CHAPTER - III

ORGANISATION, DEMANDS AND TECHNIQUES OF APPLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION AND GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSE

Apple cultivation in Himachal Pradesh has an interesting history. Alexander an Englishman is believed to be the first enthusiastic orchardist to introduce apples in Himachal Pradesh in the year 1887. He tried as many as 100 varieties of apples in his orchard “coutts Gargen” at Mashobra near Shimla. Commercially apples were grown at the instance of American missionary Samuel Even Stocks, who came to Kotgarh in 1904 and settled there. He adopted Hindu religion and changed his name to Satya Nand Stocks. He found the soil and climate very good for the cultivation of apples.

The peculiar topography and agro-climatic conditions of the state limit the scope for field crops but are not suitable for the production of fruits and off-season vegetables. Apple production in Himachal Pradesh is mainly confined to areas lying between 5000 to 7000 ft above MSL. At lower altitudes inadequate winter chilling may be a problem for apple production. An annual rainfall of about 1000 mm (40 inches) is ideal for most deciduous fruits, although its distribution is also of great importance.
Thus topography, history and language and different cropping pattern created two zone, upper zone and lower zone. The sub-regional politics came into play in the context of distribution of state cake.

Satya Nand Stock's was an educated and enlightened person and came into contact with the people of the area, who naturally, belonged to the higher echelon of the society. He was able to convince these people that the cultivation of apples paid richer dividends than the traditional crops. So, these people who were rich and educated and occupied higher social status in society started apple cultivation in a big scale. The change in cropping pattern adopted by and socially higher status people made them richer, this also induced the other people to grow apple for their economic betterment. Now apple growing has almost spread to Kullu, Kinnaur, Mandi, Chamba districts besides the Shimla district the pioneer in apple cultivation. These regions mainly belong to old Himachal Pradesh Union Territory.

Before independence, no attention was paid towards the development of horticulture. In 1948, hardly 400 hectares of land were under orchards. However, since independence considerable amount of attention has been paid to horticulture.

Dr. Y.S. Parmar, a founder father of Himachal Pradesh, was a great visionary and he was convinced that as the topography of the state was not suitable for agriculture, only horticulture would lead the state to economic prosperity. He visualized that apple holds a great potential
and gave a slogan that Himachal Pradesh will be converted into an apple state of India. So, the raising of apple orchards were encouraged by the Government in a large scale.

Horticulture development took a big stride after the creation of a separate department of horticulture, over the period of more than 30 years, the production has increased many folds. In 1969-70, the area under apple cultivation was 23,482, which has increased during nineties to 75,469 hectares. The production of apples were 72,000.25 m tones in (1969-70) which also increased from 72000.25 m tones to 301000 m. tones in nineties.

The increase in production created many fold problems to the apple growers. The main problems were marketing, transportation, inadequate supply points for the distribution of the material inputs, weak or virtually non-existent cooperative organization, acquisition of new scientific technique for the maintenance of the orchards which brought interaction between the apple growers and government. Transportation of marketing surplus was the main problem for the apple growers as the infrastructure of roads were insufficient and poorly managed because of difficult terrain. Therefore, transport subsidy hold special importance in this condition.

In mid-seventies, efforts were made by the government to develop infrastructure for the transportation and marketing of apples with the help of world Bank. Apples growing belts were linked by roads, whose
roads construction involved large amount of money and time the transportation of apples were considered by the net work of ropeways. But these efforts were negligible in terms of increasing quantum of apple production.

In order to deal with the problem of glut of apples in the market, only two cold stores and packing houses were constructed in the state under the governance of H.P.M.C. The main functions of H.P.M.C. are the storage of marketing surplus, to save the growers from exploitation by the commission agent throughout the country, processing of non-marketable and damaged apples and arrangement for the export of apples to other countries. So, in the process H.P.M.C. opened its branches for marketing and storage of apples in all the important towns of the country namely Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Banglore, Calcutta, Hyderabad etc. For the processing of apples, two big processing plants were established at Parwanoo in Solan district and Kandrali in Mandi district with the help of Rs.35 crores loan from the World Bank. These plants are equipped with latest technology supplied by the Federal Republic Germany.¹

But these H.P.M.C. marketing center in the country miserably failed as they adopted the same system of marketing as of Artis, who were deeply entrenched and more established than H.P.M.C. marketing shop.
In 1975 Dr. Y.S. Parmar had left political scene of the state and he was succeeded by Thakur Ram Lal, again of Congress Party as the Chief Minister of the state. Thakur Ram Lal represented the Jubbal-Kotkhai constituency, the heartland of apple-growing areas, and a nerve center of politics of apple growing in the state.4

But in 1977 the Congress Party lost the general election and Janata Party came into power in the center as well as the state for the first time in the history of politics of India and Himachal Pradesh.

