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**IMPORTANCE OF HORTICULTURE AND
HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN TODAY'S
SCENARIO**

- DIBYAJYOTI DAS

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IMPORTANCE OF HORTICULTURE AND HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN TODAY'S SCENARIO

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DIBYAJYOTI DAS

INTRODUCTION

The word horticulture was first conceived by Peter Laurenberg. In English language the word horticulture used for the first time in 1678 in a book entitled "New World of Words" by Phillips. Horticulture consists of two Latin words, viz. Hortus meaning garden and Colere meaning to grow or to cultivate (Cultura meaning cultivation). 'Garden' was originated from the Latin term 'Gyrdan' meaning 'to enclose'. It refers to crops cultivated in an enclosure, i.e., garden cultivation. Hence, horticulture is that branch of Agriculture which concerns with the garden crops. Horticulture can also be defined as the branch of agriculture concerned with intensively cultivated plants directly used by man for food, for medicinal purposes or for aesthetic purposes.

IMPORTANCE OF HORTICULTURE

❖ As per Indian Horticulture Database (Horticultural Statistics at a Glance 2018), fruit crops cover an area of 6.51 million hectares and vegetables crops 10.26 million hectares. Accordingly, 97.36 million tonnes of fruits and 184.39 million tonnes of vegetables are produced in the country annually.

❖ Apart from fruits and vegetables, floriculture industry in India comprising of florist trade, nursery plants, potted plants, seed and bulb products is being observed as sunrise industry. There is soaring business of flowers in almost all metropolitan cities of the different states. The developed flower market in the country during 2016-17 is with area of 3.09 lakh hectares with a production of 16.53 lakh tonnes of loose flowers. The traditional flowers are grown on a large hectare of land on a commercial scale. These flowers are mostly grown for loose flower purpose. Area under cut flowers like rose, chrysanthemum, gladiolus, carnation and orchids are increasing day by day.

❖ Plantation crops are another potential sector with lot of opportunities of employment generation, foreign exchange earnings and overall supporting livelihood sustenance of mankind at large. Coconut has so much importance in the country that the state Kerala receives its very name on the basis of coconut, the Malayalam name of which is Kera.

Plantation crops cover an area of 36.77 lakh hectares with a production of 168.67 lakh tonnes during 2016-17.



HORTICULTURE IS IMPORTANT FOR THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ As a source of variability in produce.
- ✓ As a source of nutrients, vitamins, minerals, flavour, aroma, alkaloids, oleoresins, fibre, etc.
- ✓ As a source of medicine.
- ✓ As an economic proposition as they give higher returns per unit area in terms of energy, money, job, etc.
- ✓ Employment generation 860-man days/annum for fruit crops as against 143-man days/annum for cereal crops and the crops like grapes, banana and pineapple need 1000- 2500-man days per annum.
- ✓ Effective utilization of waste land through hardy fruits and medicinal plants.
- ✓ As a substitute of family income being component of home garden.
- ✓ As a foreign exchange earner has higher share compare to agriculture crops.
- ✓ As an input for industry being amenable to processing, especially fruit and vegetable preservation industry.
- ✓ Aesthetic consideration and protection of environment.
- ✓ Religious significance.
- ✓ In short horticulture supplies quality food for health and mind, more calories per unit area, develops better resources and yields higher returns per unit area.
- ✓ It also enhances land value and creates better purchasing power for those who are engaged in this industry.
- ✓ Therefore, horticulture is important for health, wealth, hygiene and happiness.

OTHER IMPORTANCE

- ✓ Horticultural trees work in near semblance to forest trees in maintaining ecosphere.
- ✓ They help in transforming micro climate.
- ✓ Provides shelter to birds, reptiles and other micro-organisms and add to the geo-ecological diversity on the land.
- ✓ Provides impetus to the writers, poets, thinkers and analysts and thus keeps their cultural impulse alive.
- ✓ Adds to the survival of life-spheres of living entity.
- ✓ Fruit and plantation crops can be cultivated in places where the slope of land is uneven or undulating. Horticultural crops are useful for cultivation in wasteland or poor-quality soil.
- ✓ Horticultural produce serves as raw material for various industries, such as processing, pharmaceutical, perfumery and cosmetics, chemical, confectionery, oils and paints, etc.
- ✓ They have national and international demand and are a good source of foreign exchange.

SCOPE OF HORTICULTURE

Like any other things, scope of horticulture depends on incentive it has for the farmers, adaptability of the crops, necessity and facilities for future growth through inputs availability and infrastructure for the distribution of produce/marketing etc.

Incentive for the farmer: The biggest incentive for the farmer is money and horticultural crops provide more returns in terms of per unit area production, export value, value addition compared to agricultural crops.



