

DETERMINANTS OF SELECTING RAMBUTAN MARKETING CHANNELS BY FARMERS: A CASE STUDY IN *GAMPAHA* DISTRICT

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Commercial rambutan farmers in Sri Lanka are facing difficulties in selling their products. This study aimed to identify the different types of marketing channels and analyze factors affecting the selection of marketing channels by farmers in *Gampaha* district, Sri Lanka to provide inputs to formulate marketing policies. A semi-structured questionnaire was utilized to collect data from commercial rambutan farmers through face-to-face interviews. Two-stage sampling procedure was employed to select the sample. In the first stage, the major rambutan-producing *Grama Niladhari* Divisions were purposively selected from the *Attanagalla* Divisional Secretariat, the second largest rambutan production area in *Gampaha* district. Farmers were selected using snowball sampling in the second stage. Descriptive analytical techniques were employed to identify the prominent marketing channels and the multinomial logistic regression model was used to identify the factors affecting the choice of marketing channels by rambutan farmers. The results revealed that farmers predominantly sold rambutan to collectors (49%), followed by roadside shops (17%). Direct selling to consumers or exporters by farmers was rare in the study area. Short distance ($p<0.01$), high price ($p<0.05$), off-farm income ($p<0.1$) and provision of harvesting facilities ($p<0.05$) were factors that contributed to choosing roadside buyers. Low education of farmers, poor access to market information and low prices had a statistically significant impact ($p<0.1$) on selecting fair. Large-scale farmers have no option except to sell rambutan to collectors. The study concluded that price and distance to the market are two major factors affecting the choice of marketing channels. Policies aimed at improving farmers' access to market information, enhancing infrastructure facilities and logistical support encourage more farmers to diversify their marketing channels beyond traditional options. Similarly, the global value chain should be strengthened through farmer-exporter collaboration.

Keywords: Commercial rambutan farmers, Farmers' decisions, Market outlet, Multinomial logistic regression