

THE HORTICULTURE IN NEPAL - OVER VIEW

Shiva B. Nepali Pradhan*

THE HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT

1. Public sector : In 1937 the Agriculture Council was formed, when initiation was made for Horticulture and one Fruit Nursery at Godawari was established. This nursery is still in operation under the Department of Agriculture. Two stations such as, Kakani *Fruit Station and Parwanipur Agriculture Station with Horticulture unit* was the *established in 1948. Under the Department of agriculture, Horticulture Section* was created in 1955. With the initiative of Horticulture Section, two more Horticulture Research Station, Horticulture Research Station Kirtipur and Citrus Research Station, Dhankuta were established in 1961. In the same year Yangapuri Horticulture Farm, Pokhara Citrus Research Sub- station, Dhunibeshi Horticulture Farm were established. Similarly, in 1962, Daman Horticulture Farm, Helambu Horticulture Farm, Baitadi Horticulture Farm and Trishuli Trial Orchard were commissioned.

The Department of Horticulture came into existence in 1967 and several national programs were created. In 1972, Divisions of Fruit and Vegetable Development, National Program of Citrus and Potato as a Commodity Development Programs along with the Spices and Coffee development activities were initiated. The Fresh Vegetable and Vegetable Seed Production Project under technical assistance from FAO/UNDP was initiated in 1975 and ended in 1997 with good results. The Hill Fruit Development Project under loan assistance by ADB/M commissioned in 1988, ended in 1995. Under financial and technical support from Govt. of Japan Horticulture Development Project was initiated in 1985 and terminated in 1997 with positive impact.

The creation of Deputy Director General for horticulture (1981) and the position of Assistant Minister (1987) to look after horticulture development shows the commitment on the part of HMG indicating priority for the development of horticulture, is highly appreciable. In 1989 Department Of Horticulture was re-commissioned and in 1991 Horticulture Master Plan was formulated. All four departments - Agriculture, Livestock, Marketing and Horticulture were brought under one umbrella - the Department of Agriculture Development with the formation of Nepal Agricultural Research Council to look after the agriculture research in 1991.

As early as 1960, Fruit Preservation activity was in operation at Kirtipur Horticulture Research Station. Later, the same activity was put together with the Central Food Research Laboratory, and continued to deal with the fruit and vegetable preservation research

The tea plantation took place in 1963 at Illam and Tea Development Cooperation was created in 1966 to look after proper tea development activities.

* President, Nepal Horticulture Society

2. Private sector :

1. **Fruit processing :** As early as 1963, 'Nesy' processed fruit products of Nepal Phalphul Udhog were available in the market. In early 1977, Risal Fruit Processing Industry was in operation, now run with trade mark "Druke" Tashi Risal Fruit Industry. From 1991, "Frooti" a fruit drink has come in the market; this is an extension of Indian product. "Kissan " has been operating since 1979 as a new venture in fruit processing, an extension of Indian Fruit Processing Industry.
2. **Flower production:** Agriculture Enterprises Center (AEC), has helped to form Floriculture Association of Nepal (FAN) out of a number of private floriculture nurseries since 1991. In these past several years, FAN has done an excellent job in promoting the cultivation and marketing of flowers.
3. **Vegetable seeds production:** Different seed dealers and seed producers have come together to form Seed Association of Nepal(SEAN) and with the technical help of HMG/FAO, Fresh Vegetable and Vegetable Seed Production Project, has done a good job in exporting vegetable seed. \
4. **Fruit nursery :** Since 1972 a number of fruit nurseries have come up throughout the country . Over 340 fruits nurseries at private sector are supplying more than 8,42,000 saplings annually to meet the fruit saplings in the country.
5. **Tea & coffee production :** A number of private tea garden have come up as early as in 1959 and continue to come and the coffee is taking it own course in its expansion.

Area (ha.) and production (mt.) of horticultural crops, 1996/97

Commodity	Area	Productive area	Production	Yield ton/ha
Fruits total	62935	42290	428277	10.13
Citrus	15940	9335	93046	9.97
Deciduous	13261	9402	81640	8.68
Tropical	33734	23553	253591	10.87
Vegetables	146503	1357435	9.27	
Potato	106000		898394	8.48
Cardamom	9200		3680	0.40
Tea	3920	2407	3129	0.30
Coffee	260	130	38 (Dry)	0.29

Source : Agri. Stat. Div./MOA 1996/97

THE BUDGETARY SUPPORT IN THE FIELD OF HORTICULTURE

During the period from the Fourth Five Year Plan to the Seventh Plan, the budget allocation decrease from 3.6% to 1.6% in the seventh plan. There was however an exception at increase in the Fifth plan (6.8%). The budget was not enough in the 8th plan and a similar trend was envisioned in the Ninth plan also.

