedures, perishability of the banana, price fluctuation and inadequate transport facilities were the marketing constraints expressed by the respondents.

KEY WORDS: *Banana, Entrepreneurs, Production, Marketing, Constraints.*

INTRODUCTION

Banana (*Musa sp.*) is a large perennial herb with leaf sheaths that form trunk like pseudo stem. Banana has their origin in tropical region of South East Asia. Banana is a nutritious gold mine. It has Vitamin B6, Manganese, Vitamin C, Fiber, Biotin and Copper. They are also rich in potassium and are of a great source of fiber. In recent years, considering the adverse impact of indiscriminate use of chemicals, new trend for organic production of banana is increasing in the country. A new name, i.e. "Green Foods" for this has been coined. World banana was produced in the total area of 50,07,520 hectares, of this India stood first in area under banana, which was 7,75,995 hectares and it accounted 15.50 per cent of the total area under banana production in the world. In India, banana and plantain are widely grown in both tropical and subtropical regions comprising Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa, Bihar, eastern U.P, West Bengal, Assam and North eastern states with considerable socio-economic and cultural importance. Tiruchirappalli is the leading banana producing district in the state of Tamil Nadu with the production of 4,57,200 million tonnes in a land area of 8,870 hectares and it stood second place with the productivity of 51.54 million tonnes per hectare.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Trichy block has nine taluks out of which Thottiyam block was selected as it has the maximum area, production and productivity under banana. Out of 17 villages of Thottiyam block, four villages were selected based on the maximum area under banana cultivation. The selected four were Thottiyam, Alagarai, Sriramasamudiram, Kattuputhur. Fourteen independent variables were selected for the study. Data has been collected with a pre-tested interview schedule. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed. Constraints experienced by the banana growers in production and marketing were elicited. Percentage analysis was done to make simple comparisons wherever necessary.



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data on constraints faced by the banana growers in production of banana are presented in the Table-1.

Table 1. Constraints faced by respondents in Banana Production

(n= 120)

Sl. No	Constraints	Number of respondents	Percent
01	Labour scarcity	110	91.66
02	High labour cost	108	90.00
03	Non-availability of good quality suckers	100	83.33
04	Inadequate power supply	90	75.00
05	High cost of inputs	86	71.66
06	Inadequate water supply during summer	80	66.66
07	Insufficient credit facilities	76	63.33
08	Pest and disease attack	70	58.33

The Table 1 reveals that labor scarcity and high labor cost were the constraints experienced by more than ninety percent of the respondents. (91.66 per cent) and (90.00 per cent) respectively. Banana cultivation requires more number of labors from sowing to harvesting operations. The labor requirement for harvesting operations is more as it involves frequent and number of harvests. Nowadays labor scarcity is a common problem due to their diversified employment opportunities. Even when they are available they have to be paid with higher wages and hence, majority of the respondent reported those major constraints. This finding is in line with the findings of Silambarasan (2015).

‘Non –availability of good quality suckers’ was the constraints experienced by (83.33 per cent) of the respondents. Good quality is a must for getting high yield in banana cultivation. The farmers could not get high because they use the suckers of their own field year after year. They are in need of good quality suckers, but they could not get them. This finding is in line with the findings of Misra (2001).

The fourth constraints experienced by (75.00 per cent) of the respondents were ‘inadequate power supply’. During summer the respondents reported that the power was supplied only on shift basis i.e., 5 to 6 hours per day and hence they could not make use of the power when they are in need. Moreover the power supply during summer season was erratic as reported by many of the respondents. More than (66.66 per cent) of the respondents expressed ‘inadequate water supply during summer’ as a constraints. During summer, the water level would go down and hence the availability of water for irrigation would be limited. Therefore, the farmers could not undertake cultivation in larger area. These may be the reason for the above-reported constraints. This finding is in line with the finding of Shivajiganesan (2011).

‘Inadequate credit facilities’, ‘pest and disease attack’ were the constraints expressed by (63.33 and 58.33 percent) of the respondents respectively. The farmers could not avail in the credit facility from the banks because of the tedious and time consuming procedure. They could not borrow money from non-institutional source because high interest rates. Fruit rot and stem borer are the major pest in banana causing damage at the time of the harvest leading to poor quality of bananas. Hence, the above constraints were reported. This finding is in line with the findings Of Sumitha (2007).

The results on constraints experience by the banana growers in marketing of banana are presented in Table 2 and discussed



Table 2. Constraints faced by respondents in banana marketing

(n= 120)

Sl. No	Constraints	Number of respondents	Percent
01	Fixation of price by commission agents	112	93.33
02	Improper weighing procedures	108	90.00
03	Lack of cold storage facilities	104	86.66
04	Perishability of the banana	101	84.16
05	Price fluctuation	90	75.00
06	Inadequate transport facilities	45	37.50

The Table 2 shows that ninety per cent of the respondents experienced the problems of fixation of price by commission agents (93.33 per cent), improper weighing procedure (90.00 per cent) and lack of cold storage facilities (86.66 per cent).

Regarding price fixation, it is done mostly by the commission agents. They fix very low prices without considering the production cost and hence, the farmers suffer like anything. Also, the weighing procedure followed by commission agents and middle man were improper. This finding is in line with the findings of Prakash (2016).

Bananas are highly perishable in nature. If there is lack of demand for bananas or where they are produced in excess there is a need for cold storage facility. But, there are no cold storage facilities available to store the bananas. Because of this constraint, the wastage will be more resulting in poor net returns. In addition, the export opportunities are also very much limited due to lack of organized efforts. This finding is in line with the findings of Paul (1998).

Price fluctuation was a constraints faced by (75.00 per cent) of the respondents. The demand for bananas is seasonal and hence, the price fluctuates day by day. Due to this fluctuation in prices, the farmer could not get good returns. That was why, many respondents reported it is a constraints. This finding is in line with the findings of Eswaran (2012).

CONCLUSION

The production constraints experienced by the farmers in production of bananas were labor scarcity, high labor cost, non-availability of good quality suckers, inadequate power supply, high cost of inputs, inadequate water supply during summer, insufficient credit facilities and pest and diseases attack. Fixation of price by commission agents, lack of cold storage facilities, improper weighing procedures, perish ability of the banana, price fluctuation and inadequate transport facilities were the marketing constraints expressed by the respondents.

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