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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	<p style="text-align: center;">A DETAILED STUDY OF THE KEY VARIABLES INFLUENCING HOUSING PRICES</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MADHUSHREE GHOSH & Dr. AMARESHA M</i></p>	1
2.	<p style="text-align: center;">HEALTH CARE SECTOR – A CRITICAL REVIEW: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Dr. P. PONRAJ & Dr. S. S. SUGANTHY</i></p>	13
3.	<p style="text-align: center;">DYNAMICS OF HORTICULTURE PRODUCE MARKETING: A STUDY BASED ON HIMACHAL PRADESH</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>NITEESH KUMAR & Dr. NARENDER SINGH CHAUHAN</i></p>	16
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	20

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DYNAMICS OF HORTICULTURE PRODUCE MARKETING: A STUDY BASED ON HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The fact is well known that fruits provides important vitamin and minerals, in some cases fruits are even considered as the healer for various diseases. Among all these benefits horticulture industry provides great benefit to the GDP of the country. Horticulture products plays and important role in commerce trade and food processing industry. However currently horticulture industry is not delivering according to its potential due to the problem and challenges it has with respect to the distribution and marketing channels in the state. Not only in the state, when it comes to the marketing and distribution of horticulture crop, it has been a major problem in India as well. Marketing is the process of movement of goods from produces to consumer at the desired time, place and form. In view of this, this research paper tries to express the dynamics of horticulture produce marketing in the state of Himachal Pradesh. This research paper also tries to put some emphasis on the marketing aspects of horticulture produce of the state as it is not to mention that livelihood of the state depends on it. The focus on the marketing aspect will enhance the potential of this industry and will generate enormous amount of opportunities.

KEYWORDS

Himachal Pradesh, horticulture produce marketing.

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INTRODUCTION

Himachal Pradesh is a state which possess its economic strength in the activities related to agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, limestone mines and allied activities in the primary sector. Among other states of the country Himachal provides one the best horticulture environment. Horticulture industry of Himachal Pradesh provides fruits, vegetables, species, floriculture and coconut etc. the state of Himachal provides diversified climate conditions and wide range of soils to accommodate the horticulture industry. When it comes to Horticulture Himachal provides fruits, vegetables, species, Floriculture and coconut etc. and it also has diversified climate conditions and wide range of soils to accommodate the horticulture Industry. It also provides many experienced and skilled workers (ranging from officer class to labour class), so it will generate high employment to the state post COVID-19.

Horticulture contribution towards the state domestic product

1. HP is the only state in the country whose 89.96% of population lives in rural areas (census 2011).
2. It provides 62% of the total workers of the state.
3. Till now about 10.4% of total GSDP comes from the agriculture and its allied sectors.

Total geographical area of the state is 55.67 lakh hectares, out of which operational holding is of 9.55 lakh hectares, which is being operated by 9.61 lakh farmers (land holdings according to 2010-11). 87.95 % of the holdings are of others (agriculture census). 11.71 percent of holding are owned by semi medium and medium farmers and 0.34 percent is by large ones. Economic survey of India (2008) provides data regarding the growth rate of food grain products which is decelerated to 1.2 percent from 1990-2007. The population of India is increasing and is estimated to touch 1370 million by 2030. Demand will rise and to meet this demand production of food grains needs to be 289 mt, which is matter of concern.

On the basis of past studies, it can be stated that very few studies have been conducted in the area of marketing of horticulture produce in Himachal Pradesh, which involves problems related to marketing of horticulture produce of the state, awareness about the government policies provided by the state government as well as the centre government, problems in the existing techniques used for the marketing of horticulture products. Keeping these facts in mind, there is a need of improvement in the area of marketing of horticulture produce and thus the study on marketing of horticulture produce in Himachal Pradesh is required in order to develop new strategies for the solution of problems in the future.

Marketing of Horticulture produce is a complex phenomenon. Marketing pattern of horticulture is different from other agriculture commodities. Every horticulture produce has its own different pattern cum channel of distribution. For example, Apples are first brought to the nearby wholesale markets and from there to the terminal markets. The dispersion channel is totally different in case of apples. In similar manner for other horticulture produce dispersion channel is different from one another. Middleman plays a vital role in the trade of horticulture produce i.e. between the producers and the consumers. Horticulture produce marketing in Himachal Pradesh is carried out by private sector which involves pre-harvest contractor, forwarding agent, commission agents, wholesalers and retailers. Due to involvement of middlemen there is exploitation of producers and this effects the profit margin one can get from their crop.

