An Evaluative Study on the Prospect and Problem of Fruits and Vegetable Processing Industry in Kokrajhar District of Assam

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Abstract

Assam is one of the industrially backward state of the country. In spite of being being blessed with a high potential for development of resource based and demand based industries in the state, the pace of industrialization in Assam had not been satisfactory. Kokrajhar is one of the important district of the State where maximum number of people depends upon agriculture, but the agro-based economy of the District has failed to improve socio-economic situation of the area because of proper utilization of agricultural product, value addition of agricultural product and innovation. The economy of Kokrajhar have observed high production of fruits, rice, food grains, various horticultural products in the recent past but could not fetch market prices that are on par with markets in other district of the states. The Kokrajhar District in 2013-14 financial year number one in production of Rape & Mustard and Potato production, seven position in production of wheat and no eight position in production of total rice among all the District of Assam. The economic survey of Assam, 2014-15 shows that the marketable surplus of various agricultural products of the State in 2013-14 are rice (6 lakh MT), fruits (4.70 lakh MT), spices (0.75 lakh MT) and vegetables (8.60 lakh MT) respectively. The surplus produce often spoils and are wasted due to lack transportation, insufficient & well-equipped cold storage facilities and processing of farm produce, absence of agro-processing industries, poor post-harvest technology. To develop fruits and vegetable processing industry would provide better value addition to horticultural crops in the region. The study revealed that simple value addition like cleaning, sorting and packaging can increase income of farmers by 42.8% per kg. Hence it is necessary to identify the fruits and vegetable processing industry which has great scope to develop on locally based raw material of the region. Notwithstanding its immense important for socio-economic development as well as having ample prospect of development, the fruits and vegetable processing industry in Kokrajhar still not in a sound position and its growth is very poor. Because these industries in Kokrajhar have been facing a lot of problems, which basically include inadequate power supply, lack of modern technology, inefficient marketing system, devoid of entrepreneurial skill, insufficient finance etc. The most important point in fruits and vegetable processing industry is that a substantial portion being rural based and it has very high employment potential being rural based and it has very high employment potential with significantly lower investment. The multiplier effect of investment in this industry is 2.5 times than in other industrial sector. That is why, in this paper tried to analyze the prospect and problem of fruits and vegetable processing industry along with try to find out the remedial measures to develop such type of industry in the Kokrajhar District of Assam.

Key Words: Assam, Fruits and Vegetable processing Industry, Kokrajhar