

## **Flower Business Flourish Floriculture: A Study on Bangladesh.**

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**ABSTRACT:** Flower being introduced as a business item to international market by Colombia in the early eighteenth century has attracted many other countries as a means of earning foreign currencies. Flowers as business item came being into the market of Bangladesh before 1983. Over the years, this business has taken a good shape in domestic market. The study reveals that because of natural advantages. Such as fertile soil, good climate conditions and other facilities, a bright prospect of flower business and floriculture are ahead of Bangladesh. But we are being deprived of producing and marketing flowers efficiently in domestic as well as in foreign markets because of inadequate infrastructural facility, poor packaging, lack of technical knowhow in production and marketing, inefficient management system and so on. Had these problems been removed or at least minimized, Bangladesh could have earned a lot of foreign currencies as India and some other countries have been doing. This article starts with a clear focus on flower business and floriculture, objectives of the study, scope, methodology, limitations. And the later sections cover with data analyses, findings. Finally, the study has come with some suggestions to make people aware of the flower business and conclusion.

**Keywords:** Flower, Flower Business, Floriculture, Flower Marketing, Flourishing Floral industry.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Flower is the symbol of beauty. Flowers have been regarded as an embodiment of human taste and aesthetics. The floral industry is one of the major industries in many developing and underdeveloped countries. The flower farming is an important and profitable enterprise in the Agriculture sector of Bangladesh. Nursery and flower business has rapidly expanded in the capital of Bangladesh as elsewhere in the country over the last two decades, with most demand coming from the middle-class people, experts said. The number of plant farms supplying both horticultural and floricultural plants was minimal in the 1990s, which has increased to 10,200 today, while annual sales jumped from Tk 250 million to Tk 20 billion [US\$ 3.23 to 258.7 million] today, industry data shows. Flower is a widely used product around the world. Global export of Cut flowers and flower buds for bouquets, fresh or dried (H.S. 0603) was UDS 7375,7680,8387,8480 and 8442 million in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively. Top 10 Cut flowers-exporting countries are the Netherlands, Colombia, Ecuador, Kenya, Belgium, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Italy, Germany and Israel. Top 10 Cut flowers-importing countries are the United States of America, Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Russian Federation, France, Japan, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland. In Bangladesh, growth of commercial flower production can be traced back to early 70s to mid 80s when large-scale commercial production started in Jikargacha upazila of Jessore district (Sultana, 2003). Later it speeded largely in Jessore, Savar, Chuandanga, Mymensingh and Gazipur, Narayngonj which turned to be major flower production belt in Bangladesh. Flower markets and flower auction centers and the production of flowers turn out to be about 8000 to 10000 tons per annum (BBS, 2008). At present approximately 8000 farmers are engaged in floriculture. Cultivation of flower is reported to give 3-5 times and 1.5-2 times more returns than obtained from rice and vegetable cultivation, respectively (Dadlani,2003). Now- a-days, 10,0000 hectares of land covers flower cultivation taking the lead by Jessore district. More than 5,000 resilient farmers are growing flower and foliage in the country and about 1, 50,000 people are directly or indirectly involved in floriculture business as their sole livelihood (Chowdhury, 2010). Numbers of lands and farmers involved in floriculture have been increased day by day. Flower marketing is not fully organized in Bangladesh. Major traders for flowers can be found in Shahbag, Farmgate and Gulshan in Dhaka. Substantial trade can also be found in Chittagong and big cities. Now it has spread too many other specific areas of the cities. A good number of flower shops are also established in district towns. There are reportedly around 4000 retail shops of flowers in the country. Forty percent of the retail shops are located in Dhaka, while Chittagong and Sylhet having 25% each and the remaining 10% of the shops are in other district towns. At a wholesale flower market (in Dhaka), some 700 traders do flower business worth at least\$16000 every day. To satisfy the market demand, various flowers such as Chrysanthemum, Tuberoses, and Gladiolus have been imported from India and Orchids, Gerbera, Anthurium and Thai-rose from Thailand every year. Bangladesh has to spend roughly TK.2-3 million in importing flowers and ornamental plants from abroad. The traders said some 20 types of flowers are available in Bangladesh; the local ones include Rose, Rojanigandha, Gada, Lotus, Gladiolus and Chandramallika etc. At least 20 business enterprises and 4 associations are directly engaged in growing and export of flowers in Bangladesh (Ahmed,1995:5). According

to EPB export data, the country exported cut flowers and foliage worth \$16.58m during July-November 2013, an amount that is 15.2% more than that of the export target, report BSS. A study by Hossain and Rahman (1994) reveals that the capital investment in flower business has been increasing, the total number of shop exhibits an increasing trend, merchandizing patterns have been diversified, the scale of flower made products is rising and all sales are for cash.

