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Role of Marketing Agencies in Supply and Distribution of Perishable Fruits in Maharashtra State A Critical Review

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ABSTRACT: India produces 146 million tons of perishable fruits and vegetables (NHB report, 2011) and the total area under vegetable cultivation is around 8.5 million ha. Potato, tomato, onion, cabbage and brinjal account for around 60% of the total vegetable production in terms of quantity. India's annual fruit production is 75 million tons (NHB report, 2011) and the total area under fruit cultivation is around 6.3 million ha. The major Indian fruits are mango, banana, citrus fruits, apple, guava, papaya, pineapple and grapes.

Fresh fruits and vegetables play a vital role in Indian context and their marketing works as an influencing force in the economy. Though retailing of fresh fruit and vegetables is a low margin business, the market potential is very large in a country like India. This factor has attracted many corporate into this sector.

Marketing of agricultural produce is different and more challenging than many industrial products because of the perishability, seasonality and bulkiness. The very nature of small size of land holdings by the farmers, varied climatic conditions, production spread over wide geographical area, mainly in remote villages, diversified consumption patterns/habits of the Indian consumers and poor Supply Chain (SC) infrastructure makes marketing for fruits and vegetables more complicated.

At the same time, Indian consumers demand fresh fruits and vegetables. Thus Efficient marketing, agencies not only increase the profitability and efficiency of retailers, but also adds value to different stakeholders like cultivators (farmers), consolidators and consumers.

This study attempts to identify various issues involved in managing supply chain in fruits and vegetables and identify and analyze different strategies that can be applied to optimize supply chain in fruits and vegetables.

KEYWORDS: Marketing, perishable, cultivation, Supply Chain.

I. INTRODUCTION

Various issues involved in managing supply chain in fruits and vegetables and it's solution to optimize supply chain in fruits and vegetables.

1) Mahabanana:

Director of Agriculture Marketing and the Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board (MSAMB) have initialized the effort for co-ordination and established "Mahabanana" organization on 1st January, 2002. The head of Mahabanana is located at Jalgaon. MSAMB has proposed to establish two modern Pack houses in banana growing belt, which are Jalgaon and Hingoli respectively. Modern pack house includes automatic banana conveyor system, pre-cooling, cold storage and ripening chamber.

Mahabanana is an autonomous body registered under cooperative Act and major area of activity is confined to marketing of perishable fruit. An executive committee consisting of 9 executive members of which 3 are executive



partners and 6 are farmer representatives runs Mahabanana. One executive partner is the Chairman of Mahabanana. Mahabanna have started activities like local marketing/ Procurement centre, market information centre, farmers training program etc. There are 26 co-operative societies registered under Mahabanana as member. In each such member society there are 300-350 small and marginal farmers. At present there are about 8000 farmers enrolled as members under Mahabanana (www.ikisan.com).

The main objectives of Mahabanana are as follows:

- 1) To plan a strategy of perishable fruit export and to implement export process.
- 2) Provide information to various interested organization on new varieties having export potential.
- 3) To Supply Tissue Cultured Plants of banana varieties and to provide guidance regarding cultivation and technology.
- 4) To Organize Seminars/Workshop/Training Programs and demonstration for wide spread knowledge of exportable perishable fruit production and post-harvest technology.
- 5) To visits to the farms along with experts for suggestion and guidance to the farmers on control of pest, diseases and physiological diseases.
- 6) To identify new domestic markets in the country and to develop effective marketing system.
- 7) To attempt for setting up of basic infrastructure facilities like pre cooling, cold storage, ripening chambers etc. to boost perishable fruit export.
- 8) To attempt for production of processed and value added by products of banana and develop its marketing system.
- 9) To introduce effective packaging procedure of perishable fruit.
- 10) To include more cooperative fruit sale and process societies in export process and also to make them partner members of MAHABANANA.
- 11) To make, banana growers and persons engaged in perishable fruit marketing system; the individual members of MAHABANANA.
- 12) To attempt for reforms in perishable fruit transportation system and availability of modified railway wagons in suitable types and numbers.
- 13) To arrange training for exportable perishable fruit production, pre and post-harvest cares and value added products.
- 14) To attempt to get subsidies for packing material (Carton box, Crates and in transportation produce being exported).

