

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-55837

Title: Evaluating the Socio-Economic Impact of Horticulture in Jammu and Kashmir

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity			✓	
Significance			✓	

Reviewer Name: **ANAPANA GOPAL**

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

General Comments

The manuscript provides a comprehensive and policy-relevant evaluation of the socio-economic impact of horticulture in Jammu and Kashmir. The topic is timely and highly relevant, given the region's agrarian structure, employment challenges, and ongoing policy emphasis on high-value agriculture. The paper demonstrates a strong command of sectoral data, policy frameworks, and development discourse, and it successfully highlights horticulture as a key driver of livelihoods, income generation, and regional economic development.

Overall, the study is well-researched, descriptive, and analytically rich. However, the manuscript is largely review- and data-synthesis-based, with limited original empirical investigation. While this does not diminish its policy value, clearer positioning as a review-based analytical paper would strengthen its academic clarity.

Content and Originality

Strengths

- The paper offers a detailed and up-to-date synthesis of government reports, policy documents, and academic literature on horticulture in Jammu and Kashmir.
- It effectively integrates economic, social, and livelihood dimensions, presenting horticulture as a multi-dimensional development sector.
- The articulation of income differentials between cereal crops and horticultural crops is clear and persuasive.
- The discussion on employment multipliers, value chains, and rural transformation adds depth to the socio-economic analysis.

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Limitations

- The study's originality is moderate, as it primarily consolidates existing data and secondary sources rather than generating new primary empirical evidence.
- Several quantitative estimates (e.g., income ranges, employment multipliers) are presented without clearly distinguishing between cited evidence and inferred approximations.
- The paper would benefit from explicitly stating its unique contribution relative to earlier studies on horticulture in Jammu and Kashmir.

Technical Quality

Strengths

- The manuscript demonstrates strong technical understanding of agricultural economics, rural development, and value chain analysis.
- Data presentation is coherent, with consistent use of statistics to support arguments.
- The linkage between production, income, employment, and poverty alleviation is logically developed.

Areas for Improvement

- The methodology section is implicit rather than explicit; the paper lacks a clear methodological framework explaining how data were selected, analyzed, and validated.
- Several numerical assumptions (e.g., labor participation rates, income margins) require clearer justification or methodological referencing.
- The paper would benefit from basic analytical tools (comparative tables, simple trend analysis, or conceptual models) to strengthen analytical rigor.

Language and Presentation

Strengths

- The language is clear, formal, and generally well suited to an academic readership.
- Technical terminology is used appropriately and consistently.
- The narrative flows logically, particularly in sections on employment, income, and policy interventions.

Issues to Address

- The manuscript is lengthy and occasionally repetitive, particularly in discussions of income impact and policy gaps.
- Some sentences are overly long and could be simplified for clarity.
- Minor typographical and formatting inconsistencies are present (spacing, capitalization, numerical presentation).

Structure and Organization

Strengths

- The paper follows a clear and logical structure, moving from context and literature review to sectoral analysis, socio-economic impacts, policy interventions, challenges, and recommendations.
- Section headings and subheadings are informative and well organized.
- The conclusion effectively synthesizes findings and reinforces policy relevance.

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Weaknesses

- The absence of a distinct methodology section reduces structural clarity.
- Some sections (e.g., Challenges, Policy Gaps, and Recommendations) overlap in content and could be streamlined.
- Inclusion of summary tables or figures would enhance readability and reduce textual density.

References and Citations

Strengths

- The reference list is extensive and relevant, incorporating government reports, academic journals, and international organization publications.
- Citations are generally appropriate and support the arguments made in the text.
- Use of recent policy documents (2023–2025) strengthens the paper's relevance.

Concerns

- Some references are grey literature or media statements; clearer differentiation between academic and policy sources would improve credibility.
- Citation style is not fully consistent across references.
- A few claims in the text would benefit from more explicit in-text citations.

Overall Recommendation

The manuscript is a strong policy-oriented and review-based contribution that provides valuable insights into the socio-economic importance of horticulture in Jammu and Kashmir. Its strengths lie in comprehensive data synthesis, policy relevance, and clear articulation of development implications. However, to meet the standards of a peer-reviewed academic journal, improvements are needed in methodological clarity, conciseness, and analytical framing.

Final Decision

Decision: *Accept with Minor to Moderate Revisions*

Key revisions recommended:

1. Clearly state the methodological approach (review-based, secondary data analysis).
2. Reduce repetition and improve conciseness in descriptive sections.
3. Strengthen analytical presentation using summary tables or conceptual frameworks.
4. Clarify assumptions behind income and employment estimates.
5. Ensure consistency and completeness in references and citations.

With these revisions, the paper would be well suited for publication in journals focusing on agricultural economics, rural development, or regional policy studies.