

Comparative Strategies of Horticultural Practices: An Evaluative Study of North Kashmir

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Abstract—Jammu and Kashmir is Northern most state of India and is considered as the largest state of the country in terms of area. The state consists of three divisions, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, and 22 districts. 10 districts in jammu, 10 districts in kashmir and two in ladakh. Kashmir division is divided into North, South and Central Kashmir. In the state of Jammu and kashmir, Horticulture is being considered as the most emerging economic sector. Most of land under horticulture is in South Kashmir (Shopian, Anantnag, Kulgam and Budgam districts) and in North Kashmir (Kupwara, Bandipora and Baramulla). Popularly known as the valley of flowers, the Kashmir horticulture sector is one of the prominent sectors of economy, known for the wide variety of fruits, vegetables and flowers. Around Twelve hundred crore of annual income of the state is being contributed by the horticulture sector. This pieces of research tries to focus on is to study the comparative strategies of horticulture practices and its impact on economy of North Kashmir.

The main objectives of this research were:

- To evaluate comparative advantage of varied horticulture produces in north kashmir.
- To understand impact of horticulture on economy;
- To study influence of new technology on horticulture sector;
- To evaluate perceptions of grassroots people associated with horticulture industry.

The study is based on Primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the personnel interview with the work force of the Industry and cultivators, growers and laborers of horticultural produces, face-to-face interaction with the technical and the top as well as bottom level employees of the industry. Secondary data was collected from books, journals, research papers, newspapers, magazines, online sources, Reports etc. The major limitation of the study is that it was confined to only north Kashmir and not many statistical tools were used for analysis. The major findings of this research was that Horticulture is concentrated on few major horticulture produces in a particular districts and there are numerous inter district disparities in horticulture production. In order to boost horticulture sector, focus should be on diversification in the district. However the particular district should not follow the uniform policies due to weather conditions of the region. In this regard Government should take necessary help of horticultural experts and provide a necessary infrastructure to promote the horticulture sector. Marketing facilities should be provided to horticulture producers for the promotion of horticulture produces.

Keywords: J&k, Horticulture, North Kashmir, Comparative strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Jammu and Kashmir is Northern most state of India with an area of 2, 22,236 sq.Kms and is considered as the largest state of the country in terms of area. The state consists of three divisions, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, and 22 districts. 10 districts in jammu, 10 districts in kashmir and two in ladakh. Kashmir division is divided into North, South and Central Kashmir. As per the estimates 2013-14, about 70% of state population is involved with agriculture in one way or the other. The Jammu and Kashmir economy depends mostly on traditional form of occupation. Unaffected and Unaltered by modern time industrial developments and changing times, the indigenous traditional occupations of farming, animal husbandry and horticulture forms the economic backbone of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Popularly known as the valley of flowers, the Kashmir horticulture sector is one of the prominent sectors of economy, known for the wide variety of fruits, vegetables and flowers. Around Twelve hundred crore of annual income of the state is being contributed by the horticulture sector. The state government has declared horticulture to be one of the most important economic sectors of the state that has contributed immensely to the strengthening of the financial conditions of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmir is blessed with a salubrious climate and suitable soil, which forms the big factor for the production of different varieties of fruits, vegetables and flowers. Majority of the local population of Jammu and Kashmir is involved with horticulture of the state. The state government has devised several plans to boost the horticulture industry. Several Horticulture produces are exported that helps the state to earn the large chunk of revenue. The department of horticulture has formulated different kinds of schemes to enhance the growth of horticulture industry. Some of the most important schemes are agriculture Export Zones and Technology Mission. According to Agriculture export zone, Kashmir is acknowledged to be the Agri Export zone of Quality apples and walnuts. The Technology Mission aims to

