

Marketing Behaviour of Fruit Growers in Kumaon Hills of Uttarakhand

Shubhangi Kanwal^{1*} and S.K. Kashyap²

^{1,2}Department of Agricultural Communication, College of Agriculture, Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, U.S. Nagar- 263145 (Uttarakhand), India

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Cold chain, Fruit growers, Hills, Marketing constraints

ABSTRACT

Fruit production has immense potential to boost farmer's income in Uttarakhand hills. To increase producers' share in consumer rupee, marketing of quality fruits is essential. A study was conducted in Kumaon hills of Uttarakhand to assess marketing behaviour of fruit growers and constraints in marketing the fruits produced. Results revealed that fruit growers in the Uttarakhand hills exhibited a medium level of overall marketing behaviour. Marketing behaviour was studied as a composite of planning, decision making based on criteria for making an action plan, execution strategy and reconsideration/ review of the action plan after marketing. Risk preference, quality orientation, training received and market information source utilization were found to be significantly related with marketing behaviour of which risk preference and quality orientation were reported as the predictors. High transportation cost, fluctuating market prices and inadequate storage facilities were reported as the major constraints in fruit marketing by the growers. Provision of cold chain, processing units, mega markets with export linkages, minimum support price for fruits, focused training for small and marginal farmers on marketing strategies and quality concerns were suggested by the fruit growers.

Introduction

Uttarakhand state is endowed with the diverse agro-climatic conditions favoring ample unique flora and fauna but agriculture is still primarily subsistence type due to its difficult terrain, fragmented landholdings and heavy runoff. Therefore, the present trends towards rapid expansion of horticultural crops can be exploited for improving the food and economic security of the hill farmers (Pratap, 2011). Net sown area in Uttarakhand accounts for 0.749 million hectares out of which 0.1753 million hectares is under fruit cover (Govt. of Uttarakhand, 2017-18). Major fruits in Uttarakhand hills are peach, plum, pear, apricot, walnut, apple and several citrus fruits. On an average fruit

growers in hills acquire 0.099- 1.32 ha of land holding and earn between 50,000 to 1.5 lakh annually. Highly efficient agricultural marketing is essential to reap the economic benefits from rapid expansion of high value horticulture crops which reduces costs, and benefits all the sections of the society. Special attention on the marketing interventions and infrastructure is required in the hill regions of the state due to difficult terrains and limited bargaining and handling capacity of the growers resulting from lower size of holding and lack of resources (Joshi *et al.*, 2016). Adding to this concern, since agriculture in hills is subsistence type, it is not capable to fetch farmers with high returns and the producers share in consumer rupees is further reduced to marginal (Pandey *et al.*, 2011) by involvement of a large number

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: shubhangikanwal30@gmail.com (Shubhangi Kanwal)

Received 13-01-2020; Accepted 14-04-2020

Copyright@ Journal of Extension System (<http://acspublisher.com/journals/jes>)

of intermediaries, information gaps and management practices while handling the marketed surplus. Since, hill farmers are key stakeholders of the agricultural system which stresses on the necessity to realize their needs, objectives and outlook. Therefore for establishing an efficient marketing system that benefits the farmers, the objective of all the stakeholders must be in knowledge so that problems emerging from the conflicting objectives must be reconciled (Acharya and Agarwal, 2015).

The study on marketing behavior of fruit growers in Uttarakhand was undertaken to assess the gaps in marketing the surpluses, as quality production with less cost of cultivation is of utmost importance to have comparative and competitive advantage in this changing agricultural scenario. Moreover, fewer studies have been conducted regarding the marketing behaviour and constraints faced by the fruit growers of Hills.

Materials and methods

From Kumaon hills of Uttarakhand, Nainital district, Ramgarh block were purposely selected for the study due to their higher productivity and production. Four villages were selected in consultation with the horticulture development officer of the block. Selection of 120 respondents from the selected villages was done by using probability proportionate to size sampling method. Analytical research design was adopted to investigate the relationship between marketing behaviour and the selected socio-personal psychological and communication attributes. To verify the t-test was applied to the suggested relationship hypothesis. Multiple regression analysis was done on SPSS software to identify the predictors of the marketing behaviour. Further, the regression model was tested by f-test at $p < 0.001$.

