



## A STUDY ON SCOPE AND CHALLENGES IN MARKETING OF FLOWERS BY FLORICULTURIST WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NILGIRI DISTRICT

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### Abstract:

Floriculture or flower farming has become an attractive export-focused market in India. Tamilnadu is particular is one of the largest flower producers in the country. The Nilgiris district of Tamilnadu is a biosphere with rich flora and fauna and is well known for its flowers. Floriculture in India is turning out to be a very promising field for farmers, marketers, and aspiring entrepreneurs. Flower farming also creates a viable employment market and creating several jobs. The Indian flowers are also attracting several exporters due to their longstanding traditional connection to flowers. But it must be noted that despite all the above alluring factors, flower farmers fail to make notable profits and are set back by several internal and external factors. The study focuses on current scope and challenges in marketing of flowers with special reference to Nilgiris district.

*Key words : floriculturist, challenges ,flower marketing,entreprenurs*

### INTRODUCTION:

**Floriculture**, or **flower farming**, is a discipline of horticulture concerned with the cultivation of flowering and ornamental plants for gardens and for floristry, comprising the flora industry. Floriculture crops include bedding plants, flowering plants, foliage plants or houseplants, cut cultivated greens, and cut flowers. Cut flowers are usually sold in bunches with cut foliage. The production of cut flowers is specifically known as the cut flower industry. Hitech Floriculture refers to growing of high quality cut flowers under controlled conditions in poly-house through the use of technology like tissue cultured plants, water soluble fertilizers, part-mechanization, cold chain, packaging and post-harvest technology for export and domestic markets.

The Indian government has designated floriculture as a sunrise sector and given it the distinction of being entirely export-oriented. Floriculture has developed into one of the key Commercial trades in Agriculture as a result of the steadily rising demand for flowers. Commercial floriculture has developed into a high-tech activity that takes place within a greenhouse under-regulated climatic conditions. India's floriculture industry is thought to have strong development potential. From an export perspective, commercial floriculture is becoming more significant. The rise of the cut flower industry that is focused on exports it was made possible by the liberalisation of industrial and trade regulations. The ability to import planting materials of foreign types was previously made possible by the new seed policy. Commercial floriculture has been proven to have more potential per unit area than the majority of field crops, making it a successful industry. Cut flowers for export have replaced traditional blooms in the Indian floriculture sector. The liberalised economy has encouraged Indian business people to set up export-focused floriculture facilities in climate-controlled environments. India's floriculture industry is being developed and is being promoted for export by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To know the scope and challenges in marketing of flowers by floriculturist in Nilgiri District.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

**Shukla et al., (2022)**<sup>-1</sup> conducted the current study, "Constraints in Marketing of Flowers: A Study in Solan and Sirmaur Districts of Himachal Pradesh," to show how significant cut flowers are as a marketable product and to outline the constraints faced in marketing flowers. Himachal Pradesh's Solan and Sirmaur districts were specifically chosen for this investigation. A random sampling approach was employed to choose the final sample of respondents from the chosen districts. According to the concentration of farmers and practicality, the data collecting process chooses an equal number of respondents from each of the two districts (25 each). This research demonstrates that the many issues mentioned by the farmers include poor transportation infrastructure, disorganised marketplaces, middlemen that take a long time to pay, exorbitant intermediaries commissions, uncontrolled markets, and a lack of storage facilities, and high beginning costs. In addition, to prevent the larger price fluctuation of flowers, adequate institutional structures must be in place to reduce pricing uncertainty. This may be backed up by establishing minimum support prices for both flowers and other agricultural goods.

**Mahalle et al., (2020)**<sup>-2</sup> state that the Indian floriculture industry has grown significantly in importance as the demand for flowers has constantly expanded. Therefore, commercial flower growing has evolved into a high-tech operation within the greenhouse under-regulated climatic conditions. India's floriculture business, which is seeing rapid expansion, has grown in importance from an export perspective. Cut flowers that are focused on exporting are becoming more common because of the liberalisation of industrial and commercial rules. It has developed into one of the major floriculture hubs of West Bengal, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. The floriculture industry had a consistent 20 per cent gain in exports

last year. Domestic flower commerce has grown significantly in the previous ten years in both quantity and volume. Historically and seasonally, floriculture in agriculture has been one of the most important trades in civilization. Approximately 248.51 thousand hectares were used for floriculture in 2014–2015.