In Himachal Pradesh Sh. Shanta Kumar took over as the first non-Congress Chief Minister as the Janata Party captured absolute majority in the state legislature. He came from merged area (lower region). During the tenure of Sh. Shanta Kumar as a Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, major chunk of funds was diverted to merged areas (lower region). The infrastructure development in the old areas (upper region) was halted. This discriminatory attitude of Shanta Kumar added more woes to the already hard pressed growers. But in 1981 Congress government was formed headed by Thakur Ram Lal with the help of Janata Party defectors.

The increase in production created many problems for the apple growers. The cost of production had gone up, whereas the return from the sale had considerably gone down.

At the same time, a deadly fungal disease known as "Apple Scab", damaged the crop completely and the apple growers were even unable to
make their both ends meet. The Congress Party headed by Thakur Ram Lal announced 50 paise KG for scabbed apple, as a relief to the apple growers. But some of the influential apple growers manipulated this grant to their advantage and lakh of rupees were earned by people. This latter came to be known as “Scab Scandal”, in the state and this issue was greatly exploited by the political parties especially the BJP. Sh. Shanta Kumar was out of power and played the regional card very well, as BJP was fully convinced that apple growers will support the Congress Party. In 1983 election, the strong demand for equal and matching share in the form of subsidies were raised from the lower region. The discrimination of lower region” card played by Shanta Kumar brought BJP party as many 31 seats out of 68 seats of legislative assembly in 1983. Government was formed by the Congress Party headed by Thakur Ram Lal.

Soon after, Thakur Ram Lal was succeeded by Sh. Virbhadra Singh as chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh in 1983, who represented the Jubbal-Kotkhai constituency the heart land of apple belt. A major plan of his policy has been to remove the sense of regional discrimination, so prevalent in the new areas (lower region). The apple growers partially felt neglected.

A natural calamity in the form of scab disease spread in a virulent form and took heavy loss of apple production. About 70% of the apple production was affected. Even before this, the 1981 and 1982 crop was
damaged by unfavourable weather; the failure of three consecutive crops meant ruin of most apple growers because a good many could not even recover their investment. The emergency help rendered by the state seemed totally inadequate to the fruit growers. They thus felt the need for and organized association to pressure the government and to more effectively protect their interests.

The increase of production of apples and the continuous exploitation of apple growers by the commission agents in various markets in India, made apple growing a non-profitable proposition. So, the apple growers pressed for support price in case of glut in the market on the analogy of support price given to wheat and other cereals in the country.

World agriculture was subsidized to the tune of 18 per cent of its value, with a range extending from 72.5 per cent in case of Japan to 54.5 per cent in Columbia. In India taxes its agriculture to the tune of 2.33 per cent of its value. Subsidies are the most powerful instruments for manipulating or balancing the growth rates of production and trade in various sectors and regions, and for equitable distribution of income for protecting the weaker sections of the society. The subsidies provided by the Government of India have grown at a very rapid rate. The subsidies rose from 1.7 per cent of the total budget expenditure in 1970-71 to more than 10 per cent in 1980-81. Agricultural and food subsidies constitute about 70% of the total subsidies in the country.5
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Size of orchards</th>
<th>No. of Plants</th>
<th>Total Annual Income</th>
<th>Member of the Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Narinder Braga</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Orchardist</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>50 Bighas</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>B.J.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>V.President</td>
<td>Daulat Ram Justa</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-do.</td>
<td>Inter</td>
<td>40 bighas</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1,00,000 to 25,000</td>
<td>Founder member of this Association, V.President of Distt.Youth Congress for last 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>V.President</td>
<td>Pratap Chauhan</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Horticulturists</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>Members of the Cong. For last 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>V.President</td>
<td>Balak Ram Verma</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Agriculturist, Horticulturist, Industrialists Horticulturist</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Gen.Secretary</td>
<td>Pratap Chauhan</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Horticulturist</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>V.President of Mill Owner Union Kotkhai. Founder member of this association of Cong.1 Block Youth Cong. President since 1976.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Joint Secretary</td>
<td>Kunwar Shamshersingh</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-do.</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Prakash Sharma</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-do.</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Himachal Pradesh a sub-committee headed by the agriculture production commissioner was set up by the Virbhadra Government to assess the possibility of giving the support price to the apple growers and on the recommendations of this committee a support price of Rs.1.25 per kg was given to the apple growers.

