

ABSTRACT

Desiccated Coconut (DC) sector is an important sector in the country's economy as they highly contribute to the GDP and export earnings. Even though there is a high demand for Sri Lankan DC, it is hard to find past research studies on it. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the current trends in the DC industry including socio economic characteristics of the DC producers (millers) and attitudes of them towards DC industry. Further, the study aimed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of DC producers, and to suggest possible solutions for the prevailing issues in DC production. A field survey was conducted in the coconut triangle using a structured questionnaire to collect data from randomly selected 30 DC producers during July-September 2017. Graphical analysis, mean analysis, and a quantitative SWOT analysis were performed to analyze data. Collected data were analyzed using SPSS statistics 19 version and Microsoft excel 2007. Results revealed that, average annual DC production and export amounts are fluctuating time to time, Sri Lanka holds the third place for DC exports and Middle East and Europe are the priority destinations for Sri Lankan DC. Also majority of the producers are male, studied up to or above advanced level, married, and living in rural areas of Gampaha district. Furthermore towards DC industry, the producers have attitudes like DC production is environmental friendly, it improves the living standard, a good export market is available and cost of production can be reduced by high technology of machineries. According to the SPACE matrix, DC producers are in the competitive stage. It shows that they are having internal strengths and facing external threats. The threats are mainly for raw material supply which is fresh coconut supply and skilled labor force. Therefore, as the strategies, government should encourage the people to improve the productivity of existing coconut lands through proper management and with strategies to minimize the impact of climate in coconut lands. Promotion of efficient use of culinary nuts, prohibition of establishing new DC mills and strategies to retain the work force in the mills may also be helpful.

Key words: Desiccated coconut, Processors, Sri Lanka, SWOT analysis, SPACE matrix