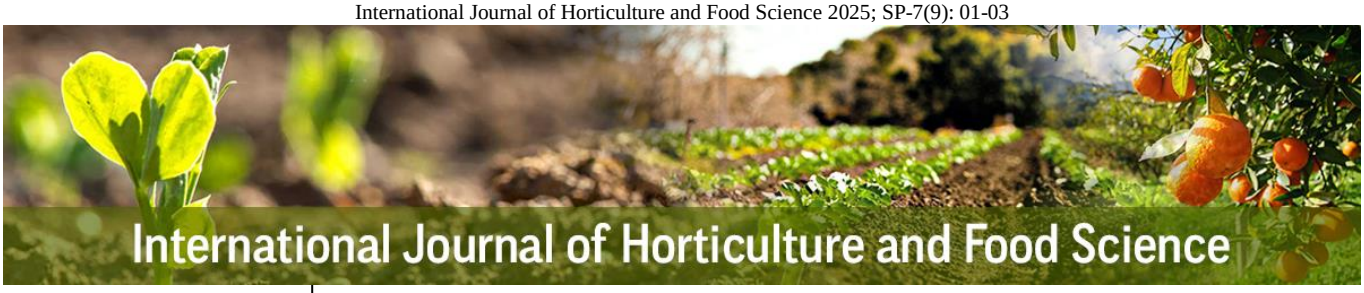

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Marketing scenario of pomegranate in Solapur district of Maharashtra

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Abstract
The current research was conducted to analyze the marketing cost, marketing margin, and price spread associated with pomegranate cultivation in the Solapur district of Maharashtra. The study was carried out across twelve villages, evenly split between two tehsils—Pandharpur and Sangola. Several marketing channels were identified, each distinguished by its structure and the roles of intermediaries involved. In the first marketing channel (Channel-I), the supply chain follows the sequence: Producer → Retailer → Consumer. Channel-II includes an additional intermediary and follows the route: Producer → Pre-harvest Contractor → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer. Channel-III simplifies this by eliminating the contractor, progressing as: Producer → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer. Meanwhile, Channel-IV introduces cooperative involvement, and moves as: Producer → Cooperative Marketing Society → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer. The marketing costs incurred per tonne of pomegranate varied across these channels. Channel-I recorded the lowest cost at ₹4,185 per tonne. Channel-II involved higher costs at ₹10,910, followed by Channel-III at ₹11,085. Channel-IV incurred the highest marketing cost, amounting to ₹12,270 per tonne. Among the various components of marketing expenses, commission fees and transportation charges were identified as the major contributors to the total marketing cost.

Keywords: Marketing, margin, price spread, Channel

Introduction
India's varied climatic conditions significantly contribute to the cultivation of a wide range of fruits and vegetables. Despite this advantage, the overall production frequently does not keep pace with the growing demand. In such a scenario, efficient marketing of agricultural commodities becomes crucial for the economic well-being of farmers. Marketing channels serve as a framework to understand how agricultural produce moves from the point of production to the final consumer. These channels involve different intermediaries who play specific roles in the distribution process. In the case of pomegranates, several marketing channels are employed to facilitate their sale and distribution. The present study was centered on evaluating key aspects of pomegranate marketing, specifically the marketing cost, the margins earned by various stakeholders, and the price spread throughout the supply chain. This analysis was conducted with reference to the diverse marketing channels involved in the movement of pomegranates from farms to end consumers.

Materials and Methods
Solapur district was deliberately selected for this study due to its extensive area dedicated to pomegranate cultivation. A two-stage purposive sampling method was employed, wherein Pandharpur and Sangola tehsils were chosen based on their proportional share of land under pomegranate farming. Data was gathered from a total of 96 pomegranate farmers across twelve villages—six from each tehsil. The villages selected in Pandharpur included Bardi, Bhose, Kasegaon, Khardi, Mendhapur, and Gardi, while Bamani, Junoni, Kole, Mahud, Wadegaon, and Watambare were chosen from Sangola tehsil. The primary data for the study was obtained through survey techniques conducted during the 2024-25 agricultural year.

