

**RESEARCH ARTICLE :**

Constraints faced by banana growers in Kerala

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18.03.2020;

Revised :

10.04.2020;

Accepted :

18.04.2020

SUMMARY : The present study was conducted in Palakkad district of Kerala state with an objective to study the constraints faced by banana growers in adoption of banana production technology and obtained their suggestions to overcome these constraints. The data were collected with the help of interview schedule. Keeping the above in view, a research study was designed to study the constraints faced by banana growers in Palakkad district of Kerala. An ex-post facto research design was followed to conduct the study with a total of 120 banana growers selected from three blocks named Attapady, Mannarkkad and Sreekrishnapuram. The data was collected through pre-tested interview schedule, which was subjected for individual responding and interpreted. Bio physical constraints, technological constraints, socio personal constraints, economic constraints, administrative constraints and marketing constraints faced by the banana growers were found and presented in order of their importance.

How to cite this article : Murugan, Reshma J., Vyshali, K. and Rao, B. Mukunda (2020). Constraints faced by banana growers in Kerala. *Agric. Update*, 15(1 and 2): 79-82; DOI : 10.15740/HAS/AU/15.1and2/79-82. Copyright@ 2020: Hind Agri-Horticultural Society.

KEY WORDS :

Constraints,

Banana growers

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difference is due to the constraints faced by the farmers in the cultivation of banana. Hence, it is essential to overcome the constraints to improve the productivity. Keeping the above in view, a research study was designed to study the constraints faced by banana growers in Palakkad district of Kerala.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The study was conducted during 2017 in Palakkad district of Kerala purposively as Palakkad has highest number of banana growers by adopting Ex-post-facto research design. The present study has been taken up in three blocks namely Attapady, Mannarkkad and Sreekrishnapuram covering twelve villages of Palakkad district. A sample of 120 banana growers were selected based on proportionate random sampling method. The respondents were interviewed individually with the help of a well structured interview schedule to assess the constraints that limited the adoption of cultivation technologies of banana growers. Finally, the results were analysed and interpreted.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Constraint analysis is becoming one of the important components of research. Without analysing the constraints, it is impossible to diffuse the needed technologies among the farming community. The constraints faced by the banana growers are given in Table 1.

Bio-physical constraints:

The important constraints reported by the banana growers in order of their importance were problematic soils, wild boars, natural calamities, inadequate drainage facilities, poor quality of irrigation water and poor water retention capacity of soil.

Problematic soils are difficult to rectify as soil testing centers are lacking in many areas. Attack of wild boars are reducing the yields heavily. Natural calamities like heavy wind and flood also causes crop losses. Hence, it is necessary to provide facilities for soil testing through mobile soil testing laboratories and also training on control measures against wild boars. Steps should also be taken for the insurance facilities in reach of farmers.

Technological constraints:

Incidence of insect / pest attack like banana weevil,

susceptibility of plant to diseases like panama wilt, non-availability of suitable high yielding variety and failure in fruit formations due to unfavourable weather conditions were the constraints faced by the respondents.

Due to the incidence of pests and diseases the yield get reduced. Hence, care should be taken by the concerned to guide the farmers on plant protection and supply the effective plant protection chemicals. Improved varieties should be made available to the farmers by the state government.

Socio personal constraints:

Constraints like lack of proper knowledge about banana production technologies, inadequate contact with extension workers and poor economic conditions of farmers were faced by the respondents.

To serve the farming community, the extension staff should have frequent contact with the farmers. The extension personnel have to maintain regular contacts on a scheduled time known to the farmers and have to give suggestions and classify the farmers doubts, which motivate the farmers to practice new technologies.

Economic constraints:

The important constraints reported by the respondents in order of their importance were low profit due to high cost of cultivation, high labour cost, lack of premium price for organic produce, high cost of plant protection chemicals and high cost of manure and fertilizers. Steps should be taken by the government to supply fertilizers on subsidy at an affordable cost to the farmers. Separate market outlets should be setup for the organic produce by the state government and export should be promoted.

