

# Standing Committee Report Summary

## Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture

- The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Chair: Mr. P.C. Gaddigoudar) presented its report on ‘Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture – An Appraisal’ on August 9, 2023. Horticulture is a branch of agriculture that deals with fruits and vegetables. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
- **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH):** MIDH has five sub-schemes, which were earlier separate schemes. These are: (i) National Horticulture Mission, (ii) Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States, (iii) the National Horticulture Board, (iv) the Coconut Development Board, and (v) the Central Institute of Horticulture. The first two sub-schemes are implemented as centrally sponsored schemes, while the other three are implemented as central sector schemes. The Committee recommended that all sub-schemes under the MIDH be implemented as centrally sponsored schemes.
- **Rationalising interventions:** MIDH has more than 22 interventions under the sub-schemes, such as creation of market infrastructure and pollination support through beekeeping. The Committee observed that there is no clarity about the number of interventions permissible or implemented under the sub-schemes. This causes difficulties in evaluation and appraisal. Additionally, it recommended that the structure of the Integrated Mission including its interventions and sub-schemes be revisited and a minimum number of interventions be finalised to avoid confusion.
- **National policy for horticulture:** India is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables, after China. The Committee noted that horticulture can enhance food security with food substitutes like potato. However, it observed that there is no independent national policy for horticulture. It recommended that a National Policy be evolved for holistic promotion and development of horticulture. It also recommended that setting up of horticulture cluster development programmes and centres of excellence be expedited to increase productivity. The Committee also noted that about 12,000 hectares of cultivable waste land is available which can be utilised for horticulture. It recommended that such land be reclaimed to promote horticulture crops under MIDH.
- **Horticulture trade:** Horticulture contributes 33% to the agricultural sector. In 2021-22, India’s horticulture imports were greater than the exports by Rs 890 crore. Import of products such as cashew nut and cocoa have been higher than the commensurate exports in 2021-22.
- The Committee observed that the Ministry must improve domestic production to reduce dependence on imports. It also recommended that Agricultural Produce Exporting Agencies be established in specific regions or districts under suitable missions to incentivise exports.
- **Productivity:** Horticulture productivity in India is lower than that in major horticulture producing countries. Productivity also varies across states, with 2.79 tonnes per hectare in Rajasthan and 18.4 tonnes per hectare in Punjab. Production and distribution of good quality seeds and planting material is essential for enhancing productivity. The Committee noted that only half the target for producing quality planting material has been achieved so far. It recommended that a new scheme component may be introduced to incentivise states which improve productivity.
- **Pricing norms:** The Committee observed that absence of remunerative crop prices may also discourage production and productivity. It recommended that the government review public procurement of agriculture and horticulture produce, and the availability of marketing infrastructure for perishable horticulture produce. It also recommended that states effectively implement the existing market intervention scheme to provide relief in case of excess production, and a fall in prices.
- **National Horticulture Mission** meant for states other than the northeastern and Himalayan states is being implemented only in 384 districts. Noting that the implementation may not involve much financial burden and provide substantial benefits, the Committee recommended its implementation in all districts of states covered under the sub-scheme. It also noted that although the relevant mission is implemented in all districts of northeastern states, the implementation itself is very poor; and that these states should be motivated for effective implementation.
- **Development of flowers and medicinal plants:** In 2021-22, India exported floriculture products worth Rs 771 crore. The Committee noted that India also has a scope in the trade of medicinal and aromatic plants. It recommended that a mission intervention be designed to promote production of flowers and medicinal plants.
- **Research and development:** The Committee noted the Ministry’s R&D initiative, and recommended that an appropriate research institution be designated as national nodal agency. This agency will provide technical assistance for examining the merits of project proposals submitted by MIDH beneficiaries.

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