**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON CONSTRAINTS FACED BY COCONUT GROWERS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT**

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**ABSTRACT:**

 In Tamil Nadu, the Coimbatore district tops in production of coconuts. Due to continuous canal irrigation and abundant rainfall in recent years, coconut production and availability have significantly risen. It had also presented the farmers with a number of fresh obstacles and limitations. Numerous technical, financial, and marketing challenges, including attacks by rugose spiraling whiteflies, Tanjore wilt, price swings, and rising pesticide and fertilizer costs, are being faced by farmers. The study was undertaken with the objective of analyzing the constraints faced by the of coconut growers in Coimbatore district. An Ex- post facto research design was used for this study. The study was taken-up in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. Out of the twelve blocks in Coimbatore district, “Sulthanpet block”, “Pollachi (North)”, “Pollachi (South) block” were selected. A sample size of 120 coconut cultivating farmers was selected by using simple random sampling technique. The required data was collected by personal interview using a well-structured and pretested interview schedule. The result revealed that cent percent (100%) of the farmers faced the major constraint of lack of remunerative prices for coconuts and fluctuations in market price. The major technical constraint faced by the farmers being (78.33%) Problem of disease and its control (Tanjore wilt, stem bleeding etc.,). Services and supply constraint such as increase in price of fertilizers and pesticides (85.83%). Hence, it should be definitely noted down by planners and policy makers at state and district level to make suitable strategies and policies to overcome the constraints faced by the coconut farmers.

Keywords – Coconuts, Constraints, Coimbatore, Tanjore wilt, remunerative price, fluctuation in market price

**INTRODUCTION:**

 Coconut being a long-lasting perennial plantation crop is of immense importance to the coconut growers since it provides food, fuel and varied sources of raw materials to different industries. It is the major source of livelihood and millions of families are sustained only from the income generated through coconuts. In 2020–21, India produced 21,207 million nuts of the coconut, or 34% of the world's total production. In the recent past years, the production of coconuts in Coimbatore had increased very well since due to ample amount of rainfall and sufficient canal irrigation. It had also bought various challenges and constraints for the farmers as there is adequate supply of nuts in the market. Since farmers are not aware about product diversification, value addition and post-harvest technology they are facing numerous constraints in fetching fair and remunerative price for their produce. It had also resulted in steady downfall of copra, de-husked coconuts, coir prices etc. Apart from that increase in fertilizer cost, delayed subsidies, shortage and increase in labour wage etc,. had also added further constraints to the coconut farmers of Coimbatore. **Nandakumar (1995)** stated that marketing of coconut, copra and coconut oil is in the hands of private traders in the country. They do not have ample knowledge and skill in marketing their produce **Palanivelu and Muthukrishnan (2019)** in their study, “Coconut marketing in Tamil Nadu: A Current Scenario” highlighted that low price for coconut and lack of market information were the major problems for coconut growers. **Kumar et.al., (2022)** in their study, “A study of marketing constraints among coconut farmers in Palakkad district” found that price fluctuation in market was the major constraint in marketing of coconut, followed by non-availability of labours, lack of market information, high labour cost, low market margin, poor storage facility, high transportation cost and delay in payment were the least experienced constraints.

Furthermore, lack of storage facilities forced them to sell their produce immediately after the harvest at low prices in the village itself to the local traders. In addition, there are inadequate arrangements for grading, standardization, market information, credit availability, storage, and transport. There is a huge extent of middlemen in marketing of coconuts who exploit farmers to certain extent such as delay in payment, not procuring in remunerative prices etc.

 Keeping the above problems in view, the present study was taken up with the specific objective to identify the constraints faced by the coconut growers in Coimbatore district. Major constraints faced by an individual farmer are poor assess to modern inputs and credits, poor infrastructure, inadequate access to markets, inadequate research and extension services etc.,. In this study constraints faced was studied in four major dimensions viz., technical constraints, service and supply constraints, credit and economic constraints and marketing constraints.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

 The study was undertaken with an objective of Analysing marketing behaviour of coconut growers in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. An “Ex Post Facto” research design was used in this study. Multi stage sampling procedure was used. District was selected purposively since Coimbatore has the maximum area and production under Coconut cultivation. Block was selected using Purposive sampling based on area under coconut production. There are twelve blocks in Coimbatore district. Among which “Sulthanpet block”, “Pollachi (North)”, “Pollachi (South) block” had been chosen as the areas of research. From each block 4 villages were selected purposefully. Villages were selected using Purposive sampling based on area under coconut production. The villages selected for the study are “Senjerimalai, Pachagoundampalyam, J.Krishnapuram, Malapalayam” from Sultanpet block. “A.Nagoor, Avalappampatti, Ayyampalayam, Puliampatti” from Pollachi (North) block. “Gomangalam, Ambarampalayam, Kanjampatti, Naickenpalayam” from Pollachi (South) block. It’s been selected since the area has high production of coconuts, hub for “coir and copra industries”, elaborate availability of respondents, diversified coconut growers in age, landholdings, educational status, farming experience etc., familiarity about the place by the researcher. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. With a sample size of 120, coconut cultivating farmers were drawn using simple random sampling technique in the above-mentioned blocks and villages. The required data were collected using a pretested structure interview schedule. The collected data were coded, tabulated and analysed using appropriate statistical tools. The descriptive statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage analysis were used to draw the inference from the study.

