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Short Communication

Socio-personal and socio-economic characteristics of the fig growers and information sources used by them in fig cultivation technology

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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 area where other crops are not suitable to grow it 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 personal, social, economic and psychological cahracteristics of the fig growers.
2. To study the sources of information used by the fig growers and;
3. To obtain the suggestions made by the respondent to overcome the problem.

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 tahsils.

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 villages 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 respondents 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.

Personal, social, economic and psychological characteristics of the fig growers :

The information pertaining to the personal, social, economic and psychological variables were collected and analysed. The results are presented in Table 1. It is revealed that a majority of the fig growers (58.50 per cent) were from middle age group and having education upto the 10th standard (33.50 per cent), belonging to the medium size of families (47.50 per cent), having medium type of land holding (73.50 per cent) with medium level of the socio-economic status (49.00 per cent). Most of them having the medium level of annual income (64.50 per cent) with medium experience (47.00 per cent) in fig farming. They used lease amount of sources of information. The only sources of information used by most of the fig growers were television (63.0 per cent) as an entertainment, friends (58.00 per cent) and neighbours (54.50 per cent). Very few of them had contacts with villages extension workers (23.00 per cent) for information. Most of the fig growers having medium level of knowledge (67.50 per cent).

Suggestions made by the fig growers regarding fig cultivation :

The data in respect of suggestions made by the fig growers regarding fig cultivation were collected and analysed. The results are presented in table 2. The data indicates that, almost all the (100.00 per cent) fig growers suggested that they should be made available the availability of efficient and effective marketing system over the present one on the one hand and provision of credit supply at lower interest rate for them may be managed on the other hand.

About 75 per cent of the fig growers suggested that,

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Table 1 : Distribution of fig growers by their level of knowledge in fig cultivation.

S.No.	Particulars of characteristics	Number of respondents	Percentage to the total
1	Age in years :		
	i. Young	46	23.00
	ii. Middle	117	58.50
	iii. Old	37	18.50
	Total	200	100.00
2.	Educational level :		
	i. Illiterate	34	17.00
	ii. Upto 4th standard	35	17.50
	iii. 5th to 7th standard	18	9.00
	iv. 8 to 10th standard	67	33.50
	v. Jr. college & above	46	23.00
	Total	200	100.00
3.	Size of family :		
	i. Small	10	5.20
	ii. Medium	149	74.50
	iii. Large	41	20.50
	Total	200	100.00
4.	Size of land holding :		
	i. Small	10	5.00
	ii. Medium	147	73.50
	iii. Large	43	21.50
	Total	200	100.00
5.	Socio-economic status :		
	i. Low	49	24.50
	ii. Medium	98	49.00
	iii. High	53	26.50
	Total	200	100.00
6.	Annual income :		
	i. Low	31	15.50
	ii. Medium	129	64.50
	iii. High	40	20.00
	Total	200	100.00
7.	Experience in fig cultivation:		
	i. Low	10	5.00
	ii. Medium	134	67.00
	iii. High	56	28.00
	Total	200	100.00
8.	Sources of information :		
	i. Less	19	9.50
	ii. Medium	141	70.50
	iii. High	40	20.00
	Total	200	100.00
9.	Level of knowledge :		
	i. Low	30	15.00
	ii. Medium	135	67.50
	iii. High	35	17.50
	Total	200	100.00

they want information to protect the fig trees from rust, 56.50 per cent requires guidance in regard of water management during drought period, 85.50 per cent required information regarding orchard management during drought period and 96.00 per cent required information regarding low cost technology for processing. Respondents also expressed that (89.00 per cent) they should be informed about the market rates in time at least during harvest period while 76.50 per cent demanded that cold storage facility should be provided by the government and at minimum distance from their own locality. They further (91.00 per cent) quoted that, all the required critical inputs material should be made

available to them in time with adequate quantity by the concern agency.

regarding control of fig rust and guidance about orchard management during the drought period.

Table 2 : Suggestions made by the fig growers about improvement in fig production technology.

S. No.	Particulars of suggestions	Respondents fig growers (N = 200)	
		No. of respondents	Percentage to the total
1.	Information regarding plant protection measure against fig rust may be given in time	150	75.00
2.	Guidance for irrigation management during drought situation may be given.	113	56.50
3.	Orchard management training during drought period may be given to the fig growers.	161	80.50
4.	There is need for generating low cost technology for the processing of fig fruits.	192	96.00
5.	Provision may be made regarding how to increase the longetivity of the ripened fruits	172	86.00
6.	Subsidy on the drip and sprinklers irrigation appliances may be increased	128	64.00
7.	Efficient and effective marketing system may be effected over the presence one.	200	100.00
8.	Information may be provided about the market prices of figs during harvest period by the market committee	178	89.00
9.	Cold storage facilities should be provided by the Government at lower rate or on co-operative basis at nearest distance.	153	76.50
10.	Sufficient and timely credit facilities should be made available by the financial agencies with lower interest rate to the produces	200	100.00
11.	All the required critical inputs should be provided in time with adequate quantity to the farmers by the respective agency.	182	91.00

CONCLUSION

This study provided as a profile of fig growers. They were from the middle age group and most of them having education upto 10th standard. Most of them belongs to medium size of families having medium level of socio-economic status. Most of them having medium size of land holding and medium level of experience in fig. Cultivation. Most of them having medium level of knowledge. But low knowledge in respect of the components of post harvest technology was observed. Most of the cultivation practices were carried out in traditional manner. They use least formal sources of information and mostly neighbours and friends are the major sources of their information.

All the respondents suggested that they wants more information regarding effective and efficient marketing system over the present one and timely credit supply. They also given suggestions regarding supply of information pertaining to prices during harvesting period, subsidy in regards of drip, generation of low cost technology for processing of figs, cold storage facilities at nearby to their locality, information

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