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Unveiling a Traditional Dimension of Entrepreneurship to a New Horizon

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Abstract

To develop a nursery is one of the vital as well as commercial ventures in horticulture sector. It became a basic need of horticulture because a healthy seedling or sapling can only give a healthy plants and fruits. Assam has unique agro-climatic conditions which permit growing of different varieties of horticultural crops. In Assam, total area under horticulture crops in 2021 reached an all-time high of 334.500 ha th. In the present post-COVID era, nursery industry has experienced a steady increase in wholesale and retail sales. Considering the ever increasing demand for horticulture and different types of plants, there is a great prospect for the entrepreneurship development in horticulture nursery business. Since it creates green quantitative and qualitative outputs as well as extensive employment opportunities, it provides an ample scope for the entrepreneurs to start up with. Hence, the present study aims to capture the profile of the horticulture nurseries of Jagiroad, Morigaon district, Assam, along with their associated prospects and problems.

Keywords: Horticulture nursery, entrepreneurship, Covid, indoor plants

Introduction

Horticulture nurseries play an important role in agriculture sector. Plant propagation techniques and practices is the main thrust of horticulture nurseries. Horticulture involves the cultivation of garden crops like fruits, vegetables, spices, flower plants, medicinal plants etc. and the place where these are raised, maintained and multiplied using various propagation techniques and methods is known as horticulture nursery. Horticulture and rising of its nursery has emerged as a major means of sustainable livelihood by offering large employment opportunities to the local people. Moreover, compared to agricultural crops, the average income per unit area is more in horticulture crops. This leads to the growth of entrepreneurial spirit among the enthusiastic youths to take up the venture of horticulture nursery. The 'Entrepreneurship is an old concept, according to which anyone who runs a business is called an entrepreneur. The more precise meaning of the entrepreneur is; the one who perceives the need and then brings together the human, material and capital needs to meet this need. The entrepreneur is the one who understands the dynamics of the market and changes the search in response to it and uses it as an opportunity' (Sharma, 2019). Development of entrepreneurs could help the economy mainly in three ways-generate employment, earns profit, supports green environment. So, In a country like India where achieving economic growth is not the only objective but also to achieve social justice, it is very important to encourage and adopt the practice of entrepreneurship among the youths. Assam is blessed with abundant natural resources and has a favourable agro climatic conditions which permit growing of different varieties of horticultural crops. In this context, horticulture and its allied activities provides a wide range of scope and opportunity to the

people of Assam. As the demand for all kinds of plants have been increasing in this post COVID era, taking up a business initiate in opening up of the horticulture nursery would not only contribute to the growth of economy but also upliftment of the society as a whole.

Profile of the Study Area

Assam-a state in Northeast India comprises the Brahmaputra Valley and the Barak Valley along with the Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao district. It covers an area of 78, 434 square kms. Morigaon is one of the 35 districts in Assam state. Assam has unique agro climatic conditions which permit growing of different varieties of horticultural crops and as such the state is traditionally horticultural with plantations and gardens which accommodates various fruits, vegetables, flowers, spices medicinal and aromatic plants, nut crops, tuber crops and also plantation crops. The homestead garden locally known as 'Bari' is a unique feature of common Assamese farmers who has an inherent tendency to be self-sufficient with day to day family requirements of seasonal major and minor fruits, vegetables, spices etc.

Importance of the Study

Nursery production involves growing plants under intensive management for use in another location. As it involves number of employment it plays a very crucial role in empowering people with financial abilities. Horticulture nurseries not only provide employment opportunities but also number of environmental solutions. Since, in Assam various horticultural crops could be nurtured and grown, it is the blessings to the state to grab the opportunity. Moreover, in urban areas there is a huge demand of

such horticulture nurseries and since last few decades the number of nurseries in the urban areas is cropping up remarkably. Hence, it is important to get some idea about the working of nurseries of the urban areas and to analyze their prospects and problems.

Objectives of the Study

- i). To observe the profile of horticulture nurseries in the study area.
- ii). To study the prospects and problems of horticulture nurseries so as to determine the scope of entrepreneurship development among the youths.

