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Raisin Marketing Practices in Western Maharashtra, India

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Abstract:

The grapes are important horticultural crop in Western Maharashtra especially in Sangli and Solapur districts. These two districts have been emerged as the well-known pocket of grape cultivation. The grape growers of this region has not only dispose of the grapes as fresh fruits to distant market of state, country and abroad, but also divert some portion of their produce for raisin making depending upon market price situation. Now a day's some grape-growers cultivated grapes for purpose of raisin making only in western Maharashtra. Seasons of grape crops are of short period i.e. February to April as well as from the year 1990 onwards grapes cultivation and production has been increasing tremendously in Sangli and Solapur districts of Maharashtra. Due to that farmers are facing problem of grapes marketing and are getting very low prices for their quality grapes. As raisins is an important product from grapes and as farmers get better price if they are making raisins. At present nearly 20 percent grapes used for raisin production in western Maharashtra. Excess production of grapes diverted towards raisin production. In view of this, this paper focus on raisin Marketing practices in western Maharashtra.

1. Introduction

Marketing of agriculture is the most important activity of a farmer. This is a particularly true in case of small farmers who have small surpluses for marketing. The average farmers is so poor and indebted that they was no capacity to wait for better prices, they forced to sell their output to the money lender or to the trader so as clear his debts. The number of intermediaries and middlemen between the farmer and final consumer of their produce is too many and the margin going to them too large. Also the farmers do not ordinarily get information about the ruling prices in the big market. As a result, the farmers have to accept whatever price is quoted to them and have to believe whatever the traders tell them. Due to this defects the farmers cannot received fair price of their product. The economic position of a farmer cannot be improved by producing only more unless they get a fair price for their produce. Efficient marketing plays an important role in the development of raisin industry. Hence it was felt necessary to investigate the prevalent marketing system and channels.

1.1. Research Methodology

The study is based on secondary data only. The secondary data collected through published library resources such as books, magazine, news paper and annual report of Agricultural produce Market committees and non participative observations.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To Study the Marketing of raisins in western Maharashtra.
- 2) To Study the raisins Marketing channels.

2. Marketing of Raisins

Raisin marketing is one of the most important activities in western Maharashtra especially in Sangli and Solapur districts. As per sugar industry, raisin industry plays vital role in development of western Maharashtra. It is gaining importance in India due to the increase in area under grape cultivation. Due to this, grape growers are facing the problems of grape marketing and getting very low prices for their quality grapes. As a raisin is important product of grapes and as grape growers get better prices, they are produce raisins from grapes, Cost of production and marketing is the important factors deciding the profitability of the enterprise. Hence the cost of production, marketing of raisins and the price spread in marketing also taken in to consideration.

In western Maharashtra raisin producer marketing their raisin in, Tasgaon, Sangliand Pandharpur organized markets. Tasgaon organized market is a biggest wholesale market for raisins in Asia.

2.1. Raisin Marketing Practices

The efficiency in performing the various marketing practices helps to lower the marketing costs and adds to net returns. The information regarding the practices of raisin marketing in western Maharashtra has been described as follows.

2.2. Cleaning

It is important marketing practice giving fresh look to the produce. After drying, the raisins are cleaned manually to separate the impurities like bunch sticks, damaged raisins and other impurities, in modern days raisins cleaning done through machines operating on fuel are used.

2.3. Grading

Grading is marketing function which facilitates the movement of produce. This function determines the quality of produce. The grading is carried out on the basis of color, size, texture, pulpiness, taste and dryness of raisins. Grading of raisins on the above basis is usually done at producer's level by sorting the raisins according to the grades. Grading is done using the human labors by small farmers whereas big farmers done grading with help of machine. Now a day's raisin grading machine available for every farmer on the rental basis.

In western Maharashtra it was found that all the sample raisin producers graded raisins in to three grades.

2.3.1. Grade I

Good and uniform appearance of produce in terms of its color green or grey green, round size smooth texture, higher pulp and a pleasing taste.

2.3.2. Grade II

Oval to round shaped, bright to slight dark green colored, higher pulp with dryness.

2.3.3. Grade III

Round too along shaped, dull green to brown and black colored less pulp content, which may form ball on pressing by hand.

2.4. Packaging

Packaging is the first function performed in the marketing of agricultural commodities. It is required for nearly all the farm products at every stage of the marketing process. An ideal package reduces losses in transport and decaying in storage, maintains the quality of produce and ultimately leads to better prices.

In the study area, the sample raisin producers who marketed their produce in Tasgaon, Sangli and Pandharpur markets used 15 kg capacity corrugated paper boxes. The raisins were filled in polythene bag and packed in these boxes. Some producers who marketed their produce out of state used 15 kg capacity corrugated boxes of better quality but the raisins were first packed 1 kg capacity polythene bags and such is bags were packed in the corrugated boxes.

