

An enquiry into the challenges faced by Flower farmers in Salem district – A qualitative study

Dr. G. Yoganandan *

** Project Director, ICSSR-IMPRESS, ICSSR, New Delhi, & Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu, India.*

Email: g_yoganandan@yahoo.com

Abstract

Flowers have always been an integral part of Indian culture and society. With globalization and free market economy, flower farming has attained an industrial status and has gained tremendous momentum in the last few years. Flowers are now commercially cultivated in several states with Tamil Nadu (20%), Karnataka (13.5%) and West Bengal (12.2%). The major objective of the study is to identify the challenges faced of flower farming in Salem district of Tamil Nadu. Study was conducted in Salem district and 10 Flower farmers are selected through referrals (snow ball sampling). This study is a qualitative study and questions are asked on the basis of the response given by the flower farmers. Through this study the research wanted to get a broader idea about flower farming and the issues or problems faced by flower farmers in the Salem district of Tamil Nadu. The flower farmers face lot of problems especially in the area of marketing of flowers. There are productions or cultivation related issues. The flower farmers feel the role of middlemen in flower farming need a rethinking. The flower farmers acknowledge that the middlemen play a vital role but at the same time they also exploit the flower farmers in pricing, assessing the quality and also in weighing the flowers. This study is the starting of series of studies to be conducted by the researcher so the future studies will focus on various other issues in flower farming.

Keywords: *Problems, Challenges, Flower farming, Floriculture, Marketing issues, Farming, Farmer, Agriculture*

1. Introduction

Flowers have always been an integral part of Indian culture and society. With globalization and free market economy, flower farming has attained an industrial status and has gained tremendous momentum in the last few years. However, this sector is still in a nascent stage of development and accounts for a negligible share in the global exports. Floriculture is a viable and profitable alternative for the new generation of farmers. By recognizing its full potential, India has a fair chance of attaining a strong position on the World floriculture platform. There has been tremendous growth in the demand and consumption of floriculture products in the last two decades. Flower farming has finally begun to form an important component of commercial agriculture and with the increasing awareness of its potential (Vasan, 2016).

Floriculture is the art and knowledge of growing flowers to perfection (Yoganandan & Vetriselvan, 2017). It deals with the cultivation of flowers and ornamental crops from the time of planting to the time of harvesting. It also includes production of planting materials through seeds, cuttings, budding, grafting and marketing of flowers and flower produces (Selvakumar & Yoganandan, 2019). It includes cultivation of flowering and ornamental plants for sales or for use as raw materials in cosmetics, Perfume industry and also Pharmaceutical sector (Suryakumar, Thirunavukkarasu, & Mohammad, 2019).

India is bestowed with several agro-climatic zones conducive for production of sensitive and delicate floriculture products. This era has seen a dynamic shift from sustenance production to commercial production. The total area under cultivation of different flowers was 0.144 million hectares in 2007-2008. As per National Horticulture Database 2010 published by National Horticulture Board, during 2009-10, the area under floriculture production in India was 0.183 million hectares with a production of 1.021 million loose flowers and 666.7 million cut flowers. As per National Horticulture Database published by National Horticulture Board, during 2015-16 the area under floriculture production in India was 249 thousand hectares with a production of 1659 thousand tonnes loose flowers and 484 thousand tonnes cut flowers (Vasan, 2011).

Floriculture is now commercially cultivated in several states with Tamil Nadu (20%), Karnataka (13.5%) and West Bengal (12.2%) having gone ahead of other producing states like Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Chattisgarh (Vasudevan & Senthilkumar, 2017).

India's total export of floriculture was Rs.286.45 crores in 2010-11, which increased to Rs. 507.31 crores in 2017-18. The major importing countries were USA, Pakistan, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Belgium and United Kingdom. There are more than 300 export-oriented units in India. More than 50% of the floriculture units are based in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. With the technical collaborations from foreign companies, the Indian floriculture industry is poised to increase its share in world trade (Vasan, 2007).

In Tamil Nadu, out of the total area of cultivation of flowers occupy 25610 ha. in 2010-11 which has increased to 55,000 ha. In 2014-15. Dindigul, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Salem, Vellore, Madurai, Tiruvannamalai, Tirunelveli and Erode are the major flowers growing districts in Tamil Nadu. The major flowers grown are Jasmine, Mullai, Rose, Crossandra, Chrysanthimum, Marigold, Tube Rose, Arali, Jathimalli etc., (Yoganandan & Vetriselvan, 2016).

