

SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS

**“Nature and Problems of Marketing of Betel Leaf Production
– A Case Study of Midnapore District (East & West) in West Bengal”**

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By

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**NATURE AND PROBLEMS OF MARKETING OF BETEL-LEAF PRODUCTION
IN THE DISTRICT OF MIDNAPORE (EAST & WEST) IN WEST BENGAL
---A CASE STUDY**

Synopsis

The marketing aspect of betel leaf (*Piper betel Linn.*) produced in the district of Midnapore (East & West) in West Bengal is taken up for study largely due to its importance evident from the fact that the district stands for the largest producer and exporter of betel leaf in India. From this district, betel leaves are despatched to different states of the country and abroad. Despite its huge economic significance there is so far no comprehensive research study on the subject. The research gap on the topic has been identified in the literature survey of the current study.

The present study has flashed a focus *over the period from 1993-'94 to 2007-'08*, the study having been conducted in the district of Midnapore based on field study and relevant secondary data. Data have been tabulated and classified as required for analysis using econometric methods. During our field and market survey, both the stratified and random sampling methods are used at different stages of sample selection in the selected study area.

The study starts with analysing the nature of price fluctuations of betel throughout the different seasons of the year and also its relations, if any, with the production volume i.e., the supplies available in the market. For the purpose, statistical methods like weekly average, moving average, seasonal variation, regression analysis, Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient etc. have been used. The result reveals that prices and arrivals of betel leaves show an inverse relation in winter and in rainy seasons, whereas a moderate or direct relationship has been identified in summer season.

Next we tried to analyse the cost of marketing; it necessarily includes production cost. It is worth mentioning here that cost of production varies from variety (of betels) to variety depending on the different production processes involved. There are three important varieties of betel leaves, namely, **Bangla, Mitha, and Sanchi**. Some input costs are again dependent on the size of the plot of land used for cultivation. So, all cost analyses are made considering two different sizes of the plot of land measuring 5 Decimals (for Mitha variety) and 15 decimals (for Bangla and Sanchi varieties). The analyses show more or less an equivalent cost of marketing; whatever minor differences are there, those are due to the locational factor/s like distances from the main railway / road transport centres and use or non-use of any marketing element. Profitability analyses are similarly done for different marketing agents like producer, trader, wholesaler, and retailer. The study has established protection of the interest of the producer in all the cases. In fact, in analysing the share of each claimant in the realised price of betel on sale, it is found that producer gets the largest share; again, producers of Mitha variety of betel bagged the largest share amongst the three different varieties.

The process of cultivation involved in growing betel leaves needs employment of labour significantly. More importantly, it is more dependent on employment of family labour for timely

supply of labour. Notional wage-cost for family labour constitutes 20% of the total cost. Unlike in other cases, the study reveals that in almost all the years family labours could realise their remunerative prices out of the earnings from sale of betels. Detailed analyses of costs – in terms of both the cultivated land-size and betel varieties reveal a worse trend for the cultivators in realising their investments than it is for family labours. Profitability analysis has also been made by comparing costs with the revenues.

An attempt has also been made to look into the adequacy or otherwise of the loan facilities to satisfy the capital needs of the betel growers.

The main theme of the study is analysing marketing problems. The study has brought to light an interesting feature. In case of Bangla and Sanchi, the middlemen eat up the major shares e. g. 67.04% and 58.44% respectively in the total profit. On the other hand, in case of Mitha, the middlemen possess the minor share of total profit e. g. 29.52%. A close scrutiny of the marketing problems leads us to develop a host of suggestions to overcome the problems.

In recent years, overseas exports of betel leaves have increased significantly. But the major probable overseas market being Pakistan, exports to it did neither increase nor decrease because of the political disturbances between India and Pakistan. The overseas export status could be improved, if national level agencies like National Agricultural and Marketing Federation or **NAFED** and Bengal Agricultural and Marketing Federation or **BENFED**, etc. directly interfere into it.

Betel leaf is a perishable product and for its quick delivery from the production areas to the different dispersed parts of the country and abroad where consumers are located distantly, transport is not always ready to deliver the desired service. The study could identify the limiting factors and suggestions to overcome them.

Our present exercise is mainly concerned with studying the nature, problems and prospects of marketing of betel leaves in the district of Midnapore (East & West) in West Bengal, mainly in economic perspective and to offer some suggestions and guidelines for the improvement of this sector. Our observations, comments and suggestions have been shown in detail in different chapters.

The present dissertation would be useful to the planners, researchers and grass-root level workers involved in betel cultivation and trade and in the process it would contribute to further work on different aspects of this crop.