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A STUDY ON MARKETING CONSTRAINTS FACED BY BANANA GROWERS IN ERODE DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Banana is one of the most imperative fruit crops cultivated in India and serves as a major source of income and employment for millions of farmers. India ranks among the world's largest producers of bananas, contributing significantly to both domestic consumption and agricultural economic growth. The crop is valued for its nutritional benefits, year-round availability, and wide market demand. In Tamil Nadu, banana cultivation plays a crucial role in the agricultural sector, providing livelihood opportunities to a large number of farming households. Erode District is one of the prominent banana-producing regions in Tamil Nadu due to its favorable climatic conditions, fertile soil and well-developed irrigation facilities. Farmers in the district cultivate different varieties of bananas and supply their produce to local, regional, and interstate markets. Objectives of the study are (i) to present the socio-economic profile of banana growers in Erode District, (ii) to identify the major marketing constraints faced by banana growers, (iii) to examine the factors influencing the marketing of bananas. (Chi square) and (iv) to assess the impact of marketing constraints on the income of banana growers and (v) to suggest suitable measures for improving the marketing efficiency of banana growers in Erode District. The researcher conducted the study in Erode District, used convenient sampling method for data collection, the data has been collected at farmers banana market, forms and important place where the banana growers meet and share their knowledge. The researcher printed questionnaire in Tamil language and distributed for data collection, distributed 275 questionnaires out of them 264 could be collected back for analysis. The researcher have taken three tools, i.e. percentage analysis to present socio economic profile of the respondents, chi square used to find the factors that include the marketing constrains and correlation used to find the relationship between socio marketing constrains and income of banana growers.

KEYWORDS: Banana Growers, marketing constraints, Income of Banana Growers and profitability and sustainability of farming operations

INTRODUCTION

Banana is one of the most imperative fruit crops cultivated in India and serves as a major source of income and employment for millions of farmers. India ranks among the world's largest producers of bananas, contributing significantly to both domestic consumption and agricultural economic growth. The crop is valued for its nutritional benefits, year-round availability, and wide market demand. In Tamil Nadu, banana cultivation plays a crucial role in the agricultural sector, providing livelihood opportunities to a large number of farming households. Erode District is one of the prominent banana-producing regions in Tamil Nadu due to its favorable climatic conditions, fertile soil and well-developed irrigation facilities. Farmers in the district cultivate different varieties of bananas and supply their produce to local, regional, and interstate markets. The banana industry contributes substantially to rural income generation and economic development in the district. Despite the importance of banana cultivation, growers face numerous challenges in marketing their produce. Marketing is a critical component that determines the profitability and sustainability of farming operations. Banana growers often encounter problems such as price fluctuations, the involvement of multiple intermediaries, inadequate storage facilities, transportation difficulties, lack of market information, high marketing costs and post-harvest losses. Since bananas are highly perishable, delays in transportation and marketing can significantly affect product quality and farmers' earnings.

The increasing competition in agricultural markets, changing consumer preferences, and fluctuations in demand further intensify the marketing challenges faced by banana growers. These constraints often reduce farmers' bargaining power and limit their ability to secure fair prices for their produce. Understanding these marketing constraints is essential for developing effective strategies and policy interventions aimed at improving market efficiency and enhancing farmers' income. The present study titled "A Study on Marketing Constraints Faced by Banana Growers in Erode District, Tamil Nadu" seeks to examine the major marketing problems experienced by banana farmers and identify measures that can improve the marketing system.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Banana is one of the most important commercial fruit crops cultivated in Erode District, Tamil Nadu, and serves as a major source of income for farmers. Despite its economic significance, banana growers face numerous marketing constraints that adversely affect their profitability and livelihood.

The marketing of bananas is particularly challenging due to the perishable nature of the crop, which requires timely transportation, storage and sale. Farmers often encounter problems such as price fluctuations, high transportation costs, inadequate storage facilities, dependence on intermediaries, lack of market intelligence, grading and packaging issues and post-harvest losses.

These challenges reduce the bargaining power of growers and result in lower returns from their produce. The market uncertainties and the absence of efficient marketing channels create difficulties for farmers in obtaining fair prices.

There are various government initiatives and agricultural marketing institutions exist to support farmers, many banana growers continue to experience marketing inefficiencies. It is necessary to identify and analyze the marketing constraints faced by banana growers in Erode District.

