

NATURE OF MARKETING PRACTICES ADHERED BY THE MUSHROOM CULTIVATORS SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NILGIRIS DISTRICT

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Abstract

Agricultural markets are special types of markets that have special characteristics that differ from other markets. These are mainly due to factors affecting supply of agricultural products, and the situation of producers in this business. The objective of the study is to identify the nature of marketing practices adhered by the mushroom cultivators. Primary data were used in the present study. Four hundred and fifty (450) sample households were selected. Cluster and snow-ball technique sampling were adopted. Weighted arithmetic mean, Likert's Summated scales and Percentage analysis were the statistical tools used. The study found that 98 per cent of the respondents target the middlemen for easy marketability of goods and 95.11 per cent of the mushroom cultivators prefer nearby towns for sales. The study suggests that farmers have to extend their target of sales by adopting various kinds of methods to fulfill their needs and farmers need to focus on factors such as better relationship with the buyers, availability of better channel partners, liquidity, prompt selling, less transport cost etc.

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Introduction

Agricultural markets are special types of markets that have special characteristics that differ from other markets. These are mainly due to factors affecting supply of agricultural products, and the situation of producers in this business. First of all the agricultural market is very competitive because the producers are all very small and large in number.

Marketing of mushrooms in India is not yet organised. It is the simple system of producers selling directly to retailer or even to consumers. By exploring various marketing options for fresh mushrooms – depending on transport infrastructure, selling directly to local customers, local traders, markets, intermediaries, regional wholesalers, local restaurants, shops or farmer cooperatives, this study discusses about the marketing practices of mushroom growers.

OBJECTIVE

To identify the nature of marketing practices adhered by the mushroom cultivators

RESEARCH DESIGN

Primary data were used in the present study. Four hundred and fifty (450) sample households were selected. Cluster and snow-ball technique sampling were adopted and information was collected on the nature of marketing practices adhered by the mushroom cultivators through a pre-scheduled questionnaire. Data were analysed using statistical methods. Weighted arithmetic mean, Likert's Summated scales and Percentage analysis were the statistical tools used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE: 1

FARMERS' OPINION ON TARGETS MARKET FOCUSED

Sl. No	Targets	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
1.	Consumers in the Local Market	1	0.22
2.	Retailers/Department Store	4	0.89
3.	Nearby Grocery Shop	4	0.89

4.	Middlemen	441	98.00
	Total	450	100

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from the above table it is clearly inferred that, 98 per cent of the respondents targets the middlemen for easy marketability of goods. Simultaneously, 0.89 per cent of the respondents said that they target retailers/department store and grocery shop and the remaining 0.22 per cent of the respondents targets the consumers in the local market.

Thus the study has been concluded that 98 per cent of the respondents target the middlemen for marketing.

TABLE: 2

FARMERS' OPINION ON SALES POINT

Sl. No	Sales Product	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
1.	Local Market	77	4.67
2.	Nearby town	128	95.11
3.	Nearby cities	245	0.22
	Total	450	100

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from the above table that 95.11 per cent of the mushroom cultivators have said that they sell their produces in the near market and 4.67 per cent of the mushroom cultivators have concentrated local market for their sales. Remaining 0.22 per cent of the mushroom cultivators sale their products in nearby cities.

Thus the study has been concludes that 95.11 per cent of the mushroom cultivators prefer nearby towns for sales.

TABLE: 3
FARMERS' OPINION ON NATURE OF CHANNEL OF DISTRIBUTION AVAILABLE

Sl. No	Nature	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
1.	Mushroom grower-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer	399	99.56
2.	Mushroom grower-Wholesaler-Consumer	51	0.44
	Total	450	100

Source: Primary Data

Among the 450 mushroom cultivators surveyed, it has been observed that majority; i.e.99.56 per cent of the mushroom cultivators mainly sell their mushrooms to wholesalers, who later sell it to the retailers and to the end consumers. Rests 0.44 per cent of farmers sell their products through the wholesaler, who later sell to the consumers.

Thus the study has been concluded that 99.56 per cent of the mushroom cultivators prefer wholesaler and retailer for the sale of the mushrooms in the market.

TABLE: 4
FARMERS' OPINION ON FACTORS FOCUSED WHILE MARKETING MUSHROOM

Factors	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Least Important	Not At All Important	Sum	Mean	Rank
Quality of the Product	352 (78.22)	96 (21.33)	2 (0.44)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2150	4.78	1
Quantity of the Product	205 (45.56)	229 (50.89)	15 (3.33)	1 (0.22)	0 (0.00)	1988	4.42	4
Bulk Sales Orders	47 (10.44)	101 (22.44)	200 (44.44)	101 (22.44)	1 (0.22)	1442	3.20	11
Price for the Produce	335 (74.44)	102 (22.67)	10 (2.22)	3 (0.67)	0 (0.00)	2119	4.71	2
Time-Schedule of Product Delivery	46 (10.22)	110 (24.44)	198 (44.00)	96 (21.33)	0 (0.00)	1456	3.24	10
Nearness to the Market	138	179	103	30	0	1775	3.94	7

