

DETERMINENTS OF INFORMATION NEEDS OF THE BANANA GROWERS

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ABSTRACT

Banana is the major fruit crop of Anand district and therefore, present study was conducted in Anand district of Gujarat state. 15 villages of 3 taluka were selected purposively based on higher area under banana cultivation. 10 banana growers from each village were selected at random, thus making total sample size of the study was 150. The banana growers have expressed their needs for information about market management (1.207 MS), tissue culture based varieties of banana (1.076 MS) and plant protection measures (1.053 MS) were the basic information needs of the banana growers. Education, information sources, extension participation, size of land holding, land under banana cultivation, irrigated land, annual income, economic motivation, scientific orientation as well as market orientation were positively and significantly associated with the information needs of the banana growers.

INTRODUCTION

India is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables each in the world after china. Because of its varied agro-climatic conditions temperate, sub tropical and tropical, India can produce a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. India ranks first in the production of mango, banana, sapota, and citrus fruits in the world. The union government has given top priority to horticulture in the tenth five year plan. The aim is to increase a growth rate and generate employment. The union government has delinked fruits from APMC regulations to boost their marketing and reduce cost of procurement and is providing subsidies for setting up post harvest facilities cold chains and cold storages.

Banana being the important fruit crop plays a significant role in socio-economics across the globe. There is a growing appreciation for the improvement of the production and utilization of this fruit to provide nutritional and food security to millions. Therefore, investigation of information needs was considered vital for catalyzing the efforts of investigators, entrepreneurs and growers

to have effective interaction and dissemination of information.

METHODOLOGY

Keeping in view the importance of the information needs of banana growers, the study was conducted in Anand, Borsad and Anklav talukas of Anand district on the basis of higher area in banana cultivation. Then 15 banana growing villages comprising of five from each taluka were randomly selected on the basis of maximum area under banana cultivation. Ten banana growers from each of selected villages were chosen as respondents. Thus, 150 banana growers were selected for this study. Required information was collected with the help of pre-tested gujarati version interview schedule by survey method.

The information needs of the banana growers were assessed for the areas such as, weather, soil & its preparation, variety, tissue culture, transplanting techniques, fertiliser management, irrigation management, inter culturing & inter crops, weed management, plant protection, harvesting &

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post harvest technology, market management and supportive facts of the banana cultivation. Thus, information needs of the banana growers about various aspects of banana cultivation were ascertained. The extent of information needs of banana growers was availed on three-point continuum ranging from most needed, needed and not needed. These three categories were attributed with 2 score, 1 score and 0 score respectively. The information needs were

computed for each of the major areas considering the total score for information gained by the respondents. On the basis of the mean score, the rank to the major areas of information needs were assigned to know relative importance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1 Distribution of the respondents according to their information needs

Table 1 : Distribution of the respondents according to their information needs

n = 150

Sr. No.	Areas of Information	Mean Score (MS)	Rank
1	Weather	0.577	XIII
2	Soil and soil preparation	0.803	VIII
3	Variety	1.048	IV
4	Tissue culture	1.076	II
5	Transplanting techniques	0.655	XII
6	Fertilizer management	0.875	VII
7	Irrigation management	0.735	X
8	Inter culturing	0.753	IX
9	Weed management	0.707	XI
10	Plant protection	1.053	III
11	Harvesting & post harvesting technology	0.930	VI
12	Market management	1.207	I
13	Supportive facts	0.999	V

The data presented in table-1 reveals that information needs on market management ranked first with mean score 1.207, followed by tissue culture (1.076), plant protection (1.053), variety (1.048), supportive facts (0.999), harvesting & post harvesting technology (0.930), fertilizer management (0.875), soil and soil preparation (0.803), inter culturing (0.753), water management (0.735), weed management (0.707), transplanting techniques (0.655) and weather (0.577). These results are in the line with the findings of Patel and Patel(2004).

Thus, it can be concluded that information related to market management ranked top. It might be because of the fact that banana growing is most expensive and banana fruit is highly perishable, market management becomes

a crucial factor to get higher net profit. They are also conscious about tissue culture as well as plant protection measures. This may be due to tissue culture plants of banana are free from insects, pests, nematodes, diseases etc. and generally more homogenous resulted into uniform and high quality and quantity produce. The data also shows that the respondents have become more wakeful about variety. The reason might be that the farmers are ready to sow improved variety but they perceive chances of being cheated in purchasing suitable varieties and suckers.

2 Relationship between selected characteristics of respondents and their information needs about banana

Table 2 : Relationship between selected independent variables of banana growers and their information needs

Sr. No.	Independent variables	Correlation Co-efficient ('r' value)
1	Age	-0.01300
2	Education	0.17640 *
3	Occupation	0.02459
4	Size of family	0.03913
5	Social participation	-0.01795
6	Use of information sources	0.24988 *
7	Training received	-0.00477
8	Extension participation	0.21307 *
9	Size of land holding	0.18331 *
10	Land under banana cultivation	0.17444 *
11	Irrigated land	0.17810*
12	Annual income	0.17503 *
13	Economic motivation	0.23118 *
14	Scientific orientation	0.26914 *
15	Market orientation	0.24629 *
16	Cosmo politeness	0.04292

* Significant at 0.05 percent level of probability

Critical value (2 tail, 0.05) = 0.16030

The data shown in Table 2 indicate that education, information sources, extension participation, size of land holding, land under banana cultivation, irrigated land, annual income, economic motivation, scientific orientation as well as market orientation were positively and significantly associated with the information needs of the banana growers. It means that higher level of education, information sources and extension participation of the banana growers would be responsible for creating interest for the latest technology of the banana crop. It can be also said that size of land holding, land under banana cultivation, irrigated land, economic motivation, market orientation and scientific orientation of the banana growers motivate them for adopting latest technology of banana crops for getting higher profit.

The data also reveal that information needs of the banana growers had negative and non-significant correlation with their age. This might be due to fact that majority of the respondents (54.00 percent) were from the middle age group. Thus,

they may gain information from any source and be knowledgeable regarding latest technology of banana cultivation.

There was no significant relationship between the age, occupation, size of family, social participation, training received and cosmopoliteness of the respondents with the information needs.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above discussion, it could be concluded that market management, tissue culture based varieties of banana and plant protection measures were the basic information needs of the banana growers. Education, use of information sources, extension participation, size of land holding, land under banana cultivation, irrigated land, annual income, economic motivation, scientific orientation and market orientation of banana growers play significant role in determination of their information needs pertaining to different aspect of composite banana cultivation technology.