India has been the world’s principal producer and exporter of spices from time immemorial. India, next to Guatemala, enjoys a predominant place among the countries producing and exporting cardamom. Cardamom, the queen of spices, is the fruit of *Elettaria Cardamom*, Small cardamom is grown in India, mainly in the western parts of the Southern Ghats, viz., Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu States. Traditionally, Kerala has been the leading producer of small cardamom in the country, while Karnataka and Tamil Nadu contribute 22 and 10 percent, respectively.\(^1\)

Despite having the largest area under small cardamom cultivation in the world, India has a record of poor productivity. However, the quality of the Indian cardamom remains unmatched for centuries. Poor productivity, i.e., lower yield per hectare, accounts for the high cost of production. Non-availability of genetically upgraded saplings/seedlings and the vagaries of monsoon are the principal reasons, as of now, for the lower yield and poor productivity. Market trend is also not favourable all the time, especially to the small and marginal farmers. Due to low price, a considerable number of cardamom growers, particularly those in Kerala, have shifted from cardamom to pepper cultivation.\(^2\)

Though India has achieved a remarkable level of production in recent years, its re-entry in the international market is made difficult by Guatemala, which supplies enough quantity of cardamom at a lower price which is less than even the cost of production in India; The domestic consumption of Indian cardamom has also increased substantially, which keeps the prices of Indian cardamom always at a higher rate than the price in the international market. The higher demand in the domestic market has also attracted cardamom from
Guatemala to the Indian market. So, the Indian presence in the world export market for cardamom has diminished.  

The need for re-gaining of the international market for cardamom is thought of only when the price in the domestic market falls lower than that in the international market. An urgent measure is, therefore, needed to encourage the small and marginal farmers to sustain their cardamom cultivation. Concerted and continuous efforts are required to bring a larger area under cultivation, improve the productivity, reduce the cost of production and marketing and find better price for the produce in the domestic and international market.

In the above context, it is pertinent to probe the following issues. What is the trend in the area under cultivation of cardamom, its production, productivity and marketing in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka? What type of farmers engage in the cultivation of cardamom? What are the institutional and non-institutional agencies involved in the production and the marketing of cardamom? What are the perceptions of the cardamom growers towards cardamom production and marketing practices? Is there any scope for reducing the cost of production and marketing? Is there any feasibility of organizing a cooperative society to extend the required services to cardamom growers in these three states through networking of cooperatives? These and other related questions call for an empirical study. Hence, the study.

Definition of Concepts

Cardamom: Cardamom in this study means small cardamom, the fruit of *Elettaria cardamom*.

Farmer *cum* labourer: A cardamom cultivator who contributes manual labour in the process of production of cardamom on par with other labourers in his own field.

Farmer: Farmer, here means a cultivator who cultivates cardamom in the land.
Estate owner: A cardamom cultivator who cultivates the land which comes under the purview of the Estate Act

Master cultivator: A cardamom cultivator who cultivates the land under the supervision of the paid manager/ supervisor.

Innovative farmer: A cardamom cultivator who has contributed innovative ideas for higher productivity of cardamom.

Absentee landlord: A cardamom cultivator who is not residing in the estate or in the place of cardamom cultivation and whose cultivation is not under his direct supervision. They are occasional visitors to the estate or to the cardamom plantation.

Production Surplus: Production surplus in this study means the net amount of money available to the cardamom growers over and above the cost of production and marketing.

Production of Cardamom: Production of cardamom means the various processes involved in the cultivation of cardamom and the production of dry cardamom out of the green cardamom capsules by undertaking curing activities.

Marketing of Cardamom: It means the process involved in selling the dry cardamom by the cardamom growers to the buyers through market functionaries such as local merchants or exporters, wholesale merchants, inter-state cardamom dealers, the retailers, cardamom planters associations, brokers and the like.

Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study

1. To analyze the recent trends in production process such as area under cardamom cultivation, cropping pattern, plantation, re-plantation, irrigation, manuring, pest control management, harvesting and Post harvesting technologies and marketing practices such as grading and
standardization, cardamom sales, auction sales, pricing, and labour-farmer relation of small cardamom in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

2. To highlight the role of institutional and non-institutional promotional agencies in the production and marketing of cardamom in India.

3. To find out the socio-economic background of the cardamom growers and their perception of cardamom production and marketing practices.