	(30.67)	(39.78)	(22.89)	(6.67)	(0.00)			
Freshness of Products	223 (49.56)	155 (34.44)	71 (15.78)	1 (0.22)	0 (0.00)	1950	4.33	5
Demand for the Product	257 (57.11)	155 (34.44)	37 (8.22)	1 (0.22)	0 (0.00)	2018	4.48	3
Easy of Transportation	167 (37.11)	157 (34.89)	120 (26.67)	6 (1.33)	0 (0.00)	1835	4.08	6
Regular Buyers for Products	21 (4.67)	109 (24.22)	236 (52.44)	84 (18.67)	0 (0.00)	1417	3.15	12
Product Certification and Hygiene Marks	6 (1.33)	47 (10.44)	220 (48.89)	176 (39.11)	1 (0.22)	1231	2.74	14
Availability of Channel Partners	1 (0.22)	44 (9.78)	232 (51.56)	172 (38.22)	1 (0.22)	1222	2.72	15
Market Location	46 (10.22)	156 (34.67)	181 (40.22)	64 (14.22)	3 (0.67)	1528	3.40	8
Relationship with Buyers	8 (1.78)	129 (28.67)	231 (51.33)	80 (17.78)	2 (0.44)	1411	3.14	13
Shelf-Life of the Product	19 (4.22)	127 (28.22)	258 (57.33)	46 (10.22)	0 (0.00)	1469	3.26	9
Others	1 (0.22)	8 (1.78)	273 (60.67)	166 (36.89)	2 (0.44)	1190	2.64	16

Source: Primary Data

The above table discusses about the primary reason for cultivating mushroom. 95.60 per cent (On an average 4.78) of the agriculturists have concentrated mainly on the quality of the product, mushrooms are highly perishable and it starts dehydrating. After some time, the quality of produce declines rapidly making it unmarketable so the cultivators are to be followed to increase the shelf life and marketability of mushrooms. They rated this variable in the first place. Batch of the agriculturists have said that they look for the price for the production of mushroom cultivation and it is ranked second place with an average mean score of 4.71 (29.43). Further it has been observed that the agriculturists expect to have demand for the product while selling and it was ranked third place with an average mean score 4.48(28 per cent). Whereas a set of agriculturists have said that the quantity of the product is an important factor for mushroom cultivation. This variable was ranked in the fourth place. Subsequently a group of agriculturists look for the freshness of the product, easy way of transportation, nearness to the market for

effective sales without any delay has ranked in fifth, sixth, and seventh places with average mean score of 4.33, 4.08 and 3.94 respectively. On an average 3.40 (21.25 per cent) of the agriculturists expect nearby market location and it has ranked in eighth place. Batch of agriculturists said that they have it is considered to be the shelf-life of the product and also prompt time schedule of the products delivery so that they took bulk sales orders for more profit and gave importance to the regular buyers. These variables are ranked in ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth places with average mean scores of 3.26, 3.24, 3.20, and 3.15 respectively. Further, some of the agriculturists have opined that they have a good relationship with buyers, and they gave importance to the product certification and hygiene marks so that it can be able to maintain the reputation of the products and it ranks thirteenth and fourteenth places with the average mean score of 3.14 and 2.74 and the remaining agriculturists have said that they look for the proper availability of channel partners, better liquidity, prompt selling, less transport cost. These variables ranked in fifteenth and sixteenth place with an average mean scores of 2.72 and 2.64 respectively.

Henceforth, it has been found that the quality of the product is the primary reason for cultivating mushrooms has ranked in first place with highest average mean score of 4.78.

FINDINGS

The study found that out of 450 respondents, 98 per cent of the respondents targets the middlemen for easy marketability of goods.

It was found that 95.11 per cent of the mushroom cultivators prefer nearby towns for sales.

It was also found that 99.56 per cent of the mushroom cultivators prefer wholesaler and retailer for the sale of the mushrooms in the market.

It has been found that the quality of the product is the primary reason for cultivating mushrooms which has been ranked in the first place with highest average mean score of 4.78.

SUGGESTIONS

•The study observed that farmers have to extend their target of sales by adopting various kinds of methods to fulfil their needs.

- Farmers need to focus on factors such as better relationship with the buyers, availability of better channel partners, liquidity, prompt selling, less transport cost etc.
- Mushroom cultivators need to concentrate more on bulk sales orders, price for the produces, time-schedule of product delivery etc. while marketing the products.
- Farmers are suggested to plan their activities well in advance before they start their cultivation process for prompt sales and supply of produces in the market.

CONCLUSION

Mushrooms are highly perishable and it starts dehydrating after some time then the quality of produce declines rapidly making it unmarketable so the cultivators are to be followed to increase the shelf life and marketability of mushrooms. Therefore, 98 per cent of the respondents targets the middlemen for easy marketability of goods and 95.11 per cent of the mushroom cultivators prefer nearby towns for sales.

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