

# INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY IN NEPAL

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## ABSTRACT

Horticulture sector of Agriculture had lagged behind in its development because of the lack of a strong institutional organization in Nepal. Isolated and inconsistent attempts were made in the past for some kind of institutional organization. Frequent changes in the organization without proper evaluation and expected output of the changed organization have been the major constraint for horticulture growth. Present organization of Agriculture Department needs some kind of adjustment in its set up to take care of the zeal and commitment on the part of the government for implementation of horticulture programme under Agriculture perspective Plan (APP). Recommendations are made for minor adjustment in the present institutional organization under the Department of Agriculture.

## INTRODUCTION

At present, His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N) has come up with Ninth five Year Plan where in HMG/N has emphasized the implementation of Agriculture Perspective Plan (APP). HMG/N expects to increase the agriculture growth from the horticulture sector from 13% to 15%. To achieve this growth with four priority inputs (irrigation, fertilizer, technology and roads and power), one of the priority outputs as expected by APP is high value crops products which basically includes "Horticulture Products".

In order to achieve the expected outputs, the present institutional organization and the scale of technology needed seem inadequate. Thus it is imperative to strengthen the developmental activities and technology generation capacity in the field of horticulture. The present paper deals with the minor adjustment in the present existing institutional organization under the Department of Agriculture (DOA).

Attempts made for horticulture development in the past are reviewed briefly below:

- 1937 - Formation of Agriculture Development Board (Agriculture council).  
Beginning of development of horticultural crops on moderate scale.
- Establishment of fruit nurseries and orchards in Chhanui, Balaju and Godavari in Kathmandu Valley.
- 1948 - Implementation of horticulture programmes. Establishment of Agriculture farms at Kakani and Parwanipur.
- 1955 - Establishment of horticulture section (at Putali Bagaincha) under the Department of Agriculture. Launched horticultural programme.
- 1961 - Establishment of Horticulture Stations at Kirtipur and Dhankuta (with India aid)
- 1967 - Department of Agriculture was dissolved with the formation of five new departments including Department of Horticulture.

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1967-1972 - Several horticulture farms were established. Priority on horticulture development was given in mid-hills.

1972 - Unification of Department of Agriculture consolidating all five departments. Development of horticultural crops became the responsibility of four different divisions and national level commodity programmes Fruit Development Division (FDD) vegetable Development Division (VDD), National Citrus Development Programme (NCDP) and National Citrus Development Programme (NCDP) and National Potato Development Programme (NPDP)

Horticulture farms were kept under the administration of Regional Agriculture Directorates. Under this phase also the horticultural development activities had suffered on both the fronts

- research and extension.
- 1982 - A separate post of Deputy Director- General was created in the Department of Agriculture to co-ordinate the Horticulture/Fisheries Development Programmes.
- National Priority Citrus Programme was launched.
- Assist. Agriculture Minister was entrusted responsibility to look after horticulture development activities.

It showed the commitment on the part of HMG/N indicating priority for the development of horticulture, which was highly appreciable.

1990 - Creation of Department of Horticulture (DOH). District horticulture offices became operational in 30 districts.

1990/91 - Preparation of 20 year Master Plan for Horticulture Development.

1992 - All four Departments- Agriculture, Livestock, Marketing and newly formed Horticulture were integrated under one umbrella under the Department of Agriculture Development (DOAD), with the separate formation of autonomous institution of Nepal Agriculture Research Council (NARC) to look after the agriculture research. Under the new DOAD with Director General as Head, provision of posts for seven Directors were made including one for Horticulture.

Under the new integrated organization, Posts for Horticulture Development officers or Assistant Horticulture Development officers were created in all the seventy five districts of Nepal.

- Horticulture development activities at national level were limited to two development Divisions (Fruit and Vegetable) putting original national but independent Citrus and Potato development programmes under the above two divisions.

New commodity programmes for tea and coffee, cardamom, and ginger were initiated under these two divisions.