In order to mitigate many fold problems related to fruit industry, the Saw Mill Owners Association, the Truck Owners Unions and later on the Fruit Growers Association were formed. The Government banned tree felling for apple boxes and the Saw Mill Owners Associations were wound up. The Truck Union and the Fruit Growers Unions not only continued but these went on multiplying. Fruit Growers Associations were formed in Jubbal-Kotkhai, Kotgarh and Kullu. In Rohru tehsil, Rohru Kisan Kalyah Sangh was formed in January 1987 for safe guarding the interest of Fruit Growers in particular and inter-farming community in general. This was got registered under Registration, societies Act, 1860. Following were the office bearers Kotkhai apples growers Association in 1983 (See Table I).

The Apple Grower Association (AGA) persuaded the Government to buy the damaged crop, fit for extraction of Juice, at a higher price than the price for low grade apples. The association demand of relief was inherent from the very inception of the system of support price for apples. For the first time, the support price was 75 Nai paise for the scab affected apples which were destroyed after collection by the
Government Agencies. This price for culled fruit kept on registering increase. In built into apple marketing system to achieve the twin arms of stabilizing the market price and prevent exploitation by the middleman and commission agent. In the year 1986, there was bumper apple crop. The growers apprehended that the boxes for marketing of apples would not be forthcoming. Therefore, the growers felt the need of formation of district level fruit Traders Association, District level Kisan Kalyan Sanga.

On 19 August 1987, the growers from the Shimla district rallied to Shimla by Trucks etc., with an objective to hold public meetings at Shimla to highlight their demands. They were lathi charged by the police, a few far longs to away towards St. Bede's College Shimla. The growers demanded judicial inquiry of the incident, however they were assured inquiry by the Chief Secretary. A committee of a important citizens headed by T.S. Negi a Retired Chief Secretary Government of Himachal Pradesh made inquiry. It was in June, 1990, that growers took positive step to form a State Level Association and included other fruits and vegetable growers. It was a tactical move at Apple Growers to save itself from alleged regional bais. But the others fruit and vegetable growers were not enthusiastic and the association was named as Apple Growers Association in 1997 and retained other fruit and vegetable growers as its members.
Constitution of Apple Growers Association

i) Association means Federation of all the different fruits of vegetable growers association/Sanghas/Unions of Farmers at block, Tehsil or District Level of Himachal Pradesh.

ii) General Body means: All those members of the respective Association sent to the state body by resolution.

iii) Executive Body means: the body constituted by the General Body.

iv) Year: Means the Financial year i.e. 1st April to 31st March.

Article No.III: Area of Operation: The area of operation of the Association shall extend to the whole of Himachal Pradesh.

Article No. IV: Membership: The membership shall be open to all the Association, Sanghs, Unions of the Farmer eligible for membership on paying an annual subscription of Rs.500/- and an admission fee of Rs.50/- each.

Member association shall cease to be the member of the association if it fails to pay the subscription within the first three months of the financial year without sufficient cause. Such a member/association will be re-admitted on fresh application and payment of all arrears by that association.

b) Associate member/Association: Any association shall be considered or adopted as associate member which directly or indirectly comes to the help of the farming class or the association as approved by
the Executive Committee for such period as the executive committee may
decide. Such members/association may attend the meeting of the
association but will have no right to vote.

c) **Life members:** An association can become Life member on
payment of subscription of Rs.5000/- and an admission fee of Rs.50/-.

d) **Confirmation of membership:** The membership of an association
will be confirmed when the said association has 300 members in their
respective associations.

**Article No.V: Rights and Privileges and duties of members:**
a) All the members with special consideration to none shall be
entitled to all the benefits assured by this constitution provided they
abide by the article of the association and pay the prescribed
subscription regularly. All the members at the same time shall have to
fulfill the obligations and implement the decision of the Association.

b) **Register of Members:** The association shall maintain a register in
which the complete names and addresses and signatures of the member
shall be entered and maintained accordingly.

Only those members will be entered in the register who are
approved by their respective associations through resolution of that
association.

**Article No.VI: General Body:** The business and affairs of the association
shall be conducted and managed by the General body which shall
exercise all the powers to manage the affairs of the Association.
b) The General body shall be constituted of not less than ten members of each member Association.

c) **Executive Committee:** The executive committee shall be constituted of maximum eleven (11) office bearers ad five member each from the member association. The office bearer shall have the following posts:

1. President
2. Senior Vice-President
3. Vice President
4. Vice President
5. General Secretary
6. Joint Secretary
7. Joint Secretary
8. Assistant Secretary
9. Secretary
10. Secretary
11. Treasures

d) **Governing Body:** The Governing Body consists of all the office bearers. This body will work on behalf of the executive committee.

c) In case of any vacancy in the body due to resignation or otherwise, the vacancy so cause shall be filled by the General house by Co-option from among the members of the Association.
**Article No.VII: Meetings:** There shall be at least two meetings of the General body in one year.

