

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF**  
**CASHEWNUT PROCESSING INDUSTRY**

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#### 3.1 Importance of the Crop:

Cashew is an important commercial crop. It ranks third amongst export-turning crops; India gets considerable foreign exchange by way of export of cashew kernell and CNSL (cashew nut shell liquid). In the year 1992-93 India exported 54,000 MT of cashew kernels and 4,000 MT of CNSL and both fetch an export earnings of Rs. 76,100 crores (Ref. Scheme Profile, Eighth Five Year Plan). It is an important agro-based industrial raw material which helps many factories involved in its processing. As a commercial crop it plays an important role in rural economy as its cultivation is mainly in waste (Warkas) land.

Cashew (Anacardium occidentale L.) belongs to the family of Anacardiaceae which includes many economically important tropical and sub-tropical trees and shrubs. In most tropical countries it is found growing in the coastal areas. However, commercial production is mainly confined to India, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and Brazil. Today the major cashew producing states in India are

- Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Maharashtra, Orissa and West Bengal.

The cultivated cashew is a low spreading ever-green tree of the tropics. It is presumed that cashew was originally introduced in India mainly for checking soil erosion. But gradually it gained commercial importance and now it is one of the ten top foreign exchange earners. In the earlier years of cashew production in India, the apple was considered valuable and it was only in the beginning of the twentieth century that the cashew kernel, the cashewnut of commerce, found favour among the consumers. Small quantities of cashew kernels were exported from India to the U.S.A. even before the First World War.

The price of cashew kernel has shot up steeply and adequate agro-technology is available to increase cashew production. Thus cashew cultivation and production have reached a 'take off' stage entering a new phase in India and these two aspects of cashew industry may catch up with processing and export pace in the near future.

### 3.2 History and Origin:

The French, Portuguese and Dutch Seaturers described cashew from Brazil in the sixteenth

- century and the first illustrative description of cashew was given by a French naturalist Thevet in 1558 A.D.. Cashew was introduced to the Malabar coast of India in the sixteenth century by the Spaniards, and probably served as a locus of dispersal to other centres in India and South East Asia (i.e., Costa, 1578).

"Acaju" is the name given to cashew by the native Tapi Indians of Brazil and the French name "Acajou" is the nearest equivalent of the original. The Portuguese dropped the latter 'A' and 'Acaju' became 'Caju' in Portuguese. The Kashmiri, Punjabi, Hindi, Marathi and Gujarathi lexicons in India also refer to the cashew as 'Caju'. In Kerala it is called 'Parangi Andi' meaning foreign or 'Portuguese hut'. It is also known as 'Kasu Andi', 'Kasu' meaning money and 'Andi' the hut. Thus, most of the names used in India are derived from the Portuguese 'Caju' for cashew.

#### **3.4 Profile of Cashewnut Industry:**

We identify cashew as a dry-fruit which is popular in India and many other countries. Cashew is mainly a horticultural crop in Western Coast of Ratnagiri to Kochin. Even though cashew

- is foreign breed, it has become indigenous. Cashewnuts are used in many dishes in India as well as continental countries. It is also used as dry fruit. Its main use is in sweets. It is popular in Northern India. Just like cashewnut, other products like cashew shell, cashewnut shell liquid and cashew apple are also useful. Cashew shells are used for getting CNSL. While cashew apple is used for making wine called 'Cashew Fenny', liquid of cashew apple is also used for preparing jam, juice and Aurvedic medicines.

Cashew is mainly a horticultural crop in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra. Cashewnut processing industry is concentrated in this district. There are 28 processing factories out of which 9 are in Vengurla Taluka.

Cashew apple is quite neglected in Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri Districts. While in Goa, it is used for making Fenny, a popular wine in Goa. Cashew apples are used for making juice, jam etc.. It is used to make a medicine particularly Ayurvedic medicine, for the last 5 years. Cashew apples in Sindhudurg district are purchased by Goa Fenny manufacturers. But sale price is negligible, 4 or 5 rupees per tin.

The same is true in case of cashew shell; even though it is useful for oil, most of cashew shells are used as fuel. Some people extract oil by country-methods which is useful for painting the wood material called the 'Chopdan' by the mariners of Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri districts.

Sindhudurg district is the origin of Cashew trade in India. In the early twenties of this century, Mr Dajisaheb Torane of Vengurla and Mr Mahadeo Bapu Prabhu-Zantye of Malvan started taking interest in this commodity and started cashew processing in Vengurla and Malvan respectively. In the first step they started sending the parcels of cashew to Bombay for sale. In the early stage, these parcels used to come in natural conditions, that is to say, with red skin. It was presumed that the red skin will enable the inside kernels to avoid deterioration for some time. As there was no air-tight packing, the kernels used to perish shortly.

In the year 1921 or 1922 Dr. Goheen, a well medical practitioner who was looking after the Vengurla Mission Hospital, a branch of the famous Miraj Mission Hospital, was presented with a parcel of cashew kernels by his friends in Vengurla and he took delight in the taste of cashews. He,

- therefore, procured some more parcels of peeled cashew kernels and despatched them to his friend in New York. Dr. Goheen was informed that the taste was very good and could find a market in the U.S.A.. In the year 1923 or 1924 Mr Dajisaheb Torney of Vengurla ventured to send his first consignment of cashew kernels to New York. Mr Rajaram Torney, son of the late Dajisaheb Torney, had been to New York and he was perhaps the first Indian to go to New York in connection with the cashew trade. Messrs Laxmidas Shamji and Messrs Nar's Malji were the leading merchants in Bombay and they used to send small parcels to North Indian markets, where cashew karnels were not known and consumption was very limited till about 1945-46. Afterwards Vithaldas Haribhai took interest in the sale of cashew kernels. Mr S.G. Nevrekar, who was in charge of cashew trade of Narsi Mulji, negotiated with Zantyes of Malvan to start foreign trade and joined them afterwards in the year 1928 or 1930.

Now General Foods Corporation started taking keen interest in this industry and encouraged the existing factorties to start the industry on a bigger scale.