4. To identify the problems of cardamom growers and offer suitable suggestions based on the findings.

Scope of the Study

The study attempts to appraise the production and marketing practices in respect of small cardamom in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. The study also aims at a discussion on the production and marketing practices, plight of the cardamom growers in these three neighbouring states. The study also includes an analysis of recent trends in marketing of small cardamom and the role of institutional and non-institutional agencies in the promotion of cardamom production and marketing.

Locale of the Study

The study covers the major small cardamom producing states in India, viz., Kerala, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. Most of the earlier studies were made on the cultivation areas of a particular state only. So, the researcher proposed to compare the cardamom cultivation of all the major small cardamom cultivation states in India. Cost of production is the basic determinant of profit in cardamom cultivation and it differs significantly between the states in the Western ghats of South India. In order to get a thorough knowledge of the production and marketing practices and other related aspects in these states, the present study is conducted.
Methodology

This study is a comprehensive and analytical study based on sampling technique. The study adopted multistage random sampling in the selection of 300 sample respondents. Three stage selection of sample was as follows. In the first stage, the proportion of farmers to be selected from three different states, viz, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Karnataka was decided based on the area under cardamom and quantum of production. Accordingly, 70 per cent respondents (21.0 farmers) were selected from Kerala, 20 per cent (60 farmers) from Karnataka and 10 percent (30 farmers) from Tamilnadu as shown in Table 3.1,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>% to total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tamilnadu</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the second stage, it was decided to cover both member and non-member cardamom growers of Planters Association at the ratio of 60:40. Therefore, 180 respondents who were members of any of the planters’ associations and 120 non-members were selected on aggregate basis without state-wise break-up for want of clear cut data on member and non-member cultivators. It was also decided to maintain the total sample size as such and to alter the proportion of member and non-member samples if there is any need. Accordingly, about 180 members and 120 non-members were selected for the study. But in the process of data collection, 182 member respondents and 118 non-member respondents were met.
In the third stage, member respondents were picked up from three important planters’ associations in the region. The number of members selected from each association is given in Table 3.2.

The case study method was also followed to highlight the performance of certain prominent institutional and non-institutional promotional agencies.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Kerala</th>
<th>Karnataka</th>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-members</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of CPA</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCPMC</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAPCMS</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tool for data collection

An elaborate interview schedule was developed, pre-tested and administered. The interview schedule contained questions for collection of data pertaining to the profile of the cardamom growers, cultivation practices such as area under cardamom cultivation, cropping pattern, plantation mode of irrigation, manuring, application of fertilizers and pesticides, harvesting technique, processing and marketing practices such as curing, cleaning, grading and standardization, pricing and auction sales. The market intermediaries and the officials of the government sponsored, agencies of institutional and non-institutional promotional agencies were contacted to study the problems and prospects of cardamom production and marketing.
Tools for data analysis

Simple statistical tools were used in the analyse of data. In the process of analysis, inter-state comparision is made in respect of all production and marketing practices. The inter-state differences if any, in regard to any practice was tested for its significance using $x^2$ test. The compound growth rate was worked out to find out the trends in production and marketing of cardamom.

Period of the study

The study was conducted during the period between 2004 and 2006.

Limitations of the Study

The study was confined to the views and opinions expressed by the respondents. Their personal bias and limitations are applicable to the study. Due to time and cost constraints, the researcher has confined himself to the chosen sample size only, which is a limitation of the study. Due to the constraints in languages such as Malavalam and Kannada, the researcher could not contact the cardamom growers in the remote areas of Karnataka and Kerala understudy. He contacted the respondents with the support of an interpreter. He had to select the respondents only from selected places of the three states to meet the sample size.
Chapter Scheme

The thesis is divided into nine chapters.

The first chapter presents an introduction about cardamom, history of cardamom, difference between small cardamom and large cardamom, uses of cardamom, varieties of cardamom, domestic consumption of small cardamom and the plight of cardamom growers.

The second chapter reviews the literature and studies related to the topic under study.

The third chapter presents objectives of the study, methodology, scope and limitations of the study and the plan of analysis.

The fourth chapter deals with recent trends in cardamom production and marketing. In this chapter trends in: production and productivity; harvesting and post-harvesting technologies; marketing practices, cardamom prices, marketing channels, and the world market for small cardamom have been analysed.

The fifth chapter discusses the role of institutional and non-institutional promotional agencies in cardamom production and marketing.

The sixth chapter highlights the socio-economic characteristics of the cardamom growers.

The seventh the chapter present the perception of the cardamom growers on production practices.

The eighth chapter deals with the perception of the cardamom growers on marketing practices of cardamom.

The last chapter provides the findings and suggestions related to cardamom production and marketing.
References


