

Knowledge level of farmers on recommended cultivation practices of Off-season vegetable crops under low cost polyhouse technology in Assam

ABSTRACT

Low cost polyhouse technology enables farmers to cultivate vegetables during Off-season and fetch higher price to the farmers. Off-season cultivation of vegetable refers to the production of the vegetable before or after their normal cultivation seasons of production. As the Off-season vegetable cultivation under polyhouse technology needs skilled knowledge than the normal seasons production. Therefore, this study is conducted to find the knowledge level of the farmers on the recommended cultivation practices of selected Off-season vegetable crops under low cost polyhouse technology in Assam. The study was carried out in 4 districts of Assam which was selected purposively where maximum beneficiaries of RKVY existed. A total 80 respondents consisted the samples of the study. Statistical tools employed to analyze the data included frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation and knowledge test. The findings of the study revealed that majority (62.50%) had medium level of knowledge level which was measured by utilizing a Knowledge test prepared for the study. Implications of the study include exposing farmers to new developments in agricultural technologies, and motivate them to adopt the new technologies by organizing group discussions, meetings, study tours and field visits etc.

Key words: *Knowledge, farmers, polyhouse, Assam*

1. Introduction

Off-season cultivation of vegetable refers to the production of the vegetable before or after their normal cultivation seasons of production. This can be accomplished by using low cost polyhouse technology which can be constructed with least cost and with easily available resources.

Off-season vegetable offers the higher prices to the farmers, consumers may have the fresh vegetable even in the Off-season, farmers can get the employment round the year, it has also lot of prospects for the exports in the foreign country so that there is ample scope of hard earned currencies, etc. Therefore, there is need for farmers to increase their knowledge level on recommended practices so that they can adopt the vegetable cultivation in the commercial scale.

Srivastava (2000) reported that in different European countries, the yield of the greenhouse tomatoes was obtained in the range between 63 to 145t/ha. He also reported that at IARI, New Delhi, an average of 100t/ha yield had been obtained and in high rainfall areas of Jorhat tomato yields were 60-70 per cent high under poly rainshelter than under open field condition.

Shadeque and Saikia (1992) conducted an experiment in Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat and reported that Off-season tomato cultivation could be profitably done in Jorhat, Assam condition during rainy summer under plastic cover.

Government provides subsidy to farmers to grow crops under cover. Recently central government initiated National Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters in 2011-12, the scheme which help farmers to get year round production of vegetables in greenhouse.

Deka (2014) revealed that 60,000 and 53,000sq.m area under polyhouse and plastic net house, respectively, for off season flower production was covered under the RKVY scheme in Assam.

Surender (1980) in a study conducted in Bangalore district of Karnataka found that majority of the respondents both big and small farmers had only medium overall knowledge on agricultural practices of tomato cultivation.

As the Off-season vegetable cultivation under polyhouse technology needs skilled knowledge than the normal seasons production. Therefore , the present study is was conducted to know the knowledge level of the farmers on the recommended cultivation practices of selected Off-season vegetable crops under low cost polyhouse technology.

2. Methodology:

The study was carried out in the state of Assam. A purposive cum random sampling design was followed for selection of the districts and respondents. 4 districts of Assam were selected purposively where maximum beneficiaries of RKVY existed. The districts were Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Sonitpur and Kamrup. 20 respondents from each district were selected randomly, a total of 80 respondents consisted the samples of the study. Statistical tools employed to analyze the data included frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation and knowledge test.

Construction of knowledge test:-

Knowledge level of the respondent in the present study was measured with the help of knowledge test constructed and standardized by Barman (1998) for the purpose. While administrating the final knowledge test, respondent score “1” was assigned for a correct answer and score “0” was assigned for an incorrect answer. Thus, the total score on the test had a theoretical range of 0 to 27. On the basis of the score obtained by the respondents they were categorized into 3 following categories:

Category	Range
Low	Below($\bar{X} - S.D.$)
Medium	Between ($\bar{X} - S.D.$) and ($\bar{X} + S.D.$)
High	Above ($\bar{X} + S.D.$)

3. Results and discussion

It is observed from the Table 1, that majority of the respondents (62.50%) possess medium level of knowledge, followed by 21.25 per cent respondents having high level and 16.25 per cent having low level of knowledge.

Considering the knowledge level of overall respondents covered under the four districts of Assam, the knowledge level that was measured is found to be relatively at a satisfactory level in order to apply in their own farms for Off-season cultivation of vegetables under low cost polyhouse technology.

The reason for such a finding could be because of the fact that the entire package of practices as well as the construction of the low cost polyhouse is not a very complicated technology for farmers to understand and apply in their own field condition to gain higher profits in a unit area of land. However, scope of higher efforts on extension support and training remains to enhance and upscale their level of knowledge so that more farmers will also imitate and replicate the technology and greater number of farmers shall adopt the technology. Similar findings found by Bramachari (2003), Reddy and Reddy (1982), Meena *et al.* (2009)

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage distribution of all the respondents according to the knowledge level in Assam

					N=80
Category	Score range	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D
Low	Below 6.7	13	16.25%	11.63	4.93
Medium	6.7-16.57	50	62.5%		
High	Above 16.57	17	21.25%		
Total		80	100		

4. Conclusion

The study revealed that knowledge level of all the respondents that majority (62.50%) possess medium level of knowledge, followed by (21.25%) having high level and (16.25%) having low level of knowledge.

As farmers had medium level of knowledge, still there is a need to expose the farmers to new developments in agricultural technologies, and motivate them to adopt the new technologies by organizing group discussions, meetings, study tours and field visits so that they increase their knowledge and adopt the vegetable cultivation in the commercial scale for profit maximization.

Government and non-government agencies may also take appropriate steps to create awareness about improved technology, participation in implementation of government schemes, time and financial management.

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