



Floriculture: A Rural Employment Opportunity

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Floriculture, or the cultivation of flowers and ornamental plants, has emerged as a thriving and economically significant industry with the potential to create rural jobs. Floriculture is one of the fastest-growing sectors in India. As per National Horticulture Database published by National Horticulture Board, during 2021-22, the area under floriculture production in India was 283 thousand hectares with a production of flower is estimated to be 2295.07 thousand tonnes of loose flowers and 833.16 thousand tonnes of cut flowers (APEDA). Top three flower producing states are Tamil Nadu (20%), Karnataka (13.5%) and West Bengal (12.2%). Recent reports state that major floriculture centres are fast developing in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Maharashtra. Floriculture has been designated as a sunrise industry by the Indian government, which has granted it 100% export-oriented status. Commercial floriculture is a profitable industry because it has greater potential per unit area than the majority of field crops. Floriculture products mainly consist of cut flowers, pot plants, cut foliage, seeds, bulbs, tubers, rooted cuttings and dried flowers or leaves. The country has exported 21024.41 MT of floriculture products to the world worth of 707.81 Crores/ 88.38 USD Millions in 2022-23. Major export destinations (2022-23) are U.S.A, Netherlands, U.K., Germany, United Arab Emirates, Germany and Malaysia. Aside from the aesthetic appeal of flowers, this industry plays an important role in boosting rural economies by creating job opportunities, encouraging entrepreneurship, and contributing to long-term development. Floriculture has witnessed substantial growth globally, driven by increasing consumer demand for flowers, foliage, and ornamental plants. The industry encompasses the cultivation, production, and marketing of flowers, both for domestic consumption and international trade. Flowers are not only in demand for special occasions but have also become an integral part of daily life, influencing home decor, events, and celebrations.

Important Floriculture Vrieties

Rose, Carnation, Chrysanthemum, Gladiolus, Gerbera, Archilea, Gypsophila, Liatris, Orchids, Anthurium, Tulip, and Lilies are the most important floricultural crops in the international cut flower trade. Floriculture crops such as Gerberas, Carnations, and others are grown in greenhouses, whereas Chrysanthemum, Roses, Gaillardia, Lily Marygold, Aster, and Tuberosa etc. are grown in open fields.

Rural Employment Opportunities

One of the most significant impacts of floriculture is its ability to generate employment, particularly in rural areas. Unlike many other agricultural activities, floriculture often requires more manual labor, creating job opportunities for a diverse range of individuals. These include the production of cut flowers, loose flowers, flower bulbs, potted plants, and

landscape plants; the use of tissue culture to produce large quantities of high-quality planting material; the addition of value through the use of dry flowers; floral crafts; landscape gardening; the reduction of pollution through the use of plants; and vertical gardening. From planting and nurturing to harvesting and packaging, each stage of the floriculture process involves skilled and unskilled labor, providing employment for people with varying levels of expertise.

Cultivation and Farm Labor: Floriculture farms require a dedicated workforce for planting, maintaining, and harvesting flowers. This labour-intensive nature of floriculture ensures that a substantial number of individuals are employed in these operations. In rural areas, where alternative employment opportunities may be limited, floriculture can be a vital source of income for local communities.

Entrepreneurship Opportunities: Floriculture also opens avenues for entrepreneurship in rural areas. As the demand for flowers continues to rise, individuals can establish their small flower farms or nurseries. For educated unemployed youth, starting and operating floriculture crop nurseries for commercial purposes can be an appealing entrepreneurial opportunity. There are numerous opportunities for start-ups and entrepreneurs in the value addition of flowers as well as secondary product development based on the compounds derived from the flowers. This not only contributes to local economic development but also empowers individuals to become self-reliant entrepreneurs. Moreover, the cultivation of unique and indigenous flowers can create niche markets, enhancing the economic viability of small-scale floriculture ventures.

Post-Harvest Activities: Beyond the cultivation phase, floriculture provides employment opportunities in post-harvest activities such as sorting, packaging, handling transportation and storage. Post-harvest technologies require skilled human resources to maintain flower export quality, produce value-added products, and market flowers internationally. To create a workforce in this promising industry, training in post-harvest and value addition technologies will be organised. This is particularly significant in rural areas where infrastructure and logistics support may be less developed. These activities create a supply chain that involves a diverse set of roles, ensuring a broader spectrum of employment opportunities.

Export and Trade: Floriculture is often an export-oriented industry, with countries engaging in the global trade of flowers and ornamental plants. This opens up opportunities for rural communities to participate in international trade networks. The demand for locally grown and unique varieties of flowers can turn small-scale floriculture operations into key players in the global market, further boosting employment prospects.

Conclusion

Floriculture stands out as an industry that not only contributes to the beauty of our surroundings but also plays a crucial role in strengthening rural economies through employment generation. The cultivation of flowers and ornamental plants provides diverse opportunities for individuals in rural areas, from traditional farm labour to entrepreneurship ventures and participation in global trade. As the demand for flowers continues to rise, the floriculture sector is poised to remain a key driver of rural employment, fostering sustainable development and improving the livelihoods of communities around the world.