Understanding these constraints will help in formulating appropriate strategies and policy measures to improve the marketing system and enhance the income and welfare of banana farmers.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Agriculture continues to be a vital sector of the Indian economy and banana cultivation plays a significant role in the agricultural development of Erode District. The benefits of increased production can be realized only when farmers have access to efficient marketing systems. Marketing constraints often reduce the income of banana growers and discourage them from expanding their cultivation activities. The need for this study arises from the necessity to understand the specific marketing problems faced by banana growers and their impact on farm profitability. By identifying the major constraints in the marketing process, the study can help policymakers and agricultural agencies design effective interventions to improve market access, reduce post-harvest losses, strengthen market infrastructure, and enhance farmers' bargaining power. The findings will contribute to the sustainable development of banana cultivation and improve the socio-economic conditions of banana growers in Erode District.

RESEARCH GAP

Several studies have examined banana cultivation, production practices and marketing systems in different regions of India. Limited research has specifically focused on the marketing constraints faced by banana growers in Erode District, Tamil Nadu. The marketing environment is continuously changing due to fluctuations in prices, transportation costs, market demand and the role of intermediaries. The unique socio-economic and geographical characteristics of Erode District may influence the marketing challenges experienced by farmers. There is a need for a comprehensive study to identify and analyze the specific marketing constraints faced by banana growers in the district and to suggest suitable measures for improving marketing efficiency and farmers' income.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To present the socio-economic profile of banana growers in Erode District.
2. To identify the major marketing constraints faced by banana growers.
3. To examine the factors influencing the marketing of bananas. (Chi square)
4. To assess the impact of marketing constraints on the income of banana growers. (correlation)
5. To suggest suitable measures for improving the marketing efficiency of banana growers in Erode District.

HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship in marketing constraints among banana growers and income of the banana growers.

SAMPLING DESIGN

The present study conducted in Erode District, the banana cultivation and marketing in Erode District presented in introduction part. The researcher conducted the study in Erode District, used convenient sampling method for data collection, the data has been collected at farmers banana market, forms and important place where the banana growers meet and share their knowledge. The researcher printed questionnaire in Tamil language and distributed for data collection, distributed 275 questionnaires out of them 264 could be collected back for analysis.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The researcher have taken three tools, i.e. percentage analysis to present socio economic profile of the respondents, chi square used to find the factors that include the marketing constrains and correlation used to find the relationship between socio marketing constrains and income of banana growers.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Percentage analysis

The following variables are taken by the researcher for socio economic profile of the respondents. i.e. (i) Nature of the family, (ii) Number of members and size of family, (iii) Age-wise classification, (iv) Educational level, (v) Annual Family Income and (vi) Family members involved in Agriculture.

Table 1
Nature of the family

Sl. No.	Nature of family	Number of farmers	Percentage
1	Nuclear Family	93	35.23
2	Joint family	171	64.77
	Total	264	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table indicates the nature of the family. Out of 264 sample respondents, 93 (35.33%) are belongs to nuclear family and the remaining 171 (64.77%) respondents are belongs to joint family. Majority (64.77%) of the respondents are nuclear families.

Number of Members and Size of Family

The respondents were divided into three groups based on the size of their families: small families (those with fewer than 3 members) medium families (those with 3 - 6 members) and large families (those with more than 6 members), as shown below.

Table 2
Number of members and size of family

Sl. No.	Family size	Number of farmers	Percentage
1	Small	50	18.94
2	Medium	116	43.94
3	Large	98	37.12
	Total	264	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the number of members and size of the family. Out of total 264 sample respondents, 50 (18.94%) respondents are belong to small family, 116 (43.94%) respondents are belong to medium family and remaining 98 (37.12%) respondents are belong to large family. Majority (43.94%) of the respondents are belongs to medium size family.

Age-wise Classification

Age is a measure of a person's maturity, therefore it becomes more significant, and the response may vary based on the age. As shown below, the respondents were divided into three groups: low (under 40 years old), middle (40 – 60 years old), and high (above 60 years old).

