



ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF APPLE FARMING IN JAMMU & KASHMIR (A MICRO STUDY OF SOME VILLAGES OF DISTRICT SHOPAIN)

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Abstract

The present study reveals that apple farming is the main source of occupation for the people of Shopian as 75% of the population is directly or indirectly engaged in this sector. The importance of this sector in Shopian can be analyzed from the fact that from 2011_13 almost 60% more land has been brought under cultivation and is increasing at the faster pace. So this sector has a very bright future in the district this industry provides employment to thousands of people. The government is now also showing interest in its development. The standard of living of the people of Shopian is considered to be higher than other districts of the valley. No doubt due to negligence of the horticulture department and political turmoil in the valley in last few years and the improper facilities being provided by the government this industry has got a serious setback but now again the arrangements are being done for its prosperity and development.

Key Words: Production, Apple, Yield, Cultivation, Horticulture.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The aim of the study is to evaluate the role of apple farming in the state Jammu and Kashmir. It investigates to what extent economy of Jammu and Kashmir is dependent on apple farming.

Area of Study

To bring in the light this investigation was carried out in villages of the block /district Shopain of Jammu and Kashmir. The investigator has interviewed apple growers, farmers Association and Organization.

Methodology

A research work is always based on certain procedures. In the beginning of the research Data- primary and secondary- are collected which are further analyzed to get a meaningful results. As such, research methodology forms a vital link between the crude data and final analysis. The study will incorporate both empirical and interdisciplinary approaches.

Introduction

Apple is commercially the most important temperature fruit and is fourth among the most widely produced fruit in the world after banana, orange and grapes. China is the largest apple producing country in the world. Today, India ranks second in the world in terms of area under apple cultivation. With 2.5 million hectares under cultivation, India produces more than 1.4 million tons of apple every year (Food and Agriculture Organization). Among fruit grown in India, apple has the third largest area under cultivation, after banana and mango. According to National Horticulture Board, a body under the agriculture ministry, over 60% of apples produced in India comes from the Kashmir Valley, followed by Himachal Pradesh and Utrakhand 30%. A National Horticulture Board estimate says India produces 1.76 Million tons of apple in 2006, out of which 1.09 Million tons came from the Kashmir valley.

Kashmir valley produces about 9.0 lakh tones of apples every year, (sources: National Horticulture Board). Major apple orchards can be found in district Anantnag, Shopain and Baramula. Apple farming is one of the major source of revenue of the state Jammu and Kashmir. One can say that apple farming is the backbone of Kashmir economy. Apples are grown in the valley on 1.25 lakh hectares of land and the total production is estimated to be of 13.5 lakh metric tons. Out of this 20% comes from the early variety of apples called Hazratbali (Directorate of Horticulture Jammu and Kashmir). The apples from Kashmir go not only to the majority of neighboring countries but also exported to Malaysia, Fiji, Congo, Singapore, and Kuwait.

Apple Farming in District Shopain

The block Shopain is very beautiful as the people of this block are peace loving hard worker and humble. The people of block Shopain are mostly engaged in agriculture and principle fruit being is apple. The block Shopain is famous for apple farming. Shopain a populous town is the urban center of the area. 90% of the population of the Sub-Division is 2, 46,041 souls as per 2001 census comprising various groups of diverse nature like Gujjars, Pastoons, Dogarwalls, Minels and predominantly Kashmir's. The villages of block Shopain are surrounding with famous apple gardens and different kinds of trees. The famous apple gardens are charming its beauty. The only town in the valley known as the Apple Valley. It is



famous for its apple production which is spread worldwide. The block Shopain is famous not only for its apple but also walnut, cherry, almond are also the famous fruits all over Kashmir valley.

Table 1.1: Area and Production of Apple in block Shopain

Year	Crop	Area(in hec)	Production (Tones)	Productivity(in MTs/hec)
2006	Apple	14543	124674	7.87
2007	Apple	16532	130989	8.98
2008	Apple	17564	178909	9.78
2009	Apple	18670	189800	10.16
2010	Apple	18814	220258	11.70
2011	Apple	19002	087178	4.58
2012	Apple	19800	172300	9.20
2013	Apple	20212	197500	10.78
2014	Apple	22300	218640	11.10
2015	Apple	23540	221780	11.80

Source: Horticulture office Pulwama, Shopain

Data Analysis and Interpretation

For the study 50 males were interviewed in 5 villages of district Shopain. As the object of the study is to find out to what extent the income source of these villages is dependent on apple farming.

Age Group of the Respondent

The table 1.2 portrays the characteristics of the respondents, 15% of the respondents were of 18-35 age groups, maximum respondents 55% were of 35-50 age groups and the remaining 30% of respondents were of 50-60 age group.

Table 1.2: Age Group of the Respondent

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18-35	8	15
35-50	27	55
50-60	15	30
Above 60	0	0
Total	50	100

Source: Calculated from Primary Data

Marital Status

Marital status of the respondent is illustrated with the aid of table. It is clear from the table that all the respondents are married. The percentage of married respondents is 100% and percentage of unmarried of unmarried respondents is zero as given in the table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Marital Status of Respondent

Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Married	50	100
Unmarried	Nil	0
Total	50	100

Source: Calculated from Primary Data

Educational Level

The status of education level is not very high in District Shopain. 20% have primary education, 20% middle, 24% high school, and both intermediate and graduate have 12% as shown in the given table 1.4 below.

Table 1.4: Educational Level of Respondents

Educational Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	6	12
Primary	10	20
Middle	10	20
High school	12	24
Intermediate	6	12
Graduate	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Calculated from Primary Data



Satisfaction Level

Satisfaction Level of sample respondents in Shopain District is illustrated in the following table 1.5. 0% of the respondents are dissatisfied, 40% of total respondents are OK, 40% of respondents are satisfied and remaining 20% of respondents are satisfied very much.

Table 1.5: Satisfaction Level of Respondents

Satisfaction Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Dissatisfied	0	0
O.K	20	40
Satisfied	20	40
Satisfied Very Much	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Calculated from Primary Data

Problems

1. There is no cold storage facility available in the district were in the fruits can be preserved for a long time.
2. There is unavailability of fast transport facility from these villages to market.
3. There is unavailability of best quality of pesticides absence of which production should be damaged.
4. There is not any juice factory available in the District were in the fallen fruits and grade 2 fruits can be utilized for juice concentration.

Suggestions

1. The good quality of fruits grown in the district should be exported in the neighboring countries which will led to increase the economy of the fruit growers.
2. The cold storage facility should be available in the district were in the fruits can be preserved for a longer time.
3. The fright rates of transportation should be fixed by the government and should take steps for the development of better and faster transportation.
4. The diseases should be curbed through the availability best quality of pesticides.

Conclusion

The apple fruit grows especially in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is one of the important sources of the economy. Apple production plays an important role in improving the standard of living. Apple production accounts almost 80% of total horticulture produce. This sector has a very bright future in the district this industry provides employment to thousands of people .The government is now also showing interest in its development. But still this sector is in the stage of backwardness due to lack of marketing facilities, field research, and credit facilities. Proper irrigation, cold storage and loss by pests.

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