

Present Status and Future Prospects of Cash Crops in Jammu and Kashmir state of India

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Abstract: Agriculture being the backbone of the state economy and important source of livelihood, income and employment to almost 75% population is losing its status because of different constraints. Cash crops are the principal items cultivated in the state since the reign of maharajas.

This paper attempts to explain the present scenario of cash crops in particular and agriculture in general including cropping pattern and crop diversification with future prospects. The current situation is not satisfactory in terms of food grains as the area under these crops have shown decreasing trends and the farmers are losing their interest in cultivating these crops. The farmers have been diversifying pattern of cropping from cereal crops to horticulture crops like, Apple, Walnut, Almond, Apricot, Saffron and Black Zeera etc. For ensuring inclusive growth still cash crops in particular and agriculture needs to get priority in order to make adequate dent to poverty reduction and providing food security to the mounting population.

There is prospect of better land utilization which is quite bright in view to the suitable conditions and rich heritage of natural resources like soil minerals, water flora and fauna. By using these resources economically together with cultivation of different crops, the state will be able to feed the mounting population. Provision of short-term loan to the farmers to purchase various inputs and also for meeting the needs of farmers will enhance the production and productivity of overall agriculture. There is opportunity to increase the productivity of cash crops by increasing the provision of storage and warehousing facilities to keep perishable and non-perishable commodities at the time of flush production and sell it when the prices are higher.

Key Words: Cash Crop, Land Utilization, Agriculture, Status, Prospects, Productivity.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Jammu and Kashmir is a hilly state having varied topography with a large diversity in terms of culture, social and economic practices of its different regions. Despite the structural changes taking place both at national and state level, agriculture has been the dominant sector at both the levels as it plays a strategic role in the process of economic development of the state and country. On an average 70% of the population are still getting livelihood and employment from this sector. Presently agriculture sector (including allied activities) is contributing 13.7% to India's GDP and around 21.09% to SGDP.

Jammu and Kashmir is home to cash crop production which is mainly rain-fed and comprises mono-cropped economy. The prominent crops are maize, wheat and rice (cereals) and apple, walnut, apricot and almond (fruits) and level of productivity for paddy is also moderate in the Kashmir valley which is counted as the highest in the Kashmir valley. Recently Mushroom, Kiwi and other cash crops have been introduced in the state which provided good profits to the farmers. The state is world famous for the production of quality saffron and variety apples. Kashmir almond is known for its taste. Apricots are known by the name of Gilgit Sweet which are mainly produced in the Ladakh region. Dried apricots are Ladakh's only cash crop and since 1970s the district administration has devoted a lot of attention towards the fruit experimenting with new strains and methods of grafting as well as with improved method of drying it. The area under apricot orchards is always being expanded especially in district Kargil.

Rice, Wheat, Maize, Pulses, Oilseeds, Fodder and Potato are the main cereal crops of the region. While major horticulture crops are Apple, Almond, Cherry, Apricot, Pear and Walnut. The farmers are now diversifying to cash crops

such as Vegetables, Quality seeds, Flowers, Aromatic and Medicinal plants and Mushrooms etc. round the year. Production of Quality saffron, Fodder intensification, Basmati Rice, Rajmash (pulses) and off season Vegetables, Potato etc. are also practiced in specific areas of the state depending upon their agro-climatic suitability.

2. Objectives of the study:

- To study the present status of cash crops in terms of cropping pattern, production and productivity in Jammu and Kashmir.
- To know future prospects of cash crops in particular and agriculture in general in J&K on the basis of present scenario.

3. Research Methodology:

The present study is based on the secondary data which have been collected from official statistical data published by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics govt. of Jammu and Kashmir, Different govt. publications, Relevant Journals and books, various news papers, Magazines, Publications of Planning department of J&K, Department of Agriculture and Horticulture govt. Jammu and Kashmir, Reports of various Commissions and Committees, Previous work done by research scholars, Statistical Hand books published by different districts govt. of J&K, DIGEST of statistics govt. of J&K, Directorate of Horticulture planning and Markets J&K, National Horticulture Database and websites etc.

