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Constraints faced by the cashew growers of Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Cashew is generally described as poor man's crop and rich man's food. Cashew is a native of Brazil, which was spread by Portuguese to different parts of the world primarily for soil conservation, afforestation, and wasteland development. Cashew was introduced to India in the Malabar Coast in the 16th century and subsequently dispersed to other parts of the country. The cashew industry provides employment to more than 5 lakhs people in farms and factories, most of them in the rural areas. In cashew processing factories, over 95 per cent of the workers are women from the lowest strata of society, mainly belonging to socially and economically backward communities. Thus, apart from its economic significance, cashew industry has the potential to play a leading role in the social and financial uplift of rural poor. Cashews have served nutritional, medicinal, and wartime food. More recently, they have been used in the manufacture of adhesive, resins and natural insecticides. A paste of bark, grounded in water is used in a tropical applications for the cure of ringworm, in this form it can however act as irritant and should not be applied to sensitive skin or to children.

Keywords: Cashew, constraints, economic, rural industries

Introduction

Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*) belongs to the family Anacardiaceae. It's otherwise called as wondernut, zero cholesterol nuts, dollar earning crop and gold mine of wasteland. Cashew is generally described as poor man's crop and rich man's food. Cashew is a native of Brazil, which was spread by Portuguese to different parts of the world primarily for soil conservation, afforestation, and wasteland development. Cashew was introduced to India in the Malabar Coast in the 16th century and subsequently dispersed to other parts of the country. The cashew industry provides employment to more than 5 lakhs people in farms and factories, most of them in the rural areas. In cashew processing factories, over 95 per cent of the workers are women from the lowest strata of society, mainly belonging to socially and economically backward communities. Thus, apart from its economic significance, cashew industry has the potential to play a leading role in the social and financial uplift of rural poor (Senthil A and Mahesh M, 2013)^[1].

Cashews have served nutritional, medicinal, and wartime food. More recently, they have been used in the manufacture of adhesive, resins and natural insecticides. A paste of bark, grounded in water is used in a tropical applications for the cure of ringworm, in this form it can however act as irritant and should not be applied to sensitive skin or to children. The root can be used as purgative. The water resistant wood is used for boats and furies, while the resin, in addition to having industrial uses, is used as an expectorant and insect repellent. India has the largest area in cashew (730000 ha) followed by Brazil (663562 ha). India is the largest producer, processor, exporter and consumer of cashew in the world. In India cashew is mainly grown in Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa. It's also grown in non-traditional areas like Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya and Andaman and Nicobar islands. Madhya Pradesh has the largest area followed by Andhra Pradesh (150000 ha) and Kerala (102000 ha). The highest productivity of cashew nut was reported from Maharashtra (1200 kg/ha/year) followed by Kerala (900 kg raw nuts/ha/year).

Research methodology

This study was conducted in Ariyalur district, where cashew is the predominant crop and cultivated as a major crop. Ariyalur district occupies the first position in the state based on area under cashew cultivation. Further, the district is familiar to the student researcher and such familiarity has been considered necessary for the successful conduct of the study. Ariyalur district has six blocks viz., Andimadam, Ariyalur, Jayamkondam, Sendurai, T. Palur, Udaiyarpalayam. Of the six blocks, Andimadam block is selected based on the maximum area

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under cashew in Ariyalur district. There are 30 revenue villages in Andimadam block. A list of villages undertaking cashew cultivation was collected from the office of the ADH of Ariyalur district. Out of the 30 villages, five were selected based on the maximum area under cashew cultivation. From the list, five villages viz., Authukurichi, Andimadam, Kuvagam, Elaiyur and Vilandai occupied the first five places under maximum area under cashew cultivation. The findings on the constraints faced by the respondents in cashew grower are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Constraints faced by the cashew growers

S. No	Constraints	Respondents	Per cent	Rank
1.	Pest and disease problem	120	100.00	I
2.	Unpredictable weather	104	86.66	II
3.	Lack of rainfall	97	80.83	III
4.	High cost of labour	85	70.83	IV
5.	Non availability of labour in time	78	65.00	V
6.	Lack of information support	73	60.83	VI
7.	Inadequate credit facilities	57	30.00	VII

It is evident from the Table 1, that pest and disease problem (100.00 per cent) was the major constraint in cashew cultivation, followed by unpredictable weather (86.66 per cent), lack of rainfall (80.83 per cent), high cost of labour (70.83 per cent), non-availability of labour in time (65.00 per cent), and inadequate credit facilities (30.00 per cent).

Pest and disease problem (100.00 per cent) was the first major constraint faced by the respondents. Pest serves to major economic loss like loss of entire plant. Damages caused by the stem and root borer leads to permanent wilting, withering and drying of branches ultimately cutting of trees periodically when infested all over in years. Fruit and nut borer causes direct loss of economic produce leading to inferior quality and reduced yield. Diseases like powdery mildew, anthracnose, etc., also contribute to yield loss and quality of produce. Unpredictable weather (86.66 percent) was the second major constraint faced by the respondents. In recently past years weather and climate were abnormal from the regular climatic patterns. Lack of rainfall (80.83 per cent) was the third major constraint reported by the respondents. The recent climatic changes had resulted in low rainfall in the region.

High cost of labour (70.83 per cent) was the fourth major constraint reported by the respondents. Farm labours are slowly migrating to cities results in the non-availability of labours to do agricultural operations. The demand for labour results in increases in the wages of the labour. Non-availability of labour in time (65.00 per cent) was the fifth major constraint faced by the respondents. Even through the labours are available but they were not skilfully trained, resulting in improper farm operations in time. This might be the reason for the non-availability of labour in time.

Lack of information support was the sixth constraint expressed by 60.83 per cent of the respondents. During data collection, the researcher ascertained from the respondents that no systematic efforts were made by extension officials to disseminate the cashew technologies at village level. Hence, most of them depend upon input dealer to get their vital information like traditional varieties, chemicals and fertilizer recommendation and some of them get wrong information. It leads to heavy loss in their cashew cultivation. An inadequate credit facility (30.00 per cent) was the sixty major constraint faced by the respondents. Most of the respondents did not have adequate savings for the purchase of vital inputs and

other farm expenses. Hence the respondents express this as crucial constraint.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that the major constraints expressed by cashew growers in cashew cultivation were pest and disease problem (100.00 per cent), followed by unpredictable weather (86.66 per cent), lack of rainfall (80.83 per cent), high cost of labour (70.83 per cent), non-availability of labour in time (65.00 per cent), lack of information support (60.83 per cent) and inadequate credit facilities (30.00 per cent).

References

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