

Horticulture sector towards economic development of Jammu & Kashmir

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Abstract

Horticulture sector plays a vital role in providing livelihood security to the farmers globally under the changing agricultural scenario. Area, production, productivity and export of horticultural produces are vital for increasing farm income and overall employment in the agricultural sector. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore potential and strength of Jammu and Kashmir with regard to its production and export of fresh and dry fruits. Jammu and Kashmir is the major producer of apple and walnuts in India, 77 percent of apple and 90 percent of walnut production in India belongs to Jammu and Kashmir and percentage share of state in India's total production is showing an increasing trend. The state has been declared as the "Agri. Export zone for Apples and Walnuts". Given the declining share of traditional agricultural commodities in production, consumption and trade; horticulture represent an important industry to improve income growth and employment in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: Economic Development, Export, Employment, Horticulture Production

1. Introduction

For world famous varieties of fruits, dry fruits, honey and saffron, Jammu & Kashmir State is considered home for all. Horticulture is one of the most dominant sector and backbone of Jammu and Kashmir's economy with a yearly turnover of Rs.1200 Crores. It provides direct and indirect employment to about 23 lakh people and has potential for further growth. Keeping this in view the state government has declared horticulture a thrust area and is taking a number of steps to boost it. Almost a century ago in the words of Sir Walter Lawrence, the European settlement commissioner of erstwhile Maharaja of Kashmir "Kashmir is the country of fruits, and perhaps no country has greater ambience for horticulture; as indigenous apple, pear, vine, mulberry, walnut, hazel, peach, apricot, raspberry, gooseberry, currant, and strawberry can come into possession without much trouble in most parts of the valley". If we analyze the sector now as almost 100 years have gone by, that definition arose a number of questions. Kashmir is not home now to that diverse and abounding fruit. The quality of fruit has diminished. In quantitative aspects the production might have gone up but the aroma, taste and size of fruit and the number of apples per plant has diminished. In other words the production might have escalated in the recent years but the productivity has abbreviated. The quantity of adjunct fruits has diminished. There is reduction in the juice concentrates, jams, jellies and marmalades. The prime reason for a fall in the number of processed fruits is the mismanagement of the sector. The horticulture sector is completely unorganized as a result of which the processing food industry which was once functional in the north of Kashmir is no more functional and not only that, no steps are taken for future as well. If the industry is taken care, it can be a great source of employment and revenue generation and hence will help to drive the economy.

2. Objectives of the study

The present study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the history and development of horticulture.

2. To study the contribution of horticulture towards the economy of Jammu & Kashmir.
3. To analyze the factors which play spoilsport in production and marketing of fruits.
4. To recommend suitable measures for the rehabilitation of the horticulture sector.

3. Methodology

For the study, the data has been collected from secondary sources and has been collected from the Government Official Records; Economic Survey of Jammu and Kashmir; Directorate of Horticulture Planning and Marketing; Magazines; Journals and other agencies which is related to Department of Horticulture in the State. The present study is analytical and empirical in nature. The data has been analyzed and interpreted through tabulation and simple percentage method. Further various published research papers and reports of State and Central Govt. have been used to arrive at the aforesaid objectives of the study.

4. Horticulture Sector - A Review

For sustainable development and spurring growth, poverty reduction and enhancing food security in developing countries like India, agriculture is considered as a strong option and fundamental instrument. Although agriculture occupies a shrinking share of India's national economy, achieving rapid growth in agriculture sector remains a nationwide major policy concern. The contribution of agriculture to India's gross domestic product (GDP) fell from 40% in 1980-81 to 13.7% in 2012-13 (CSO, GOI 2012-13) [7]. However, more than 70% of India's population lives in rural areas, and three-fourths of them depend on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihoods. Furthermore, the agricultural sector is the main source of employment in India, comprising 52% of the country's labour force in 2011-12.

