



INFLUENCE OF MIDDLEN'S SOCIAL STATUS IN THE MARKETING OF FLOWERS IN DINDIGUL DISTRICT

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1. Introduction:

Due to structural problems like quickly perishable, lack of storage, lack of finance in the agriculture sector, middlemen play a pivotal role in the marketing of the agricultural produce, since flower is a seasonable product in nature and is quickly perishable; storage of the produce is not possible for a long period. It has to be disposed as soon as it is plucked. As a result of this nature, the market price of the produce is highly volatile in nature.

2. Statement of the Problem:

Most of the flowers are disposed under the indirect market system. The Jasmine marketing is largely confined to provide traders virtually in the grip of a few commission agents. The interest of the Jasmine growers has been grossly neglected causing several financial losses. The middlemen manipulate the situation by offering low price to the growers under the pretext of low demand and false rejection of produce in the name of substandard. Sometimes, the Jasmine flowers also get accumulated in a particular region due to climatic conditions or due to strike by transport owners. Growers then get distressed and get substandard low price in addition to wastage of large quantity of the produce.

3. Scope of the Study:

This study examines the opinion of the middlemen who deal flowers in Dindigul district and also analyzes the opinion of the intermediaries' business with factors like age, educational level, marital status, nature of business, type of business, experience and number of family members involved in the business,.

4. Sample Size:

50 wholesalers, 50 commission agents and 150 retailers were selected under simple random sampling method.

5. Objectives of the Study:

- ✓ To identify the role of social status of the sample middlemen in dindigul district who deal flowers
- ✓ To estimate cost and benefit of the members in the channels of distribution.

6. Source of Data:

This study is largely based on the primary data, because, the information relating to the study is extremely scant. Required primary data were collected in the course of interview with the farmers by using survey method with, well-structured and non-discussed interview schedules. Collected data were tabulated to make it suitable for further statistical analyses.

7. Tools and Techniques Used:

To understand the relative share of various distributions in a variable, the percent method has been used. Chi-Square test helps to decide whether there is association between two variables or not.

8. Analysis and Interpretations:

8.1 Percent:

Age: Age is the important factor determining the nature of middlemen. Generally, aged and experienced middlemen get acquainted well with the Jasmine business and take the risk of dealing with Jasmine, while at the lesser age their experience and the middlemen is expected to be naïve in the stage. In the present chapter it is attempted to discuss the age-wise distribution of the middlemen.

Table 1: Association between age and type of middlemen

Middlemen									
S.No	Age (in years)	Retailer		Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%						
1.	Upto 20	6.	4.00	-	-	-	-	6	2.40
2.	21-30	48.	32.00	10	20.00	5	10.00	63	25.20
3.	31-40	30.	20.00	30	60.00	17	34.00	77	30.80

4.	41-50	36.	24.00	10	20.00	25	50.00	71	28.40
5.	51 & ^	30.	20.00	-	-	3	6.00	33	13.20
Total		50	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 30.80 per cent of the sample respondents are in the age group of 31 – 40 years. 28.40 per cent of them are in the age group of 41 – 50 years. There are 25.20 per cent of the respondents who are in the age group of 21 – 30 years. While 13.20 per cent of them are in the age group of 51 years & above and the remaining 2.40 per cent are in the age group of up to 20 years. Thus, from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (30.80%) of the sample middlemen are in the age group of 31 – 40 years.

Gender: Gender is the important factor determining the nature of middlemen. In any business while the male take risks, the female counterparts are the risk avoiders. In the present chapter it is attempted to discuss the gender-wise distribution of the middlemen.

Table 2: Association between gender and the type of middlemen

Middlemen									
S.No	Gender	Retailer		Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%						
2.	Female	48	32.00	-	-	-	-	48	19.20
Total		150	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

The above table indicates that 80.80 per cent of the sample respondents are men while remaining 19.20 per cent of them are women. Thus from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (80.80%) of the sample middlemen are men.