Objectives of Mahabanana below:

- i. Exported perishable fruit to Dubai and Gulf countries.
 - ii. Establishing Market Information Centre for perishable fruit in various districts in Maharashtra state.
 - iii. Established a Local Marketing Center at Savda Tal. Raver, Dist. Jalgaon for domestic marketing system.
 - iv. Banana Handling and Packing Centre is set up by the efforts of MAHABANANA, with the aid of FAO; at Shetkari Fruits & Vegetable Co-operative Society Ltd. Chinawal, Tal. Raver, Dist. Jalgaon.
 - v. Mahabanana has disbursed advance to some selected banana growers and attempted for loans on minimum interest to, banana growers through co-operative societies has been disbursed by I.C.I.C.I Bank.
 - vi. Submitted proposal for agricultural export zone.
- Mahabanana has ambitious plans to go ahead further with its marketing development plans. It includes setup of Local Marketing Centers, reform and research in domestic marketing system, setup of retail outlets, planning of setup of Agricultural Service Center, setup of basic infrastructure facilities i.e. pre cooling cold-storages and ripening chambers etc, and stabilization in perishable fruits prices.

2) Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is an autonomous organization attached to the Ministry of Commerce is the apex agency for promoting agro-export including both fresh and processed horticultural products. It advises potential exporters on market requirement, organizes product promotions and participates in international trade fairs to the standards for agricultural trade. The APEDA has also initiated numerous schemes to encourage exporters to upgrade their facilities in order to meet international requirements.

These include:

1. Assistance to exporters, producers, trade associations, public institutions and others for setting up laboratories
2. Assistance to exporters and producers for installing quality management, assurance and quality control system such as International Standards Organization (ISO) series, Total quality Management etc.



3. Activities related to standardization and quality control such as preparation of quality assurance manuals.
4. Recognition of laboratories for export testing.
5. Assistance to growers, manufacturers, exporter and export related organization of upgrading technical and managerial personnel through training in India.
6. Assistance to recognize of growers/exporters for organizing seminars group activities including study tours within the country and for producing informational literature.

3) Maharashtra State Marketing Agricultural Board (MSMAB):

The Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board (MSMAB), Pune was established on 23rd, March 1984, under section 39A of Maharashtra Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation) Act, 1963. MSMAB has done pioneering work in the field of Agricultural Marketing in the State and achieved success in various areas. MSMAB is having an important role in developing and coordinating agricultural marketing system in the State of Maharashtra. It undertook the first initiative to promote the use of Temperature Management Technology (TMT) by setting up of pre cooling and cold storage facilities under the co-operative sector.

The principle objective was to promote exports of fresh fruits from the state. The MSAMB then identified technology, imported the technology, planned and implemented pre cooling and cold storage facilities. Since then, under the guidance of the MSAMB, 32 pre cooling and cold storage facilities have been set up in the co-operative sector in the state. Due to this pioneering effort by the MSAMB, today Maharashtra is the largest exporter of fresh perishable fruit from the country and exports nearly 70% of all fresh fruits from the country.

Today the MSAMB monitors the running of these pre cooling and cold storage units from time to time. The MSAMB has reviewed the working of existing pre cooling and cold storage facilities and suggested appropriate strategies for better capacity utilization, financial viability and improvement in efficiency.

MSAMB is a state level organization working in the field of export of various fresh fruits, vegetable & processed food products since last twenty-five years. We have experience of export of fruits to Europe, USA, South East Asian Countries, Japan, and Middle East Countries etc. export can provide better option for the marketing of the agro commodities and provides the alternative way of utilization of surplus production. MSAMB always focus on promotion of various agricultural commodities grown in the state, domestic and internationally. MSAMB used to participate in the export promotional activities worldwide.

MSAMB has taken initiatives and setting up of export facility centers for perishable fruits at Raver, Dist Jalgaon which includes their mechanical handling machines.

Some of the remarkable achievements can be enlisted as under.

1. Commercial and trial export.
2. Implementation of subsidy scheme for Global Gap certification.
3. Erection and successful utilization of Export Facility Centers for various Commodities in the state.
4. Successful implementation of Agri Export Zones of Mango, Onion, Banana, Grapes etc.
5. Successfully organized Farmers' Foreign Study Tour to Israel & Europe.

