
Horticulture Research and Diversification by Ancillary Horticulture Programmes

Introduction

The Himalayan hill region covers more than 10% of the total land area of India and makes up the entire northern boundary between Jammu and Kashmir in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east. The economic condition of the people inhabiting this region is poor. Land holdings are small, scattered, and uneconomic. Irrigation facilities are limited and there is serious land degradation due to overgrazing, deforestation, and inappropriate land use. However, the agro-climatic conditions prevailing in this region are most suitable for the production of a number of horticultural crops on a commercial scale. These crops are more profitable per unit area and are also labour intensive, which generates more employment and can improve the economic condition of the people of the region. Horticulture is, therefore, considered the best way to exploit the region's natural resources, increase farm income, generate employment, and conserve land resources.

In the post-partition period, great strides were made in temperate fruit production in the hilly areas of the country, particularly in the northwest hill region comprising the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and the hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, located between latitudes 28° and 35°N. Simultaneously, efforts have also been made by both the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the state governments to create a sound research infrastructure which has yielded several useful introductions, new cultivars, and agro-technology for improved productivity. This paper describes the infrastructural facilities