

Dilemma Faced by Farmers in production and Marketing of Grapes in Thondamuthur region - Coimbatore District

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Abstract

Grapes the common fruit belonging to the Vitaceae family, originated in Western Asia and Europe. It is widely grown all over the world, it was introduced to India by the Persian invaders in 1300 A. D. Grapes are the cross pollinated vine with simple, lobed, cut or toothed leaves (seldom compound) with racemes of greenish flowers, the fruit consisting of watered-down or fleshy pulp, stones and skin, four - seeded. Grapes preserve can actually be eaten as a fresh or can be worn or used for making squash, juice, jelly, vinegar, wine, grape seed extracts or grape seed oil. Roughly around 71% of world grape production is being used for wine, 27% as a fresh fruit, and remaining 2% as a dried fruit. However, in India, 90% of the grape is actually used for table purpose, even though wine making has made strides. The rest of the grape is used mostly for raisin purpose.

Keywords: *Grape Cultivation, Productivity, Commercial Fruit*

Introduction

Grapes are one of the finest fruits and are the healthiest food. They are rich in source of vitamins and minerals that can actually contribute to a balanced healthy life. In addition, it has commendable medicinal qualities and has been used in nature therapy for centuries. Among fruits, grapes are delicious, refreshing, nourishing fruit, and are one of the most important subtropical fruit crops. The crop has wide adaptability and it has been taken up under a wide range of soil types. In India 94 % of cultivated area falls in the tropical region. Nowadays grapes have gained enormous commercial value because they not only serve as a table fruit but also are great by valued. Grape is a refreshing fruit and is a good source for minerals like calcium and iron and vitamins A, C and B. The chemicals in grapes are perfectly balanced and are actually harmless solvents. The flavonoids present in grapes act as antioxidants and reduce the damage caused by full radicals. It is easily assimilated and is a good remedy for constipation, rheumatism, and skin and liver disorders.

Grape is an imperative viable fruit harvest crop of south India. Grape mounting has been regarded as most remunerative endeavor. In North India particularly, Punjab its cultivation is being taken in a big way. Due to heavy initial investment on erecting the system of training and occurrence of rains at the ripening time of grapes, the area under grapes may not increase further. In Madurai area through staggered pruning fruit is taken throughout the year.

Origin

Grape cultivation is believed to have originated in Armenia near the Caspian Sea in Russia, from where it spread westward to Europe and eastward to Iran and Afghanistan. Grape was introduced in India in 1300 AD by invaders from Iran and Afghanistan.

International Scenario

Grapes occupy a major position in terms of world fruit production, accounting for about 16% of the global fruit production. The total world production of grapes is estimated to be about 68.9 million tonnes, next only to citrus and bananas and is followed by apples. The foremost grape producing countries are Italy, France, Spain, U.S.A, Turkey, Argentina, Iran, Portugal, South Africa and Chile. The area and production of grapes in some of the major countries is given in Table 1.

Table - 1

Area and Production of grapes in major producing countries (2018)

Name of the Country	Area ('000 hectre)	Production ('000 tonnes)
Spain	1240.00	6561
France	982.0	6792
Italy	785.0	8525
India	60.2	2346
World	3067.2	24,224

Source: FAOSTAT

Area & Production in India

The annual production of fresh grapes in India during the year 20018-19 was to 16.67 lakh tonne from an area of 63600 ha. India ranks first in productivity (25.69 t/ ha) against the world productivity of 9.32 t/ha and also in terms of highest recorded income of 100 t/ha. Cultivation of grapes in the country is very much localized, being confined primarily to four states , viz., Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, which together account for more than 90 % of the area and production. The state wise region, production and productivity of grapes are shown below in Table 2.

Table - 2 State wise area, production and productivity of Grapes (2018)

S.No:	State	Area ('000 ha)	Production ('000 t/ha)	Productivity (t/ha)
1	Andhra Pradesh	2.60	51.80	20.72
2	Karnataka	10.80	209.00	19.43
3	Maharashtra	45.40	1384.20	30.29
4	Punjab	1.10	40.70	27.91
5	Tamil Nadu	2.80	91.60	33.71
6	Other States	1.00	12.41	12.40
	All India	63.7	1777.3	144.46

Area & Production

India is amongst the first ten countries in the world for the production of grapes. The major producers of grapes include Italy, France, Spain, USA, Turkey, China and Argentina. This crop occupies fifth position amongst fruit crops in India with a production of 1.21 million tonnes (around 2% of world's production of 57.40 million tonnes) from an area of 0.05 million ha in 2001-02. The area under grapes covers approximately around 1.2 % of the total area of fruit crops in the country. Production is 2.8% of total fruits produced in the country. About 80% of the production comes from Maharashtra followed by Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In India, Tamil Nadu is one of the important states in producing grapes, after the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. In Tamil Nadu, Grape is cultivated in 2600 hectares with the input

of 68700 Tonnes. Tamil Nadu achieves the highest grape productivity among other grape producing states of India. The grape cultivation is mainly concentrated in three districts of Madurai, Theni and Coimbatore.

Harvest season of grapes is depicted below (for 12 months)

states	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec
Maharashtra	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow							Yellow
Karnataka	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow		Green					Yellow
Andhra Pradesh	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow		Green					Yellow
Tamil Nadu					Green	Green	Green		Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	
Punjab					Green	Green	Green					Yellow
Haryana					Green	Green	Green					

Fig- 4

- The above graph showing harvest pattern in leading grape growing states.

Source: Indian Horticulture Database, 2015

Objectives of the study

- ❖ To analyze the production problems faced by the grape cultivators in the study area.
- ❖ To examine the various barriers in marketing of the products.
- ❖ To seek various suggestions and recommendations to the farmers.

