

TRAINING NEEDS OF COMMERCIAL VEGETABLE GROWERS

India stands second in world vegetable production. But the dietary availability of vegetables is deplorably low among the Indian population. Various technological innovations are available for enhancing the productivity and attaining self-sufficiency in vegetables. Planning of trainings that have a direct bearing on the felt needs of vegetable growers is an essential prerequisite to impart these innovations. The study was organized among the commercial vegetable growers of Pananchery and Puthur panchayats of

Trichur district in Kerala to ascertain their training need perception in improved vegetable cultivation practices. Data were collected from 100 randomly selected commercial vegetable growers of the area through interviews using a pre-tested schedule. Important subject matter areas of vegetable cultivation wherein the training need was assessed was finalized based on the package of practices recommendations of the Kerala Agricultural University (1989) and discussions with experts. The eight subject matter

Table 1. Distribution of respondents on the training need index (n=100)

Category	Training need index	Frequency (%)
Low < (X - S.D.)	Below 55.32	14.00
Medium (X+S.D.)	Between 55.32 -69.02	70.00
High > (X+S.D.)	Above 69.02	16.00

X = 62.17

S.D. = 6.85

areas identified were improved varieties, nursery practices, seeds and sowing, manures and manuring, planting and aftercare, plant protection measures, irrigation, harvesting and post-harvest aspects. The training need perception in each of these subject matter areas were measured using a three point rating scale with points 'much needed', 'somewhat needed' and 'not at all needed' with respective scores of three, two and one as adopted by Kanakasabapathi (1988). Training need index (TNI) was calculated for

each respondent by dividing the actual scores assigned for the different items under each subject matter area by the maximum possible scores that could be assigned for that subject matter area converted into percentage. TNI was calculated for the major subject matter areas in the cultivation of vegetable crops from which the important areas in which the commercial vegetable growers required training were identified. Percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation were also used for the analysis of data.

Table 2. Practice-wise training need of vegetable growers (n = 100)

Sl. No.	Practice	Training need index			Rank
		Knowledge	Skill	Mean	
1	Improved varieties	58.45	54.38	56.42	VI
2	Nursery practices	59.05	65.38	62.22	IV
3	Seeds and sowing	57.74	54.82	56.28	VII
4	Manures and manuring	63.43	69.63	66.53	II
5	Planting and after care	55.18	56.15	55.67	VIII
6	Plant protection	74.48	79.32	76.90	I
7	Irrigation	56.33	71.07	58.70	V
8	Harvest and post-harvest aspects	61.77	64.88	63.33	III

Table 1 presents the distribution of the respondents under three categories viz., 'low', 'medium' and 'high' with respect to their training need index (TNI) in improved vegetable cultivation practices. It could be observed from Table 1 that majority (70%) of the farmers belonged to medium training need category. Training need is, in fact, an expression of a gap in the knowledge level. Therefore, the medium level of training need by a majority of the respondents reflected on lack of complete knowledge by the farmers about the improved cultivation practices.

Table 2 presents the practice-wise training needs of the respondents in commercial vegetable cultivation, both in knowledge and skill aspects. Plant protection recorded the highest training need index of 74.48 and 79.32 for knowledge and skills, respectively. Manures and manuring was perceived as the second area in the order of importance of the perceived training need with knowledge and skill scores of 63.43 and 69.63 respectively.

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The third highest training need perception was in the area of harvesting and post harvest aspects. The training need index scores in relation to other practices were in the order of nursery practices, improved varieties in vegetables, seeds and sowing, irrigation, planting and aftercare.

The study conclusively proved that plant protection aspects formed the most decisive factor in commercial vegetable cultivation as was evident from training need assessment. Therefore, every effort should be made to realign the training programmes in vegetable cultivation highlighting the plant protection aspects. The recent trends in control of pests and diseases with minimum use of pesticides focussing on integrated pest management may be covered in such training.

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