

# MARKETING BEHAVIOUR OF TAPIOCA GROWERS

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## Abstract

Tapioca is an important root crop widely cultivated in tropical countries as a staple food and it is mainly grown for its tuber which is used as supplementary food. Tapioca has attained the status of commercial crop especially in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Tapioca is an enterprise that provides support to the rural industrial sector. More than 5 lakhs of rural people are directly employed in tapioca based industries. This has given employment for the rural mass and augments the economic growth of rural India. Hence, this study was taken in the tapioca predominant district of Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu State in order to know the marketing behaviour of tapioca growers with a sample size of one hundred and twenty respondents. The respondents were selected based on proportionate random sampling method. The results of the study revealed that majority of the tapioca growers sold tapioca as raw tubers and using gunny bags for packing the produce and sold their produce through mill contractors. Majority of the tapioca growers sold their produce locally and more than three-fourth of the respondents enjoyed the procurement facility provided by sago factories as their mode of transport. Majority of the respondents considered immediate payment as the main criterion for the selection of market.

**Key words:** Marketing behaviour, Tapioca growers, agriculture, etc.

## 1. Introduction

Tapioca (*Manihot esculenta*), popularly known as cassava, continues to be a crop of food security for the millions of people especially in the developing countries. It is one of the most important tropical root crops. This crop sustains many agro-based food processing and starch industries and plays a vital role in the rural development of the country (Srinivasan and Anantharaman, 2004). Tapioca is cultivated in an area of 0.21 million ha. in India, with a total production of 7.74 million tones. This tuber crop is largely cultivated in Tamil Nadu (64 per cent), Kerala (32 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (1.5 per cent), Nagaland (1.2 per cent) and Assam (0.5 per cent). Tamil Nadu State stands first (64 per cent) in respect of tapioca production and also processing of tapioca into starch & sago. The cultivation of tapioca spread widely in Kerala as food crop and slowly became industrial crop in Tamil Nadu due to its high industrial value for its products.

Tapioca serves as raw material for paper, laundry, pulp textiles, pharmaceuticals, and glue, plywood, rubber, medicine and glucose industries. Value added products like starch, sago, liquid glucose, dextrin, vitamin C and high fructose syrup are made from tapioca, apart from food preparation like noodles, vermicelli, sauce, ice-cream, bread, cake, puddings, fruit pies, soups and other aesthetic value products. Of late, the starch based bio-degradable plastics developed from tapioca have received wide attention due to the ability to reduce pollution load, besides being eco-friendly. Tapioca is branded as the

poor man's crop in the rural areas. In order to ensure rural employment and provide adequate remuneration to growers, tapioca based rural processing units have to be augmented. Wafers, chips, pappads, dried chips for animal feeds, rava, porridge powders, etc. can be made out of tapioca in the villages itself. Tapioca farmer's co-operative processing units with adequate governmental and institutional support could be an innovative idea where the farm enterprises can yield not only more food but also more productive jobs and higher income in rural areas, serving as an antidote to poverty and unemployment. The possibilities for tapioca based massive and tiny rural industries are enormous and in the years to come it has to be molded into a reality for stable rural economy. Marketing of tapioca is more complicated as middlemen/brokers play a role between the producers and marketing agents and reduce the income for farmers. They are forced to sell their produce immediately after the harvest at low prices because of perishable nature of the crop. Hence, this study was taken up in the tapioca predominant district of Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu to know the marketing behaviour of tapioca growers.

## 2. Methodology

The study was conducted in Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu. Pappireddipatti Taluk was purposively selected since it has the largest area under tapioca cultivation in Dharmapuri district. A sample of 120 tapioca growers were selected from seven revenue villages based on proportionate random sampling method. Data were collected with the help of a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The collected data were properly analyzed using statistical procedures and the results are tabulated.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

Marketing behaviour is the capacity or tendency of an individual farmer to identify the market trend to sell the produce for greater returns. The results of the analysis with regard to overall marketing behaviour and item-wise marketing behaviour were presented as follows:

**Overall marketing behaviour:** The distribution of respondents according to their marketing behaviour is given in Table 1

**TABLE 1**

### **Distribution of Respondents According to their Overall Marketing Behaviour**

S.No.	Category	Number of Respondents	Per cent
1.	Low	38	31.67
2.	Medium	50	41.67
3.	High	32	26.66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

It is observed from Table 1 that 41.17 per cent of the respondents had medium level of overall marketing behaviour, followed by low (31.67 per cent) and high (26.66 per cent) levels of overall marketing behaviour. Hence, it could be concluded that majority of the tapioca growers had medium level of marketing behaviour. Since the respondents had medium level of extension agency contact, mass media exposure and social participation, which leads for medium level of information about the market and selling and it resulted in medium level of marketing behaviour. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Prathapsingh (2012) and Bagya Janani, et al. (2016).