3.1 Present Cropping Patterns of Major Cash crops in Jammu and Kashmir:

Owing to variations in climate, soil and nature of irrigation, agricultural operation and system of cultivation naturally vary region to region. In Jammu province, there are usually two crops a year, viz. Rabi in winter and Kharief in summer. The winter crops consist of wheat and barley and are sown between mid September and mid January, depending upon the moisture in the fields. Rabi crops are harvested in May-June in low lying areas and in July-August at higher altitudes. The summer crops like Rice, Maize and millets are sown from mid July according to the location of the place and character of soil. As for as the rotation of crops is concerned, Maize is often followed by Wheat or sometimes by Barley and Mustard or by some fodder crops. Fodder crops are sometimes sown with cotton, especially on the irrigated lands. Sugarcane fields are frequently left fallow or a fodder crop is succeeded by two fallows and wheat or by one fallow and cotton. Rice is generally grown on the same fields year after year in the spring. Wheat is also sometimes grown on rich-manured fields but its production is generally poor. The rotation of crops is often upset by scanty of rainfall.

In Kashmir province, land generally produces one crop in a year, therefore it is known as “*Ekfasli*”. The highly cultivated lands in the neighborhood of Srinagar and in some other towns give more than one crop in a year. Ploughing for Maize, Rice and other autumn crops in the Kashmir Division commences in the middle of March. In April –May these crops are sown. In June and July Barley and Wheat, sown in previous autumn are harvested. In July-August oilseeds is harvested. Cotton picking starts in August and September. Rice, Maize and other autumn crops are harvested in September and October.

In Ladakh region like Kashmir no customary rotation of crops is followed, however Wheat is not grown on the same land for more than two or three consecutive years. Wheat is always followed by gram. In some villages land known as “*Dofasli*” gives two crops a year. The time of sowing in the boundary line districts differs from area to area. Generally it commences early in the spring. Barley is the leading crop among cereals and Apricot among fruits of the region.

In J&K state cropping pattern has transformed from subsistence crops to commercial crops. Most of area has shifted to the production of horticulture crops, especially fresh and dry fruits. Crop production pattern have undergone change due to various developmental programmes taken by the state govt. The cropping patterns in Jammu and Kashmir in table as given below:

Area Sown Under Different Crops during 1990-91 to 2013-14. (Area in 000, hect)

| Crops | 1990-91 | 1995-96 | 2000-01 | 2005-06 | 2010-11 | 2013-14 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Cereal crops | | | | | | |
| Rice | 274.49 | 273.08 | 244.05 | 259.01 | 261.35 | 271.49 |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Maize | 294.90 | 303.87 | 330.21 | 320.92 | 308.22 | 298.67 |
| Wheat | 245.12 | 243.81 | 280.96 | 252.83 | 290.72 | 292.07 |
| Bajra | 16.09 | 13.75 | 13.34 | 13.01 | 16.69 | 14.10 |
| Barley | 8.13 | 8.03 | 8.93 | 10.24 | 13.31 | 12.51 |
| Total Cereals | 838.73 | 842.54 | 877.49 | 856.01 | 890.29 | 888.84 |
| Pulses | 41.32 | 32.57 | 27.45 | 29.27 | 28.91 | 25.79 |
| Oilseeds | 67.62 | 68.2 | 73.91 | 63.01 | 64.56 | 65.72 |
| Fruits | | | | | | |
| Apple | 68.20 | 78.01 | 81.5 | 111.89 | 141.72 | 160.87 |
| Walnut | 40.92 | 49.46 | 59.90 | 77.21 | 89.79 | 95.60 |
| Almond | 19.19 | 19.32 | 18.06 | 15.55 | 17.59 | 15.98 |
| Apricot | NA | NA | 4.01 | 5.16 | 5.86 | 6.44 |
| Total Fruits | 128.31 | 146.79 | 163.47 | 209.81 | 254.96 | 278.89 |
| Saffron | 5.30 | 6.86 | 3.08 | 3.13 | 3.79 | - |
| Total J&K | 1081.28 | 1096.78 | 1145.4 | 1161.23 | 1242.51 | 1259.34 |

Source: Digest of Statistics J&K, 2013-14, and Financial Commissioner (Rev.) J&K.

The table shows cropping pattern in Jammu and Kashmir during 1990-91 to 2013-14. In terms of claim on total cropped area the leading crops among cereals in the state in 1990-91 were Rice, Maize, Wheat, Barley and Bajra. Together they accounted 77.56 per cent of total cropped area in 1990-91. It decreased to 76.81 per cent in 1995-96 and 76.60 per cent in 2000-01. It further declined to 73.71 per cent in 2005-06 and 71.65 per cent in 2010-11. During 2013-14 it again declined to 70.57 per cent. Whereas among fruits Apple, Walnut, Almond and Apricot were leading crops in 1990-91. They together accounted 11.86 per cent of the total cropped area in 1990-91 which increased to 13.38 per cent in 1995-96. It has further increased to 14.27 per cent during 2000-01, 18.06 per cent in 2005-06 and 20.51 per cent in 2010-11. During 2013-14 fruits accounted 22.14 per cent of total cropped area.