Table 3
Age-wise classification

Sl. No.	Age wise classification	Number of farmers	Percentage
1	Up to 40 years	53	20.08
2	41 to 60 years	116	43.94
3	Above 60 years	95	35.98
	Total	264	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the age wise classification of farmers. Out of the total 264 respondents, 53 (20.08%) respondents belong to low age group of below 40 years. 116 (43.94%) respondents are belongs to 41 years to 60 years and remaining 95 (35.98%) respondents are belongs to above 60 years old. Majority (43.94%) of the respondents are belongs to 41 years to 60 years.

Educational Level

Table 4
Educational level

Sl. No.	Educational level	Number of farmers	Percentage
1	Primary	76	28.79
2	Elementary	63	23.86
3	High school level	77	29.17
4	Degree level	48	18.18
	Total	264	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the educational level of the sample respondent farmers. Out of 264 sample respondents, 76 (28.79%) respondent's educational level is primary school level. 63 (23.86%) respondent's educational level is elementary level. 77 (29.17%) respondent's educational level is high school level and remaining 48 (18.18%) respondent's educational level is degree. Majority (29.17%) of the respondents are studied high school level.

Annual Family Income

Table 5
Annual Family Income

Sl. No.	Annual family income	Number of farmers	Percentage
1	Up to Rs. 2,50,000	78	29.55
2	Rs. 2,50,001 to Rs. 5,00,000	129	48.86
3	Above Rs. 5,00,000	57	21.59
	Total	264	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table represents the annual family income of the farmers. Out of 264 sample farmers, 78 (29.55%) respondent's annual family income from agriculture is up to Rs. 2,50,000. 129 (48.86%) respondent's annual family income from agriculture is Rs. 2,50,000 to Rs. 5,00,000 and remaining 57 (21.59%) respondent's annual family income from agriculture is above Rs. 5,00,000. Majority (48.86%) of the respondents' annual family income from agriculture is Rs. 2,50,001 to Rs. 5,00,000.

Number of Family Members Involved in Agriculture

The number of family members that work in agriculture influences how much attention is paid to the crops that are grown, and they also offer the farmer moral support when they are out in the field. The following lists the number of family members working in agriculture by farm size and group.

Table 6
Family members involved in Agriculture

Sl. No.	Members involved	Number of farmers	Percentage
1	One	37	14.02
2	Two	133	50.38
3	Above two	94	35.60
	Total	264	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the number of family members involved in agriculture. Out of 264 sample respondent's farmers, 37 (14.02%) respondents having one member involved in agriculture. 133 (50.38%) respondent's two family members are involved in agriculture and remaining 94 (35.60%) respondent's having more than two family members are involving in agriculture. Majority (50.38%) of the respondents family members are involving in agriculture are two members.

Marketing Constraints of Banana Growers

The researcher taken ten variables of marketing constrains of banana. i.e. (i) Price fluctuations, (ii) High transportation costs, (iii) Inadequate storage/cold storage facilities, (iv) Post-harvest losses, (v) Dependence on middlemen/intermediaries, (vi) Lack of timely market information, (vii) Poor market infrastructure, (viii) Grading and packaging problems and (ix) Delayed payments from traders and (x) Limited bargaining power of farmers.

The researcher used likert five point scale to find the level of marketing constrains of banana growers. The following table shows the level of constrains.

Table 7
Level of marketing constrains

Sl. No.	Level of marketing constrains	Number of farmers	Percentage
1	Low	37	14.02
2	Medium	73	27.65
3	High	154	58.33
	Total	264	100
Mean : 41.832. SD : 2.338, Minimum 18, Maximum 46			

Source: Computed data

Likert five point scale used to find the level of marketing constrains, calculated the mean, SD, total score converted into 3 levels, i.e. low, medium and high. Out of 264 sample respondents, 37 (14.02%) respondents felt low level of marketing constrains, 73 (27.65%) respondents felt medium level of marketing constrains and remaining 154 (58.33%) respondents are felt high level of marketing constrains. Majority (58.33%) of the respondents are felt high level of marketing constrains.

Chi Square

Table 8
Chi square test – Factors influencing the marketing of Banana

Sl. No.	Socio economic factors	Chi Square value	DF	P - value	Result
1	Nature of the family	18.739	2	0.001	Significant
2	Number of members and size of family	24.378	4	0.001	Significant
3	Age-wise classification	20.781	4	0.001	Significant
4	Educational level	17.653	6	0.001	Significant
5	Annual Family Income	15.378	2	0.001	Significant
6	Family members involved in Agriculture	14.306	3	0.001	Significant

Source: Computed data

The above table presented the chi square test output, nature of family (0.001), number of members and size of family (0.001), age wise classification (0.001), educational level (0.001), annual family income (0.001) and family members involved in agriculture (0.001) are significantly influence the level of factors influencing the marketing of banana at 5% significant level.

