

Chapter - 1

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN HORTICULTURE

OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the students will be able to:

- Identify the different jobs and business opportunities in horticulture sector
- Identify the auxiliary industries based on horticultural production

INTRODUCTION

Dear students, in class XIth, you have read about the meaning of horticulture, its different branches such as Pomology, Olericulture and Floriculture and importance of these branches of horticulture. During this process, you might have come across the question in mind that what for we are reading this subject? Some of you might have thought of neglecting it and some might have thought to leave in between. Dear all, don't worry, it's not true. After reading this chapter, you will come to know that this subject has most valuable business opportunities. For example, you can go for higher studies to become a scientist or a teacher or you can start growing fruits, vegetables, can become consultant, business manager, can open consultancy services or can start business of fruit based processing industry as well. There is a lot of scope for a horticulturist than other subjects. Read this chapter and decide yourself !!!

The following areas related to horticulture can provide business opportunities:

Fruit cultivation: Cultivation of temperate, tropical and sub-tropical fruits is considered as one of the most lucrative enterprises. A horticulture graduate can start his/her own business of fruit growing as a fruit grower because he/she has gained sufficient scientific knowledge on fruit growing during his/her degree programme.

Points to remember

- The subject of horticulture deals with the propagation and production of fruits, vegetables and floricultural plants.
- It offers several business opportunities to the graduates in horticulture.
- It is you who has to grab the opportunity after sincerely studying the subject.

Although, experience is gained only with practice, a graduate should also have full knowledge about package of practices of the fruits to be grown. However, near cities or towns, one can go for the business of growing perishable fruits, and in far a way places, we can grow fruits as per demand of the area or climatic and soil conditions.

Vegetable cultivation: Cultivation of vegetable in peri-urban areas is a demanding area and offers good opportunities. However, one has to prioritize the vegetables in demand over those which are less in demand. Near big cities, exotic vegetables are in demand, hence their cultivation in peri-urban areas can be a good business.

Hybrid seed production in vegetables and flowers: Hybrid seeds of vegetables and flowers are very costly and are usually beyond the reach of a common farmer. It is because of the fact that hybrid seed is usually produced by big multinational companies. These companies are earning million and millions. Our horticulture graduates run for Govt. jobs rather than taking hybrid seed production as business. Our horticulture graduates can go for this as business. It is a little tricky business because we need to have technical knowledge on flowering, emasculation and pollination of crop, of which hybrid seed has to be produced. But, once, this knowledge is acquired, one can take up this as a challenge business.

Cut flower production: This business is flourishing in big cities and towns. Unfortunately, those who are involved in this business are non-horticulture persons, who do not know the basics of proper handling of cut flowers during transportation or display. However, horticulture graduates can take up this business without a second thought.

Fruit plant nursery as microenterprise: In India there are about 4000 Govt. and private nurseries of fruit plants. Still there is always paucity of quality planting material. Moreover, most of the nurserymen engaged in this business are illiterate or nearly so. Although, raising of fruit plants nursery looks quite easy but it requires technical skill for budding, grafting, transplanting or packing of planting material. Hence, fruit plant nursery can be a good business choice for horticulture graduates.

Vegetable and ornamental plants nursery: For fruit plant nursery, one require larger area, whereas for most of the flowering annuals and vegetables, little smaller area is required for nursery. Hence, raising and maintaining of vegetable or ornamental plants nursery can be a good option in such localities. In big cities and town, there is always a great demand for herbaceous perennials, shade loving plants, climbers etc.

Hence, such plants can also be grown along with fruit plants nursery, which can be a good business opportunity for horticulture graduates.

Hi-tech flower and vegetable nursery: Although, several vegetables and flowers are produced by following routine practices but due to rise in technical knowledge and purchasing power of consumers, there is always a demand for nursery plants raised through hi-tech procedures. At several places, such nurseries have come up. However, unfortunately such nurseries are, by and large, run by non-technical personnel rather than horticulture graduates. Thus, hi-tech flower and vegetable nursery can also be a good business opportunity for horticulture graduates.

Raising plants through micropropagation: In the modern era, there is a great demand for plants raised through tissue culture techniques. Now micropropagation protocols have been developed for several horticultural crops. Micropropagation is a technical job, which is highly suitable for horticulture graduates. However, before starting this type of business, you should look in to (i) for which fruit, vegetable or ornamental plant demand is (ii) what about marketing channels etc., before starting this business.