Marital Status: Marital status is another factor that determines the active participation in marketing of Jasmine flowers. Generally in Indian social set-up it is expected that while the married individuals avoid risk, the unmarried businessmen take risks. In the present chapter it is attempted to discuss the marital status-wise distribution of the middlemen.

Table 3: Association between marital status and the type of middlemen

Middlemen									
S.No	Marital Status	Retailer		Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%						
2.	Unmarried	42	28.00	20	40.00	5	10.00	67	27.00
3.	Widows	12	8.00	-	-	-	-	12	5.00
Total		150	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

The above table shows that 68 per cent of the sample respondents are married, while 27 per cent of them are unmarried and the remaining five per cent of them are either widows or living individually.

Thus, from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (68%) of the sample middlemen are married.

Family Size: Family size is also an important factor that determines the nature of middlemen. Generally, business people who have enough support from the family members are ready to take the risk of dealing with Jasmine, while others are not ready to take heavy risk in business. In the present chapter it is attempted to discuss the family size-wise distribution of the middlemen.

Table 4: Association between family size and the type of middlemen

Middlemen									
S.No	Family size	Retailer		Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%						
2.	3 – 4	84	56.00	30	60.00	7	34.00	131	52.00

3.	5 – 6	60	40.00	20	40.00	15	30.00	95	38.00
4.	7 and above	-	-	-	-	6	12.00	6	3.00
Total		150	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table indicated that 52 per cent of the sample respondents have 3-4 members in their family. There are 38 per cent of the respondents who have 5-6 members in their family, while 7 per cent of them have up to 2 members in their family and the remaining 3 per cent of them have 7 and above members in their family.

Thus from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (52%) of the sample middlemen have 3-4 members in their families.

Number of Family Members Involved in Jasmine Business:

The number of family members involved in Jasmine business decides not only the success of the business but also determines profit earnings. Generally, business people who have enough support from the family members are ready to take the risk of dealing with Jasmine, while others are not ready to take heavy risk in business. In the present chapter it is attempted to discuss the number of family members involved-wise distribution of the middlemen.

Table 5: Association between number of family members involved in jasmine business and the type of middlemen

S.No	Number of members involved	Retailer		Middlemen Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%
2.	1 – 2	72	48.00	-	-	18	36.00	90	36.00
3.	3 and above	12	8.00	-	-	-	-	12	5.00
Total		150	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 59 per cent of the sample respondents cannot get support from their family. There are 36 per cent of the respondents who get support from the group of 1-2 members in their family and the remaining 5 per cent of them get support from their family that has more than 3 members.

Thus, from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (59%) of the sample middlemen could not get support from their family.

Business Experience:

Business experience is one of the important factors in Jasmine marketing business. Many businesses failed due to lack of insufficient business experience. Experience will give a lot of information and new ideas that not only lead in business but also provide high earning technique. Hence, it is expected that the agents with more years of experience take risk when compared with the agents with less years of experience. The following table reveals the business experience of the sample respondents.

Table 6: Association between business experience and the type of middlemen

Experience of Middlemen									
S.No	(in Years)	Retailer		Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%						
2.	6-10	60	40.00	-	-	20	40.00	80	32.00
3.	11-15	12	8.00	30	60.00	7	14.00	49	19.60
4.	16-20	42	28.00	-	-	10	20.00	52	20.80
5.	21 and above	12	8.00	-	-	10	20.00	22	8.80
Total		150	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table indicates that 32 per cent of the sample respondents have business experience of 6 – 10 years. 20.80 per cent of them have business experience of 16 – 20 years. There are 19.60 per cent of the respondents who have business experience of 11 – 15 years. While 18.80 per cent of them have business experience up to 5 years, and the remaining 8.80 per cent of them have business experience of 21 years & above.

Thus, from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (32.80%) of the sample middlemen have business experience of 6 – 10 years.

Nature of Business:

Almost all agricultural occupations are seasonal in nature and this is more so in the case of floriculture. Since, Jasmine trade is a floricultural occupation, the dependent on this business do not get income for their livelihood throughout the year. Hence, depending on their experience, socio-economic conditions the agents take the marketing of Jasmine either as a primary occupation or as a secondary occupation. In the present chapter it is attempted to examine the distribution of sample respondents who have taken marketing of Jasmine as primary or secondary occupation.

