

A Study on the Problems Affecting Cardamom Farmers in Idukki District with Special Reference to Rajakkadu Panchayath

^[1] Govardhan K Mohan

^[1] Department Of Social Work, Jai Bharath Arts & Science College

Abstract: Cardamom is known as the queen of spices. It is one of the highly priced spices of the world. Cardamom is mostly cultivated in southern parts of India like Kerala , Tamilnadu , Karnataka and some other parts of Andhra Pradesh have vast to bases of cardamom cultivation. India being a traditional cardamom growing country needs to draw a clear strategy to reach its leadership position in the international markets. The cardamom farmers face so many problems and the research was conducted with the general objective to study the problems affecting cardamom farmers in Idukki district with special reference to Rajakkadupanchayath. The specific objective of the research is to study the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, to understand the financial problems, to understand the various disasters and parts affecting cultivation, to know the government services for cardamom cultivation. The descriptive method of research was used to evaluate problems simple random sampling is used and a structured questionnaire are prepared and administered to 60 cardamom farmers in Rajakkadupanchayath. The findings of the study 70% of the cardamom contribution from Idukki district hence, the government has to support the cardamom farmers, by the support of government the interest of farmers will increase in the cardamom cultivation. By the upliftment of cardamom cultivation the economy of the country also increase.

Keywords: Cardamom farmers, Financial problems, pests & disasters, Governmental support.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cardamom is known as the 'queen of spices'. It is one of the most highly priced and exotic spices in the world. It is a perennial tropical herb plant belonging to the ginger family (zingibaraceae) and grows from a thick root stalk up to a around 6-10 feet. It is indigenously growth in the evergreen forests of the western ghatts in South India.

Cardamom is generally produced in the tropical regions of the world. Guatemala is the largest cardamom producing country followed by India. The total world production of this spice is around 35,000 Mt per annum (spices board). Consumption of cardamom has sharply increased through out the world during the last decades. The major consuming countries of cardamom are the middle eastern countries – India, Pakistan, European countries, the us and japan. Middle eastern countries such as Soudhi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, and south eastern countries such as India etc... account for More than 60% of the world's consumption.

Cardamom finds its place in Every kitchen in the world. Cardamom goes into tea , coffee , snacks , sweet dishes , rice preparations , soft drinks almost all favourite food items , of the world. Guatemala produces around 25000 Mt yearly the largest in the world, accounting for almost 66% of the total global production.

The economy of Idukki district is primarily agricultural and its sole physiographic individuality and climatic feature favours the cultivation of spices, especially cardamom The output of cardamom is influenced exclusively by the physiography and the specific climatic parameters of the region. Hence, the depletion of natural forests, constant encroachments, weather change, water shortage, drought, flood, soil erosion etc. has enough potential to threaten the cultivation of cardamom. When the impact created by adverse market price, increased cost of production competition from international markets, piling of agricultural debts etc. hit the farmers intensely it would further shatter the economic backbone of the farmers especially with small and medium sized holdings. The crop loss due to the infestation of pests and diseases multiplies the burden by reducing the yield of cardamom. Thus, not only the farmers, but the livelihood and future of thousands of people who are engaged in cardamom related activities including the traders, exporters, labourers etc. depends on the success and prosperity of its cultivation. Hence its needs a support from government, spices board, KrishiBhavan, Cardamom research institute.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF CARDAMOM CULTIVATION IN IDUKKI

Idukki is basically known as a non-industrial district. Its economy is entirely based on agriculture. The district is notable for cultivation of largest area under various spices, particularly small cardamom, and contribution of large shares of these produces. For this reason Idukki is called the 'Spices District' of India. Cardamom is one of the few agricultural commodities produced in India which has significant export orientation. The unique terrain, soil and agro-climatic conditions of the district are most suitable for growing cardamom cultivation. The cardamom grown in Idukki falls under the category of "small cardamom", *Elettaria cardamom*, which is a crop native to the region. The region within Idukki district, where cardamom was growing in wild state and found ideal for its cultivation is called Cardamom Hill Reserve (CHR) forest. The district of Idukki contributes more than 70 % to the cardamom production in India. All the crops are foreign exchange earners to the country and hence very important to the economy. Even slight change in climate has a substantial influence on the agricultural development in the district. Hence, the present study has been made to analyse the problems and prospects of cardamom cultivation in Idukki district.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dr Leena Mathew, Princy P James¹Principal,²Research Scholar

High ranges of Kerala is famous for its variety of spices. Cardamom is one of the main spices produced there. Cardamom is the "Queen of Spices". It is one of the most exotic and highly priced spices; Indian cardamom has a history as old as human civilisation. Southern India and Sri Lanka are regarded as origin of this spice. Cardamom is often named as the third most expensive spice in the world after saffron and vanilla. India provides all the favourable conditions of cardamom. Differential cultivation patterns make Indian cardamom highly unique in the international market. There are different varieties and grades of Cardamom. Malabar Type, Mysore Type, Vazhukka Type are Three major types of small cardamom. Large cardamom also known as "Black Cardamom". Cardamom uses for different purposes. Cardamom is one of the few agricultural commodities produced in India which has significant export orientation. This study aims to learn the problems faced by farmers in the cardamom cultivation.