further improve the infrastructural amenities of the horticulture industry of the state. The Kashmir Horticulture is a symbol of flourishing economic sector of Jammu And Kashmir State. To be an integral part of the state economy, Most of the varieties of horticulture produces of the region has earned a worldwide fame because of their good quality and taste. The leading products of Kashmir horticulture are: Apple (varieties like Ambry, Delicious, American, Maharaji, Hazratballi, Razakwari, Chamora etc), Cheery (varieties like Awwal number, Misri, Makhmali, Double), pear (varieties like pear William, Chinese sandy pear), Almond, Walnut, Plum, Apricot, Strawberry and Saffron (The cash crop of J&K State). North Kashmir includes the districts like District Kupwara, District Baramulla and District Bandipora which forms the North pole of the state Jammu and Kashmir. District Kupwara has been carved out of the erstwhile district Baramulla in 1979 in order to develop the socio economic pattern by addressing the far flung and remote areas of the district. The Geographical area of the district is 2,379 sq kms out of which 1309.87 sq kms is forest area. In the east and south there are District boundaries of Baramulla and in the west Line of Control (LOC) separating it from Muzaffarabad (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir). It is about 97 kms from Srinagar (summer capital of J&K State) and has full road connectivity with other neighboring districts such as Baramulla and Bandipora. As per census 2011 the district has a population of 8.70 Lakh out of which male population is 4.74 lakh and female population is 3.96 lakh with sex ratio of 843 females per 1000 males. The density of population in the district is 368 persons per sq km as against 124 persons for the state. District had a record population growth rate of 34.62 percent during the decade 2001-2011. Population is concentrated mainly in rural areas and only 0.99 lakh people live in urban areas. The main occupation engaging the 40.1 % of the total working force is cultivation. District Baramulla a picturesque town situated at 34.0 34'0 N longitude and 74. 0 45' 0 E latitude, extending over an area of 4190 (P) sq km comprises of 652 villages (census villages).Baramulla has an average elevation of 1593 meters (5226 feet). Baramulla district is the largest district in the entire valley both with reference to the population and area .The district is spread over an area of 4190 Sq kms. The district is bounded by Kupwara in the North and West, Budgam and Poonch in the South, Bandipora District in the North East and Neelum District (POK) in the North. According to the 2011 census Baramulla district has a population of 1,015,503. Of the total population, 542,171 (53.4%) were males and 473,332 (46.6%) were females, the sex ratio being 873 females for every 1,000 males, a decrease from 905 in 2001 census, and much lower than the national average of 940. The sex ratio for children in 0 to 6 year age group was even less at 866. The district has a population density of 305 inhabitants per square kilometre (790 /sq mi). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 20.34%. Of the total population. District Bandipora is one of the 22 Districts in Jammu and Kashmir State in Northern India. Bandipora Town is the Administrative Head

Quarter of the District. This District carved out from the Erstwhile Baramulla District. The District is bounded by Kupwara District in the west, Baramulla District in the South and Kargil, Srinagar, and Ganderbal District in the east. The District has a population of 385099 souls (2011 Census). The District has recorded population growth of 26.31% during the decade 2001 to 2011 of as compared to 29.43%.At the biggest ethnic group in Muslims forming 99.98 of total population followed by Hindus 0.016%.working force accounts for 82.93% of total population. The main occupation of the working force is agriculture including agricultural labour which consists of 53.54% of the total population. While as 11.02% and 18.2% are engaged in industries and other sources respectively. About 84.54% of the population lives in villages and 15.45% in urban areas.

2. IMPACT OF HORTICULTURE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

District kupwara is being considered as horticulture rich district among all other Districts of Jammu and Kashmir and as per 2011 census about 70% of population of district kupwara depends on horticulture for their livelihood. Horticulture emerges out as a larger contributor of Economy of the particular district. : The reporting area of the district is 0.67 lakh Hect. Out of which net cropped area is 0.46 lakh Hect. Rest is under forests, pastures and grazing land. Main Crops in the district are Rice, Maize, Pulses, Fruits, and Vegetables. Area under Maize occupies 25,550 hec. (54%) and Paddy 15647 hec. (28%), fruit and vegetables about 3842 hec. (19%) of the total area sown. The leading horticultural produces are walnuts and Apple. In order to boost horticulture in the particular district, number of Mandis and departmental nurseries has been created like handwara fruit and vegetable mandi, Kupwara Fruit mandi and Chogul Nursery. Number of traders, Growers, farmers and labourers from allover the district are involved in this with horticulture activities in order to improve their living standard which in turn plays vital role in improving the district economy.

