



Organizational Innovations vis a vis Digital Marketing: A Boon to Mango Farmers in Karnataka

(*Srinatha T N¹, Pooja Rajendra Dhang², Pramod Kumar¹ and Pavan Kumar Kumawat¹)

¹ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi

²Department of Horticulture, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru

Corresponding Author's email: srinathtn.vk18@gmail.com

Mango (*Mangifera indica*), known as the "King of Fruits" in India, is prized for its taste, flavor, fragrance, and nutritional value. It is a major commercial fruit and plays a significant role in the Indian economy. Increased disposable incomes have driven up mango demand and production over the years. However, the COVID-19 lockdown during the mango harvesting season disrupted traditional mango markets (mandis), affecting both growers and consumers. Karnataka, a major mango-producing state, contributes about 8% to India's total mango area and production. The state supports quality mango production and marketing through various institutions. Traditional marketing channels like Producer-Preharvest Contractor-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer and Producer-Commission Agent-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer often result in a low producer share of 50-60% in the consumer's rupee. With the closure of mandis, innovative marketing channels emerged, facilitated by the Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation (KSMD & MC). New channels included Producer-KSMD & MC-Consumers with postal delivery and Producer-Flipkart (in partnership with KSMD & MC)-Consumer, boosting the producer's share to 80-90%. KSMD & MC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Flipkart, providing mango growers with assured marketing support. Consumers could order varieties like Alphonso, Badami, Banganpalli, and others with a minimum order of 3 kilograms on Flipkart. These innovative channels not only increased producer profits but also enhanced consumer access to quality mangoes at reasonable prices. These approaches, developed during the COVID-19 crisis, reduced intermediaries and improved market efficiency. With continued support and training in good agricultural practices, these channels can provide sustainable marketing options for farmers.

Key words: Mango, Marketing Channel, Innovative, Good Agricultural Practices.

Introduction

Mango (*Mangifera indica* L.) is also known as "King of fruits" and "National fruit of India. Mango is one of the most preferred fruit in India and other countries as well because of its nutritional and medicinal values. Mangoes are gaining commercial importance all over the world and assume a leading position among the fruits. India is the leading producer of mango with production of 21.82 million tonnes constituting around 50 % of the total world production.

The major mango producing states in India are Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala and Odisha. Due to the long history of cultivation, more than thousand cultivars of mango are commercially grown in India. The popular varieties of the northern regions of India are Dasheri, Langra and

Chausa, while Totapuri, Neelam, Mallika, Amrapali, and Benishan are the important varieties of South India (Ravikumar *et al.*, 2013). Most of the north Indian varieties, viz. Dasher, Langra, Chausa and Bombay Green are alternate bearer, while, most of the South Indian varieties bear regularly (Pandey and Dinesh, 2010). Benishan (Banganapalli) has received geographical indication (GI) tag and Andhra Pradesh is the proprietor of the variety.

There are many other institutions (HOPCOMS, KSMD&MCL, FPOs, etc.) involved in promotion and adoption of latest technologies by providing various technical as well as financial assistance. Horticultural Producers' Cooperative Marketing and Processing Society (HOPCOMS) is a farmer's cooperative founded in 1965 with a main aim of direct marketing of horticultural produce and processed products in Karnataka. It is operational in southern districts of Karnataka viz. Bangalore Urban, Bangalore Rural, Kolar, Ramanagar, Mandya, Mysuru and Chikkaballapura. The main aim of the society is ensuring good price for the farmer produces and providing quality produce at affordable prices to consumer by various means like dissemination of knowledge by way of training, supply of farm equipment, arranging storage facilities including cold storage, facilitating marketing of the produces through own marketing set up and direct supply of fruits and vegetables to factories, hospitals, hostels, clubs, social functions and processing industries.

Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation Limited (KSMD&MCL), a Government of Karnataka Enterprise under the Department of Horticulture, is established under the Companies Act 1956 in the year 2011 with the main objectives to facilitate mango growers for quality mango production, better post-harvest management, direct marketing, export and processing. To achieve the above said objectives, the Corporation has taken up an initiative to improve the socio-economic status of mango growers of Karnataka by helping them to produce quality fruits with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and to market the fruits directly to consumers through online portal <http://karsirimangoes.karnataka.gov.in>. in the registered trade mark "Karsiri mangoes" brand at reasonable or affordable cost (Govind, 2020). During the lockdown period, KSMD&MCL arranged to supply mangoes to the consumers of Bangalore through the postal department (Govind, 2020). The KSMD&MCL is connecting the mango growers and FPOs with Flipkart for online delivery of mangoes to the consumers. The Flipkart will pick mangoes from designated collection centres and deliver it to the consumers upon fixing the commission charges. Apart from the Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation Limited (KSMD&MCL) and HOPCOMS, many Farmer Producer Organizations are also working in Karnataka helping the farmers to realize higher share in consumer rupee. The efforts of HOPCOMS, KSMD&MCL, FPOs in removing the market intermediaries is commendable. However, its effectiveness needs to be empirically evaluated as to how much is the gain to the farmers.

Traditional/ Conventional Marketing Channels in Mango

Producer–trader–consumer (local sale)

Producer–pre-harvest contractor– retailer–consumer

Producer–commission agent–retailer– consumer.

Producer – trader – upcountry market

Producer–pre-harvest contractor– commission agent– retailer–consumer

Producer– commission agent – secondary wholesaler – retailer – consumer (up country market or distant market)

The different traditional marketing channels followed in marketing of mango in Karnataka and different stakeholders involved in Mango Marketing. It is clear from the Economic theory and review of literature suggest that the higher the number of stakeholders involved in marketing channel lower is the producer share in consumer. It is clear from the

previous studies that number of stakeholders were more in traditional marketing channels where producer share in consumer rupee is only 50-60 %. The different stakeholders involved in Mango Marketing are Producer, Preharvest contractor, commission agent, wholesaler, retailer and consumer.

Innovative Marketing Channels followed in marketing of mango in Karnataka during lockdown

1. Farmer-Central Post Office (Karnataka)- Consumers
2. Farmer-Residents Welfare Associations- Consumers
3. Farmer- Flipkart- Consumers

