

Short Communication

Knowledge level and training needs of fig growers in Pune District

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Horticulture is an effective instrument for generating greater income per unit area, additional employment, provision of nutritive and proteinous diet, conservation of soil, environment and prevention of shifting cultivation. Horticulture also plays a vital role in export and import substitution. Horticulture crops can be grown in the areas where other crops are not suitable to grown in effectively.

Fig is one of the oldest Horticultural fruit crop known to the mankind. The edible fig (*Ficus Carica*) is small deciduous tree, which has been under cultivation since antiquity in the Western Mediterranean region. It was first brought to cultivation in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula by least 300 B.C.

Fig is consumed fresh or dried, preserved or candied and canned fresh fruits are very delicious, wholesome and nutritious. From nutritional point of view, fig fruits are much valued and contain high sugar and low acid. The mineral content is 2-4 times more than that of other fruits.

The total area under fig cultivation in Maharashtra is 1080 ha. Out of which 483.35 ha. (44.75 per cent) is alone in Pune district. However, of the total area under fig in the district about 50 per cent area is in Purandhar Tahsil.

The average yield of fig fruits and the area under cultivation is comparatively less. This is because of lack of knowledge about improved and recommended package of practices and post harvest technology in the fig farming business. If the present knowledge of the farmers is identify and steps are taken to improve their knowledge and provision of infrastructure marketing facilities through the process of training. Then only it is possible to increase in area and production of the fig.

In view of this, the present investigation entitled "Knowledge Level and Training Needs of Fig Growers in Pune district" was undertaken with the following specific objectives.

1. To study the knowledge of fig growers about fig cultivation and;
2. To ascertain and relationship between on training needs of fig growers and their personal and socio-economic characteristics.

The present study was carried out in Purandhar and Bhor Tahsils of Pune district during the year January, 2005 because fig is grown extensively in these tehils.

The list of fig growing villages was obtained from the Panchayat Samiti of Purandhar and Bhor. Out of 288 villages, 15 villages from Purandhar (out of 96 villages) and 5 villages from Bhor (out of 185 villages) tahsils were selected on random selection basis. In all 20 villages were

selected for the study purpose.

The list of fig growing farmers from the selected 20 villages was prepared. Out of these fig growers 10 fig growers from each village were selected on random basis. Hence, in all two tahsils, 20 villages and 200 fig. Growers were selected for the present study purposes. The data were collected by conducting the personal interview of the respondent with the help of pre-tested interview schedule specially designed for the study purpose. The information collected through interview was transferred from the interview schedule in to the primary tables and then to the secondary tables. Whenever, necessary, the information of qualitative nature was converted in to quantitative form. In this way, the collected information was analysed and tabulated. The results are presented under following heads.

Knowledge level of fig growers about fig cultivation :

The data in respect of knowledge level of the fig growers regarding cultivation practices of fig technology was collected and analysed. The results are presented in Table-1.

The table-1 revealed that a majority of the fig growers (85.50 per cent) had no knowledge about notching. As regard the grading and processing 53.00 per cent and 75.50 per cent of them had no knowledge. Most of the fig growers had average knowledge about preparation of land and selection of soil (56.00 per cent) for the plantation of fig, selection of varieties (81.50 per cent), reproduction method (65.00 per cent), material used for reproduction (65.00 per cent), method of planting (65.50 per cent), distance of planting (82.50 per cent), size of pit (80.00 per cent), filling of pit (83.00 per cent), application of fertilizers (51.0 per cent), bahar treatment (55.00 per cent), disease (67.50 per cent), pest (66.00 per cent) and packaging (55.00 per cent). Also some farmers had full knowledge about the time of transplanting (69.00 per cent), weeding (74.00 per cent), earthing-up (69.50 per cent) and harvesting (59.00 per cent).

Further, the information pertaining to how far and at what extent the respondents possess the knowledge about fig cultivation technology was scored and classified. The results are presented in table 2. The table 2 indicate that, a majority of the fig growers had medium level of knowledge (67.50 per cent). The 17.50 per cent of the fig growers had high level of knowledge and only 15.00 per cent of the fig growers had low level of knowledge. It mans that a majority of the respondents belonged to sampled area had better knowledge about fig cultivation technology.

Relationship between training needs of fig growers and their personal and socio-economic characteristics :

To understand the relationship between training needs

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