It is noticed from the table that percentage of area under Maize, Apple and Walnut has shown increasing trends and all other crops has shown decreasing trends during 1990-91 to 1995-96. During 1995-96 to 2000-01 Maize, Wheat, Barley and Walnut has shown increasing trends and other crops has shown decreasing trends, whereas Apple has shown stability in the area under cultivation during the same period. During 2000-0, 2005-06, 2010-11 and 2013-14 area under Maize, Apple, Walnut and Apricot has increased, whereas area under Rice, Wheat, Bajra, oilseeds and Almond has shown more or less stability. The area under the cultivation of Barley, Saffron and Pulses shows fluctuations during the same period.

3.2 Variations in Cropping Pattern of Principal/ Main Crops in Jammu and Kashmir:

The main feature of the present trend is change in cultivated area under food grain crops to high value cash crops which creates imbalance in the cropping pattern in the state. The changes in cropping pattern of major crops in J&K for different periods during 1990-91 to 2013-14 are shown below in the table.

Variations in cropping patterns of Principal Crops in J&K. 1990-91-2013-14. (Area in 000, hect)

| Crop/Year | Period I | | | Period II | | | Period III | | |
|-----------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|---------|----------|------------|---------|----------|
| | 1990-91 | 1999-00 | % change | 2000-01 | 2009-10 | % Change | 2010-11 | 2013-14 | % Change |
| Rice | 274.49 | 250.63 | -8.69 | 244.05 | 259.89 | 6.49 | 261.35 | 271.49 | 3.87 |
| Maize | 294.90 | 317.30 | 7.59 | 330.21 | 311.02 | -5.81 | 308.22 | 298.67 | -3.09 |
| Wheat | 245.12 | 245.75 | 0.26 | 280.96 | 288.94 | 2.84 | 290.72 | 292.07 | 0.46 |
| Pulses | 41.32 | 29.27 | -29.16 | 27.45 | 30.30 | 10.38 | 28.91 | 25.79 | -10.79 |
| Oilseeds | 67.62 | 75.92 | 12.27 | 73.91 | 65.26 | -11.70 | 64.56 | 65.72 | 1.79 |
| Apple | 68.20 | 86.65 | 27.05 | 88.14 | 139.04 | 57.74 | 141.72 | 160.87 | 13.51 |
| Walnut | 40.92 | 59.42 | 45.21 | 59.90 | 88.59 | 47.89 | 89.70 | 95.60 | 6.57 |
| Almond | 19.19 | 18.05 | -5.94 | 18.06 | 17.58 | -2.65 | 17.59 | 15.98 | -9.15 |
| Apricot | NA | 3.95 | - | 4.01 | 5.78 | 44.13 | 5.86 | 6.44 | 9.89 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|------|------|--------|------|------|-------|------|---|---|
| Saffron | 5.30 | 2.74 | -48.30 | 3.08 | 3.78 | 22.72 | 3.79 | - | - |
|---------|------|------|--------|------|------|-------|------|---|---|

Source: Calculated by Author.

3.3 Current Production and Productivity of cash crops in Jammu and Kashmir:

TABLE(Cont.)

(Production in 000, Qtls, Area in 000, Hect. and Productivity in Qtls/Hect.)

| Year/Crop | 1990-91 | | | 1995-96 | | | 2000-01 | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|---------------|---------|-------------|---------------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| | Area | Producti on | Producti vity | Area | Producti on | Producti vity | Area | Producti on | Producti vity |
| Rice | 274.49 | 5769 | 21.02 | 273.08 | 5050 | 18.49 | 244.05 | 4153 | 17.01 |
| Maize | 294.90 | 4440 | 15.06 | 303.87 | 5360 | 17.64 | 330.21 | 5258 | 15.92 |
| Wheat | 245.12 | 2974 | 12.13 | 243.81 | 3992 | 16.37 | 280.96 | 1487 | 5.29 |
| Pulses | 41.32 | 268 | 6.49 | 32.57 | 152 | 4.67 | 27.45 | 128 | 4.66 |
| Oilseed | 67.62 | 365 | 5.40 | 68.20 | 440 | 6.45 | 73.91 | 282 | 3.82 |
| Apple | 68.20 | 6582 | 96.51 | 78.01 | 8161 | 104.61 | 88.15 | 7513 | 85.22 |
| Walnut | 40.92 | 386 | 9.43 | 49.46 | 689 | 13.93 | 59.90 | 833 | 13.90 |
| Almond | 19.19 | 023 | 1.20 | 19.32 | 072 | 3.73 | 18.06 | 099 | 5.48 |
| Apricot | - | - | - | 3.78 | 0.87 | 23.01 | 4.01 | 109 | 27.18 |
| Saffron | 5.30 | 0.092 | 0.017 | 6.86 | 1.36 | 0.20 | 3.08 | 0.003 | 0.009 |

