Much work has gone into the preparation and production of this study.

There are agencies and institutions in the country whose work is to collect and compile statistics, keep a watch over market trends and give technical help and guidance in the production and export of spices. In international trade, today, one can never take things for granted.

Given below is a list of the agencies at work:

3. Directorate of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Calcutta.
4. Directorate of Areca Nut and Spices Development, Calcutta (Kerala).
5. Spices Export Promotion Council, Cochin.
6. Cardamom Board, Cochin.
7. Indian Pepper and Spices Trade Association, Cochin.
8. Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi.
9. Horticultural Research Station, Ambalavayal, Calicut (Kerala).

10. Pepper Research Station, Thaliparamba, Cannanore Dist. (Kerala).

11. Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore (Karnataka).

The author had many occasions to visit these institutions to collect relevant data which have been used for comparative study of actual farming operations in the major centres of cultivation of pepper in Kerala.

In the final preparation of this thesis, the author had spent 8 weeks in Delhi to collect materials available with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade.

The then Honourable Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, Sri A.C. George, the Officers and men-in-charge of the agencies mentioned above have been generally helpful. They were willing to discuss the problems and prospects of the export trade in spices.

The short term fluctuation in the export earnings and the resultant economic instability affect the rate of economic growth. In a planned economy this tendency has to be reckoned and appropriate measures have to be taken. The variability of demand and supply and the short term responses
are certainly important in price fluctuations. Equally important are local and political factors. There is hardly a spice not affected by a large fluctuation in prices.

This study is directed to examine how far price fluctuations in pepper can be controlled in the Indian context so as to have a reasonable and stable income for the primary producers which will ensure an adequate encouragement for higher production and better export earnings. In a study of the methods of controlling violent price fluctuations an important question is that whether the present system of management of supply is satisfactory or not. It is more so when the demand is likely to be manipulated by the importers and wholesalers of the foreign countries. Though pepper is the most important of all the spices grown in India, little work has been done so far to study the problems and prospects of this commodity.

METHODOLOGY

To have a comprehensive picture of the problems of this major spice and the strategy for their solutions the study was made from the level of cultural practices to the level of export trade of pepper. To determine as nearly as possible on a scientific basis the cost of production of this spice, surveys of cost of production were undertaken. Since random sampling survey was too expensive and difficult for an individual researcher, the method of purposive sampling was resorted to.
In a continuous belt of pepper cultivation, excluding too small and too big producers, twenty-five producers were interviewed with structured questionnaire, after its pre-test. The data so collected were further tested with additional surveys of ten cultivators in other major districts of Kerala in the production of this spice. It is believed that the information presents a fair average around which costs may be deemed in the years for an ordinary unit chosen to fluctuate.

The production data are collected from the published documents by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. Regarding the price realised by the growers, the f.o.b. prices of the exports were taken as an index even though the producers could be getting much less depending upon the quality of the produce and the terms of bargaining. The producers in Kerala, in general, are fully aware of the price quotations in the leading markets. Another important reason for this procedure is that the f.o.b. prices are more dependable in the process of price setting, since pepper is an export oriented commodity.

The conclusions drawn are the result of proper empirical study and investigation in the fields of cultural practices, area of cultivation and production, costs of
production, the role of middle men, export markets and the
issues involved.

My guide for this research work has been
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