

**ROLE OF CASH CROP IN EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN RURAL AREA****Bharat V. Patil, Ph.D**

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Abstract

Betel vine crop is known as a commercial cash crop. The role of betel vine cultivators is felt much important in cultivation and marketing of betel vine leaves. Number of factors inspired and attracted the farmers to grow betel vine with interest. The cultivation of betel vine required a scientific and special skill and knowledge. Every activity of betel vine cultivation held its own importance. Plantation training, disease management, maintenance of humidity in the betel vine garden, proper water management, harvesting and lowering is the main practices of betel vine cultivation. For these practices, skilled hands and mind were felt essential. Betel vine cultivators acquired this skill and knowledge by experiments and experience. Betel vine cultivators became perfect practitioners to collect returns. The researcher studied the socio-economic states of betel vine cultivators. In the world, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were the major countries to cultivate betel vine leaves. Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines etc. were also noted for the cultivation of betel vine leaves. In Pakistan, large scale production of betel vine leaves is not possible and therefore Pakistan imported from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand about 5000 tones of betel leaves worth of Rs. 20 cores (Doosani 1989). The cultivation of betel vine leaves in Sri Lanka had a history of 2000 years. It is cultivated in the western region of Jafana, Kegaile and Gampha. Sri Lanka exported to Pakistan worth of 3000 tons per year. Betel leaves production is one of the important commercial cash crop of India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, etc. In India, approximately 50000 hectares were under cultivation. The crop is grown on commercial basis in Maharashtra,

Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Tripura.

Key Words: *Betel vine, Betel Leaves, Dag,*



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Introduction

In Western Maharashtra area under betel vine cultivation was more as compared to Vidharba and Marathwada. Sangli, Satara and Thane were the main districts of betel vine cultivation. Supports were also given to betel vine for climbing. Betel vine crop is a peculiar type of cash crop which provided socio economic states in the society. Betel vine crop is a peculiar type of cash crop which provides socio economic states in the society. The earnings from the sale of betel leaves were sound and attractive to the cultivators throughout the year, at regular intervals. Betel vine cultivators are obtaining financial support in the whole year to do many other farming functions. Majority of the members of the family are engaged in the plantation, training of vine, provision of manures, fertilizers, water and plucking of betel vine leaves. Sangli district is evaluated as one of the district in the cultivation of betel vine leaves. Sangli is also holding favorable elements like environment, transportation, market facilities, and willingness of farmers in betel vine cultivation. Under the study, efforts were made to study the cost of cultivation. In North India and some parts of West Bengal betel vine were cultivated in closed conservatories. In these region temperatures during summer rose even above 40° special efforts were made to protect the plants. In Orissa, it was grown in coastal tracts of Puri, Ganjam, Balasove and Cuttack districts. In Rajastan, betel vine was cultivated in a very limited area in Udaspur, Sawai and Madharpur districts in closed conservations. The betel vine cultivation was highly labour-intensive crop which provided a sound livelihood to many farmers and farm labourers. Nearly twenty lakhs families were engaged in the cultivation and selling of betel vine leaves in various states of India. Betel vine as noted as a significant cash crop cultivated with a great aspiration and inspiration in Sangli district. The residents of Sangli district like other people of other parts of India mostly used betel leaves for chewing and celebrating various functions. On 2nd February; 2006, Pudhari, a noted Marathi daily news paper published special report on the price of betel leaves regarding pan becoming expensive. Sambhaji Shingade, the vendor of betel leaves, expressed his opinion

that such type of rise in the rate of betel leaves never happened in the last 50 years. Due to lowering of betel vines and less supply of betel leaves from local cultivators and from Madras, there was a historical rise in the price of betel leaves in Sangli, market. The price of one dag (12000 leave) was increased by Rs. 700 within two to four days. During February to May price of betel vine leaves were mostly dependent upon the supply of Madras leaves. In the Sangli Market the supply of betel leaves was mostly from Miraj and Walwa tahsils. Rate of one *Kavali* (300 leaves) was Rs. 60 and later on the rate was increased to Rs. 90 within two to four days. Hakkal betel leaves got proper rate up to Rs. 500 per *dag*. Before inflation the rate of *Hakkal* betel leaves was Rs. 300 local betel leaves were also supplied in Bombay. Shirampur and Gujarat market which caused to increase the rate of betel leaves. After harvesting of betel leaves as early as possible, it was necessary to send the leaves to the market for sale. Betel leaves were perishable in nature. Sometimes due to oversupply of betel leaves in the market, growers were unable to get remunerative price. During monsoon, i. e. June – September there is excess supply of betel leaves. The price in this season was generally low. In the month of January, lowering activities were carried out in various betel vine gardens. It affected the supply of leaves. During the January-April period, the price of the betel leaves was moving towards high. The price was always settled on the basis of the quality of leaves. The price depended on the supply and demand. However, during the festivals, marriage seasons, ceremonial celebrations, the demand for betel leaves was more. The sale of betel leaves was done either through auctions or through negotiations.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Objectives

