Indian Economy · GS - III

Assess the role of National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in boosting the production, productivity and income of horticulture farms. How far has it succeeded in increasing the income of farmers?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - III	Indian Economy

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

National Horticulture Mission; Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture; area expansion; quality planting material; micro-irrigation; post-harvest infrastructure; farmer incomes

Model Answer

Introduction

The National Horticulture Mission (NHM), launched in 2005–06, aimed to promote holistic horticultural development by improving production, productivity, quality and market access. It subsequently became part of the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH).

Contribution to Horticulture

1. **Area expansion:** Support for establishing orchards and bringing suitable land under fruits, vegetables, spices and flowers increased horticultural cultivation.
2. **Productivity improvement:** Quality planting material, improved varieties, protected cultivation and technical assistance supported higher yields.
3. **Efficient resource use:** Assistance for micro-irrigation and improved cultivation practices helped conserve water and improve crop management.
4. **Post-harvest infrastructure:** Packhouses, cold storage, grading and processing facilities helped reduce losses and improve produce quality.

5. **Market development:** Training, farmer groups and market-linkage initiatives improved farmers’ access to buyers.
6. **Diversification:** Horticulture offered opportunities to diversify beyond conventional food grains and obtain higher returns per unit of land in suitable areas.

Impact on Farmers’ Income

The mission contributed to India's expanding horticultural production and created opportunities for higher-value agriculture. However, income gains have varied across regions and crops.

Small farmers may face high establishment costs, price volatility, inadequate cold chains, perishability and limited bargaining power. Increased production without corresponding demand can depress prices, while intermediaries may capture a substantial share of the final value.

Way Forward

Strengthen FPOs, crop insurance, processing, storage, transport and digital market access. Promote region-specific crop planning and reliable market information, with particular support for small and marginal farmers.

Conclusion

NHM has helped expand and modernise horticulture, but production growth does not automatically translate into higher net incomes. Integrated value chains and remunerative markets are essential to realise its full potential.

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