

CHAPTER III

Horticulture

Horticulture crops play a unique role in economy by improving the incomes of the farming community. Cultivation of these crops is labour intensive and as such they generate a lot of employment opportunities for the rural population. Fruits and vegetables are a rich source of minerals and proteins. These are referred to as protective foods and have assumed great importance in the nutritional security of the people. Cultivation of horticulture crops plays a vital role in the prosperity of the country and health of the people.

The emphasis on horticulture is a recognition of the need for attaining nutrition security and for a sustainable income. Our focus is on horticulture crops as they are less water consuming and give more income. Tamil Nadu has diverse soil and climatic conditions across 7 agro climatic zones. They are North Eastern Zone (Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur, Vellore, Thiruvannamalai, Villupuram and Cuddalore), North Western Zone (Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Salem, Namakkal and Perambalur), Western zone (Erode, Coimbatore, Karur and Dindigul), Cauvery Delta Zone (Trichy, Thanjavur, Thiruvarur and Nagapattinam), Southern Zone (Theni, Madurai, Pudukkottai, Ramnad, Sivaganga, Viruthunagar, Thirunelveli and Tuticorin), High Rainfall Zone (Kanniyakumari) Hilly Tribal Zone (The Nilgiris, Western Ghats). This provides ample opportunity to grow a variety of horticulture crops. Fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, flowers, ornamental plants, medicinal and aromatic plants, spices and condiments, plantation crops and mushrooms, etc. form a significant part of the total agricultural produce in the State.

In 2006-07 horticulture crops have been cultivated in 9.27 lakhs ha with an annual production of 160.49 lakh metric tonnes. During 2007-08, horticulture crops have been cultivated in 10.05 lakhs ha with an estimated annual production of 174.14 lakh metric tonnes. During 2008-09 it is planned to cultivate horticulture crops in an area of 10.95 lakh ha. and steps are being taken to achieve a production of 190 lakh metric tonnes. Tamil Nadu has great potential for development of horticulture as a commercial venture. Tamil Nadu has a long coastal belt suitable for plantation crops like cashew and cut flowers like tropical orchids. The southern part of Tamil Nadu has potential for growing off season mangoes and grapes.

At the National level Tamil Nadu ranks 1st in the area under banana and flowers. Tamil Nadu stands 1st in the production of flowers and Tapioca and 1st in the productivity for Tapioca and cabbage.

Restructuring the Horticulture Department

Horticulture department has been strengthened with adequate staff to cater to the needs of farmers. The district is headed by a Deputy Director. Under his control the block is headed by an Assistant Director of Horticulture with Horticulture Officers and Assistant Agriculture Officers. The staff strength has been increased from 1191 to 2599 in the Technical wing and 752 Nos. to 1158 Nos. in the Non Technical wing. This restructuring has provided growth opportunities for the staff and a record number of staff have been promoted this year. This is unprecedented in recent times.

2. State Plan Schemes

2. 1. Integrated Horticulture Development Scheme

This scheme is being implemented in all the 29 districts of Tamil Nadu excluding Chennai. Under this scheme elite planting materials, high yielding / hybrid vegetable seeds are being distributed to horticultural crops cultivating farmers at 50% subsidized cost. During 2007-08, this scheme was implemented with an outlay of Rs.266.610 lakhs. The scheme is proposed to be implemented with an outlay of Rs.385 lakhs during 2008-09.

2.2. Horticulture Training Centres

In the training centres functioning at Kudumianmalai in Pudukottai district, Madhavaram in Thiruvallur district, Thali in Krishnagiri district and in the Horticulture Training Centre, Ooty in The Nilgiris, training is imparted to the farmers, besides field level functionaries of this Department. During the financial year 2007-08 training has been imparted to 2600 farmers and extension functionaries with an outlay of Rs.6.92 lakhs. During the financial year 2008-09 it is planned to train 3000 farmers and field level functionaries with an outlay of Rs.10 lakhs.

STATUS OF HORTICULTURAL CROPS IN TAMIL NADU
(Area: Lakh Ha., Production: Lakh MT., Productivity: MT/Ha.)