On the basis of past studies, it can be stated that very few studies have been conducted in the area of marketing of horticulture produce in Himachal Pradesh, which involves problems related to marketing of horticulture produce of the state, awareness about the government policies provided by the state government as well as the centre government, problems in the existing techniques used for the marketing of horticulture products. Keeping these facts in mind, there is a need of improvement in the area of marketing of horticulture produce and thus the study on marketing of horticulture produce in Himachal Pradesh is required in order to develop new strategies for the solution of problems in the future. The fact is well known that fruits provides important vitamin and minerals, in some cases fruits are even considered as the healer for various diseases. Among all these benefits horticulture industry provides great benefit to the GDP of the country. Horticulture products plays and important role in commerce trade and food processing industry. However currently horticulture industry is not delivering according to its potential due to the problem and challenges it has with respect to the distribution and marketing channels in the state. Not only in the state, when it comes to the marketing and distribution of horticulture crop, it has been a major problem in India as well.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Parmar (2005) reported in his study "Marketing Operations of Himachal Apple- An overview" that a good production of apple and the marketing problems of growers are increasing day by day with the increase in the production of apples.

Dastagiri, M.B and Kumar Ganesh. B., (2010) reported in "Innovative Models in Horticulture Marketing in India "India produces around 111.8 MT of vegetables and 57.73 MTs of fruits (2006-07).

Ahmad, and Rifat, (2012), stated in "Marketing of Fruit Products: A case of Apple Fruit in Himachal Pradesh" marketing efficiency is important for increasing production and fair returns to apple growers. They talked about three marketing channels and have concluded that marketing channel i.e., Growers to consumer is having less price spread and more returns to growers, but is in rare practice due to lack of marketing information, credit and institutional facilities, small holdings.

Bowman, and Zilberman, (2013) research findings "Economic factors affecting diversified farming systems. Ecology and Society", had concluded that the expansion and adoption of DFS is limited by a number of factors, including still-limited demand for products produced via DFS, supply-side constraints such as high costs of tilling or harvest in multiple crop systems, and policies such as subsidies and crop insurance which discourage diversification.

Gaurav Bera, (2015) "An assessment of apple cultivation in Kalpa (Kinnaur Distt.) Himachal Pradesh". This research mentioned that horticulture has great future prospect in terms of exports. It also mentioned that horticulture does affect the socioeconomic life of inhabitants of Kalpa.

Tripathya, and Manjunath, (2014) investigation of the study "Operational semi-physical spectral-spatial wheat yield model development" had identified the existing farming systems in 12 major states of India at district level using remote sensing and ancillary data, delineated 44 farming systems with the help of GIS it became possible for integrating different enterprises

Chatterjee et al., (2015) in "Methodology of identification and characterization of farming systems in irrigated agriculture: Case study in West Bengal State of India" had identified four distinct farm types, namely, farms growing food grain and jute, farms with animal husbandry and fishery based diversification with high off-farm income, farms with crop based diversification with off-farm income, and farms growing vegetables and fruits and also concluded that farm type identification and characterization based on estimates of income from different farm components allows simplifying diversity in farming systems.

Parrey, and Hakim, (2015) States in. "Exploring marketing activities of apple growers: Empirical evidence from Kashmir" that apple grower has strong incentive to apple sale information, investigating price and demand changes by using all the available information sources. However, low availability of market information and high cost on analysis and recognition of getting signals cause such problems, including convergence of information sources, limitation in the local market, and low reliability of information.

Goswami et al., (2014) in their study "Farm types and their economic characterization in complex agro-ecosystems for informed extension intervention: study from coastal West Bengal, India of research findings" had identified four major types of farms, based on the source from which maximum gross income was earned by the farmers. Those were – rice-based farming system (34 households), vegetable - based farming system (70 households), fishery - based farming system (10 households) and farming system based on off - farm income (20 households).

