

A Study on the Impact of Government Support among Horticulture Farmers in Mizoram

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ABSTRACT: Agriculture and allied sector contributes only 16.17 percent of Gross State Domestic Product in Mizoram. In order to boost up the GSDP, high value crops with value addition and foreign exchange earnings need to be taken up which can only be fulfilled through horticultural crops so that the economic income of farmers can be enhanced manifold.

In Mizoram horticulture crops has been grown more than two decades earlier. But there were no significant improvements in production as compared to other regions. Annual production of horticulture products per hectare is not self sufficient for consumption. The government has been providing support to horticultural farmers in various forms such as farming materials, cash and training. It is expected that these support will yield favourable results in developing horticulture sector in the state.

KEY WORD: horticulture crops, production, government support

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I. INTRODUCTION

Horticultural products play an important role in the society for generating income and livelihood of the poor section of the society. It also offers huge employment opportunities for local labourers and also contributes to the overall economy of the state.

The government of Mizoram has played a vital role in the development of horticultural sector in the state. Although the department was bifurcated in the late 1990s from the Agriculture Department, it has been able to follow its vision and mission. Despite its young existence, the contribution and achievement of the Department towards horticulture development in the state has been tremendous. Apart from the schemes of New Land Use Programme (NLUP), Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEH), Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Mission on Micro-Irrigation (NMMI), National Mission on Medicinal Plants (NMMP), Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters (VIUC) etc., new schemes has been developed for horticulture. Some of the well known schemes are citrus scion bank, multipurpose packing house, creation of water resources, organic farming/certified organic area, horticulture centres, horticulture mechanization, training and establishment of a horticulture college in Mizoram.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Chadha (2006), India has favourable climates and soils for growing a larger number of horticultural crops. Soon after Independence, India faced the challenge of providing food security to millions of its people. It was only in the mid-80's that the government identified horticulture sector as a means of diversification for making agriculture more profitable through efficient land use, optimum utilization of natural resources and creating skilled employment for rural masses especially the womenfolk. Horticulture has emerged as an integral part of food and nutritional security and an essential ingredient of economic security. Adoption of horticulture by farmers has brought prosperity in many regions of India.

Chadha, Singh and Patel (2010), have observed that past investment has been rewarding in terms of increased production, productivity and export of horticultural produce. But there is a growing competition in open economy, which demand competitive price of standard quality produce. This opens up opportunity and challenges. Critical gap needing attention are low productivity and poor quality of product, inadequacy of infra-structural facilities for post-harvest management and marketing, inadequate efforts for product diversification and consumption, inadequacy of quality seed and planting material, inadequacy of human resource in horticulture, lack of appropriate database for effective planning, inadequacy of trained manpower and infrastructure in the states, poor delivery system, credit support and price support and slow pace in adoption of improved technology.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the opinion of horticulture farmers regarding the role of government towards developing their chosen trade
2. To comprehend the various types of support received by the horticulture farmers and its impact on improving their trade

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted with the help of primary and secondary data. A structured questionnaire was developed and administered to horticultural farmers engaged in the cultivation of grape, turmeric and chayote. Simple random sampling method was employed for selection of sampling units. The structured questionnaire was successfully administered on 361 farmers (113 turmeric farmers, 90 chayote farmers and 158 grape farmers).

Primary data was also collected by conducting personal interviews and discussions with stakeholders, policymakers and officers who have been involved in promoting horticulture in Mizoram.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Role of Government

During the course of the study, the respondents were asked their opinion whether the government has a role to play in developing horticulture sector in the state.

Table 1: Opinion of respondents on whether government has a role

Crop	Does government have a role?		
	Yes	No	Total
Turmeric	111 (98%)	2 (2%)	113 (100%)
Chayote	90 (100%)	0 (0%)	90 (100%)
Grape	155 (98%)	3 (2%)	158 (100%)

Source : Primary data

Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

It is observed from table 1 that out of 361 respondents, 356 (99 percent) are of the opinion that the government has a role to play in developing horticulture sector in the state.

