

## **INTRODUCTION OF HORTICULTURE**

### ***Introduction:***

Farmers of Chhattisgarh are used to cultivate paddy in their fields with the result that in areas where year round irrigation is available, farmers generally grow summer paddy. Such areas can easily be converted for growing banana and other horticultural crops if provision of drainage is made which will enable them to earn higher profit. In case of second crop after paddy, majority of farmers prefer to grow gram, mustard, linseed, lathyrus which provide less net profit as compared to horticulture crops i.e. vegetables, flowers, medicinal and aromatic plants.

It. has been observed that most of the farmers in the state are growing paddy under rainfed condition which has risk of not only reduced yield due to shortage of rainfall but sometimes farmers can not harvest even a single grain of paddy. Majority of the farmers are socio-economically poor belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe categories. Low productivity of rice (around 1.5 t/ha) along with recurring drought condition are responsible for large-scale migration of landless labourers and also marginal farmers. Under such circumstances, large scale migration can be reduced and the socio-economic conditions of the farmers and nutritional levels of the general population can be improved only with proper development of horticulture in this new state.

Chhattisgarh state is rich in diversity of biotic, abiotic as well as socio-economic condition, which favour the cultivation of various horticultural crops like vegetables, temperate, tropical and high elevation fruits. Though about 20% cultivated area is irrigated, it is only protective in nature and the irrigation system is designed to protect the rice crop after the withdrawal of monsoon rains when rice crop enters the reproductive stage. The state is mainly mono-cropped area with rice as the only crop extensively grown in all soils and at all elevations. Drought is one of the major constraints for improving the rice

productivity besides other biotic factors like weeds, pest and diseases etc. About 20% soil of the cultivated area in the region is red-laterite (Bhata) soil, which is mostly unutilised for growing any crop. These Bhata soil can be better utilized to grow fruit crops under rainfed/dryland horticulture.

Horticulture crops have a very wide range of adoptability to grow in adverse conditions and number of horticultural crops is so large that at least few of them can be grown successfully in all the types of agro-climatic conditions. Therefore, development of horticulture in the state on mission mode can change the scenario of the economic condition of poor villagers.

Horticulture development can assure year-round employment to farm labourers and once horticulture is developed, allied industry like processing, packaging and export also gain momentum in the vicinity providing adequate employment opportunities for the educated unemployed rural youth and has high potential to improve the socio-economic condition of the farmers.

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