

The Cashew: A Global Perspective

CASHEW originated in Amazon region of Brazil and thereafter reached the other parts of the world for its attractive fruit. Cashew was introduced to India by the Portuguese in the beginning of 16th century. Initially, it was adopted as a plant for afforestation in coastal degraded lands. Realizing its importance, it has been commercialized as one of the important horticultural crops for production of delicious kernel. The cashew kernel is the main commercial product which contains 47% fat of which 87% are unsaturated fatty acids; 21% protein, 22% carbohydrates, while the remaining 10% constitutes other substances including calcium (Ca), sodium (Na), potassium (K), magnesium (Mg), phosphorus (P), iron (Fe), copper (Cu), zinc (Zn), chlorine (Cl₁), selenium (Si) and vitamins. Cashew nut shell liquid (CNSL) is another important industrial product obtained while processing of raw nut. Cashew apple is also nutritious and can be exploited in preparation of various products. The powder of cashew apple pomace obtained after extracting juice can be utilized for preparation of cookies. Pomace can be used in partial substitution of animal feed.

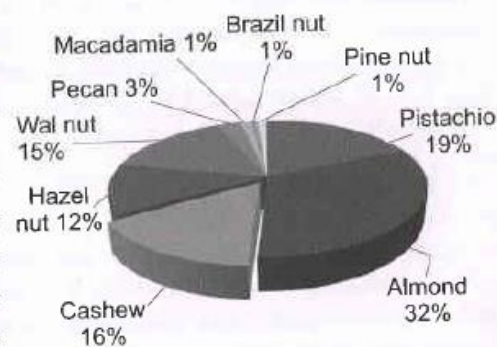


Fig. 2.1. Share of cashew kernel in global tree nut market during 2012.

Among major tree nuts viz. almond (*Prunus amygdalus*), Brazil nut (*Bertholletia excelsa*), cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*), hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*), macadamia nut (*Macadamia integrifolia*), pistachio nut (*Pistacia vera*), pine nut (*Pinus gerardiana*), pecan nut (*Carya illinoensis*) and walnut (*Juglans regia*) are traded in the world. Cashew stands at third position as far as quantity consumed and second position for its unit value next to walnut. Share of cashew kernels in global nut trade is around 16% (Fig. 2.1). Being a low input-intensive and climate-smart crop, cashew can play an important role in livelihood security of resource-poor farmers, entrepreneurs and local industries. Besides, the economic benefits, growing of cashew has a vital role in stabilizing fragile ecosystem. The demand for cashew kernel is increasing both in domestic and international markets. Therefore, it is important to develop proper strategy so as to fulfill the ever growing demand for cashew kernels.