

Prospects and Problems of Export of Agricultural & Horticultural Produces of Manipur.

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Introduction:

Manipur State falls within “Indo-Myanmar” Centre of biodiversity hotspots of global significance. The state stretches a geographical area of 22,327 sq.km which constitute 0.7% only of the total land surface of India. The state lies between 23° 80’ N-25° 68’ N and 93° 03’ E- 94° 78’E. The state is divided into nine districts of which five are hill districts and the remaining four are valley districts which comprises one tenth of the total area of the state. However, nearly 65% of the total populations of the state are concentrated in the four valley districts. The two National Highways viz No.39 along the North and No.53 along the West links with the mainlands.

The impact of terrain diversity, in the threshold of sub-tropical region, altitudes ranging from 55m above MSL the lowest altitude (Barak Valley Range of Tamenglong District) to 2,995 m above MSL (Mt.Dinifu, Mao in Senapati District), the highest altitude in the state and river regimes have become eloquent in the seasonal variations ranging from temperate to tropical type of climate from one place to another contributing a large number of bio-diversified resources to the state. The state experiences annual average rainfall of 1430 mm. This region lying in the Indo-Myanmar Biodiversity Mega hotspots ranks the 8th amongst the 34 (25+9) biodiversity hotspots of the World. This holds immense potential for production and of value added products of a wide range of plant bioresources.

The state with diverse soil and climate comprises of several agro-ecological regions representing like a mini India favouring production of variety of horticultural and agricultural crops. These crops form a significant part of the total agricultural & horticultural produce in the State comprising of cereals, fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, flowers, medicinal and aromatic plants, spices and condiments etc.

Export potential produces:

The major potential crops, which have export market potentials are Orange, Pineapple, Passion fruits, Bamboo Shoot, Ginger, Turmeric, King Chilli, Shiitake Mushroom, Cut flowers (viz. Carnation, Gerbera, Chrysanthemum, Anthurium), Orchids, Black Aromatic Rice & Handicrafts of Kouna (*Scirpus lacustris* Linn) and Aromatic Essential oils of Patchouli etc.

Area & Production of major Horticultural crops having export potentials.

(Source Deptt.of Hort. & SC Manipur 2014-15)

1.	Pineapple	14296 ha	142794 Mt.
2.	Orange	5350 ha	43000 Mt.
3.	Passion Fruits	9333 ha	102000 Mt
4.	Ginger	3026 ha	36613 Mt
5.	Turmeric	2152 ha	25873 Mt
6.	King Chillies	2500 ha	19500 Mt

Small Volume High Value products having huge Export Potentials but requiring area expansion with appropriate technical and credit support.

1. **Bamboo shoots:** Bamboo shoots are not only delicious but are also rich in nutrients, and rank among the five most popular healthcare foods in the world. In Japan, the bamboo shoot is called the King of Forest Vegetables. Japanese scientists recently discovered that bamboo shoots contain anti-cancer agents and making them a regular part of the diet which effectively eliminates the free radicals that can produce dangerous carcinogens. Huge scope for export to South Asia Countries.



2. **Black aromatic Rice-Chak Hao (*Oryza sativa linnaeus*):** A Gluten free rice, Rich in Mineral and Vitamin E with high Antioxidant content is considered to be the healthiest rice variety with higher vitamin and mineral content than both white & brawn rice. Black rice owes its colour to powerful natural black colouring pigments called **anthocyanins** which boast an impressive antioxidant activity adding to the health benefits of this rice variety. Major demand are from Singapore, USA, German and European countries.



3. **Kouna (*Scirpus lacustris*.Linn):** The matting reed, a gregarious weed belonging to the family *Cypericeae* is found at large in shallow and marshy lands where paddy cultivation are not suitable or not economical. Dried reeds

are used for making Mats, Cushions and other domestic fancy items. Reed mat weaving and other handicrafts

o f
Kouna,
once an
ancient
vocation
i n
Manipur
has now
become



an indispensable item of furnishing and attracts huge foreign markets.

4. **Shiitake Mushroom.** The shiitake mushroom, the third most widely distributed mushroom in the world, has enjoyed a prominent spot in Asian cuisine for centuries. Shiitake mushrooms representing a versatile food can be incorporated into a wide array of meals. They are an excellent source of mineral and Vitamin B. It lowers Cholesterol and increases immune system of the body. Uses in preparation of wide range of healthh tonic and anticancerous medicines. A small volume high value product for entering global market. Major demands are from Germany, USA and European Countries.