Nija KC Research Scholar, Department of Geography

The spices of Kerala date back to thousands of years in the history of the state. In the ancient times, Kerala rose to fame all around the world solely on the basis of the riches brought into the state, because of its monopoly over spices. Musiri, the ancient port of Kerala became the base of world spice trade, almost ages ago. It is sometimes said the Western colonization in India, was the attempt of the West to control the spice trade from the state. The arrival of Vasco Da Gama in India and its spice trade was the result of the same. Major spices in Kerala includes, pepper, cardamom, ginger, cinnamon, turmeric, clove, nutmeg etc. Kerala is the largest producer of small cardamom in India. Within India, Kerala is the spice garden. As spices cultivation is the means of living for a large number of agricultural households in Kerala, spices trade is of crucial significance to their earnings, well-being and living standards. Cardamom renowned as the 'Queen of spices' is a tiny spice that attracted the consumers to a greater extent. More than 80 per cent of the production of the spice in the country is restricted to Kerala. But the spices trade in Kerala is now handicapped by a number of problems. The growers of cardamom are also facing declining profit margins due to price pressure. Therefore, it is time for all those concerned with Indian spice industry to make earnest efforts to overcome the problems faced by the spices sector, or else our dominant position in the global spice market may be further relegated to the background.

Shiba Kurian, Department of geography

In Kerala's Idukki district, cardamom is a way of life. As the largest producer and exporter of cardamom in India, the district has created an assiduous industry around the spice. Harvesting cardamom is a meticulous process that is typically done by hand. The spice must then move through dozens of steps before it finally ends up in shops and kitchens.

The demand for cardamom from Idukki has grown in recent years. The spice's subtle, unrivalled taste has found favour in cuisines outside its traditional use, while it's still used widely in the Middle East and India. But nothing could have prepared the district for the devastation that wreaked during the August floods and landslides in 2018. Acres of cardamom fields were destroyed and out of 40,000 cardamom farmer families in Idukki, almost 60% lost their crops in the floods and landslides, taking away their sole source of income.

KJ Joseph, Indian Cardamom Research Institute

Realising the vital role of research and development for building international competitiveness of plantation sector, the Ministry of Commerce established research institutes under different Commodity Boards to undertake research and development on specific crop(s) assigned to them. This study, apart from being a preliminary evaluation of recent research undertaken by Indian Cardamom Research Institute (ICRI) under the Spices Board of India, is a first step towards exploring the synergy between different research institutions under the commodity boards. By conceptualising innovation as a cumulative, interactive and socially embedded process, the study has taken into account both the inputs and outputs of research with due consideration for the institutional context in which research is undertaken. The study comes up with a number of recommendations and is presented in the concluding section of this paper.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study focused on following objectives,

- To understand the socio-demographic profile of the respondent.
- To know the financial problems of cardamom cultivation.
- To understand the various pest affecting cultivation.
- To analyse the various disasters affecting cultivation.
- To know the various govt services for cardamom cultivation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study focused on understanding the problems of cardamom farmers. Simple random sampling is used in this study. Farmers from Rajakkadupanchayath is selected using Lottery method. Data is collected from 60 respondents. Descriptive research design is used in this study. Self – structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. Data was entered, edited, and analysed using excel.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1;

