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Constraints perceived by the banana growers in adoption of good agricultural practices (Gaps) and their suggestions to overcome the constraints

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Abstract
The present study was undertaken in Anand and Kheda districts of the Gujarat to study the constraints perceived by the banana growers in adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and suggestions to overcome on it. The data was conducted from 200 respondents. The constraints analysis revealed that the banana growers were confronted with the constraints such as non-availability of technical guidance in time for good agricultural practices, non-availability of packaging and grading facility, non-availability of market information. This suggests the need to take care of the constraints by the promoters of GAPs for banana, which will increase the adoption of these practices. The banana growers had made the suggestions like training should be imparted for efficient and effective use of good agricultural practices, guidance on maintenance be provided regularly, services of certification auditors about GAPs should be available free of cost, the number of experts should be increased so that the banana growers can consult them as an and when required. The important suggestions offered by the banana growers to help them overcome the constraints in adoption of GAPs for banana need to receive due consideration from the policy makers, farm scientists, extension agencies and financial organizations.

Keywords: Banana growers, constraints, good agricultural practices and suggestions

Introduction
Banana is one of the major and economically important fruit crops of India. The fruits provide the staple food; the plants are used for decoration purposes; preparation of fiber and the leaves for storing and packing food items. The fruit is available throughout the year and is considered to be a common man's food. Globally, banana is the fourth most important commodity after rice, wheat and corn. To enable farm produce to be internationally competitive, innovative farming practices incorporating the concept of globally accepted Good Agricultural Practices (GA Ps) within the framework of commercial agricultural production for long term improvement and sustainability are essential. GAPs, in addition to improving the yield and quality of the products, also have environmental and social dimensions. Implementation of GAPs would promote optimum utilization of resources such as pesticides, fertilizers, water and eco-friendly agriculture. Its social dimension would be to protect the agricultural workers' health from improper use of chemicals and pesticides. Good Agriculture Practices for reduction in microbial food safety hazards during farming, grading, and packaging and storage operations are being encouraged. Considering the scope and opportunity in the world market, there is a need to give importance to quality assurance of banana fruits. So also, for standing firmly in the world market, there is a need to keep quality, hygienic conditions and standard residue control, so that the fruits qualify all analytical tests. Promotion of the export of banana would help to earn valuable foreign exchange for the country, in addition to realize higher returns for the banana growers. During adoption of Good Agricultural Practices banana growers also perceived some constraints in it. Keeping this in view the present study entitled "Constraints perceived by the banana growers in adoption of good agricultural practices (gaps) and their suggestions to overcome the constraints" was undertaken".

Methodology
The study was undertaken on the banana growing farmers of Anand and Kheda districts of Gujarat by using systematic random sampling method and 200 banana growing farmers were selected from the study area. The constraints and suggestions obtained from each respondent

were measured in terms of mean value. To know their degree of importance, the respondents were asked to give their responses on a three-point continuum *i.e.* very important, important and not important. The scores assigned were three, two and one for very important, important and not important responses, respectively. Finally, the mean score was worked out for each problem and suggestion for ranking them in terms of their importance. There were many constraints and suggestions on the part of the farmers in adoption of GAPs. These constraints and suggestions were identified; corrective measures could be taken up. With this in view, farmers were asked these constraints and suggestions in adoption of GAPs during the pre-testing of the interview schedule and the major constraints and suggestions found were listed in the interview schedule. More ever, farmers were also asked to say other than these constraints and suggestions.

Result and discussion

Constraints perceived by the banana growers in adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)

Table 1: Distribution of the banana growers according to the constraints faced by them in adoption of GAPs in banana cultivation

n= 200

No.	Constraints	Frequency (Percentage)			Mean Score	Rank
		Very important	Important	Not important		
1	High cost of good agricultural practices	25 (12.50)	86 (43.00)	89 (44.50)	1.68	XII
2	High cost for Global GAP certification	25 (12.50)	86 (43.00)	89 (44.50)	1.68	XII
3	Lack of updated knowledge regarding GAPs to extension personnel	115 (57.50)	85 (42.50)	0 (0.00)	2.58	VI
4	Non-availability of technical guidance in time for good agricultural practices	175 (87.50)	25 (12.50)	0 (0.00)	2.88	I
5	Delay in sanction of loan and subsidy from export promoter agencies	86 (43.00)	54 (27.00)	60 (30.00)	2.13	X
6	Fluctuation in market price and low prices to the produce in global market	89 (44.50)	111 (55.50)	0 (0.00)	2.45	VII
7	Inadequate physical facilities in market	146 (73.00)	54 (27.00)	0 (0.00)	2.73	IV
8	Non availability of packaging and grading facility	175 (87.50)	25 (12.50)	0 (0.00)	2.88	I
9	Resistance from family members	0 (0.00)	30 (15.00)	170 (85.00)	1.15	XIII
10	Frustration due to failure of GAPs	56 (28.00)	30 (15.00)	114 (57.00)	1.71	XI
11	Lack of knowledge while adopting GAPs and procedure for certification	85 (42.50)	115 (57.50)	0 (0.00)	2.43	VIII
12	Difficult to meet export standards	85 (42.50)	115 (57.50)	0 (0.00)	2.43	VIII
13	Lengthy procedures and formalities for export	111 (55.50)	30 (15.00)	59 (29.50)	2.26	IX
14	Lack of knowledge about packaging and grading levels while exporting GAPs produce	140 (70.00)	60 (30.00)	0 (0.00)	2.70	V
15	Lack of knowledge about minimum residual level of chemicals while producing GAP produce	170 (85.00)	30 (15.00)	0 (0.00)	2.85	III
16	Non availability of export market information	171 (85.50)	29 (14.50)	0 (0.00)	2.86	II