THE PRESENT APPROACH

At present, HMG has come up with Ninth Five Year Plan and has emphasized the implementation of Agriculture Perspective Plan (APP). HMG expects to increase the Agriculture growth from the horticulture and livestock sectors from 3% to 5%. The present contribution of horticultural crops to GDP is over 13% of AGDP. To achieve this growth - APP foresees four priority inputs such as irrigation, fertilizers, technologies and roads and power. With these four inputs, APP expects four priority outputs - 1. Livestock production, 2. High value crops production 3. Agribusiness and 4. Forestry production. With these four outputs, APP expects impacts on poverty alleviation and food security, environment improvement and economic improvement in terai.

The production of high value crops (HVC), is basically the horticulture products that come from hill and high hill region. Also APP expects Sericulture and Apiculture to come from hill and high hill areas. Horticulture is in a position to foster agribusiness with solid impact on Poverty alleviation and food security access to food, improvement in environment and economic improvement in hill and high hill, given the working environment with policy decision and implementation responsibility. It demands technology and consolidated organization to support the activities to be undertaken to achieve the expected outputs.

Thus it is imperative to strengthen the development activities and technology generation capacity in the field of horticulture. Such strengthening will help

1. To establish the national priority in the field of horticulture : At present , priority in horticulture has overcome by other activities, due to lack of proper organization and weak authority in the field of horticulture, specially at the district level, where experts in horticulture are without means to carry any solid horticulture development activities. It is expected that the priority fixed by APP will be the continued priority in the field of horticulture.
2. To establish policy guideline in the field of horticulture that includes fruits, vegetables, floriculture, plantation crops, spices and fruit preservation : Policy guideline, at present, is not in the hands of horticulturist, it is being guided by other sectors unaware of horticulture need. This is detrimental and that is why growth in horticulture sector is slow.
3. To strengthen the organization and take initiative able to contribute to the national growth : Only concerned organization on concerned subject is in position to strengthen the organization and take initiative to contribute to national economic growth from that sector. It becomes a differed priority when placed under different organization.
4. To utilize the available resources in the best possible way to contribute to the national growth : Only the concerned organization would know what are the available resources that are available and/or could be utilized for the national economic growth.
5. To justify the financial requirement in achieving the growth and also look after the funding source for further growth and would be seriously concerned on the source of the fund .
6. To realize the dream of a position of Minister in the level of assistant Minister in the field of Horticulture: This was the right approach, but with the change in the government the continuity of the right decision is lost. It was an unfortunate situation that lost the ground to contribute to the national economic growth. The government

should give priority to reinstate Department of Horticulture and creat a separate Minister for Horticulture.

7. To negotiate and follow up with other departments, supporting the growth of horticulture, for example road to Jumla, value addition activities with processing industries, packing industries, marketing of horticultural products etc :

Only the Department can deal with other Departments and with same level of Corporate bodies, at their level because of the status. Such negotiating status can only be available to horticulture activities, only when horticulture receives the status of Department.

8. To synchronize the horticulture development activities with other sectoral activities benefiting each other : The synchronizing initiative can only be taken by the Department with clear vision on its activities - the horticulture development with processing, trade and industries, marketing, roads and power and improvement in environment.
9. To bring competitive sprit among the agricultural departments in their growth.
10. To save time in making decision in the field of horticulture development. Having a separate department of its own, time is much saved in making or taking a decision to enhance the horticultural activities:
11. To be responsible and answerable to all the horticultural program in the country with the appointment of right person at the right place. : The recent appointment through promotion in the field of horticulture Class II and Class I with different educational background, in spite of clear gazzetification, would not have taken place, if there was a Department of Horticulture. This is very serious implication in the development of horticulture and its contribution to the national economic growth.
12. To make horticultural products in the form of food, drinks and beverages, nutrition, value addition and for export and generate employment and income to the larger mass of the rural and urban communities with specific address to gender issue.

Such priority can only be achieved properly only when there is a strong horticultural organization to look after it with. Horticulture, working together with agriculture and livestock and even fishery, agro-based industries and agri. support industries, trade and commerce, with well defined policies and political will and commitment can lead the country to food security and poverty alleviation.

The realization of increased contribution from horticultural crops up to 15 percent. as foreseen by APP, could certainly be achieved, when the opportunity is given to horticulture.