

FLOWER MARKETING IN BELGAUM CITY: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract: Flower industry is emerging as a blooming business not only in India but in other countries as well. Flower industry / floriculture denotes cultivation of flowers, developing new varieties of commercial value, sale of flowers as raw commodities, processing, distribution etc, for the local and international market. This paper attempted to understand the demand and retail marketing of cut flowers in Belgaum city, as the demand for flowers in this area is also increasing at a faster rate with the development of new urban/semi-urban areas and rise in the standard of living of people with the corporate people making their entry to these areas. This study was based on primary data and interviewed 120 flower sellers in Belgaum city of Karnataka state. The study highlights that majority of the customer are casual buyers in study area. This represents a large untapped prospective consumer base. Well organized and planned marketing efforts will be required to break the inertia. The frequency of customers buying flowers for presentation (as bouquet) is not very high. Modern cut flowers can fulfil an affordable gifting option for the people.

Key words: Flowers, sellers, customers, marketing, income.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The use of flowers has a central place in many of the Indian cultural and religious practices. Religious worship does not take place without offering of flowers occasions such as marriage and even welcoming some one calls for an offer of flowers. In addition women in some parts of the country adorn themselves with flowers. Daily arrangements of expensive cut flowers are an inherent part of decoration in luxury hotels and affluent homes. Flowers are increasingly given on happy occasions and on sad occasion to cheer those affected. As a result of improvement in the general level of well being in the world and growing middle class has led to burgeoning flowers industry.

India is blessed with a diversity of agro-climatic conditions prevailing in the different regions in the country. A wide range of climatic and edaphic conditions in the Indian subcontinent ensure that it is ideally suited to produce almost all the ornamental crops throughout the year. Cut flowers and ornamental plants play an important role in the floriculture industry. In many advanced countries, ornamentals are the major exportable crops. In our country, ornamental commodities will increase tremendously in the near future. Continuous efforts are being made in ornamental crop research during the last five decades which has generated awareness in the recent advances made by the universities and research institutes in this direction.

Currently, floriculture is recognized as a lucrative profession. The demand for flowers in the world market is growing at around 15 per cent each year. The floriculture industry in India comprises the florist trade, nursery plants, potted plants (including house plants), bulb and seed production, micro propagation (tissue culture raised plant) material and extraction of essential oils from flowers. The industry is worth \$200 million. Flowers like China aster, chrysanthemum, crossandra, gladiolus, marigold, jasmine, rose and tuberose are in religious and social events. These traditional flowers are grown on large acreage of land, on a commercial scale (out door) for loose flower production.

Flower industry is emerging as a blooming business not only in India but in other countries as well. Flower industry / floriculture denotes cultivation of flowers, developing new varieties of commercial value, sale of flowers as raw commodities, processing, distribution etc, for the local and international market.

After liberalization, the government of India identified floriculture as a sunrise industry and accorded it 100 per cent export oriented status. In the flower industry, cut flowers have assumed prominent place in respect of consumer use. From amongst wide range of flowers, only certain type of flowers are grown as cut flowers because of their special features. Final consumer use of cut flowers is different from other flowers. Cut flowers are mainly used for preparing bouquets.

Floriculture has become a full fledged industry world wide because,

1. Though scale of investment is high in floriculture the return on investments is also high.
2. Gestation period in floriculture is comparatively less compared to other high investment areas in agriculture.

3. Local market has annual growth of 25-30%.
4. Lot of demand is there by foreign countries for floriculture products.

Trade in floriculture can play a significant role in promoting economic development. A developing country like India which has a comparative advantage in the production of cut flowers and the export of these items could be the main source of foreign exchange earnings. Infrastructure is an important factor in horticulture and it is here that India is very disadvantageously placed. Further, right treatment of flowers, packaging, storage and transport of flowers is nowhere near the required standards. The growers of cut flowers often complain that they do not receive fair prices for their flowers due to inefficient marketing system. The absence of proper grading at the growers level has further aggravated the problem since there is no incentive to good quality flowers. The price of flowers depends on the quality, supply pattern, demand and freshness. Unlike other commodities, there is little organized market for selling cut flowers.

Another dimension added to the floriculture trade in country is the growth of florists and retail shops. Besides, some vendors who sell the cut flowers from pavements on roadsides have up-market shops and bouquets in major cities. The large super markets and retail chains coming up across the country are further fillip to this growth.

Looking at the emerging importance and thrust given to floricultural industry by both central and state governments, it is important to study the different aspects of management of flower business by the retailers. The paper attempted to understand the demand and retail marketing of cut flowers in Belgaum district, as the demand for flowers in this area is also increasing at a faster rate with the development of new urban/semi-urban areas and rise in the standard of living of people with the corporate people making their entry to these areas.

