

STATUS AND SCOPE OF EXOTIC VEGETABLE PRODUCTION IN INDIA

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The growing exotic vegetable is a more profitable business than the cultivation of traditional Indian vegetables. Globalization has brought many opportunities and changes in developing countries like India. Some of the major changes along with globalization are the changes in the living standards and living styles among Indians. China is the largest producer of vegetables and global trade in agricultural products allows consumers to purchase vegetables grown in far-away countries. Vegetables can be eaten either raw or cooked and play an important role in human nutrition, being mostly low in fat and carbohydrates, but high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Many governments encourage their citizens to consume plenty of vegetables, five or more portions a day often being recommended.

The most visible change which we can notice is the change in the food habits among the new generations. In India, such produce is "exotic" (Rao and Sasanka, 2015). Exotic vegetables are commercially cultivated in net houses or poly houses. These vegetables are imported from outside India and they are grown and sold at a high price. These vegetables are not very common to us. Currently, there are various exotic vegetables available in India like broccoli, asparagus, cherry tomato, bell pepper, and zucchini. Globally, they are an important source of cash income for smallholders in Asia.

Domestic production of exotic vegetables, however, has been growing at a fast clip over the last three years. Farms catering to exotic greens have mushroomed too- in Manesar, Haryana (near Delhi), Pune, Bengaluru, and Mysore. Their clients are mostly restaurants and five-star hotels. Some of the produce is finding its way into retail shops as well. However, despite a naturally enabling environment for cultivating these high-value veggies, the area, unfortunately, lacks proper export facilities and local marketing infrastructure (Rao and

Sasanka, 2015). In India Maharashtra, alone could be accounting for half of the production of exotic vegetables. Some districts of Maharashtra like Pune, Nasik, and Satara are now growing asparagus and broccoli (www.freshplaza.com). In Himachal Pradesh, the cultivation of Exotic vegetables like asparagus, broccoli, lettuce, leek, Chinese cabbage, snow pea, and parsley start picking up in Theog, Narkanda, Matyana, Saproon Valley, Nauradhar in Sirmour, Katrain, Sanj Valley, and Manali (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com, feb2011).

IMPORTANCE OF EXOTIC VEGETABLES

1. Exotic vegetables as the economic source:

- Exotic vegetables are important sources of income for farmers.
- Public and private sector supplies seeds to farmers at a reasonable price.

2. Nutritional and medicinal value:

- Vegetables not only provide essential micronutrients but also contain a range of health-promoting phytochemicals.
- These can prevent nutritional deficiencies and reduce the risk of obesity and chronic disease including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer.
- Correct cooking improves the nutritional value of exotic vegetables.

3. Exotic vegetable as a home garden:

- Immense nutritional value as health food and nutraceuticals.
- Growing exotic vegetable originally at home makes exotic vegetables excellent choices which are not easily available in the market.

4. Exotic vegetables for commercial purpose

- They lend themselves well to small scale and part-time farming operation.
- For plains they serve as off-season vegetable.

➤ Commercial production and marketing require knowledge about their time of planting and availability in various regions.

STATUS OF EXOTIC VEGETABLES IN INDIA

- The new polyhouses build is undertaking exotic vegetable cultivation in 75% of their area.
- Almost 50% flower cultivating farmers have shifted to exotic vegetable cultivation.
- Exotic vegetables market is growing at the rate of 15-20% per annum and is increasing day by day.
- India is importing more than 85% of its exotic vegetables.
- Growing of exotic vegetables is more profitable business than cultivation of traditional Indian vegetables. There is an increasing demand in the domestic market due to their nutritive value.
- These vegetables have high demand in five-star cultures of the cosmopolitan cities.
- Exotic vegetable has major two niches i.e., market hotel industry and export.

SCOPE OF EXOTIC VEGETABLES IN INDIA

- In India, North-western Himalayas, and Nilgiri hills provide an excellent climate for production especially during the summer.
- In India, seed and planting material requirement presently is not very high and can be met by multinational seed companies easily.
- Seeds of many crops like lettuce, broccoli, leek, Chinese cabbage etc. are available in Himachal Pradesh at IARI Regional Research Station Katrain, Kullu and Dr. YSPUH&F, Nauni.

CONCLUSION



- Good source of income for small and marginal holders. Exotic vegetables are highly nutritious and has medicinal values
- India is still importing more than 85% exotic vegetables.
- In India, maximum diversity in climate occurs and Nilgiri hills and Himalayan region provides excellent climate for production during summer months
- A lot of scope exists for exotic vegetable farming in India due to increasing urban population, changing their life style, food habit and increasing numbers of foreign tourist day by day.

