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Knowledge of rural women regarding aonla (*Emblica officinalis* Gaertn) cultivation practices in Udaipur district

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Abstract
The study was conducted to study the knowledge of rural women in cultivation of aonla in Udaipur district (Rajasthan). The sample consisted of randomly selected 100 rural women from five villages of Mavli *tehsil* having maximum area under aonla cultivation. Personal interview techniques were used for collecting data from the respondents and collected data was classified, tabulated, and analyzed by calculating frequency and percentage and Mean Percent Score. The outcome of the study divulges that overall, respondents had good knowledge in aonla cultivation with MPS, 56.77. Further the respondents had good knowledge about vegetative propagation, plantation practices, irrigation and harvesting but had poor knowledge about improved variety and intercropping. The respondents were aware about the improved practices but lacked technical knowledge related to some of the aspects of aonla cultivation.

Keywords: Knowledge, cultivation, rural women, aonla

Introduction
Horticulture specifically means growing fruits and vegetables which has well-known significance from the economic viewpoint (Siddiqui *et al.* 2014). The horticultural crops form an important part of the daily diet as an effective nutritional supplement and the most prominent source for nutritional security. Fruit and vegetables are not only sources of many vitamins and minerals but eating them reduces the risk of disease. Among various fruits which are grown in India, aonla has its great importance as it is considered a magical fruit which has ample medicinal and health benefits. Aonla (*Emblica officinalis* Geartn) also known as Indian gooseberry is one of the oldest Indian fruits and considered as "Wonder fruit for health" and is a grateful fruit and one of the precious gifts of nature to man. The growing popularity for alternate medicines, health foods and herbal products has enhanced the requirements for aonla fruit and its products. Since aonla can be cultivated in waste and drylands, aonla production has become a major income producer for farmers in Rajasthan. Rural women in Udaipur district are actively engaged in different fruits and vegetables cultivation and their post-harvest activities. A wide gap separates the women farmer from the basic information needs to increase production, efficiency, and income. To fill this gap and boost the agriculture production, it is necessary to assess the knowledge of rural women regarding improved aonla cultivation practices. The present paper attempts to find out knowledge of rural women regarding aonla cultivation practices in Udaipur District, Rajasthan".

Objective: To study the knowledge of rural women regarding aonla cultivation of practices in Udaipur District

Methodology
The research work was purposively conducted in Udaipur district of Rajasthan State. Out of fifteen tehsils, one tehsil i.e., *Mavli* was selected purposively for the study on the basis maximum area under aonla cultivation and from the *Mavli* tehsil, five villages having maximum area under aonla cultivation were selected. For each selected villages, a list of rural women engaged in aonla cultivation was prepared in consultation with officials of State Department of Agriculture, Udaipur. A sample of 20 rural women was randomly drawn from each of the selected villages there by making a total sample of 100 rural women. To studying the knowledge of rural women in cultivation of aonla practices, a specially designed interview schedule was selected to get the information from the respondents.

Collected data were classified, tabulated, and analyzed by using frequency, percentage and mean per cent score.

Result and Discussion

a. **Background information of the respondents:** In the present study, most of the respondents (71%) belonged to the 31-45 years of age group and 60 per cent of them were illiterate. Further, 41 per cent of the respondents possessed 2.6-5.0-acre land and nearly 60 per cent per cent of respondents had television as a medium of getting information through the media. Most of the respondents (78%) belonged to nuclear family and farming was their primary occupation (82%). About organizational membership, only 15 per cent of the respondents had membership of formal organizations like co-operative and panchayat and all the respondents belonged to low socio-economic status. Regarding sources of information, 42 per cent of the respondents were getting information through agriculture supervisors whereas 25 and 15 per cent of the respondents gained information through personnel of KVK and extension workers.

b. **Knowledge of the respondents regarding improved aonla cultivation practices:** The knowledge about various components of improved aonla cultivation such as soil and climate, improved aonla varieties, vegetative propagation, plantation practices, irrigation, manure and fertilizer application, plant protection practices, training, and pruning, harvesting has been presented in this section and extent of knowledge possessed by the respondents in different component related to improved aonla cultivation is presented in three categories i.e., good, always, and poor along with Mean Percent Scores in Table 1. It is apparent from the table that in the component like soil and climate, less than half of the respondents had good (47%) and average (40%) knowledge with 45.66 MPS as respondents reported that sandy loam soil is an ideal soil condition for aonla production whereas very few respondents knew about the soil pH. Vishwakarma (2017) also revealed that most of the respondents (91%) knew about the type of climate required for aonla cultivation. Regarding improved variety, 59 per cent respondents had poor knowledge with MPS 30.5 as they were not able to recall the names of varieties. They had little bit knowledge about local varieties of aonla. (*Hathijhool* and *Banarasi*). Rural women in an informal discussion stated that these two varieties were recommended by agriculture supervisors and extension agents who regularly visit their area. In component of vegetative propagation, majority of the respondents (88%) possessed good knowledge with 78.85 MPS. Majority of the respondents knew about budding method of propagation in aonla and mentioned that it is simple and economic method and respondents had also knowledge about shield method of budding as an ideal method. Table further shows that 90 per cent respondents in the component of irrigation were found to be in good knowledge category with MPS 82.28. Respondent reported that March was the right time for irrigating aonla orchard and in summer, the field should be irrigated every 10-15 days whereas in winter the watering should be done at every 20-25 days' interval. About plantation practices, 71 per cent respondents were found under good knowledge level with MPS 79.3. It indicates that respondents had knowledge about the recommended age of plant for transplanting planting to the mainland and actual height required i.e.,1 foot of the nursery plant to be transplanted. Further they knew the suitable time of aonla plantation in orchard i.e., July to August whereas respondents stated that February to March is the best time for aonla transplanting.

