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PROBLEMS OF FLORICULTURE IN COSTAL KARNATAKA: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHIRVA

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Abstract

Flower cultivation occupies a unique position in the life and economy of Udupi and Dakshina Kannada in coastal Karnataka so much that it is not only a household work but also a source of income and occupation for quite a number of households. This study focuses on the challenges of floriculture farmers, particularly in Shirva village. The primary data obtained through interviews with floriculture farmers located in and around the shriva and agents of the Shirva flower market because so far there is no relevant information available with regard to status of floriculture in this area. The author himself frequently approached the respondents of the village to get details about the study area. Several farmers have indicated that there is lack of suitable technology, lack of proper knowledge about the use of quality planting materials, inadequate or absence of guidance have resulted in low productivity. These have to be made available to the farmers so that the farmers can reap the benefits of technology and increase their productivity.

Keywords: Floriculture, Shriya, Coastal Karnataka, flower market etc.

INTRODUCTION

The State of Karnataka is famous for floricultural activities right from the 18th Century the farmers in Karnataka started growing various traditional flowers due to positive encouragement by different rulers. The flowers in Karnataka are grown either for domestic consumption or for trade activities. The road railways and aircraft facility help to transport these flowers. The traditional flowers such as rose, jasmine, .crossandra, marigold champaka and gladiolas are grown in open conditions. Some of the flowers have been used as cut flowers in recent years. Recently, new crops like lilies, Calla Lily,

iris limonium are also relatively better in quality, have a longer life and always fetch high unit price in the market. Now lot of importance has been given to this sector due to its multiple use, need of the people, high returns to rural people and due to the facility of earning more foreign exchange. Behari (1993) reported that flowers can be used for decoration, adornment, garland making, banquets, extracting perfumes, and preparation of Ayurvedic medicines, gulkand, essence industry, cosmetic preparation and soap manufacturing. Dried flowers, floral craft items and floral

arrangement are used during festivals and marriages.

Flower cultivation occupies a unique position in the life and economy of Udupi and Dakshina Kannada in coastal Karnataka so much that it is not only a household work but also a source of income and occupation for quite a number of households. Jasmine is a shrub with snow-white flowers. About forty species of Jasmine are recorded in India. Many of them are cultivated for their handsome and fragrant flowers. A few of them are grown for the extraction of jasmine oil, a production that has high commercial value. In the coastal Karnataka jasmine only three varieties such as Sambac, pubescens, and grandiflorum are cultivated.

Among the cultivated varieties only the Sambac in mangaluru mallige is the subject matter of our study. Jasmine cultivation in these area is called as 'mallige' cultivation has become famous as "mangaluru mallige". In the above mentioned three variety product distinction is made with reference to the size of the flower and the area of cultivations. The mallige that has grown in Shirva Shankapura are also called partly Shankarpura mallige in local market. But outside it become famous as Mangaluru mallige'.

The growth of floriculture in the recent years is very fast. But the traditional floriculture growers face series of problems in the cultivation. Some of the problems that confront modern floriculture are also identical here. We can find rapid growth of floriculture in India. The factor which are responsible for this are plenty such as climatic conditions, increased demand every day, increase in the per capita income etc. However we can find that much attention has not given to provide infrastructural facilities needed for the development of the sector in the village (Shirva).

METHODOLOGY

The present research the primary data obtained through interviews with floriculture farmers located in and around the Shirva and agents of the Shirva flower market because so far there is no relevant information available with regard to status of floriculture in this area. The author himself frequently approached the respondents of the village to get details about the study area.

THE MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS

1. Transport related problem

A good Transport facility is very necessary for this development of sector. It works like a network, and quick disposal of highly perishable flowers. But this area (Shirva) is a remote village lacking such facility, approached by farmers. When researcher asked about their opinion on transport facility nearly 70% of farmers said that they were facing the problem of transport.

2. Storage related problem

Storage facility is also one of the pre-requisite for maintaining the freshness of the Jasmine flower and other fragrant flowers. The reasons is that the farmers grow only a small quantity of flowers. Cold storage facilities are very essential for the flowers to maintain freshness, qualities, life span. None of the former is having the cold storage facility. Govt. has to provide such facility for them. They were also of the opinion that such facilities on co- operative basis would highly help them to keep their flowers in cold storage and to overcome price fluctuations.

3. Material related problem

The opinion of farmers with regard to material availability and packing is good. But they mentioned that there is lack of improved packing technology and that it costs high. The observation in the field and market clearly shown that they are using banana leaf. As per the planting materials were concerned, majority of the farmers expressed that view that non- availability of quality seeds and improved varieties of

planting materials. They said that this is one of the reason for the low yield.

4. Market related problem

With regard to market, the growers express the constraints that they faced in market. The farmers mention that major problem in the market that they face is that of middlemen. Some of the farmers argue that middlemen do not consent the farmers while selling the produce for a particular price. Regarding market information, there is complete absence of market information on demand and price. The farmers revealed that they were able to get some information from the fellow produces who visited the market on the previous day. This clearly indicate that they were not getting day-to-day information about the previous demand in the market.

