

An analysis on marketing behaviour of pineapple growers among the farmers of Manipur State

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Abstract

A study was conducted to understand the marketing behavior of pineapple growers in Manipur, using a sample of 300 respondents selected through random sampling and an ex-post facto research design. Most respondents were found to have a medium level of marketing behavior, followed by low and high levels. The major findings revealed several common practices: selling pineapples in raw form, using clean bamboo baskets and sacks for packing, and using tempos, Lorries, and head loads for transportation. Sales typically took place in near by towns or cities, with some export to other states or countries. The primary modes of sale were through wholesalers and village traders, with terms of sale often being cash on delivery. Key reasons for selecting a market included immediate payment, ease of transportation, and higher prices, while market information was primarily sourced from relatives and friends.

Key words : Marketing behaviour, Pineapple, Manipur, packing and transportation.

Pineapple (*Ananas comosus* L. Merr) is an herbaceous perennial crop belonging to the order Farinasae and the family Bromeliaceae. It is one of the most significant commercial fruit crops globally, (Sharma *et al.*, 2016) often referred to as the “queen of tropical fruits” due to its excellent flavor and taste. Pineapple ranks as the third most

important tropical fruit after banana and citrus fruits. Marketing involves a system of interconnected business activities aimed at planning, pricing, promoting, and distributing products and services to satisfy both current and potential customers. It is the process through which organizations creatively, productively, and profitably engage with the

marketplace, (Kumar and Ravi 2014). Understanding marketing behaviors helps businesses effectively reach and engage their target audience. Pineapple contributes about 6% of India's total production, with the North-Eastern region producing approximately 49% of the country's total (Rabina *et al.*, 2021). In Manipur, pineapple is the largest fruit crop after citrus fruits and is considered the state fruit, with an annual production of about 2.40 crores pineapples. The average weight of a pineapple is around 1.5 kg, although they can range from 1 to 3 kg. Pineapples are commonly sold directly in local markets and by roadside vendors, especially in rural areas. To promote and support pineapple growers, financial service providers under the Manipur Organic Mission Agency (MOMA) and other related departments have been assisting farming communities in the hill districts where pineapple farming is a major income source. MOMA intervention programs, in collaboration with partner private agencies, have provided essential farming materials and marketing platforms to the farmers. In July 2022, for the first time, 20 metric tons of fresh and ripe organic pineapples were exported from Manipur to Dubai by the Department of Horticulture and Soil Conservation (Imphal free press 2022) The government supports organic farmers through various stages up to market linkage to improve their socio-economic conditions. Besides pineapple, the department also exports other high-profit organic crops. This study aims to analyze the marketing behavior of pineapple growers in Manipur state.

The study was conducted in three districts of Manipur state: Imphal East, Thoubal, and Kangpokpi, chosen specifically because

they have the highest numbers of pineapple growers. The final sample consisted of 300 respondents, selected through proportionate random sampling within an ex-post facto research design. Data collection was carried out using pre-tested structured schedules and personal interviews. Frequency and percentage analyses were employed to examine the marketing behavior of the pineapple growers. The respondents' levels of marketing behavior were categorized into low, medium, and high using the cumulative frequency method. The marketing behavior of the pineapple growers was analyzed across eight categories: Form of Sales, Mode of Packing, Mode of Transport, Place of Sale, Mode of Sale, Terms and Conditions of Sale, Reasons for Market Selection, and Market Information Sources.

The data regarding the marketing behaviour are presented in Table-1.

Form of Sales :

All respondents (100 per cent) reported selling pineapples in raw form, indicating a universal preference for marketing unprocessed products in the region. Only a small portion, 9 per cent, engaged in selling processed pineapples, suggesting that processing is much less common among these growers. The mean percentage of 54.5 per cent represents an average between raw and processed sales, but this average is significantly skewed higher by the dominance of raw sales.

Mode of packing :

The majority of respondents, 87.7 per cent, used sacks for pineapple packing, indicating this method's popularity due to its low cost, ease of use, and adequate protection for the fruit. A significant portion, 70.3 per cent,

used clean bamboo baskets, which are preferred for their natural ventilation, cost-effectiveness, and suitability for transport protection. Lining with paddy straw was common among 47.7 per cent of respondents, likely for its protective and cushioning qualities. Wood containers and crates were each used by 7.7 per cent of respondents, suggesting they offer moderate protection and durability for shipping. Only 6.3 per cent used corrugated board cartons, indicating this method is less common, possibly due to higher costs or impracticality for pineapples. The mean usage rate of 37.9 per cent across all packing methods is less meaningful due to the wide variation in usage rates.

