

Food Processing Technology and Packaging: A Case Study of Indian Cashew-Nut Industry

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Abstract : India is the global leader in world cashew business and cashew-nut industry is one of the important food processing industries in world. However India is the largest producer, processor, exporter and importer of cashew in the world. India is providing cashew to the rest of the world. India is meeting world demand of cashew. India has a tremendous potential of cashew production and export to other countries. Every year India earns more than 2000 crore rupees through cashew trade. Cashew industry is one of the important small scale industries in the country which is playing significant role in rural development. It is generating more than 400000 jobs at remote area and 95% cashew worker are women, it is giving income to poor cashew farmers, majority cashew processing units are small and cottage, it is helping to stop migration from young farmers for employment opportunities, it is motivating rural entrepreneurship development and it is also helping to environment protection etc. Hence India cashew business is very important agribusiness in India which has potential to make inclusive development. World Bank and IMF recognized cashew-nut industry is one of the important tools for poverty eradication at global level. It shows the importance of cashew business and its strong existence in India. In spite of such huge potential the cashew processing industry is facing different problems such as lack of infrastructure ability, lack of supply of raw cashew, lack of availability of finance, collection of raw cashew, unavailability of warehouse, marketing of cashew kernels, lack of technical knowledge and especially processing technology and packaging of finished products. This industry has great prospects such as scope for more cashew cultivation and cashew production, employment generation, formation of cashew processing units, alcohol production from cashew apple, shield oil production, rural development, poverty elimination, development of social and economic backward class and environment protection etc. This industry has domestic as well as foreign market; India has tremendous potential in this regard. The cashew is a poor man's crop but rich man's food. The cashew is a source of income and livelihood for poor farmers. Cashew-nut industry may play a very important role in the development of hilly regions. The objectives of this paper are to identify problems of cashew processing and use of processing technology, problems of cashew kernel packaging, evolving of cashew processing technology over the years and its impact on final product and impact of good processing by adopting appropriate technology packaging on international trade of cashew-nut. The most important problem of cashew processing industry is that of processing and packaging. Bad processing reduces the quality of cashew kernel to a large extent especially broken cashew kernel which has a very low price in the market compared to whole cashew kernel and is not eligible for export. On the other hand if there is no good packaging of cashew kernel it will get moisture which destroys it. International trade of cashew-nut depends on two things: one is cashew processing and the other is packaging. This study has strong relevance because cashew-nut industry is labour oriented, where processing technology is not playing an important role because 95% of processing work is manual. Hence processing work was depending on the physical performance of workers which makes the presence of a large workforce inevitable. There are many cashew processing units closed because they are not getting sufficient work force. However due to advancement in technology slowly this picture is changing and processing work is getting improved. Therefore it is interesting to explore all the aspects in the context of cashew processing and packaging of cashew business.

Keywords : cashew, processing technology, packaging, international trade, change

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