5. **Orchids and Cut flowers:** The North-Eastern (NE) Region of India is considered as the cradle of flowering plants and identified as a golden treasure house of variety of orchids. The region once richly endowed with luxuriant forest growth and rich genetic diversity of orchids is vanishing day by day due to human interference. However, this natural orchid wealth of the country as a whole and the NE region in particular is yet to be judiciously utilized and managed to harvest economic benefits from orchid based industries. *Ascocentrum ampullaceum*, *Vanda coerulea*, *Vanda stangeana*, *Renanthera imschootiana*, *Aerides odorata*, *Rhynchostylis retusa*, *Paphiopedillum spiceranum*, *Paph. hirsutissimum*, various *Dendrobium* species, etc. have rich floricultural traits for international trade. There is an urgent need to harness the commercial potential of the horticulturally significant orchids of this region for economic upliftment of the local Agripreneurs and farmer groups. M/s Kwaklei and Khonggunmelei Orchids Pvt. Ltd., Imphal has been breeding orchids during the last 20 years and has registered eight of them having unique location specific characters with the Royal Horticultural Society, London. These important hybrids include *Ascocenda* Kangla, *Renantanda* Kebisana Shija, *Renantanda* Prof. G.J. Sharma, *Renantanda* Momon Shija, *Holcanthera* MS Swaminathan, *Hygranda* TN Khoshoo, etc. All these varieties which flowers for nearly 35-40 days have already created demands both in the National & International Markets.



6. **Essential oil of Patchouli.** Essential oil of Patchouli is extracted by hydro distillation of dried leaves of the plant. This oil is used as ‘base’ material in perfumery industry including aroma therapy. So far there is no any synthetic substitute for this oil, because of which its value and demand increases in the perfumery market. Unlike most essential oils that oxidize and diminish in therapeutic and aromatic quality over time, Patchouli Essential Oil improves its quality with age like a fine wine. France, Arab, German & USA (Organic certified) are the main buyers.

Our Constraints:

There is no doubt, our farmers are very intelligent, very fast to adopt new technologies and can exploit the available potentials for production provided demands are created, logistic supports are put in proper places with assured buy-back arrangement. However, although the state has a very high potential for supplying the above products to the export markets either in fresh or processed forms, still we have not been able to achieve any growth in this sector due to many inherent weaknesses such as lack of logistic support coupled with technology, lack of awareness and poor marketing linkages and credit support are the key factors.

The existing infrastructure for the development of horticulture is highly inadequate in many ways. The low technological base and limited market infrastructure with virtually no storage facilities and inadequate means of transport have resulted in a very low or even remains as insignificant growth in this sector.

Key indicator Support required for promotion of Export of Agricultural & Horticultural Produces:

1. Logistic support: As of now there is **no any Air Cargo service routing from Imphal Airport to any mainlands**. At this point of time how can we imagine export of perishable horticultural produces of the state to other countries. Hence, attention of the relevant Ministry or Department is required for immediate activation of **Cargo service** from Imphal Airport and setting up of one Cold Storage Infrastructure in an appropriate place near to Airport.
2. As the Agripreneurs / Producer groups are either ignorant or busy with farm activities they have limited access to the Financial Institutions and Nodal Department for seeking any kind of support. Therefore, there is a felt need to create a **Facilitation Centre** by the Nodal Department exclusively for coordination with the line departments and for extending hand holding support to the producer groups including market intelligent to regularise export of Agricultural / Horticultural Produces from the state with the launching of a Dynamic Web Portal exclusively for interacting with the state’s entrepreneurs and producer groups.
3. If at all we have to promote export of agricultural or horticultural produces, there should necessarily be a **Quality Testing Lab**. to check quality conformity parameters of the consumers / buyers.
4. Present Frieght Subsidy or transport support scheme of APEDA applicable to only export destination need to be facilitated while transporting from North East Region to any mainlands within the country “**as special case**” whether the products be for National or International market because of the existing inherent transport bottleneck.

5. There is urgent need for creation of Market yards, collection centres, and storages / warehouses at a centralised place.
 6. As of now there is no any organised Agricultural Produces Market Committee (APMC). Hence, felt need for enactment of Agriculture Market Act. in the state.
 7. There is fet need that, Cold chain systems production model need to be encouraged supported by the line departments and Financial Institutions.
 8. Districtwise Quality Planting Materials (QPM) production centres should be established to facilitate timely availability of quality planting materials to the producer groups.
 9. As timely availability of credit support to the farm sector is an important input for increasing production and productivity. Therefore, State's competent authority need to monitor credit flow to the farm sectors.
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