



“A STUDY OF AGRICULTURE MARKETING WITH REFERENCE TO THE GROWERS OF FIG AND CUSTARD APPLE BELONGS TO PURANDAR TALUKA OF PUNE DISTRICT”

Dr. Yuvraj Rajaram Thorat

Vice Principal , Appasaheb Jedhe Mahavidyalaya Pune.

ABSTRACT:

Agriculture is the mainstream of the state of Maharashtra. It is the main occupation of the people. Both food crops and cash crops are grown in the state. Large area of the state has been brought under fruit cultivation. The researcher has selected Purandar taluka as the representative of the drought prone area. Fig, custard apple, pomegranate, ber are popular fruits grown in this area. For the economic development of farmers having dry and waste land the fruit plantation is useful. It may increase exports and earn foreign currency. The present research is focused on the problems related to fig and custard apple Marketing and tendency of farmers to sell fig and custard apple with special reference to Purandar taluka of Pune District.

KEYWORDS: Fig, Custard apple, selling trend, marketing strategy, Agricultural Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The agricultural marketing system is a link between the farm and non-farm sectors. With the development in agricultural sector, the marketing system has also changed. In the Indian context, “agricultural marketing is a process which starts with a decision to produce a saleable farm commodity, and it involves all the aspects of market structure or system, both functional and institutional, based on technical and economic considerations, and includes pre- and post-harvest operation, assembling, grading, storage, transportation and distribution”. In Maharashtra in spite of the existence of regulated marketing, the system of agricultural marketing varies from region to region and also within a region. The prevalent systems are— sale in village, sale in mandis, sale in weekly markets, sale of agricultural produce through co-operatives and sales to government. In earlier days when the village economy was more or less self-sufficient the marketing of agricultural products presented no difficulty as the farmer sold his produce to the consumer on a cash or barter basis. Today’s agricultural marketing has to undergo a series of exchanges or transfers from one person to another before it reaches the consumer.

Selling of fig and custard apple depends on some couple of factors like the demand of the product at that time, availability of storage etc. It may be sold directly in the market or it may be stored locally for the time being. Moreover, it may be sold as it is gathered from the field or it may be cleaned, graded and processed by the farmer or the merchant of the village.



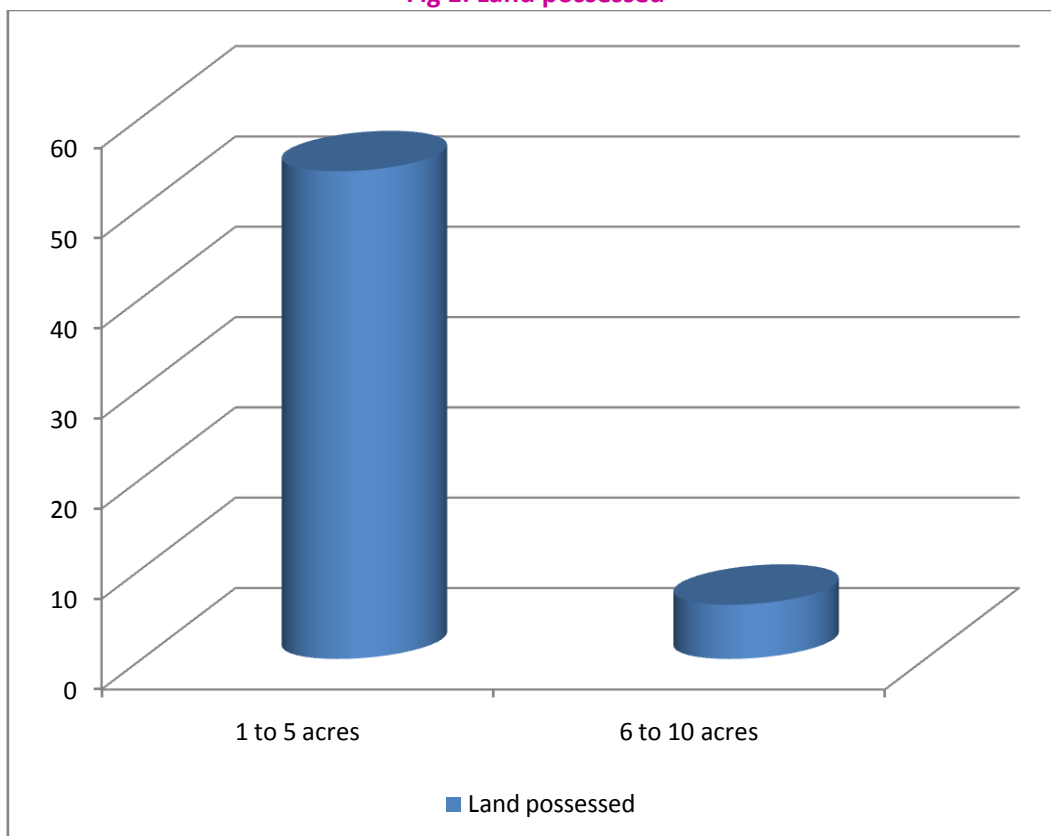
Fruits are highly perishable. Therefore Careful and continual care is needed during its production and marketing. Growing and selling fruits can be a satisfying family business. Fruits and vegetables are produced seasonally, but the market requires products throughout the year. For many decades, this problem of matching product availability with consumer demand was solved in two ways. First means is to sale fresh products during harvest and shortly thereafter. Second means is to process it to meet demand during the rest of the year. In present research study 60 farmers belongs to Purandar taluka of Pune district

