

# A STUDY ON PROBLEM FACED BY BANANA CULTIVATORS IN LALGUDI, TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

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## **Abstract**

One of the most ruthlessly exploited segments of Indian community is that of the farmers. As the small farmers are hard pressed for cash to meet postponed consumption needs and to pay off debts, they have to sell their produce soon after the harvest, when the price is low. Banana production is seasonal in nature while its demand is inelastic. This also affects the price fixation. There is a large variation in the quality of banana which makes their grading and standardization somewhat difficult. Due to the prevalence of high level of illiteracy, most of the farmers are unable to follow the literature available on marketing rules and the relevant Act. Indian economy is an Agrarian Economy. More than 40 per cent of the total population depends on agriculture as their main occupation. The reasons for taking up a study on the production and marketing of banana in Lalgudi, Tiruchirappalli District are summed up below. More than 40 per cent of the population in the selected area of Lalgudi, Tiruchirappalli District depends on agriculture. Hence a lot of marketing activates are going on in this area. This lalgudi area is solely dependent on agriculture. So a survey has been undertaken to study the process of socio demographic profile, production and marketing of banana and problems in cultivation and marketing.

*Keywords: Banana Cultivator, Marketing Problem, Cultivation Problem*

## **Introduction**

The season of planting banana varies between the various states. In most parts the cold seasons of the year are unsuitable for planting. In West Coast, planting is done from September to November, when irrigation facilities are available. Planting is done all the year round in order to secure better prices during the off season. In other areas planting is done during South west monsoon in May-June, and continues thereafter till November. Bontha and Mauritius and for Poovan the best time is November to January because it has a longer duration. Planting in cold season is a problem and great care is to be given for irrigating the crop in summer and also it exposes the plants to high winds or cyclone damage during bunch season.

Banana and plantains are grown in about 120 countries. Total annual world production is estimated at 9,37,13,868 million tonnes of fruits. India leads the world in banana production with an annual output of about 2,62,17,000 million tonnes. Other leading producers are Brazil, Ecuador, China, Philippines, Indonesia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Thailand and Colombia (Indian Horticulture Data Base, 2009). Production and marketing are the two basic elements in the system of agriculture. An efficient network of agricultural marketing system creates a better link between farmers and consumers. The word 'market' is not altogether easy to define because it is used in many senses. The word 'market' comes from the Latin word 'Marcatus' which means merchandise or trade or a place where business is conducted. It came to signify a public place in which goods and services are bought and sold. It is the act or technique of buying and selling. The term 'Marketing' has numerous common meanings, to the household, it is shopping for food. To the farmer, it stands for the sale of his produce. To the wholesale businessman, it is the scientific method of advertising and sales promotion. To the industrialists of the country, it is the discovery of foreign outlets for goods manufactures. These are only different phases of marketing. Agricultural marketing is the study of all the activities and policies involved in the procurement of farm inputs by the farmers and the movement of agricultural products from the farms to the consumers. The agricultural marketing system is a link between the farm and the non farm sectors. It includes the organisation of agricultural raw materials supply to processing industries, the assessment of demand for farm inputs and raw materials, and the policy relating to the marketing of farm products and inputs.

The scope of the study has been restricted to the banana production and marketing in Lalgudi, Tiruchirappalli district. It is essential to know the socio-economic profile, banana production, cultivators' problems, banana marketing, income and saving pattern of the cultivators, profile of traders and their problems in marketing in the study area. It helps to enhance the agricultural prices. It suggests measures to solve the problems of agricultural marketing. It helps to get a statistical view of the particular region.

India is the largest banana producer in the world and the cultivators are facing many problems during cultivation. The productivity of banana in India is low when compared to other countries. At present the development of agriculture does not merely depend upon increasing the agricultural produce and productivity, but also upon the promotion of a better and well organized marketing by which the agricultural goods are moved from the field of the farmer to the places of ultimate consumers. When one looks in to the production aspect of banana cultivation it seems that the farmers face several financial problems. In the study area majority of the farmers are not able to get cheap loan facilities to finance the expenditure involved in banana cultivation. One of the most ruthlessly exploited segments of Indian community is that of the farmers. As the small farmers are hard pressed for cash to meet postponed consumption needs and to pay off debts, they have to sell their produce soon after the harvest when the price is low. Banana production is seasonal in nature while its demand is inelastic. This also affects the

price fixation. There is a large variation in the quality of banana which makes their grading and standardization some what difficult. Due to the prevalence of high level of illiteracy, most of the farmers are unable to follow the literature available on marketing rules and the relevant Act. Indian economy is an Agrarian Economy. Around 40 per cent of the total population depends on agriculture as their main occupation. The reasons for taking up a study of the production and marketing of banana in Tiruchirappalli District are summed up below. The selected areas of Lalgudi, Tiruchirappalli District with more than 40 per cent of the total population depend on agriculture and a lot of marketing business is going on in this area. This taluk is solely depending on agriculture. 50 respondents were selected using the Simple Random Sampling technique was adopted for this study. So a survey has been undertaken to study the process of socio-demographic profile, production and marketing of banana and cultivation problems. However the present study would be appropriate to take up the study of banana production and marketing in the region concerned and make the research work a worth while and a relevant one.