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the study is to find out the perception and awareness of the consumer towards flowers in Bangladesh. The research is focused on the perspective of the consumer and their views towards flower, what are their needs and wants. Others objectives are as below:

- To find out the total conditions of flower business in Bangladesh.
- To evaluate the present export performance of flowers in the context of global market.
- To know the floriculture condition of Bangladesh.
- To explore the constraints of flower business in Bangladesh.
- To analyze the existing flower marketing system in Bangladesh.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

The article has prepared by the primary and secondary data and information. Data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected through Observation, interview to the targeted respondents. Secondary data has been collected from books, published documents, survey reports, internet and journals. Sample size is 10 flower traders and 10 flower farmers. Data have been processed through computer.

## **IV. LIMITATIONS**

- Secondary information is not available.
- Books, articles, journals are not updated.
- Update information is not available regarding flower business and floriculture.
- Difficulty of getting information from respondents.

## **V. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Flower business is the activities to create and increase the demand of flower in the market. As flower is the agricultural commodity and most of its production depends on nature. Flower business is spreading its fragrance far and wide whether in form of international Tulip or Orchids or national Roses or Lilies which available in the market. Flower is a horticulture product that is commonly loved by everyone having a minimum sense of pleasure and feeling (Hossain and Rahman 1994:6) by and large; love for flowers is ingrained in us. But in recent years it seems that a revolution has taken place particularly in Dhaka citizen's attitude towards flowers (Shams 1999). At the primary stage, flowers were mainly used by human beings to provide interesting ornamental effects and its business was confined around the Hotels of the Capital and business cities of the World (Hossain and Rahman 1994:6). It was Columbia which first introduced flowers as a business item to the international market. The huge success of Columbia in selling flowers to the international market inspired others countries namely Netherlands, Columbia, Israel, Holland, Mexico, Peru, Kenya etc involved in exporting flowers. The total world export of flowers during 2002-2003 exceeded to 1.37 billion dollars (www.globtdinfo.au2004). According to the experts the trade is growing at a highly encouraging rate of 11 percent a year. This has enabled countries like Columbia, Guatemala, Germany, Netherland, Kenya, India and some other Asian countries to think about the trade of flower as well (Ahmed, 1995:6). The typical Japanese consumer spends on average of \$50 a year on floral products. In Europe, the German consumer spends over \$30 and even the British, who traditionally prefer to grow their own, doubled their spending on fresh flowers to \$25 in the last five years (Ahmed, 1995:5). In 1992, the Netherland, the world's leading flower producer supplied more than 160000 tons of flowers to Germany, the number one flower-importing country. Moreover, it provided 50% of all the flowers bought in France, Britain and Switzerland (Ahmed, 1995:5). A writings of Shykh Seraj (2007) stated that there is a huge potentiality of flower business in Bangladesh. It is potential market to export for China. Bangladesh exported Cut flowers, worth \$16.58m, during July-November 2013 into a few destinations like India, Pakistan, Italy, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, the United States, South Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Japan, Germany, Britain, Denmark and France. Our stake in the global trade of Cut flowers is negligible i.e. 0.3 per cent. We have good potential in the production of Cut flowers due to favorable environment and fertile land; it's a cash cow crop for the farmers (Abedin, joynal: 03, October2013, Financial Express).