2.5. Labeling

The graded products, according to the standard fixed by the Agricultural marketing Advisor, Government of India, bear the label 'AGMARK'. But in the study area it is observed that all the producers who marketed their produce out of state market used labels showing name of raisins producer, name of marketing agency and the brand name of produce. Very few producers used the practice of labeling who marketed their produce at Tasgaon, Sangli and Pandharpurmarkets.

2.6. Transportation

The movement of products between places is one of the most important functions at every stage. Quick and efficient transportation of produce to the desired place had direct bearing on the operational efficiency in marketing. Transportation is essential for certain of place utility which helps in timely supply of particular commodity to both nearby and distant markets. In the study area raisin producers transported the raisins by trucks, tempos and tractors.

2.7. Place of Marketing and Method of Sale

On 13th march 1994 the regulated market for raisins was established at Tasgaon in Sangli district. The Tasgaon market is one of the big and famous regulated market for raisins in the Asian country. After that Sangli and Pandharpur regulated markets in western Maharashtra and Nasik regulated markets for raisin established.

In this regulated market auction method is followed for raisins marketing. On the basis of sample of raisins the open auction is done. The raisin producers before sale of their produce, first contacts with the commission agents in the market and after his consent, hand over the sample of their produce for action. At the market day, the wholesalers and traders from different places in country take part in open auction sale. The prices are given according to the quality and grade of the raisins.

Thus the open auction method of sale is followed which has helped to reduce the number of intermediaries in marketing of raisins, it is also found beneficial to avoid the cheating of producers and to get better prices for their produce. Moreover, the transportation charges are also less and the raisin producers can get the amount of sale within 30 days after auction takes place.

2.8. Marketing Channels

Marketing channel is a route through which produce passes through different agencies from producer till it reaches to consumers. While studying the margins taken by the various intermediaries in the raisin trade, it is essential to know the channels through which the raisins pass to ultimate consumer. Different marketing channels followed by raisins producers in the study area are as follows.

- I. Raisin producers sell their product through commission agent of Tasgaon, Sangli and Pandharpur organized market (market yard).
- II. Raisin producers sell their product to wholesale traders at the place of production.
- III. Raisin producers sell their product to traders at cold storage.
- IV. Raisin producers sell their product to local retailers.

The first important channels of marketing of raisin is marketing through commission agent. Commission agents act as representatives of raisin producer. They do not take title to the raisin, therefore do not own it. They serve as buyers or seller in effective bargaining. For this activity they receive income in the form of commission or brokerage.

Normally raisin producers bring their product in the market when the market conditions are favourable. Raisin production activity is seasonal i.e. from January to May, marketing of raisins takes place throughout the year because of cold-storage facility available in the study area. Raisins producers preserve their raisins up to fair price received. Majority raisin producer farmers sell their raisins through commission agent. So present analysis of marketing of raisins is focuses on first channel only.

Second channel is the marketing to wholesalers at the place of production of raisin. In this method the wholesaler visits to shades of raisin producer during the peak period i.e. January to May, where the raisins are ready to sell. The wholesalers and raisin producers fix the price of raisins after that wholesalers either store purchased raisins in cold storage or sold to retailers. This method followed by the raisin producer farmers before this establishment of raisin auction in the regulated markets. Now a day's very few producers follow this method.

Third channels are the marketing through cold storage. Arrangement is made from the owner of the cold storage for the marketing of the raisin. The traders come from Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi and Bangalore to cold storage and purchase the product through open auction. Very few raisin sellers adopt this channel because of cheating by purchaser and uncertainty about amount of their produce. From the year 2008-09 the organized market banned such type of marketing.

Fourth channels is selling raisin products to retail traders, in this method the retailer come from western Maharashtra and purchase raisin directly from raisin producer. This method has helped to reduce number of intermediaries in marketing of raisins, sometimes raisin producer sales their raisins directly to grocery shopkeeper, *Bajar* and in a *Mandi*. Share of marketing through this channel is negligible in the total marketing and usually this channel is used for the marketing of low quality raisins.

Thus these are the four important channels, which are used by the raisins producers for marketing of raisins. But the first channel used by most raisin producers in the study region.

3. Conclusion

For getting fair price to the farmers, the development of an efficient marketing system is essential. Raisin marketing is not only an economic link between the producers and the consumers, it maintains a balance between demand and supply. The objectives of price stability, rapid economic growth and equitable distribution of goods and services cannot be achieved without support of an efficient raisin marketing system.

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