

Present Scenario of Horticulture in Assam: Its Challenges and Remedial Measures

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Abstract—Assam is an agrarian state producing various types of crops including horticultural crops. The horticultural sector of Assam produces various types of fruits, vegetables, plantation crops, aromatic plants, medicinal plants etc. The wide variety of climate and soil in Assam is suitable for horticultural production. Horticultural crops are now having commercial importance particularly fruits. Assam produces variety of fruits such as orange, guava, pineapple, jackfruit, papaya, citrus fruits, banana etc. which account for bulk of fruit production. Horticultural crops has many benefits as it provides more employment than other sectors, stimulates local economy, produces raw material for other sector, eco friendly etc. Though horticulture in Assam has many benefits, it is facing many challenges which need to be solved.

Through this paper I tried to show the present scenario of horticulture in Assam, the challenges faced by the horticulture in Assam and to give some remedial measures to challenges faced by the horticultural sector in Assam.

Keywords: Horticulture, crops, challenges, remedial measures

I. INTRODUCTION

The horticulture sector of Assam includes a variety of crops such as fruits, vegetables, spices plantation crops, floriculture, medicinal plants etc. The horticulture now a day's recognized as an important sector for potential diversification and value addition in agriculture. It has been recognized that growing horticultural crops is now an ideal option to improve livelihood security, enhance employment opportunities, and attain income and food security and increase income through value addition. Horticultural crops particularly fruits are now receiving increasing attention in view of its increasing commercial importance accentuated by quick transportation to vast internal market. Banana, pineapple, citrus fruits, jackfruit etc. account for bulk of fruit production in Assam which has a good market. The major tuber crops produced in Assam are potato, onion, sweet potato; tapioca is also having commercial importance. Besides these different types of spices such as ginger, garlic, turmeric, chilly and flowers etc. produced in Assam and by selling the same a handsome amount comes to the state.

II. OBJECTIVE

The Objective of my research is-

1. To study the present status of horticulture in Assam.
2. To study the challenges associated with horticultural sector of Assam.
3. To suggest some remedial measures to solve the challenges of horticulture in Assam.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The secondary method of data collection is used in this research. The data are collected from government reports, books, policy documents, academic journals and from internet.

IV. PRESENT SCENARIO OF HORTICULTURE IN ASSAM

Assam occupies a wide variety of soil and climate which is suitable for production of various types of fruits, vegetables, tuber crops, spices, plantation crops, etc. The horticulture has moved from rural to commercial venture as it is income generating and job orienting.

Area, Production and Productivity of horticultural crops in Assam from 2020-21 to 2022-23.

| Year | Fruits | | | Vegetables | | | Tuber crops | | | Spices | | | Plantation crops | | |
|------|--------|------|-------|------------|------|-------|-------------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|------------------|------|-------|
| | Area | Prod | Produ | Are | Prod | Produ | Are | Prod | Produ | Are | Prod | Produ | Are | Prod | Produ |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | in lakh Hectare) | uction (In lakh MT) | ctivity (In Kg/Ha) | a(in lakh Hectare) | uction (In lakh MT) | ctivity (In Kg/Ha) | a(in lakh Hectare) | uction (In lakh MT) | ctivity (In Kg/Ha) | a(in lakh Hectare) | uction (In lakh MT) | ctivity (In Kg/Ha) | a(in lakh Hectare) | uction (In lakh MT) | ctivity (In Kg/Ha) |
|-------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 20-21 | 1.46 | 22.29 | 15267 | 2.93 | 55.84 | 19091 | 1.11 | 8.17 | 7338 | 1.14 | 4.20 | 3689 | 0.92 | 2.44 | 2642 |
| 20-22 | 1.41 | 23.04 | 15477 | 2.96 | 57.58 | 19430 | 1.09 | 7.92 | 7226 | 1.14 | 4.13 | 3623 | 0.916 | 0.49 | 2400 |
| 20-23 | 1.51(estimated) | 1.51 | 15699 | 2.97 | 58.13 | 19548 | 1.09 | 8.34 | 7679 | 1.15 | 4.29 | 3720 | 0.918 | 0.52 | 2520 |

