



DECISION BEHAVIOUR OF PEPPER GROWERS IN INDIA

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study the decision behavior of Pepper growers in Kerala, on analyzing using Garrett Ranking Technique, the first and foremost reason for preferring Indigenous varieties was 'Consistent Yield of Pepper' with mean score of 62.52, in analyzing factors responsible for the low productivity of pepper was 'Pests and Diseases'. To increase the productivity the preventive measures to be taken with the support of biological research department. In analyzing the factors influencing the growers to sell pepper to village trader, 'Convenient Sale Possibility' was with mean score of 64.15 because the growers can sell their produce on any day and at any time to the village traders. If they want to sell their produce in assembling market which is far away from the production centers, they have to incur more on transportation by spending more time.

Keywords: Pepper Cultivation, Decision Behaviour, Garrett Ranking Technique

Introduction

Pepper (Family: Piperaceae) is a perennial vine grown for its berries extensively used as spice and in medicine. India is one of the major producer, consumer and exporter of black pepper in the world. During 2013-14, 21250 tonnes of black pepper products worth Rs. 94,002 lakhs were exported



to various countries. Black pepper is cultivated to a large extent in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and to a limited extent in Maharashtra, North eastern states and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The crop is grown in about 201381 hectares with a production of 55000 tonnes annually (2012–13). Kerala and Karnataka account for a major portion of production of black pepper in the country.

Review of Literature

Johny A. Kallupuruakkal pointed out that more than hundred pepper cultivars are grown in Kerala and Karnataka. Among the popular cultivars, the most important was the Karimunda Variety because of its regular bearing, stability in yield and suitability for inter-cropping under varying soil climatic conditions. The varieties Panniyur-1 and Panniyur-3 were hybrids with wide adaptability suited to all pepper-growing regions. They had long spikes with bold berries and they performed well in open situation. Panniyur-1 was the most suitable for mixed cropping/border planting in coffee and cardamom plantations, especially in the Wynad region.

M. Renold anticipated that the future production of pepper in India would be stable and steady since most of the senile vines were replanted along with area expansion with high yielding varieties and the increased adoption of package of practices.

George et al., found that the yield per acre of pepper was influenced by number of pepper vines per acre, age of the plant, cultural activities and the prevailing weather conditions. According to them low productivity was the main reason for the low export which in turn resulted in instability in export earnings.

M.S. Madan, et al., in their study, “Raising Productivity of Balck Pepper in Indian context” observed that, India had superior varities which could yield more than two times the yield of other pepper producing countries. Adoption of available technology could easily bridge the gap between



national average and average yield the grower's field. They concluded that, 'yield gap' was nothing but 'technology gap' which could be bridged by well-planned extension activities.

Statement of the Problem

India stands first both in area under cultivation and production of pepper among the pepper producing countries in the world. Even though India is the largest producer of pepper in the world, productivity of pepper in India is the lowest among the pepper producing countries. This calls for an in-depth study of the factors which contribute to the problems in the production of pepper, in order to suggest possible steps to be taken to improve production and productivity of pepper in the country. In this context, this paper attempts to study the decision of the pepper grower in determining the growth of the pepper production.

Objectives

The main objectives of the study are:

- To study reasons preferring Indigenous Varieties
- To study factors responsible for the Low Productivity of Pepper
- To factors influencing the growers to sell pepper to village traders

Methodology

Kerala is the largest producer of pepper in India. It accounts for a lion's share of area and production of pepper in India and hence the study of performance of pepper economy of Kerala can well be treated as synonymous with its performance in India. Hence Kerala state was selected for collecting primary data. In Kerala, Idukki district ranks first in the area and production of pepper. Hence this district was chosen for the selection of respondents. Idukki district consists of eight development blocks, of which three blocks namely Nedumkandom, Kattapana, and Devikulam were



again selected, based on area coverage under pepper. From each block, two panchayats were selected by simple random sampling. The total sample size was 210, of which 70 respondents each in three blocks. Multistage sampling method was adopted with the selection of the State, District and blocks, followed by simple random selection of the panchayats, villages and respondents.

Analytical Tool

The growers were asked to rank some of the identified reasons. The order of merit assigned by the respondents was converted into scores by using Garrett's Ranking Technique. The per cent position for each rank was found using the following formula.

$$\text{Per cent Position} = (100(\text{Rij}-0.5)) / \text{Nj}$$

Where, Rij=Rank given to ith factor by jth individual; Nj=Number of Factors ranked by jth individual.

By referring the table given by Garrett, the per cent position estimated were converted into scores. Then for each factor, the scores of various respondents were added and divided by the number of respondents to arrive at the mean score. The mean scores thus obtained for each factor were arranged in a descending order. The factor with highest mean score was given the first rank, followed by second, third and so on.

Results and Discussions

Success depends upon the right decision in right time, placing right person in right place, suitable variety of crops in suitable climatic conditions. Selection of correct variety of pepper increases the volume of production and productivity in certain area.

