



An economic of study of constraints associated Herbal medicines growers in the valley of Kashmir.

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Abstract

The study analyses the problems associated with the herbal medicinal growers in Kashmir valley. For this purpose various government policies are studied and the impact of these policies are studied and further data is taken directly from the herbal medicinal growers by asking various question to check certain parameters of the herbal medicinal cultivation. The main or basic problems those are prominent for all growers in valley include lack of proper knowledge, marketing linkage, inability of farmers to take risk of cultivation, not proper institutional support and infrastructure.

The main methodology adapted for this research was to formulate certain questions and then the results were computed in order to arrange the constraints faced by the medicinal growers according to percentage to highlight the results of research.

Introduction:

Over the past few years as a policy of government Of India the medicinal plants have regained a wide acknowledgment due to a growing faith in herbal medicine in view of its smaller side effects compared to allopathic medicine in addition the necessity of meeting the requirements of medicine for an increasing human population. Through the awareness of the continuous erosion of traditional knowledge of plants used for medicine in the past and renewed interest at the present time, a need existed to review this valuable knowledge of medicinal plants with the purpose of developing medicinal plants sectors across the different states in India. Our major objectives therefore were to explore the potential in medicinal plants resources, to understand the challenges and opportunities with the medicinal plants sector, and also to suggest recommendations based upon the present state of knowledge for the establishment and smooth functioning of the medicinal plants sector along with improving the living standards of the underprivileged communities.

The research paper discusses the constraints or limitations of herbal medicinal plant sector. Herbal medicines are in use for treatment since generations. These conventional information systems have started to vanish with the passage of time due to lack of written documents and relatively low income in these traditions.

The preparations of herbal medicines come either as single herb or as collections of herbs in composite formulae. It is often difficult to determine which component, if any, of the herb has biological activity in humans. In addition, the processing of herbs, such as heating or boiling, may alter the dissolution rate, or even the pharmacological activity of the organic constituents. Similarly, a host of environmental factors, including soil, altitude, seasonal variation in temperature, atmospheric humidity, length of daylight, rainfall pattern, shade, dew, and frost conditions, may affect the levels of components in any given batch of an herb. Other factors, including infections, insects, planting density, competition with other plant species, seeding time, and genetic factors, play an important role.

Problems faced by the herbal medicinal growers in the valley:

Herbal medicines in Kashmir are mostly found in forests and mountains that mean the significant amount of trade is unorganized. Herbal medicinal growers are small or marginal that mean the benefits of growing herbs is also very small. Most of herbal medicinal growers don't have required knowledge of cultivation for growing herbs so productivity is matter of concern that results in discouraging farmers for using large part of their lands for same. This also results in that the smallholders of land for taking up the cultivation of medicinal plants. All these factors add up uncertainty in the minds of people for taking up the risk of using their land for the cultivation of herbal medicines. The other main problem associated with the growing of medicinal herbs that came up during the survey was the gestation period of medicinal herbs is very long. Most of the farmers have small land holding and have less credit generation capacity so understandably they cannot wait for long periods for returns.

During our survey the problems that are most prominent are as under:

1. **Low Profitability:** Most of the herbal medicinal growers are not sure of exact profitability of their produce with small land holdings and limited capacity of credit most of the farmers are not willing to do cultivation at large scale. The other reason for low profitability seems presence of large number of middle man and not well defined market.
2. **Lower yield:** The production is lower as mostly it is done on small patches of land. Almost all farmers are growing it small part of land with lack of required scientific knowledge with no or very little knowledge of about periods of sowings and other relevant information that results in low yield of farm produce.
3. **Lack of agro techniques:** Farmers that produce herbal medicines lack agriculture techniques required to grow medicinal herbs. Farmers lack the knowledge and don't possess required agro tools and technology to grow herbs.