Lokesh, and Hira.S, (2014) in his research paper entitled, "Horticulture development in Himachal Pradesh: An Empirical Analysis", the contribution of the horticulture within primary sector has risen from 18.53 percent in 2000-01, 26.98 per cent in 2009-10. In terms of contribution to GSDP and NSDP, horticulture sector demonstrates a phenomenal place during the span of ten years.

Iles and Marsh, (2012) findings of the study "Nurturing Diversified Farming Systems in Industrialized Countries: How Public Policy Can Contribute" had concluded diversified farming systems depends on the willingness and capacity of farmers to diversify their farms, but they need support and incentives to help survive the risks of changing from conventional to alternative production practices and to work together more collaboratively at the landscape level.

Khatun and Roy, (2012) in their study "Rural livelihood diversification in West Bengal: Determinants and constraints" conducted in the state of West Bengal had shown that household-head experience(age), educational level, social status, training, asset position, access to credit, rural infrastructure, agro climatic condition and the overall level of economic development of a region are the main driving force towards livelihood diversification in the state.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to analyse the horticulture produce marketing in the state which will involve the existing marketing practices, and also to analyse the government aids with respect to horticulture produce.

1. To analyse the government aids by the state government with respect to horticulture industry.
2. To analyse the distribution channels of different horticulture produce.
3. To analyse the contemporary marketing issues with respect to horticulture produce.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is an analytical study which is based on secondary data. Secondary data means which is already available, it refers to data which has been collected and analysed by someone else. Certain types of secondary data such a product details of the company, main aspects of the research, data about the marketing of new products, essentials of advertisements in marketing etc. For meeting the objectives of the study, the secondary data of last 10 years related to production of various horticulture produce of Himachal Pradesh has been analysed. The data for this purpose has been collected from the secondary sources such as official websites, reports, journals and newspapers etc.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**1. GOVERNMENT AIDS****A. MISSION FOR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF HORTICULTURE(MIDH)**

Mission for integrated development of horticulture sector is a sponsored scheme for the overall growth of this sector which covers fruits, vegetables, root & tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew and cocoa.

Under MIDH there are further five more schemes on horticulture:

- i) National Horticulture Mission (NHM)
- ii) Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEH)
- iii) National Horticulture Board (NHB)
- iv) Coconut Development Board (CDB)
- v) Central Institute of Horticulture (CIH), Nagaland

In MIDH, Govt. of India (GOI) contributes 60% of the total outlay and 40% of the total outlay is provided by the state governments. For the North East States and Himalayan States, GOI contributes 90%. Under the above mentioned 5 schemes GOI contributes 100%. The total Budget allocated for this is Rs. 2160.25 crore has been earmarked for 2020-21. And as on 31st December, 2020 Rs. 857.47 crores have been released under MIDH, i.e. Rs. 495.13 crore for NHM, Rs. 197.75 crore under HMNEH, Rs. 80.00 crore under CDB, 77.42 Crore to NHB and Rs. 7.17 crore to CIH, DCCD & DASD.

i. NATIONAL HORTICULTURE MISSION(NHM):

NHM comes under MIDH which is centrally sponsored scheme and was launched in 2005-06, it aims at the overall development of the horticulture, through cluster approach which ensures forward and backward linkage and also the active participation of all the stake holders. 384 districts in 18 states and 6 union territories were covered under NHM. There are total of 16 national level agencies (NLAs) that were included under this Mission.

A. PHYSICAL PROGRESS**TABLE 1: PHYSICAL PROGRESS UNDER NHM**

S. No.	Components	Unit	Progress during 2020-21 (as on 31 st December, 2020)
1	Area Expansion	Ha.	80406
2	Rejuvenation	Ha.	6783
3	Protected Cultivation	Ha.	9450
4	Integrated Pest/ Nutrient Management	Ha.	35460
5	Nurseries	No.	14
6	Water Resources	No.	1213
7	Beekeeping	No.	49194
8	Horticulture Mechanization	No.	4081
9	Post Harvest Management		
	(i) Pack House	No.	661
	(ii) Cold Storage	No.	29
	(iii) Primary/mobile processing units	No.	117
10	Rural Market	No.	1