Results and discussion

Major source of marketing information utilized by the fruit growers were information received from horticulture office (92.5%),

television (89.17%), friends (62.5%), relative (48.33%), local leaders (42.5%), newspaper (33.33%), local or regional farmer fairs (30%), and internet (28.33%) respectively as per the rank assigned according to the preference of source utilized by the respondents. It was also observed that more than one source of market information were consulted and utilized by the fruit growers. Entire struggle of a fruit grower of hills revolves around production as well as marketing of the fruit produced at a remunerative price. Marketing behaviour is the behavioural skill helpful in accessing the probable marketing strategy followed by the fruit growers. It would further help in identifying the gap between desirable and followed marketing strategy. Marketing behaviour was accessed by using a scale developed by Nirban (2004), was studied as a composite of planning, decision making based on criteria for making action plan, execution strategy and reconsideration/ review of the action plan after marketing. An overall medium marketing behaviour was witnessed by processing of the data responses of the fruit growers.

The detailed analysis of components of marketing behaviour revealed that probable reason for their medium level of marketing behaviour might be due to their medium level of planning, decision making, execution and reconsideration of the strategy followed by the fruit growers for proper marketing of fruits. Hike in either of the sub-component can pave the way for increase in overall marketing behaviour. Therefore, individual sub-component can be studied and the increment of each could be strategized accordingly.

Key findings extracted from the statements of the scale and as an reported outcome of focused group discussion includes: majority (92%) of the fruit growers opted for private vehicle for transport of their fruits, grading was done by almost all the fruit growers, fruits were mainly sold through the commission agent to the mega fruit markets of Mumbai, Delhi and Ahmedabad. The fruits sold in mega markets were grade A; lower grade fruits were either sold to distant or local markets. Perishability of the fruits were the main reason behind immediate sale of fruits at the price set by the commission agents. Approximate weighing of the fruit produced according to the capacity of the box was done by all the fruit growers. Similar patterns of set marketing practices were followed by all the fruit growers. The medium marketing behaviour depicted the stagnant marketing outlook of the fruit growers towards fruit production. Therefore, the outlook of the fruit growers towards fruit production and marketing needs urgent up thrust so that it becomes a lucrative business opportunity for the future generations to invest in fruit production and marketing as a cumulative enterprise.

Relationship analysis with marketing behaviour

Age, education, farming experience, total land holding, area under cultivation, annual income, infrastructural facilities, training received, information source utilization, risk preference, decision making ability, quality orientation, economic

Table 1 Marketing behaviour of the fruit growers

Category / Criteria	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)
Planning for making action plan	17.5	66.67	15.83
Decision making based on criteria for making action plan	21.67	60	18.33
Execution strategy of the action plan for marketing	15.83	67.5	16.67
Reconsideration/ review of the action plan after marketing	29.17	58.33	12.5
Overall marketing behaviour	16.67	66.67	16.67

motivation were the variables selected in the study, whose relationships with the marketing behaviour were hypothesized. The variables that exhibited significant correlation with the marketing behaviour of the fruit growers of the hills were: training received (at 0.01 level of significance), information source utilization (at 0.05 level of significance), risk preference (at 0.01 level of significance) and quality orientation (at 0.01 level of significance). Risk preference (at $p < 0.001$) and quality orientation (at $p < 0.005$) were identified as good predictors of marketing behaviour by multiple regression analysis of the selected variables and marketing behaviour. It was also found that about 48% of the variance in marketing behaviour is due to all the thirteen selected variables taken together. The overall regression model was significant, $F(4, 115) = 24.119$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = .456$.