- i) To find out the socio position of farmers in the sample area.
- ii) To find out the employment generation through cultivation of betel vine crop to the farmers.

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study

- i) Betel vine cultivation assists to the farmers to enhance the social status due to strong financial position.
- ii) The betel vine cultivation provides job opportunities to many farmers.

3.2.1 Research Design

3.2.2 Selection of Area: The area under betel vine cultivation is increasing day by day in Sangli district therefore the researcher selected two tahsils for the intensive study.

3.2.3 Selection of Villages : Five villages from two tahsils were selected purposely based on maximum area under the betel vine cultivation. 10 villages were selected with specific purpose.

3.3.3 Selection of Samples: Six betel vine cultivators were selected from each of the selected villages out of which two from small size of group, two from medium size of group and two from large size of group. Thus, total sample in two tahsils accounted to 60 betel vine cultivators.

3.3.4 Significance of the Study: The study assists to development of employment generation in agricultural sector. It also helps to know the socio economic status of the betel vine cultivators. This study will also be useful to the central and state Governments to formulate policy for the betel vine crop.

3.3.5 Scope of the Study: The present research study is applicable to only Sangli district. Sixty farmers were selected and personal contacts, questionnaires were solicited. The study is mainly concentrated on managerial aspects of betel vine cultivation in Sangli district.

4. Results and Discussion: In Maharashtra, harvesting of pan is carried out after six months after planting or two months after first lowering the betel vine with skilled labour using a small iron blade attached to thumb. Plucking of betel leaves required on expert hand with the help of an artificial thumb nail made by iron. The leaves were cut along with the stalk about on cm. length. Betel vine leaves increased from the second year up to fifth years. From fifth year, the yield was reduced year after year. The total survival of betel vine garden ranged up to eight to ten years. Singh and others (1988) suggested that the leaves matured after six to eight weeks. Such leaves become ready for harvest. Das and Banarjee (1984) estimated that in West Bengal, betel leaves were yielded 2.4 million leaves per hectare annually from second year onwards, whereas from *Meetha* leaves the corresponding yield was 0.05 and 0.58 million leaves respectively. The transfer of betel leaves from cultivators to ultimate consumers executed through various middlemen. Betel leaves were marketed as early as possible after harvesting. Dr. V. B. Rahudkar (1992) reported that annual net profit from sale of betel leaves was Rs. 75,000 to 90,000 per acre. Betel vine cultivation was highly labour-intensive. It provided employment to betel vine cultivators, members of the family and hired laborers. It provided employment for various functions such as training, plucking of ripe leaves, supply of water to

betel vines, cutting of excess height of live supports, lowering the betel vines, spraying of pesticides and fungicides and spread of fertilizers. Training, plucking of betel vine leaves and lowering were required specified and skilled labourers who were thoroughly and fully experienced to do such technical activities. All such activities provided full employment opportunities to the local employees. The employment opportunities in total man days and expenses incurred on wages for betel vine cultivation were analysed as follows in Table-1.