b) Executive(Body) Committee meeting shall be held once in two months.

c) Governing Body: shall meet once in a month.

d) Information regarding meeting shall be sent to the members in writings at least 07 days in advance.

e) The President in his absence Senior Vice-President or Vice-President or in their absence any member present elected by the members shall preside over the meeting of the day.

f) Special or Emergency meetings of the Governing body or Executive Committee may be called by the President.

g) If any office bearer does not attend three consecutive meetings he ceases to be the office bearer of the office. Provided that his or her absence is not for reasons beyond his/her control. All such absences must be explained in writing and approved by the Executive Committee. Then Executive Committee will co-option any member for that office.

**Article No.VIII: Quorum:** The quorum shall be one third of the total member's for all the committees. At least the office bearer shall be present with one tenth of the total members i.e. the adjourned meetings. In case there is no quorum within one hour from the time affixed for the meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned to such suitable date and time as the Chairman of the day may declare in the meeting so
adjourned. And no quorum shall be necessary for announcement of the adjournment of the meetings.

Article No.IX: Term of Office: The terms of office of all that office bearers and members, the executive committee and consideration of the article No.IV.

Article No.X.: Elections: All the office bearers and other bodies i.e. Executive Committee and governing body shall be fixed period of two years. The election shall take place in the general house meetings. The process of the election shall be initiated three months before the expiry of the term of office. The election shall be by the secret ballet paper system.

b) All the office bearer will be honorary.

c) A member will be eligible to seek election for (any one office only at a time and there shall be no restriction or re-election of the same person.

Article No.XI: Business of the Association:

The entire business of the association shall be conducted in the name of AGA, Shimla.

ii) All the office bearer shall be responsible collectively to the association.

iii) The President or the General Secretary/Secretary shall be responsible to maintain the records of the association and record all the proceedings of the committees and conduct (correspondings) correspondences on behalf of the association.
iv) The General Secretary/Secretary shall always keep on informing the executive committee of all the records and proceedings and the correspondence about the affairs of the association.

v) Under overall control and supervision of the President, the treasurer shall maintain all the accounts and got audited and checked and approved the same every year from the Executive Committee or a special committee nominated for that purpose by the Executive Committee.

**Article No.XII:** The funds shall be raised by way of membership fee, donations, contributions.

b) The funds collected by the association shall be deposited in any nationalized Bank, or Co-operative Bank in the Associations Account.

c) The account of the association shall be operated jointly by any two signatures out of three i.e. President, Treasurer and General Secretary.

**Article No.XIII:** Disqualification of members: The Executive body is empowered to disqualify any member who:

(i) Indulges in dishonest or fraudulent acts injurious to the best interest of the association.

(ii) Shows gross indiscipline or indulges in spreading misleading nature against the association or abuses his position as members of the association and aspects unhelpful attitude towards the interest of the association.
The disqualified member can appeal for the revival membership to the General Body of the Associations.

**Article No.XIV: Resignations:** The office bearer and executive committee member's can resign from their respective posts at their will subject to the acceptance of the executive committee.

**Article No.XV:** Any amendments in the articles of the associations shall be effected by a resolution of the associations by 2/3rd majority of the members present and voting. The amendment shall be made in accordance with the provisions of section-12 of the societies. Registration Act-1860 shall apply.

**Article No.XVI Records:** Proper records shall be maintained of minutes of the meetings, account books and all other correspondence and financial transactions carried by the associations.

**Article No.XVII General:** The association will be a purely non-political organisation. It shall not use its funds and resources to support any political organisation or any individual.

**Article No.XVIII Transition Provisions:** Notwithstanding anything contained in these rules and regulation the presently elected office bearer's the existing executive committee member's shall exercise all the power's and functions of the Association till the elections are held.
Functions, Powers and Duties:

(1) General House:- The house will make the annual budget and give guideline to the executive committee for the period when it meets again.

(2) Executive Committee:- It will work within the constitutional setup of the association and direct, advice the office bearer's in all aspect.

(3) President:- President will look after all the activities of the association and call meetings, negotiations, seminar's etc.

(ii) President has power to spent Rs.1000/- in its own for the association activities.

Aims and Objectives:

(a) To promote and safeguard the best interest of those engaged in fruit and other farming.

(b) To promote great goodwill, profound affection, deep sympathetic understanding amongst fruit and other farmers.

(c) To discuss the exchange ideas amongst members and to further sort out the problems and difficulties with the concerned authorities and agencies.

