

Impact of Horticulture towards Economic Development of Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Kashmir, lately referred to as “Paradise on Earth” has many assets to boast off and undoubtedly its salutory climate being one big asset. This favorable climate makes horticulture as one of the most emerging sectors. J&k has been officially declared as Agri Export zone for apples and walnut. The steep rise in the production of 1.83 MTS in 1972-73 has taken a jump to 24.94 L MT’S with a turnover of 6000.00 crore, apart from foreign exchange of over 80 crore, this sector is next biggest source of income in state’s economy. Horticulture is the mainstay of economy in Kashmir with 23 million people associated with this sector and 23700 hectares of land for fruit cultivation. In this paper, an attempt has been made to explore the potential of horticulture in valley towards the economic development.

Keywords: Economic Development, Employment, Export.

1 INTRODUCTION

Horticulture is defined as the art and science of growing fruits, vegetables, herbs, nuts and ornamental plants. Kashmir, famous for its rich landscape and lush green meadows bears home to many varieties of articles like apple, almond, walnut, plum, apricot, strawberry and saffron. Horticulture is gaining momentum by its growing contribution to agriculture and GSDP. Apples and walnut are the major producer of j&k. about 75% of apple and 90% of walnut production in India comes from J&K. Horticulture practices have pushed the economy further of the state for a long time now. It has managed to engage a huge slice of rural labor required for the cultivation of fruits and crops. Around 6 lakh farm families comprising of 30 lakh people are being directly or indirectly involved with horticulture sector. In addition to this, if given enough attention, this sector can scale new heights in enhancing the nutritional safety and working capital of the population. 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”. For sustainable development and stirring growth, poverty reduction and enhancing food security in developing countries like India, agriculture is considered as a powerful option and basic tool. Although agriculture occupies a diffident share of India’s national economy, achieving rapid growth in agriculture sector remains a nationwide major policy concern.

2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the contribution of horticulture in employment generation of state
2. To study the comparative advantage of varied horticulture produces in kashmir

3 METHODOLOGY

The data has been collected from secondary sources like the Government Official Records; Economic Survey of Jammu and Kashmir, Directorate of Horticulture Planning and Marketing, Magazines, Journals and other agencies which are

related to Department of Horticulture in the State. 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: MAJOR SOURCE OF REVENUE GENERATION

Horticulture sector has acted as feasible 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 stimulative mechanism for overall economic growth and upliftment of rural poor by raising their living standard of living through their income levels. The favorable climatic conditions offer 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 be sub-sector showing remarkable progress in the state. 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. 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. There are many positive effects of horticulture sector in state of Jammu and Kashmir which are

Given below:

- Contribution to State Gross Domestic Product
- Employment creation
- Foreign Exchange Contribution
- Transformation of rural economy
- Improve health sector
- Skill development
- Conservation of natural resources

The tables below show the area under production and exports during last five years

The area and production during the last five years are:-

Year	Area (Lakh Ha)	Production (Lakh MTs)	Productivity Per Hect.
2010-11	3.25	22.22	6.83
2011-12	3.42	21.61	6.32
2013-14	3.55	21.17	5.96
2014-15	3.56	17.12	4.76
2015-16	3.38	24.94	7.38

Exports during the last 5 years are as under:-

Year	Fresh Fruits (Apple(95%), Pear, Cherry, Apricot & Peach etc. (in LMT)	Walnut Fresh (in LMT)
2011-12	10.54	0.19
2012-13	11.76	0.18
2013-14	11.92	0.18
2014-15	12.55	0.15
2015-16	14.58	0.14

PRODUCTION OF MAJOR HORTICULTURE CROPS

The state is blessed with vast potential for all kinds of fruits. Apple, Pear, Cherry, Plum, Walnut, Almonds etc. are major fruits grown in the state. . Among temperate fruits, apple has rank first in terms of production. The production of apple was 1662.36 thousand metric tonnes in 2013- 14 which accounts 78.51 percent of total fruit production. The production of pear had increased from 40.25 thousand metric tonnes in 2004-05 to 72.65 thousand metric tonnes in 2013-14 i.e. showing an increase of 80.50 percent. Among the production of dry fruits, the production of walnut and almond are 251.93 and 9.56 thousand metric tonnes in 2013-14 which accounts 11.89 percent and 0.45 percent of the total fruit production of the state. Previously, Apples contributed more in total fruit production in the state. Now, the cultivation of walnut has also seen the diversification of fruit. Among the dry fruit, walnut has a very high export potential. Jammu and Kashmir is a largest producer as well as exporter of dry fruits. It has an important source of Foreign Exchange earnings. Apple and walnut contributed a major share of total fruit production in the state.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Horticulture sector contribute 7 percent to state domestic product and 45 percent of agriculture returns in the agricultural sector are accounted by horticulture. However, the lack of proper marketing strategies is main factor which has adversely affected the horticulture sector. 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. Proper marketing facilities should be given to the fruit growers in the state. An export zone should be encouraged 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.

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