2. DATA SOURCES:

This study is based on primary data collected from randomly selected 120 flower sellers in Belgaum city of Karnataka state. Simple tabular form and percentage techniques are used to present the study findings.

3. STUDY FINDINGS:

Karnataka is considered as one among the progressive states with excellent potential for horticulture development in general and floriculture in particulars. Many flowers such as rose, gladiolus, tuberose, aster, chrysanthemum, jasmine and crossandra are commercially grown in the state. Looking at the emerging importance and thrust given to floricultural industry by both central and state governments, it is important to study the different aspects of management of flower business by the retailers. The following findings presents position of flower marketing in Belgaum city.

3.1 Socio-economic background:

It is evident from the above table no 1 that 27.50 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 14 to 25 years and 57.50 percent of belong to age group 26 to 50 years. Whereas only 5.88 percent respondents belong 51 and above. The data shows that age is not an important factor in flower business. Usually all types of age people are engaged in selling of flowers.

Table 1: Socio-economic background of flower Sellers.

Sl. No	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
AGE			
1	14 to 25	33	27.50
2	26 to 50	69	57.50
3	51 & Above	18	15.00
SEX			
1	Male	93	77.50
2	Female	27	22.50
CASTE			
1	SC/ST	21	17.50
2	OBC	60	50.00
3	Upper Caste	39	32.50
EDUCATION			
1	Illiterate	45	37.50
2	SSLC	57	47.50
3	PUC	09	7.50
4	Other	09	7.50
Total		120	100.00

Source: Field Study.

Sex is an important factor in flower marketing. In the present study female sellers are also found in market. As observed from the table, it is found that there 93 male sellers and 27 female flower sellers. The percentage of male sellers 77.50 and female sellers constitutes 22.50. However, it is clear from the analysis that male sellers are more and they dominate the flower market in study area. India is a secular state without any state religion. But its population practices a number of castes. A caste does not pose any barrier for sales. From the study results, it is found that out of the total, 17.50 percent respondents are SC and STs, 50 percent respondents belongs to OBC and remaining 32.50 percent respondents are upper caste. This shows that all caste people are engaged in flower marketing.

Education is an important variable that influences the market behavior of the seller. Hence information regarding the educational level of the respondents is also considered for our study. The data reveals that the 37.50 percent respondents are illiterate, this is followed by 47.50 percent who have completed S.S.L.C education. Further, data reveals that 7.50 percent could do their P.U.C level education and 7.50 percent respondents completed other education. The data concludes that most of the sellers are illiterate or semiliterate. Only few respondents are having a good qualification status.

3.2 Size of the Shop:

According to Table No. 2 out of 120 respondents 81 respondents have small shops, 33 respondents have medium size shops and remaining 6 respondents have large shops. It shows that 67.50 percent respondent's shops are small, 27.50 percent respondents shops are medium sized and 5.00 percent respondent's shops are in large size. The analysis clearly point out that most of the florists have small size shop due to lack capital and also how economic status.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents according to size of shop.

Sl. No	Size of shop	Frequency	Percent
1	Small	81	67.50
2	Medium	33	27.50
3	Large	06	5.00
Total		120	100.00

Source: Field Study.

3.3 Working Time:

The above Table No. 3 shows the information about working time of respondents. It is found from the study that 25.00 percent sellers work 2 to 4 hours, 5.00 percents sellers' work 5 to 7 hours and 70.00 percents sellers' work 8 and above hours. Thus, more number of flower sellers are working more than 8 hours to earn their lively, However, the flower sellers who allocate less time are also doing other works to earn income.

Table 3: Florists working time.

Sl. No	Working Hours	Frequency	Percent
1	2 to 4	30	25.00
2	5 to 7	06	5.00
3	8 & above	84	70.00
Total		120	100.00

Source: Field Study.

3.4 Types of Flowers:

According to data shown in Table No. 4, 90 respondents sell 1 to 5 types of flowers, 15 respondents sell 6 to 10 types of flowers and 15 respondents are selling more than 11 types flowers. Further, one can analysis the date that 75.00 percent respondents sell 1 to 5 types, 12.50 percent sell 6 to 10 types and 12.50 percent re selling more than 11 types of flowers. It is unsatisfactory to note from the analysis that only few flowers are sold by most of the florists due to narrow market size in the study area.

Table 4: Distribution of florists according to types of flowers selling.

Sl. No	Types of flowers	Frequency	Percent
1	1 to 5	90	75.00
2	6 to 10	15	12.50
3	11 & Above	15	12.50
Total		120	100.00

Source: Field Study.

3.5 Flowers Demanded:

The Table 5 gives the information about more demanded flower. According to information available 15.00 percent respondents stated that Sugandaraj have more demand, furthe according 35.00 percent respondents Galata have more

demand, this is followed by Jasmine (25.00 percent), Jerbera (7.50 percent). This shows that only few flowers are more demanded by the consumers.