**Item-wise marketing behaviour:** The item-wise marketing behaviour of respondents is presented in Table 2

**TABLE 2**

**Distribution of Respondents According to Item-wise Marketing Behaviour**

S.No.	Category	Number of Respondents	Per cent
<b>I</b>	<b>Form of sale</b>		
1	Raw tubers	113	94.16
2	Processed dry forms	7	5.84
3	Parboiled chips	-	-
4	Starch	-	-
5	Animal feed	-	-
6	Food products	-	-
<b>II</b>	<b>Mode of packing</b>		
1	Bamboo basket	-	-
2	Polythene bag	-	-
3	Cloth bag	11	9.16
4	Gunny bag	109	90.83
<b>III</b>	<b>Mode of transport</b>		
1	Head load	-	-
2	Bicycle	-	-
3	Bullock cart	-	-
4	Moped	-	-
5	City bus	6	5.00
6	Tempo	-	-
7	Lorry	20	16.66
8	In-situ mill procurement	94	78.33
<b>IV</b>	<b>Place of sale</b>		

S.No.	Category	Number of Respondents	Per cent
1	Locally	81	67.50
2	Nearby town	17	14.66
3	Distant town	22	18.33
<b>V</b>	<b>Mode of sale</b>		
1	Local merchant	-	-
2	Retailer	-	-
3	Commission agent	26	21.66
4	Contractor	94	78.33
5	Wholesaler	-	-
<b>VI</b>	<b>Terms and conditions of sale</b>		
1	Auction	-	-
2	Credit sales to specified merchants	-	-
3	On contract with merchant	94	78.33
4	Ready cash	26	21.67
<b>VII</b>	<b>Reasons for selection of market</b>		
1	Nearness to the place of production	-	-
2	Receipt of advance	-	-
3	Higher price	12	10.00
4	Immediate payment	108	90.00

**Form of sale:** Nearly all the respondents (94.16 per cent) sold their produce as raw tubers and the rest 5.84 per cent of them sold the tubers after drying them. Other forms of sale were not practiced by the tapioca growers. Lack of awareness on value addition and high cost involved in it, could have been the possible reasons for the above situation. This finding is line with the results of Arunkumar (2002) who reported that a majority of the respondents sold their produce as raw tubers and a minimum number of respondents sold then after curing.

**Mode of packing:** An overwhelming majority of the respondents (90.83 per cent) used gunny bags and 9.16 per cent of the respondents used cloth bags for packing. This finding is in line with the findings of Arunkumar (2002) who also identified that majority of the tapioca growers used gunny bags for packing the tubers. Compared to all other mode of packing, gunny bag was found to be cheaper. This might have been the possible reason for a fairly high majority of the respondents to use gunny bags as their packing material.

**Mode of transport:** Majority of the respondents (78.33 per cent) utilized the transport extended by the sago mills, who used to procure raw tubers in the farm gate itself. Convenience in transport facility provided by the mills and the comparatively less number of intermediaries in the facility would have resulted in majority of the growers to follow this mode of transport.

**Place of sale:** More than two-third of the respondents (67.50 per cent) sold their produce locally, followed by 18.17 per cent of the respondents, who sold in distant market. Remaining 14.16 per cent of the respondents sold the produce in the nearby town. This finding is in accordance with report of Arunkumar (2002) who reported that majority of the respondents sold their raw tubers locally.

**Mode of sale:** More than three-fourth of the respondents (78.33 per cent) sold their produce through mill contractors on agreement basis and the remaining 21.66 per cent of the respondents sold through commission agents. By selling the produce through mill contractors, cultivators need not incur any marketing cost.

**Terms and conditions of sale:** A fairly higher proportion of respondents (78.33 per cent) sold their on contract with merchants and rest 21.67 per cent of the respondents, sold their raw tubers for ready cash payment. Since the growers sold through contractors, terms and conditions of sale was on contract with merchants, that is, mill contractors.

**Reasons for selection of market:** Majority of the respondents (91.67 per cent) expressed that immediate payment of money decided the selection of market. The rest 12.50 per cent of the respondents stated that higher price decided the selection of market.

#### 4. Conclusion

The present study revealed that more than two-fifths of tapioca growers had medium level of marketing behaviour. Hence, it should be definitely noted down by planners and policy makers to make arrangement for marketing the products for maximum price. It is also necessary to streamline the entire marketing channel. An effective marketing strategy also needs to be framed by the State Department of Agriculture in co-ordination with the regulated markets, commission agents and other marketing organizations functioning at village level. There is a need to establish a separate co-operative society and regulated exclusively for tapioca growers.

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