



## **Problems and prospects of food processing industry in Bihar with special reference to Makhana Industry**

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*In this day and age, it has become imperative to process and preserve the food being produced in one particular area in order to make it available to people in other areas. This has given rise to a very important industry of food processing. The following paper focuses not only on the importance of food processing industry in India but also tries to explain the aspects of food processing industry like; problems, prospects, employment opportunities and contribution of the “**Makhana Industry**” in national income. **In India only 2% of the processing is carried out as compared to other nations.** This itself bears a testimony to the fact that problem of food processing are immense and unresolved. The problems cited are cold storage, transportation, middle men & high cost packaging etc. **Bihar accounts for over 85% of the Makhana production of the country** which resulted into thrust area for taking up the task and identifying the constraints in the exports of Makhana from the state. **As per a rough estimate 50,000 tones of Makhana worth Rs.550 crores in market are produced annually.** Bihar produces 3.5 million tones of fruits & 8.5 million tones of vegetables. But hardly 1% is being processed in the state. Bihar with its beautiful natural resources of fertile soil, abundant water, varied climate & rich culture & historical heritage is one of the most fascinating states of India. Bihar is endowed with rich biodiversity. **It is infact 3<sup>rd</sup> largest producer of vegetables & 4<sup>th</sup> largest producer of fruits in the country.** It is the largest producer of litchi, Makhana, guava & lady's finger in India. There are certain Government future plans for the food processing industry to develop two integrated food zones & food parks & set-up 100 rural agri-business centers. **As the vision 2015 scheme states 'tripling the size of food processing industry from “\$70 billion to about \$210 billion'.** The food processing **generates high rate of employment.** The population engaged in food processed has increased thereafter which will lead to the play of multiplier effect. Thus, the Government should give certain incentives to foster the growth of food processing industry which in turn will prevent out migration of labourers & hence will increase employment opportunities within the state itself.*

**Key words:** Processing, Vision, Makhana, Climate, National Income.

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