Table 7: Association between nature of business and the type of middlemen

S.No	Nature of Business	Retailer		Middlemen Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%
1.	Primary	132	88.00	30	60.00	47	94.00	209	84.00.
2.	Secondary	18	12.00	20	40.00	3	6.00	41	16.00.
Total		150	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 84 per cent of the sample respondents engage this business as a primary occupation and the remaining 16 per cent of them engage this business as a secondary occupation.

Thus, from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (84%) of the sample middlemen engage this activity as the primary business.

Membership: Almost all types of businessmen are having an association to meet their demands and to get a solution for their problems. Association office bearers will take necessary steps to give solution and satisfy the needs of the members. The following table shows that how many of the middlemen are members of the association.

Table 8: Association between membership and the type of middlemen

Membership and Type of Middlemen									
S.No	Particulars	Retailer		Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%						
1.	Membership	-	-	50	100.00	50	100.00	100	40.00
2.	Non-membership	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	150	60.00
Total		150	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table indicates that 60% of the sample middlemen are not members of the association and the remaining 40% of them are members of the association.

Thus, from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (60%) of the sample respondents are not members in the association.

Reason for Choosing this Business:

If one is take up any business, it is important that one should have interest and involvement in it. Here, the researcher has made an attempt to find out the factors that motivated the respondents to take up Jasmine business. The respondents opined that profitability, demand of Jasmine flowers in the market, supply of Jasmine, competition are some of the factors that have promoted them to take up this business. The following table shows the reasons for the selection of the business and their respective percentages.

Table 9: Association between reason for choosing this business and the type of middlemen

Middlemen									
S.No	Particulars	Retailer		Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%
1.	Profitability	78	52.00	50	100.00	35	70.00	163	65.00
2.	Less capital	18	12.00	-	-	3	6.00	21	8.00
3.	Demand	18	12.00	-	-	7	14.00	25	10.00
4.	Less Competition	36	24.00	-	-	5	10.00	41	17.00

Total	150	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00
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Source: Primary Data

Overall, 65% of the respondents have selected this business because it is more profitable and 17% per cent of the respondents have selected this business for its being less competitive and 10% per cent of the respondents have selected this business because of the heavy demand and the remaining 8% of the respondents have selected this business because it requires lesser capital.

Thus, from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (65%) of the sample middlemen have selected this business due to highest profitability.

Need for Training: Any businessman cannot succeed in any business without previous knowledge. Such knowledge can be obtained through proper training. This training may be obtained from the elders, from the friends, from training institutes etc. The following table shows whether training is required or not for this business.

Table 10: Association between need for training and the type of middlemen

Middlemen									
S.No	Necessity of the Training	Retailer		Wholesaler		Commission Agent		Total	
		No. of Respondents	%						
1.	Yes	78	52.00	10	20.00	27	54.00	115	46.00
2.	No	72	48.00	40	80.00	23	46.00	135	54.00
Total		150	100.00	50	100.00	50	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 54 per cent of the sample respondents have felt that training is a must to become a successful businessman and the remaining 46 per cent of them have felt that training is unnecessary to become a successful businessman.

Thus, from the above analysis it can be concluded that majority (54%) of the sample middlemen have felt that training is a must to become a successful businessman.

8.2 Chi-Square Test:

In order to find out the influence of various factors relating to the sample respondents (Independent variables) on the flower business (Dependent variable), the null Hypotheses were formulated that the personal and other factors relating to the sample respondents do not significantly influence the Jasmine business that have been offered by the middlemen and these null hypotheses were tested with the help of Chi-square test and the result of the test is presented in Table.

Ho: There is no association between age and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between age and type of middlemen.

Table 11: Association between age and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
Age	15.507	55.85	8	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between age and type of middlemen.

Ho: There is no association between gender and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between gender and type of middlemen.

Table 12: Association between gender and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
Gender	5.991	39.60	2	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between gender and type of middlemen.

