Chapter- 10

SUGGESTIONS

AND

CONCLUSION
The fruit and vegetable processing industry of Assam is yet to be started in an organised manner. The units are mostly existing as unorganised household ones entrusted with many problems. To overcome these problems of the processed fruit and vegetable industry a time has come to implement new policy incentives, initiatives and make investment from field to the processing unit and the consumer.

Therefore in order for the industry to grow and solve problems the following strategy may be adopted both by the processor and the state government.

(1) The present level of technology followed by the industry though not outdated are also not modern. In order to increase productivity and meet the stringent quality and consumer demands of the export as well as the local market it is necessary to upgrade the technology incorporating automation, better process control. Moreover, it is also required on the part of the government to encourage the entrepreneurs to start their units on an organised and large scale manner by giving various incentives and assistance.

(2) Farmers should be motivated by creating awareness of the market value of their produce in order to improve their productivity and quality. Moreover, in order to increase
productivity government should provide improve seeds at subsidise rate. Furthermore, subsidies should also be provided for other inputs like pesticides, fertilizers, agricultural implements and equipment. Besides this, in order to provide relief to the farmers the government should draw a crop insurance scheme when the crops are destroyed by natural calamities like floods which are a common scenario of Assam.

(3). The government should also take up supportive infrastructure scheme for post harvest handling and storage. In this context, mention can be made about the need of setting up cold storage facilities in the central place which is in an easy access to both the area of production and processing. Moreover, government should provide warehousing space in public warehouses in a nominal rate with first preference given to the fruit and vegetable industry.

(4). The government should strengthen the backward linkage step by constituting cash incentive scheme for the best fruit and vegetable growers in order to ensure adequate supplies of raw material to the fruit and vegetable processing industries.

(5). The government should take initiative to develop an organised market of the raw materials for the fruit and vegetable industry through the institution like NERAMAC so
that it becomes easier for the growers to sell their produce and the processors to get standard raw materials for processing. Moreover, arrangements should be made by the government to render services of refrigerated vans while bringing the raw materials from the place of production to the market and the place of processing at concessional rate. Further, transportation facilities should be made easy for sending the finished products to the market throughout Assam and outside even during the rainy season when floods occur.

(6) Periodic market survey should be conducted by the processor to find out changes of price, taste, competition etc.

(7) The entrepreneurs of the fruit and vegetable processing industry should take up initiative for extensive advertisement of their products in order to create customer awareness of the products and capture the market.

(8) Special care should be taken while packaging and labelling the products because outward presentation of the products have a telling effect on the minds of the customers.

(9) Organised initiative should be undertaken for production of containers (either glass material or plastic material) for
incessant and continuous flow of incidental requirements of successful fruit and vegetable based units.

(10) Steps should be taken to modernise the labelling process of the fruit and vegetable based products by giving special attention by the Government for setting or providing assistance to the local unemployed youth for starting such units which will provide labelling through sophisticated techniques which will facilitate the local fruit and vegetable processing units.

(11) Government should make arrangement for frequent visit of the local processors to the industrially developed state to get first-hand knowledge.

(12) Both the central and the state government should make necessary arrangement for setting up of multipurpose food testing centre with research and development facilities.

(13) Seminars and discussions should be organised by the government both at district and state level for a direct interaction between the growers and the processors as well as expert from the government and semi government institutions.

(14) For the benefit of the entrepreneurs of the food
processing industry of the North east the government should make arrangement for opening of the NE regional office of the FPO, CFTRI, Processed Food Export Promotion Council.

(15) Steps should be taken by the government institutions like APEDA to register more and more units under ISO 9000 for exporting the products outside India. Moreover, national level seminars and workshops should be organised where reputed exporters and government officials of the particular industry should be invited to give latest information regarding exports to the local entrepreneurs. Further first-hand information should be provided to the entrepreneurs regarding the norms to be followed during the processing of the products meant for exports by the government institutions like APEDA.

(16) In order to export the products and capture the International market the entrepreneurs should be given training on the International quality standards and about the hygienic way of processing the fruits and vegetables for the acceptance of those by the advanced countries. Moreover, they should be given training on the technical side of such processing, for example, uniform slicing of the products, using of correct apparatus and utensils required for processing and expert know how of processing the raw materials into finished products.
(17). The central government should provide reduction of taxes and duties particularly for packaging material for the North east region since the region is industrially backward.

(18). Bank and financial institutions should liberalise the loan formalities and provide speedy disposal of loan to the local entrepreneurs / processors.

(19). It is observed that the entrepreneurs are not fully aware of the various schemes provided by the central and the state government, therefore efforts should be made for the proper dissemination of the information regarding such schemes by the government.

(20). The retailers should be given an opportunity of credit system as well as privileges of sending back unsold materials which lose quality owing to long gap between production and sale by the entrepreneurs.

(21). Efforts should be made on the governmental level to provide training by the experts on the correct blending of chemicals and other ingredients required for taste, durability and preservation of the product as the entrepreneurs have not earned expert knowledge in correct blending of such.
(22). The Government should take up measures to control flood in the state and try to restore the transportation of the raw materials and the finished products even during the rainy season.

Conclusion:

The fruit and vegetable processing industry plays a significant role in the socio-economic development particularly in the rural areas of Assam. Despite abundant natural resources as raw materials for this industry, it is still in a very poor condition. This is because of the casual operation, unscientific and uncoordinated approach from the field to the processor and the consumer. So there is a need to make a joint effort on the part of the entrepreneurs and the government to overcome those constraints for the future growth of the industry.