

## **Training Need Assessment of Extension Officers on Oil Palm**

**K L Mary Rani, M V Prasad, S Shivashankar and P Anitha**

ICAR-Indian Institute of Oil Palm Research, Pedavegi, Eluru District, A. P.

### **ABSTRACT**

Oil palm cultivation is expanding to newer areas in the country which necessitates the need of training to officers associated in oil palm development programme. To meet this need, capacity building programmes are organized regularly by ICAR-IIOPR to officers and farmers involved in the oil palm development programme. The present study was undertaken to assess the need of officers on requirement of training on oil palm technologies. A structured questionnaire was prepared and administered to the nominated trainees for undergoing training on oil palm technologies. A total of 31 respondents were selected at random. Data collected from respondents was compiled. The findings revealed that all the respondents were willing to undergo training and subject matter on which the training is required is as follows, most of the respondents expressed requirement of 1 to 7 days of training on Pest and Disease Management, Water Management and Nutrient Management with medium to high priority. Respondents perceived to have training based on requirement of the current job and expressed to undergo 2 trainings per year. Majority preferred offline training. Respondents perceived to attend the training wherever it is organized. All the respondents wanted the training literature. Majority of the respondents wanted the training literature in the form of softcopy or as manuals and power point presentations. Majority of respondents perceived that they can disseminate oil palm technologies through training programmes, awareness campaigns and demonstrations.

Oil palm is a high oil yielding crop with 4 to 6 tons of oil and has a potential of 19.3 lakh hectares in India. At present the crop is cultivated as an irrigated crop and also under rainfed conditions in a total area of 4.0 lakh hectares. Oil palm development is expanding to newer areas to meet the challenges of vegetable oil requirement in the country. As oil palm is an introduced crop in India, it is required to impart training to all oil palm stakeholders' viz., growers, extension personnel, field officers etc. As new areas are identified and area expansion activities are taken up every year by state department, need arises to build know how about the crop to the concerned state department officials & staff of oil palm processing units. To meet this objective, ICAR-Indian Institute

of Oil Palm Research (IIOPR) regularly organizes various capacity building programmes round the year on various subject matter areas of oil palm production technologies. In order to know the training needs of nominated officers representing from new oil palm growing areas, a study was conducted with following objective.

### **Objective**

To assess the training needs of extension officers on oil palm technologies.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

A total of 81 nominations were received from different organizations for the training on oil palm

through online mode, during 2021-22. A structured interview schedule was prepared and standardized. Interview schedule was administered to 31 randomly selected (among the nominated) officers, before commencement of training programme. Data thus collected from respondents was compiled and tabulated. Statistical tools viz., frequency and percentage were used to obtain the results and draw inferences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected to assess the training needs of officers associated in oil palm development programme. Results obtained are presented below and meaningful inferences drawn.

**Table 1. Categorization of respondents based on Age**

Age Group	Frequency (f)	Percentage	fx
25-35	11	35.48	330
36-45	13	41.94	520
46-55	7	22.58	350
Total	31	100.00	1200
		Mean	37.5

Data showed that majority of the respondents (41.94 %) were in the age group of 36 to 45 years (Table 1) and the mean age was found to be 37.5 years.

**Table 2. Categorization of respondents based on Education**

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
B.Sc (Ag)	1	3.23
B.Sc (Hort)	6	19.35
M.Sc (Ag)	6	19.35
M.Sc (Hort)	12	38.72
Ph.D.	6	19.35
Total	31	100.00

With regard to education, 38.72% were holding a post graduate degree in M. Sc. (Horticulture) (Table 2).

**Table 3. Job Experience**

No. of Yrs	Frequency (f)	Percentage	fx
01-May	10	32.26	30
06-Oct	4	12.90	32
Nov-15	9	29.03	117
16-20	3	9.68	54
21-25	1	3.23	23
26-30	3	9.68	84
31-35	1	3.23	33
Total	31	100.00	373
		Mean	12.03

Though maximum number of respondents (32.26%) were in their initial years of service i.e. 1 to 5 years, 29.03 % of them were having 11 to 15 years of service. The average experience of nominated officers was 12 years, shows that respondents are having medium experience, who require know how in oil palm (Table 3).

**Table 4. Categorization of respondents based on Trainings attended on oil palm**

Trainings attended on oil palm	Frequency	Percentage
NO	21	67.74
YES	10	32.26
Total	31	100.00

**Table 5. Categorization of respondents based on Willingness for Training on oil palm technologies**

Willingness for Training on oil palm	Frequency	Percentage
NO	0	0
YES	31	100.00
Total	31	100

Though 32.26% respondents have undergone some training on oil palm cultivation (Table 4), all the respondents perceived to have training on oil palm technologies (Table 5).