Table 2 Constraints experienced in marketing

S.No.	Constraint	Considered as a constraint (% respondents)	Weighted mean	Rank
1.	Markets are far away	62.5	1.975	VI
2.	Inadequate storage facilities	86.66	2.858	III
3.	High cost of transportation	84.16	3.008	I
4.	Fluctuation in market price	82.5	2.941	II
5.	Inadequate physical facilities in the market	23.33	1.350	IX
6.	Prolonged transaction	7.5	1.075	XIV
7.	Lack of market information	8.33	1.083	XIII
8.	High commission charges	75.83	2.533	V
9.	Lack of grading facilities and knowledge	4.16	1.058	XV
10.	Delayed cash payment	6.66	1.100	XII
11.	Lack of processing facilities	85.83	2.733	IV
12.	Inadequate extension services	44.16	1.550	VIII
13.	Lack of value addition techniques and skills	72.5	1.866	VII
14.	High labour cost	1.66	1.050	XVI
15.	Lack of licensed cooperative society for marketing and value addition	6.66	1.833	X
16.	High cost incurred in packaging	3.33	1.116	XI

Marketing problems experienced by the fruit growers

The identified constraints were ranked according to their weighted mean score along with a separate column highlighting the statement marked as a constraint by what proportion of the respondents irrespective of the rank assigned to them. Rank marks the importance of the statement being a constraint and percentage the probability of it being a constraint. The table 2 shows the identified constraints as perceived by the fruit growers of the area. It can be said that lack of storage facility followed by lack of processing facility were identified as a constraint by majority of the respondents, although, high cost of transportation followed by fluctuation in market price were ranked as the major constraint in marketing the fruits by the fruit growers.

Suggestions offered by the fruit growers

Provision of cold chain rather than just cold stores, establishment of large scale processing units, establishment of mega fruit markets (like Mumbai and Delhi) with export linkage within the state and provision of minimum support price for fruit marketing were the suggestions offered by the fruit growers. Frequent training focusing on small and medium farmers on marketing behaviour, marketing strategies and market process were also identified as essential. Easy access and quick availability of market related information and training on quality concerns of the fruits in local, national and international markets was marked necessary by the majority of fruit growers to build desirable competence. Regular on-farm visits of experts from KVK and agricultural universities aligning to horticulture was also suggested by the fruit growers.

Conclusion

The study revealed that fruit production in the hill embraces a mix of unique advantages along with the severe constraints faced by the fruit growers in marketing their produce. It involves high cost of transportation, fluctuating market price, lack of storage and processing facilities, high commission charges and many more. The suggestions offered by the fruit growers were well thought to be solutions to many of their marketing problems. This indicated that fruit growers require proper guidance and urgent support from state and union. Infrastructure upgradation, bridging information gaps and focused training that acquaints all the fruit growers towards quality and export marketing strategies would certainly boost the marketing behaviour of the fruit growers.

References

- Agrawal GK, Bhatt PJ. Acharya, SS and Agarwal, NL, Agricultural Marketing in India, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co. Ltd., New Delhi, 2016. Pp. xxiv+ 619. Agrawal, Girish K., CSR-CFP Relationship in India—An Idiosyncratic Pestel Context and Research Agenda,

- Working Paper 270, Institute of Rural Management, Anand, Gujarat, March, 2015. pp. 28.
- Joshi, D., Anwer, M.E., Kumar, R., Rana, S., Paul, R.K., Kumar, A., Saxena, R.(2016). Agricultural marketing system in Uttarakhand: Structure and functioning. *Economic Affairs*, 61(3),549.
- Pratap, T. (2011). Hill Agriculture: Challenges and Opportunities. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 66 (1), 33-52.
- Nirban, A.J. (2004). *Analysis of the agricultural produce market committees in konkan and western Maharashtra with reference to their potential role in agricultural marketing extension* (Doctoral dissertation, Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri.
- Pandey, D., Kumar, A., Singh, R.(2011). Marketing of Sweet Orange (Malta) In Kumaon Region of Uttarakhand. *Journal of Recent Advances in Applied Sciences*. 1,26
- Singh, S., Hansra, B,S. (2021). Minimising Vegetable Production Constraints in Hills: Boon to Attain Sustainable Vegetable Farming System. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 57(2):52-5.