

# PRESENT STATUS OF FLORIBUSINESS IN NEPAL

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## ABSTRACT

Floribusiness in Nepal is taking up its momentum since mid-1980's. This article focusses on floricultural trade in this country with regard to present status, training, research and developmental activities along with the problems, prospects and suggestions to improve the floribusiness in the future.

**Additional Key Words:** Floriculture, flowers, ornamental plants, flower nurseries

## INTRODUCTION

Flowers and gardens have been a part of Nepalese culture since time immemorial. This is primarily due to religious, aesthetic and social values attached to flowers and gardens. However, economic value of flowers and garden is only of recent origin and is gaining importance to beautify environment and reduce pollution.

Floriculture nurseries in Nepal have had 4-5 decades old history of its existence. This basically started as a hobby of the elites in Kathmandu which slowly turned into income generating activity. And only in the mid 1980's did floriculture in Nepal really turned into a commercial business. Since then the increase in the nurseries particularly within the valley have increased manyfold.

Fortunately, Nepal is a country endowed with wide range of micro climatic zones and biodiversity thereby becoming a home for many precious ornamental plants. It is interesting to note here that even today expedition to forest and mountains results in discovery of many new ornamental species (Shrestha, 1994). Perhaps, many of these indigenous ornamental plants have qualities worthy to be introduced in the international market for export earnings. However, floribusiness is get to make its presence felt in the Nepalese business circle. It is very young and like any other business is not free from shortcomings. An attempt is made in this paper to present the picture of Nepalese floribusiness.

## FLORICULTURAL TRADE IN NEPAL

Floricultural trade in Nepal is at a budding stage. With a history of only a decades into commercialization, information are very meagre. However, it is felt by the traders that it is gaining importance but at a very slow pace. An insight into floriculture trade in Nepal may be as enumerated below.

### Area and production

The total area under floriculture crop in Nepal has been estimated to be about 23 ha; out of this about 7 has is within Kathmandu Valley. The domestic of production accounts to

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about 35% of the total consumed. The annual transaction on flowers and ornamental plants is estimated to be about Rs. 1.8 crores in whole of Nepal. In 1994, Rs.1.1 crore was transacted within Kathmandu Valley (ITAD, 1994 a).

### Agrotechniques and quality of products

In general, both the agrotechniques and quality of the products are poor. The nurseryman or florists do not follow proper agrotechniques in the cultivation of flowers (seasonal, cut flowers and other ornamental plants) which is mostly grown in Nepal. Furthermore, the emphasis on quality of products is largely neglected. But trading is basically done on the basis of size of the plant and rarity of the plant or its variety.

### Producers

There are about 90 nurseries in Nepal with more than half within the Kathmandu Valley. Majority of the nurseries procure indoor plants, ornamental shrubs and trees and cut-flowers from India with the exception of seasonal and usually few ornamental shrubs and trees. Seeds for seasonal flowers are imported from Japan, Holland and Denmark. Majority of the Nepalese florists are non-technical professionally; however, about 12% of them have had certificate to diploma degree in agriculture and forestry. Some of the important nurseries in Nepal are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Some important flower nurseries in Nepal.

S.N.	Name of nursery	District	Contact phone #
1.	Agro Himalayan Pvt.Ltd.	Lalitpur	01-525990/524719
2.	Amar Nursery (ECSC)	Kathmandu	01-411495
3.	Botanical Enterprises	Lalitpur	01-290548/226393
4.	Brihad Bagawani Kendra	Sarlahi	-
5.	C and C Nursery	Kaski	61-20708
6.	Choudary Nursery Farm	Banke	81-20884
7.	Flora Farms	Chitwan	01-414615
8.	Garden Flower Nursery	Kaski	61-20915
9.	Garden Services P.Ltd.	Lalitpur	01-524250/521292
10.	Green Thumb Nepal	Lalitpur	01-524170
11.	Gupta Nursery Udyog	Rupandehi	-
12.	Himalaya Nursery	Morang	21-22983
13.	Himalayan Flora Tech	Lalitpur	01-525139
14.	Himalayan Flori.Enter.	Lalitpur	526360/524360
15.	Jai Kisan Nursery	Kathmandu	-
16.	Jyoti Nursery Farm	Parsa	51-22679
17.	Mallika Nursery	Chitwan	-
18.	Nepal Bio-tech nursery	Kathmandu	01-475847
19.	NFC Seed Company	Kavre	01-522782/522067
20.	Orchid Land	Lalitpur	01-212791
21.	Parijat Nursery	Lalitpur	01-527187/527109
22.	The Standard Nursery	Kathmandu	01-214286/413683
23.	Trees, Seeds and Flowers	Kathmandu	01-213021

