

Trends in area, production and productivity of cashew in India – An economic analysis

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ABSTRACT

Cashew is one of the most valuable processed nuts on global commodity markets and has the potential to generate employment and revenue for developing countries. India is the second largest exporter of cashew kernels in the world and earns a sizeable amount of foreign exchange. In India, cultivation of cashew is confined to Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra along the west coast and Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal along the east coast. To a limited extent it is being cultivated in Chattisgarh, North Eastern states and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Area under cashew nuts in India increased by 53 per cent from 5.65 lakh hectares during 1993-94 to 9.23 lakh hectares during 2009-10. The compound annual growth rate in production was the maximum in Maharashtra (10.81%) followed by Tamil Nadu (7.30%) and Orissa (6.24%). The yield of cashewnut in India increased from 694 kg/ha during 1993-94 to 695 kg/ha during 2009-10. Cashew prices in Goa were higher as compared to other states because of the large size of nuts as compared to the nuts of other states.

KEY WORDS : Production, Growth rate, Cashew, Co-efficient of variation, Herfindahl index

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Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale* L.) often referred to as 'wonder nut', is one of the most valuable processed nuts traded on the global commodity markets and is also an important cash crop. It has the potential to provide source of livelihood for the cashew growers, empower rural women in the processing sector, create employment opportunities and generate foreign exchange through exports.

Cashew tree is believed to be a native of Brazil, from where it has dispersed to different parts of the world primarily for soil conservation, afforestation and wasteland development. The term 'cashew' has originated from the Brazilian name 'acajaiba' and the Tupi name 'acaju', which the Portuguese converted into 'caju' and is commonly known as 'kaju' in India. It is known as 'Paragi Andi' in Kerala meaning foreign nut, 'Lanka Beeja' in Orissa assuming its introduction from Sri Lanka, and 'Mundiri' indicating the shape of the nut in Tamil Nadu. Cashew is cultivated mainly in the Asian, African and Latin American zones. The Asiatic zone includes India and Vietnam as the major producers, besides Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. In the African zone, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Tanzania are the major producers, besides other countries like Benin, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Ghana, Senegal and Madagascar. The primary producers in the Latin American zone is Brazil, besides Columbia, Costa Rica, Honduras and Salvador (Pillai and Santha, 2008).

In India, the Portuguese introduced cashew in the

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