(d) To organize all the fruit and other farmers in right, beneficial and profitable directions and create avenues for their welfare.
(e) To organize horticulture and other farmers like a basic industry and obtain for it an equitable treatment and status for better economic conditions of the farmers.

(f) To organize deputations, convene seminar's and camps to ventilate the hardship difficulties and problems of the common farmer's with the government and other agencies.

(g) To co-operate with other similar agencies or Associations.

(h) To build relations with other classes what so ever and who so ever they are, provided the swear by the constitution of India.

(i) To co-operate the Government or any other concerned agencies in order to formulate and execute correct policies beneficial and helpful to the fruit Grower's and farmer's

(j) To consider, discuss the suggest the government or other agencies on all the questions affecting horticulture and other farming questions like inputs, packing material, compensation, crop insurance, loans and other kinds of facilities to be given to the growers.

(k) To strive for guaranting support, remunerative or assured price to the farmer's for their fruits and other produce.

(l) To work for ways and means to improve horticulture and other farming scientifically and mechanically and also work for ways to improve the poor life of the rural farmers.
(m) To strive for solving the problems and difficulties of farmers as individuals or in group and also help them to get proper relief from the concerned agencies or the government such as natural calamities.

(n) To serve as an information and assisting bureau for the common farmers and to help producers benefits by way of modern methods of fruit and other farming which is useful to them.

(o) To guide common farmers in plantation production and marketing and also guide them in diversification of fruit and other farming.

(p) To help farmers to get adequate plant protection facilities.

(q) To make a case for regulated marketing system,

(r) To help growers to get cheaper, prompt and direct transport facilities.

(s) To fit for insecticide, pesticide, fertilizer, subsidies plants and crop protection measures.

(t) This federation will not indulge in any kind of business.

To understand any other matter of activities which may help in promoting the interest of horticulture and other farming and are conducive to the attainment of the above aims and objectives.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age years</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education qualification</th>
<th>Size of Orchards</th>
<th>No. of Plants</th>
<th>Total Income</th>
<th>Member of other Association/Political Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>Ravinder Chauhan</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Orchardist</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>50 Bighas</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>3 lakhs</td>
<td>Member of Congress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Lekh Raj Chauhan</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>70 Bighas</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>5 lakhs</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>K.C. Chauhan</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>60 bighas</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>3 lakhs</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Secretary</td>
<td>J.C. Singha</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>40 bighas</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>2.5 lakhs</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Raj Pal Chauhan</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>50 bighas</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>3 lakhs</td>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising Secretary</td>
<td>Pratap Chauhan</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>45 bighas</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>3 lakhs</td>
<td>Congress Party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the same time, the association nominated following office bearers for the time being. (See Table – 2)

*Chief Adviser* : Ravinder Chauhan

1. President : Lekh Raj Chauhan
2. Vice-President : K. C. Chauhan
3. General Secretary : J. C. Singha
4. Treasurer : Rai Pal Chauhan
5. Organizing Secretary : Pratap Chauhan

Some *problems* and *demands* were highlighted, which are as follows:

1. Support price for apples damaged by natural climates such as hailstorm, draught etc. The Government in the year 1989 fixed the price at Rs.2.75 per Kg. Since, then, the price of inputs, the cost of production and marketing has registered a considerable increase. Therefore, the price should be appreciably increased keeping in view the aforesaid factors.

2. Subsidies in fungicides, insecticides and fertilizers.

3. Assured availability of packing cases on reasonable prices.

4. Uninterrupted transport facilities to carry the produce to various market, in the country especially Delhi. The roads be maintained in good conditions in during the marketing season.

5. Easy availability of short-form loans from nationalized banks for the purchase of packing materials etc.
6. Establishment of fruit and processing plants for second grade apples and other fruits.

7. Establishment of network cold-storages and packing houses so as to avoid the glut in the market.

8. Establishment of ropeways and rain-shelter to facilitate the supply of fruits from difficult terrains. Where the growers keep their produce pending transport to markets.

9. Assured supply of carton for marketing.

10. A Kisan Bhavan be setup at Delhi and provide facility of stay for the growers.

11. The equipment like sprayers be made available as per the demand of the growers.

12. The collection centers for procurement of processable apples have not been fixed and announced. The growers including those belonging to lower attitude areas could also benefit from the scheme. It is also requested that the limit of 30,000 metric tones of apple be revised upward.

13. Under the H.P. Taxation on certain goods carried by Road Act, 1976, the Tax on export of fruits and vegetables was being charged at flat rate per box. But the BJP Government made the tax leviable on distance covered within the state. The growers of the backward and remote areas are now required to pay the tax of higher rates.
14. Market fee is being charged during transit for mere crossing of the limits of local bodies by the market committees. This is in contravention of section 21 of the agricultural produce markets Act. This illegal fee was also started during the time of BJP regime. This fee should be stopped.

