Economic Appraisal of Pomegranate Production and Marketing in Chitradurga District of Karnataka

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I. INTRODUCTION

India is endowed with wide agro climatic conditions that offer immense scope for cultivation of various kinds of fruit crops. This provides an excellent platform for the country to emerge as a leading producer of fruit crop. The horticulture scenario of the country is rapidly changing. The production & productivity of horticulture crop have increased manifold. It is the fastest growing sector within agriculture thanks to the economic prosperity that has provoked market changes in the life styles & the consumption habits.

Important fruits grown in India are mango, grapes, banana, citrus, sapota, apple pomegranate etc…

Pomegranate is currently ranked 10th in terms of fruit consumed annually in the world. The fruit is symbolic of plenty and very much liked for its cool, refreshing juice and valued for its medicinal properties. Its popularity is also due to the ornamental nature of the plant which bears bright red, very attractive flowers. To highlight its importance, it was chosen as a symbol of the 18th International Horticultural Congress held during 1970.

The versatile adaptability, hardy nature, low maintenance cost, steady but high yields, better keeping quality, fine table and therapeutic values and possibilities to throw the plant into rest period when irrigation potential is generally low, indicate the avenues for increasing the area under pomegranate in India. At global level, India is the world’s largest producer of pomegranates, followed by Iran. Other countries like Turkey, Spain, Tunisia, Morocco, Afghanistan, China …

The study was conducted in Chitradurga District of Karnataka state with the main objectives of enquiring into the economic analysis of production & marketing aspects of pomegranate.

1.1. Objectives

- To study the growth & development of pomegranate cultivation in India.
- To estimate and analyze the production cost of pomegranate cultivation.
- To compute the marketing cost, marketing margins & price spread for pomegranate.
- To assess & analyze the profitability of pomegranate cultivation.
- To examine the problem associated with cultivation & marketing of pomegranate & to suggest appropriate policy guidelines.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Pomegranates are cultivated on commercial scale in the district. It is the major Pomegranate growing district in South Karnataka. It ranks fourth in the state with respect to total area under pomegranate. The area under pomegranate in the district is 1297 hectares. Pomegranate being a dry land horticultural crop is gradually becoming popular with the farmers of the region. These reasons led to the choice of Chitradurga district as the area of study.

2.1. Choice of the Study Area

The pomegranate cultivation is practiced throughout the district. However, the large scale cultivation of pomegranate is concentrated mainly in Challakere & Hiriyyur taluk extending on an area of 233 & 470 hectares & forming 18.4 & 37.12 per cent of the total area under pomegranate in the district. Hence Challakere & Hiriyyur taluk was specifically selected for the study. The top villages having larger area under pomegranate cultivation were
selected. The information on area under pomegranate cultivation & growers details were collected from the district & taluk Horticulture department in the respective areas.

The required data related to cultivation & marketing of pomegranate were collected by 50 pomegranate growers by survey method during the year 2011 through well-structured schedule. Secondary data was collected from Director of Horticulture, Bangalore, District Statistical officer, Chitradurga, District Horticulture officer, Chitradurga.

2.2. Collection of Data

For evaluating the specific objectives of the study necessary data were obtained from both primary as well as secondary data. The primary data were obtained from the sample farmers through personal interview method with the help of structured questionnaire. A draft interview schedule was first prepared & pre-tested with farmers in the sample area. In the light of pre-testing, necessary changes were incorporated in the final form of structured questionnaire was used to elicit the required information from the respondents.

Secondary data were also collected from Directorate of Horticulture included the district-wise area under pomegranate cultivation in Karnataka, District Horticulture Officer, Assistant Horticulture officer, cropping pattern, land use pattern & rainfall pattern in the cultivation areas etc.

2.3. Growth & Development of Pomegranate

In the recent past pomegranate cultivation gained momentum due to the production technologies developed by the scientists. Among the different states Maharashtra is the leading in pomegranate production. It is also grown commercially in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat & Tamil Nadu.

The presentation has been analyzed under the following broad heads.

- Economic aspects of production
- Economic aspects of marketing

2.3.1. Economic Aspects of Production

The investments in pomegranate orchards were the costs incurred in establishing the orchard. The costs incurred in the orchard up to bearing stage that is for three years formed the establishment cost of the orchard.

