

Marketing of Bittergourd in Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra

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Introduction

Marketing is one of the important economic functions of society and proper marketing of agricultural produce is of greater importance in an agrarian economy. Marketing is a comprehensive term covering business activities involved at various stages in the flow of transferring products from the primary producer to the ultimate consumer. Agricultural marketing is a vital sub-factor of agriculture, which deserves as much attention as agriculture. Vegetable marketing is different from marketing of other agricultural commodities because of their high perishability, concentration of trade in few hands and a large number of producers.

Objectives

Keeping in view the present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To study the marketing cost, margins, price spread, marketing services
- To determine net price of produce realized by the producers.

Methodology

In all six villages, three each from Sangamner and Akole tehsils having maximum area under bittergourd, were selected for the present study. These villages were Ganore, Pimpalgaon and Hivargaon from akole tehsil and Jawale Kadlag, Vadgaon Landga and Chandanpuri were from Sangamner tehsil. Twenty bittergourd growers were selected village thus making a total sample of 120 farmers. The data on specific aspects of study were collected by personal interview method with the help of a specially designed and pre-tested schedule. The Bombay market, which is a major consuming centre, was selected for the study.

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Results

• Average Productivity and Pattern of Disposal of Bittergourd

Table 1: Average Pattern of Disposal of Bittergourd by the Sample Growers

S. No	Particulars	Units	
1	Average area under bittergourd	ha.	0.30
2	Average no of pickings	No.	44.87
3	Total quantity of fruits obtained	Qtls	97.28
4	Per hectare average productivity of bittergourd	Tons	30.40
5	Pattern of disposals		
a)	Quantity sold	Qtls	96.17
b)	Home consumption	Qtls	0.33
c)	Gifts	Qtls	0.24
d)	Wastage	Qtls	0.54

The data presented in Table 1 show that the average area under bittergourd was 0.32ha. i.e. 10.37 per cent of gross cropped area with a total production of 97.28 quintals from 44.87 pickings during the life period of a crop. The pattern of disposal indicated that at the overall level, 98.85 percent of the total produce used for home consumption was hardly 0.34 per cent, while the wastage of fruits, on an average, was 0.56 percent.

• Marketing Services of Bittergourd

The sample villages were the assembling centers in the selected tehsils. The producers arrange to take their produce after suitable grading and packing in bamboo baskets, each being of 30 kilograms, through their means such as cycle, bullock-cart or head load to the above assembling centres. Normally, bittergourd is graded on the basis of colour and size of fruits. The bittergourd fruits sorted into green coloured fruits are sent to a distant market. Full matured yellow red fruits are utilized for local markets or for home consumption. Bittergourd fruits are also graded on the basis of length of fruits i.e. length upto 8cms (small), 8 to 12cms (medium) and more than 12 cms (large). Per farm total produce graded was 96.16 quintals. The proportion of green fruits and white fruits, on an average was 95.28 and 4.22 per cent respectively. The Coimbatore long green variety was popularly grown by growers for commercial purpose in the area under study.

Generally, bamboo baskets are used for packing of bittergourd fruits. The bamboo baskets with a capacity of 30kg each were used by the sample farmers for sending the produce to the Bombay market. At the time of packing, a piece of gunny bag and leaves of trees especially of neem tree are used as cushioning material. There is a private transport agency situated at Sangamner which collects the packed units of bittergourd from every assembling centre and arranges to transport the same quickly through trucks to the Bombay market. The commission agents on receipt of produce arrange for its sale in the market. One of the bamboo baskets at random in respect of the producer is opened for inspection of the produce by the purchasers who

are mostly wholesalers and retailers. After inspection of produce, the price is fixed for 10 kilograms of produce by 'Hatta' method of sale. Surprisingly, there is no open auction sale of produce in Bombay market. The transport cost recorded in 'Patti' actually consists of transport charges, octroi and loading charges. All these charges are recorded in the 'Challan' or 'memo' given by the transport agency to a particular commission agents then send 'Patti' through the hands of truck driver to the concerned growers in order reduce the postal expenses. Local agents of the commission agent are entrusted with the work of delivering payments to the producers for their consignments sold through them. As far as bittergourd is concerned, no storage is followed by the growers in the area under study. This is because the fruits, immediately after harvest, are graded and packed either in Karandies or bamboo baskets for sending to the markets through quick transport for disposal. Bittergourd fruits after harvest remain in good condition at the most for one day. Market information on ruling prices of produce is obtained by the producers either from local agents or from their counterparts who sold their produce. the important market channel for disposal of bittergourd in Bombay market was observed as Producer-Commission-Agent-Wholesaler-retailer-Consumer.