Ho: There is no association between marital status and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between marital status and type of middlemen.

Table 13: Association between marital status and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
Marital Status	9.488	20.94	4	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between marital status and type of middlemen.

Ho: There is no association between family size and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between family size and type of middlemen.

Table 14: Association between family size and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
Family Size	12.592	65.37	6	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between family size and type of middlemen.

Ho: There is no association between number of persons involved in this business and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between number of persons involved in the business and type of middlemen.

Table 15: Association between numbers of persons involved in the business and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
No of persons involved in business	9.488	52.09	4	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between number of persons involved in the business and type of middlemen.

Ho: There is no association between experience and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between experience and type of middlemen.

Table 16: Association between experience and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
Experience	15.507	115.46	8	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between experience and type of middlemen.

Ho: There is no association between nature of business and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between nature of business and type of middlemen.

Table 17: Association between nature of business and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
Nature of Business	5.991	26.37	2	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between nature of business and type of middlemen.

Ho: There is no association between membership and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between membership and type of middlemen.

Table 18: Association between membership and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
Membership	5.991	250	2	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between membership and type of middlemen.

Ho: There is no association between reason for the selection of this business and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between reason for the selection of this business and type of middlemen.

Table 19: Association between reason for the selection and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
Reason for this Business	12.592	41.46	6	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between reason for the selection of this business and type of middlemen.

Ho: There is no association between necessity of training and type of middlemen.

Ha: There is an association between necessity of training and type of middlemen.

Table 20: Association between necessity of training and type of middlemen

Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Df	Result
Necessity of Training	5.991	17.06	2	Ho : Rejected

Source: Primary Data

Table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis (Ho) should be rejected i.e. there is a significant association between necessity of training and type of middlemen.

The result of the Chi-square test indicates that factors such as *Gender, Age group, Marital Status, Family Size, Number of members involving in business, Experience, Nature of business, membership, Reason for the selection of this business, Necessity of training*, variables have association with the type of middlemen's marketing activities.

9. Findings:

- ✓ It has been found that majority (30.80%) of the sample middlemen are in the age group of 31 – 40 years.
- ✓ From the study it has been inferred that majority (80.80%) of the sample middlemen are male.
- ✓ It has been found that majority (68%) of the sample middlemen are married.
- ✓ It has been found that majority (52%) of the sample middlemen have 3 - 4 members in their family.
- ✓ It has been found that majority (59%) of the sample middlemen are not getting any support from their family members in business.
- ✓ It can be concluded that majority (32.80%) of the sample middlemen have business experience of 6 – 10 years.
- ✓ It has been found that majority (84%) of the sample middlemen engage this business as a primary occupation.
- ✓ It has been inferred that majority of the sample middlemen (60%) are not members in Jasmine marketing association.
- ✓ It has been found that majority (65%) of the sample middlemen are expressed that profitability is the main key factor to start Jasmine business.
- ✓ It has been found that majority of the sample middlemen (54%) viewed that training is not necessary.
- ✓ From the study it has been inferred that there is a significant association between distribution of age or gender or marital status or experience or family size or family members involved in business or membership or requirement of training and the type of middlemen.
- ✓ From the study it has been inferred that there is a significant association between nature of business, membership, reason for the selection of this business, necessity of the training and the type of middlemen. Wholesalers get Rs 0.07 and the retailers get Rs 0.37 as profit. Thus, the cultivators enjoy only a moderate profit or meager profit from the cultivation and marketing of Jasmine.
- ✓ Chi-square test indicates that factors such as Gender, Age, Marital Status, Family Size, Number of members involving in business, Experience, Nature of business, membership, Reason for the selection of this business, Necessity of training, Reason for not needing training, Types of flowers dealing, suppliers, terms of purchase, types of buyers, facilities given to the regular buyers, Factors deciding price, pricing method adopted, purchase price and selling price variables have association with the type of middlemen's marketing activities.

10. Conclusion:

The analysis of the collected data indicated that social status has differed significantly across the categories of middlemen.

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