6. Production constraint

The cultivation of flower also largely depends on the availability of water resources, like ground water. But there is lack of availability of this ground water. The frequent failure of power supply and water supply is partly responsible for low yielding of crops. The respondents in this area also present their view that it is not possible to cultivate in the entire land because cost of labour is going up, and the labourers are demanding more wages. One of the interesting fact was that about 10 to 15% of remote growers were not been given the information about modern floriculture.

7. Diseases

There has been a growing concern among the farmers about increasing diseases to the floricultural crops. They have little knowledge about the appropriate pesticide for controlling such diseases. They also expressed that prices of these pesticides are high and the quality is low.

8. Constraints for floriculture in modern world

Shirva floriculture area is having close contact with export activities since from 1960's. But export of floricultural product has raised in the last 5 to 10 years.

Since the industry is not performing well and many units have become Sick, many cultivators have closed their cultivation. Some of the factors that have contributed to this situation are.

- Efficient and direct flights are essential requirement for the quick disposal of the product in the other markets. In this area international movement of air flights are very less. So even if these flowers have sufficient demand in the foreign market product of Shirva is in sufficient. The large quantity of flowers are exported to the Bombay market every day. During the rainy season the flower market suffers high in this area as expressed by the farmers.
- High transport charges for the Transport of floriculture units. It is estimated that nearly 100 to 150 rupee has been charged for exporting 1 kg of flower.
- If large quantity is exported in flight, flight booking should be made by the exporter. Even if booking has been made sometimes cancellation of flights cause heavy losses to the exporters.
- There is lack of infrastructure such as cold storage facility at the airports. This leads to the exposure of flowers to open area. The procedure followed at the airport is very difficult.
- The modern floriculture is incurring loss due to high duties & high cost of production.

11. Other constrains

Lack of Transport vans with refrigeration facilities to transport to long distance market, lack of information about world market and non-availability of high quality seeds. Information regarding the market trends in terms of opportunities for new varieties, value- added packaging and development taking place in other part are also not available to the farmers in Shirva. On the whole, the major problems faced by the producers are infrastructure, absence of

technology, lack of inputs such as quality seeds, planting materials 85 absence of co-operative marketing, high transport cost, import duties and irregular supply of power.

It would be tackled on priority basis, if the industry wants to the most of the resources also affects the variability of the unit because of high borrowing rate of units in Shirva. On the whole, the major problems faced by the producers are infrastructure, absence of technology, lack of inputs such as quality seeds, planting materials 85 absence of co-operative marketing, high transport cost, import duties and irregular supply of power. It would be tackled on priority basis, if the industry wants to the most of the resources also affects the variability of the unit because of high borrowing rate of units in Shirva.

1) Lack of experience

Cultivators in this area are not receiving enough technological support from the government. As such many of the operations were carried out in this area as per the direction of their knowledge and some what the direction of the local farmers. It results heavy cost of production on cultivation. They are also not able to achieve the projected yield in many places because entrepreneurs with industrial and business background have entered in floriculture. Many of the farmers have invested heavily in the field by borrowing from the bank without assessing the local conditions. This is one of reason for losses. Apart from this encouragement has to be given for setting up more processing units to get high demand in the other markets in India and Abroad.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The growth of floriculture in the recent years is very fast. But the traditional floriculture growers face series of problems in the cultivation. Some of the problems that confront modern floriculture are also identical here. This study will help us to take some appropriate measures for the development of this sector.

Almost all farmers who are cultivating flowers in the Shirva are small and marginal farmers. This small nature of their holdings comes in the way of undertaking scientific cultivation and even to take up the traditional flower cultivation. The prices in the market are also fluctuating very frequently. Therefore, co-operative farming may be encouraged to realise the economies of scale, minimize price fluctuations, and regulate the supply of the flowers with the demands. To accelerate the rate of adoption of modern techniques flower extension workers of horticulture department should organize production demonstration in the field of small flower growers.

Several farmers have indicated that there is lack of suitable technology, lack of proper knowledge about the use of quality planting materials, inadequate or absence of guidance have resulted in low productivity. These have to be made available to the farmers so that the farmers can reap the benefits of technology and increase their productivity.

There is no suitable technology for storing and marketing of traditional flowers as in the case of modern cut-flowers. As such, they are disposing of these varieties in local markets at whatever prices prevailing in the market. Many a times, they have incurred losses due to glut in the market and delay in payments by the commission agents. These can be set right by opening cold storage facilities in market places and fixing minimum support prices to the flower products on the lines of food crops.

In order to solve this problem the government of Karnataka is encouraging the growers associations and co-operatives by extending financial support to the registered association. Having seen the means of middlemen and frequent fluctuations in price due to demand and supply conditions, few organisations come into existence to help the farmers to overcome these problems. The

organisations such as APEDA, NABARD are prominent among them.

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