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PERFORMANCE AND PROSPECTS OF HOPCOMS IN KARNATAKA – A DIRECT LINK BETWEEN FARMERS AND CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT

Horticulture provides excellent opportunities in raising the income of the farmers even in the dry tracts. A significant shift towards horticulture is evident in the state with an increase in area and production. Horticulture provides higher unit productivity and offers great scope for value addition and this sector is taking inroads throughout the length and breadth of the state. Horticulture products have good potential for generating employment in cultivation and in processing, marketing and distributing. They are frequently produced on small farmers thus providing an important source of additional income for poor farmers in developing countries. Horticulture has been acknowledged and identified as one of the growth engines by the government of India and many states in India. It contributes to economic security of the farmer and the country, generates employment for rural masses and conserves natural resources

KEYWORDS

HOPCOMS, farmer & consumers.

INTRODUCTION

arnataka is predominantly an Agricultural state with 33% of the total Gross Domestic product (GDP) derived from agriculture and 66% of the work force is dependent on agriculture. As such, if the state has to proper and progress economically, it is possible only through agriculture.

In Karnataka varieties of horticultural crops are grown. Almost every major cereal, pulse, oilseed, fruit, vegetables, flower, spices and plantation crops finds ideal home in the state, thanks to the moderate climatic conditions, and the absence of the rigorous summer and winter. Specially there are number of varieties of horticultural crops ranging from the temperate zone pears, plum, peach, strawberry; the sub-tropical or humid zone fruits like the mangosteen, litichi, rambaatan, and the tropical mango, banana, grapes, citrus, guava, sapota, jack, pomegranate, cashewnut and annonas. Among fruits; cabbage, cauliflower, carrot, beetroot, turrip lettuce among temperate vegetables, brinjal, bhenndi, tomato, Onion among tropical crops: tea, coffee, cocoa, rubber cinchona, eucalyptus, coconut and are canut among plantation crops, pepper, clove, nutmeg. Cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, turmeric, coriander and a host of spices; jasmine, rose, chrysanthemum and array of flowers ornamental foliage crops and a number of medicinal and aromatic plants. These lend the state a unique status in the field of horticulture. The department of horticulture acts as the facilitator for creation of infrastructure for marketing of fruits & vegetables in the state. The Department of Agricultural Marketing is facilitating the marketing of horticultural produces in the state the Department of Agricultural Marketing is also handles the notified fruits and vegetables to the market and sell them directly to the consumers. The Department of Agricultural marketing is also handles the notified fruits and vegetables in the state through APMC'S.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- 1 To study the existing structural network and administrative pattern of HOPCOMS in Karnataka.
- 2 To study the means and methods of procurement and distribution of Fruits and Vegetables by HOPCOMS in Karnataka.
- 3 To study the facilitative link provided by HOPCOMS to Farmers and Consumers in Karnataka.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from HOPCOMS and National Horticulture Board Bangalore. The collected data has been analyzed by adopting compound growth rate model and simple tabulation. The secondary data has covered the period from 1999-2000 to 2009 -10.

HORTICULTURE SCENARIO IN KARNATAKA

Karnataka state is situated between 11031' and 18048' North Latitudes and 74012' and 78040' and 78040' East longitudes, and lies in the West-Central part of the Peninsular India. It's from North to south is 700 Kms. And from East to West is 400Kms. Karnataka State covers an area of 191791 sq Kms., occupying 7.75 per cent of the total geographical area of the Country. As per the 2001 Census, the population of the state is 53 Millions. Karnataka has been the First State in the Country, to set-up a separate department for the horticulture, in the year 1965.

Karnataka is the Fourth largest producer of Horticulture Crops in India, the geographical area of Karnataka is 190.50 lakh ha, of which an area of 126.021 lakh ha, comes under the cultivatable area, constituting 66.15 per cent of the geographical area for the year 2009-2010. Out of the total cultivable area, 18.99 lakh ha, are covered under horticulture, as per the "Horticulture Crops Statistics Karnataka State at A Glance 2009/10". Horticulture in the state, accounts about 15.07 per cent of the total cultivable area. Out of the 18.99 lakh ha., of the total horticultural cropped area 8.05 lakh ha., (42.39%) come under Plantation croups; 4.37 lakh ha., (23.01%) under Vegetables; 3.60 Lakh ha., (18.96%) under Fruits; 2.66 Lakh ha., (14.01%) under Spices and 0.31 Lakh ha., (1.64%) under (Commercial flowers, including the area under Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. Accordingly, the total horticultural production in the State during the year (2009-2010) reference figures at 147.80 Lakh tones. Going in detail the production figures stand at 59.63 Lakh tones (40.34 per cent) with respect to Fruits Crops. 70.63 Lakh tones (47.79 per cent) Vegetables Crops; The Area under Horticulture crops is 206.62 Lakh hectares and production of 2146.14 Lakh tones under Horticulture crops in India. Karnataka has occupied 4th place in respect to the total area with 17.13 Lakh hectares contributing 8.29 per cent of area to the total area and 7th place in respect of total production with 149.68 Lakh tones contributing 6.97 per cent production at all India. Karnataka has occupied 7th place regarding in Fruits Crops with an area of 3.15 Lakh hectares, and production of 52.70 lakh tones, 6th place regarding Vegetables Crops with 4.48 Lakh hectares, of area and 77.25 Lakh tones of production.

