

RESEARCH ARTICLE :

Marketing behaviour of coleus growers

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SUMMARY : Medicinal plants gain significance because of their contribution to local health support systems, generation of local income, foreign exchange earnings and contribution to bio-diversity. Medicinal plants, if cultivated properly, it can contribute significantly to the economic rural development. This study was conducted in Salem district of Tamil Nadu, from the selected district four villages were taken for the study. The medicinal plants selected for the study purpose was coleus which is cultivated in Salem district of Tamil Nadu. Regarding the export of medicinal plants India's contribution to the international market is increasing rapidly (Kumar, 2004). This can be achieved through increased cultivation of medicinal plants. At this juncture, marketing behaviour of the medicinal plant growers was considered important and analysed. The finding concluded that they existed low marketing behaviour among the growers.

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KEY WORDS :

Medicinal plant growers, Marketing behaviour, Coleus, Glory lily

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

India has been a traditional exporter of medicinal plants for the past several decades and ranks one of the foremost suppliers of medicinal plants in the world. Though we are ranking second place in terms of export of medicinal plants, we rank only sixth position in terms of its value (Rajamani, 2004). The marketing of medicinal plants is inefficient, informal, secretive and opportunistic. As a result, the raw material supply situation is shaky, unsustainable and exploitative. Hence, the marketing behaviour of the respondents was studied, which includes mode of transport, place of sale, mode of sale, terms and condition for sale, selling pattern of farm produces, payment pattern, packing material used,

opinion about existing market facilities, price etc.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Salem district of Tamil Nadu during the year 2012. Out of the 31 districts in Tamil Nadu, Salem district has been selected purposively for the study due to its area under medicinal plant cultivation is more in the selected district while comparing other districts of Tamil Nadu.

In Tamil Nadu medicinal plants namely *Coleus forskholii* (Coleus), *Gloriosa superba* (Glory lily), *Cassia angustifolia* (senna), *Catharanthus roseus* (Periwinkle) are cultivated widely. For the study, it has been decided to take the medicinal plants that are

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cultivated in more than 1000 acres. Consequently, the medicinal plants coleus was cultivated in more area in Salem district. Hence, Salem district was purposively selected for the study. There are twenty blocks in Salem district, one block from namely, Attur were selected, because of the reason that this block had the maximum area under coleus cultivation. Four villages from Attur block were selected. A sample size of 75 respondents was selected and interviewed. Respondents were selected by using proportionate random sampling method.

The information to study the objective was collected by using the well structured interview schedule. A pilot study was conducted in the non-sample area to pretest the schedule in order to test and verify the applicability of the schedule. Percentage analysis was used for making simple comparison for calculating percentages for different items in their marketing behaviour. By using the cumulative frequency, their marketing behaviour was classified into low, medium, high.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Marketing behaviour referred to the capacity or tendency of an individual farmer to identify the market trend to sell the produce for greater returns.

In this study marketing behaviour was studied under different dimensions *viz.*, mode of transport, place of sale, mode of sale, terms and condition for sale, selling pattern of farm produce, payment pattern, packing material used, opinion about existing market facilities, price etc.

From the Table 1, it could be concluded that, the majority of coleus respondents had low (69.00%) level marketing behaviour followed by medium and high (19.00% and 12.00%) levels of marketing behaviour, respectively. The attributed reason for the low marketing behaviour among coleus respondents might be due to the involvement of intermediaries in the marketing channel, secretive trade, no proper market and unstable price. The findings derive support from the findings of

Ramasubramanian (2000).

Place of sale :

From the Table 2, cent per cent(100.00%) of the coleus respondents sold their produce in the village itself, as there is no proper market place to sell their produce, The contract firms/brokers could have involved in collecting the produce directly from the growers and this might be the reason for the result.

Persons to whom sold :

Table 2, inferred that majority (64.00%) of the coleus respondents sold their produce through traders of contract farming and (36.00%) of the coleus respondents sold their produce to the brokers. In case of coleus respondents, if they are contract farmers the officials from the contract group will take the responsibility in collecting the produce and if they are not contract farmers the brokers will collect the produce immediately after harvest.

The existence of secretive trade and the guidance provided by the contract officials and brokers with regard to marketing might be a reason for the above results.

Terms and condition of sale :

From Table 2, it was observed that majority (64.00%) of the coleus respondents came under the category of deferred cash payment and the remaining (36.00%) under ready cash payment. It might be due to existence of contract farming and if not terms and condition of sale was through brokers where ready cash payment was done.

Same/fluctuating price of the produce :

From the Table 2, it is revealed that majority (89.00%) of the coleus growers are not able to sell their produce for the price throughout the year. The reason might be due to the ignorance of price of the produce among the respondents, fluctuation in the demand and price of product in the international market.