4) Farmer Market (Shetkari Bazar)

As per Government resolution NO. APMC-1099/P.C.305/11-C dated 2nd July 2002, Govt. of Maharashtra has decided to set up Shetkari Bazars in the State and the MSAMB has been appointed as nodal agency for implementing this scheme. The Shetkari Bazars in all District and key taluka places by APMCs from the area and the produce brought by farmers will not be levied cess. As per this resolution a state level committee is setup under the chairmanship of Hon. Minister of Marketing, Govt. of Maharashtra, for implementation and monitoring of this scheme. The district level committees are also setup under the chairmanship of respective district collectors.

In the traditional marketing farmer has no say while fixing price of his produce in the market. In present agricultural marketing system, a number of middle men are involved till the produce reaches the final consumer, as a result the farmer gets only 30 to 35% of every rupee paid by the consumer. Farmer's market (Shetkari Bazar) is a concept of direct marketing, by producer (farmer) to consumers by circumventing the mediators. The produce reaches in good shape with minimum handling. This is expected to help small farmers with small quantity of perishable, fruit get fair price and escape commercial exploitation in the market place.

The MSAMB as a planned setting up of 100 Shetkari Bazars in the State within next two years. The cost of setting up Shetkari Bazar is around Rs. 20 to 25 Lakhs. MSAMB is providing subsidized interest loan up to 50% of the total subject of maximum of Rs. 10 Lakhs per beneficiary. The rate of interest for this loan is 5% p.a. with 10 years payback period. To avail this loan the APMC has to submit the proposal to MSAMB along with detailed plan and estimate and get prior approval for the same before starting the construction.



5) Terminal Market

Post-harvest losses in perishable fruits are up to 30 to 40%. The National Horticulture Mission was launched during 2005-06 by the Government of India. Terminal Market concept has been conceptualized to give more remunerative returns to the farmers from NHM by reducing post-harvest losses of the fruits of the farmers and reducing the middlemen.

Terminal Markets will be established in the big cities and these markets will be linked to the production areas by means of collection centers. The perishable horticultural produce will be cleaned at the collection centers and by removing the waste at the collection centers it will be transported to the terminal markets. Terminal Markets and the Collection Centers will be connected by means of reefer vans thereby reducing post-harvest losses.

Export of horticultural produce is also expected from the terminal market. It is proposed to establish modern marketing infrastructures like electronic auctioning facility, pre-cooling, cold storage, ripening chambers, grading packaging facilities, processing units and other allied infrastructures like banks, post office etc. Terminal Markets will be established in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

The commodities to be marketed by the Terminal market will include all perishables fruits, vegetables, flowers, etc. Non-perishable can also be handled in the terminal market however, the proportion of non-perishable shall not exceed 15% of the total through put of the market, similarly, and the proportion of non horticultural products within the perishable's commodities shall not exceed 15% of the total through put of the market.

The objectives of Terminal Market can be summarized as follows:

1. To reduce post-harvest losses due to present marketing system.
2. To link the farmers directly to the markets and provides more alternatives to sell their produce and reduce the number of inter mediatory.
3. To use modern technologies in the marketing system and establish a cold chain with the help of private players.
4. To bring transparency in the market transactions of perishable fruit. To promote export of horticultural produce and perishable fruit.

II. CONCLUSION

In Maharashtra state, infrastructure facilities such as roads are not developed in all regions of the country. Hence the transportation industry is not very efficient. The state has diverse climatic conditions and hence during transportation, majority of perishable fruits are gets deteriorated due to difference in temperatures. Hence there is utmost need of cold transport system which will maintain the temperature of fruits and vegetables at constant temperature.

Small scale farmers are still exploited by middlemen and farmers do not get correct picture of the market and consumer demand. Farmers can come together and form co-operative societies/associations so that even a small farmer will be able to sell his produce and get protection from exploitation by middlemen. These associations can tie up with big retailers ensuring good margins.

Contractual agreement will help both the parties; farmers will get correct market information, retailers can train the farmers in their farming techniques in order to increase productivity, retailers will get consistent supply of good quality perishable fruits. The retailers can afford to have good cold storage facilities thus reducing the wastage.

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