Results and Discussion
1. Marketing channels in Pomegranate marketing
Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the quantity of pomegranates sold per hectare

through various marketing channels. The data highlights the distribution of sales among four distinct channels used by farmers in the study area. Channel III, which follows the route from Producer → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer, accounted for the highest share of pomegranate sales. A total of 9.39 tons per hectare, representing 50.89% of the total quantity sold, was marketed through this channel. This suggests that farmers most commonly preferred this route, likely due to better accessibility to wholesalers and relatively streamlined operations. Channel II, involving the sequence Producer → Pre-harvest Contractor → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer, contributed to 5.25 tons per hectare, making up 28.45% of the total sales. This indicates that a significant portion of farmers opted to sell their produce through pre-harvest contractors, possibly for assured returns or risk-sharing benefits. Channel IV, which incorporates a cooperative marketing society before the produce reaches the wholesaler and retailer, accounted for 2.31 tons per hectare or 12.52% of the total. This relatively lower figure may reflect limited reach or lower farmer participation in cooperative marketing structures. Channel I, the most direct route involving Producer → Retailer → Consumer, saw the least quantity sold, with just 1.50 tons per hectare or 8.13% of the total. This limited usage could be due to higher marketing efforts and logistical challenges required on the part of the farmers to directly access retailers or consumers. Overall, the table illustrates a clear preference for intermediary-based channels, particularly Channel III, with direct marketing and cooperative involvement playing a smaller role in the overall marketing landscape for pomegranates in the region.

Table 1: Channelwise Quantity Sold of Pomegranate (ton/ha)

Sr. No.	Channels	Quantity Sold
1	Channel I (Producer - Retailer- Consumer)	1.50 (8.13)
2	Channel II (Producer - Preharvest Contractor-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer)	5.25 (28.45)
3	Channel III (Producer-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer)	9.39 (50.89)
4	Channel IV (Producer - Cooperative marketing society - Wholesaler- Retailer - Consumer)	2.31 (12.52)
Total Quantity Sold		18.45 (100.00)

(Figure in parentheses are the per cent to the total)

2. Price Spread and Marketing Efficiency in Different Marketing Channels

The price spread analysis for pomegranate across four marketing channels is shown in Table 2 highlighting the distribution of price, costs, margins, and efficiency from producer to consumer. In Channel-I, where the producer sells directly to the retailer, the net price received by the producer is ₹42,770, which constitutes 77.54% of the consumer price of ₹55,155. The cost incurred by the producer is ₹2,605 (4.72%), bringing the total price received by the producer to ₹45,375 (82.27%). The cost incurred by the retailer amounts to ₹1,580 (2.86%), while the retailer's margin is ₹8,200 (14.87%). The total marketing cost is ₹4,185 (7.59%), and the marketing margin is ₹8,200 (14.87%), resulting in a price spread of ₹9,780 (17.73%). The marketing efficiency in Channel-I is highest at 3.66, indicating a more beneficial channel for producers.

In Channel-II, the marketing process involves a pre-harvest contractor and wholesaler. The net price received by the producer is ₹53,410 (73.04%) out of a consumer price of ₹73,120. The producer's cost is ₹520 (0.71%), with the total price received by the producer reaching ₹53,930 (73.75%). The pre-harvest contractor incurs a cost of ₹4,580 (6.26%) and gains a margin of ₹4,360 (5.96%). The wholesaler pays ₹62,870 (85.98%), incurs a cost of ₹4,130 (5.65%), and earns a margin of ₹4,200 (5.74%). The retailer then pays ₹62,940 (86.08%), spending ₹1,680 (2.30%) on costs, and earns ₹8,500 (11.62%) as margin. The total marketing cost is ₹10,910 (14.92%), with a marketing margin of ₹17,060 (23.33%). The price spread is ₹19,190 (26.24%), and the marketing efficiency drops to 1.92.

In Channel-III, where the product is marketed through wholesalers and retailers, the net price received by the producer is ₹51,060 (66.38%) from a consumer price of ₹76,915. The producer's cost amounts to ₹3,695 (4.80%), leading to a total producer price of ₹54,755 (71.19%). The wholesaler purchases the product at ₹54,755 (71.19%), incurs a cost of ₹5,470 (7.11%), and makes a margin of ₹5,620 (7.31%). The retailer pays ₹65,845 (85.61%), with a cost of ₹1,920 (2.50%) and earns a margin of ₹9,150 (11.90%). The total marketing cost in this channel is ₹11,085 (14.41%), and the marketing margin is ₹14,770 (19.20%). The price spread is ₹22,160 (28.81%), with a marketing efficiency of 2.11. The marketing efficiency slightly improves but remains less favorable compared to direct sales.