Sr. No	Category	Coleus growers	
		No.	%
1.	Low	52	69.00
2.	Medium	14	19.00
3.	High	9	12.00
	Total	75	100.00

Sr. No.	Particulars	Coleus growers	
		No.	%
1.	Place of sale		
	In the village itself	75	100.00
	Nearby town	-	-
	Distant town (whole sale market)	-	-
	Total	75	100.00
2.	Persons to whom sold		
	Brokers/middle men	27	36.00
	Consumers	-	-
	Practising Siddha doctors	-	-
	Exporters through commission agents	-	-
	Traders through contract farming	48	64.00
	Company supplying material	-	-
	Society/NGO	-	-
	Exporters/wholesale traders directly	-	-
	Total	75	100.00
3.	Terms and condition of sale		
	Pre-harvest contract	48	64.00
	Deferred cash payment	-	-
	Ready cash payment	27	36.00
	Total	75	100.00
4.	Same/ fluctuating price		
	Yes	8	11.00
	No	67	89.00
	Total	75	100.00
5.	Time of sale		
	Immediately after harvest	75	100.00
	When in need of cash	-	-
	When it is convenient	-	-
	When price is attractive	-	-
	Total	75	100.00
6.	Grading of produce		
	Yes	-	-
	No	75	100.00
	Total	75	100.00
7.	Price fixation of the produce		
	Auction at market	-	-
	Fixed price by buyers based on the demand in the international markets	75	100.00
	Weight	-	-
	Grade	-	-
	Total	75	100.00

Table 2 : Contd.....

8.	Disposal of the produce		
	By/volume/weight	75	100.00
	Quality	-	-
	Total	75	100.00
9.	Packing material		
	Nothing	75	100.00
	Gunny bags	-	-
	Polythene bags	-	-
	Wooden box	-	-
	Total	75	100.00
10.	Made of transport		
	Head load	-	-
	Bicycle	-	-
	Bullock cart	11	15.00
	Tractor	64	85.00
	Total	75	100.00
11.	Opinion about existing market facilities		
	Insufficient	75	100.0
	Sufficient	-	-
	Quite sufficient	-	-
	Total	75	100.00
12.	Opinion about the prevailing market price		
	High	7	9.00
	Medium	68.00	91.00
	Low	-	-
	Total	75	100.00

Time of sale :

From the Table 2, it can be concluded that, the cent per cent of the coleus growers sold their produce immediately after harvest.

The economic part that is sold are the tubers, this cannot be maintained upto the needed moisture level and cannot be stored unless the coleus respondents have a good post harvest facilities hence, the contract farming officials and the brokers collect the produce immediately after harvest and moreover if the coleus tubers are not maintained at the correct level the tubers will be rejected hence the farmers do not take such risk they sell the tubers immediately after harvest.

Grading of produce :

According to the Table 2, cent per cent of coleus respondents do not grade their produce this may due to the

immediate disposal of produce after harvest and moreover the coleus respondents do not have any facility to check the moisture level of their produce to be sold.

Price fixation for the produce :

The results presented in Table 2, cent per cent of coleus respondents stated that the price was fixed by buyers based on the demand in the international markets. The demand and price for the produce will be always fluctuating and the price for the produce will not be known as like for the other produces.

Disposal of produce :

It concluded from the Table 2, that cent per cent of the coleus respondents disposed their produce through weight; this might be felt as the easy way of measuring the bulk quantity of produce by the respondents, contract officials/brokers. Later from the traders, when the produce is ready for export the produce is checked for its quality. Quality here for coleus depends mainly on the moisture content.

Packing material :

The Table 2 indicates that, 100.00 per cent of the coleus respondents do not use any packing material. The harvested produce is the tubers which are to be further processed (Coleus tubers are further cut into bits) before it reaches the exporters so it might a reason for not using any packing material when it is transported from the field.

Mode of transport :

As per the Table 2, that more than three-fourth (85.00%) of the coleus respondents utilized tractor as means of transport and the rest (15.00%) of the coleus respondents used bullock cart for transporting their produce.

As the entire field will be harvested the quantity will be more so this might be a reason to use tractor and bullock cart as a means of transport. More over only the loading charges will be collected from the growers, the transport charges will be meet out by the traders/contract officials hence, to be cost effective the traders/contract officials could have chosen these two type of transport.

Opinion on existing market facility :

The Table 2, concluded that cent per cent of the respondents stated that the marketing facility was

insufficient for the coleus respondents.

As mentioned earlier there is no market for selling the produce, unstable price, involvement of lot of intermediaries in the market channel, secretive trade may be the reason for insufficient market facility.

Opinion on market price :

Table 2, indicates that majority of the respondents (91.00 %) of the coleus had medium opinion on the prevailing market price and 9.00 per cent of coleus respondents had high opinion on the prevailing market price. The reason might be due to ignorance of price among respondents and fluctuating demand and price for the produce in the international market (Pushpa and Desingurajan, 2012).

Conclusion :

The findings of WHO (2002), reported that the global value of medicinal related trade in India is 5.5 billion US dollar and is growing rapidly. Further, the international market of herbal produce is estimated to be US\$ 62 billion which is poised to grow to US \$ 5 trillion by the year 2050. To attain this stage we need to set right the negative markings. And since the marketing behaviour of the respondents is found to be low, this facility should be strengthened. Price fore cast, avoidance of too many intermediaries in the market channel, formation of medicinal plant grower association may be few of the suggestion to overcome the problem.

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