HOPCOMS IN KARNATAKA: AN OVERVIEW

Development of Horticulture is being varied out on scientific basis since early decades of the present century. The Mysore State Government gave enough impetus by establishing the Department of Government gardens in 1856, later in 1961 it was upgraded as the full fledged Department of Horticulture. Mysore

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Horticulture Society located at Lalbagh in Bangalore was founded by G H Krumbiegal, the Director of Horticulture. But virtually it was a rebirth of a society called Mysore Agri-Horticulture Society, Bangalore, which was the founded in 1836 by William Munro. The Government of Mysore had taken over the responsibility of conducting the horticultural shows after the society become defunct probably from 1874. After retirement of John Cameron in 1907, G H Krumbiegal was appointed as superintendent of Government gardens in the year 1908. It was Krumbiegal who thought of forming an association of horticulturists. Hence Krumbiegal named the society as the "Mysore Horticultural Society" and got it registered with the Registrar of Societies under Societies Registration Act of India -1904.

The word 'Horticulture' could by symbolized with the letter H which has four limbs. Here the concept "people participation, through NGOs" is made use of. The first limb of "H" is designated as the KSDH and the remaining three limbs of "H" are designated for the three NGOs. The Mysore Horticulture Society (MHS). The Bangalore Nurserymen co-operative Society (BNCS) and Horticultural producers co-operative marketing Society (HOPCOMS). The First two limbs –the Department of Horticulture and the MHS already existed. Founded the remaining two limbs the BNCS and the HOPCOMS in 1958. The Horticulture Producers' Co-operative Marketing and Processing Society Ltd. Popularly called as HOPCOMS was established in with the principal objective of establishing a proper system for the marketing of fruits and vegetables, to benefit both the Producers the consumers. Prior to the establishment of HOPCOMS, no proper system of marketing of horticulture produce was in existence. Farmers were in the clutches of the middlemen and the whole system was benefited the middlemen neither the farmers nor the consumers.

Horticulture Development in the Mysore state was started by establishing. The first Horticulture farm was started at Maddur in 1942, to demonstrate the cultivation of Horticulture crops and production of vegetable seeds and planting material for the farmers. Marketing of highly perishable commodities like fruits and vegetables has always caught with problems. Farmers often have little bargaining power, middlemen collect commissions from producers, and there was a frequent delay in payments, and produce sold on the basis of volume, with prices being determined to the advantage of retailers and not the farmers. In order to tackle these issues the Horticulture Producers' Co-operative Marketing and Processing Society Ltd. (HOPCOMS) was founded in 1959 under a name of Grape Growers Marketing and Processing Society Act. The members comprise farmers, state financial organizations and the Karnataka State Government. It is managed by official's appointment by the state, drawn from the Department of Horticulture and the department of Co-operation. As of 2010 there are 22 HOPCOMS in the state, each working independently with in demarcated districts of operation. It had jurisdiction over Bangalore, Kolar, Mysore, Tumkur, Mandya and Mangalore districts. Since grape was a seasonal fruit, the society started handling all types of fruits and vegetables from 1965. Due to this change in operations, the name of the society was changed into Horticulture Producers Co-operative Marketing and Processing Society Ltd. From 10th Sep 1959 its registered office is located at Lalbagh, Bangalore. Later, Govt. has declared the HOPCOMS as the unit of Horticulture department in January 2009.

COMPOSITION OF HOPCOMS BOARD

The Board of HOPCOMS consists of 20 members. In which 11 members are elected from among the producers, and the rest are the Govt. nominees. The President and Vice President are elected among producers only. The Managing Director of HOPCOMS is from of the Horticulture Department on a lent service (Deputation).