Mode of Transport :

A majority of respondents, 84.3 per cent, use tempos for transportation, indicating they are highly favored for their balance of capacity, cost, and convenience in urban and semi-urban areas. A significant portion, 71 per cent, use lorries or large trucks, likely chosen for transporting large quantities of pineapples over longer distances, providing good protection and efficiency for bulk transport. Notably, 67 per cent of respondents still rely on head loads, a method prevalent in areas where other forms of transport are inaccessible or impractical. This suggests a significant reliance on manual labor, difficult terrains where vehicles might not reach, or remote areas where pineapples are grown and need to be moved short distances. More than half, 58.7 per cent, use tractors for transportation, indicating their popularity in agricultural regions where they are readily available and suitable for transporting goods from farms to local markets or collection points. Bicycles are used by 36.7 per cent of respondents, likely for short

distances or in areas with narrow or unsuitable roads for motorized vehicles. Bicycles offer a cost-effective and environmentally friendly option but are limited in the volume they can carry. The mean percentage of 63.54 per cent represents the average usage rate of different transport methods, highlighting a significant and balanced reliance on multiple modes of transportation.

Place of Sale :

The majority of respondents, 96.7 per cent, sell their pineapples in nearby towns or cities, reflecting highly efficient marketing and sales efforts in these areas. A significant portion, 70.0 per cent, exports their pineapples to other states or countries, indicating strong demand beyond local markets and providing insights into global market dynamics and preferences. A considerable proportion, 65.7 per cent, sell their pineapples locally, suggesting heavy reliance on local sales for income, which could be a point of strength or vulnerability depending on local market stability. More than half, 58.0 per cent, sell their pineapples in the Imphal market, indicating it as a significant market hub for the region with high demand or consumption of pineapples. The mean percentages of 72.6 per cent represent the average percentage of total pineapples sold across different places of sale, indicating a diverse range of market destinations for pineapple growers.

Mode of Sale :

The majority of respondents, 83.7 per cent, sell their pineapples to wholesalers, indicating that wholesaling is the most significant sales channel for pineapples, likely due to its capacity to handle larger volumes and wider distribution. A significant portion, 79.3 per cent, sell to village traders, reflecting strong local

(1960)

Table.1 Distribution of the respondents according to their item-wise marketing behaviour

(n=300)

Sl. No.	Statements	No. of Respondents	Per cent
I.	Form of Sales		
1.	Raw	300	100
2.	Processed	27	9.0
Mean Percentage		54.5	
II.	Mode of packing		
1.	Corrugated board cartons	19	6.3
2.	Crates	23	7.7
3.	Clean bamboo baskets	211	70.3
4.	Wood Containers	23	7.7
5.	Sack	263	87.7
6.	Lined with Paddy straw	143	47.7
Mean Percentage		37.9	
III.	Mode of Transport		
1.	Head load	201	67.0
2.	Bicycle	110	36.7
3.	Tempo	253	84.3
4.	Lorry	213	71.0
5.	Tractor	176	58.7
Mean Percentage		63.54	
IV.	Place of Sale		
1.	Local area	197	65.7
2.	Nearby town /city	290	96.7
3.	Imphal market	174	58.0
4.	Export other state or country	210	70.0
Mean Percentage		72.6	
V.	Mode of Sale		
1.	Village Trader	238	79.3
2.	Retailer	137	45.7
5.	Wholesaler	251	83.7
Mean Percentage		69.56	
VI.	Term and Conditions of Sale		
1.	Auction	27	9.0
2.	Credit sales to specified merchants	7	2.3

(1961)

3.	On contract with merchants	36	12.0
4.	Ready cash	198	66.0
Mean Percentage		22.32	
VII.	Reasons for selection of market		
1.	Regular business	42	14.0
2.	Higher price	215	71.7
3.	Immediate payment	281	93.7
4.	Transportation Ease	270	90.0
Mean Percentage		67.35	
VIII.	Market information Source		
1.	Relatives and Friends	300	100
2.	Local marketing center	111	37.0
4.	Retailers	98	32.7
5.	State Horticulture Department/ SAU/KVK/Research Stations	79	26.3
6.	Newspaper	46	15.3
7.	AIR / DDK	63	21.0
8.	Internet (websites)	94	31.3
Mean Percentage		37.65	

Table-2. Distribution of the respondents according to their overall marketing behaviour of pineapple growers

(n=300)

Sl. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	61	20.3
2	Medium	191	63.7
3	High	48	16.0
	Total	300	100.0

sales. Less than half, 45.7 per cent, sell directly to retailers, suggesting that while retailers play a significant role, it is not as large as village traders or wholesalers. Retail sales might target more localized or specialized markets. The mean percentage of 69.56 per cent suggests a fairly high level of efficiency or target achievement on average across village traders, retailers, and wholesalers.

