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Information seeking behaviour of commercial mango growers in Konkan region of Maharashtra state

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken with the objective of assessing the information-seeking behavior of commercial mango growers in the *Konkan* region of Maharashtra, India. The investigation was confined to Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts of South *Konkan*. A multistage sampling procedure was employed, wherein 48 villages were randomly selected. From each village, five commercial mango growers possessing a minimum of 2 ha area under mango cultivation were purposively chosen, thus constituting a total sample of 240 respondents. Data were collected using a pre-tested, well-structured interview schedule and analyzed through frequency and percentage methods under an *ex-post-facto* research design. Findings revealed that 76.25% of respondents regularly obtained information on mango production technologies from television, whereas 46.25% occasionally consulted friends. Interestingly, 95.42% had never approached agricultural officers or branch managers for such information. With respect to overall behavior, 71.25% of growers exhibited a medium level of information-seeking, while 14.58% and 14.17% were categorized into low and high levels, respectively. The mean information-seeking score was 57. The study concludes that commercial mango growers rely predominantly on mass media and informal interpersonal networks rather than formal extension personnel. In conclusion, the findings highlight a substantial gap in institutional communication, emphasizing the urgent need to strengthen extension linkages between mango growers and agricultural experts. Strengthening these connections will facilitate the broader dissemination of scientific cultivation practices, enabling mango growers to enhance profitability from their orchards while overcoming constraints related to accessing information on commercial mango production.

Keywords: Information seeking behaviour, commercial mango growers, Konkan region, scientific cultivation practices

1. Introduction

Agriculture remains one of the most vital sectors for sustaining livelihoods across the globe (Momoh and Adewojo, 2025) [21]. In India, a significant proportion of the rural population depends primarily on agriculture as a source of income and subsistence (Mahindarathne and Qingfei, 2018) [16]. Consequently, the agricultural sector is often regarded as the backbone of the Indian economy. At present, this sector encompasses a wide diversity of crops, production systems, and advanced technologies (Saqib *et al*., 2022) [26]. Continuous research and innovation by multidisciplinary teams of scientists are contributing to the development of improved agricultural technologies aimed at enhancing farmers' productivity and livelihoods. Simultaneously, extension functionaries play a crucial role in disseminating these technologies and associated packages of practices, ensuring their effective adoption by the farming community. Farmers engaged in diverse crop production systems, including agronomic crops, horticulture, vegetable cultivation, forestry, floriculture, and cattle labour hiring, and others require comprehensive information for a wide range of purposes. This need extends beyond the domain of crop production to encompass post-harvest handling, value addition, and marketing of produce. Consequently, information is recognized as a critical input for enhancing agricultural productivity through the effective management of farm operations and decision-making processes. Commercial mango growers primarily cultivate mango crops for market-oriented production, aiming to generate higher economic returns through the sale of produce to domestic and international markets across various regions of India. The commercial cultivation of mango demands comprehensive and precise technical knowledge, encompassing all stages from planting and orchard management to post-harvest handling, marketing, and export procedures. Information is recognized as one of the most powerful tools (Ere, 2017) [9] for addressing the crop management requirements of farmers (Bachhav, 2012; Maltez *et al*., 2020) [2, 18] and in realizing desired objectives or goals (Kehinde *et al*., 2016) [13], also an important component of growth and development in every discipline. It plays a significant role in the adoption of farming practices and is also a building block for effective extension services delivery (Demet-Soylu *et al*., 2016) [7]. The specific

information needs of farmers often vary according to the growth stages of the cropas well as the individual circumstances and practices of each farmer (Deribe, 2020) [8], and are valued as much as human, financial, material, and plant resources, for it has become the fifth factor of production (Hellen, 2012) [11]. Agricultural information is disseminated through a variety of sources (Banmeke, 2005) [3], both printed and digital, for farming as well as their livelihood (Ofuoku, 2008; Shrabantika Ghosh *et al*., 2022) [22, 27]. In this context, agricultural information refers to data related to various stages and components of crop cultivation, which, when processed and organized into meaningful forms, can be effectively utilized for informed decision-making in agriculture (Matovelo, 2008; Idiegbeyan-Ose Jerome and Theresa, 2009) [20, 12].Agricultural information is most essential to farmers, it can provide the latest and reliable new knowledge and new discoveries for their occupation, which can increase food production and improve marketing and distribution strategies Oladele, (2006) [23]. Information seeking is a natural behaviour of individuals, necessary for the successful completion of tasks in life. It is closely related to human needs (Anwar, 2007) [1], as individuals use information to satisfy their specific requirements (Majid and Kassim, 2000) [17]. Seeking information from different sources requires focused attention; it can be both a passive and purposive behaviour. Lack of concentration during this process may hinder the ability to effectively receive and process information. Farmers are generally eager to seek out and utilize information that can help them improve their production and productivity. Several personal factors influence information-seeking behaviour, shaping the way a person interprets and uses information. Commercial mango growers, in particular, manage their orchards through the adoption of scientific practices. For this purpose, they seek information from various sources such as personal localite and personal cosmopolite contacts, mass media, and different extension education methods (Verma *et al*., 2012) [29]. However, their personal characteristics, such as age, education, family type, family size, farming experience, availability of resources, training received, and extent of contacts, play a significant role in determining their information-seeking behaviour (Manoj Kumar, 2024) [19]. There is, however, a significant gap between the advanced package of practices and improved technologies developed by research institutions, and the practices actually followed by commercial mango growers in their orchards (Davis *et al*, 2010) [6]. Therefore, it is urgently necessary to understand how and from where commercial mango growers seek information for cultivating commercially oriented mango production. The present investigation aims to study the information-seeking behaviour of commercial mango growers towards market-oriented mango production.

2. Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in two districts, namely Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg, of the South Konkan region of Maharashtra state, India (Fig. 1). A multistage sampling technique was used for the selection of districts, tahsils, and villages. Each district had three tahsils selected based on the maximum number of commercial mango growers; thus, a total of six tahsils were used for the study. Each selected tahsils has eight villages selected based on the maximum area under commercial mango cultivation. Thus, a total of 48 villages were selected randomly. Each selected village has five commercial mango growers those having a minimum of 2ha. The area of mango trees on a commercial basis was considered for this study. Therefore, a total of 240 commercial mango growers were selected for the present investigation. The ex-post-facto research design was adopted for the present research. Information-seeking behaviour refers to the frequency of contact or exposure of the commercial mango growers to different sources for obtaining information on agriculture and occupation-related technology. The extent of use of information sources available to the commercial mango growers. Each respondent was asked to indicate how frequently he/ she received information about the technology from each of the listed sources. The scoring procedure used is 3 for ‘regular’, 2 for ‘occasional’, and 1 for ‘never’. The respondents were grouped into three categories, namely ‘low’, ‘medium’, and ‘high’ by using mean and standard deviation. This variable is measured using the procedure followed by Bhairamkar (2009) [4]. The collected data for the study were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentages of the respondents.

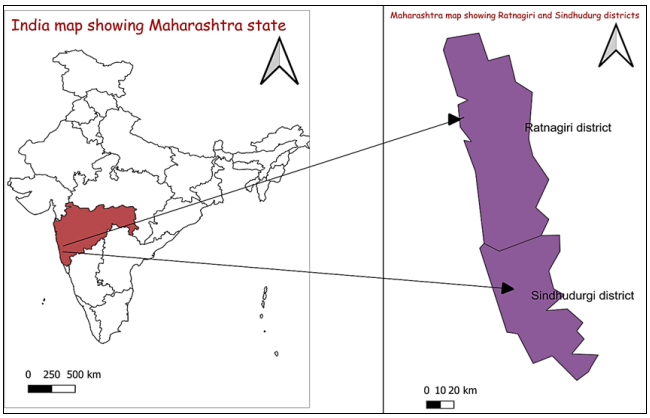

Fig 1: Map of study of location

3. Results and Discussion

Information seeking behavior is a broad term encompassing the ways commercial mango growers articulate their information needs, seek, evaluate, and use the needed information. Different of information sources through which the commercial mango growers have to choose which provide the most benefit and best meet the needs of the mango orchard. Keeping this in view, information seeking behaviour of commercial mango growers on commercial mango production technology have been collected and furnished in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to information seeking behaviour

Sr. No.	Information Source	Seeking behaviour (N=240)		
		Regular	Occasional	Never
A	**Personal localite**			
1.	Friends	101 (42.08)	111 (46.25)	28 (11.67)
2.	Neighbors	14 (5.84)	44 (18.33)	182 (75.83)
3.	Relatives	23 (9.58)	69 (28.75)	148 (61.67)
4.	Progressive farmers	05 (2.08)	74 (30.84)	161 (67.08)
5.	Mango cooperative	10 (4.16)	29 (12.09)	201 (83.75)
6.	Mango Traders	58 (24.16)	101 (42.09)	81 (33.75)
B	**Personal cosmopolite**			
1.	Taluka Agri. Officer	-	15 (6.25)	225 (93.75)
2.	Agril. Extn. Officer	-	17 (7.08)	223(92.92)
3.	Agril. Officer	03 (1.25)	74(30.84)	163 (67.91)
4.	Block Dev. Officer	-	71 (29.59)	169 (70.41)
5.	Subject Matter Specialist	43 (17.92)	76 (31.66)	121 (50.42)
6.	Scientist of nearby research centre	28(11.67)	73 (30.42)	139 (57.91)
7.	Agril. Officer/ Branch Manger	-	11 (4.58)	229 (95.42)
C	**Mass Media**			
1.	News paper	128 (53.34)	90 (37.50)	22 (9.16)
2.	Extn. Publication *(Leaflet, folder, booklet, etc.)*	07 (2.92)	74 (30.84)	159 (66.24)
3.	Farm magazines	87 (36.25)	90 (37.50)	63 (26.25)
4.	Television	183 (76.25)	42 (17.50)	15 (6.25)
5.	Kisan Call Centre	01 (0.42)	39 (16.25)	200 (83.33)
6.	Mobile (Whatsapp Group)	81 (33.75)	06 (2.50)	153 (63.75)
7.	Internet (Web search)	43 (17.91)	49 (20.42)	148(61.67)
D	**Extension Education Methods**			
1.	Meeting	05 (2.08)	83 (34.58)	152 (63.34)
2.	Group Discussion	42 (17.50)	89 (37.08)	109 (45.42)
3.	Demonstration	01 (0.42)	11(4.58)	228 (95.00)
4.	Field visit	36 (15.00)	102 (42.50)	102 (42.50)
5.	Agril. exhibition	89 (37.08)	77 (32.08)	74 (30.84)
6.	Workshop/Seminar/Conference	03 (1.25)	46 (19.17)	191 (79.58)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentages)

