

A Qualitative Study of Marketing Channels for Organic Packaged Kala Namak Rice in Siddharth Nagar District of Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The objective of the study is to identify current marketing channels for organic packaged Kala Namak rice in Siddharth Nagar and assess their efficiency in promoting and distributing the product. It aims to investigate the role of intermediaries in various channels, as well as their influence on product price and availability. Furthermore, the study aims to better understand the major problems that stakeholders, such as farmers, merchants, and consumers, encounter while using these channels.

Method: In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 35 participants, including farmers, wholesalers, merchants, and consumers in Siddharth Nagar, will be used in this study. Purposive sampling was utilized to make sure that all main stakeholders were represented. The data were evaluated thematically, with an emphasis on major issues such as channel efficiency, price dynamics, and logistical constraints.

Findings/ Results: The findings shows that the distribution of Kala Namak rice is dominated by conventional marketing channels, such as regional wholesalers and merchants, according to the research. These channels, however, often lack efficiency and have notable deficiencies in logistical assistance and pricing transparency. Due to farmers' lack of knowledge and technical obstacles, direct-to-consumer channels—such as organic shops and e-commerce platforms—show promise for increased profitability but are underused. Major obstacles include inadequate infrastructure for appropriate packaging and branding, expensive shipping costs, and constrained marketing resources.

Conclusion: Organic packaged Kala Namak rice's marketing channels must be optimized in order to reach its full potential as a premium product. Collaborative solutions, such as farmer cooperatives, may assist enhance access to direct-to-consumer channels while minimizing reliance on middlemen. Investment in digital platforms, as well as better logistics and branding infrastructure, is critical. By resolving these issues, marketing channels for Kala Namak rice may be improved, resulting in long-term advantages for farmers and fulfilling the rising demand for organic goods in urban markets.

Keywords: Kala Namak Rice, Organic Food, Marketing Channels, Siddharth Nagar, Distribution Strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

A historic and fragrant rice variety from Uttar Pradesh's Siddharth Nagar district, Kala Namak has been attracting more attention recently because of its distinct taste and health advantages. Kala Namak rice variety is an epitome of best aromatic rice cultivated and consumed in Northeastern part of Uttar Pradesh (Chaudhary and Tran, 2001). India is the world's biggest producer of white rice, accounting for 20% of global output. In several nations around the globe, aromatic rice is more in demand due to its greater scent and longer kernels than regular rice.

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India is among the world's top exporters of basmati rice (Husaini et al., 2009)

There is an increasing chance to promote Kala Namak rice as a high-end organic packaged product due to the growing customer interest in organic products. However, how well the product is distributed and promoted via the marketing channels will determine how successful this venture is. Marketing channels connect manufacturers and customers, playing an important influence in product availability, price, and overall market performance. Because of the market's specialized character, choosing relevant and effective marketing channels for organic packaged goods such as Kala Namak rice is very vital. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the present marketing channels for organic packaged Kala Namak rice in Siddharth Nagar, analyze their effectiveness, and investigate methods to enhance distribution techniques. Additionally, knowing the Kala Namak rice marketing environment is essential for maintaining the cultural legacy connected to this special variety as well as for boosting profitability. Effective marketing strategies may improve small-scale farmers' access to urban markets, allowing them to satisfy the rising demand for organic goods while securing fair pricing. Given the obstacles faced by existing distribution methods, it is critical to investigate new solutions and current marketing strategies that meet the interests of both producers and consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The marketing of organic goods has received substantial attention, with a focus on the significance of effective distribution methods. The availability of organic food is lower than that of conventional food since it is rare in local markets and retailers. In order to satisfy consumer demand for organic food, it must be advertised so that all consumers are aware of and may purchase organic food items. Singh, A., & Verma, P. (2017) state that factors like advertising have a big impact on consumers' choices to buy organic food products. According to H.N. Singh et al. (2006), there is no official record, but in-depth conversations with farmers in the production region showed that Kalanamak was the most widely grown type there up until the 1970s. Several studies have shown that the success of organic goods in competitive marketplaces is dependent on aspects such as channel selection, pricing transparency, logistics management, and customer trust. Kala Namak was formerly only marketed and consumed in the eastern portion of Uttar Pradesh and by individuals who moved from this area

to other areas of India. In order to promote regional specialty rice types, consumers and marketers are now searching for diversity in the Basmati market. "Basmati for your eyes and Kala Namak for your palate" is a common slogan in eastern Uttar Pradesh. As a result of this shift in perspective, processors, marketers, and customers are emerging from all around. PRDF is helping to make this growth possible by raising awareness via exhibits and media (Chaudhary et al., 2013). Traditional marketing channels face challenges including high intermediary costs, inadequate infrastructure, and inefficient logistics. Recent research has also shown that direct-to-consumer (DTC) channels are becoming more important for organic goods. With increased customer convenience and producer profitability, e-commerce platforms and organic specialty shops have become viable substitutes for traditional channels. However, these channels need substantial expenditures in branding, packaging, and digital infrastructure. Inadequate packaging requirements and the lack of formal farmer cooperatives are two significant obstacles to the commercialization of native rice varieties like Kala Namak. Research on conventional agricultural goods shows that government assistance initiatives and policies may significantly enhance marketing results. Offering financial incentives and raising knowledge about organic certification may greatly boost the market potential of conventional types. Another important element in increasing demand for niche goods, especially among urban customers who are health-conscious, is consumer education. Similar issues have been seen in the Indian organic food industry for items such as regional rice varieties and traditional millets. An investigation into the marketing of organic basmati rice, for instance, discovered that small-scale farmers' market access and profitability significantly increased as a consequence of new digital platforms and infrastructural improvements. Additional obstacles for indigenous rice varieties such as Kala Namak include a lack of farmer understanding about current marketing tactics, poor packaging requirements, and the absence of established farmer cooperatives. Addressing these gaps is critical to improving the overall effectiveness of marketing channels and ensuring farmers get fair rewards.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research method to better understand the marketing channels for organic packaged Kala Namak rice in Siddharth

Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh. A qualitative design was adopted to allow for a thorough examination of the viewpoints and experiences of key players engaged in the production, distribution, and consumption of Kala Namak rice. Through direct interactions with participants, the technique focuses on obtaining comprehensive, descriptive data that offers insights into the effectiveness and structure of the current marketing channels. Qualitative research involves understanding respondents' perspectives, identifying key phrases that best reflect their ideas or experiences, and determining the reasoning behind their choices (Vinten, 1994).

Research Design

The research is exploratory in nature, with the goal of identifying existing marketing techniques and uncovering difficulties encountered by diverse stakeholders. The qualitative technique helps to capture the intricacies of the marketing system, including the roles of intermediaries, logistical challenges, and customer views.

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling ensured that participants from all phases of the marketing process were included in the research. This sampling strategy is beneficial for identifying persons with specialized expertise and experiences related to the study goals. The sample consisted of 35 people, who were grouped as follows:

Farmers (15)

Small and medium-scale farmers who grow Kala Namak rice.

Wholesalers and Merchants (10)

Key intermediaries in the distribution chain.

Consumers (10)

People who have bought organic packaged Kala Namak rice, both locally and online.

Data Collection Method

With the chosen participants, focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews were used to gather the study's main data. Over the course of two months, the data was gathered.

In depth interview

Semi-structured interviews were used to get in-depth information on the experiences of farmers, wholesalers, and customers. The interviews lasted 30-60 minutes and included subjects such as marketing methods, pricing

strategies, distribution problems, and future changes.

Focus Group Discussions

Two focus group conversations were held—one with farmers and another with merchants—to delve further into shared experiences and issues. This approach supported engaged conversations and assisted in validating each respondent's answer.

Data Analysis

To examine the gathered data, thematic analysis was used. Key themes were identified via coding, classifying, and transcribing the recorded interviews and focus group discussions. The goal of the investigation was to find trends and reoccurring problems with:

- Marketing channel efficiency
- Role of intermediaries and pricing dynamics
- Logistical challenges and infrastructure gaps
- Consumer preferences and awareness

Coding was done manually to make sure that the analysis was closely related to the data. Multiple iterations of coding and validation with important participants helped to develop the themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study reveals that the marketing channels for organic packaged Kala Namak rice in Siddharth Nagar are mainly traditional, with a major role played by local retailers and regional wholesalers. Farmers rely heavily on intermediaries to gain access to the market, which frequently results in lower profit margins due to limited bargaining power and price volatility. The study also highlights the inefficiencies in these channels, including logistical constraints like inadequate storage facilities and transportation, which result in high post-harvest losses, and the lack of standardized packaging and cohesive branding impacts the product's competitiveness in larger markets. Direct-to-consumer channels, such e-commerce sites and organic specialty shops, provide a viable substitute that might increase farmer income and market penetration. However, hurdles such as poor digital literacy, expensive logistical expenses, and little consumer knowledge of Kala Namak rice limit its present implementation. The research also highlights the double function of intermediaries: while they provide small-scale farmers vital access to markets, their dominance often jeopardizes profitability and pricing transparency. The establishment of farmer cooperatives, investments in digital platforms, and packaging and infrastructural upgrades have the potential to greatly boost marketing channels. Finally,



these adjustments might result in more equitable pricing and increased product awareness and demand in both local and urban markets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following tactics are suggested in order to maximize the marketing channels for Kala Namak rice that is packed in organic form:

Formation of Farmer Cooperatives

Farmers may access bigger markets, share resources, and bargain for lower pricing by joining cooperatives. Cooperatives may also be very helpful in offering training on quality standards and marketing techniques.

Investment in Digital Platforms

Kala Namak rice may become more visible and accessible to a larger audience by creating an online marketplace. Farmers should be given training and assistance to sell their goods online, either individually or via current e-commerce platforms.

Improvement in Packaging and Branding

In urban markets, investing in better, ecologically friendly packaging and consistent branding may boost the product's appeal. Packaging should highlight the unique qualities of Kala Namak rice, such as its organic certification, health benefits, and cultural heritage.

Infrastructure Development

Improving storage and transportation infrastructure is critical for reducing post-harvest losses and ensuring that rice reaches customers in optimum condition. Collaboration with government agencies and private investors may assist to overcome these logistical issues.

Awareness Campaigns

Increasing consumer knowledge of Kala Namak rice's advantages is crucial to driving demand. To reach target demographics, marketing strategies should include digital media, influencer cooperation, and attendance at organic food festivals.

CONCLUSION

Organic packaged Kala Namak rice has the potential to become a premium product in both domestic and urban markets. However, the present marketing methods are inefficient, limiting the market reach and profitability. Optimizing these channels requires a diverse strategy that includes establishing farmer cooperatives, investing in digital infrastructure, and upgrading packaging and branding. By resolving these obstacles, stakeholders may maximize the potential of Kala Namak rice and assure long-term development for Siddharth Nagar farmers. Collaborative efforts between government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector entities will be critical in changing the marketing environment for this unique rice species. Finally, enhancing Kala Namak rice marketing channels would assist not only local farmers, but also fulfil the growing demand for organic goods among health-conscious customers.

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