Term and Conditions of Sale :

The majority of respondents, 66.0%, prefer selling their pineapples on a ready cash basis, indicating a strong preference for immediate payment, reducing credit risk and ensuring immediate liquidity for the seller. A significant portion, 12.0 per cent, sells their pineapples on contract with merchants, suggesting a structured relationship providing

stability and predictability in sales. A small fraction, 9.0 per cent, engages in auction sales, indicating that auctions are not the primary method for selling pineapples but offer competitive prices with some uncertainty regarding final sale prices. A very small number of respondents, 2.3 per cent, sell on credit to specified merchants, suggesting that selling on credit is not common, possibly due to the associated risks or a preference for immediate payment. The mean percentage of 22.32 per cent reflects the average engagement across various terms and conditions of sale, highlighting that while immediate cash sales dominate, and other methods are also utilized to a lesser extent.

Reasons for selection of market :

The vast majority of respondents, 93.7 per cent, select their market based on the availability of immediate payment, emphasizing the importance of cash flow and liquidity for sellers. A significant portion, 90.0 per cent, choose their market based on ease of transportation, highlighting the critical role efficient logistics and transport play in market choice, likely reducing costs and complications associated with moving goods. A large portion, 71.7 per cent, are motivated by the potential for higher prices when selecting their markets, indicating that maximizing profit is a major determinant in market choice. A notable portion, 14.0 per cent, select their market based on the opportunity for regular business, suggesting that maintaining consistent and ongoing business relationships is a factor, although not as significant as other reasons. The mean percentage of 67.35 per cent reflects the average importance of various factors in market selection, with a strong emphasis on immediate payment and transportation

ease.

Market information Source :

All respondents (100 per cent) rely on relatives and friends for market information, indicating that personal networks are the most trusted and prevalent source of market information. The strong dependence on informal sources suggests that these networks are perceived as reliable and easily accessible. A significant portion of respondent, 37 per cent, use local marketing centers as a source of information, likely providing relevant and timely market data, making them a valuable resource for many sellers. A considerable number of respondents, 32.7 per cent, obtain market information from retailers, who can offer insights on market trends, prices, and demand as they are directly involved in sales. A notable portion, 31.3 per cent, use the internet and websites to get market information, reflecting the growing importance of online sources for quick access to vast amounts of information, though access and digital literacy may limit usage for some. Another significant portion, 26.3 per cent, relies on official sources such as the State Horticulture Department, SAU, KVK, and research stations for market information, valued for their authoritative and research-based information. A smaller but notable percentage, 21.0 per cent, gets their market information from radio (AIR) and television (DDK), indicating the continued relevance of traditional media. Only a small portion, 15.3 per cent, uses newspapers for market information, suggesting that print media is less influential compared to other sources. The mean percentage of 37.65 per cent represents the average usage across different sources of market information, highlighting the diversity of information channels utilized by the growers.

Overall marketing behaviour of the pineapple growers :

Table-2 indicates that the majority of pineapple growers, 63.7 per cent, have a medium level of marketing behavior, reflecting a balanced approach to their marketing activities. A smaller segment, 20.3 per cent, engages minimally in marketing, while an even smaller group, 16 per cent, is highly active in their marketing efforts. This distribution suggests that although most growers are moderately involved in marketing, there is potential for many to either increase their efforts or improve their strategies to enhance their market presence and sales. The majority of respondents, 79.7 per cent, exhibited medium to high levels of marketing behavior. This is likely due to their good understanding of marketing trends, setting prices based on product demand, and preferring to sell directly to markets without intermediaries to secure better prices for their products. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by A. Rajkala *et al.*⁴.

From the findings, it can be concluded that most respondents exhibit a medium level of marketing behavior, followed by those with low and high levels. The data reveals a strong preference for traditional practices in selling and distributing pineapples, such as selling raw pineapples, using local materials for packing, and relying on personal networks for market information. The reliance on cash transactions and immediate payments indicates a need for liquidity among sellers. The preference for wholesaling and village trading suggests a

market structure that favors large-volume sales. To optimize and modernize the market, opportunities exist to promote processed pineapple products, modern packing materials, and more formal sources of market information. By adopting modern farming practices, improving market linkages, and utilizing digital tools, pineapple growers in Manipur can enhance their productivity, market presence, and profitability, thereby contributing to the region's economic development.

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