District Baramulla is the largest producer of Horticulture products in the state. There are vast apple orchards in the district. Fruit industry occupies the most important position in the economy of District Baramulla where 80% of the population is directly or indirectly involved with horticulture activities. The leading Horticulture produce is Apple and the second largest hub of apple lies in the sopore town of district baramulla named as fruit mandi sopore which in turn is called as the apple town of district baramulla.Sopore Fruit Mandi is the biggest economy hub for kashmir. The yearly turnover is in millions. It is leading in all Kashmir mandis and a tough competitor for all. A large number of buyers from all over India and Bangladesh come to buy apples for supply across india and Bangladesh. Chief Horticulture Officer plays a vital role in enhancing the production of fresh fruits especially apples and their export to other terminal markets of the

country. To enhance the production capacity, the following developmental schemes have been launched in the district:-

- Expansion of area under new orchards.
- To improve the quality production of fruits in the existing orchards.
- Production of plant quality material in the departmental nurseries.
- Production of fruit crops against pests and diseases.

In District Bandipora, Horticulture has assumed great importance in the District and makes a handsome product contribution to the state domestics' product. An area of 7406.05 hectors has been brought under fruit orchards. Distribution of plants and other equipments.

Major Steps to boost horticulture Industry: 1: In order to boost horticulture in District Kupwara, minister of horticulture and floriculture allotted 2.5 crore fruit and vegetable market to the public. He on the occasion said that government was committed to spread marketing activities for fruits and vegetables in every nook and corner of the state in order to improve their income strata. He, according to an official statement said that efforts are being made to procure the products of farmers from their doorsteps. With an opening of Kupwara mandi, he said a long pending demand of this hilly district has been fulfilled. He hoped that the trading activities will boost this area and people will get good return of their produces. The mandi has been completed at an estimated cost of Rs 2.52 crore. Describing Kupwara as a horticulture rich, he said that government will explore uncovered area and bring under the ambit of horticulture cultivation. He directed Director Horticulture and joint director floriculture to organize awareness camp for farmers at block level to educate them about horticulture and floriculture potential so that more and more people adopt these activities. Earlier the minister inspected the orchard-cum- nursery at chogal Kupwara. He expressed the satisfaction over the activities of the nursery and directed to explore possibilities for developing latest varieties of different fruits conducive in the valley environment. A revenue to the tune of Rs.4 lakh generated out of the auction of fruits and saplings during the current fiscal and also inaugurated newly constructed NTPHC at Drugmulla Kupwara constructed at an estimated cost of Rs.94 lakh. This was also a long pending of people. Former Minister of state for health, medical education and horticulture Mr. Javid Ahmad Dar also addressed the gathering and said that Government was committed to upgrade the existing infrastructure in leading fruit and vegetable market to give further boost to horticulture industry. He said horticulture is the mainstay of state's economy and all out efforts are being made to involve more and more people in the industry. He said thousands of people are engaged in the industry and government is aware of their problems and efforts are afoot to

mitigate these in a phased manner. (GK news network posted at: March 13 2015).

2: Several steps have been taken to develop horticulture sector on modern lines in District Bandipora. During march and april this year (2015), about 83,000 fruit plants of different varieties have been planted on 375 hectares of land, benefiting 1200 orchardists. By this, total area of orchards of the district has enhanced to 6,230 hectares which included 4,480 hectares of fresh fruit plants like apple, pear etc and 1750 hectares of dry fruit plants like walnut and almonds, an official statement said. (GK 19 June 2015). The meeting was informed that fruit production in the district has been recorded at 53, 726 Metric tonnes, which include 50, 867 metric tonnes of fresh fruits and 2409 metric tonnes dry fruit. The horticulture department has established four plant nurseries comprising 27.33hectares at Asham, Bandipora, Iz marg and Check Reshipora which provide high yielding variety of fruit plants to orchardists. Technology Mission, Rejuvenation of old and sick orchards and development of horticulture in dry and hilly areas , schemes are being implemented in the district to develop horticulture sector in a big way. Under these schemes, orchardists get latest varieties of high yielding fruit plants like apple, walnut, pear and apricot on subsidy, besides barbed wire for fencing of orchards. Water storage Tanks and Tube wells are been constructed in the orchards under these schemes to overcome the irrigation shortage. An amount Rs, 13,000 per hectare is being provided to orchardists as financial assistance for the purpose by the department. Meeting held under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner).