## Consumers

The main consumers of floriproducs in Nepal are Diplomatic Missions and Foreign Agencies, Hotels, Travel Agencies, Business companies and Banks, Pilgrims and general consumers. And interestingly, the highest consumption was made by the general public (this perhaps might be due to the growing awareness of the people in the use of flowers) followed by Pilgrims and Hotels (Table 2).

Table 2. Major consumers of flowers in Kathmandu valley.

S.N.	Major consumers	Estimated Annual consumption in Rs. '000
1.	Diplomatic Missions & Foreign Agencies	400
2.	Hotels	2,000
3.	Travel Agencies, Business Companies and Banks	200
4.	Pilgrims	3,200
5.	General Consumers	5,200
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,000</b>

Source: ITAD, 1994b.

## Type of floriproducs

Nepalese floribusiness although is new in the commercial sector; yet it provides with a good variety of items for all purposes. Some of the important items for sale in Nepal are cut flowers, cut foliage, potted plants, seeds, Bonsai, Bouquet/Crossages, Shrubs and Trees (Table 3).

Table 3. Some common floriproducs available in Nepal.

Floriproducs	Plant species oftenly used
a. Cut flowers:	Rose, Chrysanthemum, Gladiolus, Gerbera, Tuberoze, Carnation, Orchids, Dahlia, Daises, Freesia, Anthurium, Gypsophila, Lilies, Aster, Stock, Sweet Sultan, Lupin, Iries.
b. Cut foliage:	Asparagus, Ferns, Maranta, Aspidistra, Thuja, Crotons.
c. Pot.foliage plants:	Monstera, Philodendron, Tupidanthes, Dieffenbachia, Dracena, Maranta, Aglaonema, Asparagus, Croton, Acalypha, Syngonium, Ivy, Cordyline, Araucaria cookie, Ficus, Camphor tree, Thuja, Juniper, Pothos.
d. Pot.flowering plants:	Bougainvillea, Hibiscus, Camellia, Orchid, Dahlia, Poinsettia, Azaleas.
e. Herb. perennials:	Geranium, Orchid, Dahlia, Gerbera, Chrysanthemum, Acalypha, Poinsettia, Cyclamen, Saintpaulia.

- f. Shrubs: Bougainvillea, Hibiscus, Camellia, Thuja, Rhododendron, Azaleas, Ixora, Mussanda, Calliandra, Hydrengia, Jatropha, Bruenflesia, Fuchsia, Cassia biflora, Lagerstormia, Murrya, Jatropha.
- g. Ornamental trees: Araucaria (Christmas tree), Ficus, Gravellia (Silver oak tree), Prunus (Cherry tree), Salix tree, Magnolia, Deodar, Maples, Pines, Spruce, Callistmon (Bottle brush), Cassia species.
- h. Seasonals: Phlox, Salvia, Calendula, Zinnia, Pansy, Primula, Helichrysum, Lilies, Hippeastrum, Antirrhinum, Marigold, Balsam, Hollyhock, Larkspur, Cineraria, Coreopsis, Petunia, Candytuft, Verbena, Solidago, Gomphrena, Lupin, Ranunculua.