who are growing fig and custard apple are interviewed. The land possessed by these farmers is given in following table no.1.

Table 1: Land possessed

Land possessed	No. of respondents	No. of respondents in %
1 to 5 acres	54	90
6 to 10 acres	6	10

Fig 1: Land possessed



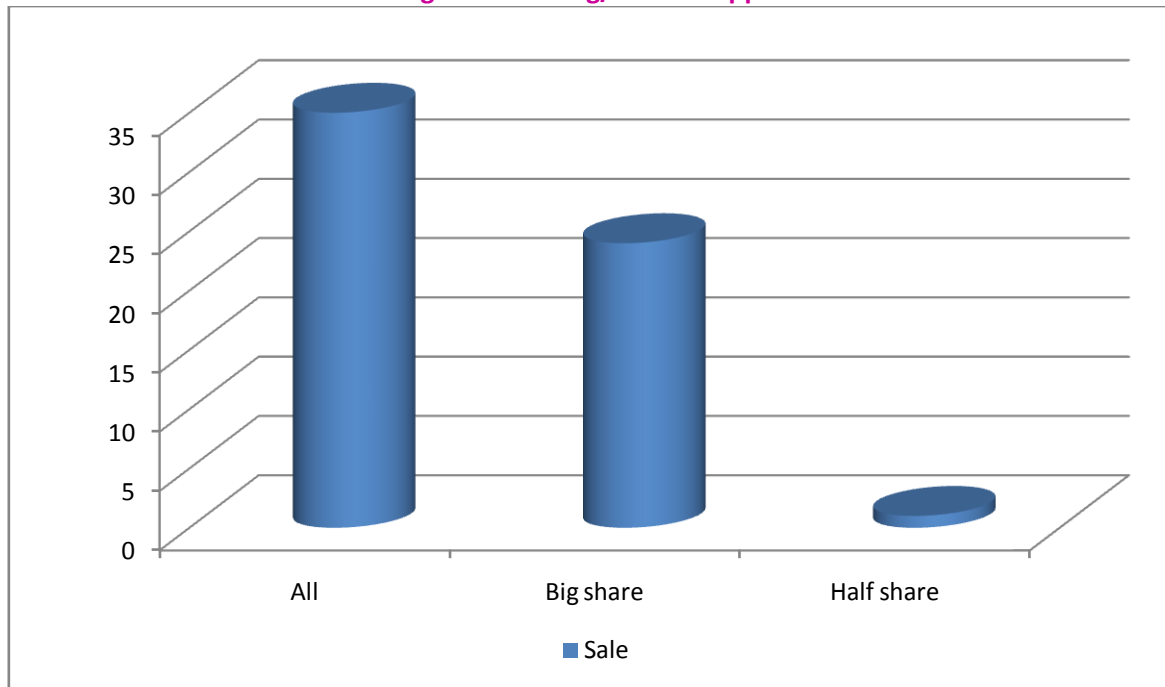
Source: Table 1

Fig.1 shows that majority of the respondents possess 1 to 5 acres of land. The selling trend of the respondents is shown in following table no.2.

Table: 2 Sale of Fig/Custard apple

Sale	No. of respondents	Percentage
All	35	58
Big share	24	40
Half share	1	2

Fig : 2 Sale of Fig/Custard apple



Source: Table no.2

Fig no 5 indicates that most of the respondents (58%) sales all of their figs and custard apples in the market,48% sales big share of their production and 2% said that they sale half of their fruits and remaining are used for their own consumption.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO FIG AND CUSTARD APPLE MARKETING

The problems related to Fig and Custard apples marketing which are observed by researcher are as follows.

1. Illiteracy and Lack of Unity among Farmers

Most of the farmers are illiterate who are easier be fooled by the money lenders, traders, middlemen, due to their simple nature. Similarly, lack of unity among farmers also causes their exploitation because farmers are spread in distant areas in rural places.

2. Too Many Intermediates

The one main defect of the Agricultural marketing is the presence of too many middlemen and exploitation of farmers by them.

3. Lack of Financial Resources

In the rural areas there is lack of financial resources, due to which even their emergency requirements are not fulfilled. In such conditions the farmers sell their produce before its ripening.

