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A precise discourse of floriculture entrepreneurship in West Bengal

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Abstract

Flowers are significant in Indian culture. And India is a flower-full nation. Numerous of them are symbolic. A traditional agricultural method in India floriculture has a lot of promise for creating lucrative income streams for small and marginal farmers. It has become an internationally and in India profitable agribusiness in recent years. Marketing of perishable crops like flowers are always needed to be handled with proper and special management. It has been noted that the states of Karnataka and Maharashtra export fresh flowers, whilst the states of Tamil Nadu and West Bengal export dried flowers. Various initiatives in response to the marketing and upliftment of the horticultural sector have already been proposed by the government. The state of West Bengal has grown increasingly alluring during the past ten years. Farm and non-farm products have been acknowledged as one of the major alternative options and various necessary policy initiatives in the context of overcoming the ongoing problems of unemployment, poverty, and a significant portion of people migrating, which causes imbalance and diversification of economics. Flower cultivation in Nadia district is a very vital concerned area of West Bengal. Just two hours from the capital of Calcutta, Khirai a place in West Bengal is known as the "Valley of Flowers" because it is home to fields of flowers ranging from marigold to chrysanthemums. The government should be involved in creating a proper "Model Village" with the assistance of many non-governmental organisations.

Keywords: Flowers, management, government, NGOs, upliftment, initiatives

Introduction

Flowers are significant in Indian culture. India is a flower-filled nation. Numerous of them are of significant value. In India, floriculture is a traditional kind of agriculture with enormous potential for helping small and marginal farmers to establish lucrative side businesses. It has been a successful agribusiness in recent years, both in India and internationally (Vahoniya *et al.*, 2018) [29]. The economic aspects of flower cultivation were recognized after a very long time (Kumar *et al.*, 2011) [32]. The floriculture business is one of the mainstream economic activities in parts of West Bengal state. The district of Purba Midnapore and some portions of the district of Nadia are the major cultivators of the horticultural segment of flowers. Flower business in these areas is suffering from several problematic factors like non-abundance or lack of fruitful and disease-free planting substances, limitation of logistical operations and timely financial support. The demand of cut flowers is growing in tremendous manner. Fetching a substantial outcome from a small portion of land is enhancing and uplifting the quality of life of the farmers (Das, 2012) [8]. It has been argued that the merchandising of less shelf-life crops like floret packs are everytime needed to be handled with care and special arrangements. In due course, as the post-harvest maintenance and value-added chains of the loose and cut flowers are majorly clumsy in nature so for that reason measures should be taken to enhance the consciousness of the buyers and also to bring a progressive path in the infrastructural facilities (Roy *et al.*, 2015) [28]. A study in West Bengal found that women who are housewives are being considered as less empowered than those who are involved in the flower trading business and marketing than those who are the agents having a higher level of income. The study has been concluded as important because the floriculture sector has recently come out as a very quick-developing merchandise and business concept in the state of West Bengal which has led to diversification, generation of several employments and lastly value addition in the areas of primary activities (Sarker and Chakrabarti, 2013) [25]. Flower enterprises has emerged as a very vital production aspect in consequence of advanced scientific technology.

But in due course there are several limitations which curtail down the ongoing progress of the floret merchandise. The techniques of tissue culture have been improvised for several cultural practices on necessity basis for economical and merchantile benefit (Datta, 2019) ^[28]. Floriculture has emerged as a very important section of the horticultural sector. It has been taken into account that newly harvested flowers are being exported from the parts of Karnataka, Maharashtra and the dried flowers from the states of Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Several initiatives in response to the merchandise and upliftment of the horticultural quarter have been already proposed by the government (Biswas *et al.*, 2019) ^[3]. During the examination of market efficiency in West Bengal it was being concluded that the study did not reinforce the floret merchandise in the zone of alluvial soil in West Bengal but in actual context the orderliness of market hampers with the increment in the number of market agents and negotiators in a marketing channel (Sarker and Chakravorty, 2005) ^[26].

Scenario of the flower business in recent era

Taking in account the commercial aspect of the Orchid, it may be given as a remedial measure for concerted efforts and more credit inclusion towards Research and Development, more efforts towards infrastructural development along-with proper extension services in this particular sector (Lepcha *et al.*, 2020) ^[15]. A SWOT Analysis regarding the agri-entrepreneurship done in the Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal concluded that it is perpetual process for every person to maintain its livelihoods and the activities related to entrepreneurship in various aspects (Roy and Tiwari, 2022) ^[24]. Floriculture occupies a vital standard in the hilly regions of Darjeeling, West Bengal. The hills of Darjeeling are the dwelling origin to countless orchids like Cymbidium, Vanda, Dendrobium, Lycaste, Phaius and Arundina. The important critical areas for the intended growth and improvement are proper entrepreneurship, the development of infrastructure, adequate access to information, and information providence. Entrepreneurs are needed to increase the output of large quantities of modern, disease-free seeds and plant materials with precise logistical facilities, including correct storage, post-harvest technologies, and marketing (Chakraborty, 2019) ^[5]. The area of cultivation for floriculture has expanded from 53,000 hectares in 1993–1994 to 2,48,000 hectares in 2015–16, according to the National Horticultural Board (NHB). According to Kumar and Sainath (2022) ^[13], Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka make up around 77 percent of the region. India with no doubt an agrarian country and majority of the population depends on agriculture. The rural non-farm activities comprises of wide range of operations which in return support various range of income generating or economic activities. The study has been majorly done in regard to the floriculture industry in India (Jayalakshmi *et al.*, 2019) ^[10]. Around 77 percent of the flower cultivation area comes under the states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka (Kumar and Vazhacharickal, 2020) ^[12].

