

Constraint analysis and needed strategies for saffron growers of Kashmir Valley

AJAZ AHMAD SHAH AND TAHIR HUSSAN WANI

Accepted : February, 2009

See end of the article for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to:

AJAZ AHMAD SHAH
Department of Agriculture
Extension, Amar Singh
College, Lakhaoti,
BULANDSHAHR (U.P.)
INDIA

ABSTRACT

The present study was made in block Pampore of district Pulwama, Kashmir during 2006-2007; to investigate the constraints facing in cultivation were studied in detail. It was observed that lack of irrigation scheduling technology was the major problem articulated by majority of the growers as a technological problem followed by lack of technical guidance from extension problems. As per the marketing constraints the non-availability of clean and competent marketing infrastructure was considered the main problem of growers and lack of insurance facilities to cover risk was reported as economic problem. Among communication problems and physical problems lack of literature regarding improved cultivation and small size of land were reported as major problems.

Key words : Saffron, Constraints, Strategies, Kashmir

Saffron (*Crocus sativus* L.) is one of the most important foreign exchange earners among the spices of India, grown entirely in the state of Jammu and Kashmir; about 49 per cent of its total produce is exported outside the country. The saffron is the oldest commodities of Jammu and Kashmir agriculture spread over many villages and is a good source of earning foreign exchange for the country as a whole. However, due to some practical constraints studied like technological, extension, marketing, economic, communicational and physical constraints are quite obviously the most critical factors for the development of the saffron cultivation. This is of great concern to agricultural scientists, planners and administrators. Therefore, they should join their hands to streamline the production procedures and development strategies for saffron crop. Then it can save our old cultural heritage of growing such costliest spice, which has a great social, cultural and economic stability and acceptability in Kashmir otherwise it will perish from saffron fields of Kashmir, if special attention will not be paid towards the constraints coming into its growing path. As, it is evident from the statistical data that during last decade 1/3rd of the saffron cropped area has vanished from the saffron growing map of Kashmir which is an alarming situation for the sustainability of the saffron crop. An attempt was made, to identify the constraints faced by growers and look for some precious suggestions for further improvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present investigation was undertaken in block Pampore of Pulwama district in Kashmir. Selection of block was done considering the maximum area and

production of saffron among all the blocks of the district. Further, six villages were selected which were having highest area under saffron cultivation for the study purpose. From each village 20 respondents were selected thus, the total sample consisted of 120 respondents. The data were collected through a well structured interview schedule by applying a personal interview technique and statistical tests were applied for analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The saffron growers felt the technical problems more. Lack of irrigation scheduling technology (2.28) was the major problem articulated by majority of the growers followed by poor plant protection technology (2.25), lack of technology for growing quality corms (2.18) and lack of utilizing improved tools and implements (1.96) existing in Table 1.

Saffron is a rain fed crop and it requires water during the month of August and September. Whenever, a fine spray of precipitation comes in these months the saffron records high yields. This would be the reason for majority of farmers felt the irrigation as a major problem. These findings are corroborated with the findings of Singh *et al.* (1997).

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that lack of technical guidance (2.30) was reported as major extension problem. Majority of the respondents expressed that they did not come across any extension worker from the agriculture department. Some of the saffron growers expressed they had few occasions to meet the extension worker of the State Agricultural University (SKUAST-K). These findings are in conformity with the findings of Aga and Shah (2006).