Sl. No	Crops	2000-01 (Base year)			2006-07			2007-08 (provisional)			2008-09 (Estimated)		
		Area	Prodn	Pvty.	Area	Prodn.	Pvty.	Area	Prodn.	Pvty.	Area	Prodn.	Pvty.
1	Fruits	2.23	40.06	17.96	2.69	69.4	25.79	2.92	75.30	25.80	3.18	82.08	25.81
2	Vegetables	2.20	59.39	26.99	2.41	73.06	30.32	2.61	79.27	30.37	2.84	86.4	30.42
3	Plantation crops	2.20	7.73	3.51	2.33	7.92	3.4	2.53	8.6	3.41	2.76	9.37	3.43
4	Spices & condiments	1.68	6.62	3.94	1.55	8.02	5.17	1.68	8.7	5.18	1.83	9.48	5.19
5	Medicinal & Aromatic	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.08	1.6	0.05	0.09	1.8	0.06	0.11	1.83
6	Flowers	0.19	1.45	7.75	0.24	2.01	8.37	0.26	2.18	8.38	0.28	2.38	8.5
	TOTAL	8.51	115.27	13.55	9.27	160.49	17.31	10.05	174.14	17.33	10.95	190.0	17.35

2.3. Integrated Tribal Development Programme

Under this scheme, vegetable seeds are being distributed to tribal farmers at 90% subsidized cost and planting materials, farm implements at 75% subsidized cost in Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, Tiruvannamalai, Vellore, Trichy and Villupuram districts. Exposure visits and training programmes are being conducted in order to educate tribal farmers on improved technologies. During 2007-08, this scheme was implemented with an outlay of Rs. 40 lakhs. The scheme is proposed to be implemented with an outlay of Rs.40 lakhs in 903 ha. during 2008-09.

2.4. Western Ghats Development Programme

Under this scheme, training to the horticulture farmers has been conducted in the districts of Coimbatore, Erode, Dindigul, Madurai, Virudhunagar, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari. Quality planting materials of Mango, Aonla, Sapota etc. and other inputs are distributed to the horticultural crop growers at 25% subsidised cost. During 2007-08, this scheme was implemented with an outlay of Rs. 58.38 lakhs. The scheme is proposed to be implemented with an outlay of Rs.63 lakhs during 2008-09.

2.5. Hill Area Development Programme

Under this scheme, pedigree fruit plants, high yielding vegetable seeds, spices plants, farm equipments like sprayers, oil engines etc. are distributed to the horticultural growers of The Nilgiris district at 25% subsidy. During 2007-08, this scheme was implemented with an allocation of Rs. 221.66 lakhs. The scheme is proposed to be implemented with an outlay of Rs.250 lakhs during 2008-09.

2.6. City Vegetable Development Scheme

Under this scheme planting materials, fertilizers and plant protection chemicals are distributed to Chennai city dwellers besides providing technical know-how to them. During the year 2007-08, the scheme was implemented with an outlay of Rs. 3.5 lakhs and the scheme is proposed to be continued with an outlay of Rs. 4 lakhs during 2008-09.

2.7. Part-II Schemes

During 2007-08, a sum of Rs. 15 lakhs has been spent for setting up of work station and improvement of infrastructure at Commissionerate of Horticulture and Plantation Crops.

3. Targets and Achievements

The financial allocation for the year 2007-08 and the expenditure incurred and the proposed outlay for the year 2008-09 for the **State Plan Schemes** are furnished below.

Financial : (Rs.in lakhs)

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme	Unit	2007-08				2008-09	
			Phy.		Fin.		Phy.	Fin.
			Target	Achmt. as on 29.2.08	Target	Achmt. as on 29.2.08	Target	Target
1	Integrated Horticulture Development Scheme	Ha.	16777	15207	266.610	192.050	25000	385.00
2	Horticulture Training Centre	Nos	2600	2600	7.610	6.920	3000	10.00
3	Integrated Tribal Development Programme	Ha.	903	0	40.000	0.000	903	40.00
4	Western Ghats Development Programme	Ha.	25	17.23	58.380	27.550	30	63.00
5	Hill Area Development Programme in Nilgiris District	Ha.	2067	1713	221.660	139.840	2100	250.00
6	City Vegetable Development Scheme	Ha.	100	100	3.500	3.500	100	4.00

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme	Unit	2007-08				2008-09	
			Phy.		Fin.		Phy.	Fin.
			Target	Achmt. as on 29.2.08	Target	Achmt. as on 29.2.08	Target	Target
7	Part-II Scheme	-	1	0	15.000	12.500	-	-
Total					612.760	382.360		752.00

4. Policy Focus for 2008-09

- i. Promotion of Hi-tech Horticulture including Micro-Irrigation and Fertigation
- ii. Promotion of Bio-technology / Tissue Culture
- iii. Strengthening the production of Pedigree Planting materials.
- iv. Promotion of Organic Farming with export orientation.