The major cultivating zone of flowers in West Bengal

Flower cultivation in Nadia district is a very vital concerned area of West Bengal. In the aforesaid district, floriculture is taking the positions of several other crops and getting

incorporated in mainstream business day by day. Flower based industries are getting an overall development in a gradual phase. Facilities of irrigation, knowledge fetching, training facilities, government subsidies, advantageous ecology for agriculture are in charge for the development of flower business and cultivation in Chapra village (Biswas, 2013) ^[4].

A location in the state of West Bengal called Khirai, which is only two hours from the capital city of Calcutta, is known as the state's own flower valley and pastures, with fields of flowers ranging from marigolds to chrysanthemums. Horticulture is the Khirai people's main and most important kind of occupation (Mohanta, 2022) ^[17].

Measurement of the influencing factors for the development of Floriculture has been made in the Dokanda village, Khirai, Panskura in the district of Purba Medinipur. Due to the positive and favourable conditions of the geographical environment the valley of Kansai River has tremendous potentiality of the enhancement of the floriculture industry. Government with the support of several Non-governmental organizations should be involved in developing a proper "Model Village" (Maity *et al.*, 2021) ^[21].

In the Purba Medinipur district in West Bengal state, horticulture has been a particularly significant, unique type of agriculture. The local economy may greatly benefit from gardening, but some problems, such as a lack of cold storing, market offices, proper street facilities, etc., are big obstacles. (Kundu and Som, 2020) ^[14].

Case Studies

1. The locale of the study is Kudalipara village in Darjeeling. The farmers gives statement that they can tie upto 10 to 12 flower garlands in just 180 minutes and just earns around 150 rupees per day. The flower trade majorly flourishes with proper connectivity with several gateways as Siliguri serves as the major route way to the north-eastern states, thus, helping West Bengal to flourish in flower business (Singh, 2022) ^[27].
2. Bleak monsoon has put hamper in the production of floriculture cultivation in West Bengal. The locale of the study is South 24 Parganas district where a grower named as Nashkar would produce 1000 bundles of tuberose and 1000 quintal of marigold during a normal monsoon. Dealyed monsoon puts a drastic negative impact on the production. (Chakraborty, S., 2019) ^[6]
3. West Bengal's 'flower village' which is Khirai has helped the farmers a lot in acquiring certain amount of money by having a proper employment from the flower business. A farmer called Pintoo Halder, who is long time vegetable and fruit seller has made a statement that during winter production of flowers increases and the time is best to witness the blooming process (Basu, 2022) ^[2]

Constraints in flower cultivation and its business

Poor marketing efficiency, Exploiting role of intermediaries and Mahajans, lack of new technologies etc. are the big problems for floriculture industry. To cope with this situation a well-developed Floriculture Information System is needed which can serve as a platform for information and knowledge repository for the floriculture industry (Mondal, 2017) ^[18]. Unanticipated nature of the climatic conditions and its aberrations with due time has been perceived as the major

constraint among the florists (Kaur *et al.*, 2020) ^[11]. A case study being done on the livelihood activity of the farmers in a village in West Bengal. It was being found that small-scale farmers are not involved actively in the flower cultivation and also having no access to the export market of flowers. Lastly, the flower cultivators were having less reach to proper training and facing the issue of quick soil properties declination. (Latulippe, 2008) ^[30].

Suggestions

Economics and sustainable development can provide a fresh perspective to the issue of economy and welfare through entrepreneurship (Pattanayak and Padhy, 2022) ^[22]. Change agents of extension and staffs should be able to be empathetic towards the farmers mental and emotional situation. Certain awareness and participative activities should be performed among the farmers to observe their attitude in order to express out and convey their stress, needs and urges (Padhy and Raju, 2020). The floriculture farmers should learn the entrepreneurial skills. The 21st century brings challenges which make entrepreneurial skills inevitable for the entrepreneurs (Pattanayak and Padhy, 2020) ^[20]. Farmers can adhere themselves to mass media channels for updated news and maintaining their participation in social activities to make a remedial measure for tough times. The farmer community should involve themselves in social works, should go through interesting and knowledgable books, spend time in gay and humorous activities in order to avoid stress. (Padhy *et al.*, 2020) ^[19]. It has been suggested that Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) should be bought more into light in order to provide a single-window solution in accordance to multipurpose problems of the farmers and making a direct linkage to the markets. It has been proposed that the FPCs should be promoted in different areas of the state in relation to increase the income proportion of the farmers (Das and Mandal, 2021) ^[21]. In order to boost the cultivation of the flowers it has been suggested to use improved floriculture practices, improvement in the systems of marketing along-with proper import of new floricultural technology and releasing new pest and disease resistant varieties with the involvement of scientists (Rahim and Sarkar, 1997) ^[23].

The Indian government has mostly classified floral enterprising and merchandising as a top business and obtained a high export-oriented status. Therefore, given the current environment, new initiatives and programmes are required to expand India's floriculture sector (Jayalakshmi *et al.*, 2019) ^[10].

Conclusion

Precision farming is a science which is dependent on observation and the response to the intra-field variations. Though precision farming has an important role in the agricultural and horticultural sector, but due to the high cost of the technological advances and lack of high speed internet, it has lost popularity (Mandal *et al.*, 2021) ^[7]. The cut flower business is known to be profitable both in India and major flowering producing states like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan (agrifarming.in, 2021). In 2018, India held a 0.40 percent share of the global export market for floricultural activities, which may be attributable to shortcomings in upholding international quality standards, a lack of adequate integrated cold chain management procedures, an unorganised market,

and improper distribution channels (Anumala and Kumar, 2021) ^[1]. West Bengal has been counted as number one in cut flower production and Tamil Nadu has been counted as number one in loose flower production (Vahoniya *et al.*, 2018) ^[29].

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