Scope of wine grape cultivation in Andhra Pradesh, India – A SWOT analysis

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Grape is one among the oldest cultivated fruit crops gaining commercial importance particularly for wine production in the recent times. Major viticulture region accounts for 70 percent of the area in the country which comes under the hot tropical region. In Andhra Pradesh, grape cultivation is confined to RangaReddy, Mahabubnagar, Medak, Anantapur and Chittoor districts. About 80% of the grape production is utilized for wine making in the world, while in India it is less than 2% only. This wide gap in wine grape cultivation in India compared to the world may be due to lack of encouragement for wine production in India.

The turning part of the modern Indian wine industry occurred in early 1980s with the Chateau Indage in the state of Maharashtra. There is growing awareness of wine as health drink mainly due to the presence of phenolic compounds. It is the richest source of resveratrol well-known for its natural anti-carcinogen and anti ageing properties. This trend will suggest concentrating on wine grape cultivation and wine making apart from table grape production.

Currently more than 80% of the produce is used for table purposes. The major bulk of the produce is harvested in March-April, but as cold storage facilities are currently inadequate there are frequent market gluts. Diversification of uses as wine/juice and export of table grapes can ease the marketing problems. Maintenance of quality of table grapes by crop regulation is the priority consideration to increase exports. For the survival of the grape industry in India, the produce should be quality and cost competitive. Future efforts are to be concentrated in this direction (Shikhamany, 2005).

In this regard, brain storming session on the revival of grape industry in Andhra Pradesh was conducted by Grape Research Station, Rajendranagar. A SWOT analysis was done to evolve strategies for promoting wine grape cultivation involving the grape growers, industrialists, researches and policy makers during brain storming session. Selected parameters in grape cultivation like climate and soil, crop characteristics, input availability, employment, market and exports infrastructure, government policies and support, quality and price for grapes, extension and research, crop yield and economics, organisations involved and area under grape cultivation were selected. The respondents were asked to indicate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and based on this, Rank based quotients (RBQ) were calculated.

In view of the above, research was carried out to unearth the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of wine grape cultivation to formulate suitable strategies for promoting wine grape cultivation in Andhra Pradesh. SWOT analysis procedure followed by Keshav Kattel et al. (2011) was adopted for the present study.
Strengths

- Higher and assured profits from wine grape cultivation,
- Suitable wine grape varieties identified for cultivation in this region,
- Less pests and disease incidence and easy management
- Diversification of uses as wine that ease the marketing problems
- Increase in the shelf life of grapes

Weakness

- Inadequate government support in terms of excise/marketing policies/subsidies, high price compared to spirits like whisky and brandy, lack of promotional activities for wine consumptions,
- Lack of awareness on wine grape cultivation and high initial investment for establishing vineyard are some of the weakness identified in wine grape cultivation.
- Though wine making technology is simple it is still considered as an art and is produced under the guidance of wine masters.

Opportunities

- Success of wine varieties in this congenial climate and soil for the wine making is yet to be exploited by grape growers, availability of wineries in the neighbouring Maharashtra and Karnataka region,
- Guidance and technical know how from SAU/ Scientist from centre and possibility for establishment of small scale wine industries / wine parks / SEZ’S are some of the opportunities for wine grape cultivation.

Threats

- Unpredicted weather may reduce yield and quality due to increased pest and disease incidence,
- Inadequate government support in terms of excise/marketing policies/subsidies,
- Shortage of labour due to migration of labour to cities and towns for the sake of higher wages,
- Lack of favourable state wine policy for wine marketing,
- Lack of cooperative societies and boards for grapes in this area are some of the threats.

Certain strategies for wine production in Andhra Pradesh were worked out, which can be entrusted to the government, researchers, extension scientists, marketing and non government organizations in a chain system.

Policy Intervention:

- The government should develop a wine policy liberalizing the taxation policy to encourage wine production and sale of wine at affordable price.
- Wine should be considered as health drink (food produce) and national wine policy should be made and exempted excise duty.
At present price of wine is higher compared to whisky and brandy manufactured in the country. State and central government policies should be liberalised selling of wine should be at affordable price.

Government should encourage wine growers by setting up SEZ’s, wine parks.

**Strategies for non Government organisations:**

- With the increase in number of non-government organisations in the grape growing areas, they should focus on location specific research on grape.
- They should develop suitable package of practices on concepts of non pesticidal management, integrated Pest management and organic grape cultivation.
- The formation of shelf help groups, commodity interest groups and capacity building of farmers should be the prime focus of the non-government organisations.
- In addition, they should also focus on establishment nurseries by adopting superior clones.

**Infrastructure development:**

- During early 1980’s Golconda wine was manufactured by Shaw Wallace company in Hyderabad. Likewise winedel breweries also manufactured wine. But due to lacunae in excise policies these wineries could not sustain.
- In lines with Maharastra, in Andhra Pradesh also the wine manufacturing units should be encouraged. The wine plant and machinery consisting of juice extraction, fermentors, storage tank and bottling equipment etc can be manufactured indigenously.

- Though wine making technology is simple it is still considered an art and is produced under the guidance of master wine makers. Loans and subsidies for establishing wineries should be implemented.

**Provision of loans and subsidies to farmers:**

- A well designed procedure for loan sanctions and repayment schedule considering the gestation period of the crop need to be followed. Farmers should be given short and long term loans.
- Crop insurance should be provided.
- Subsidies have to be provided for drip irrigation, training structures, pits etc since the initial investment cost is high.
- National Horticulture Board has to increase its contribution towards wine grape production.

**Employment generation through wine industry:**

- Establishment of wineries, small scale processing units, input industries, nurseries, will open the avenues of employment.
- Grape cultivation is highly labour intensive and skill oriented includes training, pruning, typing, canning etc, hence can reduce the problem of migration with creation of local employment.

**Research:**

- Research strategy involves location specific research, standardisation of enological techniques. In this regard, an experiment conducted at Grape Research Station, Hyderabad revealed the suitability of Shiraz and Chenin Blanc varieties for red and white wine, respectively.
- A need to develop specific package of practices for wine grape varieties including Integrated Pest
Management and Integrated Nutrient Management practices

- Location specific research for production of elite, true to type disease free planting material of commercially important varieties and rootstocks.
- Standardisation of package of practices for wine grape for quality wine under local conditions standardisations enological techniques should be taken up.

**Extension**

Wide spread extension activities such as training of farmers, on farm demonstration, field days and setting up of wine parks / SEZ’S help to disseminate the technology on wine grape cultivation and also create awareness on easy management of pests and disease incidence which in turn help to get higher and assured profits from wine grape cultivation. Growers should be made to understand about the diversification of grape use as wine to ease the marketing problems and to increase the shelf life of grapes. Extending cultivation of wine grapes to potential areas should be incorporated into extension activities in order to spread the area across the state. Technical courses on enology should be introduced for availability of expertise and human resource for the upcoming wine industry.

**Strategies for marketing**

**Promotional activities:** India is not traditionally wine drinking country, but wine industry steadily growing over last 10 years. Therefore, promotion activities such as advertisement policy should be liberal in case of wine (Karibasappa et al., 2006).

**Regulation of market:** The problem of unregulated markets and price fluctuation should be addressed by concerned authority and provide assurance where there is win-win situation for the producers as well as processors. During certain years, problem in wine marketing and glut was found in states of Maharashtra and Karnataka (Hinge et al., 2013), which needs to be analysed and addressed.

**REFERENCES**


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