Adaptability: India is bestowed with a great variety of climatic and edaphic conditions as we have climates varying from tropical, subtropical, temperate and within these humid, semi-arid, arid, frost free temperate etc.

Necessity: After having achieved self-sufficiency in food, nutritional security for the people of the country has become the point of consideration/priority. Moreover, Indians are basically vegetarians, and to meet their nutritional requirement in terms of vitamins and minerals horticulture crops are to be grown in sufficient quantities to provide a bare minimum of 120 g of fruits and 280 g of vegetables per head per day as per the recommendation of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

Continued increase in demand for horticultural produce provides tremendous scope for the growth of this industry. Good land is under pressure for stable food, industry, housing, roads and infrastructure due to population explosion and only wasteland had to be efficiently utilized where cultivation of annuals is a gamble due to restricted root zone and their susceptibility of abiotic stress.

EXPORT VALUE

Among fresh fruits, mangoes and grapes; in vegetables, onion and potato; among flowers, roses; among plantation and spice crops, black pepper, cardamom, ginger, turmeric, chillies, cashewnut, tea, coffee, coconut, arecanut, etc. constitute the bulk of the export basket.

European and gulf countries are major importer of horticultural produce.

SCENARIO OF HORTICULTURE

- ✓ India is one of the leading global producers of horticultural crops.
- ✓ Horticultural crops cover an area of about 13% of the total area under agriculture and contribute to about 28% of the GDP.
- ✓ Horticultural crops accounts for 37% of the total exports of agricultural commodities.
- ✓ India is the second largest producers of fruits and vegetables in the Globe.
- ✓ Our country is the largest producers of cashew nut, tea, spices and third largest producer of coconut in the world.
- ✓ India is also fourth largest producer and consumer of rubber and sixth largest producer of coffee in the world.
- ✓ India exports fruits, vegetables, processed products, flowers, seeds and planting materials, spices, cashew nut, tea, coffee, etc.
- ✓ India is the largest producer of mango, banana, grape and litchi in the world but the bulk of the production is consumed domestically.
- ✓ Fruit's account for about 11% of total horticultural export of the country with global shares only about 0.3%.
- ✓ Grapes and mango together constitute about 60% of India's exports of fresh fruits and citrus, banana, apple, papaya etc. are other important fruits for export.
- ✓ Onion accounts for maximum share in export trade and other vegetables like tomato, potato, beans, peas, mushroom,



asparagus, capsicum and okra have significant share in export trade.

- ✓ Cut flowers account about 86% of the total trade in floriculture and in this sector, dried flowers and other plant parts are prominent commodities.
- ✓ Processed fruits and vegetables account for 20% and 17%, respectively in the total horticultural trade.
- ✓ Among the processed fruits, fruits juices and dried fruits contribute to 41% and 12% of trade, respectively.
- ✓ Mango pulp, pickles and chutneys of various fruits remain in high demand in export trade.
- ✓ Among processed vegetables, mushrooms, gherkins, dehydrated onion and frozen pre-cut vegetables are important items.
- ✓ Value added spices are in large demand in export trade and their share is 60% of total export of spices.
- ✓ India exports seed and planting materials of fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ The country has its credits of exporting herbal material raw drugs to world market.
- ✓ The share of tea in total agricultural export is about 5% at present.
- ✓ Coffee is the second largest commodity in the world trade after petroleum and about 70% of the total production of coffee is exported.
- ✓ There is significant increase in the export basket for coconut-based commodities

like coco chemicals, activated carbon, coir and coir products.

- ✓ India exports natural rubber which accounts for about 1% of the global share.

CONCLUSION

India can emerge as a far bigger producer and exporter if sufficient emphasis is given to resource allocation, infrastructure development, more R&D, technological upgradation and better policy framework for horticulture sector. Horticulture sector with strong forward and backward linkages as an organised industry can stimulate and sustain growth. The diversification in the agricultural sector mainly of the horticulture sector has become a major source of positive growth for the sector itself and for the nation. It has emerged as a promising source of income acceleration, employment generation, poverty alleviation and export promotion. The various suggestions must be adopted to improve horticultural sectors are:

Achieve technology led development in Horticulture. Post-harvest & value addition in horticulture crops. Modified atmosphere packaging for long storability & transportation of fruits & vegetables. Insect pollinators for improving productivity and quality of the crops.

Development of varieties for cultivation in non-traditional areas. Nutrient dynamics and interaction. Bioenergy and solid waste utilisation to make horticulture more efficient and eco-friendlier. Plan, coordinate and monitor R&D programmes at national level as well as to serve as knowledge repository in Horticulture sector.