

## POTENTIAL OF LEMON GRASS IN BIHAR

Jyoti

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### Abstract

India ranks first in the production of lemongrass. The drug industry in the country is valued more than 4000 corers annually. The increasing consciousness about health and side effects of modern medicines has again focused on innovation and use of herbal medicines. In Bihar, area under MAPs cultivation is 2600 ha only. Thus, the status of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants cultivation is still negligible in Bihar. Though commercial cultivation of Mentha and Lemon grass are picking up in the state but still a lot of efforts are required to increase the cultivation of lemongrass. Development of suitable agronomic practices for lemon grass is crucial to convert these plants into economically viable components in existing cropping systems of Bihar. Therefore, it is necessary for individual state to develop agro-technologies for medicinal plants, as there is numerous potential in Bihar so the work becomes easier, we must also motivate the farmers towards profitable cultivation lemon grass for their livelihood security.

### Key words

*Medical and Aromatic plants, Bihar, Lemon grass.*

### Introduction

India is known for its cultivation of aromatic and medical plants. They contribute significantly to rural economy and health security of the country. One of the beneficial medicinal plant is lemon grass which has been used since time immemorial for health and livelihood purposes. India is the largest producer of lemongrass in the world and 80% of the produce is exported to other countries like Japan, West Europe, USA etc. The cultivation of lemon grass was redirected mainly to the western parts of India, but due to its properties and

high market demand it has gained a popularity and is being preferred to grow by the farmers of other states also . Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon flexuosus*) is considered as a fast growing perennial grass which smells like lemon. The leaves and stocks are used for the purpose of oil extraction by steam distillation, and they are it's essential parts. When it comes to the state like Bihar for cultivation of any crop then it makes us remind of one of the most fertile lands of India. The topography of Bihar can be easily described as a fertile alluvial plain occupying the north, gangetic valley.



#### **Economic potential of lemongrass in Bihar:-**

Economy of Bihar development is almost exclusively upon agriculture, which is full of potentialities of innovation regarding sustainable development. Those who are engaged in cultivation of different crops are small and marginal farmers with small holding. Due to weak economic status they do not use vital inputs to their crop in time, this result in low productivity of crops, so in Bihar who started lemon grass cultivation are innovative farmers. Among all the species of medicinal plant Mentha and Lemongrass have major importance shared more than 95% total area and production of medicinal plants in the state. Bihar has taken a systematic approach in the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants. Agricultural Technology Management Agency, Patna has followed a pilot testing method for lemon grass. It made assessment about the local conditions and requirements, and demand. The first time cultivation of lemongrass in Bihar was on 22 acres of land which was in Hadiyabad village.

Medicinal plant	Area(ha.)	Total production (tons)	Soil yield(kg/ha)
Lemon grass	185	25.90	140

Source: Report of NMMP

Income generation from the production of these plants is concern it is quite adjustable although there is scope of increasing it. Gross income derived from the production of Lemongrass was 42000Rs/ha and net income 19500Rs/ha at cost of Rs.22500 per ha.

### **Future scope**

Bihar has the potential to increase the production of the lemongrass, because of end number of reasons, such as agro- climatic conditions. The use of the lemon grass as the drug by the rural masses or rural physician is quite common. Availability of manpower, Funds provided by the government in this sector. Innovative nature of the farmers of Bihar. 4.36% lands is barren and non-cultivated which can be used for the production of herbs and medicinal plants. In the state about 57% of 84.04 lakh ha. of gross cropped area is irrigated and the rest 43% is rain-fed, these rainfed area can be used for the cultivation of lemongrass. Farmers would be able to generate more income by spending less time if they cultivate lemon grass, as it could be grown anywhere. Lemon grass survives for about five years and might be harvested around 120 kg within a year if proper care is taken of the plants. The Banka district administration is promoting cultivation of lemongrass in order to encourage farmers to use around 42,000 acres of cultivable barren land in Banka district. The district administration is linking farmers to firms which provide lemongrass slips to landowners without any upfront cost and buying back the product directly from the field, freeing the farmers from the worry of marketing their product.

### **Conclusion**

Although there are a lot of challenges in bringing any new innovation or technologies in agriculture specially where there is lack of education and rigidity for the adoption, but a silver lining emerged when the innovative farmers of the Bihar adopted the technologies for the growth of lemongrass. There is lack of market facility and inadequate infrastructure for storage in Bihar which government must look upon. It is clear from the fact that there are only 243 cold-storage exit in the state. (Report from Horticulture mission, Govt. of Bihar.) Bihar horticulture develops and society has taken the initiative for establishment of the nurseries in the area, for medical and aromatic plants. Bihar has wide prospectus for the production as well as marketing of lemongrass, provided the steps are taken in correct direction with the support of government institution.