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A study on farmers' knowledge and attitudinal orientation towards nursery raising in horticulture

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Abstract

Horticultural nurseries play a crucial role in providing healthy, high-quality planting materials through advanced propagation techniques. Nursery raising has evolved into a skilled, market-oriented enterprise with substantial potential for income generation, community development, and ecological sustainability. This study, conducted in the districts of Anand, Vadodara, and Kheda in Gujarat, involved 120 purposively selected farmers engaged in nursery raising. An ex-post-facto research design was employed, and data were collected using a structured interview schedule and data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel (Office 365) and SPSS (Version 26). Analysis revealed that farmers generally possess a positive attitude toward nursery raising, which is influenced by practical experience, peer learning, and direct engagement in horticultural activities. Socio-economic and psychological factors, such as education, training, extension participation, and market orientation, play a significant role in shaping farmers' attitudes, while variables like age, family size, landholding, and scientific orientation are less influential. The findings underscore the importance of enhancing farmers' knowledge, skills, and market awareness to strengthen positive perceptions, increase active participation, and promote sustainable horticultural development. Overall, the study highlights the intersection of technical expertise, entrepreneurial mindset, and ecological stewardship in successful nursery management.

Keywords: Horticultural nursery, knowledge, attitude

Introduction

Agriculture and horticulture are vital sciences that ensure global food security, with healthy plants forming the foundation for sustainable production. Nurseries serve as the cornerstone of horticultural practices by providing vigorous seedlings and planting materials derived from both seeds and vegetative parts. Acting as nurturing grounds, nurseries employ scientific propagation methods to cultivate seedlings, grafts, saplings and ornamental plants. With advancements in technology, modern nursery management has evolved into a commercial enterprise integrating cost-effective practices that enhance transplant success, minimize labor and meet the increasing demand for high-quality planting material. This growing demand driven by interests in vegetable gardening, fruit tree cultivation, agroforestry and plantation crops has transformed nursery raising into a profitable venture for farmers, horticulturists and entrepreneurs alike.

Horticultural nurseries today represent the intersection of science, business and sustainability. Successful nursery management requires a blend of technical knowledge, entrepreneurial vision and effective resource utilization. Nursery entrepreneurs combine expertise in plant biology, soil health, pest management and irrigation with creativity and business acumen to ensure productivity and profitability. Far from being simple plant-growing

operations, nurseries demand strategic planning, marketing skills and continuous innovation. These entrepreneur-farmers not only drive economic growth through employment generation and enterprise development but also contribute to environmental stewardship and community well-being. Thus, horticultural nurseries exemplify the integration of agricultural innovation and entrepreneurship, fostering both ecological and economic progress.

Objective

To measure the attitude and level of knowledge of farmers towards horticultural nursery raising.

Methodology

The present study was carried out in 2025 to assess farmers' knowledge and attitudes toward horticultural nursery raising. The research was guided by a positivist philosophy, focusing on the objective measurement and empirical analysis of observable variables. A deductive approach was employed to test theoretical assumptions. The districts of Anand, Vadodara and Kheda in Gujarat were purposively selected for the study. A total of 120 farmers involved in horticultural nursery raising were also purposively chosen as respondents.

The study followed a survey strategy within an *ex-post-facto* research design (Kerlinger, 1976) ^[3] and adopted a cross-

sectional time frame, as data were collected at a single point in time. Data were gathered using a structured interview schedule. To measure farmers' attitudes toward horticultural nursery raising, Scale of Parmar *et al.* (2012) was used with slight modifications, while a structured schedule was designed to assess their knowledge. Data analysis was performed using statistical tools, including Microsoft Excel (Office 365) and SPSS (Version 26).

Table 1: Distributions of farmers according to their attitude towards horticultural nursery raising (n=120)

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Per cent
1	Strongly unfavourable (Up to 25.20 score)	00	00.00
2	Unfavourable (25.21 to 36.40 score)	02	01.67
3	Neutral (36.41 to 47.60 score)	26	21.67
4	Favourable (47.61 to 58.80 score)	76	63.33
5	Strongly favourable (Above 58.00 score)	16	13.33
Total		120	100.00

Table 1 shows that the majority of farmers (63.33%) held a favourable attitude toward horticultural nursery raising, followed by 21.67% with a neutral attitude and 13.33% with a strongly favourable attitude. Only 1.67% of farmers expressed an unfavourable attitude, while none (0.00%) exhibited a strongly unfavourable attitude.

Overall, it can be inferred that most farmers demonstrate a positive attitude toward horticultural nursery raising. This favourable outlook may be due to the relatively low investment required for nursery cultivation compared to other agricultural activities, its potential to provide a steady year-round income, its suitability for small landholdings, and the opportunities it offers for value-added production.

Level of knowledge

The knowledge of farmers involved in horticultural nursery raising reflects their level of awareness, understanding, and technical skills in nursery practices. The data on farmers' overall knowledge are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of farmers according to their overall knowledge towards horticultural nursery raising (n = 120)

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Per cent
1	Very low (Up to 20.00%)	00	00.00
2	Low (20.01 to 40.00%)	12	10.00
3	Medium (40.01 to 60.00%)	43	35.83
4	High (60.01 to 80.00%)	61	50.83
5	Very high (Above 80.00%)	04	03.33
Total		120	100.00

Table 2 indicates that the majority of farmers (50.83%) possessed a high level of knowledge regarding horticultural nursery raising, while 35.83% demonstrated a moderate level of knowledge. Furthermore, 10.00% of the respondents exhibited a low level of knowledge, 3.33% had a very high level, and none (0.00%) fell into the very low knowledge category.

This outcome is likely attributable to the fact that most farmers have practical experience and are actively engaged in horticultural nursery activities, which allows them to acquire knowledge through direct involvement. In addition, the regular exchange of ideas among farmers, combined with learning through trial and error, may have played a significant role in enhancing their knowledge over time.

Results and Discussion

Attitude of the farmers

The attitude of farmers involved in horticultural nursery raising indicates the extent of their positive or negative feelings, as manifested through their behaviors toward their occupation. The data on farmers' attitudes toward nursery raising are presented in Table 1.

Conclusion

The findings of the study reveal that farmers involved in horticultural nursery raising exhibit a generally positive attitude and possess considerable knowledge about nursery practices. A majority of farmers hold favourable or strongly favourable attitudes, reflecting recognition of the economic viability, low investment needs, year-round income potential, and suitability for small landholdings offered by nursery cultivation. Similarly, most respondents demonstrated medium to high levels of knowledge, likely gained through practical experience and active engagement in nursery activities. This combination of positive perception and technical understanding provides a strong basis for adopting improved nursery techniques, enhancing productivity, and promoting horticultural nurseries as a sustainable and profitable agribusiness venture.

Policy Implications

1. Governments should offer simplified, farmer-friendly loan schemes tailored to nursery development to promote investment and operations.
2. Targeted interventions based on farmer profiles: Development programs should consider education, experience, and social participation to customize extension and support services.

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Conflict of Interest

All authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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