2. Objectives of the study

The major objective of the study is to identify the challenges faced of flower farming in Salem district of Tamil Nadu.

3. Review of Literature

Manoel Xavier Pedroza Filho (2008) in his study "Changes in the governance of the French market for cut flowers: Challenges and opportunities for foreign suppliers" observed that the flower farmers face the problems like Changing Supply chain / governance structure and the reduction in wholesalers' role. And the need to supply large volume, varieties of flowers and regularity of supply are some other challenges. Rising power of Super markets and floral shops (Retailers) are some of the opportunities for flower farmers (Pedroza, 2008).

Mulu Gebreyesus & Tetsushi Sonobe (2011) in their research "Global Value Chains and Market Formation Process in Emerging Export Activity: Evidence from Ethiopian Flower Industry" identified the problems of flower farming as stringent standards and regulation by the Ethiopian government and also points out that there is a huge export market potential for flower farmers (Mulu & Tetsushi, 2011).

Assefa Mitike Janko and Gosa Alemu (2017) in their study "Supply and marketing of floriculture in Ethiopia" pointed out that highly capital intensive, highly controlled time dimension of the logistics process and lack of domestically produced inputs are some of the marketing challenges and government incentives abundant cheap/ trained labour

proximity to EU and middle east markets and FDI by global investors are the opportunities for flower farming in Ethiopia (Janko & Alemu, 2017).

Jalal Amin (2018) in his study “Marketing channels of different cut flowers under different agro-ecological zones of Nowshera and Peshwar” observed that the lack of knowledge on modern production techniques, latest variety non availability and poor infrastructure are the problems and related business opportunity, higher standard of living, education and electronic media and high-value floral crops are the opportunities for this sector in Pakistan (Jalal Amin, 2018).

Chris Ward (2002) in their study found that rose flowers are one of the most popular flower crops grown in New Zealand. Very few roses are now exported from New Zealand, as a result of the global trend of rose production in developing countries such as South America, Africa and Asia at cheaper prices. The domestic market is well supplied by New Zealand growers in summer, but supply is still limited in winter. As a result, roses are imported from India and South East Asia in winter. Over the last 12 months many rose growers have invested in new varieties, with increasing interest in fragrant new varieties from Europe (Chris, 2002).

Yang Xiaohan, Liu Guangshu and Zhu Lu says that more than 90 per cent of the cut flowers produced in China are consumed within China. The cut flowers are sold through wholesale and retail distribution channels. At present, there are 670 cut flower markets and 7,000 flower shops across the country, and 7 regional whole sale markets which have been established in Beijing, Shanghai, Kunming, Guangzhou, Fujian, Chengdu and Liaoning. The major consumption areas are Shanghai, Beijing, Zhejiang and Guangdong. The majority of the flower shops are located in these areas. In 1996, 260 million stems of cut flowers were consumed with about 20 stems per capita in Shanghai, and 100 million stems were consumed with about 10 stems per capita in Beijing.

The marketing problems faced by flower farmers in India are depression in pricing, non availability of basic inputs, proper irrigation, non availability of skilled manpower, lacking product diversification and product differentiation, managing transportation, competition, inadequate, storage, packing, transportation, poor road infrastructure, poor quality of flowers, usage of unscientific production methods and unorganized market structure and the marketing opportunities are self-employment, emergence of (retailers) super markets, changing lifestyle, increasing demand, domestic market (Karnataka and Maharashtra), and export markets like UK, EU and USA (Harisha, 2017), (Senthilkumar, 2017), (Kanaka, 2017), (Vahoniya, 2018).

Small land holding, lack of resources, price fluctuations, not motivated to adopt modern production methods, lack of proper transport, market information, cold storage facilities and menace of middlemen, threats from other countries, lack of mother stock and their high price, price of fertilizers and insecticides, lack of scientific knowledge and training attack by pest and disease, inadequate transportation and communication system, low market price, lack of market information, unstructured market, lack of storage facility, unsold flowers, demand fluctuation are the marketing problems faced by flower farmers. The marketing opportunities are growth of bouquet stalls, rapid urbanization increase in income, changing lifestyle IT, climate cheap and skilled labour (rich soil, use of modern production methods), and increasing demand from domestic market, also, as the Jasmine and tuberose are rich in aromatic oil content, setting up extraction unit will be beneficial to

flower farmers (Thippaiah, 2005) (Danish & Asif, 2015), (Noor ul, MA, Imtiyaz, Mohd, & Aabid, 2017), (Ashoka, Shrinivasulu, Anupama, Harshavardhan, & Kattimani, 2017).

