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HORTICULTURE ECONOMY OF MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract:-Agriculture is the largest and the most important sector of the Indian Economy. India has made a lot of progress in agriculture since independence in terms of growth in output, yields and area under many crops. It has gone through a green revolution, a white revolution, a brown revolution and a blue revolution. Today, India is the largest producer of milk, fruits, cashew nuts, coconuts and tea in the world, the second largest producer of wheat, vegetables, sugar and fish and the third largest producer of fish and the third largest producer of tobacco and rice. The per capita availability of food grains has risen in the country from 350 gms in 1951 to near about 400 gms per day now, of milk from less than 125 gms to 226 gms per day and of eggs from 5 to 30 per annum despite the increase in population from 35 crores to 102.70 crores (2001). At present, only 23.3 per cent of the farmers are able to derive any benefits of extension services provided by various government agencies and every year about 20 percent of the crop is lost due to mishandling, spoilage, floods, droughts, pests and diseases. In fruits and vegetables the loss is around 30 percent.

Keywords: Indian Economy, green revolution, wheat, vegetables, sugar.

INTRODUCTION

Maharashtra is India's third largest state in terms of population and area, with an area of 307713 sq. km. and a population of 78937187 in 1991. The state boundary lies between 160.4' to 220.1' North latitude and 720.6' to 800.9' East longitude. The net sown area of the state in 1997-98 was 17761 thousand hectares and the gross cropped area was 21740 thousand hectares during the same year. Irrigated area was 15.4 per cent (i. e. 3350 thousand hectares) in 1997-98. The state is known for its Sahyadri range of mountains, running from north to south, also known as the Western Ghats. The boundaries between the hilly region and the Arabian Sea lies between the Konkan strips with full of rain but with its soil often washed down with the flowing rain water. Towards the west lies the fertile region of Western Maharashtra, where well-known commercial crop viz. sugarcane fields and sugar factories are located densely. The large Vidharbha region lies to the east and mostly consists of plain landscape, in the state. The less developed Marathwada region lies to the south along with the Andhra Pradesh border.

The soils of the state (Encyclopedic Gazetteers, 1998) are derived from basalt. The important soil groups are deep black clay soils, clay loam and medium deep soil and yellowish brown and red soils. The soils are sub grouped as very shallow, shallow medium deep and deep etc.The state received 85 to 90 per cent of rains from south-west monsoon between June to October. The Western Coastal region receives rainfall of about 3000 mm. whereas in dry zone, the rainfall is about 500 mm. There is a wide range of dispersion in rainfall. Konkan receives per capita 19000 liters of rain water availability, whereas in dry zone, the people have to strive hard even for adequate and clean drinking water. Even during the summer, the Konkan people have to struggle hard for drinking water availability. The states irrigated area is hardly 16 per cent of the cultivated area. Economic use of water resource may extent the area under irrigation by 25 per cent of cultivated area. But this has not yet attained due to number of technical and financial constraints. However, state planning is marching towards achieving this end.

The gross cropped area is also hardly less than 2.5 million hectares. Around 60 per cent of irrigated area

receives water from wells, 30 per cent by canals and 10 per cent by tanks. The resource based development plan has to be preferred to attain the ambitious plan fulfilled. Out of 15 zones, Maharashtra falls in the 3 agro climatic zone (Alagh Committee Report) viz. (a) Zone – 7 covering 3 districts, (b) Zone – 9 covering 22 districts, (c) Zone – 12 covering Konkan region. In Zone – 7 (Bhandara, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli) the upland and the agricultural lands have slopes from 1 to 10 per cent. Soils are shallow to medium and low in organic content, zinc phosphorus, boron, coarse in texture, acidic to strongly acidic in reaction and high in permeability. Soils are red, brown and yellow. Area under cereals is decreasing. While area under fruits, vegetables and pulses is growing in the state. The development perspective includes water and land development, development of vegetables, spices, general horticulture plantation crops and forestry.In Zone – 9 the climate is tropical hot and humid monsoon and dry. Soils are derived from deccan trap grouped in 5 types, black, red, yellowish, brown, saline and alkaline and hill soils. Rainfall is scarce in the region. Major crops grown are sorghum, pearl millet, rice, wheat, gram, groundnut, safflower, sunflower, sesumum, cotton and sugarcane.