**Table -1: Employment Generation in Betel vine Cultivation
(Per Acre/Year)**

Sr. No.	Nature of Employment	Average <i>Dag</i> Harvested	Employment Man Days	Wage Rate (per employee /day) Rs.	Total Wages Rs.	% to Total Wages Rs.
1	Study of water	--	75	60	4500	6.65
2	Training of Betel vines	--	161	60	21660	32.00
3	Harvesting	428	--	70	29960	44.25
4	Cuttings of live support Spread manures,	--	14	60	840	1.24
5	Fertilizers & Soil in the bed	--	25	60	1500	2.21
6	Lowering the vine	--	120	75	9000	13.30
7	Spraying	--	40	60	240	0.35
Total					67700	100

Source: Primary data

The purpose of Table- 1 was enlightening the employment opportunities in betel vine cultivation. Excluding man days for plucking, 599 man days employment was generated per acre during the agricultural year. During the year average 428 *dags* were harvested. One man harvested 1 to 2 *dags* (12,000 to 24,000 leaves) according to the efficiency of the harvester. Highest employment was available from training of betel vines and plucking activity of betel leaves. Harvesters were not paid daily wages but they were paid on job wages number of *dags* harvested. Such harvesters were paid on an average of Rs. 70 per *dag* containing 12000 leaves. Rs. 70 was paid for plucking 12000 leaves, systematically arrangements of leaves in the *dag* and packing of *dag* etc. Betel vines required periodically training and tying with the live supports. Tying labourers were appointed on daily wages basis. During the agricultural year, 361 man days were required per acre for training the betel vines. Betel vines required lowering - coiling once in a year to improve the quality of betel vine leaves and to put number of healthy betel

vines. Lowering of vines was the provision of employment for 120 man days per acre per year. Betel vine crop required frequent water-supply which provided 75 man day's employment on an average. Cuttings of line - supports were also necessary in case betel vines maintained excess growth. To provide normal growth, cultivators maintained suitable shade and humidity in the garden. This activity provided 14 man day's employment. Spraying of pesticides and fungicides, it provided 4 man day's employment. Total expenses incurred on such labour employments were Rs. 67,000 per acre and during the sample year.

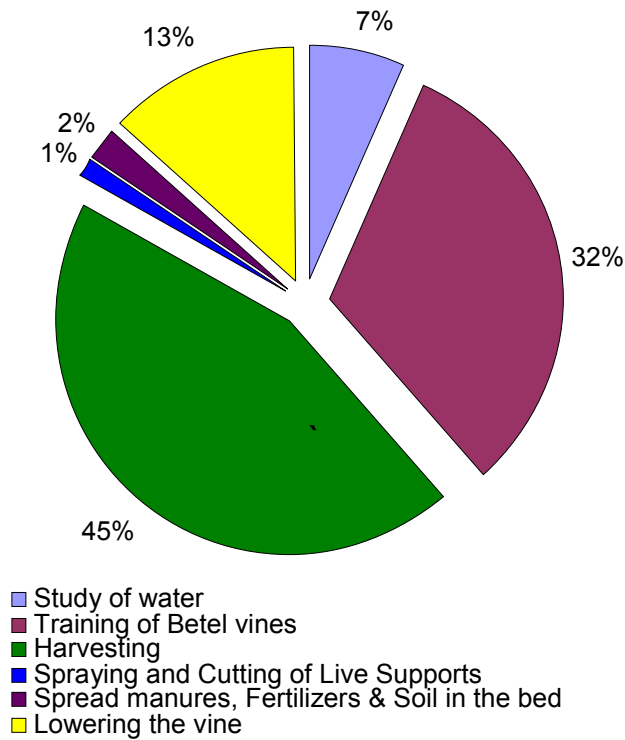


Figure- 1: Employment Generation in Betel vine Cultivation

The consumption pattern of durable goods such as motor-cycle, communication devices, televisions, refrigerators, tractors, jeep etc. indicated the sound status of finance of respondents. Such use of durable goods pointed out the sound financial status of betel vine cultivators.

Table 2: Classification of Respondents as per use of Durables

Sr. No.	Durable Goods	No. of Respondents	% to Total Respondents
1	Motor Cycle	56	93.33
2	Four Wheeler-Jeep	02	3.33
3	Tractor	04	6.67
4	Communication Devices	58	96.67
5	Television	60	100.00
6	Refrigerator	13	21.67
7	Shares of Co-operative Societies	55	91.67

Source: Primary data

The above Table -2 showed the use of durable goods by the respondents. Out of 60 respondents 56 respondents, 93.33 per cent had their own motor-cycles for their routines 2 respondents, 3.34 per cent owned jeep for carrying *dags* of betel leaves 4 respondents, 6.66 per cent purchased tractors for other reliable functions. All respondents had owned the television to entertain their weary mind. 21.67 per cent, possessed refrigerators. 55 respondents, 91.66 per cent, held shares in co-operative sugar factories and co-operative societies.

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