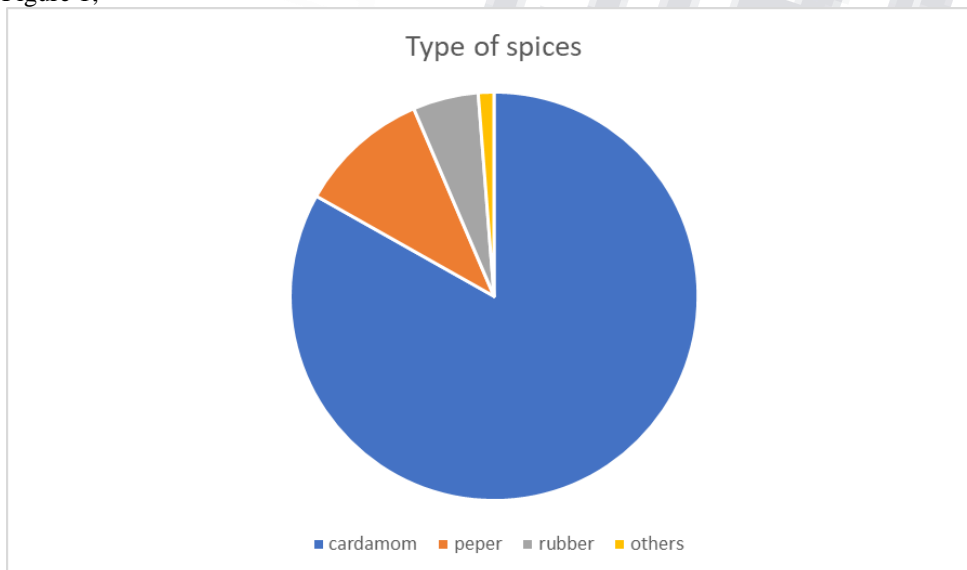
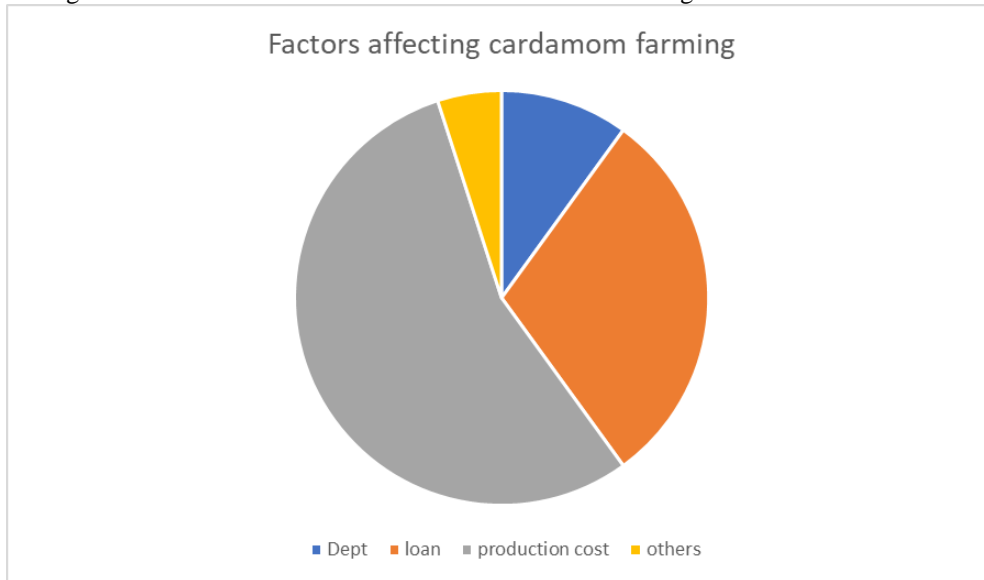


Figure.1 shows the types of spices in rajakkadupanchayath. 80% of farmers engaged in the cardamom cultivation. 10% of farmers engaged in the peper cultivation. 8% of farmers engaged in the rubber and 2% of others.

The figure indicates most of the area covered cardamom farming



The figure 2 shows 55% of production cost affecting the main problem of cardamom cultivation. 30% of various loans affecting the cultivation. 10% of debts affecting and 4% of others.

The cardamom farming has very more production cost like- pesticides & fertilizers, other costs etc... so it's a main problem of cardamom farming.

Figure 3;

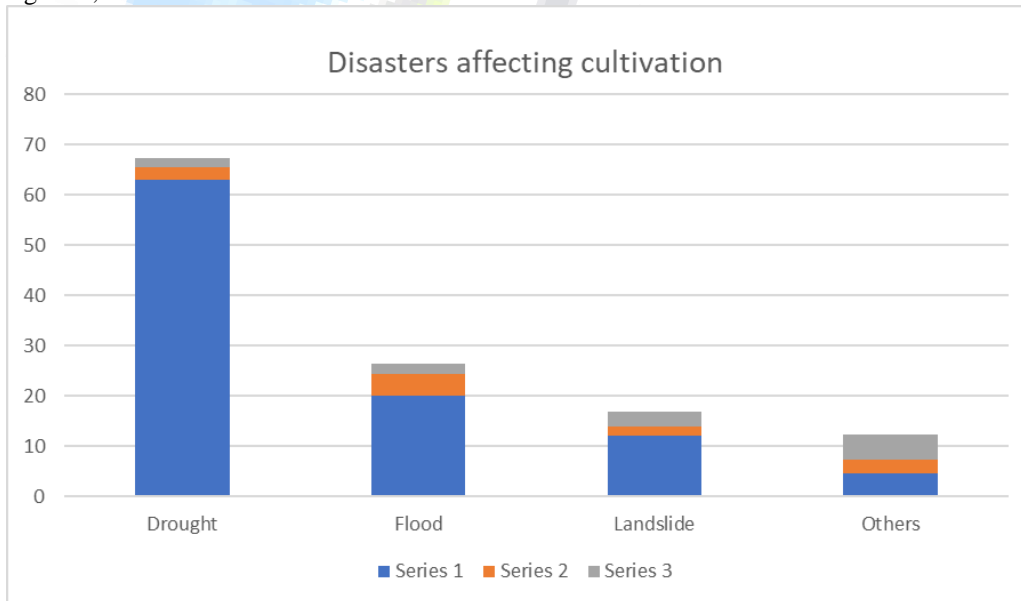


Figure 4;

