

#### **F-14: Potential for promotion of gherkin cultivation**

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High value export crops grown by smallholders under contract farming system have become central to the new agricultural policy of the government. Under the diversified agriculture policy, gherkin was promoted as a non-traditional export crop. Since the late 80s, this crop has been one of the main foreign exchange earners among the fruit and vegetable exports. Though this crop has been in production for a few seasons it has raised many controversial issues. While export firms talk of additional income to farmer families, interested parties have questioned the use of high dosage of agro-chemicals. This has raised issues regarding the impact of this non traditional export crop on the peasant farming system.

This paper investigates the influence of this crop and assesses its socio-economic potential for further promotion among small farmers. The study was based on interviews and data collected (both published and unpublished) in the field. The analysis indicates that there is a positive impact on resource use and farm integration mainly due to the contractual agreement signed with the companies. The use of under-utilised resources in the area such as land and labour has increased. The supply of inputs and services has led to a greater integration in the farming system, for instance, the income generated is utilised among various sub-components of the farming unit.

If the detrimental effects on the environment and related institutional problems are solved, there is a potential for this crop.