### Objectives of the study

- To study the socio-demographic profile of the banana cultivators in Lalgudi, Tiruchirappalli district
- To study the problems faced by the cultivators in the production and marketing of banana.
- To give suitable suggestions for policy makers.

### Data analysis and interpretation

#### Percentage analysis of socio-economic profile

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
Below 30yrs	07	14
31 to 40yrs	11	22
41 to 50yrs	26	52
Above 50yrs	06	12
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Illiterate	07	14
Upto HSC	33	66
Graduate	10	20
<b>Experience</b>		
Below 10yrs	28	56
10 to 15yrs	13	26
Above 15yrs	09	18
<b>Fixation of Price</b>		
Supply Base	06	12
Expenditure Base	05	10
Season Base	34	68
Quality Base	05	10
<b>Problems</b>		
Perishability	02	4

Transportation	08	16
Storage Problems	06	12
Inadequate Finance	02	4
Prices fluctuation	06	12
Middlemen	26	52

Source: Primary data

The above table more than half (52per cent) of banana cultivator between 41 to 50years of age group, 22per cent were 31 to 40years, 14per cent were below 30years 12per cent were above 50years. Majority (66per cent) of banana cultivator between upto Hsc qualification, 20per cent were graduate 14per cent were illiterate. More than half (56per cent) of banana cultivator below 10years of experience, 26per cent were 10 to 15years 18per cent were above 15years. Majority (68per cent) of banana cultivator between seasonal bases for fixation of price, each 10per cent were supply base and expenditure base and quality base. More than half (52per cent) of banana cultivator between middlemen of problems, 16per cent were transportation, each 12per cent were storage problems and prices fluctuation each 4per cent were perishability and inadequate finance. The agro-biological factor differs from product to product. Climate plays an important role in banana production and it has scored the first rank for banana production. Rainfall also plays a significant role in the banana production. This scores the second rank. Severity of wind is also another factor that makes considerable impact on banana cultivation. It has secured the third rank. Soil condition, severity of pests and severity of diseases are also important factors in the banana production and they occupy fourth, fifth and sixth ranks respectively. Natural calamities also affect banana production and this scores seventh position.

#### **Karl Pearson coefficient correlation relationship between banana cultivator production problems with regards to marketing problem**

Production problem	Correlation value	Statistical inference
Marketing problem	0.816	0.002<0.05

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significance relationship between banana cultivator production problems with regards to marketing problem

**Findings:** The above Karl Pearson coefficient correlation test reveals that there is a significance relationship between banana cultivator production problems with regards to marketing problem. Hence, the calculated value less than table value ( $p < 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis is rejected.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is a micro study which relates to a small region, the investigator experiences difficulties in contacting the cultivators during day times. Only during evening and nights, they have been interviewed, and the respondents are mostly illiterates. They have given manipulated information's. Efforts have been taken to elicit true and accurate information.

## Suggestions

- Awareness must be created among farmers on systematic storage to reduce loss and enhance duration of storage.
- The cost of production of banana is increasing. So the farmers should use the costly inputs efficiency.
- The severity of pests and diseases should be controlled by using the required amount of pesticides and insecticides.
- To prevent the damage caused by winds, bamboo poles should be used by farmers.
- The producers can avoid middle man in the marketing of banana by linking producer directly to the wholesaler.
- Fair price markets can be established in this area to sell the banana bunches.
- The government should provide adequate road and communication facilities to the proposed market area.
- The government should provide proper facilities for storing their products.
- The government should publish the actual ruling price list daily for different commodities.
- The government should arrange adequate and cheap means of transport facilities in this area.

## Conclusion

Agricultural sector is contributing a major share of their income to the banana cultivators. Most of the cultivators borrow money from Agricultural Cooperative Credit Societies for agricultural operations. There is no regulated market in this study area. In this study area, majority of the cultivators have earned more marketable surplus for their commodities. Hence, majority of the cultivators are engaged in banana cultivation, even though the agricultural marketing is not satisfactory in this study area. It is concluded that, agricultural marketing facilities must be well established in this area which facilitates to provide more income to the cultivators. The government should start well organized agricultural market in this area.

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