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PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF STRABERRY CULTIVATORS: A CASE STUDY OF MAHABALESHWAR TALUKA OF SATARA DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA).

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ABSTRACT

The research study was conducted in strawberry farming of Mahabaleshwar taluka of Satara district. This research study focused on problems and prospects of strawberry cultivators. The study indicate that Mahabaleshwar taluka is most eminent centre of strawberry cultivation in India due to its climate, soil and other geographical factors which was started 90 years ago. Mahabaleshwar taluka produces strawberry for domestic and international market. This taluka is contributing 78 percent of the total production and market supply of strawberry in India. But in study area, large numbers of problems are raised in the front



of strawberry cultivators. With the help of use of modern techniques and proper planning in strawberry cultivations, such problems will be solved and one day this tahsil become the largest producer of strawberry in the world.

KEY WORDS: Strawberry Cultivation, Domestic & International market, Production, Modern Techniques, Proper Planning etc.

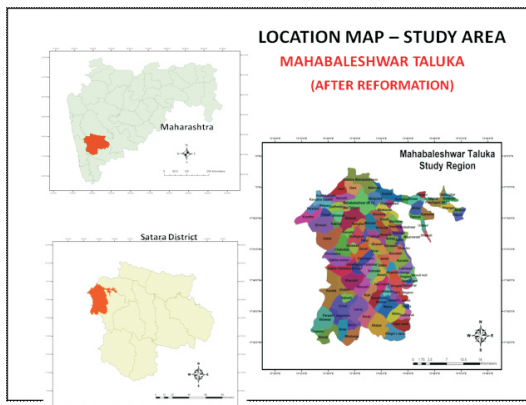
1. INTRODUCTION

Strawberry is one of the best fruit in many parts of the world. Indeed, people from all walks of life truly enjoy the venerable strawberry. In addition to being a delicious fruit, the strawberry also is a fruit that can be easy to cultivate and grown. Strawberry is important commodity of food and it is used for manufacturing of sweet jams, jellies, biscuits, ice-cream, cakes etc. Strawberry is highly perishable and hence, a great deal of care in harvesting and handling as well as its marketing also requires to be organized carefully. Usually, the fruit is picked late after soon, stored over night in cool place and sent to market. The area under strawberry cultivation is increased day by day with increasing demand for this fruit on domestic and international market. In study area large numbers of difficulties are raised in the front of strawberry cultivators. But with the help of use of modern techniques and proper planning in strawberry cultivations such difficulties will solved within a few days and one day this tahsil become the largest producer of strawberry in the world.

2. OBJECTIVES:-

- + To study the Origin and Growth of Strawberry Farming in India as well as in the study area as particular.
- + To study the Problems of Strawberry Cultivators in Study area.
- + To suggest the Planning and Decision making strategies for Strawberry Cultivators.

3. STUDY AREA:-



Mahabaleshwar taluka is having very distinct physical character. It is located between 17° 42' North to 18° 60' North latitude and 73° 21' East to 73° 51' East longitude in Satara district of West Maharashtra. The taluka is bounded in North West by Raigad district, in West by Ratnagiri district, in South by Patan taluka and in East by Satara and in North East by Wai taluka. The total geographical area of Mahabaleshwar taluka is 495.50 Sq km. The total taluka is surrounded by Sahyadri Mountains, and having a famous hill station Mahabaleshwar located at 1436 m above msl.

4. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY:-

The primary data has collected by using the structured questionnaires, interview and non participative observation. The informal discussion with the farmers and agricultural officers has also been carried. The researcher has been collected the secondary data by using secondary sources such as reference book, research paper, Agriculture magazines, Newspapers, articles and various websites.

5. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:-

Mahabaleshwar is a single tahsil in India who have 80% land under strawberry cultivation. We find that the spread of strawberry cultivation in this tahsil is due to its climate, soil and other geographical factors. But some difficulties are arising in the front of strawberry cultivators due to lack of finance, technical development, research and proper planning.

6. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY:-

The present study is mostly useful for strawberry cultivators. The farmers may use this study for adopting proper methodology for increasing production and profit. It also helpful for strawberry based industries and for the government authorities for the purpose of policy formulation.