In some pockets, fruit growing has been commercialised, for example grape and pomegranate in Central Maharashtra, banana in Jalgaon, Parabhani and Nanded districts, citrus in Nagpur, Amaravati, Wardha and Jalna districts. Vegetable cultivation is commercialised in Pune and Nasik districts. The climate is much suited to tropical and sub tropical crops both under irrigation and dry land situations. Mandarin, oranges, kagazi lime, banana, grapes, guava, pomegranate, sapota are grown on commercial basis. Dry land horticultural crops like mango, ber, custard apple, jamun, tamarind are grown on a large scale. Vegetable crops like onion, tomato, okra, brinjal, cabbage, cauliflower, potato, chilli, garlic and cucurbit are grown. Among floriculture, chrysantheemun, roses, gaillardia, aster, gladioli, tuber rose and jasmines are commercialised. Even some fruits like grapes, mango, citrus have been processed for commercial purposes.

Maharashtra is highly industrialised state in India. Agriculture continues to be the main occupation of the people. Nearly 61 per cent of the total main workers in the state depend on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. The principal crops include rice, jowar, bajra, wheat, pulses, cotton, sugarcane, oil seed including groundnut, sunflower and soyabean, turmeric, onions and other vegetables etc. The state has a large area under fruit cultivation of which mango, banana, grape, pomegranate and oranges are the main ones. The juicy Alphanso mango, pomegranate and grapes being cultivated in Sindhudurg, Solapur, Sangli respectively and other districts of the state and have justly become well-known and spin considerable foreign exchange also.

CONCEPT OF HORTICULTURE

Modern horticulture is normally defined as an agricultural science which of the production, tilisation and improvement of fruits, vegetables and ornamental plants. The term is derived from the Latin hortus, garden and culture, cultivation. Today's horticulture encompasses much more than garden cultivation. It is a growing industry composed of numerous commercial enterprises and even more numerous home gardens, orchards, lawns and ornamental planting. Millions of people are engaged in horticulture on a full time, part time, leisure time or on amateur basis. It is a field that affects and influences all people. We live on horticulture products. It provides a large portion of our food supply. It is a bounteous source of beauty in our homes, cities, rural landscapes, parks, campuses, gardens, conservatories, greenhouses and areas of the great outdoors. It furnishes the setting for many recreational events, from picnics in the outdoors living area of a home to the tough turf of a football field or the 'carpet like' putting green of a golf course. All these things are termed as horticultural products (E. Denisen, 1979).

CLASSIFICATION OF HORTICULTURE

A classification is only temporary structure, which not only can but also must undergo changes in accordance with the growth of factual knowledge.There are many diverse species of plants include in horticulture. It is only natural that there be a classification, a division of interests and specialisation among those engaged in the field, many of the divisions of horticulture are further subdivided where certain crops or groups of crops are of commercial significance. Horticulture deals with fruits, vegetables and ornamentals. We distinguish them between their kinds, types and cultivars by comparing characteristics of form, habit of growth and longevity.

HISTORY OF HORTICULTURE

The history of horticulture starts from a long time. Men began to plant crops in order to supplement the wild seeds, roots and fruits. They would naturally choose the annuals and only at a later stage with the development of more permanent abodes, wood trees find a place in primitive agriculture. But very little is definitely known about the very early history of agriculture (W. Hayers, 1957).History begins in the development of the great centres of civilization, India, China and tropical America people concentrate only where agriculture has been developed. Casson (1939) says that agriculture started at Sumeria (present day Iraq). In about 3500 B. C. when grains like wheat, barley and fruits like pomegranates (one of the world's earliest cultivated fruits) constituted the earliest crops at that

time. This is brought out clearly in gold jewellary and ornaments of Sumerian Kings. By one religious record this dates back to 7000 B.C. and spread throughout the Mediterranean World. The date achieved importance in Egypt in the third millennium B. C.

IMPORTANCE OF HORTICULTURE

In the economy of the world and within each nation, horticulture is a basic industry. It is an important source of the food supply of the world. Production, processing and marketing of horticulture crops provide gainful occupations for many citizens of the world. Horticultural crops enter interstate commerce and world trade as fresh fruits, vegetables and ornamental plants. Even greater quantities of fruits and vegetables are shipped in a processed form.

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