A critical look at Table 1 indicated that, little more than three fourth (76.25 per cent) of the commercial mango growers had regularly seek the commercial mango production technologies from television, followed by newspaper (53.34 per cent), friends (42.08 per cent), agril. exhibition (37.08 per cent), farm magazine (36.25 per cent), mobile (WhatsApp group) (33.75 per cent), mango traders (24.16 per cent), subject matter specialist (17.92 per cent)are the sources from which commercial mango growers 'regular' seek information. However, it is observed that, nearly less than half (46.25 per cent) of the commercial mango growers had occasional seek the information from friends, followed by demonstration (95.00 per cent), mango traders (42.09 per cent), newspaper (37.50 per cent), farm magazine (37.50 per cent), group discussion (37.08 per cent), meeting (34.58 per cent), agril. exhibition (32.08 per cent), subject matter specialist (31.66 per cent) are the sources from which commercial mango growers 'occasional' seek information. It is also found that great majority (95.42 per cent)of the commercial mango growers had never seek the information about commercial mango production technologies from Agril. Officer/ Branch Manger, followed by, Taluka Agri. Officer (93.75 per cent), Agril. Extn. Officer (92.92 per cent),Mango cooperative (83.75 per cent), Kisan Call Centre (83.33 per cent) are the sources from which the commercial mango growers 'never' seek information.

Overall Information seeking behaviour

The data pertaining to the information seeking behaviour of the respondents are presented in Table 2 and diagrammatically depicted in Figure 1.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their overall information seeking behaviour

Sl. No.	Information seeking behaviour (Score)	Respondents (N=240)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Low (Upto 52)	35	14.58
2.	Medium (53 to 62)	171	71.25
3.	High (63 and above)	34	14.17
	Total	240	100.00

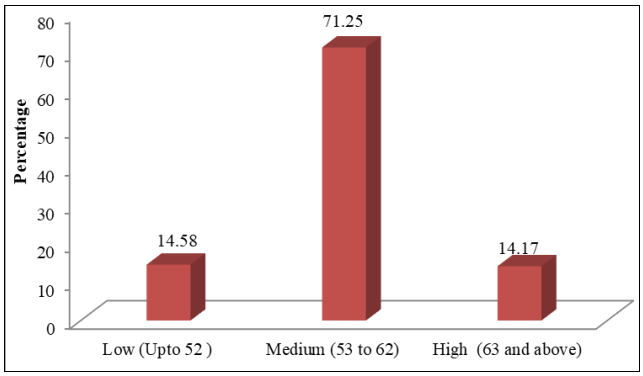

Fig 2: Overall information-seeking behaviour

A perusal of the data presented in Table 2 and Fig. 2revealed that slightly less than three-fourths (71.25%) of the commercial mango growers had a 'medium' information-seeking behaviour. Nearly equal (14.58%) and (14.17%) of the commercial mango growers had 'low' and 'high' information-seeking behaviour. The average score of information-seeking behaviour of the respondents was 57. From the above results, it can be concluded that the majority (85.83%) of the commercial mango growers had 'medium to low' information-seeking behaviour. The probable reason might be that most farmers have good access to mass media sources of information, such as television, newspapers, farm magazines, and mobile phones (WhatsApp groups), rather than other resources. Further, they may also feel that they do not require any information and might be spending much of their time in getting a livelihood. The present findings corroborate observations previously noted by Thorat *et al*. (2007) [28], Borate *et al*. (2010) [5], MadhuShekar *et al*. (2023) [15], Madhushekar *et al*. (2024) [14], Kumari *et al*. (2025), Sanjay *et al*. (2025) [25].

4. Conclusion

The present investigation examined the information-seeking behavior of commercial mango growers in the Konkan region of Maharashtra state. The findings indicate that commercial mango growers in the study area have diverse information needs related to the scientific cultivation of mango orchards. Farmers regularly preferred to obtain information from friends, newspapers, and television. This pattern suggests that their higher levels of education and active social participation influence their reliance on these sources, which provide relevant scientific and factual information in the local language. However, the majority of farmers seldom sought information from Taluka Agriculture Officers or through agricultural demonstrations. This implies that farmers were more engaged in their routine orchard management activities and independent planning. In conclusion, the study reveals a notable gap in institutional communication, underscoring the critical need to reinforce extension linkages between mango growers and agricultural experts. By enhancing these linkages, scientific cultivation practices can be more effectively disseminated, empowering mango growers to increase orchard profitability and overcome existing challenges in obtaining information on commercial mango production.

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Competing Interests

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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