Nature of Government Support to Horticultural Farmers

The Department of Horticulture provides support to the horticultural farmers in various forms. An effort was made to find out the number of respondents who has received support from the government in the past five years in various forms such as fertilizer, seeds and seedlings, trailing wire, cash support and irrigation facilities.

Table 2: Number of respondents who received fertilizer support

Crop	Fertilizer				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Turmeric	7 (10%)	5 (7%)	5 (7%)	16 (25%)	46 (55%)
Chayote	0 (0%)	3 (4%)	5 (7%)	20 (31%)	11 (13%)
Grape	62 (90%)	60 (88%)	59 (86%)	28 (44%)	26 (31%)
Total	69 (100%)	68 (100%)	69 (100%)	64 (100%)	83 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

From table 2, it can be seen that the number of farmers receiving fertilizer support has increased from 69 in 2007 to 83 in 2011. In terms of crops wise distribution the numbers of fertilizer support has increased from 10 percent in 2007 to 55 percent in 2011. The year 2011 in fact saw a quantum jump for the turmeric farmers from 16 recipients in 2010 to 46 recipients in 2011 a jump of 30 percent. For the chayote growers the table shows that fertilizer recipients have gradually increased from 2007 to 2011 from zero to 11. The main reason behind the lesser number of recipients of fertilizer is that the crop totally depends on monsoon. Grapes on the other hand have witnessed a decreasing trend from 62 recipients to 26 recipients during 2007 to 2011 viz., from 90 percent to 31 percent.

Table 3: Number of respondents who received seed/seedlings support

Crop	Seed/Seedlings				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Turmeric	25 (89%)	25 (100%)	23 (96%)	24 (96%)	26 (84%)
Chayote	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Grape	3 (11%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	5 (16%)
Total	28 (100%)	25 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)	31 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

It is observed from table 3 that out of 361 respondents 24 to 31 respondents received support of seed/seedlings from the Horticulture department. From the table it can be seen that the turmeric growers have been receiving seed/seedlings in about 84 percent to 100 percent. It was revealed that none of the chayote farmers received seed/seedlings support during 2007-2011. Chayote has been flourishing in Sihphir area for many decades and the cultivators have many years of experience. They do not necessarily need support in the form of seeds and seedlings. Among the grape cultivators, 3 percent received support of seed/seedlings in 2007, 0 percent in 2008, 1 percent in 2009, 1 percent in 2010 and 5 percent in 2011.

Table 4: Number of respondents who received trailing wire support

Crop	Trailing Wire				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Turmeric	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Chayote	1 (1%)	7 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Grape	88 (99%)	67 (91%)	58 (100%)	29 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total	89 (100%)	74 (100%)	58 (100%)	29 (100%)	1 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

In total, out of 361 respondents 89 received support in the form of trailing wire in 2007, 74 in 2008, 58 in 2009 and 29 in 2010. As turmeric crop does not require trailing wire, they have not received any support in this regard. Chayote farmers did not receive much support in the form of trailing wire during 2007-2011, except in 2008 when 9 percent received the support. The grape cultivators have received a great deal of support in the form of trailing wire for their crops. 99 percent received trailing wire support in 2007, 91 percent in 2008, 100 percent in 2009 and 2010 while nil in 2011. Grapes require trailing wire to support the grapes plants.

Table 5: Number of respondents who received cash support

Crop	Cash Support				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Turmeric	16 (94%)	19 (86%)	17 (77%)	16 (64%)	12 (71%)
Chayote	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Grape	1 (6%)	3 (14%)	5 (23%)	9 (36%)	5 (29%)
Total	17 (100%)	22 (100%)	22 (100%)	25 (100%)	17 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

Regarding cash support, it was revealed that turmeric growers receive more in comparison to grape growers. Among the turmeric growers, 94 percent of the total respondents received it in 2007, 86 percent in 2008, 77 percent in 2009, 64 percent in 2010 and 71 percent in 2011 as seen in table 5. The chayote farmers revealed that none of them have received cash support during 2007-2011. Among the grape farmers, only 6 percent received cash support in 2007, 14 percent in 2008, 23 percent in 2009, 36 percent in 2010 and 29 percent in 2011. The reason behind the support of cash incentives to turmeric growers in comparison to grape growers is that the turmeric growers are more cash strapped in relation to grape growers.