7. STAWBERRY FARMING IN INDIA:-

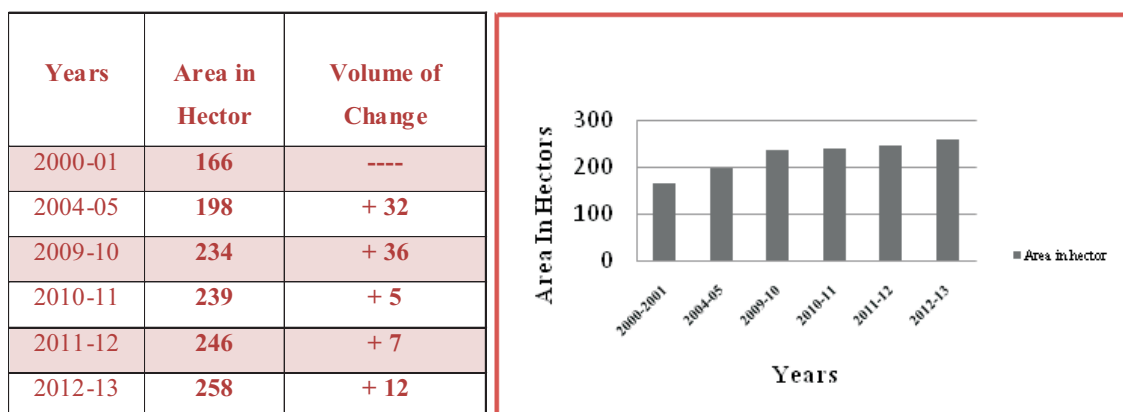
Mainly strawberry cultivation is India in Kashmir, Punjab, UP, HP, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Karnataka state. But production of strawberry was not found satisfactory in some region of our country. We realized commercial importance of this crop after the British left our country. Strawberry cultivation in India is done mostly on hilltops. Recently in 2015 there was approximate 3810-acres land of under the cultivation of strawberry in our country. Out of which 3000-acres land is under the cultivation in Mahabaleshwar, Jammu & Kashmir – 300 acre, Himachal Pradesh – 150 acres, Ooty – 150 acre, Punjab – 100 acres, Haryana - 60 acres, Uttaranchal – 50 acres land is under the cultivation of strawberry. Recently, there is little bit improvement in production and area under the cultivation of strawberry in Shilong and Meghalaya since last two year. Export of strawberry form India is rare to compare with other fruits, which are often exported. During 2001 -02 export of fresh strawberry was 117.55 tons only and derived income Rs. 12.74 lakh. Bangladesh was the major importer of strawberry with accounts 110 tons from India. Australia, USA, Jordan, Germany ranked in top five list of importer. In 2007- 08 export of strawberry from Mahabaleshwar to Europe on trial basis of 300 tons.

8. STRAWBERRY FARMING IN MAHABALESHWAR TALUKA:-

Mahabaleshwar taluka is most eminent centre of strawberry cultivation in India, which was started 90 years ago. Mahabaleshwar taluka produces strawberry for domestic and international market. This taluka is contributing 78 percent of the total production and market supply of strawberry in India. One of the British officers sowed the root of reddish and delicious strawberry fruits in Mahabaleshwar in 19th century which was

the first plant of strawberry in Maharashtra. Since then we find the strawberry cultivation in Mahabaleshwar. Even if British introduced strawberry to Mahabaleshwar, Late Dr. Hakim Seth was beginning strawberry farming in 1947s and then after local farmer Late Shri. Sakharam Bhilare from Bhilar village started farming in 1958s, this considered initially pace towards red revolution of strawberry farming. Strawberry cultivation in Mahabaleshwar found beneficial according to farmers earning aspects after red revolution introduced in Mahabaleshwar. The area under strawberry cultivation is increased day by day. The table no.1 shows the area under strawberry cultivation as below:-

Table No 1: Area under Strawberry Cultivation in Mahabaleshwar Taluka (2000-2001 to 2012-13) (Area in Hector)



Source: Based on Revenue Record, Tahsil office, Mahabaleshwar (2000-2001 To 2012-13).

The above table no.1 and fig.no.1 shows the total area under strawberry cultivation from 2000-2001 to 2012-13. The total area under strawberry cultivation is 166 hectares in 2000-2001, which is increased upto 258 in 2012-13. There is continuous growth in area under strawberry cultivation during the period of 13 years is observed due to the great demand for this crop by tourist and in domestic and international market.

