

The Horticulture Sector of India

Why in news?

Though the production and productivity of fruits and vegetables quadrupled during the last three decades, the same has not been translated into comparable increases in the incomes of the cultivators.

What is horticulture?

- Horticulture is an important branch of agriculture that deals with the cultivation of plants and vegetables for food, medicine, and other uses.

Terms	Meaning
Pomology	It deals with cultivation of fruit and nut crops
Olericulture	It deals with cultivation of herbaceous plants for the kitchen
Floriculture	It deals with production of flowers and ornamental plants

What is the status of horticulture sector in India?

- Production** - In 2022, total Horticulture produce is **341.6 million tonnes** and total Agriculture produce is **314.5 million tonnes**.
- Fruits and vegetables account alone account for almost 90% of the total horticulture production in the country.
- According to FAO 2021, India leads in the production of certain vegetables (*ginger and okra*) and fruits (*banana, mangoes and papaya*).
- Areas of cultivation of flowers** - More than 50% of the floriculture products are produced in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh.
- Areas of cultivation of fruits & vegetables** - Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Odisha.
- Contribution** - Horticulture contributes **30.4% of the agriculture Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** using only 13.1% of gross cropped area.
- Exports** - India is ranked **14th** in vegetables and **23rd** in fruits.
- However, the global horticulture market of India is at mere **1%**.

What is the significance of horticulture sector?

- Plays crucial role in providing *food and nutritional security* especially to rural and tribal population
- Promotes to diversify the income of the farmers and aid in *doubling their income*
- Acts as an important source of *raw material for food processing industries*, leading to the creation of value added products
- Helps in the *development of the rural economy* by generating income and employment
- Acts as an important *source of foreign exchange* for India through exports

What are the issues faced by horticulture sector?

- **Production challenges-** It is caused by small operational landholdings, lack of irrigation and poor soil management.
- **Limited land availability-** It affects crop rotation and the use of sustainable agricultural practices is also impacted.
- **Lack of Irrigation-** It is due to insufficient access to water for irrigation.
- **Poor soil management practices -** Over-tilling, over-fertilising, and mono cropping will reduce soil fertility leading to low yields and low-quality produce.
- **Lack of institutional credit-** Lack of access to institutional credit for small and marginal farmers results in low investments.
- There is a limited outreach of farm insurance and farm mechanisation.
- **Climate change-** Changing weather patterns, droughts, floods, and other natural disasters leads to crop failures and losses.
- **Others -** Poor logistics and weak Farmer Producer Organisations are the other issues.

Around 15-20 % of the fruits and vegetables in India are wasted along the supply chain or at consumer level.

What steps were taken to promote horticulture sector?

- **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) -** It is a Centrally Sponsored scheme launched in 2014-15.
- The 5 sub-schemes under this mission are
 - **National Horticulture Mission-** It is implemented by State Horticulture Missions in selected districts of 18 States and 6 Union Territories.
 - **Horticulture Mission for North-East and Himalayan States (HMNEH)-** It is implemented by State Horticulture Missions in the North Eastern and Himalayan States.
 - **National Horticulture Board-** It has a goal to improve the integrated development of Horticulture industry. (*Headquarters-Gurugram, Haryana*)
 - **Coconut Development Board-** It is implemented in all coconut growing States with the focus of productivity increase and product diversification. (*Headquarters- Cochin, Kerala*)
 - **Central Institute of Horticulture-** It provides adequate institutional support to development of horticulture in North-East region. (*Headquarters-Medziphema, Nagaland*)
- **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund-** It was launched in 2020 for creating community farming assets and integrated post-harvest management infrastructure.
- **Horticulture Cluster Development Programme-** It is a central sector program implemented by National horticulture Board.

How to address the challenges in the horticulture sector?

- **Investment in agri-infrastructure-** There is a need to capitalise in *MIDH and Operation Greens*, horticulture produce can reach the airport cargo handling facility

and improve the export.

Operation Greens, launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, is a price fixation scheme to ensure farmers are given the right price for their produce. It has been implemented for the development of Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) value chain.

- **Focus on food processing-** This can be done by leveraging the [One District One Product model](#), food processing of fruits and vegetables may be encouraged in order to expand the export basket.
- **Renaissance of co-operatives-** To harness market efficiency and boost exports, co-operatives in horticulture should be promoted.
 - For example, In Karnataka, HOPCOMS supplies inputs to farmers at reasonable prices and collects the horticultural produce directly from them.
- **Compliance with international standards -** Horticultural producers have to comply with world-class quality norms (Codex standards) apart from timely execution of export orders to avoid rejection from buyers.
 - Japan and the US banned import of mangoes and other fruits from India due to prevalence of fruit-fly pest infestation.

The Codex Alimentarius or “Food Code” is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

- **Digitalisation -** Climate-smart technologies, biotechnology, and nano technology should be promoted to boost exports.
- **Channelize Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) grants-** [CSR grants](#) may be channelled to undertake advanced research for digitalisation of horticulture through artificial intelligence, machine learning, and Internet of Things.
- **Institutional support-** Institutes like National Horticultural Board, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development Authority, and NABARD need to provide liberal financial assistance for undertaking extension services in horticulture.
- **Training-** Exporters should be imparted training on good agricultural practices and in commodity derivatives to protect them against price volatility and exchange rate risks.

References

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