

Training Needs of Banana Growers in Erode District of Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Banana is also the fourth most important commodity at global level next to rice, wheat and dairy products. It is the earliest fruit known to mankind and has always been an important part of the diet of millions all over the world. It could be considered as 'Poor man's apple' and it is the cheapest among all other fruits in the country. Most of the banana growers are still practicing primitive technologies in crop cultivation. This is primarily due to the reason that there is considerable gap between the technology developed on the research farms and its implementation in the banana field. The transfer of technology is a function of many development factors, training being an important one. Hence, a study was undertaken to identify the training needs of banana growers in crop cultivation. The study was taken up in Erode District of Tamil Nadu State with a sample size of one hundred and twenty growers selected based on random sampling procedure. This study revealed that majority of the respondents expressed high level of training needs for nine major subject matter areas i.e., 'Plant protection measures', 'sucker treatment', 'bio-fertilizer application', 'marketing', 'plant growth regulators', 'nutrient management', 'micro-nutrient application', 'irrigation management' and 'weed management'.

Key words: Training needs, Banana cultivation, Banana growers

Banana (*Musa paradisiaca*) is one of the important fruit crops of tropical countries like India, China, Brazil, Philippines etc., belongs to Musaceae family and Musa genus of the order Zingiberales. The word banana itself comes from the Arabic word "banan" which means "finger" and the genus contains numerous species. Banana is native to tropical South and South East Asia. It is the second most important fruit crop in India next to mango [1]. Banana leaves are also used to serve food in India and other Asian countries. In India, banana is known for its antiquity and is interwoven with Indian heritage and culture. The different agro climate and physiographical condition of the India is favoring for the growth of Banana [2]. In banana production India has first rank in the world [3]. It is called as 'Apple of paradise'. It is widely used for making chips, jams and powders [4]. Banana is considered as the most important energy providers' food and is a good source of mineral, salts and vitamins. It produced a more balanced diet than many fruits [5].

Considering the year-round availability of fruits, unlike the seasonal availability of other tree fruits, it has become an inevitable necessity in any household in India, for all functions. It is widely grown in India and has great socio-economic significance. It is a dessert fruit for millions and is also used as staple food. Pulp of the ripe fruit is rich in sugar and easy to

digest. It is used in the dietetic management of coeliac disease in children and for sodium restriction in some patients [6]. Because of its multifaceted uses it is referred to as 'Kalpatharu'. Banana is an important fruit, representing about 42.00 per cent of the world trade in fruits. The global area and production of banana is 4.80 million hectares and 99.99 million tonnes respectively.

In India, it is the second most important fruit crop both in area and production, accounting nearly 29 per cent of total world production and occupies 20 per cent area (7.76 lakh hectares) among the total area under fruit crops in India with a production of 25.51 million tonnes. Banana is commercially cultivated in the states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh.

Banana is one among the auspicious fruit crops grown in Tamil Nadu. Banana has great socio - economic and religious significance [7]. The area under banana cultivation in Tamil Nadu is 0.94 lakh hectares with a production of 3.302 lakh tonnes [8]. Banana is one of the priority crops of Erode district farmers. The area and production of Banana in Erode district accounts to 4,83,888 metric tonnes from 15,000 hectares.

Human resource development is largely associated with "training" as one of its main components in carrying out the

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mission of achieving its goal of “development”. Training is undeniably a dynamic and powerful tool to impart desired set of knowledge, skill or attitude into a person or a group of people at any level [9]. At present, recommended technologies in banana cultivation are not utilized fully by farmers due to some constraints. Training of farmers is necessary in banana field. Most of the banana growers are still practicing primitive technologies in cultivation. This is primarily due to the reason that there is considerable gap between the technology developed on the research farms and its implementation in the banana field. The transfer of technology is a function of many development factors, training being an important one. In order to make any training more meaningful and effective, training needs of the farmers have to be established prior to any training programme in banana cultivation, so that the major subject matter areas of training could be determined on the basis of the needs or expectations of the farmers for effective banana cultivation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in TN. Palayam block of Erode district. Proportionate random sampling procedure was applied to select 120 banana growers from six selected villages namely Perumugai, Vaniputhur, Kanakampalayam, Punjaithuraiyampalayam, Kondayampalayam and

Thandapallikiramam. Training need has been operationalized as the required level of training by the respondents in the selected major subject matter areas of banana cultivation. Eighteen major subject matter areas were selected for studying the training needs. The data were collected through personal interview using a well-structured, pre-tested interview schedule. The collected data were properly analyzed using statistical procedures and the results are tabulated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Training needs of banana growers

The results on training needs of banana growers on major subject areas of banana cultivation are presented in (Table 1).

It could be revealed from (Table 1) that the training needs for ‘plant protection measures’ (MS 2.50), ‘sucker treatment’ (MS 2.46), ‘bio-fertilizer application’ (MS 2.45), ‘marketing’ (MS 2.44), ‘plant growth regulators’ (MS 2.40), ‘nutrient management’ (MS 2.38), ‘micro-nutrient application’ (MS 2.37), ‘irrigation management’ (MS 2.26), ‘weed management’ (MS 2.25), ‘intercropping’ (MS 2.03), ‘selection of varieties/hybrids’ (MS 2.00), ‘plant population’ (MS 1.99), ‘desuckering’ (MS 1.90), ‘post-harvest’ (MS 1.81), ‘planting techniques’ (MS 1.66), ‘ratooning’ (MS 1.43), ‘harvesting’ (MS 1.35) and ‘propping’ (MS 1.33) were perceived in the descending order of importance [10].

Table 1 Training needs of banana growers in major subject matter areas of banana cultivation

S. No.	Major subject matter areas	Mean score	Rank
1.	Plant protection measures	2.50	I
2.	Sucker treatment	2.46	II
3.	Bio-fertilizer application	2.45	III
4.	Marketing	2.44	IV
5.	Plant growth regulators	2.40	V
6.	Nutrient management	2.38	VI
7.	Micro-nutrient application	2.37	VII
8.	Irrigation management	2.26	VIII
9.	Weed management	2.25	IX
10.	Intercropping	2.03	X
11.	Selection of variety/hybrid	2.00	XI
12.	Plant population	1.99	XII
13.	Desuckering	1.90	XIII
14.	Post-harvest	1.81	XIV
15.	Planting techniques	1.66	XV
16.	Ratooning	1.43	XVI
17.	Harvesting	1.35	XVII
18.	Propping	1.34	XVIII

It could be inferred that out of the eighteen major subject areas, only nine viz., for, ‘plant protection measures’, ‘sucker treatment’, ‘bio-fertilizer application’, ‘marketing’, ‘plant growth regulators’, ‘nutrient management’, ‘micro-nutrient application’, ‘irrigation management’ and ‘weed management’ were the most needed areas on which trainings were demanded as the scores for these areas ranged from 2.25 to 3.00. The items ‘intercropping’, ‘selection of varieties/hybrids’, ‘plant population’, ‘desuckering’, ‘post-harvest’ and ‘planting techniques’ were the technologies for which the respondents expressed need for training as the scores for these areas were ranging from 1.50 to 2.24. Training was not needed in the remaining areas viz., ‘ratooning’, ‘harvesting’ and ‘propping’ as the scores for these areas ranged from 0.75 to 1.49 [11].

CONCLUSION

While organizing training programmes for banana growers, special emphasis should be given to impart training in the areas like plant protection measures, sucker treatment, bio-fertilizer application, marketing and plant growth regulator, nutrient management, micro-nutrient application, irrigation management and weed management.

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