Table 6: Number of respondents who received irrigation support

Crop	Irrigation facility				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Turmeric	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Chayote	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Grape	3 (100%)	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	3 (100%)	6 (100%)
Total	3 (100%)	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	3 (100%)	6 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

Mizoram has high rainfall during monsoon but the rainwater is not retained for a long period of time. Most of the farmers in the state depend on rainwater for irrigation purposes. The turmeric and chayote farmers revealed that they have not received any irrigation support during 2007-2011. Among the grape farmers, 3 respondents received irrigation support in 2007, 2 respondents in 2008, 1 respondent in 2009, 3 respondents in 2010 and 6 respondents in 2011.

Apart from the various tangible supports given by the government to the horticultural farmers, the government conducts training programmes on farming techniques to educate the horticultural farmers for developing their trade.

Table 7: Number of respondents who have attended training programmes

Crop	Whether attended training programmes		
	Yes	No	Total
Turmeric	42 (37%)	71 (63%)	113 (100%)
Chayote	15 (17%)	75 (83%)	90 (100%)
Grape	68 (43%)	90 (57%)	158 (100%)
Total	125 (35%)	236 (65%)	361 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

The respondents were asked to identify whether they have attended training programmes organised by the Department of Horticulture at least once. It is observed in table 7 that from a total of 361 respondents, 125 respondents (35 percent) have attended training programme at least once while 236 (65 percent) have never attended the training programmes organised by the government. Among the turmeric farmers, 37 percent have attended trainings whereas 63 percent have never attended. 17 percent of the chayote farmers have attended training programmes while 83 percent have never attended training programmes. Among the grape farmers, 43 percent have attended the training programmes whereas 57 percent have never attended training programmes.

Regular training is important for the horticultural farmers to keep themselves abreast with modern farming techniques and best practices of the trade. It was found that some of the farmers have attended training programmes multiple times. Of the 125 horticultural farmers who have attended training programmes, 88 farmers have attended the training 1-2 times, 30 farmers have attended training 3-5 times, and 7 farmers have attended training more than 5 times.

Respondents were further asked whether they found the training programmes helpful.

Table 8: Whether training programmes are helpful for respondents

Crop	Whether training is helpful		
	Yes	No	Total
Turmeric	38 (90%)	4 (10%)	42 (100%)
Chayote	15 (100%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)
Grape	62 (91%)	6 (9%)	68 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

Of the 125 horticultural farmers who have attended training programmes, 115 (92 percent) revealed that the training programmes are helpful. Only 10 (8 percent) reported that the training programmes are not helpful. It can be seen that all the participants of chayote farmers and turmeric and grape farmers representing 90 percent approximately are satisfied with the training programmes and found it to be useful.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the government has a significant role in the development of horticultural sector in the state as agreed by 98.6 per cent of the respondents.

The study also finds that the farmers of select horticultural products have been getting support in the form of fertilizers, seed/seedlings, trailing wire (grape growers), cash support (turmeric growers), irrigation support (grape growers) and training for all the farmers. The Department of Horticulture provides training to horticulture farmers from time to time to keep them abreast of the latest farming techniques. Out of a total of 361 respondents, 125 (35 percent) have attended training program at least once and 236 (65 percent) have never

attended the training programs organised by the government. Of the 125 horticultural farmers who have attended training programs, 115 (92 percent) revealed that the training programs are helpful. Only 10 (8 percent) reported that the training programs are not helpful.

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