Methodology of the Study

The study is mainly based on both the primary and some secondary data. The primary data has been collected through interview schedule and personal investigation. Data have been collected from five horticulture nurseries which were selected on convenience basis along the National Highway 37. From each nursery 3 to 6 workers have been questioned regarding the working of the nurseries. Secondary data have been collected from published journals, books, internet sources etc.

Interpretation and Analysis

To explore the nature and working of the nurseries in the study area, a descriptive analysis of the overall profile of the nurseries have been studied. It has been seen that all the five nurseries have a substantial market share and gained much popularity. Among these, the Chayanika nursery which was established in 1984 has been rated as the best. While, the most oldest among these are the Beauty nursery which was established in 1977. Daisy Nursery and Amnesty nursery was established in 2004 and 1997 respectively.

When compared in terms of land area, the Chayanika nursery and the Sumitra turned out as the largest with 33 bighas and 35 bighas respectively, while, Beauty Nursery has been operating in 8 bighas of land only. Daisy nursery and Amnesty nursery is running with only 3 bighas and 2 bighas size of land respectively.

Table 1: Land area of the Nurseries

S. No.	Name of Nursery	Land Area (Approx. in Bigha)
1	Chayanika Nursery	33
2	Sumitra Nursery	35
3	Beauty Nursery	8
4	Daisy Nursery	3
5	Amnesty Nursery	2

Prospects of the Horticulture plant Nurseries

Generation of Employment Opportunity: In developing economies like India horticulture is expected to solve the aggravating problem of unemployment to a large extent. However, nurseries which are undertaken in small scale or large scale can also create enormous employment opportunities to the unskilled or semi-skilled labour force. The numbers of employees which are associated with the sample nurseries can be stated as follows:

Table 2: Number of employees

S. No.	Name of Nursery	Number of Employee
1	Chayanika Nursery	280
2	Sumitra Nursery	135
3	Beauty Nursery	46
4	Daisy Nursery	19
5.	Amnesty Nursery	14

It is evident from the Table-2 that the Chayanika Nursery has 280 employees which is the highest figure. While the lowest count came from Amnesty Nursery with only 14 numbers of employees operating in 2 bigha land. The study finds that more than 90 people are employed on an average in the sample nurseries. It means horticulture plant nurseries can prove to be a source of livelihood for semi-skilled and unskilled workforce. So, this kind of entrepreneurship has a great potential to emerge in the context of agro-based economies like India. We can generate enough employment avenues by expanding such nurseries across the state which, in fact, can contribute to the state GDP of a state and inclusive growth can be better achieved through expansion of small, medium and large scale nurseries.

Estimate of Yearly Sale Proceeds: The study has demonstrated that the yearly return of Chayanika Nursery is the highest with 6 to 13 crores, whereas the lowest sales earnings has been recorded for Amnesty nursery which is 4-7 lakhs. The size of the annual sales earning largely depended upon the acre of size of land coverage under horticulture plant and other associated factor. The remarkable findings of the present study are that the income earnings in horticulture crops is comparatively more than in traditional agricultural crops. Nurseries like Daisy nursery and Amnesty nursery have recorded a significant fall in their income after the COVID-19 period. However, their sales earnings have been improving a lot in the post COVID period and they are delivering a good performance in terms of revenue generation and employment creation in Assam. They become the source of motivation and to grow up other horticulture plant nurseries in the nearby areas. The empirical study reveals the fact that the plant nurseries have great potential to introduce and expand entrepreneurship and be a source of livelihood for hundreds of people in a region.

Table 3: Annual income of Nurseries (in Rupees)

S. No.	Name of Nursery	Income P.A.
1	Chayanika Nursery	6-13 crores
2	Sumitra Nursery	3-5 crores
3	Beauty Nursery	11-13 lakhs
4	Daisy Nursery	10-12.5 lakhs
5.	Amnesty Nursery	4-7 lakhs

Ability to Meet Demand with Sufficient Supply

With the passage of times, there has been growing demand for variety of nursery items. People demand flower plants for decoration, for rendering day to day worship, special occasion like Puja, Bihu and other festival time, for gift and celebration and so on. The study also reveals the fact that all the sample nurseries have been trying to meet as well as fulfilling the market demand. Unfortunate part is that at the advent of COVID, there were a sharp decline in demand for such items and subsequently all the sample nurseries faced severe hardship. However, the small nurseries even face losses during COVID crisis period. The study demonstrates that there has been enough potential in cultivating the spirit of entrepreneurship among the people who are interested to pursue this business.