Reasons for Preferring Indigenous Varieties



In India, different varieties of pepper are cultivated such as Sreekara, Kuthiravally, Panniyur – 1 to 8, Singapora, Panchami and Pournami. Some of them are indigenous and others are hybrid. In Kerala from where more than 90 per cent of total output is derived, growers prefer native varieties to others for a number of reasons. The growers' choice for preferring indigenous variety of pepper and factors responsible for low productivity of pepper in India were studied.

The factors influencing the growers to cultivate local varieties were selected and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Influencing the Cultivation of Indigenous Varieties of Pepper

S.No.	Factor	Garrett Rank Mean Score	Rank
1.	Consistent Yield of Pepper	62.52	I
2.	Suitable to prevailing Climatic Conditions	51.10	II
3.	Resistance to Pests and Diseases	50.40	III
4.	Availability of Pepper Vines	35.98	IV

Source: Primary data

The consistent yield of pepper will result in regular income to the growers year after year. Data revealed that consistent yield was attributed as the major reason for the preference of indigenous variety with a mean score of 62.52. Growers felt that the indigenous varieties withstood the prevailing climatic conditions and this factor was ranked second with 51.10 mean score. The growers preferred local varieties due to their resistance to pests and diseases and this factor was found to be the third important reason with mean score of 50.40. Finally, the availability of pepper vines was the least important factor for the preferring the native varieties of pepper.

Factors Responsible for the Low Productivity of Pepper



The average production of pepper per acre in India is far from satisfactory while comparing world average. Factors responsible for low productivity of pepper were analysed and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Factors responsible for Low Productivity of Pepper

S.No.	Factor	Garrett Rank Mean Score	Rank
1.	Pests and Disease	60.18	I
2.	No Intensive Cultivation	59.16	II
3.	Unfavourable Climate	58.50	III
4.	Non-availability of hybrid seedlings	36.72	IV
5.	Lack of Scientific Knowledge	35.44	V

Source: Primary data

It could be observed from Table 1 that pests and diseases were the major reasons for the low productivity of pepper with a mean score of 60.18. Growers lacked adequate knowledge about proper manuring and timely culture operations. Therefore next to pest and disease, no intensive cultivation was considered the second important factor with a mean score of 59.16. Pepper plants thrive well at the appropriate climatic conditions. Unfavourable climatic conditions adversely affect the production of pepper with mean score of 58.50. The fourth important factor was the non-availability of adequate hybrid variety seedlings with a mean score of 36.72. Growers lack sufficient knowledge due to inadequate guidance from the extension agencies. This was found to be the last reason for the low productivity of pepper.

Factors Influencing the Growers to Sell Pepper to Village Traders

The pepper growers in the study area were left with two options while marketing their produce. The first option was selling pepper to the village traders or primary wholesalers and the second one was selling through co-operative institutions such as service co-operatives or the primary



co-operative marketing societies. The factors influenced the growers to select a particular intermediary are analyzed and presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Factors influencing the growers to sell pepper to Village traders

S.No.	Factor	Garrett Rank Mean Score	Rank
1.	Convenient Sale possibility	64.15	I
2.	No price benefits in other markets	60.00	II
3.	Advance	52.68	III
4.	Low Transportation cost	45.00	IV
5.	Low Marketable Surplus	40.32	V
6.	Long-term Practice	37.85	VI

Source: Primary data

Village traders are operating in the production centers. The growers can sell their produce on any day and at any time to the village traders. The study revealed that convenient sale is attributed as the major reason for selling pepper through village traders with a mean score of 64.15. If the growers want to sell their produce in the assembling market which is far away from the production centers, they have to incur more transportation cost and spend more time. Therefore they feel that they can't enjoy price benefits in other markets. Hence, absence of price benefit in other markets is the second important factor with mean score of 60.00. The growers used to get money in advance from the village traders whenever they needed money. Once they received the amount, they had no other option except to sell their produce only to the village traders. Thus, advance money received is found to be the third important reason with mean score of 52.68. Low transportation cost has been found to be the fourth important reason with mean score of 45.00. Growers having low marketable surplus prefer village traders. Hence, low marketable surplus is found to be the fifth factor and the 'long term



practice' is considered to be the least important factor influencing growers to sell pepper through village traders.

Conclusion

Success depends upon the right decision in right time, placing right person in right place, suitable variety of crops in suitable climatic conditions. Selection of correct variety of pepper increases the volume of production and productivity in certain area. This paper attempts to study the decision behavior of Pepper growers in Kerala, on analyzing using Garrett Ranking Technique, the first and foremost reason for preferring Indigenous varieties was 'Consistent Yield of Pepper' with mean score of 62.52, in analyzing factors responsible for the low productivity of pepper was 'Pests and Diseases'. To increase the productivity the preventive measures to be taken with the support of biological research department. In analyzing the factors influencing the growers to sell pepper to village trader, 'Convenient Sale Possibility' was with mean score of 64.15 because the growers can sell their produce on any day and at any time to the village traders. If they want to sell their produce in assembling market which is far away from the production centers, they have to incur more on transportation by spending more time.

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