In component of application of manure and fertilizer, respondents had good knowledge (73%) with MPS 73.76. Respondents generally used farmyard manure which include cow dung, rotten leaves, and grassland waste for covering the pit hole and to some extent the respondents had knowledge about chemical fertilizers such as super phosphate, chlorpyriphos, and murate of potash for covering the hole. In case of training and pruning, half of the respondents had good knowledge (50%) with MPS 70.8 as respondents mentioned that training and pruning facilitates spraying and other intercultural operations, and it removes infected branches and dead wood. Majority of the respondents (76%) had an idea about actual time to perform training in aonla plant so that, plant leads a healthy life and bear good number of fruits. Regarding plant protection practices, majority of the respondents (72%) had an average knowledge with MPS 43.1. About common insect-pest infestation, respondents had knowledge regarding leaf eating caterpillar in aonla as respondents regularly monitored and observed the leaves of aonla for having any bug and insect infestation. Bark eating caterpillar and shoot gall maker were also known to the respondents as a common insect of aonla. Besides this, 73 per cent respondent possessed poor knowledge in intercropping component with 24.28 MPS. Some respondents only intercropped vegetables, pulses and *barseem* with aonla orchard and they were not aware about different combination of intercropping plants. In harvesting of aonla, most of the rural women (93%) had good knowledge with 98.25 MPS as respondents knew the correct stage, time and method of harvesting. Similar finding reported by Meena *et al.* (2020) that respondents possessed poor knowledge about characteristics of improved varieties, recommended control measures for pests and diseases, methods and correct time of propagation, name of fertilizers and their quantities and average yield of aonla from eight to ten years old plant. This indicated the need for training regarding vegetative propagation, plant protection measures, information about improved varieties, name of fertilizers and average yield of aonla *etc.* Data in Table 1 further reported the overall knowledge of rural women in all cultivation practices, which shows that majority of the respondents (91%) had average knowledge with overall MPS, 56.77, whereas only 9 per cent respondents had good knowledge in aonla cultivation (Fig. 1). Patra and Pelebei (2021) in a study on "Knowledge and adoption of improved cultivation practices of mandarin (*Citrus reticulata* Blanco) growers in Nagaland, India", showed that the majority (75.84%) of the respondents had average level of knowledge about improved cultivation practices. Many of the mandarin growers had a higher level of knowledge on the package of practices viz., site selection, propagation, planting material, irrigation, intercultural operations, diseases, pests and harvesting.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by their component wise knowledge regarding improved aonla cultivation practices n=100

S. No.	Component	Good f (%)	Average f (%)	Poor f (%)	MPS
I.	Soil and Climate	47	40	13	45.66
II.	Improved Variety	3	38	59	30.5
III.	Vegetative Propagation	88	12	0	78.85
IV.	Plantation Practices	71	29	0	79.3
V.	Irrigation	90	10	0	82.28
VI.	Manure And Fertilizers	73	27	0	73.76
VII.	Training and Pruning	50	35	15	70.8
VIII.	Plant Protection Practices	4	72	24	43.1
IX.	Intercropping	00	27	73	24.28
X.	Harvesting	93	7	0	98.25
	Overall knowledge	9	91	0	56.77

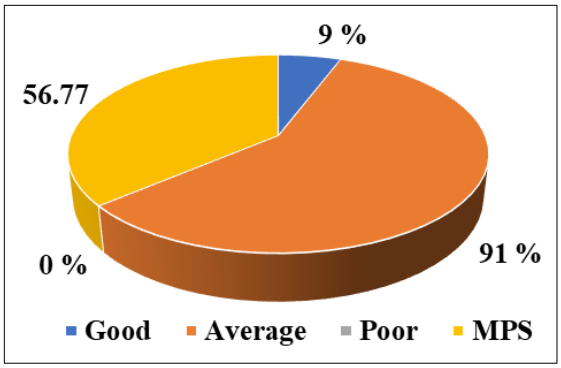

Fig 1: Overall knowledge of respondents in improved aonla cultivation and practices

Conclusion

It can be inferred that the respondents were aware about the improved practices but lacked technical knowledge related to some of the aspects of aonla cultivation and respondents possessed poor knowledge regarding improved plant varieties of aonla and intercropping with low MPS. The possible reason regarding poor knowledge of women might be due to lack of exposure to different information sources. For earning good profit and income, it is important to upgrade their existing knowledge and sensitize them abut new improved scientific practices with assistance of personnel working in the field of agriculture development. Hence, there is a compelling need to educate and train them regarding improved cultivation practices so that technological gaps can be minimized. For exposure of rural women to new agricultural technologies, regular visits of rural women should be organized at Krishi Vigyan Kendras and Agricultural Technological Information Centers.

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