Statement of the Problem

The main objective to be taken into consideration is actually to know about the problems being faced by the farmers cultivating grapes. Climate, irregular rainfall, lack of demand for labor and the chemical fertilizers are actually various problem faced by the farmers in the **Thondamuthur** region. The study of rainfall in the south west monsoon is considered to be chiefly responsible for the successful cultivation of grapes. Another factor which seems to be favorable is that there are frequent spells of dry weather, during the south west and northeast monsoon which are essential for proper flowering and fruit development. The dry and hot weather periods in Coimbatore district hailing from January to May, are practically free from heavy rain and it’s a clear cut case for noticing few showers received during this particular period. Even though productivity and production of grapes is high, the economic condition of the growers is not favorable. It is because of the growers' weak bargaining power and poor financial condition that the marketing intermediaries are harassing and cheating them in different ways. Even if grape cultivation allows the growers to earn more, the growers are not interested in cultivating grapes as they face a large number of marketing problems.

Constraints in Grape Production

- Although grape cultivation is considered as highly remunerative, there are also following constraints, which include:
- ❖ Heavy initial investment for establishing a vineyard

- ❖ High recurring costs in vineyard management
- ❖ High risk of losing the crop due to unprecedented changes in weather
- ❖ Very low proportion of export quality grapes.
- ❖ Problems caused wild animals.

Basic Needs for Grape Cultivation

An attempt is made to study the cultivation practices of grapes in the international, national, state and district and regional levels. The main problems that are involved in grape cultivation are also being reported, which includes:

- **Climate**

In India, it is cultivated most successfully around 15° N latitude. Grapes generally require a hot and dry climate during their growth and fruiting periods. However, at a very high temperature the skin becomes thicker. Hot and dry summer is required for ripening of grapes. The fruitfulness of buds is influenced by light. Low light intensities during the active growth stage (45 to 75 days after pruning) and fruit bud formation adversely affects the crop.

- **Rainfall**

The quantum and pattern of rainfall obtained are the critical factors in the selection of regions for growing grapes. The dry and hot weather periods in Coimbatore district from January to May, which are practically free from heavy rain and the few showers received during this period are in fact greatly beneficial for proper development of berries.

- **Humidity**

Grapevine does not grow well under humid conditions. High atmospheric humidity is detrimental during vegetative growth and fruiting. At a high humidity the vegetative growth of vines is vigorous which affects the fruit size and quality. The vines go to dormancy during winter in North India but do not have dormancy period in South India where they grow throughout the year, yielding two crops. Humidity is very high along the coastal regions and at lower elevations.

- **Soil**

Grapevine has powerful root system and it is found growing on a wide variety of soils including sandy loams, sandy clay loams. The best suited soil is well-drained, having good water holding capacity. Heavy clay, very shallow soil, poorly drained soils and those which contain high concentration of salts should be avoided. Grapes can also be grown successfully over a wide range of soil however, soils having pH range of 6.5 to 8.0 are considered ideal. Grapevine has powerful root system and it is found growing on a wide variety of soils including sandy loams, sandy clay loams, red sandy soils, shallow to medium black soils and red loams.

Problems faced by Cultivators

One of those problems is lack of support by government on the grapes production. Compared to the other cash crops in such as the cotton, the grape has not given any priority of being developed and put in the competition from the nation level up to international standards. The government have not made important effort on providing support to these farmers such as making the common price for grapes. Lack of common price delays in the development of this crop, as most of

the business men tend to provide the buying price for themselves in such a way that the farmers continue to become the slaves. Government should take steps on the following aspect:

- Establishing the processing industries like (wine, grape essence, juice, jam, squash, and dry grapes etc.) near by the plantations.
- Provide the compliment the grape nation policy that can help the farmers to have the common selling price.
- Providing the farmers with the education and skills on how to produce the quality products which will be marketable and competitive in the world market.
- Providing the loan through commercial banks and co-operative banks as well as providing the farmers with the equipment, chemicals and other technology for development of this cash crop.
- Establishing the research centres which will help to identify the problems and give out the solution to those problems facing grapes. Here also the government will create the employment our agricultural experts produced from our universities.

The lack of market, most of the grape producer tends to produce this kind of fruit without being sure about the market.

Recommendations for Grape Cultivation

On the basis of the findings of the study, following recommendations are given.

1. Government should start a regulated market for marketing of grapes, from the farmers to direct consumers.
2. It reduces the exploitations from the middlemen such as price fixation to the farmers and also to ensure market reliability for grapes;
3. Government should start a cooperative society in this area in order to organise farmers in a group entity.

Conclusions

In recent years, grape is cultivated over an area of 60,000 hectares with an annual production of 1,200,000 tonnes in India. Although, the returns per unit area of land seems to be a bit high with grape cultivation, the area under grapes is not mounting fast owing to high initial cost of establishing the vineyards and elevated habitual cost of production. The menace of losing a crop due to exceptional changes in weather seems to be high. Since the highest productivity in grapes has been achieved, efforts are actually needed to broaden grape cultivation to a newer area. Soil and water salinity and drought are the impediments in this direction, for which suitable rootstocks are to be identified.

There is a need to diversify the uses of grapes. Currently more than 80 % of the produce is used for table purposes. The major bulk of the produce is harvested in March-April, but as cold storage facilities are currently inadequate, there are frequent market gluts. Maintenance of excellence of table grapes by crop parameter is the highest priority consideration for increasing exports. For the survival of the grape industry in India, the produce should be qualitative and cost competitive. Future efforts are to be concentrated on this direction.

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