Source: as per the data uploaded by State Govt. on MIDH web portal

B. FINANCIAL PROGRESS

During 2019-20, as on 31st March, 2020, funds to the tune of Rs. 800.13 crore have been released to States/ UTs/NLAs for implementing NHM scheme against BE of Rs.1217.00 crore and RE of Rs 1065.00 crore. During 2020-21, an amount of Rs. 1363.62 crore has been allocated for NHM, against of which an amount of Rs. 495.13 crore has been released as on 31st December, 2020.

ii. HORTICULTURE MISSION FOR NORTH EAST AND HIMALAYAN STATES (HMNEH):

HMNEH is a scheme under MIDH which is also a centrally sponsored scheme for North East and Himalayan states. Earlier this scheme was known as Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States only, since 2001-02. During the X plan (2003-04) this scheme was extended to three Himalayan states namely: Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand. This scheme covers full spectrum of horticulture, from the planting to the consumption with the forward and backward linkage. HMNEH subsumed under MIDH from 2014-15.

A. PHYSICAL PROGRESS**TABLE 2: PHYSICAL PROGRESS UNDER HMNEH**

S. No.	Components	Unit	Progress during 2020-21 (as on 31 st December, 2020)
1	Area Expansion	Ha.	3843
2	Rejuvenation	Ha.	300
3	Protected Cultivation	Ha.	125
4	Integrated Pest/Nutrient Management	Ha.	6730
5	Nurseries	No.	5
6	Water Resources	No.	15
7	Beekeeping	No.	0
8	Horticulture Mechanization	No.	1067
9	Post Harvest Management		
	(i) Pack House	No.	32
	(ii) Cold Storage	No.	0
	(iii) Primary/Mobile Processing Units	No.	0
10	Rural Market	No.	0

B. FINANCIAL PROGRESS

During 2019-20, as on 31st March, 2020, funds to the tune of Rs. 326.74 crore have been released to States implementing HMNEH scheme against BE of Rs.415.00 crore. During 2020-21, an amount of Rs. 470.00 crore has been allocated for North Eastern States and Himalayan States (including PMDP), against which an amount of Rs. 197.75 crore has been released as on 31st December, 2020.

iii. NATIONAL HORTICULTURE BOARD

Government of India started National Horticulture Board (NHB) in 1984 as an autonomous body under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and registered under societies registration act 1860 and re-registered under the Haryana Registration and Regulation of Societies Act 2012. The NHB aims at the commercial horticulture development by creation of production hubs, post-harvest infrastructure and cold chain facilities, promotion of new crops and promotion of growers' associations.

A. PHYSICAL PROGRESS

- Under the scheme of Commercial Horticulture Development through Production and Post-Harvest Management, board sanctioned 249 projects as on 31 December, 2020, which involves subsidy of Rs. 3219.50 Lakh.
- Under the Capital Investment Subsidy for construction/ expansion/ modernization of cold storages for horticulture produce scheme, board sanctioned 06 projects of cold storages/CA storages which involves subsidy of Rs. 32122 MT as on 31.12.2020.
- Under the scheme of Technology development and Transfer for promotion of Horticulture, board sanctioned 04 projects for New technology introduction, progressive farmers visit, horticulture sangam, various awareness programs which involves financial assistance of Rs. 11.21 Lakh as on 31.12.2020.

B. FINANCIAL PROGRESS

For the period 2020-21, total of Rs. 77.42 crore has been released to NHB against BE of Rs. 170.00 crore.

2. MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

A Horticulture produce marketing agency have many activities and operations like procurement, packing, storage, transportation, processing and marketing of produce related to horticulture sector. Marketing strategy for horticulture produce, if it is efficient, rely on the decisions related to where, when and how much to market. The horticulture products pass through different channels on their way to final consumer and the profit share of producers depends on the channel followed.

i. DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIES FOR HORTICULTURE PRODUCES

Distribution, as the name suggest, is the process of making a product available for final consumer. It is very important to have a good distribution channel for every product. Horticulture produce involves perishable products, therefore, distribution is considered to be very important element. Due to perishability, the distribution channel of these products needs to be as fast as possible.