The establishment costs in pomegranate orchards were classified into material costs & maintenance costs. The material cost were the cost incurred during the zero year & they included the land value, cost on well. Pump set, pump house, sprayer, plant material, Investment in digging of pits & planting. The maintenance costs were the costs incurred in the maintenance of the orchard till the time of bearing, that is up to three years of the planting & they included expenditure on labor, fertilizers, manures, plant protection chemicals, etc.

The results of the analysis on cost of establishment of pomegranate per acre are the material cost constituted the major share of the total establishment cost which accounts for Rs. 25,043.86 (85.11%) & the material cost was Rs. 4379.78 (114.88%). The total establishment cost of pomegranate per acre was Rs. 29,423.64/-. 

Among the 50 sample farmers, 29 (58%) farmers sold their produce at the farm itself to the pre-harvest contractors. The remaining 17 (34%) farmers sold their produce at the market through commission agents.

The details of problems faced by the pomegranate growers are evident from the results that the problem of mite, inadequate irrigation facility & lack of timely transportation facility were the most severe problem felt by majority of growers. About 90% of the growers faced the problem of Lack of technical know-how & Lack of storage facility.

III. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has confirmed the economic soundness of investment on pomegranate orchard. Grading of pomegranate helped growers in fetching the good prices. It is also concluded that there is still vast scope to increase the producers share in consumer’s rupee. This can be done either by arranging the sale of pomegranate by all producers through co-operative marketing societies. Similarly, pomegranate growers share can still be enhanced by grabbing the exporting potential. Government should take the keen interest in supporting the infrastructural facilities like cold storages in the producing area so that marketing period can be extended for a longer period.

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Among the material costs the value of the land accounted for the largest share (32.42%) followed by well (28.13%).

The maintenance costs which were incurred during gestation period increased from Rs. 1263.31/- per acre (4.29% of the total establishment cost) in the first year, in the second year Rs 1,462.12 (4.96%) & the third year the maintenance cost is Rs1,654.35 (5.52%) of the total establishment cost.

The major contribution to the total cost of cultivation of pomegranate was labor cost. It accounts for 42.79% followed by fertilizers 19.14% & manure 14.06% respectively.

The two prime methods of sale practiced in the study area by the sample farmers were
- On-farm sale to pre-harvest contractors &
- Market sale, through commission agents.

It is observed that the farmers prefer market sale over on farm sale despite the involvement of marketing costs, as market sale of pomegranate helped that farmers to gather higher net return.

- The study reveals that commission charges, transportation costs & cost of packing material were major components of marketing cost.
- It is evident from the results that the problem of mite, inadequate irrigation facility & lack of timely transportation facility were the most severe problem felt by majority of growers.
- Opinion survey was conducted for the 29 sample farmers who sold their standing crop to pre-harvest contractors. Almost all the farmers indicated risk involved in marketing of the produce as the main reason for not taking up the marketing of fruits on their own. The other reasons for selling the produce to the pre-harvest contractor were, distinct market, credit obtained from pre-harvest contractors, small quantity of the produce etc…

3.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the necessary steps to be taken up in the areas of production & marketing of pomegranate are presented as under;

- Plans for establishing inter crops for reducing the cost of establishing & providing income during the non-bearing period.
- The study indicated that profitability of pomegranate cultivation & hence there is scope for advancing credit facilities for the cultivation of the crop.
- The average farm size under pomegranate cultivation has to be increased which would enhance efficiency of pomegranate cultivation there by increased returns from the orchard.
- Following the recommended package of practices inputs like manures fertilizers & pesticides will substantially increase the yield levels & thereby improve the income level of the pomegranate farmers.
- Farmers must themselves take up the task of marketing of pomegranate thereby enhancing their income from the production of pomegranate.
- A marketing co-operative society should be established exclusively for the marketing of pomegranate to rescue the farmers from the exploitation by the pre-harvest contractors.
- The government should give due attention for providing proper approach roads to the villages. It should also provide scientific storage facilities to help the farmers to store the fruits.
- The authorized agencies like NHB, APEDA, IIHRD, NADARD etc., should take active role in providing the technical guidance & also educate the farmers in growing quality in keeping the export potential thereby the farmers enhance their income.

REFERENCES