**Sehgal, (2020)**<sup>-3</sup> states that the Indian government has launched many measures to encourage the use of poly houses in floriculture. To determine the advantages and challenges farmers encounter while utilising poly houses for producing flowers, research was undertaken on 100 farmers in the state of Haryana who practise floriculture in these structures. According to the findings, 31% of farmers had completed high school and 29% had completed senior secondary school; 67% of farmers had 4-6 acres of land. With a WMS of 1.67, environmental benefits came out on top, followed by economic advantages (WMS of 1.64) and technical benefits (WMS of 1.62). (WMS 1.58). The most often observed restriction was economic, which received a WMS score of 1.61 (rank I), followed by other constraints, which received a WMS score of 1.55 (rank II), and technical constraints, which received a WMS score of 1.32. (rank III). Therefore, the government must increase awareness by offering pieces of training on the usage of poly houses to farmers to alleviate the limits they encounter.

**Balamurugan, (2020)**<sup>-4</sup> aims to investigate India's export-focused cut flower business. The research will concentrate on identifying the opportunities and problems facing the sector and will also provide some suggestions on how to improve the cut flower sector's export performance. This paper covers the cut flower market as it exists now on the international stage, the difficulties flower growers and exporters confront, and the potential future directions for the sector. This research employed a qualitative technique. The basic information was gathered via several unstructured conversations with Indian flower producers. For the simplicity of gathering data, interviews with flower producers close to Dhaka were performed. Even though India's cut flower business is little compared to the rest of the world, it is displaying excellent growth potential. Opportunities to serve high-income markets in Europe, the United States, and Asia have played a significant role in the fast rise of the cut flower industry. To produce flowers for various markets, it is now feasible to take advantage of cost, seasonality, and climatic effects thanks to improved cultivation and post-harvest methods and widely accessible air transportation.

**Kaur & Singh, (2019)**<sup>-5</sup> endeavoured to learn how flower production technology was being adopted, what challenges farmers were facing, and what improvements might be made. 50 flower growers and 100 other farmers were chosen at random from ten villages in the Punjabi districts of Patiala, Ludhiana, Fatehgarh Sahib, and Mohali for this research. According to this survey, only 20% of flower growers had adopted the suggested flower production method to a great level, while the remaining 80% of growers used medium and low adoption rates. Out of the 17 components of flower manufacturing technology, soil preparation was ranked highest, while flower packing came in last. The study's main limitations were high weather variability, a lack of trained and professional labour, a low market price for flowers, and price volatility. To improve flower production in Punjab, all of the farmers recommended setting a market price for flower output and implementing appropriate crop insurance coverage.

**Kumari et al., (2016)**<sup>6</sup> investigated the Farmers' Perceptions of Floriculture Marketing Problems and Challenges in the Solan District of Himachal Pradesh. The study's main goals were to comprehend the marketing strategies used by floriculture producers, identify the main marketing issues these farmers encountered, and solicit their input on how to address these issues in the floriculture industry. A sample size of 60 farmers from Himachal Pradesh's Solan block was used for this article. Due to its importance in sustaining the floriculture industry, florists gave transportation the utmost consideration. A research study identified several marketing issues, with the florists' lack of access to transportation and storage facilities standing out as the biggest challenge to floriculture. The research showed that there is a pressing need to raise public knowledge of the floriculture industry. Additionally, increased marketing effectiveness and improved producer returns via direct retailing are a certain signs that the area's farmer's markets are growing.