3. TECHNOLOGIES AND SCHEMES USED IN THE INDUSTRY

- Development of Horticulture in dry land and hilly areas.
- Diversification of fruit plants.
- Creation of Irrigation infrastructure (Tube wells /Dug wells on 75 % subsidy of the cost of Rs: 25000/0 i.e.18750 per beneficiary.
- Horticulture Mechanization providing of power Operated machines (MPS) on 50% subsidy of the cost.
- Quality control.

Horticulture Intelligence Department: The work of the horticulture intelligence department is to disseminate information relating to demand, supply and price of all horticulture produces present in the market at a particular time both within and outside the state.

Horticulture planning and marketing: It is the post harvest management of horticulture produces. As soon as production completes, the role of marketing begins till the consumption of the produces. There is a separate department of horticulture planning and marketing in almost all over the country. Fruit

Dealers direct contact officers of the area marketing office of horticulture department within and outside the state for knowing about the demand of horticulture produces.

Training programme of the Horticulture Industry: Regular training, awareness and exposure regarding marketing, production and post harvest service is being given to cultivators, farmers, growers and all other directly or indirectly involved with the industry. Provision of earnings of youth is given out of post harvest service and teaching them how to process and change it into value added production.

Marketing Intervention Scheme (MIS): Under this scheme, Growers, Fruit dealers send their fruit to the department which in turn send it in the processing units Like FIL (Fungicide India Limited), and Jagir Apple juice Factory Located in Jagir Sopore. This Scheme is basically meant for those Growers who work on C- Grade Fruit also called culled fruit). This scheme was implemented between 2005-2008 but now in 2015-2016, the state Government has again started this scheme to give edge to this Industry. The benefit of this Scheme is that, there is no Transportation cost, No packaging Cost, No grading or sorting, and the most important benefit of this is that growers can send their fruits in the Gunny Bags.

Employment Opportunities: Number of young literate people are unemployed in the North Kashmir and they think it as an age old profession, but there are lots of opportunities in which more and more people can be involved to get rid of the unemployment like, Young literate people can start their own processing units of Apple and other produces of Horticulture to have a value addition of the product. There is only One Processing unit located at Jagir Sopore under JKHPMC (Jammu and Kashmir Horticulture Produce Marketing Corporation Limited). There is also a need to start Cold Storage facilities also called CA-Stores (cool atmospheric stores), that can give boost to the Horticulture Industry. When the demand of the produces is less in the market, they can be dumped in the CA-Stores.

4. ISSUES OF THE STUDY

- The Research is conducted only in North Kashmir
- There are seasonal variations
- Disturbances and less demand of the produces due to 2014 floods.

5. CONCLUSION

Horticulture is considered as an important and emerging growth sector of agriculture and plays an important role in the Economy of state. It offers a wide range of choices to the farmers, cultivators, growers, laborers of crop diversification and provides various employment opportunities, and involves more and more people in the industry in one way or the other. In North Kashmir, Horticulture, which is considered as the fastest growing sector in agriculture plays a major role in its

economic prosperity, which in turn provokes a greater change in the lifestyle and consumption pattern of people. Horticulture products and commodities like fruits and vegetables are rapidly growing and highly demanded in the market. If the schemes, technologies, training programmes and production and marketing patterns will be properly implemented, more and more people especially literate young people will get attracted towards the industry and will involve themselves in the industry, the confusion they have, related to this Industry will get resolved. This will help this industry to prosper which in turn will help the region in terms of Economic Prosperity.

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