



RESEARCH ARTICLE

AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION NEEDS OF MANGO GROWERS

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Krishnagiri District of Tamilnadu state in India which is well known for the production and processing of the mango. Various agricultural information needs of the farmers in processing and producing value added products in mango are analysed and studied. A well structured and pre-tested interview schedule was used to collect data from 300 randomly selected mango growers. The respondents wanted information in the descending order on the aspects like selection of mango varieties, / hybrids, plant protection measures, pruning in crop, manures and fertilizer management, post harvest technology, preparation main field, planting techniques, pretreatment of seedling, weed management, method of propagation, irrigation management, intercropping, recommended growth regulators to prevent flower and fruit drop, harvesting techniques and value addition in mango.

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INTRODUCTION

Mangoes are tropical fruits that are preferred in the fruit kingdom. These fruits are seasonal and are cultivated in the tropics to a very large extent. There are about six hundred varieties of mangoes, but only very few varieties are cultivated for their taste aroma and natural properties. Mango (*Mangifera indica* L) called the 'king of fruits' are largely consumed locally as well by people of the world in very large volumes, (Alagesan, 1989; Mathaiya, 1997; Thirumal, 1998) In Krishnagiri district in the state of Tamil Nadu, South India there are about 385 mango fruit processing units. Eighty percent of these units fall under the category of small scale industries that have an average production capacity of 5.5 tons per day of mango pulp. Krishnagiri district in the Tamil nadu state is the prominent region which is involved in the mango cultivation and fruit processing activity. The area under mango cultivation in Krishnagiri area is about thirty thousand hectares with a total production of three lakh tons per annum. About six thousand tons of mango fruit, mostly Alphonso and Totapuri are allotted for mango pulp processing. Around ninety percent of the processed pulp is exported and the balance goes to meet the domestic market. India exported about 1, 90, 100 metric tons mango pulp in the year 2010-2011. The mango farmers were in need of agricultural informations which would enable them to increase the production and productivity and to get maximum returns from mango farming. In this study an attempt was made to analyse the agricultural information needs of the mango farmers.

METHODOLOGY

The present investigation was carried out in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu State in India. Three hundred respondents were identified from twenty villages of five selected Taluks. The data were collected using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The results obtained were tabulated and appropriate inferences were drawn. Information needs can be defined as the gap between information needed and information available in relation to mango cultivation and value addition technologies in mango. Information need was assessed on a three point continuum with scores of 3, 2, and 1 respectively for items 'most needed', 'needed' and 'not needed'. Information Need Index (INI) was calculated for each of the specific technology, by dividing the total score obtained by the respondents by the total number of respondents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As discussed under methodology, the mean score for each of the major subject matter areas was calculated and then the major subject matter areas were ranked based on the mean score value, the results of information needs of mango growers on the major subject matters in crop cultivation and value addition are presented in Table 1. It is revealed from Table 1 that crop improvement technology through 'selection of varieties/ hybrids' (MS 2.74) 'pest and disease management' (MS 2.70) and 'pruning in crops' (MS 2.63), were perceived as areas where growers wanted more information. Manures and fertilizer management' (MS 2.20), 'post harvest technology' (MS 2.17), 'preparation of main field' (MS 2.14), 'planting techniques' (MS 2.12), 'pretreatment of seedlings' (MS 1.73), 'weed management' (MS 1.43) 'method of propagation'

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Table 1. Information needs for mango growers in major subject matter areas

S. No.	Major subject matter areas	Mean score	Rank
1.	Selection of varieties / hybrids	2.74	I
2.	Pests and diseases management	2.70	II
3.	Pruning in crop	2.63	III
4.	Manures and fertilizer management	2.20	IV
5.	Post harvest technology	2.17	V
6.	Preparation of main field	2.14	VI
7.	Planting techniques	2.12	VII
8.	Pretreatment of seedlings	1.73	VIII
9.	Weed management	1.43	IX
10.	Methods of propagation	1.38	X
11.	Irrigation management	1.33	XI
12.	Inter-cropping	1.23	XII
13.	Recommended growth regulators to prevent flower and fruit drop	1.17	XIII
14.	Harvesting techniques	1.13	XIV
15.	Value addition in mango	1.05	XV

(MS 1.38), 'irrigation management' (MS 1.33), 'inter-cropping' (MS 1.23), 'recommended growth regulators' (MS 1.17), 'harvesting' (MS 1.13) and 'value addition' (MS 1.05) were perceived in the descending order of importance for information needs. Mango growers wanted information on 'selection of varieties' because an ideal variety can fetch them more yield and ultimately more profit. Farmers can also select varieties suited for pulp marking. Hence they wanted more information about various mango varieties and hybrids. Mango crop was affected various pests and diseases as found by the researcher at the time of investigation. The mango growers had to control the pests and disease but they had lesser knowledge on pest and disease management. Hence they had perceived maximum information needs for plant protection measures. The properly pruned crop would yield better. This fact is known to mango growers. Hence they preferred to have more information about the pruning of the mango tree, A well manured and properly fertilized mango tree yields better. Hence there was more need for the information on quantity and type of manures and fertilizers to be applied for mango tree. 'Post harvest technology' plays a significant role in storing, processing and marketing of the harvested produce. Hence mango growers expressed need for information about the 'post harvest technology'. Mango growers expressed their desire to have information, on the techniques of 'preparing main field', planting techniques, and 'pretreatment of seedlings' as these also contribute significantly for the increased yield in mango. Hence they wanted information on these aspects also.

Thakur *et al.* (1991) has revealed that mango growers should be provided sufficient agricultural informations to enable them to improve the production. The mango growers wanted least information on weed management, method of propagation, 'irrigation management', 'inter-cropping', 'growth regulators', and 'harvesting techniques' because mango growers are fairly familiar on all these techniques. Value addition in mango was the area where the growers wanted least information. Mango growers are exclusively confined mango farming and they do not engage themselves in the processing and in value addition.

Conclusion

From the results it is understood the mango growers needed more information on 'selection mango varieties/ hybrids', followed by plant protection measures 'pests and disease management', 'pruning in crop', 'manures and fertilizer management', 'post harvest technology', 'preparation of main field', 'planting techniques', 'pretreatment of seedlings' and 'weed management'. The growers wanted less informations on 'methods of propagation', 'irrigation management', 'inter-cropping', 'recommended growth regulators' to prevent flower and fruit drop, 'harvesting techniques' and 'value addition' in mango. Hence, the government officials, policy makers, planners, and Agricultural Extension workers, should focus their efforts for providing sufficient agricultural information, to enable the mango farmers gain the needed agricultural information to increase their farm income.

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