### **Why Floriculture?**

Floriculture is a rapidly growing large global enterprise, particularly as a potential revenue generator for many third-world nations. Many flowers and beautiful plants are cultivated for both the local and export markets, and they generate a greater return per unit area than any other agricultural/horticultural commodity. Flower crops have a much shorter gestation time than other crops. Modern floriculture is the cultivation of high-value cut flowers such as Rose, Gladiolus, Carnation, Orchids, Tuberose, Anthurium, Lilium, Gerbera, and others. The growing of these cut flower crops, appropriate for flower arrangements/decorations for bouquets preparation, and for floral baskets, has expanded significantly in recent years, as has their part of the overall commerce. Loose flower sales including Jasmine, Crossandra, Marigold, China Aster, Chrysanthemums, and Gaillardia are brisk in south India. The current floriculture tendency is to make dried flowers, and extract natural colours, and essential oils. Good-grade flower seeds and decorative plant materials are in high demand. The worldwide ornamental crop sector is now valued at over US\$ 70 billion. The worldwide flower market is worth around US\$ 35 billion. More than three lakh hectares of flower cultivation exist in various nations throughout the globe. Floriculture provides year-round self-employment options. Employment prospects in this industry are as diverse as the task itself. Currently, more than 145 nations are active in commercial flower cultivation (*Commercial Floriculture, 2012*).

### **Current Scope of the Indian Floriculture Industry:**

India Especially in Nilgiris region is endowed with a diverse and dynamic agro-climatic environment, as well as high-quality soil and water, making it ideal for floriculture. India is strategically placed between two main markets: Europe and East Asia. Winter is warm, thus there is plenty of opportunities to export Indian flowers to temperate nations during the winter season when demand is high due to key winter festivities such as Christmas, New Year's Day, and Valentine's Day. India's labour costs are almost 10-15 times lower than those of comparable personnel in the Netherlands, Israel, and Japan.

The Indian government has designated floriculture as an 'Extreme Focus Thrust Area' for export during the IX plan. With the introduction of the GATT agreement, European countries reduced the import charge on floricultural goods, which is now 15%. The international market is increasing at an annual rate of 8-10%.

International demand is around Rs. 90,000 crores per year, with a local market share of 20-25%. As a result, the opportunities to join the floriculture sector in India are limitless.

The Indian government has built infrastructure for the floriculture business in key cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Pune. APEDA provides some financial help for different initiatives related to the export of floriculture goods. Bank funding is simple for high-tech floriculture. 100% export-focused units (EOUs) are concentrated in and around Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Bengaluru, Hosur, Doddaballapur, and Devanahalli (Karnataka) in the south, Gurgaon (Haryana) in the north, and Lonavala and Pune (Maharashtra) in the west.

The government has approved the selling of 50% of crops in domestic marketplaces for 100% EOUs. On greenhouse implements and raw materials, a complete tax exemption has been granted. Import and export laws and restrictions have been simplified. Singapore is the closest international flower auction centre, which is beneficial for Indian exporters. Floriculture goods generate 25-30% more foreign currency than grains or any other agricultural/horticultural commodity. Floriculture has the potential to attract and keep a huge number of forward-thinking farmers and businesses. Because of the abundant sunshine and ideal temperature throughout the winter, the greenhouse production of cut flowers does not need artificial lighting or heating. The Government of India has designated product-specific zones for selective floriculture research and development. APEDA and GOK have set up four floral auction facilities in Bengaluru, Noida (UP), Mumbai, and New Delhi. APEDA has also established a marketing centre in Aalsmeer, Netherlands, to promote Indian goods.

## **DEMAND/CONSUMPTION OF FLOWERS**

The use of flowers has a central place in person of the Indian cultural and religious practices. Religious worship does not take place without offering of flowers. Occasion such as marriage even welcoming someone calls for an offer of flowers. In addition, women in some parts of the country adorn themselves with flowers daily. Arrangements of expensive cut flowers are inherent part of decoration in luxury hotels and affluent homes. Flowers are increasingly given on happy occasions and on sad occasions to cheer those affected. As per utilization, flowers are grouped into three categories.

### **a. Traditional use**

Flower is gift of nature to humanity. Naturally, flower attracts every human being. Flower is a symbol of passion. Use of flowers is tradition in India. India is a multi-religious country so flowers used in each religious ceremony and at the time of festivals. The period between August to December is the best season for traditional flowers i.e. marigold, rose, tuberose, aster, chrysanthemum etc. in India.