The marketing problems faced by flower farmers in Tamil Nadu are lack of airport infrastructure, price fluctuation, labour problems, (lack of continuous supply of flowers), fluctuation in price, lack of infrastructure, fraudulent practices, lack of export promotion, non-regulatory system of marketing, middlemen dominance – malpractices – deduction of more charges, payment by instalment, quoting lower prices, deduction of unique charges etc., and not taking farmers’ consent before selling their produce. The opportunities are development of agri – export zone in Hosur, growth of retailers, proximity to Madurai airport, increasing demand from local and export market, export opportunity, domestic demand, since the Madurai is a temple town, the local demand is also huge. Also, jasmine requires less workload, the plant life is 10-15 years, and has many applications in the form of being a sedative, antiseptic, antidepressant, analgesic and aphrodisiac. Setting up flower oil extraction unit will benefit the local farmers (Amarnath & Tamil, 2017), (Ganapathi, 2015), (Kanniammal, 2016), (Karthick & Chandrasekar, 2016).

4. Research Gap Research Methodology

The major objective of this study is to analyze the problems of flower cultivating farmers and find out the factors that motivating/ least motivating the farmers to cultivate flowers as commercial crop.

5. Research Methodology

Study was conducted in Salem district and 10 Flower farmers are selected through referrals (snow ball sampling). This study is a qualitative study and questions are asked on the basis of the response given by the flower farmers. Through this study the research wanted to get a broader idea about flower farming and the issues or problems faced by flower farmers in the Salem district of Tamil Nadu. This study is the base for future in-depth studies to be conducted in the same area by the researcher.

6. Results and Discussion

The following are the summary of the challenges faced by Flower Farmers in Salem district of Tamil Nadu.

Challenges
Product Poor quality of flowers Mother stock availability Lack of knowledge Inadequate information Hesitation to use modern methods Lack of locally produced inputs (in some cases) Lacking product diversification Unable to ensure stable supply Demand fluctuations

Branding and Packaging issues Labour problems
Pricing Price fluctuation Price of seeds, mother stock Price of fertilizers, pesticides Price of modern technology High Middlemen charges
Physical distribution Inadequate transport infrastructure Poor road connectivity Poor Air port connectivity Storage and Cold storage facility Middlemen (agents) dominance – Malpractices in Southern States/ TN Wholesalers losing their relevance Unsold flowers
Promotion Lack of export promotion and also domestic promotion

7. Conclusion

The results of this study may be carefully applied to farmers many geographical areas in India. The flower farmers face lot of problems especially in the area of marketing of flowers. There are productions or cultivation related issues. The flower farmers feel the role of middlemen in flower farming need a rethinking. The flower farmers acknowledge that the middlemen play a vital role but at the same time they also exploit the flower farmers in pricing, assessing the quality and also in weighing the flowers. This study is the starting of series of studies to be conducted by the researcher so the future studies will focus on various other issues in flower farming which will help all stakeholders to get a clear picture about the state of flower farming and to decide on the future course of action.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank and acknowledge Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi for providing major research project funding under ICSSR IMPRESS scheme.

References

1. Amarnath, J., & Tamil, V. K. (2017). An Economic Analysis of Cut Flower Marketing in Tamil Nadu. *Economic Affairs*, 62 (4), 621-631.
2. Ashoka, N., Shrinivasulu, G., Anupama, G., Harshavardhan, M., & Kattimani, K. (2017). Economic Analysis of Production and Marketing of Jasmine in Hyderabad-Karnataka Region: A Case in Koppal District, India. *International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences*, 6 (9), 1702-1711.