In the present study, the constraints faced by the banana growers in adoption of GAPs in banana cultivation were studied. It can be seen from table 1 that the most important problems faced by the banana growers in adoption of GAPs in banana cultivation were; non-availability of technical guidance in time for good agricultural practices (2.88 mean), non-availability of packaging and grading facility (2.88 mean), non-availability of export market information (2.86 mean), lack of knowledge about minimum residual level of chemicals while producing gap produce (2.85 mean), inadequate physical facilities in market (2.73 mean), lack of knowledge about packaging and grading levels while exporting gaps produce (2.70 mean) and lack of updated knowledge regarding gaps to extension personnel (2.58 mean). This was followed by the important problems like, fluctuation in market price and low prices to the produce in global market (2.45 mean), lack of knowledge while adopting gaps and procedure for certification (2.43 mean), difficult to meet export standards (2.43 mean), lengthy procedures and formalities for export (2.26 mean), delay in sanction of loan and subsidy from export promoter agencies (2.13 mean), frustration due to failure of gaps (1.71 mean), high cost of good agricultural practices (1.68 mean) and high cost for global gap certification (1.68 mean).Resistance from the family members (1.15 mean) was the only least important constraint.

Suggestions of the banana growers to overcome the constraints in adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)

Table 2: Distribution of the banana growers according to their suggestions to overcome the constraints in adoption of GAPs in banana cultivation

n=200

No.	Suggestions	Mean score	Rank
1	Cost of certification of GAPs should be minimized	1.73	VII
2	Timely technical guidance should be provided to the farmers from extension personnels	2.43	IV
3	Provision of regular guidance on maintenance and free services about GAPs from certification auditors	2.71	II
4	Training should be imparted for betterment of knowledge/skill to use good agricultural practices efficiently and effectively	2.88	I
5	Increase in subsidy/loan and it should be made available timely	1.87	VI
6	Provision of regular supervision by certification agencies	2.41	V
7	More number of experts should be appointed so that each villager can get chance to meet them as and when required	2.56	III

8	**Any other suggestions**	**Number**	**Per cent**
	i) Government of Gujarat shall provide Pack house facilities, precooling chambers	18	9.00
	ii) Department of horticulture shall form GAP interested Farmer's forum/group	22	11.00
	iii) APEDA should declare middle Gujarat as an Export zone	15	7.50
	iv) SAUs should initiate Export training centres at AAU	13	6.50

The results in table 2 indicated that according to responses given by the banana growers for the major listed suggestions, the suggestions were arranged in descending order of ranks were; training should be imparted for betterment of knowledge/skill to use good agricultural practices efficiently and effectively (2.88 mean), provision of regular guidance on maintenance and free services about GAPs from certification auditors (2.71 mean), more number of experts should be appointed so that each villager can get chance to meet them as and when required (2.56 mean), timely technical guidance should be provided to the farmers from extension personnel (2.43 mean), provision of regular supervision by certification agencies (2.41 mean), increase in subsidy / loan and it should be made available timely (1.87 mean) and cost of certification of GAPs should be minimized (1.73 mean).

As per, the other suggestions given by the banana growers were department of horticulture shall form GAP interested Farmer's forum / group (11.00 per cent), government of Gujarat shall provide Pack house facilities, precooling chambers (9.00 per cent), APEDA should declare middle Gujarat as an Export zone (7.50 per cent), SAUs should initiate export training centres at AAU (6.50 per cent).

Conclusion

The constraints analysis revealed that the banana growers were confronted with the constraints such as non-availability of technical guidance in time for good agricultural practices, non-availability of packaging and grading facility, non-availability of market information. This suggests the need to take care of the constraints by the promoters of GAPs for banana, which will increase the adoption of these practices. The banana growers had made the suggestions like training should be imparted for efficient and effective use of good agricultural practices, guidance on maintenance be provided regularly, services of certification auditors about GAPs should be available free of cost, the number of experts should be increased so that the banana growers can consult them as an and when required. The important suggestions offered by the banana growers to help them overcome the constraints in adoption of GAPs for banana need to receive due consideration from the policy makers, farm scientists, extension agencies and financial organizations.

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