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Role of State Interventions in Marketing of Horticultural Crops in Gujarat

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ABSTRACT

Fruits and vegetables are currently marketed through the "open market transactions system" under the conventional APMC regulations. Market yards set up under the APMC Acts are playing a vital role in terms of price discovery, as well as product aggregation and disaggregation along the chain. However, the present marketing system of horticultural produce in the state, lacks system approach. Producers have often failed to realize expenses incurred on transportation to markets, let alone the cost of production and capital investment, during the period of glut. Fruit and vegetable growers are receiving only a small part of price paid by the consumers as lion's share is being taken by chain of middlemen. The high profit margin of intermediaries is quite disproportionate to their services. In order to increase the income of farmers and promote the role of private sector in the agriculture marketing there is need to improve existing APMC's for better realization of producers share in consumer's rupee. Thus, it is imperative to make our APMC more vibrant and strong in terms of infrastructure, management and transparency. It is also important to understand implications of FDI in retail for wholesale markets and traders/CAs and therein there is need for more efficient and lower cost APMC markets in the state. It is essential to facilitate development of marketing infrastructure through private sector investments and create avenues for alternate marketing channels for farmers for sales transactions of their produce where prices are remunerative to them.

Keywords: Horticultural Crops, Marketing, Challenges.

INTRODUCTION

An efficient agricultural marketing is essential for the development of the horticulture sector as it provides outlets and incentives for increased production, the marketing system contribute greatly to the commercialization of subsistence farmers. Worldwide Governments have recognized the importance of liberalized horticulture markets. Task Force on Agricultural Marketing Reforms set up by the Ministry has suggested promotion of new and competitive Agricultural Market in private and cooperative sectors to encourage direct marketing and contract farming programmes, facilitate industries and large trading companies to undertake procurement of agricultural commodities directly from the farmer's fields and to establish effective linkages between the farm production and retail chains. There is a necessity to integrate farm production with national and international markets to enable farmers to undertake market driven production plan and adoption of modern marketing practices.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To study the present status of horticulture in Gujarat
2. To review the present APMC act and reforms in APMC Act
3. To suggest policy implications for improvement of horticulture produce marketing

Review of literature: Research work done on performance of regulated horticultural produce marketing in India, by the academicians and researchers are scanty. The literature obtained in the form of various reports and research studies, is briefly reviewed in this part on agricultural produce.

Patel and Shiyani, (1997) concluded that the income stability of rising farm income as an objective of price policy did

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not receive much attention till 1976. After seventies, objective of rising and stabilizing farm income was made an integral part of agricultural policy.

Baltha (2004) reported that government played an important role in influencing policies in the agriculture sector all over the world.

Rehman, et.al, (2011) in their paper suggested that the need to strength the regulated agricultural market system arises from changing nature of linkages between agriculture and markets. It has also been observed that better and easy market access and efficient information flow can bring much desired market orientation of the production system.

Rehman et. al (2012) reviewed the regulated agricultural marketing in india and concluded that The Government monopoly in setting up agriculture produce markets under the State specific Acts [Agriculture Produce Markets Committee Act] has prevented the private sector from taking initiatives in development of agricultural marketing. Exporters, processors, and retail chain operators cannot procure directly from the farmers as the produce is required to be directed through regulated markets and licensed traders.

Nagpure and Deshmukh (2015) examines the market interventions of horticulture crops with special reference to ajwain seed pointed out that market integration was found highly significant between Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan market (0.663), between Maharashtra and Gujarat (0.514).

Kalmakar (2015) analyze the Government intervention in the marketing of selected agricultural commodities in India and found that agricultural price policy is one of the important instruments in achieving food security by improving production, employment and income of the farmers. There is a need to remove the bottlenecks in marketing and to provide remunerative prices to the farmers in order to maintain food security.

STATUS OF HORTICULTURE IN GUJARAT

State has achieved considerable growth rate in horticulture during last five years because of serious efforts made by the State Govt. The area and production of horticulture crop was 5.89 lakh ha (5 % of total cropped area) and 59.49 lakh tons in 1998-1999 which increased up to 14.67 lakh ha. and 213.21 lakh tonnes, respectively in 2014-15 (table-1). State has strong cooperative credit and marketing structure, along with 265 cold storages having 12.50 lakh mt. storage capacity. About 42 fruit and vegetable co-operative marketing societies and 197 Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) are dealing with selling & buying of horticulture produce in the State. These have been mandated to maintain utmost transparency in dealing to ensure farmers against exploitation by middlemen. Agriculture Export Zone for dehydrated onion and for fruits - vegetables has been established, which will be the back bone to boost horticultural development in the state. State having ample potential to export various horticultural produce. The main produce are fresh fruits which includes mangoes (Kesar and Alphonso), Sapota, Aonla and Dates (khalal). The vegetables viz. okra, beans, bitter gourd, onion fresh as well as flakes and powder, garlic powder and gourds.

The spices viz. cumin, fennel and garlic also have great potential for export. In floriculture, major flowers grown in the state are Roses (Desi & Hybrid), Lily, Marigold, Jasmine & Tuberose. As far as area under floriculture is concerned, about 15000 ha. area is covered under these crops in the state. Flowers like carnation, gerbera and rose are also cultivated by using Hi-tech Green house technology in some of the districts. Isabgol, Aloe vera, Senna, Gugal, Safed musali, Ashvagandha, Kadu-kariyatu, Kaucha, and Kalmegh etc. are being mainly cultivated in the different parts of the State. But absence of assured market is the major constraint for the development of these crops, however, Isabgol has find the way to the world market. Dehydrated vegetables, Canned vegetables, Mango Pulp, Juices, Pickles - chuteny (Sauce) and ketchup are the important processed products of the state. Onion dehydration industry of the state is biggest in the country. It comprises 80% of total onion dehydration units, which process nearly one lakh ton onion and one lakh ton fruits and vegetables annually. Nearly half of the produce is being exported. Approximately 0.10 lakh ton of Isabgul husk is processed and 0.06 lakh ton of husk is exported to various countries. Mango, Banana, Guava, Chikoo, Papaya, Potato, Onion, Garlic, Cumin, Fennel, & Isabgul are the focused crops for the value addition. Grapes, cashew, medicinal & aromatic crops like aloe vera, almarosa are emerging as a potential-

