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Constraints in Production and Marketing of Arecanut in Salem District of Tamil Nadu, India

V. Mohanraj¹ and R. Velusamy²**ABSTRACT**

Arecanut is an important cash crop in our country. The study was carried out to ascertain the constraints faced by arecanut farmers in Salem district of Tamil Nadu with a sample size of 120, by employing proportionate random sampling technique. Majority of the respondents expressed lack of specific grading of nuts in marketing as a constraint. More than three-fourths of the respondents suggested that there should be a mechanism to regulate import of nuts from other countries and to create market potential for nuts in the local markets.

Keywords: *Arecanut; Constraints; Price risk; Production; Marketing; Suggestions; Tamil Nadu*

Arecanut (*Areca catechu*) is an important cash crop in our country and it is extensively used in nuptical ceremonies, religious rites, chewing and mastication purposes. Globally, India ranks first in terms of both area and production of arecanut with 54.07 per cent of world production (FAO, 2017). The major arecanut growing states in India are Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Assam. About 6,884 ha is the total area under arecanut in Tamil Nadu. Salem district accounts for 35.00 per cent of total area under arecanut cultivation in Tamil Nadu. The farmers and traders in that area expressed that quantity of nuts harvested from the trees dropped by 50 per cent due to drought in that area. Badhe

& Tambat (2009) reported that more than three-fourths of respondents faced a major constraint in cultivating intercrops causing decrease in the yield of nuts and transmission of disease from intercrop. Arecanut is grown mostly by marginal and small farmers with less than 2.0 hectares of land (Kasinath et al., 2019) and needs less maintenance. Thus, the identification of constraints in arecanut cultivation helps to address the constraints faced by farmers in both production and marketing, and to increase the area of arecanut. The main aim of the study is to assess the constraints and get suggestions in production and marketing of arecanut. The identification of constraints could help the policy makers and various stakeholders in approaching

1. Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, TNAU, Coimbatore- 641 003.

2. Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, AC&RI, TNAU, Madurai-625 104.

and planning suitable remedial strategies for farmers in improving their livelihood.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Salem district of Tamil Nadu. It occupies first position in both the area (2,421 hectares) and production (3,445 tonnes) of arecanut in Tamil Nadu. Among the 20 blocks in the district, Peddanaickenpalyam, Valapady, Gengavalli and Attur blocks were selected based on the area under arecanut crop. These blocks constitute 87.28 per cent of area under arecanut in this district. 120 arecanut farmers were selected for the study by employing proportionate random sampling technique. In Peddanaickenpalayam block, 52 respondents

were selected for the study due to more number of arecanut growers with more than 1,000 hectares of area. In Valapady block, 36 respondents were selected with more than 700 hectares of area under arecanut cultivation, from Gengavalli block, 21 respondents were selected and from Attur block, 11 respondents were selected for the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Constraints faced by the Arecanut Growers in the Production and Marketing of Arecanut

The constraints encountered by the arecanut growers in production and marketing of arecanut are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Constraints Encountered by Arecanut Farmers in Production and Marketing of Arecanut in Salem District

(n=120)*

Sl.No.	Constraints	Number	Percentage
I Production constraints			
1.	Drought	120	100.00
2.	Implements at high cost	50	41.67
3.	Lack of trainings on arecanut cultivation	120	100.00
4.	Premium for crop insurance is high	19	15.84
5.	Labour scarcity at seasonal time	70	58.34
6.	Organic compost rate is high	2	1.67
7.	High cost of drone spraying of chemicals	2	1.67
II Marketing constraints			
1.	No exclusive market for arecanut	88	73.34
2.	Price fluctuations	97	80.84
3.	Middlemen involvement	97	80.84
4.	No specific graders in marketing	101	84.17
5.	Importing of nuts affects the price	93	77.50

(*) Multiple responses obtained

The results show that 100 % of respondents had expressed that drought and lack of trainings in arecanut cultivation as the major constraints faced by farmers in arecanut cultivation. The drought experienced during the last five years had drastically reduced the area under arecanut cultivation. About 500 hectares of area under the areca palms had withered due to the effect of drought. For this, farmers are in need of trainings on improved practices to mitigate the drought. 58.34 per cent of respondents in the study area expressed labour scarcity at peak season as one of the major constraints. Only a meagre percentage of respondents (1.67 per cent) expressed that high cost of organic compost and high cost of drone for spraying of chemicals as constraints.

Majority of the respondents (84.17 per cent) had expressed lack of specific grading of nuts in marketing as a constraint. The lack of specific grade of the nuts affects the price of nuts in the market, creating a negative impact on the farmers who have good quality nuts.

Suggestions

It is inferred from Table 2 that 100 % of respondents suggested that training on arecanut cultivation is needed to overcome the production and marketing problems. The training on improved technologies on arecanut cultivation is to maximize the production.

Majority of the respondents (83.33 per cent) suggested that timely & location-specific market information would help the

Table 2.
Suggestions given by the Arecanut Growers to overcome the Constraints (n=120)*

Sl.No.	Suggestions	Number	Percentage
Suggested measures on production			
1.	Subsidy for purchase of implements	50	41.67
2.	Subsidy to purchase of organic composts	21	17.50
3.	Subsidy for Drone spray	2	1.67
4.	Training on arecanut cultivation	120	100.00
5.	Farm mechanization	70	58.33
Suggested measures on marketing			
1.	Special market during season	92	76.67
2.	Creating export opportunities	93	77.50
3.	Import trade control	93	77.50
4.	Farmers groups as sellers	81	67.50
5.	Government procurement at field level	85	70.83
6.	Timely market information	100	83.33
7.	Specific grading for marketing of nuts	98	81.67

(*) Multiple responses obtained

farmers to avoid risks in marketing. Timely market information helps the farmers to fetch better price for their produce, and it reduces the additional costs in marketing the produce. 'Specific grading in nuts should be followed in market' was suggested by 81.67 per cent respondents. The specific grades for arecanut help in exporting of nuts and fetch better price.

This article reveals the constraints of the farmers in production and marketing of arecanut with measures suggested by farmers in mitigating the constraints. The major constraint was drought and farmers would need trainings on improved farm management practices to mitigate the effects of drought.

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