Table 5: Type of flowers demanded more by customers.

Sl. No	Flowers name	Frequency	Percent
1	Sugandaraj	18	15.00
2	Galata	42	35.00
3	Jasmine	30	25.00
4	Jerbera	09	7.50
5	Other	21	17.50
Total		120	100.00

Source: Field Study.

3.6 Collection of Flowers:

According to Table No. 6, 15.00 percent of sellers collect flowers from farmers, 85.00 percent sellers purchase flowers from local market. It shows that more respondents are depending on local market because they can easily purchase there and most of the sellers are small sellers.

Table 6: Sources of flower collection by the florists.

Sl. No	Sources	Frequency	Percent
1	Farmer	18	15.00
2	Local Market	102	58.00
Total		120	100.00

Source: Field Study.

3.7 Customers' Attraction:

It is evident from the Table no 7 that 85.00 percent respondents are saying that customers are attracted towards their shop because of low price compared to other seller. Only 5.00 percent respondents stated that customers are attracted because of quality flowers. Whereas 10.00 percent respondents agreed that they attract customers from their service. From this analysis we can conclude that price is the dominant factor which influence the customers.

Table 7: Methods followed by florists to attract customers.

Sl. No	Methods	Frequency	Percent
1	Price	102	85.00
2	Quality	06	5.00
3	Service	12	10.00
4	Brand name	00	0.00
5	Variety	00	0.00
Total		120	100.00

Source: Field Study.

3.8 Daily Income:

The information regarding income of the respondents was collected in terms of daily income as the sellers earn income daily. It is evident from the Table No. 8 that 27.50 percent of respondents are falling in between Rs. 100 to 500 income category, 50.00 percent belong to the income category Rs. 500 to 1000, 7.50 percent belong to income group of Rs. 1000 to 1500 and 15.00 percent belongs to the income category of Rs. 1500 and above. This emphasizes that the florists in Belgaum city have satisfactory transactions and good returns from their business.

Table 8: Florists daily income from flower business.

Sl. No	Daily Income	Frequency	Percent
1	Rs.100 to 500	33	27.50
2	Rs.500 to 1000	60	50.00
3	Rs.1000 to 1500	09	7.50
4	Rs.1500 & above	18	15.00
Total		120	100.00

Source: Field Study.

3.9 Daily Profit:

It is evident from the above Table No. 9 that out of 120 flower sellers selected for the study 10.00 percent flower sellers earn up to Rs.100, 80.00 percent flower sellers earn Rs.100 to 500, only 7.50 percent and 2.50 percent flower

sellers earn Rs.500 to 1000 and Rs. 1000 and above. The study results shows that majority of flower sellers are able to earn Rs. 100 to 500 and satisfied with this income.

Table 9: Daily profit earned by the florists.

Sl. No	Classification	Frequency	Percent
1	Up to Rs. 100	12	10.00
2	Rs. 101 to 500	96	80.00
3	Rs. 501 to 1000	09	7.50
4	Rs. 1001 & Above	03	2.50
Total		120	100.00

Source: Field Study.

4. CONCLUSION:

Majority of the customers are casual buyers in study area. This represents a large untapped prospective consumer base. Well organized and planned marketing efforts will be required to break the inertia. The frequency of customers buying flowers for presentation (as bouquet) is not very high. Modern cut flowers can fulfill an affordable gifting option for the people. Flower as product has to be developed and similar taste has to be developed among the consumers. The average monthly expenditure of customers on flowers is very low. The fattening salary packets especially in the growing cities metros shows that a good portion of the disposable income can still be spent on flowers. Customers have to be made to realize the value for money when they buy flowers and why flowers should be an integral part of their lives.

Customers in general are satisfied with the type of flowers that they get in the market. This satisfied with the type of flowers can be used as a platform to push the sales with supporting marketing endeavors, more exotic varieties can be added. The challenge is to have a high shelf-life of the flowers and to really make the non-customers start liking the flowers. Customers are also satisfied to a certain extent with the quality of flowers available in the market. This is again a silver lining for the marketers to really latch-on to and push the sales further. Satisfaction with the quality of flowers is not very high in smaller cities and district centers.

Customers have divided opinion over the price that the florist charges them for flowers. Price normalization and price bands especially during seasons can improve the scenario. If the customer feels cheated for the price that he is charged, he will continue to shy away from becoming a regular and voluminous customer. Highly disorganized state of the flower market will make it very difficult to achieve price normalization and price-bands. Efforts to bring in the floral marketers under one community will help the cause. Most of the floral retailers and wholesalers occasionally advise their customers on the buying pattern. The retailers should further develop the communication with the customers. With an initiative coming from the retailers themselves. Most of the flower retailers are illiterate and poor communicators. They also have poor knowledge about the flowers, especially about those which are not available with them.

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