3. Chris, W. (2002). Floriculture" Ministry of Agriculture And Forestry, Te ManatuAhuwhenua, Ngaherehere, New Zealand. Innovation and Research Policy , 101-103.
4. Danish, K., & Asif, I. F. (2015). A Swot Analysis of Floriculture Industry in Kashmir. Abhinav International Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Management & Technology , 4 (12), 1-4.
5. Ganapathi, R. (2015). A Study on Factors Affecting Marketing of Jasmine in Dindigul District. Journal of Management Research and Analysis, 2 (4), 238-242.
6. Harisha, B. N. (2017). An Economic Analysis of Floriculture in India. Global Business, Economics, Finance and Banking, 6 (8), 1-13.
7. Jalal Amin, A. S. (2018). To Study Marketing Channels of Different Cut Flowers under Different Agro-Ecological Zones of Nowshera and Peshwar. International Journal of Environmental Sciences & Natural Resources, 8 (3), 84-91.
8. Janko, A. M., & Alemu, G. (2017). Supply and marketing of floriculture in Ethiopia. International Journal of Horticulture and Floriculture, 5 (3), 258-271.
9. Kanaka, D. d. (2017). Problems of prospects of floriculture industry in india. Intercontinental journal of marketing research review, 5 (4), 1-5.
10. Kanniammal, K. (2016). Production and Marketing of Jasmine Flower with Reference to Sathyamangalam Taluk. Asia Pacific Journal of Research , 1 (XL), 146-154.
11. Karthick, K., & Chandrasekar, K. (2016). Obstacles of Jasmine Flower Marketing in Tamilnadu – A Study with Reference to Madurai District. Indian journal of Research, 5 (11), 236-238.
12. Mulu, G., & Tetsushi, S. (2011). Global Value Chains and Market Formation Process in Emerging Export Activity: Evidence from Ethiopian Flower Industry. Journal of Development Studies, 48 (3), 335-348.
13. Noor ul, I. W., MA, D., Imtiyaz, T. N., Mohd, Y. W., & Aabid, S. (2017). A study on the Socio-economic characteristics and the constraints faced by the registered flower growers in the production and marketing of flowers in Srinagar and Budgam districts of Kashmir valley. Journal of Pharmacognosy and Phytochemistry, 6 (4), 1878-1885.
14. Pedroza, F. M. (2008). Changes in the governance structure of the French market for cut flowers: challenges and opportunities for foreign suppliers. Presented at IAMO Forum 2008 , 7.
15. Selvakumar, M., & Yoganandan, G. (2019). Problems and Practices of Micro-Scale Dairy Entrepreneurs in Salem District, Tamil Nadu. International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research, 8 (12), 1485 – 1489.
16. Senthilkumar, R. (2017). Cultivation and marketing of flowers in india"-an empirical study. International Journal of Research in Social Sciences, 7 (7), 245-271.
17. Suryakumar, M., Thirunavukkarasu, T., & Mohammad, N. (2019). Factors Contributing to MSME Entrepreneurs Level of Satisfaction on Banking Services. International Journal of Management and Business Research, 1 (9), 115- 119.

18. Thippaiah, P. (2005). Floriculture in karnataka: Performance, problems and Prospects. Bangalore: Agricultural Development and Rural Transformation Unit.
19. Vahoniya, D. P. (2018). Status of Floriculture in India: With Special Focus to Marketing. *International Journal of Pure & Applied Bioscience*, 6 (2), 1434-1438.
20. Vasan, M. (2011). Consumer Shopping Behaviour in Retail Stores - A Case of Salem District. *International Journal of Marketing & Management Research*, 2 (7), 226-237.
21. Vasan, M. (2016). Problems and Prospects of Women Entrepreneurs in India. *Shanlax International Journal of Management*, 3 (1), 312-315.
22. Vasan, M. (2007). Retail Industry in India - A Review. *Economic Challenger*, 36 (9), 25-30.
23. Vasudevan, M., & Senthilkumar, V. M. (2017). Brand awareness of 'generation y' customers towards doughnut retail outlets in India. *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, 11 (4), 108-113.
24. Yoganandan, G., & Vetrivelan, V. (2016). Entrepreneurship development in India. *Shanlax International Journal of Management*, 3 (1), 345-346.
25. Yoganandan, G., & Vetrivelan, V. (2017). Personality Traits of (In) Effective Teachers as Identified By Indian MBA Students: A Qualitative Study. *Asian Journal of Management*, 8 (3), 403-406.