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Critical analysis of marketing constraints faced by pomegranate growers in Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra

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Abstract

Pomegranate is an important fruit of tropical and subtropical regions of India. The wide adaptability, hardy nature, low maintenance cost, steady and high yields, fine table and therapeutic values, better keeping quality and possibilities to throw the plants into rest period when there is scarcity of irrigation water are some of the qualities which make this fruit crop ideally suitable for semi arid and arid regions. The present study was conducted in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra state considering the area and production of pomegranate. During the study, it was observed that the major marketing constraints faced by pomegranate growers in study area were market fluctuation in price for their produce, lack of processing facilities, high cost of transportation, low price paid to pomegranate growers and lack of storage facility. While the least felt constraints were payment insecurity, unavailability of skilled labour and risk bearing.

Keywords: Marketing Constraints, Pomegranate.

Introduction

Pomegranate (*Punica granatum* L.) is one of the most remunerative fruit crops grown in Maharashtra. Its ability to resist drought, wide adaptability to soil and climatic conditions profitable is without much care and ability to flower in all three seasons has put it way ahead than other crops. Pomegranate is originated in Iran and extensively cultivated in Mediterranean countries like Spain, Mexico, Iran, Egypt and Afghanistan. In India 2 lakh hectares area under pomegranate crop, which is mainly grown in states of Maharashtra, Gujarat followed by Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Maharashtra stands first in the country in respect of area and production of pomegranate. At present 1, 75,000 hectares area under pomegranate crops with 18, 00,000 tones production, 6.0 million tones per ha productivity and 66.21 per cent total share in production (Anonymous, 2017) [1]. Pomegranate growers necessarily get benefit as per the production cost. But unfortunately they get less profit due to large number of marketing intermediaries in marketing process. An attempt has been made to analyze marketing problems faced by pomegranate growers.

Material and Methods

Multistage sampling method was used for selection of talukas and villages. The pomegranate growers were selected randomly from the selected villages. In the Maharashtra state, Ahmednagar is one of the leading district in the cultivation of pomegranate. Ahmednagar district comes under the arid region of the scarcity zone. For the same the land of Ahmednagar district is suitable for pomegranate cultivation. The primary unit of the sample was talukas of Ahmednagar districts. The leading talukas of pomegranate cultivation in Ahmednagar district are Sangamner, Akole, and Rahata. All three talukas were selected purposively. The secondary unit of the sample was villages. Five villages from each talukas having maximum area under pomegranate cultivation were selected for the study. From each village 10 farmers who

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cultivate pomegranate were selected randomly. Thus, total sample size for the research were 150. Data were collected from primary sources to achieve the stated objectives. Garrett's ranking technique Garrett's ranking technique was used to study the opinion of the farmers regarding the major constraints associated with marketing of pomegranate.

Result and Discussion

The results in Table 1 indicated that, the constraints faced by pomegranate growers in marketing of pomegranate cultivation practices were as follows. The first and foremost problem was fluctuation in market prices (Rank I). Currently pomegranate growers were facing the price fluctuation due to more production against less demand and area under pomegranate increased in more new states. In addition to these, lack of processing facilities (Rank II) is not available because the research on value addition and post harvest technology in pomegranate is not spread among the growers. The consumer prefer table pomegranate for direct consumption rather than process products. Further, high cost of transportation (Rank III) viz., were ranked on fourth position. As the availability of national markets and international ports are far away from the production area. This problem can be solved by strengthening the railway transportation from production area to distant market. While, low price paid to pomegranate growers was rank IV. Present day farmers were facing the problems of low price due to lesser seasonal demand and poor quality. Reason

for poor quality of fruits is attributed due to unfavorable climatic conditions in production area. Lack of storage facilities (Rank V) was another major marketing problem. Due to the non availability of storage structures at farm level farmers are not in the position to command better price and often undertake distress sale. These are the reasons of marketing constraints. The rank of unavailability of transport facility were VI faced by pomegranate growers. This problem was due to unavailability of well connected road and transport vehicles in distant area of production. Lack of market information ranked VII. As it was found that most of pomegranate growers are nor friendly using IT tools to gather market information. The fruit spoilage due to damage during transportation was rankled VIII because it was evident that the packaging material used was not of poor quality and during long transportation damages accord was high. The IX rank constraint was found to be payment insecurity due to cash transaction between grower and traders. As most of the traders belonged to other states, the chances of payment defaults were felt high on growers side. The rank of unavailability of skilled labour was rank second last i.e. X. Because as the pomegranate is been cultivated since long in the districts the skilled labour are easily available to the pomegranate growers. The least felt constraints by pomegranate grower was risk bearing as they are assured of good income from pomegranate.

Table 1: Garrett's ranking for Constraints in Marketing of Pomegranates Growers

Sr. No.	Constraints	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Fluctuations in market prices	82.20	I
2.	Lack of processing facilities	73.60	II
3.	High cost of transportation	67.57	III
4.	Low price paid to pomegranate growers.	61.73	IV
5.	Lack of storage facility	56.80	V
6.	Unavailability of transport facility	49.84	VI
7.	Lack of market information	41.32	VII
8.	Fruit spoilage due to damage During transportation	36.16	VIII
9.	Payment insecurity	33.19	IX
10.	Unavailability of skilled labour	28.67	X
11.	Risk bearing	23.53	XI

Conclusion

Hence it can be concluded from the study that the major marketing constraints faced by pomegranate growers in study area were market fluctuation in price for their produce, lack of processing facilities, high cost of transportation, low price paid to pomegranate growers, lack of storage facility. It can also concluded that least felt constraints were payment insecurity, unavailability of skilled labour and risk bearing. With the help of the above study the researcher tried to understand the related problems of pomegranate growers. Conclusions of this study will be helpful to pomegranate growers and agencies who are engaged in production and marketing of pomegranate for designing future policies.

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