Horticulture is not only a means of employment but also forms integral part of food and nutritional security and important source of economic security. Horticulture production contributes directly to national prosperity. Many horticultural

products are exported to various countries of the world and by exporting the produce our economy earns foreign exchange. India exports flowers to America, Netherland, Germany, UK, vegetables to Sri Lanka, fresh Grapes and fresh fruits to Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia. Shifting towards horticulture production, both by small and marginal farmer's act as a mean to prosperity in many regions of country like Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir etc. Horticulture sector is the consumer for many auxiliary industries like fertilizer, pesticide, fungicide industries, canning industries and processing industries. One hectare of fruit production generates 860 man days per annum (GOI 2005). So far Indian horticulture was insulated from outside world. Time bound removal of quantitative restrictions and other initiatives under WTO of which India is signatory, Indian horticulture became more competitive both in domestic and export market. This would generally modify crop varieties; micro propagation integrated and water management ensuring nutritional and aesthetic security of population of millions. Major challenge for our horticulture sector with shrinking agriculture activity, the sensible option before nation is to increase further the production per unit area, intensive cultivation in high-tech protected environment with high- tech production inputs.

Over the years, horticulture has emerged as one of the potential agricultural enterprise in accelerating the growth of economy. It offers not only a wide range of options to the farmers for crop diversification, but also provides ample scope for sustaining large number of Agro industries which generate huge employment opportunities. At present, horticulture is contributing 24.5% of GDP from 8% land area. India has now emerged as the world's largest producer of coconut and tea and the second largest producer and exporter of tea, coffee, cashew, spices exports of fresh and processed fruits, vegetables, cut flowers, and dried flowers have also been picking up (GOI, 2001).

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is basically agriculture in nature, 75% people depend on agriculture and 60% of states revenue is contributed by the primary sector (State Agriculture Department). In the State, there is little scope for agriculture development and increase in productivity because of hilly terrain and fragmented and marginal holdings. The peculiar geographical situation, hilly terrain even of agricultural lands and lack of infrastructural facilities in Jammu and Kashmir has resulted in stagnant agriculture development. The production and productivity is not increasing in the same way as the input costs applied in production of crops. The agriculture is viewed as uneconomic activity and lot of disguised unemployment prevails. Horticulture sector has acted as viable option because of comparative advantage enjoyed by the State in the production of certain world famous horticulture products due to climate and land suitability. Thus horticulture sector acts as an accelerative mechanism for overall economic growth and upliftment of rural poor by raising their living standard through their income levels.

Horticulture occupies an importance place in farming system. The initial land use pattern was mostly field crop cultivation, over the period of time due to better prospectus and wide scope for production of cash crops it has changed to agri-horticultural. Horticulture sector emerged as dominant industry

in the state economy. Out of total area of horticulture in the State, 90% is occupied by the Kashmir valley due to its suitable climate with annual turnover of \$75 million. State have different agro-climatic and topographical advantages, famous for horticulture production in India, the environmental conditions offers a wide scope for cultivation of all types of horticulture crops grown in different tropical zones. Temperate fruits like Apple, Pear, Plum, Apricot, Medical and Aromatic Plants, Mushroom and all types of vegetables, besides these world famous spices like Saffron and Black Zeera are cultivated. Horticulture industry is considered to sub-sector showing remarkable progress in the state. Horticulture is gaining momentum by its growing contribution to agriculture and GSDP. Fruit production has increased to 11.05 metric tons during 1990-2000 from mere 16,000 metric tons in 1953-54, fresh fruit increased to 10.22 lakh metric tons; the area under fruit cultivation has increased by 17 times increased to 2.12 lakh hectare in 2013-2014. Per hectare yield has also increased to 25.94 metric tons from 1.29 metric tons (J&K Horticulture Department).

The major cultivation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir is apple production. From past one and half decade production and area under apple cultivation has substantially increased due to high value of apple production. Production has increased from 1151.7 thousand M.T to 1373 thousand M.T and also the share of State in the national production of apple has increased from 63.5% to 77.2 % in 2010 (National Horticulture Board, 2011). Saffron is world famous high valued low volume industrial/medical product, has great exporting value in the State. Presently Iran with production of 70% of the world Saffron ranked at first and India with production of 7.0% (J&K'S Monopoly), ranked as a third largest producer of Saffron. State has monopoly in the production of walnut, 90% of national share is produced in the state. According to State Horticulture Department about 6 lakh families are involved in horticulture industry and around 30 lakh persons get employment directly or indirectly from fruit industry of state.