**Area, Production and Productivity status of coconuts in Coimbatore district:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Area** | 87749.20 ha |
| **Production** | 14882 lakh nuts |
| **Productivity** | 16960 nuts/ha |

 **Source- www.coconutboard.gov.in (2019-2020)**

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS:**

**Constraints faced by the coconut growers**

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on the constraints faced by the coconut growers (n=120)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No** |  **Constraints** | **Number** | **Per cent** |
| **A.** | **Technical Constraints** |
| 1. | Lack of high yielding, disease and pest resistant varieties | 23 | 19.17 |
| 2. | Lack of improved agricultural implements | 82 | 68.33 |
| 3. | Problem of pests and its control (Rugose Spiraling Whitefly, Eriophyid mites etc.,)  | 89 | 74.17 |
| 4. | Problem of disease and its control (Tanjore wilt, stem bleeding etc.,) | 94 | 78.33 |
| 5. | Insufficient guidance about post - harvest practices | 44 | 36.67 |
| 6. | Lack of awareness about export procedure | 79 | 65.83 |
| **B.** | **Services and supply constraints** |
| 1. | Labour scarcity and increase in labour cost | 93 | 77.50 |
| 2. | Increase in price of fertilizers and pesticides | 103 | 85.83 |
| 3. | Lack of coconut processing plants | 33 | 27.50 |
| 4. | Lack of cold storage facilities | 26 | 21.67 |
| **C.** | **Credit and economic constraints** |
| 1. | Lack of credit facilities for inputs like Insecticides, fungicides and fertilizers | 51 | 42.50 |
| 2. | Insufficient information regarding agricultural schemes | 33 | 27.50 |
| 3.  | Delay in agricultural subsidies | 45 | 37.50 |
| 4. | Complicated procedures for agricultural subsidies | 23 | 19.17 |
| **D.** | **Marketing constraints** |
| 1. | Lack of remunerative prices of coconut | 120 | 100 |
| 2. | Fluctuations in market price | 120 | 100 |
| 3. | Exploitation by middleman | 109 | 90.83 |
| 4. | Lack of regulated markets |  96 | 80.00 |
| 5. | Lack of value addition units | 103 | 85.83 |

**1.Technical constraints**

The table 1, revealed that the majority of the respondent’s technical constraint (78.33 per cent) was problem of disease and its control (Tanjore wilt, stem bleeding etc.,). Followed by problem of pests and its control (Rugose Spiraling Whitefly, Eriophyid mites etc.,) 74.17 per cent.

 More than half of the respondents (68.33 per cent) reported lack of improved agricultural implements such as coconut dehusker, coconut desheller etc., followed by Lack of awareness about export procedure 65.83 per cent as many respondents were interested in exporting coconuts to fetch higher prices and insufficient guidance about post - harvest practices 36.67 per cent.

 Only 19.17 per cent mentioned lack of high yielding, disease and pest resistant varieties.

**2. Services and supply constraints.**

 Regarding services and supply constraints majority of the respondents (85.83) mentionedincrease in price of fertilizers and pesticides as it increased overall cultivation cost followed by, labour scarcity and increase in labour cost 77.50 per cent as finding labour has become difficult to carry on intercultural operations and other activities and lack of coconut processing plants 27.50 per cent.

 Only 21.67 per cent of the respondents mentioned lack of cold storage facilitiesas only few respondents stored their produce in cold storage.

**3. Credit and economic constraints**

It could be inferred from table 1, regarding the credit and economic constraints that majority of the respondents (42.50 per cent) mentionedlack of credit facilities for inputs like insecticides, fungicides and fertilizers followed by delay in agricultural subsidies 37.50 per cent and insufficient information regarding agricultural schemes 27.50 per cent.

 Only 19.17 per cent expressed complicated procedures for agricultural subsidies.

**4. Marketing constraints**

With respect to marketing constraints cent percent of the respondents mentionedLack of remunerative prices of coconut as the price of copra and nuts had fallen drastically and Fluctuations in market price as the major constraint.

 More than three-fourth of the respondents (90.83 per cent) mentioned Exploitation by middleman as majority of the farmers sold their produce through middleman followed by, Lack of value addition units 85.83 per cent as many farmers were interested on value addition of their produce and lack of regulated markets 80.00 per cent.

**CONCLUSION:**

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