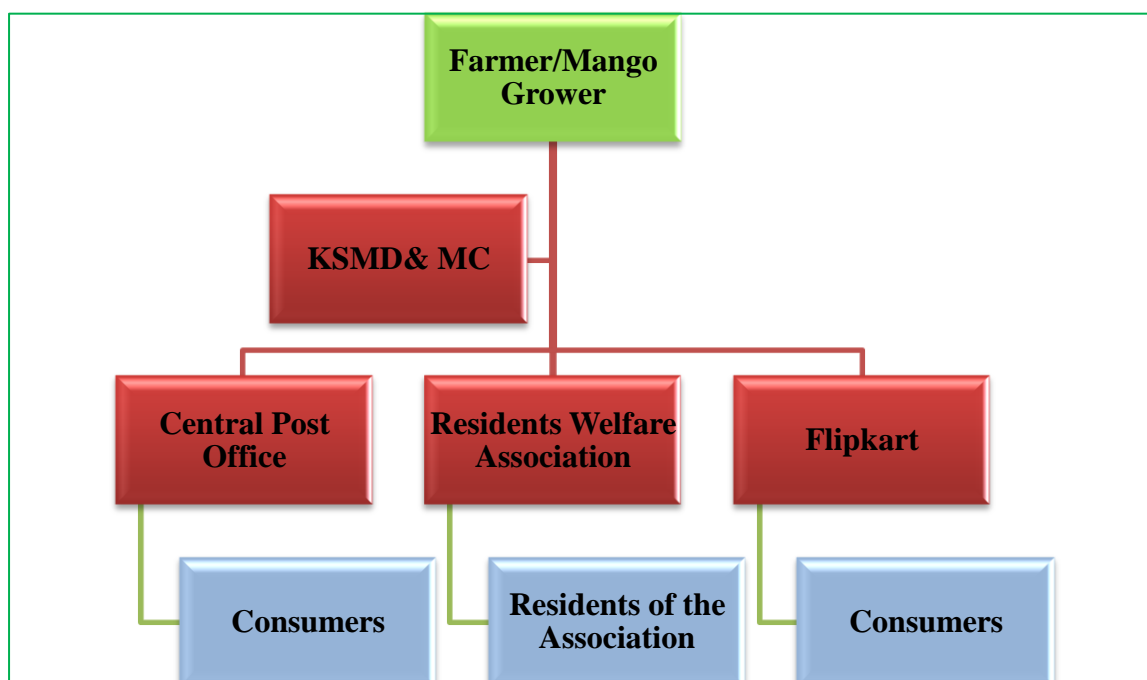


Figure1: Innovative Marketing Channels in Mango during lockdown.

The Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Board acted as a facilitator between farmers and consumers by partnering with the Central Post Office, Resident Welfare Associations, and Flipkart. This partnership enabled the direct sale of mangoes from producers to consumers, effectively eliminating traditional middlemen like pre-harvest contractors, wholesalers, and retailers. The board provided a platform for consumers to place orders via their website <http://karsirimangoes.karnataka.gov.in>. The innovative marketing channels developed during the COVID-19 lockdown reduced the number of intermediaries in mango marketing, allowing farmers to receive a higher share of the consumer rupee (80-90%) and providing consumers with access to quality produce at reasonable prices. The board also supported farmers with technical guidance on good agricultural practices and natural ripening methods in ripening chambers.

Additionally, the Mango Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the e-commerce platform Flipkart, facilitating the sale of mangoes grown by farmers, where consumers could conveniently order mangoes through Flipkart. During the lockdown, KSMD&MCL arranged for mango deliveries to consumers in Bangalore via the postal department (Govind, 2020). The board also connected mango growers and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) with Flipkart for online delivery. Flipkart managed the collection from designated centers and handled consumer deliveries, charging a commission for the service.

Conclusion

Karnataka is the one of the leading state of mango production in India and has numerous institutions promoting quality mango production and efficient marketing. Since the traditional marketing channels, such as Producer-Preharvest Contractor-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer and Producer-Commission Agent-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer, involve multiple intermediaries, resulting in a low producer share of 50-60% in the consumer rupee. During the COVID-19 lockdown, the closure of mango mandis led to the rise of innovative channels like Producer-Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation (KSMD & MC)-Consumers (via postal delivery) and Producer-Flipkart (in collaboration with KSMD & MC)-Consumer. These new channels significantly increased the producer's share to 80-90%. KSMD & MC's MoU with Flipkart ensured marketing support for mango growers, allowing consumers to order varieties like Alphonso, Badami, Banganpalli, Kesar, Neelam, Sendur, and Mallika, with a minimum order of 3 kilograms. These innovative channels improved producer profits and consumer satisfaction by offering quality mangoes at reasonable prices. Initially developed to address the COVID-19 crisis, these channels should be promoted as key marketing options in the future, supported by government policies that allow farmers to sell outside APMC markets. Additionally, farmers should be trained in good agricultural practices and natural ripening methods to build online consumer confidence.

References

1. Ravikumar, S., Aravindakshan, M., & Kumar, R. (2013). Commercial importance and varieties of mangoes in India. *Journal of Horticultural Science*, 8(2), 120-125.
2. Pandey, S. N., & Dinesh, M. (2010). Mango cultivation in India: A historical perspective and modern-day trends. *Agricultural Research Journal*, 15(3), 215-220.
3. Govind, R. (2020). Role of Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation Limited in Mango Marketing during COVID-19. *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, 33(1), 45-52.
4. KSMD&MCL Official Website. (2020). Karsiri mangoes initiative. Retrieved from <http://karsirimangoes.karnataka.gov.in>.
5. Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation Limited (KSMD&MCL). (2020). Memorandum of Understanding with Flipkart for Mango Marketing. Internal Document, Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka.
6. Horticultural Producers' Cooperative Marketing and Processing Society (HOPCOMS). (n.d.). Overview and marketing strategies in Karnataka. Internal Report.