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PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF BETEL LEAF: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO KADAPA DISTRICT ANDHRA PRADESH

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. This sector in India assumes special importance in the context of population explosion, and it is required that agricultural planning should be so devised that agricultural productivity should keep pace with the growing population.

Efficient agricultural management to ensure better productivity may make a valuable contribution to the balanced growth of the Indian economy because India is an agricultural country that is endowed with abundant natural resources. The development of agriculture to its fullest potential is, therefore, the king-pin of the Indian economy. Agricultural growth has a direct impact on poverty eradication. Its development also helps in controlling inflation, rising agricultural wages, and increasing employment generation.

Still, agriculture remains the largest employer, with about sixty percent of the population depending on agriculture for its livelihood. Agriculture provides an immense opportunity for trading activities which passes on the produce from wholesaler to retailer. What is more important is that despite these substantial material gains to the economy, it is a way of life, unique and irreplaceable in human values. Betel leaf is the native of Malaysia is an evergreen perennial creeper. Its botanical name is Piper betel Linn. It belongs to the piperaceae family. The name 'Piper' is

probably derived from the Sanskrit word "Pippali". The word betel means 'climbing plant‟ of which leaves are chewed. It is knownas Nagavalli in the northeastern and western regions of the country. In many parts of the country, it is known as pan/paan.

It is cultivated on a large scale in Assam, West Bengal, Orissa Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. The cultivation of betel leaf in India was confined in the hands of members of a particular community, which has been raising this crop from time immemorial. They were poor illiterate and engaged in betel leaf cultivation to earn a livelihood. No scientific studies have been carried out in the past and till now. Hence, the technology for raising this crop could not be improved. The Government of India realized the importance of developing scientific technology in betel leaf cultivation.

The importance of this crop differs from country to country. The international trade in this commodity is not significant. However, some quantity of betel leaves exported from India to different countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Egypt, Pakistan, Kenya, and Bangladesh. Indian‟s net returns form betel leaf are approximately 700 corers. There are many varieties of betel leaf, which is reported to be grown in different states of India. Leaves of betel leaf are chewed along with areca nut and lime throughout the length and breadth of the country.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the profile of betel leaf cultivation in KadapaDistrict.
2. To study the economics of betel leaf cultivation in Kadapa District.
3. To study the socio-economic profile of the betel leaf growers in the study area.
4. To study the marketing problems of Betel Leaf Cultivation
5. To study the constraints faced by betel leaf growers.
6. To study the findings and give suggestions to improve the betel leaf cultivation in the study area.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study had two phases, one focusing on production aspects and the other on marketing. The objective of covering the production aspects was to examine the

economics of the cultivation of betel leaf, which is vital for marketing.

LIMITATIONS

i) The present study is confined to one taluk of the district. Hence, the results obtained from this study may not be generalized for the whole of the district.

ii) The growers are very much unorganized and not habituated to maintain proper production and marketing statistics of their products.

The sample growers who had grown betel leaf in the agricultural year 2015 to 2016 were taken into account for this research. In choosing the sample betel leaf-growers, an attempt was made to select the sizeable number of growers as per the proposed study design. Still, in the course of preparing of growers‟ list, it was found that the cultivation of this crop is in the very meager area. So it was challenging to categorize the growers according to their land, class, and size, which was ranging between 0.05 and 0.30 hectares as per the records available in respective block offices. The probability proportion method of the ultimate growers was selected village wise. About twenty percent of the betel leaf growers formed the sample size of the study. The detail of the procedure adopted is presented hereunder. A list of betel leaf growers from each village was selected from the selected villages.

SAMPLING DESIGN

Totally 2254 farmers were engaged in cultivating betel leaf in the selected villages. So, the researcher proposes to select around 25% of farmers for the study, which aims at analyzing the cultivation methods and the problems faced by the farmers in the production and marketing of the betel leaf in the study area. A proportionate convenient sampling method was used to select the respondents. Hence a total of five hundred farmers from five villages, namely Muddanur, Jammalamadugu, Proddatur, Mydukur, Pulivendla and Kamalapuram. There have been selected for this research. The breakup of the total is presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: Distribution of Sample respondents in five Selected Villages

S. No	Name of the village	No. of. Betel leaf Cultivators	% to the total	No. of. Sample Respondents
1	Muddanur	699	31	155
2	Jammalamadugu	293	13	65
3	Proddatur	450	20	100
4	Mydukur	406	18	90
5	Pulivendla	406	18	90
	Total	2254	100	500

Source: http://english.kadapa.info/crops-and-soil-of-kadapa-district/

Collection of data

The researcher collected both primary and secondary data for this study. A comprehensive questionnaire schedule was prepared for the collection of primary data. The schedule was framed by arranging the questions systematically. In preparing such schedules, the objectives of the study were primarily kept in view. The presentation of schedules was done by taking a few farmers. After preparing the schedules, the actual fieldwork was conducted, and data were collected from selected farmers through personal interview techniques. Special care was taken to contact the farmers in their leisure hours in the evening, and also special efforts were made to contact the respondents when they are alone. They were ensured the researcher supply of reliable data for this study purpose.

Period of the study

The secondary data were collected from the records of Betel leaf Association, which is functioning in Sholavandan to analyze Economics of Cultivation of Betel

Leaf for ten months, starting from 2009-10 to 2018-19. The primary data was collected during the year 2017-18 by administering the Interview Schedule.

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The researcher used the interview schedule to collect primary data from the respondents. Data relating to the personal details, land holdings, methods of cultivation, and details regarding marketing were collected from the respondents.

Other relevant data relating to the study were collected from books, journals, government agencies, and were used as secondary data.

Statistical tools used

The primary data were analyzed with statistical tools. Time series analysis was used to find out the estimated expenses of production and marketing and also to estimate future cultivation and sales of betel cultivation in the sample area.

Trend analysis (Least square method) was used in this study. Percentage tools also used for analyzing the socio-economic characteristics of the sample cultivators. Garret ranking method was also used to rank the problems faced by the respondents.

The following tools have been used in the present study.

1. Trend Analysis – Least square method
2. Garrett‟s Ranking Technique
3. Compound Growth Rate
4. Cost Benefit Ratio

CONCLUSION

Betel vine is a green-gold of our nation. It is still regarded as an excellent mouth refresher, and mild vitalizer routinely served on the social, cultural, and religious occasions, which has an excellent nutritional composition of minerals and vitamins. Because of its short span of life and very perishable commodity, it gets wasted due to a lack of storage facilities and low market demand. In spite of these wastages, India earns more than Rs.9000 million every year. The Government of India should take necessary steps to reduce the wastages and losses; publicity from a commercial angle would help to

increase consumption, and thereby there will be a demand for betel leaf. Diversification in uses of betel leaves and its by-products (oil, medicine, etc.), promotion of council for export, etc., may help to absorb the excess supply of betel leaves in the market, especially during the rainy season when the price goes abnormally down.

The cost of cultivation is very high, and also it is a labour intensive crop, and the farmers have to face the water irrigation problems, no proper arrangement for storage and non-availability of transport as well as the poor condition of the roads will automatically bring down the production of betel leaves. The Government must provide credit loans to the farmers and also make proper arrangements for storage facilities, irrigation facilities, good conditions of roads and transport facilities; proper price fixation will automatically bring up the lifestyle of the betel leaf farmers.

In order to solve many problems with regard to the marketing of the betel vine growers and also to protect them from the clutches of intermediaries, wide price fluctuation and irregular demand, the Government based service organizations such as regulated markets and co-operative marketing societies should establish their present marketing services and infrastructure facilities to a greater extent.

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