The HOPCOMS has 16,221 growers as members, with a share capital of Rs. 265.01 lakhs (As on 31.03.2010) and at present HOPCOMS have 916 staff members under different work.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF HOPCOMS

The main objective of HOPCOMS is to promote and encourage the development of horticultural produces with following support.

- a) By training & providing technical advice literature on horticultural crop.
- b) By providing inputs implements plants and grafts etc..,
- c) Providing marketing facilities and organize the proper studies to members of HOPCOMS.
- d) Supply of Horticultural products to all major Factories, Hostels, Hospitals, Clubs, and Social functions etc.,,
- e) Providing internal commodities exchange facilities to co-operative societies & Branches.

TURN-OVER OF HOPCOMS

At present, HOPCOMS is handling about 90-100 M T of fruits and vegetables every day, Nearly 200 farmers are bringing their produces directly to HOPCOMS every day. Soon after produces arrived at HOPCOMS, it is graded, weighed and cash payment up to 5,000/- is made immediately to the procures. Above 5,000/- to 10,000/- payment will be made by Cheques. Out of total procured quantity, about 80 per cent is distributed & disposed of through outlets, 15 per cent to institutions and the rest 5 per cent to Government Hostels. The retail outlets are being managed by the salesman who is the employees of HOPCOMS. As incentives, they are allowed to absorb driage and damage to the extent of 3.7 per cent of the value of the produce besides wages. Every day the salesman will remit the sales proceeds of the previous day and collect the materials required for the day's sales from the Central procurement center. The supplies to retail outlets are being made through the 30 own and through hired vehicles.

AREA OF OPERATION

At present Bangalore HOPCOMS operating in Bangalore urban, Bangalore Rural, Kolar, Chikkabalapura, Channapatana & Ramanagara Districts.

HOW PRICES ARE FIXED AT HOPCOMS

The APMC markets play a major role in setting market trends and prices. The prices at which HOPCOMS buys the produce from the farmers is based on the rates and prices released APMC. The HOPCOMS employee's collects the maximum, minimum and model prices for the various commodities sold at previous day in the APMC markets published in the newspaper.

Based on the rates released by APMC, HOPCOMS fixes the procurement and sale price for different Fruits and Vegetables brought for sale by its member. The prices produce are vary from day to day and from hour, to hour in private markets such as

- 1) Singshandra market for Fruits
- 2) K R Market for Vegetables

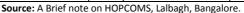
3) Yashavanthpura market for Food grains.

Clarity is person the whole mechanism of price fixation for various Fruits and Vegetables at HOPCOMS.

INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT HOPCOMS

The HOPCOMS is having the following infrastructural facilities for marketing of Fruits and Vegetables.

Particulars	No's	Particulars	No's
Retail outlets	295	Chemical & fertilizers	10
Cold storages	01	Vehicles	28
Processing units	01	Walk – N-Cooler	02
Grading unit	01	Procurement Center	07
Godowns	16		



DISTRIBUTION OUTLETS OF HOPCOMS

HOPCOMS distributing various Fruits and Vegetables products through following points.

Particulars	Distribution Outlets No's			
Retail outlets	295			
Hospitals	14			
Factories	21			
Hostels, Clubs, Institutions etc.,	22			

Source: A Brief note on HOPCOMS, Lalbagh, Bangalore.

HOPCOMS undertake supply of Fruits and Vegetables to directly to marriages and other function on demand.

PROCUREMENT & PAYMENT PROCESS AT HOPCOMS

HOPCOMS enroll farmers as its members issues purchase indent to those members specifying the quantity of Vegetables to bring to the procurement center at Bangalore or other districts center. Producer will be verified weighed aid issued a receipt and the same presented to the payment officer who in turn issue a cash voucher which will be encased immediately at the bank located at the centers its of same day.

OTHER ACTIVATES OF HOPCOMS

The society has set up a unit for preparing fresh fruits drinks out of fruits like Bangalore Blue grapes, mango, oranges etc. It is selling the same to the general public at a reasonable price of Rs.5/- per 200 ml bottles through its retail outlets, and through dispensers located at impotent places. The HOPCOMS help its member farmers by supplying Fertilizers, plant protection chemicals, garden implements, seed etc, through its own center located at procurement centers.