There are so many factors which plays an important role in the distribution of horticulture produce such as nature of produce, Competitors choice of selection of channel, financial resources, transportation saving, storage facilities, market knowledge, High marginal cost, image of the producers, price and convenience. The large chain of commission agents affects the profit of orchardists, so choosing a cost saving channel is always considered to be the best channel. Distribution

channel also involves commission agent, wholesaler, private companies HPMC, and retailers. Majority of horticulture produce growers consider commission agent and wholesaler as the most efficient channel.

ii. DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS OF HORTICULTURE PRODUCE

Marketing of any consumer good comprises of the movement that good from producer to consumer, and in case of Horticulture produce one can say from grower to consumer. Distribution is important because it decides the almost everything in any business. Distribution channels one is using needs to be efficient and cost effective so that growers/producers can get the maximum benefit out of it. In the state of Himachal Pradesh there are so many problems in when it comes to distribution due to its geographical situation. It is very challenging for the producers to manage the supply chain in the state. In this chain of distribution there are various agencies involved like growers, pre-harvest contractors, wholesalers, retailers and consumers. The following are the existing channels used for the purpose,

1. Channel A: Producer-wholesaler-retailer-consumer
2. Channel B: Producer-primary wholesaler-secondary wholesaler-retailer-consumer
3. Channel C: Producer-pre harvest contractor-primary wholesaler-secondary wholesaler- retailer-consumer
4. Channel D: Producer-retailer-consumer

iii. MARKETING FUNCTIONS

Marketing in case of Horticulture produce involves various marketing function. After growing the produce has to be prepared for the market which involves picking, assembling, grading, packing, transportation, loading/unloading, storage etc. These marketing functions are important determinants for setting up the prices of horticulture produce. Being careful in performing these function helps in setting up the good tone for the net returns and vice-versa.

- i) **Harvesting:** marketing function starts from the picking function and hence it is important to depicts the correct time for picking to ensure its quality and maximum storage life. The picking stage also depends on the time lag between the expected arrival of the produce in the market and picking. The horticulture produces are considered to be very susceptible to bruising and other mechanical injuries and therefore, should be handled carefully. If any damage cause due to rough handling, it will reduce the value of the horticulture produce.
- ii) **Grading:** Grading is considered to be the second important marketing function. Grading is not considered for every horticulture produce as it varies from produce to produce, for example in case of apples, apples are classified into different grades on the bases of quality, sizes.
- iii) **Packing:** packaging is considered to be very important marketing function as it is the package which appears in front of consumer. Horticulture produce involves perishable items which are fragile in nature, and needs to be transported to different locations therefore it is very important to have a good packaging material which can protect and preserve its quality during transportation and handling.
- iv) **Transportation:** transportation is another function in marketing which adds utility and need to be done carefully. Managing the supply chain is very important as horticulture produces are perishable and fragile in nature.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Himachal Pradesh provides wide variety of soils and diversified climate conditions for the horticulture produces in the state. Geographical area of the which ranges from Lower hills (Shivalik range), Inner Himalayas (mid-mountains) and Greater Himalaya (Alpine zone) makes it suitable to produce variety of horticulture produce within the state itself. Horticulture produce in the state is having very wide range i.e. Apple, Plum, Peach, Apricot, Pear, Cherry, Kiwi, Pomegranate, Olive, Persimmon, Strawberry, Almond, Walnut, Pecannut, Hazelnut, Mango, Litchi, Guava, Papaya, Jackfruit, Aonla, Grapes, Loquat, Ber, Banana, Karonda, Fig, Spota, Deon, Bael, Harad, Jamun, Baherba, Orange/Kinnow, Malta/Musambi, Kagzi Lime, Galgal, Grape fruit, etc. There are approximately 38 varieties of fruits only. Among other issues related to horticulture sector, marketing and distribution channel in the state needs to be improved. Focusing on Marketing channels will open many opportunities to the growers as well as towards the economy of the state. The existing marketing practices needs to be revisited by the government as well as the growers. Innovative strategies and new marketing tools available in the market needs to be utilized by the horticulture sector as well. Centre as well as state governments are providing so many facilities to the growers but many of the growers are not aware of it. Awareness programs should be provided to the growers. Supply chain facility which will manly focus on the transportation related issues needs to be addressed. E-Marketing as well as direct marketing will enhance the states potential in the horticulture sector. Niche marketing and in case of premium quality produce can also be considered. Also, advertising and promotional activities needs to be focused and increased.

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