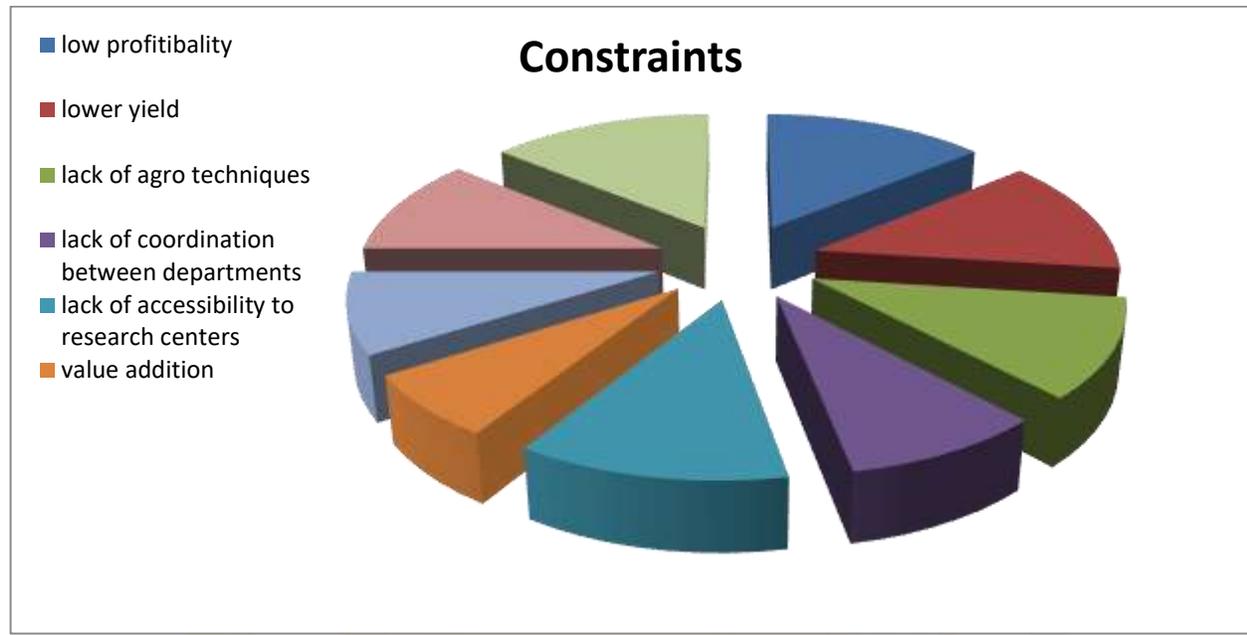
4. **Lack of coordination between line departments:** The problem is also because government policies at ground level lack the impact due to non –coordination between the departments associated with the said farming.
5. **Lack of accessibility of farmers to research centers/universities:** Government is trying to detect the herbs in forests and do research in laboratories to supply the seeds for farming to farmers. The problem with this is there are no takers for these herbs as farmers don't find any incentive to use their land for same and also on the other farmers don't have access to universities and research labs to see the actual findings of research so that to remain motivated and to take risk of using their land for the herbal production.
6. **Value addition:** Another problem that in survey got noticed is the value addition that refers additional value that through the chain gets added. The main problem is that the primary cultivator or farmer is not able to get the benefits of value additions and somehow the additional values are not trickledown to farmers.
7. **Lack of warehousing:** This is very technical problem farmers are facing. Once the herbs are kept for drying it gets difficult for a common farmer to detect the differences between the herbs and everything gets mingled up. Also the storage facilities not available for farmers and due to this they easily get exploited by the middle man or contractors.
8. **Nonexistent testing laboratories:** Government is not able to provide the testing laboratories for the detection of herbs and farmers don't possess the scientific knowledge required to detect the herbs on their own.
9. **Large scale of smuggling of herbs from the wild:** This is the common problem throughout the country and is very well prevalent in the valley of Kashmir also. Unorganized cultivation of herbal medicines from forests and smuggling of herbs poses threat to the extinction of various herbal medicines.

These are the issues that herbal medicine farmers are facing in the valley. During survey we analyzed these problems and as per percentage gave value to these problems to check and the results are shown in the following tables:

Table A: Constraints associated Herbal medicines growers in the valley of Kashmir.

S. No.	Problems/Issues	Percentage
1	Low Profitability	14%
2	Lower yield	13%
3	Lack of agro techniques	11%
4	Lack of coordination between line departments	9%
5	Lack of accessibility of farmers to research centers/universities	12%

6	Value addition	7%
7	Lack of warehousing	9%
8	Nonexistent testing laboratories	11%
9	Large scale of smuggling of herbs from the wild	14%



Primary survey conducted through questionnaire.

Table A: Shows the graphical percentage of various constraints faced the herbal medicinal growers. The source of survey was mainly primary and many departments related to herbal medicines were also consulted to check the accuracy of data.

Conclusion:

This estimate of percentage is based on the questionnaire asked to the herbal medicinal growers and the percentages are roughly put in order to highlight the issues farmers are facing. The department people are contacted in order to check the accuracy of the problem and surprisingly are found very same as the concerned department for the herbal medicine had noticed. For this mainly data from forest department were checked and the departments associated with the marketing were also contacted. This leads to the conclusion of the research paper as the objective of the research was to highlight the issues and constraints farmers are facing in the valley.

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