In Channel-IV, where cooperative marketing societies are involved, the net price received by the producer is ₹52,500 (63.66%) out of a consumer price of ₹82,470. The producer's cost is ₹2,680 (3.25%), leading to a total price received by the producer of ₹55,180 (66.90%). The co-operative society incurs a cost of ₹1,600 (1.94%) and earns a margin of ₹2,000 (2.42%). The wholesaler buys at ₹58,780 (71.27%), incurs a cost of ₹5,900 (7.15%), and gains a margin of ₹6,500 (7.88%). The retailer then pays ₹71,180 (86.31%), incurs ₹2,090 (2.53%) in costs, and earns a margin of ₹9,200 (11.15%). The total marketing cost sums to ₹12,270 (14.88%), and the marketing margin is ₹17,700 (21.46%). The price spread is the highest at ₹27,290 (33.09%), and the marketing efficiency is the lowest at 1.84.

Table 2: Price spread and Marketing Efficiency of Different Channels (Rs/ton)

Sr. No.	Particular	Channel-I	Channel-II	Channel-III	Channel-IV
1	Price received by Producer	45375 (82.27)	53930 (73.75)	54755 (71.19)	55180 (66.90)
2	Cost incurred by producer	2605 (4.72)	520 (0.71)	3695 (4.80)	2680 (3.25)
3	Net price received by producer (producer's share in consumer's rupee)	42770 (77.54)	53410 (73.04)	51060 (66.38)	52500 (63.66)
4	Cost incurred by pre-harvest contractor	-	4580 (6.26)	-	-
5	Margin of pre-harvest contractor	-	4360 (5.96)	-	-
6	Cost incurred by co-operative marketing society	-	-	-	1600 (1.94)
7	Margin of co-operative marketing society	-	-	-	2000 (2.42)
8	Price paid by wholesaler	-	62870 (85.98)	54755 (71.19)	58780 (71.27)
9	Cost incurred by wholesaler	-	4130 (5.65)	5470 (7.11)	5900 (7.15)
10	Margin of wholesaler	-	4200 (5.74)	5620 (7.31)	6500 (7.88)
11	Price paid by retailer	45375 (82.27)	62940 (86.08)	65845 (85.61)	71180 (86.31)
12	Cost incurred by retailer	1580 (2.86)	1680 (2.30)	1920 (2.50)	2090 (2.53)
13	Margin of retailer	8200 (14.87)	8500 (11.62)	9150 (11.90)	9200 (11.15)
14	Price paid by consumer	55155 (100.00)	73120 (100.00)	76915 (100.00)	82470 (100.00)
15	Marketing cost	4185 (7.59)	10910 (14.92)	11085 (14.41)	12270 (14.88)
16	Marketing margin	8200 (14.87)	17060 (23.33)	14770 (19.20)	17700 (21.46)
17	Price spread	9780 (17.73)	19190 (26.24)	22160 (28.81)	27290 (33.09)
18	Price Spread (%)	21.55	35.58	40.47	49.46
19	Marketing Efficiency	3.66	1.92	2.11	1.84

(Figure in parentheses is the per cent to the total)

In summary, the analysis reveals that as the number of intermediaries increases, the producer's share in the consumer price declines, while the price spread and marketing margins increase, reducing overall marketing efficiency. Channel-I proves most efficient and profitable for producers, whereas Channel-IV, with more intermediaries, yields higher costs and lower producer shares.

Conclusion

The marketing pattern of Pomegranate indicated a higher preference for Channel-III, denoting the Producer-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer pathway, compared to the other channels studied.

Per tonne marketing cost of channel - IV was highest as it consists of a greater number of intermediaries.

For Channel-IV highest price spread was seen, at Rs.27,290, followed by channel-III at Rs.22,160. Price spread increase was directly linked to the elongation of the market chain.

Marketing efficiency of Channel - I (3.66) was highest. Though the Channel - I have highest marketing efficiency net price received by farmers highest in case of Channel- II.

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