



# ELEMENTS CONTROLLING THE KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF CASHEW GROWERS IN INDIA

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## Abstract

Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*) belongs to the family Anacardiaceae. It's otherwise called as wonder nut, zero cholesterol nuts, dollar earning crop and gold mine of wasteland. Cashew is generally described as poor man's crop and rich man's food. Cashew is a native of Brazil, which was spread by Portuguese to different parts of the world primarily for soil conservation, afforestation, and wasteland development. Cashew was introduced to India in the Malabar Coast in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and subsequently dispersed to other parts of the country. The cashew industry provides employment to more than 5 lakhs people in the farms and factories, most of them in the rural areas. In cashew processing factories, over 95 per cent of the workers are women from the lowest strata of society, mainly belonging to socially and economically backward communities. Thus, apart from its economic significance, cashew industry has the potential to play a leading role in the social and financial uplift of rural poor. India has the largest area in cashew (730000 ha) followed by Brazil (663562 ha). India is the largest producer, processor, exporter, and consumer of cashew in the world. In India cashew is mainly grown in Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa. In this study, totally 120 cashew growers were selected from the Ariyalur District of Tamil Nadu with proportionate random sampling method. Totally fourteen variables selected for the study, out of that six variables viz., educational status, farming experience, information seeking behaviour, information sharing behaviour, training undergone and risk orientation were found to have positive and significant relationship with the knowledge level.

**Keywords:** Cashew growers, variables, knowledge level.

## Introduction

Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*) belongs to the family Anacardiaceae. It's otherwise called as wonder nut, zero cholesterol nuts, dollar earning crop and gold mine of wasteland. Cashew is generally described as poor man's crop and rich man's food. Cashew is a native of Brazil, which was spread by Portuguese to different parts of the world primarily for soil conservation, afforestation, and wasteland development. Cashew was introduced to India in the Malabar Coast in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and subsequently dispersed to other parts of the country. The cashew industry provides employment to more than 5 lakhs people in the farms and factories, most of them in the rural areas. In cashew processing factories, over 95 per cent of the workers are women from the lowest strata of society, mainly belonging to socially and economically backward communities. Thus, apart from its economic significance, cashew industry has the potential to play a leading role in the social and financial uplift of rural poor. India has the largest area in cashew (730000ha) followed by Brazil (663562 ha). India is the largest producer, processor, exporter, and consumer of cashew in the world. In India cashew is mainly grown in Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa. It's also grown in non-traditional areas like Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya and Andaman and Nicobar islands. Madhya Pradesh has the largest area followed by Andhra Pradesh (150000 ha) and Kerala (102000 ha). The highest productivity of Cashew nut was reported

from Maharashtra (1200 kg/ha/year) followed by Kerala (900kg raw nuts/ha/year).

India has a well-established processing setup with 771 processing factories with a processing capacity of 7 lakhs tones per annum. Raw cashew nuts are imported from countries like Vietnam, Tanzania, Ivory Cost continued to be major exported raw nuts in to India. Hence there is an urgent need to increase the production to meet the requirement of the processing factories. Numbers of factors were influencing the knowledge level of the cashew growers regarding cultivational practices. Here, the researcher selected fourteen variables based upon the expert opinion.

## Materials and Method

This study was conducted in Ariyalur district, where cashew is the predominant crop and cultivated as a major crop. Ariyalur district occupies the first position in the state based on area under cashew cultivation. Further, the district is familiar to the student researcher and such familiarity has been considered necessary for the successful conduct of the study. Ariyalur district has six blocks viz., Andimadam, Ariyalur, Jayamkondam, Sendhurai, T.Palur, Udaiyarpalayam. Of the six blocks, Andimadam block is selected based on the maximum area under cashew in Ariyalur District. There are 30 revenue villages in Andimadam block. A list of villages undertaking cashew cultivation was collected from the office of the ADH of Ariyalur district. Out of the 30 villages, 120 cashew growers were selected from the five villages namely Authukurichi,

Andimadam, Kuvagam, Elaiyur and Vilandai were selected based on the maximum area under cashew cultivation.

### Results and Discussion

Correlation and regression were computed to know the relationship between the profile characteristics and knowledge level as well as training needs of cashew growers.