DAMAGES AND WASTAGE OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT HOPCOMS

Fruits and Vegetables being highly perishable products losses due to driage and wastages is obvious. Driage and wastage at HOPCOMS is around 4-5 per cent of the total procurement of the produce. However, Driage and wastage has been reduced from 4.32 per cent of the total procurement to 1.85 per cent present. FACILITIES EXTENDED BY HOPCOMS TO FARMERS

FACILITIES EXTENDED BY HOPCOWS TO FARMERS

- HOPCOMS is offering multifarious facilities to the farmers.
- 1 HOPCOMS purchase the Horticulture produces directly from farmers at remunerative prices.
- 2 Provide transport facilities from collection centers to HOPCOMS procurement
- 3 Correct weighment & immediate cash payment.
- 4 Arrange for essential input supply Fertilizers, plant protection chemicals, garden implements, seed etc, at reasonable prices.
- 5 Arrange subsidized supply of plastic crates to its farmer members for handling fruits and vegetables.
- 6 Supply of seeds under subsidized rates.
- 7 Conducting farmers tours and technical guidance.
- 8 Conducting training on production and processing of horticultural crops.
- 9 Providing Accommodation for night stay at Guest House.
- 10 Providing Canteen and banking facilities.
- 11 Guaranteeing minimum support price during distress sales under Govt schemes.
- 12 Extending (financial) Assistance for preliminary processing activities.

FACILITIES EXTENDED TO CONSUMERS

- 1. Supply of fresh and quality fruits and vegetables at reasonable price.
- 2. Ensure correct weighment.
- 3. Established Retail outlets in extensions.
- 4. Providing mobile sales.
- 5. Supplying fruits and vegetables to marriages and social functions in spot with free transportation.
- 6. Offering bulk supply of fruits and vegetables to institution, Organization, Hostels, Hospitals & factories etc at competitive price.
- 7. Offering fresh grape, orange, mango fruits drinks at reasonable prices in 200ml battles.
- 8. Conducting seasonal fruits Meals, fares and festivals of grapes, mango, and fruits fare at discount rates at cities to promote fruits sales ensuring better returns to farmers and fresh and quality products at reasonable prices to consumers.

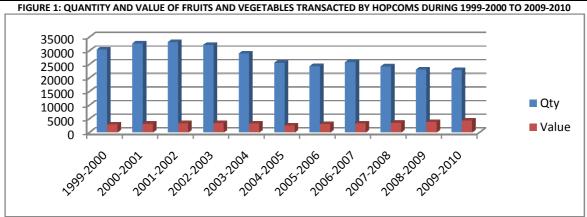
TABLE 1: QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES TRANSACTED BY HOPCOMS DURING 1999-2000 TO 2009-2010

(Qty: in Metric Tones, Value: Rs. in Lakhs)

Years	Fruits		Vegetal	oles	All Products		Total
	Qty	Value	Qty	Value	Qty	Value	Turnover
1999-2000	15921	1795	14444	1011	30365	2806	3754
2000-2001	15732	1962	16872	1122	32605	3083	4204
2001-2002	16384	2041	16659	1244	33043	3284	4517
2002-2003	16099	2131	15964	1179	32063	3311	4523
2003-2004	14648	1959	14198	1242	28845	3200	4368
2004-2005	12565	1681	12903	1103	25468	2484	3834
2005-2006	11095	1572	13137	1343	24232	2915	4068
2006-2007	10910	1719	14802	1468	25713	3187	4613
2007-2008	9869	1757	14274	1659	24144	3416	9462
2008-2009	10100	2099	12906	1592	23012	3691	5648
2009-2010	10243	2523	12547	1768	22790	4291	6550
% of CAGR	-5.78	0.79	-2.22	5.20	-3.90	2.51	5.75



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Sources: Department of Horticulture, Bangalore

The above table and figure shows that quantity & value of Fruits and Vegetables transacted by HOPCOMS during 1999-2000 to 2009-2010. The table clearly indicates that there was a decline in quantity of Fruits handled (with -5.78 percent) and the value is in positive growth of 0.79 percent in value similarly the vegetables growth was negative with -2.22 percent in quantity but registered the positive growth rate of 5.20 percent in value. However, the total quantity and value handled in the HOPCOMS has been registered the same trend. The total quantity registered the negative growth with -3.90 per cent, where as the value with positive growth rate of 2.51 per cent. The table also revealed that the total turnover of HOPCOMS has been registered the significant positive growth rate with 5.75 percent turnover the period of 11 years.

CONCLUSION

Through HOPCOMS, the government has invested large amount of resources in marketing of horticultural produce in the city of Bangalore and in several other cities of Karnataka. While the proportion of total produce that HOPCOMS picks up is small compared to the total amount used in Bangalore city, HOPCOMS sets a good example, both in terms of the prices that it offers farmers, as well as the quality and prices that if offers to customers. Even though it deals with only a small part of the total horticultural produce in the city of Bangalore, HOPCOMS sets the prices in the market. Both farmers and customers have come to accept the price set by HOPCOMS as fair.

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