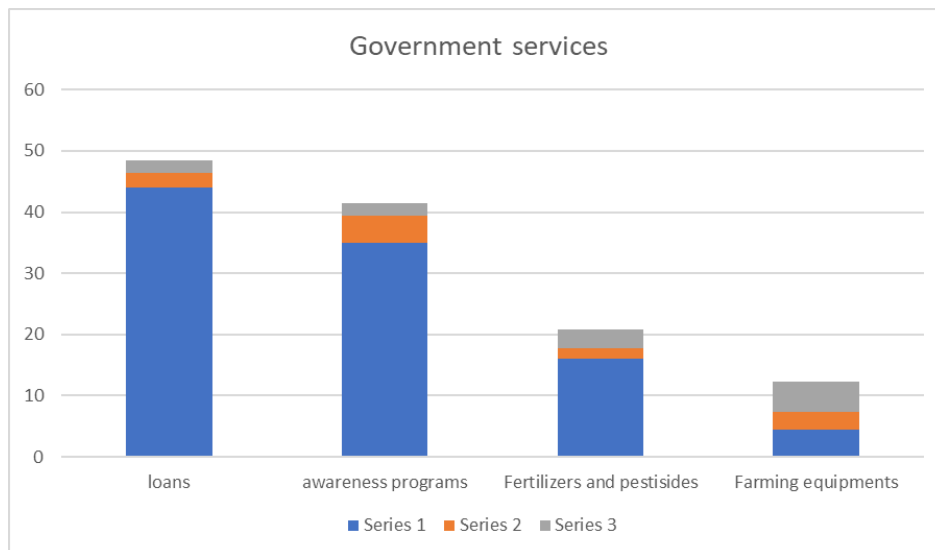


Figure 4 shows 44% of loan is given by the government for the cardamom cultivation. 39% only awareness programmes by the government initiative. 12% of fertilizers & pesticides and the other 5% for farming equipments. Mainly the loan facility is a best service by the government

IV. CONCLUSION

Like all other crops, cardamom also has several problems inherent and incidental to its cultivation. The farmers in rajakkadupanchayath also face several struggles in this sector from the land preparation to its marketing. Undoubtedly the distinctive climatic parameters could have played momentous role in the flourishing of cardamom cultivation in rajakkadupanchayath. But the changes in climate have already sent worrying signals on the sustainability of its cultivation over the years which may push the crop into an edgy future. Therefore the studies highlights the need for further investigations on micro - climate studies for improving the growth & yield of the cardamom. If the economy of rajakkadupanchayath can sustain with cardamom, then, it, will remain as unique in the developmental literature as the spices crop of a region has lead to its economic upliftment which is very exceptional. Cardamom is one of the few agricultural commodities produced in India which has significant export orientation. The superior quality cardamom which is being produced in India has huge demand both in the national as well as international markets. But because of the peculiar parameters essential for its growth, the cultivation is limited only to very few pockets in the country, where idukki ranks the prime position. So, in order to recapture India's past Glory in its production & trade, superfluous concern should be given by the government and other responsible agencies to tackle the issues persisting in the cultivation of cardamom.

V. SUGGESTIONS

Government initiative is more relevant for the cardamom cultivation.(KrishiBhavan, spices board, cardamom research institute) the 3 major institutions effective functioning helpful to the production increase. So, government implement a Farmers board & this board focusing on the farmers problems.

The main suggestions are given;

Open market must be needed for cardamom products Price of fertilizers should be controlled Fertilizers and other chemicals used for plant protection should be applied to the marginal, financially weak & small growers on credit basis and that too at a subsidized rate Soil testing should be conducted effectively Effective disease control measures have to be implemented Each year a major portion of the plants are lost due- to drought & lack of sufficient irrigation facility. So crop insurance facility should be arranged (cardamom registration) Government must give various types of subsidies the growers.

REFERENCES

- 1, swaminathan research foundation, measures to mitigate agrarian distress in idukki district of Kerala , study report, thiruvananthapuram government of Kerala, 2008, 125 – 157
- 2, muthuswamymurugan, Raju Ravi, paddukrishnappa Shetty, arulappan Joseph rajkumar. Climate change and crop yields in Indian cardamom hills 1978 – 2007 CE. Climate change, 2012, 737 – 753
- 3, singadurai s. Ground water information booklet of idukki district, Kerala state, thiruvananthapuram: central ground water board, 2013, 45 - 50

