

Problems in Large Cardamom Cultivation in Darjeeling Hill areas of West Bengal

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Abstract—Large cardamom (*Amomum subulatum*) is one of the important cash crop in the eastern Himalayan region including Sikkim and the Darjeeling hills in India, the eastern part of Nepal, and southern Bhutan (Sharma et al. 2000). Large cardamom cultivation area in the Darjeeling hills during 2007-08 was recorded to be 3,305 ha of which only 2,715 ha gives the agronomic yield. Large cardamom plantation area is declining over the years. The total production during 2007 in Sikkim was 4,358 MT while production in Darjeeling hills was only 614 MT (Sharma 2009). There are many reasons which lead to low production and low agronomic yield of large cardamom cultivation in Darjeeling. Some of the reasons for low production are - lack of quality planting materials, climate change, lack of irrigation facilities, inadequate nutrient management, non adoption of scientific methods of cultivation, lack of knowledge of the farmer, diseases and pests, high market price of the products, post-harvest methods and storage. Large cardamom is fetching high price in recent past. Since the large cardamom is cultivated in Kalimpong hill region without using any chemicals, there is a scope for organic certification of crop from this region. Transportation facilities, availability of subsidy, market linkage and export facilities need to be developed; auction facility to be provided and awareness about market intelligence should be generated. Hence it is an urgent need to find out the exact scenario of large cardamom plantation in clusters/villages of Kalimpong hill region in order to combat the problems related to large cardamom cultivation.

Keywords: Cash crop, climate change. Market intelligence, auction facility.