

Cultivation And Marketing of Banana in Tiruchirappalli District

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Abstract

Bananas are one of the most widely cultivated and consumed fruits globally, serving as a staple food and significant cash crop in many tropical and subtropical regions. This study examines the cultivation practices, challenges, and marketing strategies associated with banana production. Key aspects such as soil preparation, irrigation, pest and disease management, and sustainable farming techniques are explored to improve productivity. The research also delves into the marketing chain, from farm gate sales to retail, highlighting the roles of farmers, wholesalers, and retailers. Challenges faced by farmers, such as fluctuating market prices, limited market access, and post-harvest losses, are analyzed. Strategies for improving profitability include value addition and market diversification. The findings emphasize the importance of adopting modern cultivation techniques and efficient marketing strategies to enhance the economic viability and sustainability of banana farming.

Keywords: Banana Cultivation, Banana Marketing, Agriculture Economics,

I.INTRODUCTION

The banana plant, the largest herbaceous flowering plant, holds significant agricultural and economic importance worldwide. All above-ground parts of a banana plant grow from a structure called a corm. Banana plants are fast-growing and adaptable, thriving in a wide variety of soils provided there is good drainage and the soil is at least 60 cm deep. The plant's pseudo-stem, formed by tightly packed leaf sheaths, supports its treelike structure. Cultivated banana plants vary in height depending on the variety and growing conditions. They produce large leaves arranged spirally and may grow up to 2.7 meters long. Upon maturity, the corm stops producing leaves and begins forming a flower spike or inflorescence. This remarkable growth pattern enables bananas to thrive in diverse environments, making them one of the most versatile and valuable crops globally.

Banana Cultivation in Tiruchirappalli District:

Tiruchirappalli district in Tamil Nadu is renowned for its extensive banana cultivation. Favorable climatic conditions, abundant water resources from the Kaveri and Kollidam rivers, and fertile soil make it ideal for growing bananas. The Nendran variety, cultivated on approximately 2,500 hectares of land, constitutes about one-third of the district's banana cultivation. During the 2023-24 season, around 7,000 hectares were under banana cultivation in Tiruchirappalli, with significant farming activity in areas like Andhanallur, Kuzhumani, and Musiri. Farmers here have adopted efficient planting practices, completing sowing in April 2023 and commencing harvest by late 2023. The region's bananas enjoy high demand, especially from traders in Kerala, who procure large quantities for markets in Thrissur, Kottayam, and Palakkad. Tiruchirappalli's strategic location and infrastructure also contribute to its success. The district houses the Banana Research Centre of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and the ICAR-National Research Centre for Banana in Thayanur, further strengthening its role as a hub for banana cultivation research and development.

Review of Literature

DuraiPrasanth, T., Senthilnathan, S., Senthilkumar, R., Anandi, S., &Harishankar, K. (2022), This study focused on the efficiency of banana farmers in Tiruchirappalli District, analyzing factors such as resource utilization, yield outcomes, and cost-benefit ratios. The findings highlight the importance of modern techniques in optimizing productivity and minimizing losses, particularly in marketing and transportation challenges.

Velavan, C. (2024), This paper emphasizes the growth and marketing trends of bananas in Tamil Nadu, exploring the influence of regional demand, climatic conditions, and governmental policies. The study also explores export opportunities and highlights the need for better infrastructure to ensure quality standards in international markets.

Saraswathi, M.S., & Durai, P. (2023), A comprehensive review of banana genetic resources, focusing on conservation methods and their utilization in improving banana varieties. The study discusses sustainable cultivation practices and the role of advanced research in addressing pest resistance and enhancing yield quality.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the marketing behavior of banana-growing farmers and the price spread in banana marketing.
2. To identify the challenges faced by farmers in banana cultivation and marketing.
3. To propose strategies for enhancing the profitability and sustainability of banana farming.

Key Aspects of Banana Cultivation

Soil Preparation and Climate Requirements:

- Bananas thrive in well-drained, fertile soil with a pH range of 5.5–7.0. Ideal temperatures for growth range between 25°C and 30°C, with high humidity levels.

Planting Techniques:

- Spacing: Recommended spacing is 3m x 3m to optimize growth and yield.
- Propagation: Tissue-cultured plants or healthy suckers are used for planting.

Irrigation and Nutrient Management:

- Irrigation: Drip irrigation is widely used for water efficiency.
- Nutrients: A combination of organic compost and balanced chemical fertilizers is applied.

Pest and Disease Management:

- Common threats: Fusarium wilt, nematodes, and banana weevils.
- Control measures: Integrated pest management (IPM) strategies, including biological controls and targeted pesticide use.

Harvesting and Post-Harvest Handling:

- Timing: Harvested 8-12 weeks after flowering based on maturity.

- Post-harvest care: Proper washing, sorting, and ripening processes are essential for maintaining quality.

Banana Marketing in Tiruchirappalli

Banana marketing in Tiruchirappalli revolves around robust production and efficient distribution systems. Key marketing hubs like the Thiruchendurai Banana Complex and Kattuputtur Regulated Market facilitate large-scale sales to wholesalers and retailers.

Supply Chain Management:

- Bananas are transported to neighboring states such as Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.
- Cold storage and refrigerated transport play a crucial role in preserving quality for long-distance markets.

Retail and Export Markets:

- At the retail level, bananas are sold through supermarkets, local shops, and street vendors.
- While local consumption dominates, there is growing demand for Indian bananas in international markets. However, challenges like stringent quality standards and logistics remain.

Value Addition:

- Products like banana chips, banana flour, and banana-based snacks offer significant opportunities for revenue generation.
- Entrepreneurs are exploring processed banana products to capture niche markets.

Challenges in Banana Marketing

- Price Volatility: Market prices fluctuate due to weather conditions, pests, and changing demand.
- Post-Harvest Losses: Insufficient cold storage facilities and transportation delays lead to spoilage.
- Competition: Bananas from other regions, such as Robusta from Kerala, impact pricing and demand.
- Market Access: Limited access to larger markets reduces profitability for smallholder farmers.

Strategies for Enhancing Banana Marketing

- Improving Infrastructure: Expanding cold storage facilities and improving road networks for faster transportation.
- Market Diversification: Targeting export markets and developing processed banana products.
- Adopting Digital Tools: Using e-commerce platforms and social media for marketing and sales.
- Collaborative Efforts: Forming farmer cooperatives for better bargaining power and reduced marketing costs.

II.CONCLUSION

Banana cultivation and marketing hold immense potential for economic growth and rural development. By adopting modern farming practices, addressing challenges in supply chain management, and leveraging value addition opportunities, banana farmers can achieve higher profitability and sustainability. The Tiruchirappalli district's experience serves as a model for integrating research, innovation, and practical solutions to boost the banana industry.

III.REFERENCES

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