4. Lack of Organized Marketing System

The agricultural marketing is not organized like, cooperative societies, government marketing activities, regular markets etc. As a result, the farmer remains entangled in exploitation.

5. Lack of Transport Facilities

The roads from Villages to cities are usually unmade which are not capable of transport during the rainy season.

6. *Lack of Store Houses*

An important deficiency of agricultural marketing is lack of store houses. Due to lack of this facility the farmer is unable to keep his product safely until it can fetch a fair price, and he is forced to sell his product at a low price.

7. *Corrupt Policies of the 'Mandis'*

In mandis, the middlemen and the traders jointly make fool the simple farmers.

8. *Lack of Standardization*

The lack of standardization and grading is clearly visible in the Agricultural marketing, due to which fixing a deal in relation to these products becomes difficult.

9. *Lack of Awareness of the Market*

The farmer has no knowledge about marketing. They believe on information acquired from the businessmen and money lenders of the village. Mostly, the farmers are illiterate so they cannot read the newspaper. Thus, they do not have sufficient knowledge about the market.

10. *Defective Weights and Scales*

One of the biggest defects of agricultural marketing arises due to weights and scales. Usually, in rural areas stones, etc. are used as weights and in urban markets also defective weights are found.

SUGGESTIONS

In order to solve marketing related problems of fig and custard apple producing farmers following suggestions are made by the researcher

1. Linking small and marginal farmers with multinational and national companies like Hindustal Unilever Ltd. Brand Kissan, IT Food Ltd. Brand Dawaat, Modern Diary brand Safal, Britannia, Nestle, Heritage food Ltd. Kohnoor Food Ltd. Parle Agro, Mc Cain Food, Ruchi Soya, etc.
2. Recently web based and mobile app based platforms like veggibazar.com, vegwala.com, farm2kitch, mondionwheels.com, harrafresh, freshdaily, veggies.co.in, vegfru, greencart.in, go4fresh.in, bigbasket.com, fruitvegetable.com, greentokri.com, etc are used to sale agricultural products. hence farmers may adopt such tricks.
3. The government should come up with subsidies, advertisements with film personalities to make it more popular.
4. Cold storages with facility of built in pre-cooling, high humidity and controlled atmosphere for storage of produce for a longer period are essential for effective marketing of the perishable horticultural produce.
5. There is an urgent need to establish a strong network of communication in the rural and urban markets for effective information flow.
6. There is a need for developing specialized markets for fig and custard apple.
7. Considering the useful role, direct marketing has played in the interest of both producers and consumers it is necessary to promote Apni Mandis and Shetkari Bazaars.
8. The Government may work out a farmer centric 'Code of Conduct' for contract farming arrangements, which should form the basis of all contract farming agreements and also encourage development of farmer's groups/organizations to negotiate with the purchasers and take care of the interests of the small farmers.
9. A marketing system backed by strong, adequate infrastructure is at the core of agricultural marketing. Market infrastructure is important not only for the performance of various marketing functions and expansion of the size of the market but also for transfer of appropriate price signals leading to improved marketing efficiency. Hence efforts should be made to strengthen the infrastructure.
10. The Government can come up with certain subsidies to increase the use of fig and custard apple. The growers of this plant can be given awards as is now given for bamboo growers. They can also be supplied with free nutrients for the growth of these plants.
11. The Govt. can give advertisements to take these fruits regularly as they give for eggs.
12. The advertisements can be made as such that big sports persons or actors take the fruit daily.

13. Strong network of marketing extension is very much necessary at District/block/Village level to effectively advise farmers on various aspects of marketing, advice on product planning, marketing information, securing market for farmers, advice on improved market practices and advice on post-harvest management practices.

CONCLUSION

Figs and Custard apple are very popular among small and marginal farmers because they are more labour intensive, provide recurring income, high value markets, offer value addition possibilities and give risk management mechanism against crop failure. But these fruits also have more capital intensive required much post harvest handling, most perishable in nature and their market price highly fluctuate due to market price instability. Consumer market available in urban areas and due to long distance it is not possible for small and marginal farmers to sell their produce directly, it has created a very large supply chain full of middle men.

Agricultural marketing includes the movement of agricultural produce from farms where it is produced to the consumers or manufacturers. An efficient marketing system provides an incentive to farmers to produce more; conveys changing needs of the economy to enable production planning; and fosters competition among traders, and eliminates exploitation, particularly among the small and marginal farmers. The emerging trend worldwide and also in the country which is indicative of paradigm shift in dietary needs of the people with the rise in the income, which demand for more horticulture produce. Custard apple and fig are important fruit crops. Considering the fast increasing area under custard apple and fig cultivation, methods of its preservation and processing technology needs to be developed to regulate the prices of produce during glut period.

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