The supply of wooden cases at subsidized rates was another issue on which the apple growers associations successfully influenced the Government. The shortage of wooden boxes was the result of the ban on the open auction of trees used for the manufacture of apple boxes, cardboard boxes which the Government has tried to popularized have not found favour with the apple growers primarily because of the fragility of these boxes and out dated mode of transport by open trucks. Thus the subsidy of about Rs.10 per box was given to the growers on carton boxes.

The Government also gives subsidies on pesticides, insecticides, power sprayer, foot sprayer, fertilizers, medicines for anti-scab diseases, anti-hailstorm nets, concessional timber for apple boxes, concession on transport, timber and concession on cartons, which has given below.

To find out the amount of subsidy on the aforesaid items, information from the concerned departments were recorded. Subsidy given on anti-scab diseases, medicines, and various items are
Rs.4,87,10,691. The subsidy given on the carriage of packing boxes of poplar and safeda in the year 1985-86 to 1990-91 was, 104,96,134.

Total subsidy given on various items
1985-86 to 1990-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Anti scabe disease medicines</td>
<td>4,06,41,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Foot sprayer</td>
<td>17,86,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Power sprayer</td>
<td>41,12,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Insecticides</td>
<td>17,07,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Anti Hail Stone nets</td>
<td>4,63,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Concessional Timbers</td>
<td>47,32,49,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Concession on Transport/on Timber</td>
<td>1,04,96,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Concession on Carton</td>
<td>17,24,43,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>70,48,98,836</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Deptt.of Horticulture, Himachal Pradesh, Nav Bahar, Shimla.

The hidden subsidy given for making boxes for fruits on the basis of market rates of the timber and the rates on which the timber for boxes was supplied for the year 1985-86 to 1990-91 was Rs.52,58,32,235.

The subsidy given on the cartons for apples for the year 1985-86 to 1990-91 was 17,24,43,000/- which is increasing accordingly. Thus the total subsidy on the above mentioned items comes to Rs.70,48,98,836/-.

In addition to the above, the Government has been giving subsidy on fertilizers and on plant protection. The subsidy on these items for the years 1985-86 to 1990-91 have been shown according to these statements, subsidy on fertilizers is Rs.41,45,38,000/- and on plant protection measures Rs.76,93,000/-.
The department has not maintained any separate record for subsidy on fertilizers given to the orchardists and to the agriculturists. 50% of the subsidy given on fertilizers is utilized by the fruits growers and this comes to Rs.20,72,69,000. The subsidy given to the apple growers on this items comes to Rs.18,65,42,100/-. Similarly, the subsidy given on plant protection calculated on this basis comes to Rs.89,83,64,636.8

As the Government announced, that the support price for the apple for the year would be revised, this raised apprehension in the minds of the apple growers that either the support price will not be given or it may be reduced. On this apprehension, in the month of May and June 1990, they began to mobilize themselves and hold several meetings in different parts of the state to muster support of the apple growers. The H.P.Fruit Growers Association intensified the agitation by holding rallies, dharna, at different places in the state.9 In the meantime the support price was fixed 2.75 per kg. in 1989 by the Virbhadra Government was slashed down to 1.30 paise per kg. by Shanta Government. The association felt betrayed by this act of Shanta Kumar. Because during parliamentary campaign he promised to raise the support price from 2.75 to Rs.5 per kg. On 3rd July, 1990, largely attended rally was organized at Sabzi Mandi Shimla. Thereafter, it was decided to go in for Jail Bharo Agitation and a programme for various Tehsil level
Association was chalked out for coming to Shimla and courting arrest. This stage continue till 19th July.10

On 20th July, the police made a lathi charge on a huge gathering of growers who had assembled at Sabji Mandi, Shimla. Women participants also were lathicharged.11

On 21.7.1990, a rally was addressed by the leaders of the growers at Scandal point Shimla. This was an unprecedented occasion. The police lathi charged the growers at various points throughout the day.

On 22.7.1990, Kotgarh, the police opened fire on peaceful procession of the growers in which three youngmen were killed. The Government suppressed the agitation with iron hand. Now the association was clear that it won't be able to force the state, so the agitation was withdrawn. The association demanded judicial enquiry of Kotgarh firing. The government did not agree for a Judicial Inquiry of the firing and other police atrocities at Bhekalti, Shimla and Anny Sub-Division.12 But Jai Chand Malhotra commission was appointed under the commission of public inquiry Act. The proceeding of the commission were boycotted by growers with the result that the growers grievances could not be reflected in the report.

