



Floriculture-An Emerging Sector in Bangladesh

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Editorial

Preamble

The culture of Bangladesh is deeply ingrained with flowers. This nation has long engaged in the production of flowers as well as the applications of floriculture products. At present it is not only being recognized as a symbol of purity and beauty, but also a potential revenue earner. In Bangladesh, floriculture has become a profitable agribusiness endeavor with a larger potential for profit than other agricultural crops. The primary products traded in the floriculture industry are cut flowers, foliage plants, propagules of ornamental plants, and production inputs like as pots, growing media, pesticides, etc. Cut flower development has brought a dramatic increase of the farmer's income in Bangladesh. Flower trading worth of near about 3 million \$ has been recorded at a local flower market, Jashore district simply on the occasion of spring festival and valentine day of the year 2024. This is the testimony of booming flower market in Bangladesh. At present, flower cultivation has adopted commercially in 26 Zillas (districts) out of 64 of our country and the estimated area is around 10,000 hectares of land. About 30 lakhs people are directly or indirectly involved in this business. Changes in people's lifestyles, expectations and taste, due to a steady growth in income, has also contributed to the rise in demand for flowers. Gerbera, Rose, Gladiolus, Tuberose, Orchid, Marigold, Liliium etc. are now being commercially cultivated in Bangladesh. Moreover, Aglaonema, Aralia, Diffenbachia, Dracaena, Ferns, Coleus, Croton etc. are also being added in commercial floriculture as foliage and ornamental plants.

The flower market in the country started to expand significantly from 2000 onward with rapid urbanization

and cultural proliferation with new festivals like Valentine's Day, 1st Falgun etc. The annual turnover in the flower market is near about 150 million \$. This sector has influenced the national GDP growth as well as employment generation in Bangladesh. So, commercial flower production is a profitable venture which can contribute to boost up the national economy of Bangladesh.

Potentials and Prospects of Bangladesh Floriculture

At present flower cultivation is more profitable in Bangladesh than other crops like rice and vegetables (3-5 times and 1.5-2 times more returns than rice and vegetable cultivation, respectively). Due to shorter production cycle and increasing domestic demand farmers are very much interested to shift their business to the floriculture sector. Bangladesh has advantage due to its favourable climate, topography, lower labour cost and relatively low production cost for growing many flower and ornamental plants which can help the development of flower industry. For quick returns and good market prospects, a vast area of agricultural land has been turned into flower growing areas. It is very positive that a good number of large farmers are coming up to invest money in this area.

Besides cut flower, foliage and ornamental plants also may be a good item for floriculture trade. The tropical climatic conditions available in the country are ideal for multiplication of many leading ornamental plants of the global trade. The high humidity levels help the plants to grow quickly and give them a vibrant, healthy appearance. Another business is going to start to supply indoor and outdoor plants to the various offices, restaurants etc. Cut greens, or foliage, are another significant output of floriculture.

Using different fragrant flowers the oil extraction industry has a bright future as flower oil is widely used in various industries such as perfumes, cosmetics, food and beverage etc. Bangladesh has the potentials in that area as a large number of fragrant indigenous flowers are available here those could be used in the perfume and oil industry. Considering profitability an online business has been started in Bangladesh mainly with potted plants for indoor and roof top gardening. Moreover, various potting media, cocopeat, compost, vermi-compost, tricho-compost are also selling via online and in the market as well. Besides, so many services like repotting of indoor plants, pick-up and delivery services, consultations for selection and management of indoor plants and change the plants after specific time of intervals in home/office/hospital/restaurant etc., are also observing in Bangladesh at present.

Flower Export-Import Scenario of Bangladesh

Though Bangladesh exports very poor portion of the world flower demand but it produces the most attractive flower items of the world in a lower price than the most flower exporting country. There is a huge opportunity for Bangladesh to grab the international flower market due to its very much cheap production cost. Simultaneously, to meet up the market demand, various flowers, such as chrysanthemum, liliun, carnation, orchids, rose, anthurium are being imported from China, India, Vietnam and Thailand every year. Flower imports still represent somewhere between 20 to 30% of the market in Bangladesh.

Employment and Income Generation

In addition to producing more revenue, the floriculture industry has demonstrated a great deal of promise for creating jobs for rural people, especially for women who can work close to their households, thereby more easily managing their jobs and families. Earlier the women were mainly involved for plucking, bunching and making flower garland but now they are being engaged in production level also. As rural women in Bangladesh strive to become more economically independent, so future agro-technology should not only be eco-friendly but also 'women friendly' with significant support from the public and private sectors.

Conclusion

Floriculture has the potential to expand more in Bangladesh in terms of both production and area. Along with playing a vital role in employment generation and poverty reduction to make a profitable agribusiness, floriculture can also play a key role in environmental protection by reducing air pollution. Though Bangladesh floriculture is facing some challenges also but by the active participation of public and private organizations the industry is rising, no doubt and it is the ideal time for research organizations, academic institutions, private organization and flower growers association to come forward and collaborate closely for the benefit of farmers, consumers, and the nation's economy.