

Importance and Scope of Fruit and Vegetable Preservation Industry in India

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Fruit and Vegetable preservation industry is very important in India

Importance and Loss Reduction

Post harvest loss reduction technology encompasses the usage of optimum harvest factors, reduction of losses in handling, packaging, transportation and storage with modern infrastructure machinery, processing into a wide variety of products, home scale preservation with low cost technology. **Different processes** are used to convert comparatively bulky, perishable and typically inedible food materials into ultimately more useful, concentrated, shelf-stable palatable products or potable beverages.

Value Addition

Fruit and vegetable preservation industry is the very backbone of horticulture industry, taking care of gluts and wastes. Processing can always fetch an additional income to the growers and help in stabilizing the prices with economic returns. The best overall indicator of the economic contribution of food processing to the food system is the value addition. It represents the firm's contribution to an industry's value addition and the value addition is the indicator of the industry's contribution to GDP.

Contribution to the Economy

With plenty of horticultural crops, availability of machinery and equipment and other raw materials required for the industry to develop, the sector has immense potential to contribute to the economy of a nation.

Availability of Fruit and Vegetable

Processing industry has the unenviable role to make fruits and vegetables available throughout the year in a prime condition by deploying modern technologies like ripening, manipulation refrigeration, freezing, modified atmosphere storage and packaging, drying, irradiation etc. Vending of cut fruits is already popular amongst the consumers in many countries.

Tool for Exports Earnings

Export of processed products to earn valuable foreign exchange is a major spin-off benefit of the processing industry. To quote an example, Brazil is the largest exporter of fruit juices followed by Israel, Argentina Philippines etc. The principal juice exported by developing countries is citrus, in particular orange juice and orange juice concentrate. The international trade in the preserved fruits and vegetable is constituted largely by juices, nectars. Juice concentrate, canned pineapple, canned and dehydrated vegetables.

Employment Generation

Employment generation is another way of showing the relative importance of processing industry. The processing industry has generated a number of opportunities. Processing industry is a potential contributor of employment in India. It offers ample opportunities to self-employment. Being seasonal, this industry provides jobs to the casual labour also.

Adding Taste, Variety and Providing Nutrition

Fruit and vegetable products provide nutrition besides adding taste to the food. The processed products are especially useful to the urban people where most of the people go for job and there is a paucity of time to cook the food or other delicious items. The processed ready-to-serve products are getting more popularity. The industry offers the consumers products for use in the off-season, in the affordable packs. The processed foods are of special attraction to the children and those who need specific nutritive products like infants, women and the old.

Waste Utilization

The processing industry can convert even the waste from agriculture, horticulture sector into value added products and thus, can stabilize the economy of the processing units. The wastes from food processing industries have been transformed into a number of valuable products.

Home Scale Preservation

To encourage this on home scale, food preservation can be made an integral part of the education in girls' schools so that every house-wife is able to conserve every ounce of the surplus fruits and vegetables. A very important function being performed by the processing industry is to meet the needs of defence forces by supplying processed fruit and vegetable products.

Special Canned Fruits for Infants and Children

A great field of vigorous activities for the food processing industries is that of child feeding i.e. the babies should be given tomato or citrus fruit juice at the beginning of the third month.

A Food Supplier to the Astronauts

The persons who travel in the space craft (Astronauts) need special foods, keeping in view the requirements of the mission and the conditions prevailing in the space-craft. Such foods are processed and packed in a suitable manner by the processing industry

Scope of Fruit and Vegetable Preservation Industry

There is wide scope for fruit and vegetable preservation industry in India.

1. Product-mix

The production of new products besides being necessary for the survival and growth of the processing industry would also meet new taste and demand in home as well as export market.

A wide variety of products can be made from fruits and vegetables. The choice of the products to be manufactured will depend on the readily availability of raw materials in the area where the processing unit is proposed to be set up and the consumer preference in the neighbouring markets.

2. Availability of raw material

As stated earlier a wide variety of fruits and vegetables are cultivated in India and are available in abundance in the season. Some of these fruits like mango, guava, sapota, banana, cashewnut, jamun, pineapple, aonla and jackfruit do not grow in many countries and their products are likely to find a ready market in foreign countries.

3. Manpower

India is in an advantageous position, as compared to developed countries, in having a large reservoir of manpower, but skilled manpower in some trades is in short supply and productivity in general is low.

4. Capital

In recent years, with Government support, a number of big industries have diversified into the area of fruit and vegetable processing. There is, however, scope for small-scale units which require less capitals.

5. Lack of awareness

Most commercial fruit and vegetable growers are not aware of the market for preserved products and do not have the necessary technical knowledge to undertake processing themselves.

6. Marketing facilities

Although there is a demand for preserved products, which is likely to grow in future, these are not readily available in small towns due to reluctance of shopkeepers in stocking such items. The establishment of growers' cooperatives would help in the marketing of such products and it is the policy of the Government to encourage the establishment of such cooperatives.

7. Transport facilities

There is now considerable improvement in both road and rail transport and the day is not far off when even remote rural fruit and vegetable producing areas will be connected to processing factories in distant parts of the country.

8. Availability of containers

Bottles and cans are the two major types of containers required by the food processing industry. Earlier these had to be entirely imported, but now the manufacture of bottles of the required specifications has been taken up by a number of factories.

There is need for setting up more factories to meet the demand for cans.

9. Publicity

Proper publicity is the only way to attract the consumer and give him information about the new products in the market. Publicity of the preserve food can create a good market even in backward areas as a majority of the population does not have knowledge of these products. These products can also be popularized by displaying in exhibitions and fairs, by practical demonstrations and distributing samples to the public.

10. Role of Government

Both the Central and the State Governments are giving encouragement to the fruit and vegetable preservation industry.



THANKS