The commission came to conclusion that in Kotgarh firing was not justified and more use of force than permitted by law and circumstances was used.13
The second phase of agitation consisted of relay fast by growers performed at Sabji Mandi, Shimla, in which the state level association volunteers observed fast turn by turn.

The state committee had alleged that never before in the history of Himachal Pradesh had a government adopted semi-Fascist methods to crush a democratic movement. The H.P.Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association lambasted the H.P.Government, for misleading the growers on the issue of support price of apples and other fruits during the 1991 marketing season and going back from its election promises. A subtle sub turfuge employed by the Government for such misleading is evident from the following facts.

The first election for the office of president was held on 9.7.1991, in which Sh.Lekh Raj Chauhan was unanimously elected as President. Sh.Lekh Raj Chauhan was again elected as president in the election on 11.5.1994 and 26.7.1996. The general house also elected following office-bearers in its meeting held on 26.7.1996.

1. President  Lekh Raj Chauhan
2. Sr.Vice-President  Jimmi Jonson.
3. Vice-President  (i) Basudev Sharma  (ii) M.R.Azta.
4. General Secretary  Sanjay Chauhan
5. Joint Secretary  Satya Prakash Katyal
6. Secretary  Ajit Chauhan
The General House Meeting of the Association was held at Shimla in which the difficulties being faced by the growers were discussed. After discussion, it was resolved to send a memorandum to government about their demands which are as follows:

1. **Support Price of Apples:**

The support price for apple season has been fixed at Rs.3/- per Kg. The Government in the year 1989 fixed the price at Rs.2.75 per Kg. Since then, the prices of inputs, the cost of production and marketing has registered a considerable increase. Therefore, the price may be appreciably increased keeping in view the aforesaid factors.

With a view to fixing a reasonable price the State Government a few years ago had setup a Price Fixation Board in which representatives of growers were also included. But it is regretted that the Board has become non-functional and this Board may be revived. They were expecting that this year too, they should have been associated with the fixation of the price.
2. **Collection Centres:**

So far, the collection centers for procurement of processable apples have not been fixed and announced. These may be made public within a week's time so that the growers including those belonging to lower altitude areas could also benefit from the scheme. It is also requested that the limit of 30,000 Metric tones of apples be revised upwards as this year more processable apples are available.

3. **Rationalization of Road Tax:**

Under the H.P. Taxation on Certain Goods Carried by Road Act, 1976, the tax on export of fruits and vegetables was being charged at flat rate per box. But the BJP Government in 1991 made the tax leviable on distance covered within the State. Thus in one go, the tax got enhanced 2 – 3 times. The growers of the backward and remote areas are now required to pay the tax at higher rates. The scheme of the legislation of 1976 Act, distorted beyond recognition by the amending Act of 1991, be restored by review of the law.

4. **Market Fee:**

Market fee is being charged during transit for mere crossing of the limits of local bodies by the market committees. This is in contravention of Section 21 of the H.P. Agricultural Produce Markets Act. This illegal fee was also started during the time of BJP regime. This fee be stopped.

5. **Improvement of Infrastructure for Marketing:**

In this connection, the following measures are necessary:
a) The roads be maintained in good conditions in during the marketing season. The Association has listed and supplied to the government the particulars of the roads of horticultural importance. The apples from Chopal Sub Division and Rohru Sub Division are also transported via Minas in U.P. Special measures be taken to complete and keep this road traffic worthy. The P.W.D. be asked to check up the link roads in apple growing belt of Shimla and Kullu districts which roads are prone to land slides and consequent road blocks. The growers from Kotkhai have requested to improve the condition of Khanety - Kotkhai - Kiari road.

b) More fruit processing units be setup in the interior of the fruit belts to utilize the processable fruits. This will result in remunerative prices for the produce sent to the markets.

c) More cold storages be setup to regulate release of produce in tune with the demand at a particular time and to prevent exploitation by the middlemen.

d) A Kisan Bhawan be set up at Delhi to provide facility of stay for the growers.

e) Ropeways and rain-shelters be provided at the points where the growers keep their produce pending transport to markets.

f) Assured Supply of Carton for marketing.
Government Response:

The rate of card board carton trey has also been brought down from Rs.24.50 to Rs.21 and that of wooden boxes from Rs.21 to Rs.19. Transportation subsidy on the import of eucalyptus timber has been raised from Rs.2,000 to Rs.2,500 per truck. The state Government would spend Rs.11.90 crore by way of giving various types of subsidy to the apple growers during ninties.