Administrative constraints:

Inadequate training facilities, insufficient technical staff, inadequate supply of agricultural inputs from co-operatives, improper crop insurance schemes, non-availability of adequate credit, non-availability of fertilizers and plant protection chemicals in time were the constraints faced by the banana growers. Training is necessary to the farmers for adoption of an innovation properly. Hence, there is a need for providing training to the farmers on large scale. At the same time, sufficient technical staff is needed to guide the farmers at field level. Steps should be taken by government for providing sufficient, timely and easily available credit to needed

banana growers through banks. Non-availability of plant protection chemicals in time and non-availability of fertilizers in time were the other identified constraints. Steps should be taken by the government for providing sufficient, timely and easily available plant protection chemicals and fertilizers to the needed banana growers through co-operative societies. Since, availability of inputs is a critical factor for adoption, ensured input supply is essential along with extension thrust.

Marketing constraints:

Constraints like lack of remunerative price, insufficient collection centres at local levels, inadequate knowledge about market intelligence and inadequate transport facilities were faced by the banana growers. VFPCs should be made active and government should take initiatives for this in the state. Government should provide regulated markets and reasonable price for produce to relieve the farmers from the clutches of

Table 1 : Constraints faced by the banana growers in banana cultivation			(n=120)
Constraints	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Bio physical constraints			
Problematic soils	85	70.83	I
Poor water retention capacity of soil	50	41.67	VI
Poor quality of irrigation water	63	52.5	V
Inadequate drainage facilities	68	56.67	IV
Natural calamities	76	63.33	III
Wild boars	80	66.67	II
Technological constraints			
Susceptibility of plant to disease like panama wilt	95	79.17	II
Incidence of insect / pest attack like banana weevil	98	81.67	I
Non-availability of suitable high yielding variety	78	65.00	III
Unfavourable weather conditions during fruit formation	66	55.00	V
Socio personal			
Lack of proper knowledge about banana production technology	86	71.67	I
Inadequate contact with extension workers	80	66.67	II
Poor economic conditions of the farmer	77	64.17	III
Economic			
Lack of premium price for organic produce	78	65.00	III
Low profit due to high cost of cultivation	110	91.67	I
High labour cost	80	66.67	II
High cost of plant protection chemicals	75	62.50	IV
High cost of manure and fertilizers	72	60.00	V
Administrative constraints			
Inadequate supply of agricultural inputs from co-operative societies	79	65.83	III
Inadequate training facilities	95	79.17	I
Insufficient technical staff	88	73.33	II
Non-availability of adequate credit	68	56.67	V
Non-availability of fertilizers and plant protection chemicals in time	61	50.83	VI
Improper crop insurance schemes	76	63.33	IV
Marketing constraints			
Insufficient collection centres at local levels	73.33	88	II
Lack of remunerative price	81.67	98	I
Inadequate knowledge about market intelligence	62.5	75	III
Inadequate transport facilities	50.00	60	IV

intermediaries. Establishment of nearby collection centers in villages will help the farmers to reduce transportation charges and also better storage. At the same time, the government has to provide incentives for export marketing to get good price for the produce. Similar work related to the present investigation was also carried out by Mahajan (2000); Mote and Wadnerkar (2009); Naik and Deshmukh (2016); Varma (2009) and Waman and Wagh (2009).

Conclusion:

Majority of the banana growers expressed constraints under bio physical constraints like problematic soils, wild boars, natural calamities, inadequate drainage facilities, poor quality of irrigation water and poor water retention capacity of soil. Incidence of insects / pests attack like banana weevil, susceptibility of plant to diseases like panama wilt, non-availability of suitable high yielding variety and unfavourable weather conditions during fruit formation were the constraints faced by the growers as technological constraints. Constraints like lack of proper knowledge about banana production technologies, inadequate contact with extension workers and poor economic conditions of the banana growers were faced by the respondents under socio personal constraints. The important constraints under economic constraints given by the respondents in the order of their importance were low profit due to high cost of cultivation, high labour cost, lack of premium price for organic produce, high cost of plant protection chemicals and high cost of manure and fertilizers. Inadequate training facilities, insufficient technical staff, inadequate supply of agricultural inputs from co-operative societies, improper crop insurance schemes, non- availability of adequate credit, non- availability of fertilizers and plant protection chemicals in time were the administrative constraints faced by banana growers. Constraints like

lack of remunerative price, insufficient collection centres at local levels, inadequate knowledge about market intelligence and inadequate transport facilities were marketing constraints faced by the banana growers. Hence, authorities should concentrate on resolving these problems.

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