## VI. OVERVIEW OF FLORICULTURE IN BANGLADESH

Flower traders have said that flowers demand have been increased with increasing income of citizen in Bangladesh. Now various festivals have been observed enthusiastically with colorful flowers, ceremony of family, business and state's festival have not been observed without flowers. Even fresh flower is essential in daily life for decoration. Floriculture has been expanding in various districts in Bangladesh, mostly in Jessore, Jhinaidah, Chuadanga, Mymensingh, Gazipur, Manikgonj, Tangail, Narayngonj, Rangamati. Almost 16 thousands farmers are engaged in floriculture, they are cultivating flower in 12 thousand acres in Bangladesh; Rose, Rojonidondha, Ganda, Jervera, Gladioli have been cultivated for commercial purpose, flowers of 800 core taka supplied from Bangladeshi farmers in various festivals, national days and daily's demand, according to flower businessman- 20 lac people are engaged in flower business that not only in floriculture also in transports and sales (Protom Alo, 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2016). According to Bangladesh Statistical Bureau (BBS)- The Rose has been cultivated at 189 acres in the 2012-13 FY, but that has been increased at 281 acres and The Ganda's cultivation has been increased from 926 acres to 1467 acres, The Rojonigondha's cultivation has been increased from 666 acres to 2339 acres in 2013-14 FY. According to the report'2015 prepared by Bangladesh Tarrif Commission- A farmer earns 25 lac taka by the cultivation of the Jervera, 2 lac taka from the Rose, 1 lac taka from the Ganda and also 1 lac taka from the Gladioli per acre. Whereas a farmer loses 3 to 4 thousands taka by paddy cultivation per bigha in Jessore district that's why the farmers of jessor and also farmers of other districts involved in floriculture. According to the daily Prothom Alo's report (30<sup>th</sup> April,2016)- Rojonigondha, Rose, Ganda, Chandramollika have been cultivated by the farmers of Bangladeshi efficiently and effectively, but now they are cultivating import-alternative flower like Jerbera, Gladulas even Orchid. So those flowers have been not imported from Malayasia and Thiland. An Orchid firm has been established at Valuka in Mymensingh which area is 22 acres named Dipta Orchid, this flower has been supplying in Dhaka and Cox-bazar based five star hotels and other's hotel.

## VII. CASE STUDY ON KOLAGACHIA OF NARAYNGONJ IN BANGLADESH

Kolagachia is the union of Bondor upozila in Narayngonj district. Floriculture has been expanded in Narayngonj district of Bangladesh. Kolagachia is the most floriculture area in Narayngonj. Flower cultivation day by day has been expanded in Madhoppasha, Sabdee, Digholdee, Nreshong, Mohonpur, Kolabag, Zeodhora, Adompur, Noyanogor, and Mukfoldee area of Kolagachia, farmers are going to flower cultivation from paddy & other agriculture corps and farmers are highly interested in flower cultivation because of more income and daily sale in cash, though floriculture is more laborous than others corps cultivation. Kolagachia is full-off flower with various colors, here farmers are cultivating Ganda, Dalia, Gladiolus, Chery, Calendola, Star, Jipsi etc.flowers, farmers and labors are busy with pluck the flowers, binding the flower bundle, preparing garland, etc. According to Agriculture Extension Directeriate, Bondor Upazila office, Sub-Assistant Agriculture officer Mr.Jainal Abedin informed that flower is cultivating in 150 hectares land of this upazila, but most of the land in Kolagachia, florists have changed their lives, increased income, purchased new land, expanded various business & activities through floriculture and also given past data of floriculture, which are given below:

Name of Upazila	Year	Land Area of Floriculture ( Hectres)
Bondor Upazila, Narayngonj (Kolagachia Union, mostly renown on floriculture in Bondor Upazila)	2011	35
	2012	60
	2013	95
	2014	120
	2015	140
	2016	150

Source: Agriculture Extension Directorate, Bondor Upazila office, Narayngonj.

## VIII. PROSPECTS OF FLOWER EXPORTING

Environment and climate are very much suitable for flower cultivation and flower market which is extending day by day. Each and every year flower market is getting the growth at the rate of 11%. In our country we also can increase the production of flower by applying tissue culture system. Most of the flower market in the world is being dominated by Netherlands, Holland, U.S.A, Germany, France, India, Pakistan, Italy, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Japan, Great Britain and Denmark. Kenya, Israel, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, Uganda appeared as major flower exporting countries as the cut flower trade is a multibillion dollar world industry with the United States, Germany, Italy, France, Japan, Switzerland being major world consumers. According to flower specialist, International flower market is very prosperous but in case of surviving in the competition of flower market farmers of Bangladeshi of course has to develop the varieties of flowers as well as the packing system and also develop the grading system, processing & distribution system, storage etc. At first Bangladesh exported flower to Australia and England in 1919 and its

cultivation took place in Jamalpur district but after that Govt. had no taken any kind initiative to accelerate the export. Next to that attention is given to flower cultivation again in 1979 and from 1995 for exporting flower. In the fiscal 1993-94 got 12000 taka by exporting flower and in 1994 it reached at 16000 taka. Now the total scenario has changed and in the fiscal year 2003-04 earned a foreign currency of almost 4.5 core taka, in the year 2004-2005 it increases by the 10 times of the previous fiscal year and it was 40 core taka ( Amardesh,06/08/2005). According to EPB export data, the country exported cut flowers and foliage worth \$ 16.58 million during July-November 2013, an amount that is 15.2% more than that of the export target, report BSS. So the study has been observed that Bangladesh has great possibility to exporting flowers in international flower market and also has great chance to flourish floriculture.