Analyzing the relationship between the profile characteristics and knowledge level of cashew growers on farm practices was one of the objectives of the present study. Hence, zero order correlation and multiple regression co-efficient were worked out and the results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Relationship between profile characteristics and knowledge level of cashew growers**

(n=120)

Sl. No .	Variables		Standardize regression Co -efficient	Standar d error	't' value
X1	Age	0.056NS	0.028	0.232	0.276NS
X2	Educational status	0.209*	1.246	0.451	2.762**
X3	Occupational status	-0.061NS	-0.042	0.637	-0.433
X4	Annual income	-0.038NS	0.009	0.004	0.089NS
X5	Farm size	0.151NS	0.143	0.239	1.1490NS
X6	Farmi ng experience	0.271**	0.741	0.41	1.733**
X7	Social participation	0.055NS	0.032	0.050	0.329NS
X8	Extension agency contact	0.037NS	0.022	0.077	0.196NS
X9	Mass media exposure	-0.067NS	-0.0098	0.262	-0.971NS
X10	Information seeking behaviour	0.196*	0.946	0.517	1.829*
X11	Information sharing behaviour	0.191*	2.468	1.541	1.934**
X12	Training undergone	0.208*	0.418	0.200	2.090*
X13	Risk orientation	0.268**	1.318	0.806	1.667*
X14	Innovativeness	0.077NS	0.094	0.257	0.806NS

$R^2 = 0.531$   $F = 6.946^{**}$

\* = Significant at 5% level

\*\* = Significant at 1% level

NS = Non -Significant

It could be observed from the Table 1, that out of the fourteen variables considered for the study six variables viz., educational status (X2), farming experience (X6), information seeking behaviour (X10), information sharing behaviour (X11), training undergone (X12) and risk orientation (X13) were found to have positive and significant relationship with the knowledge level. Among the significant variables, two variables namely farming experience and risk orientation were found to be significant at one per cent level of probability. The remaining four variables viz., educational status information seeking behaviour, information sharing behaviour and training undergone were found to be significant at five per cent level of probability and remaining other variables non-significant. Educational status showed a positive and significant relationship with one per cent at knowledge level. Educated respondents have more mental ability to information from various sources. This finding is in line with the findings of Ganapathyramu (2017). Farming experience showed positive and highly significant relationship knowledge, level. It is quite natural that more experience in cashew growers would have enabled the farmers to learn more about the knowledge. This finding is in

line with the findings of Kathiresan (2013). Information seeking behaviour observed a positive and significant relationship with knowledge level. It is quite understandable that more exposure to information sources would have enabled them to gain more knowledge about recommended technologies. This finding is in line with the findings of Prakash (2016). Information sharing behaviour had shown a positive and significant association with knowledge level. It is obvious because the respondents who had higher information sharing behaviour would have naturally acquired knowledge about the practices. This finding is in line with the findings of Vasanthakumar (2014). Training undergone was found to be positively and significantly related with knowledge level. Most of the respondents had attended one or more training programmes, which might have influenced their knowledge positively. This finding is in line with the findings of Rajamanickam (2010). Risk orientation was found to have positive and highly significant relationship with one per cent at knowledge level. More risk orientation otherwise means their readiness to accept the new ideas. Such a take-off mind would have naturally propelled them to seek more information through various sources and

hence would have enabled them to gain more knowledge. This finding derives support from the findings of Naseem (2000).

#### **Contribution of profile characteristics with their knowledge level of cashew growers**

In order to find out which of the independent variables explained the variation in the knowledge level and also to know the extent of contribution, multiple regression analysis was carried out and the results are presented. It could be observed from the Table 1, that all the fourteen variables together explained 53.10 per cent of the variation in the knowledge level. The “t” value was found to be significant; hence, it could be concluded that a linear functional relationship between the independent and dependent variables could be established. Of the fourteen variables, two variables namely, educational status and information sharing behaviour contributed significantly and positively at one per cent level of probability towards knowledge. Farming experience, information seeking behaviour, training undergone and risk orientation contributed significantly and positively at five per cent level of probability towards knowledge. All other variables were found to be non-significant. Hence, it may be concluded that a unit in educational status, farming experience, information seeking behaviour, information sharing behaviour, training undergone, and risk orientation would the knowledge level by 1.246, 0.741, 0.946, 2.468, 0.418, 1.318 units respectively. Hence it could be inferred that the knowledge level of cashew growers could be positively influenced by their educational status, farming experience, information seeking behaviour, information sharing behaviour, training undergone, and risk orientation. The positive and significant relationship of independent variables with knowledge level of cashew growers may be discussed on the same line as already given under simple correlation of these variables with knowledge level.

#### **Conclusion**

It could be observed from this study, that out of the fourteen variables considered for the study six variables *viz.*,

educational status, farming experience, information seeking behaviour, information sharing behaviour, training undergone and risk orientation were found to have positive and significant relationship with the knowledge level. Among the significant variables, two variables namely farming experience and risk orientation were found to be significant at one per cent level of probability. The remaining four variables *viz.*, educational status information seeking behaviour, information sharing behaviour and training undergone were found to be significant at five per cent level of probability and remaining other variables non-significant. Multiple regression analysis revealed that all the fourteen variables together explained 53.10 per cent of the variation in the knowledge level. Hence, it could be concluded that a linear functional relationship between the independent and dependent variables could be established.

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