The brief history of Nepalese horticulture development was filled with these instabilities and uncertainties which brought great setbacks and caused the horticulture sector too lag far behind compared to other sectors. The line of command over the past years has been very inconsistent which created confusion among the employees about their responsibilities and field of work. Horticulture sector possesses an immense scope and potential of gearing the economy

towards fulfilling the aspirations of the people. This sector seems to be lacking the desired attention.

## **PRESENT STATUS**

The present status of institutional organization of horticulture under Department of Agriculture is described below :

- 1) Having two times full fledged separate "Department of Horticulture" and one time a separate Assistant Minister for Agriculture entrusted responsibility to look after horticulture development activities, the horticulture sector has a misfortune to direct activities at the Departmental level in the present organization of Agriculture.
- 2) Two commodity programmes which contributed in their field and enjoyed full fledged national status for so many years were given simple status of ordinary sections as well as deprived gazetted first class posts which are transferred to the districts.

Considering the importance of citrus and potato commodities in the national economy of the country, these two commodities should be given their original national status with restoration of their developmental activities, and so also in other commodities.

- 3) Keeping in view the national policy of developing horticulture in the midhills of Nepal, the present organizational set up lacks the leadership of a horticulturist as well as necessary manpower and physical amenities to carry out the above envisaged policy.
- 4) Region Agriculture Directorates having responsibility of monitoring and evaluation within the region includes no horticulture unit.
- 5) Programmes on export oriented commodities like spices and flower are completely neglected.
- 6) Under the present organizational structure, the original status of majority horticulture farms are reduced too low-level and some horticulture farms are privatized, which have resulted in the great shortage of foundation seeds and mother plants. Appropriated technologies transfer on horticulture for field level has been lacking very much.

Serious thought on the institutional aspect of the overall horticulture development programme is invited.

## **APPROACH**

Initial approaches to be made in Phase I are listed below:

- 1) At grassroot level (i.e. production level), every Agriculture Service Center/Sub-center presently manned with a joiner Technician be given responsibility of a production unit (or block) of horticulture crops with an area coverage of 10 hectare. Each district will have five such production units. Each production unit with an average production of 150 mt. will have 750 mt. in total in each district. With a simple farmgate price of Rs. 5.- per kg. each district can give production of horticultural crops worth  $750,000 \times \text{Rs. } 5/- = \text{Rs. } 37,50,000/-$

Production programme in each production unit with 10 hectare area will be managed through group formations.

- 2) For district level horticultural programme, the present provision of one horticulture officer and one junior technician seems adequate in the first phase.
- 3) Under Regional level, the present organizational structure be remained as such at least for Phase 1.
- 4) For the National Level, an additional post of Deputy Director General be created to look after horticulture development activities at the departmental level in this Phase 1.
- 5) The Department a Agriculture should consider the great importance of Citrus and Potato crops in the national economy of the country, for which these two commodities should be given their original national status with restoration of their developmental programmes and activities.
- 6) In the same line of National Citrus and Potato Development Programme, additional national programme on Apple/Temperate Fruit development and Tropical Fruit development need due consideration.
- 7) At Central divisional level, divisions for spices and flowerier very much needed considering their export potentialities. These divisions will be responsible for policy formulation and production programme.

In Nepal due to the wide variation in attitude, and consequent climates ranging from tropical to alpine types, a wide range to horticulture crops (fruits, vegetables, spices, herbs and flowers) can be grown successfully. Moreover mobilization of resources for the development of horticultural crops can help to improve import substitution and promote export to a great extent. Considering the tremendous scope and potential of horticultural crops for generating comparatively better income, horticulture sector occupies special position compared to other sector of agriculture in Nepal. For this, horticulture sector needs independent growth and development at its own course. To develop this sector, it needs to have its own independent organization. Moreover to achieve the ambitious target set for horticultural crops in the Agriculture Perspective Plan (APP), it needs to have a strong support of an institutional organization of agriculture. For this, higher authority in the Ministry of Agriculture should think seriously about the creation of full-fledged Department of Horticulture under the Ministry as soon as possible. The Nepal Horticulture Society (NHS) is always at its service to co-operate His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the people in the development of horticulture industry in Nepal.

## **REFERENCES**

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