TABLE: (Concl.)

| Year/Crop | 2005-06 | | | 2010-11 | | | 2013-14 | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|---------------|---------|-------------|---------------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| | Area | Producti on | Producti vity | Area | Producti on | Producti vity | Area | Producti on | Producti vity |
| Rice | 259.01 | 5574 | 21.52 | 261.35 | 5447 | 20.84 | 271.49 | 8347 | 30.75 |
| Maize | 320.92 | 4535 | 14.13 | 308.22 | 5277 | 17.12 | 298.68 | 5305 | 17.76 |
| Wheat | 252.83 | 4782 | 18.91 | 296.17 | 4463 | 15.06 | 292.07 | 6019 | 20.60 |
| Pulses | 29.27 | 135 | 4.61 | 28.91 | 169 | 5.85 | 25.79 | 138 | 5.35 |
| Oilseed | 63.01 | 366 | 5.81 | 64.56 | 530 | 8.20 | 65.73 | 448 | 6.82 |
| Apple | 111.89 | 11514 | 102.9 | 141.72 | 18524 | 130.7 | 160.87 | 16477 | 102.42 |
| Walnut | 77.21 | 1091 | 14.13 | 89.79 | 1637 | 18.23 | 95.60 | 2206 | 23.07 |
| Almond | 15.55 | 143 | 9.20 | 17.59 | 125 | 7.10 | 15.98 | 118 | 7.38 |
| Apricot | 5.16 | 124 | 24.03 | 5.86 | 156 | 26.62 | 6.44 | 171 | 26.55 |
| Saffron | 3.13 | 0.065 | 0.020 | 3.79 | 0.099 | 0.026 | NA | 0.1 | NA |

It is seen from the above table that there has been fluctuations in the productivity of Rice, Maize, Wheat, Pulses, Oilseeds, Almond and Saffron while increase in the productivity of Apple, Walnut and Apricot in almost all periods. While production has also been fluctuating except Apple, Walnut, Oilseeds and Apricot during the study period.

4. Future prospects of cash crops in J&K:

- ✓ The prospect of the better land utilization in the state is quite bright in view to the suitable conditions and rich heritage of natural resources like soil minerals, water flora and fauna. By using these available resources economically together with cultivation of different crops, the state will be able to feed the mounting population.
- ✓ Provision of short-term crop loan to the farmers to purchase various inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. and also for meeting the needs of farmers will enhance the productivity of overall agriculture. Provision of more credit without proper evaluation of the credit needs and repaying capacity of the farmers will only worsen the indebtedness in the farm sector. The banks must be permitted to provide agricultural finance at appropriate rates of interest on the basis of repaying capacity estimated to be generated out of the borrowed

fund and availability of other risk mitigates, rather than only security consideration. The credit facilities should be made available to the poor and small farmers particularly in the rural areas.

- ✓ Most of the defects and malpractices to the disadvantages of producer seller can be removed/ eliminated by practices of proper control over markets and this could be done by the establishment of more regulated markets in the state. Market may be regulated either by local bodies or under provincial legislation.
- ✓ Increased provision of storage and warehousing facilities will help producers to keep the perishable and non-perishable commodities at the time of flush production and sell it at the when the prices are higher. Storing is therefore a very important part of marketing. Losses in storage are due partly to the change in temperature, dampness and partly to insect etc. The losses in temperature can be reduced by making provision for efficient ventilation in godowns and by clothing them during rains and keeping them open during the dry season.

5. CONCLUSION:

Looking at the present scenario of Jammu and Kashmir agriculture in terms of production, area and productivity are not satisfactory as the growth of cereals food is much less than the growth of population. Even though the green revolution has led to bumper harvest of major crops especially rice and wheat which in turn has contributed to a large extent in uplifting the rural population but the late figures are very disturbing. To sustain continuous growth in productivity in agriculture, profitability and sustainability is must. There is need to create a general awareness about the knowledge, skill and techniques to enhance the production and productivity of cash crops in particular and agriculture in general.

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