**Table 6. Required Topics and Duration of Training Programme on oil palm**

Topic	Duration (No. of Days)
Water Management, Pest and Disease Management, Oil Palm Genetics / Botany	7
Package of Practices	6
Post Harvest, Nursery Management	5
Nutrient Management, Fertigation, Intercrops, Cropping / Farming System, Weed Management, Recycling of Biomass, Harvesting of Bunches, Processing of oil palm, Value Addition, ICT Tools, Improved techniques to improve quality and yield in oil palm, Production Technology	3
Soil and Leaf sample collection, Establishment & Management of Oil Palm Plantations, Developing Processing Unit of Oil Palm, Products and by products, Hybrid Seed Production	2
Nutrition of Palm Oil, Prospects of oil palm, New varieties	1

**Table 7. Categorization of respondents based on Number of Trainings required per year**

No. of Trainings	Frequency	Percentage
As per current job requirement	15	48.49
1	2	6.45
2	10	32.26
3	1	3.23
4	2	6.45
8	1	3.23
Total	31	100

Topics of training and required duration as expressed by them are as follows i.e., 7 days each for Water Management, Pest & Disease Management and Oil Palm Genetics / Botany; 6 days on Package of Practices; 5 days each on Nursery Management, Post Harvest; 3 days each on Nutrient Management, Fertigation, Intercrops, Cropping / Farming Systems, Weed Management, Recycling of Biomass, Harvesting, Processing, Value Addition, ICT Tools, Improved techniques to improve quality and yield in oil palm, Production Technology; 2 days each on Soil and leaf sample collection, Establishment & Management of oil palm plantations, developing

processing unit, Products and By-Products, Hybrid Seed Production and one day each on Nutrition of Palm Oil, Prospects of oil palm and New Varieties (Table 6). Respondents might have perceived these subjects would be useful to learn and disseminate the technology to the needed farmers in the oil palm growing areas.

Respondents (48.49%) perceived that, they wanted the training based on requirement of current job, followed by 32.26 % per of them expressed to undergo 2 trainings per year (Table 7). Since these respondents were from new oil palm growing areas, they might have perceived to undergo training to cater to the immediate on job requirement.

**Table 8. Categorization of respondents based on Online / Offline Training**

Training Mode	Frequency	Percentage
Online	5	16.13
Offline	24	77.42
Both	2	6.45
Total	31	100

Majority of the respondents (77.42 %) preferred offline training, where in 16.13 % preferred online training programme (Table 8). Majority might have felt direct participation, interaction, learning by seeing & doing would be more useful, hence opted for offline training programme.

**Table 9. Categorization of respondents based on Perceived Training Venue for offline training programmes**

Place	Frequency	Percentage
State HQ	7	23
District HQ	10	32
Block / Mandal HQ	2	6.5
Anywhere	12	39
	31	100

Majority (38.71%) of the respondents expressed to attend the training where ever it is organized, while 32.26% wanted the training venue to be at district headquarters while 22.58 % expressed that it should be held at state headquarters (Table 9). Respondents might have perceived to participate in training wherever it is arranged by the organizers.

**Table 10. Categorization of respondents based on Training Literature Requirement**

Training Literature Required	Frequency	Percentage
NO	0	0
YES	31	100
Total	31	100

All the respondents (100%) wanted the training literature (Table 10).

While 16.2 % respondents wanted softcopy of the literature, 13.5 % wanted to have hardcopy. 13.5% also wanted the material as power point presentations while 10.8 % expressed that training material could be given as manuals (Table 11).

**Table 11. Categorization of officers based on Type of Literature Required**

Literature type	Frequency	Percentage
Folder	1	2.70
Booklet	3	8.11
Presentation	5	13.50
Technical Bulletins	1	2.70
Training Manual	4	10.80
Leaflet	3	8.11
Handout	1	2.70
Softcopy	6	16.20
Hardcopy	5	13.50
Pendrive	2	5.41
Apps	2	5.41
CDs	1	2.70
Trail Data Maps	1	2.70
Compendium of Lectures	1	2.70
E Literature	1	2.70
Total	37	100.00

Respondents might have felt to have different type of literature for future reference and to guide the stakeholders in oil palm cultivation.

**Table 12. Categorization of respondents based on option for mode of dissemination oil palm technologies**

Literature type	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness Campaign	14	21.54
Demonstration	13	20.00
Training Programmes	16	24.62
Meetings	8	12.31
Farm and Home Visits	7	10.77
Workshops	5	7.69
Bike Rally	1	1.54
Exposure Visits	1	1.54
Total	65	100.00

Majority of respondents (24.62% ) perceived that dissemination of oil palm technologies need to be done through training programmes, while 21.54% perceived that it can be done through awareness

campaign and 20 % stated it could be done through demonstrations (Table 12). Respondents might have felt that technical knowledge & skills will be effectively gained through above capacity building programmes.

### CONCLUSION

The study conducted to assess the training needs of officers / extension personnel on oil palm technologies. The findings revealed that all the respondents were willing to undergo training and subject matter on which the training is required. Respondents perceived to have training based on requirement of the current job and were willing to attend the training wherever it is organized. They perceived that they can disseminate the learnt oil palm technologies to oil palm stakeholders through training programmes, awareness campaigns and demonstrations.

Study reveals training need subject matter areas as perceived by the nominated officers to meet the requirement of stakeholders in the field condition. Training logistics were also required to be met by the organizers of the training programme based on the specific needs. This study will give a road map to the planners and organizers to propose appropriate training programmes to the needy officers in the new and upcoming oil palm growing areas.

### LITERATURE CITED

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