- **Marketing Cost**

Bombay has emerged as the most important market for bittergourd which shared 95 per cent of the total produce of the area under study. Per basket and per kilogram cost of marketing of bittergourd in Bombay market is presented in table 2. Per basket and per kilogram cost of marketing of bittergourd on an average, worked out to Rs. 47.36 and Rs. 1.48 in Bombay market respectively. Among the items of market cost, transport, commission charges and packing were the major items, which together accounted for Rs. 38.40 i.e. 80.98 per cent of total marketing cost of bittergourd in Bombay market. Transport including loading and unloading charges and losses during transportation alone shared 44.50 per cent of the total marketing cost. This was followed by the commission charges and packing charges. Grading charges per kilogram of bittergourd worked out to 0.12. Vata refer to the charges taken by the local agent of the commission agent and then safely passing on to the concerned growers. Charges on account of hating of produce with the commission agent and other charges including dhaemadaya and market association fee accounted for 0.04 per kilogram in the Bombay market.

- **Price Spread of Bittergourd**

The relevant data relating to price spread are presented in Table 3. It is noted that pre quintal net price received by the producer was Rs. 218.00 in Bombay market. The consumer's price per quintal of bittergourd was Rs 525.41 in Bombay market. Thus, the producers share in consumer's rupee worked out to 41.49 per cent. The expenses incurred by producer for marketing of one quintal of produce in Bombay market, on an average, came to Rs.148/- which accounted for 28.17 per cent of the

consumer's price. It is observed that the margin of wholesaler and retailer was to the extent of Rs. 74.04 and Rs.85.37 per quintal in Bombay market respectively. This means that the wholesaler and retailer could secure a share of 14.09 and 16.25 per cent of the consumer's price.

Conclusion

Bombay market has emerged as a major consuming centre for bittergourd produced in the area under study the study concludes that per kilogram average cost of marketing worked out Rs. 1.48 in Bombay market. By and large, transport, commission charges, packing and grading were the major items of marketing cost. The price spread in marketing of bittergourd in Bombay market indicated the producers' share in the consumer's rupee to the extent of 41.49 per cent. The study suggests that there is a strong base to establish a co-operative marketing society for vegetables so that the crucial market services such as grading, packing, storage and transport could be performed collectively on scientific basis for improving the market efficiency and thereby increase the producer's share in the consumers rupee in the area under study.

References

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Table 2: Per Unit Average Marketing cost of Bittergourd in Bombay Market (Rs).

Sr. No.	Items of marketing cost	Per Basket	Per kg
1	Grading	3.84(8.11)	0.12
2	Packing	8.64(18.24)	0.27
3	Transport(loading charges and losses during transport)	21.12(44.60)	0.66
4	Weighing	0.32(0.68)	0.01
5	Commission charges @ 8 %	8.64(18.24)	0.27
6	Postage	1.60(3.38)	0.05
7	Vatav @ 2 %	1.92(4.05)	0.06
8	Halting charges	0.64(1.35)	0.02
9	Other charges(Dharam daya and market association fee)	0.64(1.35)	0.02
	Total Marketing Cost	47.36(100)	1.48

Table 3: Price spread in Marketing of Bittergourd in Bombay Market

Sr. No.	Particulars	Margins and prices of bittergourd (Rs./qtl)	Percentage
1.	Net price received by the producer	218.00	41.49
2.	Expenses incurred by producer on marketing including commission	148.00	69.66
3.	Purchase price of wholesaler	366.00	69.66
4.	Margin of wholesaler	74.04	14.09
6.	Purchase price of retailer	440.04	83.75
7.	Margin of retailer	85.37	16.25
8.	Consumer's price	525.41	100.00