Problems of the Horticulture Nursery

As revealed in Table-4 that almost all the sample face the common problem of the attack of pests and insects and weather conditions. The rising temperature as a result of global warming has a major impact on the raising of crops and propagation of the plants. These as a whole affect the quality and quantity of the nursery product. Moreover, Chayanika nursery as well as Sumitra nursery faced the problem of adopting new techniques in terms of finance and availability, handling and management. Although horticulture nursery forms a major sector that can absorb large chunk of unemployed youths but this constitute

another major problem that the nurseries are facing. It is very difficult to get a skilled and permanent labour force. Some of the nurseries are facing the problem of labour shortage. After three four years of working experience they discontinue to start their own or in search of better opportunity or in most of the cases they stay at home doing nothing or just doing a light labour work. One of the possible reason of this is government subsidy schemes and free distribution schemes. As people are getting food at almost free of cost they are least bothered about getting themselves in some work. This finding brings a different picture of job demand and supply relation. There is demand for labour in the market but people are not willing to opt the same creating lack of labour supply. This aggravates the problem of unemployment in the economy.

Table 4: Problems faced by the Nurseries

S. No.	Name of Nursery	Problems Faced by Nursery
1	Chayanika Nursery	Weeds, weather condition, incorporating new techniques, pests, insects.
2	Sumitra Nursery	Weather condition, incorporating new techniques, pests, insects.
3	Beauty Nursery	Insects, diseases of plants, weather condition.
4	Daisy Nursery	Unavailability of Labour, weather condition, pest, insects.
5.	Amnesty Nursery	Unavailability of Labour, temporary set up/shed, pests, insects.

Absence of trained personnel is another major problems of the sample nurseries in Assam. As revealed in table 5, labour shortage is proved to be a major issue in this regard. Moreover, lack of capital is the problem faced by the nurseries except the Chayanika and Daisy nursery. Other problems are high cost of production and infrastructural issues like transportation problem. Such problems could be solved with some government support and initiative. These constraints create hindrance towards the entrepreneurship development. People steps backward thinking about the prevailing problems in the nursery sector. So, it is important to sort out such issues with the help of government as well as individual level initiative. Moreover, the nurseries have not received any kind of government support and subsidy for running the business. Nor they receive any training or awareness and skill development program.

Table 5: Constraints faced in expansion of the business.

S. No.	Name of the Nursery	Constraints Faced in Expansion of the Business
1	Chayanika Nursery	Transportation problems, other infrastructural problem, lack of trained person, high cost of production
2	Sumitra Nursery	Transportation problems, other infrastructural problem, lack of trained person, high cost of production
3	Beauty Nursery	Lack of capital, lack of trained person
4	Daisy Nursery	Lack of capital, lack of marketing, transportation problem, Lack of capital, lack of trained person, high cost of production, lackof expert and trained person
5	Amnesty Nursery	Lack of capital, lack of marketing, transportation problem, lack of demand, high cost of production, lackof expert and trained person

Conclusion

The study depicts that horticulture nurseries plays an important role in the socio-economic condition of a huge number of people. Horticulture nurseries help to maintain a clean and pollution free environment. It also helps in increasing the natural beauty of a place. Apart from other horticulture products, horticultural nurseries in Morigaon serve as the most important avenue for the distribution of ornamental and non-ornamental genetic material to the landscape industry, garden enthusiasts and farmers and also help to improve biodiversity in the urban setting. It provides employment to many people for whom it is the means for living. The owners of the nurseries also earn a good amount from the horticulture nurseries. They serve as a source of employment and investment for the daring entrepreneur, creating a vibrant start-up business. With young and agile entrepreneurs the nursery business would surely be the industry of a bright future creating a scope for more entrepreneurs to enter the industry. The lack of affiliation with government, professional bodies, and non-governmental agencies has not allowed for proper monitoring to streamline their activities. It has also not provided opportunity for training to improve their skill or the necessary inputs from research to increase variation in the types of plants cultivated. Over all it could be said that the nurseries in Morigaon are having very good future prospect with huge yearly turnover and with increasing demand of the nursery products. Some of the problems which are discussed above could be solved with proper management and support from government and various other organizations in various terms.

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