Horticulture-based processing industry: During the recent years, there has been significant increase in urbanization. In cities, significant amount of middle class families are living, which demand for processed products of fruits and vegetables such as fruit juices, squashes, jams, jellies, pickles, preserves etc. In our country, about 30-40% of horticultural produce is lost between harvesting and consumption due to improper handling of fruits and vegetables. This loss can be avoided or reduced significantly if fruits and vegetables are processed in to value added products. Horticulture graduates can contribute in this direction by establishing processing units. Although, it requires huge money initially but Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Govt. of India provides subsidy on it. The processing industries are labor intensive and offer high employment potential in collection centers, grading, packing, loading / unloading, storages (warehouses and cold storages), transport, marketing and processing units.

Dry flowers: In towns and cities, there is a great demand for dry flowers. In fact fresh flowers have very short life, so the concept of dry flowers has originated in towns and cities. Moreover, dry flowers can also be used for making file covers, greeting cards, paper weights etc. This industry is flourishing nowadays and horticulture graduates can grab the opportunity of flower drying as one of the businesses.

Business Sales Representative: Horticulture graduates can work/act as business sales representative for several chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides required for growing of horticultural crops. A business sales representative promotes, markets, and distributes fruit related products to retail or wholesale businesses and growers. Such personnel may work for companies, which manufacture or sell chemicals, fertilizers, equipments, or processed/value added products, as well as plant suppliers. However, the educational requirement varies from company-to-company.

Consultant: As horticulturist, one can act as consultant as well. After acquiring sufficient education and experience either on production technology or nursery raising, hybrid seed production technology, one can definitely choose consultancy as his/her business. They provide expert advice to businesses and fruit growers. They may be specialized in one area; e.g. nursery crops. Many are self-employed; others work for equipment companies, pesticide companies or private organizations such as Reliance Foundation. This may require a minimum of a four-year college degree and sometime Master's degree.

Marketing manager of horticultural produce: Marketing of horticulture produce is a major problem in our country. After acquiring sufficient knowledge in horticulture, you can opt the job of marketing of fresh horticultural produce.

Ayurvedic medicines: Several horticultural plants can be used for manufacturing ayurvedic medicines. For example, rose water is used to cure eyes ailments. Similarly saffron is imported ingredient of many medicines, papain is a digestive enzyme, citrus fruit like sweet lime is used for liver ailment, rind of pomegranate and pectin from guava used for stomach upset, bark of arjun trees for heart troubles, neem water for skin irritation and allergies etc. Thus, we also have opportunity to join this business for good survival in the society.

Business of essential oils, flavours and fragrances: Floral extracts like essential oils, alkaloids, pigments, dyes etc., have tremendous demand in both domestic and international markets. In order to produce the highest quality extracts, highly sophisticated extraction methods and qualified personnel are required, for which horticulture graduate can be the best choice.

Lecturer/Assistant Professor/Training Associate: After acquiring P.G. degree, you have the option to join some State Agricultural Universities and College or ICAR Institute as a lecturer, assistant professor or scientist, respectively. They are recruited by State Agricultural Universities and Colleges. For this, a minimum of Master's degree in Horticulture with National Eligibility Test (NET) or Doctoral degree in Horticulture, is required. Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi recruits scientists for

its research institutes in the field of horticulture through all India competitive test followed by an interview.

Government development departments: A horticulture graduate has full chance to get a state Govt. job as Horticulture Inspector or Hort. Development Officer. The duty of such officers is to take part in all state development programmes related to horticulture. In some states (e.g., Punjab, Himachal Pradesh), this post has been classified as class-1 status.

Ancillary services: For raising, fruits, vegetables or ornamentals or their nurseries several types of fertilizers, tools, insecticides, fungicides, irrigation equipments, chemicals, growth regulators etc. are required. Thus, a horticulture graduate can also start a business for offering such services to the growers or nurserymen.



ACTIVITIES/EXERCISES

- Visit an orchard with school friends or a family member. Make a list of articles/materials and package of practices required for profitable cultivation of fruits, vegetables or flowers.
- Go to a market. Make a list of business opportunities in which yourself fit.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What are various business opportunities related to fruits?
2. Describe several business opportunities which are related to vegetables or ornamentals.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS

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- Sharma, R.R. (2006). Fruit production: Problems and solutions. Intl. Book Distributing Co., Lucknow, India.
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