## **IX. FINDINGS**

Cut flowers sector in Bangladesh is suffering from various obstacles. Major barriers of this sector are:

1. Little knowledge about flower preservation: Farmers use jute bags for packaging flowers. When these flowers reach markets in Dhaka, Chittagong or other divisional or district level towns, they dry up. Many flowers are wasted during transportation.
2. Absence of cold storage/cold chain to transport or preserve fresh flowers: There is no cold storage in Bangladesh to preserve or store flowers during emergency. Therefore a large amount of flowers perish in the field or market.
3. Absence of backward linkage industry: Bangladesh is producing only a few types of flowers from the inception. It is now essential to increase the variety of flowers to meet the demand of the local and global markets. But there is no system of supplying variety of flower seeds or plants to enlarge the basket. Seeds, fertilizers, preservation technology, packaging variety, i.e., backward linkage industries could energize the sector.
4. Absence of forward linkage industry: Perfume industry, herbal cosmetic industry etc. forward linkage industry of Cut flowers are absent in Bangladesh. Therefore, industrial use of Bangladeshi fresh flowers is almost zero.
5. Absence of permanent flower market in major cities: There are no permanent wholesale flower markets in Dhaka, Chittagong, or any other divisional/district towns of Bangladesh.
6. Unavailability of large amount industrial loan: Cut flower growing is considered a farming activity. Policy-makers do not yet consider the industrial or commercial aspects of flower. As a result, flower growers or businesses get small amount of agriculture loan instead of industrial/SME loans. But cultivating high-priced flowers like Gerbera needs green house/sheds. Making a green house/flower shed is costly.
7. Poor knowledge about flower export: Hardly any farmer knows how to export Cut flowers. A very limited number of businesses are involved with export occasionally.
8. Knowledge about value addition: Bangladeshi flower growers/businessmen are not aware about post-harvest value addition of flowers.
9. Scarcity of other support staffs: Fertilizer, seed, polyethylene sheet, water for irrigation, new variety of flowers etc. are not easily available in the local market. Therefore, farmers find it difficult to grow quality flowers in Bangladesh.

There could be a debate whether Cut flowers are farming or industrial product. It may be argued that as flowers are cultivated in the field, collected and sold; Cut flowers are an agricultural crop. Government agencies like Agriculture Extension Department, Agriculture Research Council etc. will promote, nourish the Cut flowers sub-sector.

But as Cut flowers are widely traded, exported, used as raw materials in perfume or herbal cosmetics, herbal medicine etc, these may be put under industrial agro-processing sector. Packaging, transportation, ware house, cold storage/cold chain etc. are directly linked with the sub-sector. Therefore, Cut flowers could be considered as an agro-processed industrial product. Government agencies working to promote enterprises/industries like the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation (SME Foundation) etc. could play a role to develop and promote the Cut flowers sub-sector.

Whatever the classification is, Cut flowers are a very promising sector offering higher return. So this foreign exchange-earning sector should get priority from all agencies to develop.

## **X. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following recommendations could be considered to develop and promote the Cut flowers sub-sector:

1. Teaching Flower Preservation System: Most important support to the flower growers could be teaching them how to preserve flowers for a comparatively longer period.
2. Supplying modern flower packaging materials: Non-perishable flower packaging system could help the flower growers to add more value to flowers.

3. Assisting in development of cold chain: Government/donor agencies/ development partners could take the lead in developing a preservation-friendly cold chain (storage & transport) system for the flower growers.
4. Establishing permanent flower wholesale market: City corporations, municipal authorities and district administrators could establish permanent wholesale flower markets.

## **XI. CONCLUSION**

Flower business should be needed more attention and care for trading as perishable goods. Bangladesh has favorable climatic condition and natural competitiveness to take targeted measures for local and export market expansion. There is ample opportunity for increasing the profit from flower production due to increased demand. But post harvest losses affected the profit of flower grower income from floriculture has a remarkable contribution to increase total household income. Farmers and traders are showing keen interest in floriculture and flower business in Bangladesh, as a high value of agricultural crops, floriculture shall receive proper prioritization within public planning and initiatives. For small, medium and large farmers, income from different sources was also increased than before situation of practicing commercial floriculture. Hence, commercial floriculture has a remarkable positive impact on increasing total household income. There is scope remains for the future researchers to conduct study on different related aspects of floriculture and flower business like pre & post flower production condition, flower marketing, economic potential of dried flower and so forth.

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