



# An Economic Study of Production and Marketing of Banana in Thoothukudi District

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## Abstract

India is the largest banana producer in the world and the cultivators face many problems during cultivation. The productivity of banana in India is far from satisfactory. At present the development of agriculture does not merely depend upon increasing the agricultural produce and productivity, but also upon the promotion of a better and well-organized marketing by which the agricultural goods are moved from the field of the farmer to the places of ultimate consumers. When one looks into the production aspect of banana cultivation, it seems that the farmers face several financial problems. In the study area majority of the farmers are not able to get cheap loan facilities to finance the expenditure involved in banana cultivation. One of the most ruthlessly exploited segments of Indian community is that of the farmers. As the small farmers are hard pressed for cash to meet postponed consumption needs and to pay off debts, they have to sell their produce soon after the harvest, when the price is low. Banana production is seasonal in nature while its demand is inelastic. This also affects the price fixation. There is a large variation in the quality of banana which makes their grading and standardization somewhat difficult. Due to the prevalence of high level of illiteracy, most of the farmers are unable to follow the literature available on marketing rules and the relevant Act. Indian economy is an Agrarian Economy. More than 60 per cent of the total population depends on agriculture as their main occupation. The reasons for taking up a study on the production and marketing of banana in Thoothukudi District are summed up below. More than 60 per cent of the population in the selected area of Srivaikundam and Tiruchendur taluk of Thoothukudi District depends on agriculture. Hence a lot of marketing activates are going on in this area. This taluk is solely dependent on agriculture. So, a survey has been undertaken to study the process of socio demographic profile, production and marketing of banana and problems in cultivation and marketing. The present study of banana production and marketing in the region is appropriate and makes the research worthwhile and a relevant one.

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## Introduction

Fruits play a unique role in developing countries like India both in economic and social sphere for improving income and nutritional status particularly of rural masses. Today the need for meeting the minimum nutritional level of the diet of a common man is assuming greater importance. The cultivation of fruits and vegetables is increasing because they provide much needed nourishment supporting vitamins, minerals and also help in improving the protein value in food. Besides their value in human consumption these crops play an important role in the economy of the country.

Among fruits and vegetables banana is a prominent and special crop with its peculiarities such as non-seasonal character, one year gestation period, single bunch output and perishable in a short period of seven to ten days. Banana is the most nutritious fruit among all fruits. Owing to its greater socio-economic significance and multifaceted uses, it is referred as 'Kalpatharu'. Banana fruit is a wonder berry, which forms the staple food of millions of people across the globe, providing more balanced food than any other fruit or vegetable. It contains eleven vitamins and the important ones are A, B and C. Although fat and protein contents are very low, the fruit is rich in minerals.

### Production of Banana in Thoothukudi District

Wherever irrigation facility is available, banana is grown in Thoothukudi district. both as a domestic as well as a commercial crop. Though all varieties of banana are grown in breadth and length of Tuticorin District depending on the suitability, Poovan, Nadan, Rasthali, Karpooravalli and Red Banana are the most popular varieties grown from the commercial view point.

Thoothukudi district is one of the important districts in Tamil Nadu and agriculture forms the backbone of the district economy. During 2019-20 the area under banana in Thoothukudi district was 9,379 hectares, which was nearly seven per cent of area under banana in Tamil Nadu. The production of banana during the corresponding

period was 84,421.57 metric tonnes which was about 8.26 per cent of the state's production

In the present study, Thoothukudi district constitutes the universe Srivaikundam and Tiruchendur blocks were selected as the stratum the revenue village as the primary units of sampling and the farmers cultivating banana under canal and ground water irrigation conditions as the ultimate units.

### Statement of the Problem

At present the development of agriculture does not merely depend upon increasing the agricultural produce and productivity, but also upon the promotion of a better and well-organized marketing by which the agricultural goods are moved from the field of the farmer to the places of ultimate consumers. When one looks in to the production aspect of banana cultivation it seems that the farmers face several financial problems. In the study area majority of the farmers are not able to get cheap loan facilities to finance the expenditure involved in banana cultivation.

Banana production is seasonal in nature while its demand is inelastic. This also affects the price fixation. There is a large variation in the quality of banana which makes their grading and standardization somewhat difficult.

Due to the prevalence of high level of illiteracy, most of the farmers are unable to follow the literature available on marketing rules and the relevant Act.

The selected areas of Srivaikundam and Tiruchendur taluk of Thoothukudi District with more than 60 per cent of the total population depend on agriculture and a lot of marketing business is going on in this area. This taluk is solely depending on agriculture. So, a survey has been undertaken to study the process of socio demographic profile, production and marketing of banana and cultivation problems. However, the present study would be appropriate to take up the study of banana production and marketing in the region concerned and make the research work a worthwhile and a relevant one.



**Objectives of the study:**

1. To study the socio-economic characteristics of the banana cultivators.
2. To study the problems faced by the farmers in the production and marketing of banana.
3. To give appropriate suggestions for policy makers.

**Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study has been restricted to the banana production and marketing in Srivaikundam and Tiruchendur taluk in Thoothukudi district. It is essential to know the socio-economic profile, banana production, cultivators’ problems, banana marketing, income and saving pattern of the cultivators, profile of traders and their problems in marketing in the study area. It helps to enhance the agricultural prices. It suggests measures to solve the problems of agricultural marketing. It helps to get a statistical view of the particular region.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study is based on primary data collected from sample farmers and the market intermediaries by survey method. As many of the farmers have not maintained proper records

about farming operations, they furnished the required information from their memory and experience and hence the collected data are subjected to recall bias. However, efforts have been taken to minimize the bias by including in the interview schedule, the questions that would facilitate cross checking. Hence, the findings of the study may be considered appropriate for the situations prevailing in the study area and extra care should be taken while generalizing the results.

**Methods of Collection of Data**

In order to get an insight into physical and economic environments of the blocks, a reconnaissance survey of the blocks was undertaken. The primary data required for the study were collected through personal interview with the help of pre-tested comprehensive interview schedule. The data collected were tabulated, processed and subjected to statistical analysis. To understand the basic characteristics of this research in the study area, data about banana, its uses, and other available facilities were collected from published and unpublished records available in various sources.

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**Distribution of farmers in the study area**

S. No	Taluk	Revenue Block	Number of farmers
1.	Srivaikundam	Srivaikundam	50
2.	Tiruchendur	Tiruchendur	50
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The selected areas of Srivaikundam and Tiruchendur taluk of Thoothukudi District banana farmers distribution in the study area is 50:50.

**Analysis and Interpretation**

**Socio Economic Conditions of Banana Cultivators**

S.No	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Less than 25	51	51.0
2.	25-35	22	22.0
3.	35-45	6	6.0
4.	45-55	15	15.0
5.	Above 55	6	6.0
	Total	100	100.0
Education Level		No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	6	6.0
2.	Primary	67	67.0



3.	Secondary	25	25.0
4.	Above Secondary	2	2.0
	Total	100	100.0
	<b>Type of family</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Joint	76	76.0
2.	Nuclear	64	64.0
	Total	100	100.0
	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>No. Of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Married	64	64.0
2.	Unmarried	36	36.0
	Total	100	100.0
	<b>Size of family</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Less than 3	23	23.0
2.	3-5	56	56.0
3.	5-7	15	15.0
4.	Above 7	6	6.0
	Total	100	100.0
	<b>No. of dependents</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Less than 3	66	66.0
2.	3-5	32	32.0
3.	Above 5	2	2.0
	Total	100	100.0
	<b>Ownership of house</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Own House	73	73.0
2.	Rented and leased House	27	27.0
	Total	100	100.0
	<b>Nature of House</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Tiled House	53	53.0
2.	Roofed House	47	47.0
	Total	100	100.0

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The above table highlights that 51 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of less than 25, 67 percent of the respondents are educated up to primary level of education and 6 percent are illiterate. Moreover, in the concept of size of family 56 percent has been engaging for about 3-

5. No. of dependents of the sample respondents represent 66 percent in less than 3 and 73 percent of the respondents having own house. It is inferred that the nature of house of the respondent is 53 percent is tiled houses and 47 percent is roofed houses.

#### Frequency Distribution of Farmers Based on Reason for Cultivating Banana

Reason for cultivating banana	Frequency	Percentage
Suitability to land conditions	51	51.0
Less expenditure	22	22.0
Profitability	6	6.0
Continuous demand	15	15.0
Marketability	6	6.0



Total	100	100.0
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It is inferred that the frequency distribution of farmers based on reason for cultivating banana is suitability to land conditions.

### Frequency Distribution of Farmers Based on Problems Faced in Banana Marketing

Problems faced in marketing	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of assured price	2	2.0
Low price per unit	18	18.0
High transportation charges	33	33.0
Perish ability of the banana	14	14.0
Collusion among the traders	16	16.0
Absence of cold storage	8	8.0
Lack of ripening chambers	9	9.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table highlights that 33,18 16 and 14 percent of the respondents faced the high transportation charges, low price per unit, collusion among traders and perish ability of the banana are the problems respectively.

#### Suggestions

1. As per sample survey, farmer community is literates. Govt, must motivate them to attend such meetings.
2. Training can be imparted to the farmers to adopt cultivating technology in order to get more yield
3. Co-op. Societies may be encouraged to form to sort out the issues of Transport, Fund requirement, Savings, Manure Bank etc. The senior members with more experience may be made as leaders.
4. Members of the farmer association may be taken on education tour to other states to learn more about the methods, variety etc.
5. Small scale research centers may be formed in various places.

#### Conclusion

Agricultural sector is contributing a major share of their income to the banana cultivators. Most of the cultivators borrow money from Agricultural Cooperative Credit Societies for

agricultural operations. There is no regulated market in this study area. In this study area, majority of the cultivators have earned more marketable surplus for their commodities. Hence, majority of the cultivators are engaged in banana cultivation, even though the agricultural marketing is not satisfactory in this study area. It is concluded that, agricultural marketing facilities must be well established in this area which facilitates to provide more income to the cultivators. The government should start well organized agricultural market in this area.

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