

SHORT COMMUNICATION

# Marketing of *aonla* fruits

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*Aonla* (*Emblica officinalis* Gaertn.), also known as Indian gooseberry, is the emerging fruit crop with lot of scope for commercial cultivation with its wider adaptability across India. It comes up well in black saline soil, dry lands, with less pest incidence, prolonged storability, high medicinal value and thereby greater demand in pharmaceutical, cosmetic and food industry. Recently role of extension has been stretched beyond production and market information has been brought under its purview to facilitate the farmer in fetching good price for his produce. Marketing of *aonla* fruits has become important aspect in view of its greater demand from various sectors. Keeping this in view, a study was conducted to assess the method of marketing of *aonla* fruits by the farmers.

The study was conducted in Panchmahals and Vadodara districts of Gujarat. The list of *aonla* farmers was prepared and thirty farmers were randomly selected. A structured interview schedule was prepared to assess the marketing of *aonla* fruits by the *aonla* farmers. Data were collected during January March 2001, by interviewing the farmers at their farm. The statistical tools used were frequency and per cent.

Table 1 revealed that the majority (43 per cent) of the farmers sold the *aonla* fruits to pre-harvest contractor. This might be due to saving the expenditure on watch and ward of the fruit trees when the fruit was in bearing condition, harvest, packing, and transportation. Further, the farmer got the income well in advance of harvest of the fruits. However, the price offered by pre-harvest contractor was usually less remunerative than the direct auctioning at wholesale market. Sadaphal *et al.* (2003) observed that the white onion growers sold their produce through wholesaler in other village. Custard apple growers expressed that commission agents deduct more commission, fluctuations in the market prices, difficulty in getting the documents for export purpose, prices are not according to the quality of fruits, and damage of fruits during transportation were the major marketing constraints (Yelpankar *et al.*, 2000). Onion growers expressed that open auction sale fetches low price for onion produce, low prices and fluctuation in market price, commission agents charge heavy commission, without involvement of middleman/commission agents, it is very difficult to sell the onion produce in market, and malpractices adopted in market were the major problems in marketing of onion produce (Waman and Patil, 2000).

## Mode of transport of *aonla* fruits

It was evident from table 2 that all the farmers used truck for transporting the *aonla* fruits to the market. It might be due to fast, and huge space. White onion growers had transported their produce from the storage place to the marketing place by bullock cart (Sadaphal *et al.*, 2003).

## Type of packing of *aonla* fruits

Table 3 indicated that the majority (47 per cent) of the farmers used wooden boxes for packing *aonla* fruits. Forty per cent of the farmers packed *aonla* fruits in gunny bags. It might be due to cheap, easy and local availability of wooden boxes and gunny bags. These packing materials caused bruising of fruits, leading to brown discoloration on the skin of the fruits within two hours. Even though the Corrugated Fibre Boxes (CFBs) were the best packing material, none of the farmers used it. It might be due to high cost, non-availability at local place.

## Source of information

Table 4 revealed that the majority (40 per cent) of the farmers got the information regarding the price of *aonla* fruits from *mandi* agent. This might be due to cosmopolitaness of the farmers and they might be regularly visiting the *mandies* and contacted the *mandi* agent and got the first hand information on the prevailing price of *aonla* fruits.

Farmers sold the *aonla* fruits to pre-harvest contractor. Truck was used for transporting the *aonla* fruits to the market. Wooden boxes were used for packing *aonla* fruits. Farmers consulted *mandi* agent for market price of *aonla* fruits. The market of *aonla* had to be strengthened and the competition among different sectors that needed *aonla* as essential raw material of their products had to be manoeuvred in favour of the farmers. The electronic media like television channels, Internet and modern communication devices like cellular phones might be effectively used for delivering latest information about prevailing market prices at various markets. Farmers should be persuaded to pack the *aonla* fruits in the Corrugated Fibre Boxes (CFBs) which are best packing material with no bruising and no browning of fruits; easy for packing, handling, transport; attractive and preferred by the end users. CFBs should be made easily, locally available and at low cost affordable by the farmers.

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Cooperatives might be established to eliminate the middlemen. The farmers might be provided training about

value addition of aonla fruits like preparation of pickles, murraba, mouth freshner, etc.

Table 1. Method of aonla marketing

S.No.	Method	Farmers	
		No.	Per cent
1	Self marketing through commission agent	7	23.4
2	Sale to pre-harvest contractor	13	43.4
3	Direct auctioning in the wholesale market/mandies	10	33.4
4	Sale to cooperative society	0	0

Table 2. Mode of transport of aonla fruits

S.No.	Mode	Farmers	
		No.	Per cent
1	Truck	30	100
2	Cartload	0	0
3	Others	0	0

Table 3. Type of packing of aonla fruits

S.No.	Method	Farmers	
		No.	Per cent
1	Basket	0	0
2	Wooden box	14	46.7
3	Wooden crate	4	13.4
4	Gunny bag	12	40
5	Loose loading in truck	0	0
6	CFB box	0	0

Table 4. Source of information

S.No.	Method	Farmers	
		No.	Per cent
1	Mandi agent	12	40
2	Newspaper	7	23.4
3	Television	4	13.4
4	Market	7	23.4

#### References

- Sadaphal, S.S., Sawant, P.A. and Nirban, A.J. 2003. Storage and marketing practices of white onion followed by the white onion growers. *Maharashtra Journal of Extension Education*. 22(1):75-77.
- Waman, G.K. and Patil, P.S. 2000. Production, storage and marketing constraints faced by onion growers.

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- Yelpanekar, P. H., Sawant, G.K. and Rade, V.M. 2000. Factors associated with production and marketing of custard apple. *Maharashtra Journal of Extension Education*. 19:100-103.



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