9. PROBLEMS OF STRAWBERRY CULTIVATION IN MAHABALESHWAR TALUKA:-

1. ANALYSIS OF SOIL:-

It is generally finds that all the strawberry cultivators do not analyze the soil before strawberry cultivation. It creates difficulties after cultivation of crops and also affects on the production

2. SHORTAGE OF CAPITAL:-

Most of the cultivators need the capital every year and hence they shown their dependency on credit providers. The rate of interest in this system is too much high and that’s why it is not economically beneficial to the farmers.

3. POOR MANAGEMENT:-

Sometimes cultivators fail in management of ailment and that is the reason behind the excessive use of remedies fertilizers and agents. Many ailments have been occurring since the cultivator started to cultivate strawberry so he can easily notify them.

4. ABSENCES OF PROPER GUIDANCE:-

All cultivators have grievance that they unable to find out the solution without proper guidance, hence, they have to depend on the veteran farmer and shop keeper who sell the agro based growth agents and manures. Today the world is information technology so they can use it in better way to find out the problems solutions.

5. NATURAL DIFFICULTIES:

Most of the cultivators says they face natural difficulties while cultivation of strawberry. This is an uncertainly and we have to assume this thing and have over come on this adverse situation.

6. SHORTAGE OF WATER:-

The acute problem is water. Cultivators experience the shortage of water in summer season when the strawberry crop takes grip. Due to shortage of water farmer give up the effort and remain listless.

7. SCARCITY OF LABOURS:-

Labor is another one sensitive problem. Cultivators annoys due to shortage of labours on the actual season time. Cultivators for over come on this difficulty have to use modern method of production.

8. CROP INSURANCE:-

There is no access of crop insurance which is the great hurdle in cultivation. To overcome on this problem they can use multi crops pattern and can secures inter crop also.

9. PRODUCTION OF ALTERNATIVE BARRIERS CROPS:-

Besides the strawberry, there are other berry family fruits can be cultivates in same regions i.e. Blue berry, Raspberry etc. These fruits have also same demand in market. So, it effect on cost of strawberry.

10. USE OF TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES:-

The cultivation of strawberry is somewhat traditional and lags in technique. On account of these traditional techniques, they fail in facing natural problems simultaneously managerial problems.

11. LOW RATE OF PRODUCTION PER ACRES:-

Finally, the production per acre is the issue to be taken into consideration. In strawberry producing leading countries, the average production per acre is about double than us.

10. PROSPECTS OF STRAWBERRY CULTIVATION IN MAHABALESHWAR TALUKA:-

After the research study the researcher suggested some prospects. These prospects are as belows:-

- Farmers have to divert from chemical base agriculture to organic farming. This is current global trend and organic produce has enormous demand from worldwide market.
- Seek interest in developing or importing high yield varieties which are suitable and easily survive without any defect in this region for smoothening cultivation operations.
- Develop domestic cultivation varieties along with long life span i.e. more than 3 to 4 years for improve profitability and free from annual fresh investment.
- Cultivation of strawberry by scientific method can survive crop from natural disorders. Proper land selection and its analyzing of proper utilization of fertilizers can also decline the cultivation cost and stimulate yield.
- More space between the two beds remains idle throughout the cultivation period. This space can be utilized for inter crop and multiple crop to avert loss of uncertainties.
- Strawberry is a medicinal plant and cultivators have to cultivate this crop with this point of view also beside with cash crop. If he utilizes disorder plant useful parts in medicinal use then it can give him additional income rather than destroy without any use and returns.
- Affected by insects and pesticides fruits may be harmful to directly eat but it could bring in use after any medical treatment. It may not use for consumption purpose but could be use for indirect uses i.e. in cosmetics industry. In this way cultivator can find new uses and marketing source too.
- This fruit utilize after its full ripening. Up to its full maturity it damages on several stages. Then it impels to utilize it in its early ripening stage and find out these kinds of additional uses i.e. pickle, sauce etc.
- It is necessary to organize agricultural exhibition and the lectures by agricultural experts by the agricultural department of Mahabaleshwar taluka in rural area to provide update and modern information for the farmers about strawberry crop. It is necessary to establish 'Strawberry production farmer's organization' in rural area by the farmers. Though, these organizations the problem regarding this crop will be solved for exam. Market, finance, cold storage, Transportation etc.

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