In Tropical region of Jammu fruits like Mango, Peach and Litchi and cold arid zone of Ladakh there is only one cropping pattern buckwheat, turnips and recently Strawberry cultivation were adopted in Ladakh. The region is famous for spice of Black Zeera. Certain Aromatic and medical plants are also produced in the state. World high quality and high priced saffron is produced in Jammu and Kashmir. Fruits like Apple, Walnut and Almond get rank first, second and third respectively in area and production holding area of 64.05%, 27.3% and 8.65% respectively (Digest of Statistics, J&K 2013-2014). So it has become sub-sector and promising part of agriculture and important for overall growth and raising living standard.

Table1 reveals that from the year 2004-05, area and production under the cultivation of horticulture, fruits has increased manifold and results in huge amounts of dispatches from the State. There were favourable trends in overall growth of horticulture sector because of 45% of GDP from agriculture is contributed by horticulture sector and various policy measures from centre and state government to boost horticulture sector due to labour absorbing nature of this sector which provides employment to large chunk of population.

Table 1: Area and Production of Horticulture Fruits (Dry and Fresh)

Year	Area (Thousand Hectares)			Production (Lakh Metric Tons)		
	Fresh	Dry	Total	Fresh	Dry	Total
2004-05	167.6	90.7	258.3	12.17	1.14	13.31
2005-06	174.2	93.1	267.4	12.96	1.22	14.18
2006-07	123.6	66.0	189.6	12.65	1.07	13.72
2007-08	196.1	99.0	295.1	14.78	1.58	16.36
2008-09	203.3	102.3	305.6	15.31	1.60	16.91
2009-10	209.7	105.4	315.1	15.35	1.77	17.12
2010-11	217.1	108.0	325.1	20.42	1.80	22.22
2011-12	226.4	110.2	336.6	22.58	1.87	24.45
2012-13	230.1	114.6	344.7	23.13	1.92	25.05
2013-14	234.5	119.3	353.8	23.96	1.98	25.94

Source: Directorate of Horticulture, Government of J&K

The drawbacks which the state farmers are facing are with regard to marketing and storage facilities. The state Govt. has not provided good number of storage facilities with the result a good proportion of fruits go waste. The lack of marketing facilities is main factor which has adversely affected the horticulture sector of Jammu & Kashmir. Poor market strategy, poor infrastructure in terms of roads, lack of market strategy and grading leads a lot of problems like wastage of products on one hand and increasing cost on the other hand.

5. Conclusion

The study reveals that horticulture sector is a highly contributing industry in the Jammu & Kashmir State. Due to higher return on horticulture production, people shift from food grain production to cash crop. Horticulture sector contribute 7 percent to state domestic product and 45 percent of agriculture returns in the agricultural sector are accounted by horticulture. Proper marketing facilities should be given to the fruit grower in the state. An export zones should be encourage to be set up in the state so that the export of fresh and dry fruits can be promoted. For the growth prospect of this sector, the agriculture sector should not produce only for food security mode but it should look for producing products like high value fruits, vegetables and some cash crops, so that it could shift its strategy from food security mode to value addition mode. Growing of supplementary crops should be encouraged by the state government. For sustaining employment in the horticulture sector, state government should provide proper marketing facilities to the cultivators. Government should focus more on research and development activities in the horticulture. There is an immense need to prepare a proper vision and mission on horticulture. In order to boost the horticulture crop production state governments should define role clearly and mobilize resource to invest in this sector. Agricultural universities should take lead role in providing technical knowledge to the horticulture crops growers in a systematic way, So that farmers are enable to increase the area under fruits and vegetables and achieve the demand of fruits and vegetables. Production of fruits and vegetables can also be increased by scientific production technology. Organic farming also improves the quality of fresh and dry fruits which have high export potential in international market. Quality control laboratories should be established to ensure the exporters the commodities to export that can get international standard in foreign market.

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