Area=In Lakh Hectare, Production=Lakh MT, Productivity=Kg/Hectare

Source: Directorate of Horticulture, Assam

From the above table it is seen that Assam produces a sufficient amount of horticultural crops. The area of production of fruits decreases from 2020-21 to 2021-22 but again increases in 2022-23. The productivity is increasing continuously from 2020-21 to 2022-23. In vegetables the area under production is increasing from 20-21 to 2022-23 and productivity first decreases and again it starts increasing. Production is also decreases and starts increasing. In tuber crops area under production decreases in 2020-21 and then starts increasing and same in production also. In spice production the area increases in 2022-23 and production and productivity shows a mixed answer. In plantation crops the area is less compared to other horticultural crops and productivity declines in 2021-22 and 2022-23 as compared to 2020-21.

V. THE BENEFITS OF HORTICULTURE

In Assam horticulture contributes 24.5% to the state's GDP from total area of 8.5%.

The horticulture sector provides many benefits to the society. These are-

1. **Economic benefit:** More employment is possible in horticulture than food crops. Horticulture is income generating for farmers, traders and other stakeholders.
2. **Value added products:** The special goods such as organic fruits, organic vegetables have the opportunity to command higher prices in the market.
3. **Stimulates local economy:** by providing fresh fruits and lowering transportation cost the horticulture sector stimulates local economy.
4. **Food production:** Horticulture is necessary for food production. The vegetables, fruits and other food are important for vitamins and minerals of human use.
5. **Environment friendly:** Horticulture is considered to be as environment friendly as it has no smoke or any environment hampering wastage.
6. **Producer of raw materials.** Horticulture in Assam supplies raw materials to the food processing industry.

VI. CHALLENGES OF HORTICULTURE IN ASSAM

Assam is a producer of varieties of horticultural goods. However this sector faces some challenges. The major challenges faced by the agriculture in Assam are-

1. With the increasing demand there is a necessity of more organic vegetables and fruits. Due to lack of organic manure the production is low in Assam.
2. The poor farmers are not able to afford invest for fertilizers, seeds and pesticides.
3. There is lack of knowledge among the farmers regarding improved package of practices.
4. The marketing facilities are not available in Assam for which horticultural development is not up to the mark.
5. The poor farmers are ignorant about the modern technologies of production for which production is below the demand of horticultural crops in Assam.
6. The cold storage is less in Assam in compared to other states of India and therefore some crops are damaged.
7. The production units are often far away from urban selling centers. Therefore there is a need of transportation facilities to sell the crops in market.
8. To reduce waste of horticultural crops proper packaging is necessary.
9. Most of the horticultural crops in Assam are perishable and seasonal that needs to be marketed at the proper time which is difficult.
10. The agro-input provided by the government in Assam is insufficient for which production is not satisfactory.
11. Due to existence of middlemen the farmers do not get the satisfactory price of their horticultural crops.
12. Irrigation facilities are not sufficient and the producers need to wait for the natural water for production.

VII. REMEDIAL MEASURES TO CHALLENGES OF HORTICULTURE IN ASSAM

1. The agro-related infrastructure should be developed to increase the production of horticultural crops in Assam.
2. The loan should be made available for the producers to develop horticulture in Assam.
3. The government should provide quality planting materials to increase horticultural crops.
4. The scientific irrigation facilities need to be provided to the producers to increase yields and make use of water more economical.
5. Pesticides and fertilizers should be used properly to increase production and management of pests and diseases.
6. The farmers should be given training and exposure to introduce them with new technologies and best practices.
7. More investment should be done in this field to develop new methods for more production and reduce pests and disease of crops.
8. To reduce costs the use of solar power, low-cost machinery and other innovation should be made.
9. The farmers should be promoting to grow high valued crops such as vegetables, spices and fruits to increase income.
10. The financial assistance from NABARD and NEC need to be seeking for financial assistance.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Assam is an agrarian state where different types of crops are produced including horticultural crops. Assam produces various types of horticultural crops including fruits, vegetables, spices and plantation crops. Growing horticulture crops is now recognized as an ideal option to improve livelihood security, employment generating, attain income and food security through value addition. Assam has a wide variety of soil and climate which is suitable for horticultural crops. Besides its tremendous potentiality the horticultural sector in Assam face various challenges. When all this challenges meet up by the government and other institutions the Assam could become one of the major producers of horticultural crops and can earn a handsome income.

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