### **b. Non-traditional use**

Recently, urban culture attracted to non-traditional flowers i.e. gerbera, carnation, rose and other new comers. These flowers are normally offering for exchange of joy or sorrow on the form of bouquets or wreaths to express one's feelings. Particularly, around metro cities such types of green house flower projects have been set up.



### c. As a raw material

Flowers are also used as a raw material in pharmaceutical and perfumery industries. For preparation of medicine, perfumes, cosmetics, toiletries, gulkand and syrup, so many flowers are used as raw material. It is called dry flower industry.

### Challenges Faced by Flower Farmers in India:

Many sections of northern and southern India, such as the Nilgiris, offer very rich flora and germplasm that has yet to be fully tapped. Cut flower marketing is disorganised and in many circumstances, markets do not exist at all. The connections between farmers and markets are poor. Most Indian states do not assist floriculturists. Flowers are carried to wholesale marketplaces in most cities with large market potential, which generally operates in big open markets with insufficient facilities and deplorable surroundings. Cut flowers are perishable output, and the infrastructure required to ensure the floriculture industry's smooth operation and expansion is lacking.

There is no competition. Dominated by unethical monopolists, a small number of flower merchants wind up purchasing the majority of the output from farmers at very cheap costs and distributing it to local retail shops after a significant mark-up. Retail florist businesses are often located beside highways with little or no protection or air conditioning for flowers. Due to the sky rocketing pricing of flowers, middle-class buyers are immediately excluded from this industry. Under these conditions, it is the state's role to invest in the establishment of efficient and fair auction centres, as well as systematise floral shops with modern storage facilities to extend the vase life of cut flowers (Dhillon, 2015).

In terms of production, visible impediments to the development of this industry include a scarcity of essential seeds, flowers, germplasm, and tissue culture facilities at reasonable prices; a lack of technological support; a lack of capital investment; a scarcity of trained labour; a scarcity of post-harvest management; and a lack of pest and disease control.

Marketing restrictions include insufficient airfreight space, a lack of sophisticated cold chains, a lack of regional and international collaboration, patenting concerns, royalties, restrictive WTO regulations, and drastically inadequate transportation infrastructure.

Other challenges include an excess supply of flowers in the intercontinental market, as well as no assurance of product quality and quantity for maintaining an appropriate market share in the export sector. To accomplish this, the government should reduce import duties on all types of floral planting material and equipment; intervene to effectively reduce airfreight to a rational level; ensure adequate cargo space in airlines; establish model nurseries with cutting-edge facilities for supplying authentic planting material, and establish florist organisations at the regional level based on a cooperative model.

The major challenges are classified as follows:

- a) Production Level Challenges
- b) Climate related Challenges
- c) Storage and Packing Challenges
- d) Marketing and Transportation Challenges
- e) Export Challenges

### **a) Production Level Challenges**

The production related challenges are related to the ground level obstacles which are unavailability of ample infrastructure, quality and improved species planting material, identical fertilizers and manures. Lack of knowledge regarding high yield varieties, soil testing and proper doses of pesticides and fertilizers is again a big obstacle in flower production. Unavailability of skilled labour for plant protection, harvesting and post harvesting of floriculture produce is affect the floriculture production.

### **b) Climate related Challenges**

There is a great impact of climate change on flowering plants particularly in commercial production under open field conditions. The impact of excessive heat, cold, continuous or unpredictable rain fall with storm damage the flower production in the blooming span. Indigenous species in the natural habitat may not be proliferate and will be under threat of unfavourable agro-climatic conditions. Unseasonal monsoon may deprive the western hilly regions and its surrounding regions of normal precipitation, affecting the species required high humidity and water. The plain regions also affected either by drought or flood and abrupt seasonal variations. Due to drastic climatic change onset of new diseases, pest or even altered resistance to the existing pathogen is also expected resulting in low production or low quality of flowers.

The production in open cultivation of floriculture affects mainly due to these factors. Diseases, pests, nematodes and crops do co-exist in the cropping in the environment always challenges the successful cultivation and post-harvest handling of crops. Changing climate scenario increased incidence of soil borne pathogens, viral infection, nematodes, foliage and flower pests and reemergence once of controlled pest and pathogens affecting the quantity as well as quality of production.

