

Title Post harvest losses of fruits and vegetables in Bangladesh
Author M. Burhan Uddin I, Imtiaz Hussain
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Abstract

Fruits and vegetables production plays a key role in the overall economic performance of Bangladesh, in terms of its contribution to GDP, population health and nutrition and as a minor source of foreign exchange earnings. Bangladesh produces a diversity of tropical fruits and vegetables. Some of the more commonly produced fruit include jackfruit, banana, mango, pineapple, papaya, melon, guava, citrus fruits including lemon and lime, sapota and litchi. Post harvest losses in food grains in Bangladesh are reported at an estimated 15%, while in fruits and vegetables they are estimated at 20-26%. For highly perishable fruits and vegetables, these losses may go as high as 40%. The problem of post harvest losses is compounded by the lack of proper processing, preservation and storage systems. The absence of a well-developed marketing network and rapid transportation in the country also contributes significantly to high post harvest losses in fruits and vegetables. Total production of fruits and vegetables in Bangladesh in 2010 - II was 7.78 million tones, comprising 4.62 million tones of fruits and 3.16 million tones of vegetables. But the post-harvest losses fruits and vegetables in same year were more than one-third of the total production of horticultural crops in Bangladesh and estimated to be more than two million tones. Post harvest losses are mainly due to mechanical injury, microbial infections, high temperature and humidity among other causes. Due to post harvest losses all the production inputs, farmer's labor, time, money investment wasted too many extents which obviously have negative effect on productivity and availability of commodity. This paper deals with how post harvest losses can be reduced through the integrated scientific approaches addressing the issues pertaining to production, post harvest handling, processing, storage and transportation. Bangladesh has a high potentiality of export expansion due to increased global demand for high value fruits and vegetables. With improvement of post-harvest technologies in handling, packaging, storage and cooling system, fruits and vegetables export from Bangladesh may be accelerated.