Correlation

Table 9
Relationship between impact of marketing constrains and income of banana growers

		Marketing constrains	Income of banana growers
Marketing constrains	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	264	

Income of banana growers	Pearson Correlation	-0.873**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	264	264

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is negative relationship between the marketing constrains of banana growers and income of banana growers. If the marketing constrains reduce their income will increase, the same time, if the marketing constrains increase their income automatically reduce. There is negative and significant relationship between marketing constrains (-0.873) and income of banana growers at 1% significant level. Hence, the null hypothesis has been accepted.

FINDINGS

The following are the findings of the study.

1. Majority (64.77%) of the respondents are nuclear families.
2. Majority (43.94%) of the respondents are belongs to medium size family.
3. Majority (43.94%) of the respondents are belongs to 41 years to 60 years.
4. Majority (29.17%) of the respondents are studied high school level.
5. Majority (48.86%) of the respondents annual family income from agriculture is Rs. 2,50,001 to Rs. 5,00,000.
6. Majority (50.38%) of the respondents family members are involving in agriculture are two members.
7. Majority (58.33%) of the respondents are felt high level of marketing constrains.
8. There is negative and significant relationship between marketing constrains (-0.873) and income of banana growers at 1% significant level.

SUGGESTIONS

The following are the suggestions of the study.

1. The government and agricultural marketing authorities should strengthen regulated markets in Erode District to ensure transparent pricing mechanisms and enable banana growers to receive fair prices for their produce. Improved market regulation can reduce exploitation by intermediaries and increase farmers' income.
2. Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and cooperative marketing societies should be encouraged and strengthened to facilitate collective marketing. This will enhance the bargaining power of banana growers and help them negotiate better prices with traders and wholesalers.
3. Adequate cold storage and warehousing facilities should be established in major banana-producing areas to reduce post-harvest losses and allow farmers to store their produce during periods of low market prices.
4. The government should improve transportation infrastructure, including rural roads and logistics facilities, to ensure the quick and efficient movement of bananas from farms to markets, thereby reducing transportation costs and spoilage.
5. Timely and accurate market information regarding prices, demand trends and market opportunities should be provided through mobile applications, agricultural extension services and digital platforms to help farmers make informed marketing decisions.
6. Training programs on scientific post-harvest management, grading, packaging and value addition should be organized regularly to improve the quality and marketability of bananas and increase farmers' returns.
7. Direct marketing channels such as farmers' markets, retail outlets and online marketing platforms should be promoted to reduce the dependence of growers on middlemen and increase their share of the consumer price.

8. Financial assistance and easy access to institutional credit should be provided to banana growers for marketing-related activities such as storage, transportation, packaging and value-addition initiatives.
9. Government agencies should encourage the establishment of banana processing units in Erode District to create value-added products such as banana chips, banana powder and banana puree, thereby increasing market opportunities and reducing wastage.
10. Regular awareness programs should be conducted to educate banana growers about modern marketing practices, government support schemes, crop insurance, and digital marketing tools, enabling them to improve their marketing efficiency and overall profitability.

CONCLUSION

Banana cultivation plays a vital role in the agricultural economy of Erode District, providing income and employment opportunities to a large number of farmers. The study reveals that banana growers face several marketing constraints that adversely affect their profitability and overall economic well-being. Major challenges such as price fluctuations, high transportation costs, inadequate storage facilities, post-harvest losses, lack of timely market information and dependence on intermediaries continue to hinder the efficient marketing of banana produce. The findings indicate that these constraints significantly reduce the income of banana growers by increasing marketing costs and limiting their access to profitable markets. Strengthening Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), promoting direct marketing channels, improving storage and transportation facilities and providing timely market information can help farmers obtain better returns for their produce. The government support in the form of financial assistance, marketing infrastructure development, training programs and digital marketing initiatives can contribute significantly to overcoming existing marketing challenges. Addressing these constraints will not only enhance the income and livelihood of banana growers but also contribute to the sustainable development of the banana sector in Erode District.

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