### **c) Storage and Packing Challenges**

Storage facilities are pre-requisite for maintaining the freshness of the flowers particularly the modern flowers. However, the flowers covered in the study are traditional varieties which do not require this facility. The reason being that the farmers grow only a small quantity and dispose them quickly. However, a small proportion of the traditional flower producers expressed that they did not have sufficient place even to keep their small quantity of produce. Cold storage facilities are very essential for the flowers to maintain freshness, quality, texture and life-span. However, none of the flower growers had either possessed these facilities or the Government had provided such facilities. Even then a majority of them were of the opinion that they did not require this facility as they grew in small quantities and disposed it as quickly as possible. They were also of the opinion that such facilities on co-operative basis might help them to keep their flowers in cold storage to overcome price fluctuations

#### d) Marketing and Transportation Challenges

The market related challenges is the main obstacle in improving economic status of floriculture producers from small growers to large. There are various market related challenges faced by floriculturist which are non-availability of market, difficulties in transportation due to high perishable produce, commission agents, delayed in payment after sell of flowers, inadequate arrangements for grading and storage due to such factors growers have to sell their produce at very cheap prices to the wholesalers or commission agents. With regard to market, the growers expressed single or combination of constraints that they faced in the market. The prominent single constraint expressed was more commission followed by middlemen problem and deduction of more charges.

#### e) Export Challenges

In Tamilnadu, these facilities are inadequate. There are no direct flights to international markets. The exporters have to transport flowers through Mumbai or Chennai airports, where connection to international flights is available. Even, in the available flights, adequate space is not accommodated for flowers. Several tones of flower in airport were stranded in the airport for lack of space in flights. Again, there were several instances of diverting the flowers to domestic market on account of insufficient plights. All these led to delays in exports and deterioration in the quality of the flowers. The high freight charges are affecting the viability of the floricultural units. To ease the matter, subsidy on airfreight rates are provided to exporters. But the airline rates are much higher than the IATA (International Air Transport Association) rates. The exporters are required to book space in the flight one month in advance. Even after booking, there were instances of cancellation of booking and some times cancellation of flights caused heavy losses to the exporters. There were also instances of cancellation of flight and cancellations of advance booking. There was lack of post-harvest infrastructure such as cold storage facilities at Airports. This led to the exposure of the flowers to open conditions. The procedure followed at the airport in checking the quarantine element before transit was taking lot of time. This lead to delays in exports and affected the quality of the product.

**f) Margins decreasing:** While prices remain stable over the last few years, most production costs have steadily increased. Producers must be more successful in production and management in order to stay profitable.

3. **Pest control:** Public and producer worries regarding pesticide use, as well as pesticiden resistance and pesticide depletion etc. led farmers to pursue alternative methods of pesticide control. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) has a greater role to control pest infestation in green house. Most farmers already use biological or bio-rational methods for the supplement or substitution of existing pesticides.

6. **Capital costs:** New and cutting-edge greenhouse businesses will cost up to \$200 per square metre. For several potential farmers, this is an obstacle to entry. Field-grown cut flowers and the manufacture of bedding facilities have considerably lower cost of capital.



## Conclusion:

Floriculture is emerging as a commercial proposition in recent years due to export of some selected flower types and varieties. Production of export oriented flowers in floriculture is emerging as a commercial proposition in recent years due to export of some selected flower types and varieties. Production of export oriented flowers in green houses/poly houses is a recent technological adoption in India, which has given impetus to exports. But there is urgent need to improve some areas like packing system, quality of flowers (grading), quick and refrigerated transport and organisation with minimum intermediaries. Floriculture crops require intensive cultivation and have high income potential. Therefore, they generate good employment in rural area. Setting up training centres in at least two districts of each state for diploma courses, providing cold chain facilities from farm to final destination, and ensuring Phyto-sanitary conditions laid out in the Agriculture Agreement and other World Trade Organization laws can all help the industry to grow. Thus it may be concluded that by framing proper regulations of flower marketing and by providing adequate institutional credit to mechanize the farmers, the production and marketing of flowers can be improved in the study area.

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