During 1995-96 about 2.71 lakh tones of fruits has been exported from the state. The public sector integrated carton manufacturing factory at Pragati Nagar (Kotkhai) manufactured about 20 lakh telescopic cartons, which have been distributed among the orchardists. Subsidy were given to the fruit growers on cartons, plastic crates, eucalyptus wood 12.00 Rs. Per Box.

i) The provisions for ropeways was created in those interior areas where road feasibility was not available.

ii) The announced compensation to the diseased in the Kotgarh firing incident was released immediately.

iii) The government withdraw all false cases registered against the growers during the agitation with immediate effect.

iv) The pending H.P.M.C. payments was released immediately and also the payments to the workers engaged in the processment operations was made.
Among those apple growers who have been paid large amounts of money by the state government on account of the support price for the fruit. The information was provided in a list of apple growers, who have been paid a support price.

The master plan is being prepared by the Union Government for the construction of godowns in rural areas to serve the farmers from distress sale at the harvest time.

In view of the loss of crop due to natural calamities, the government has decided to continue with the comprehensive crop insurance scheme.

The H.P. Government has assured the fruit growers that every effort would be made to arrange transport to carry their fruits to various markets.

At the end of nineties, the support price for apple season was fixed at Rs.3/- per Kg. The government in the year 1989 fixed the price at Rs.2.75 per Kg. Since then, the prices of inputs, the cost of production and marketing has registered a considerable increase.

The government incurred Rs.14 crore on apple support price in the year 2000-2001. But this amount have been fluctuating and depends up the richness of crop.

In addition to plant protection operation, 87 M.T. of fungicides and pesticides valuing at Rs.150.27 lakhs were supplied to fruit growers per
year for combating the pests and other diseases in fruit crops. The government also incurred huge amount on following items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Name of Distt.</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Rate of Subsidy (Rs.)</th>
<th>Maximum limit per truck (Rs.) / Per orchards (No.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Subsidy on transport of wooden logs/wooden packing cases</td>
<td>(a) Half box</td>
<td>0.25 (per box)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Full box</td>
<td>0.50 (per box)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Wooden logs</td>
<td>5.00 per (qtl.)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Solan, Sirmour, Una, Bilaspur, Kangra and Hamirpur</td>
<td>(a) Half box</td>
<td>0.50 (per box)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Shimla, Mandi, Kinnaur, Chamba, Kullu and Lahaul-Spiti</td>
<td>(b) 20 Kg. Wooden box</td>
<td>1.00 (per box)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Wooden logs.</td>
<td>10.00 per (qtl.)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Carton Subsidy</td>
<td>(a) Kullu Carton 10 K.G. capacity</td>
<td>6.00 (per carton)</td>
<td>3,000 (carton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All the Districts</td>
<td>(b) Telescopic Carton</td>
<td>12.00 (per carton)</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Plum carton</td>
<td>2.50 (per carton)</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Almond carton</td>
<td>2.00 (per carton)</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Apple Growers Association has very low level of institutionalization. It is not a well knit organisation. Even the name of organisation has been changed time and again. The organisation structure of the association as per its constitution leaves and impression that association does not give importance to formal structure and minute details. There are no rules in regard to block, Tehsil and District level organisation. The available data revealed that groups organizational
aspect is incomplete and deficient. The apple growing district like: Mandi, Sirmour and Solan do not have any block, Tehsil and district level organisation. The association lacks financial resources. The funds are collected as and when, the association needed. Proper accounts are not maintained and nor they are read in annual meeting of the association.

The schedule of the meetings are not adhered. There are instances that the meeting of general body, Executive body and governing body are not held for or more than years. These bodies were generally convened during the course of agitation by the association or in preparation thereof. Generally the decision to launch an agitation were taken by state committee later on adopted by district committee. In fact, association launched two agitations, one in 1987 another in 1990. In these two agitation the association has not adopted well thought strategy. Since the association functioned only at State level, the distance between local unit and stae level leadership was not large enough to insulate leadership from rank and file members of the association. More so, the executive committee of association, to which it was immediately responsible was constituted at the representative of the district units. More over the association organisation is heavily relied on two districts i.e. Shimla and Kullu, it also became a source of weakness of the association. The office-bearers are affiliated with political parties.
Majority of them are congressmen. Therefore, association sometime loses its credibility of its autonomy. This factor become the regional rivalries and differentiation of regional economy led regional chauvinist to exploit this fact to the advantage of B.J.P. party, because the B.J.P. has foot hold in the non apple growing area.

Although, the government has been making and implementing various schemes and programmes for promotion of horticulture and improvement of economic lot of the growers, yet there is a need of formulating a comprehensive horticultural policy encompassing various aspects of horticultural development. Such a policy be framed and the state government may pursuade the government of India for including the policy in the National Agricultural Policy.
References


3. Source: Department of H.P.M.C. Shimla.


6. Press Note.

7. Ibid.


14. Press Note.