#### **Type of services**

Most of the nurseries in Nepal simply do retailing of their plants (either raised in their nursery or imported from India). However, few of the nurseries particularly in the valley provides a wide variety of services. They are (a) Supply of cut-flowers, cut foliage, potted plants and seeds, (b) Plant rental service, (c) Interior decoration, (d) Supply of bouquet/crossages, (e) Garden maintainance services, (f) Garden designing and development and (g) Landscaping of industrial areas.

#### **Nature of marketing**

The sale of plants by Nepalese nurserymen is done in the (a) Nursery, (b) City showroom, (c) Mobile carts, (d) Order supplies and (e) Export. Most of the nursery usually market their product from the farm gate itself. In addition to that, others do the business through city showrooms, mobile carts and attend to order supplies and exports.

### **TRAINING AND EXPERT SERVICES**

There is acute shortage of trained manpower in this sector resulting into a lack of proper production and management. The growers feel a need of training in the areas such as nursery management, propagation of plants, plant protection, marketing and advertisement. They feel that such training should be organized by the government and made free of cost to the entrepreneurs.

In this area Floriculture Association of Nepal (FAN) has made some efforts and successfully conducted two training programs on nursery management and flower arrangement. Both the training was well participated by the growers.

### **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Floriculture research is not a mandate in Nepal both in the Nepal Agriculture Research Council (NARC) and at the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science (IAAS), Tribhuvan University, the apex organizations for research and training of agriculture in the country. This responsibility is being shouldered by the Department of Plant Resources which have done considerable works, yet it is too meagre to think about local technology development for commercial cultivation. Propagation by *in vitro* culture has been standardised in some flower such as orchids, chrysanthemum, gerbera, carnation, lily and gladiolus. Research also should be directed towards introduction, identification and domestication of both indigenous as well as exotic ornamental plants.

## NEPALESE EXPORT - PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Nepal seems to be exporting ornamental plants since last one decade. The main items of export were orchid plants and flowers seeds to Japan and Germany. But today even this limited amount of export has declined and only orchid is exported to India for medicinal purposes (Shrestha, 1993; Pun, 1995). During 1985, Nepalese seeds and plants (ornamental plants included) are exported to the tune of Rs. 8781 thousand (F.T.S. 1985). But in 1990, the plant export declined to Rs.113 thousand (TPC, 1993).

For future export, product diversification is essential and Nepal should concentrate on: (a) production of live flowering and foliage plants and (b) introduction of rare indigenous himalayan plants into international markets.

Similarly, for future export markets, Nepal should also focus on S.E. Asian countries, particularly Singapore and Hongkong markets apart from the European countries. A new wholesale market which is to be established in Singapore can be a good avenue and entry point for Nepalese products since we have direct air link with Singapore.

### PROBLEMS OF FLORIBUSINESS IN NEPAL

Like any other business sector, floribusiness is also not free from shortcomings. Some of the major problems are:

- a) lack of availability of quality planting materials of different ornamental plants,
- b) lack of proper agrotechniques and research supports,
- c) lack of trained manpower and training facilities to already engaged growers,
- d) lack of financial incentives from the government to encourage floriculture projects,
- e) lack of quality and price standards of flowers and ornamental plants in Nepal,
- f) lack of postharvest handling techniques and infrastructures like refrigerated store, and
- g) lack of organized marketing channels and monitoring system.

### SUGGESTIONS

To solve the present problems, the following suggestions are recommended.

- \* Import duty should be waived for inputs required for floriculture business at least for first two years and thereafter charge at the rate of 1%.
- \* Quality planting materials should be grown, multiplied and supplied to the growers at reasonable price.
- \* Standardisation of agro-techniques for growing cut-flowers such as, rose, gladiolus, carnation, chrysanthemum and other ornamental plants both in the field and under protected conditions.
- \* Training both at the higher level and growers level should be strengthened.
- \* Financial institutions especially Agriculture Development Bank should provide loans on low rate of interest and easy terms of payments.

- \* There is need for standard fixed price for products about within the valley.
- \* There is need for quality standard in flowers, foliage and potted plants as well.
- \* There is need for a common whole-sale marketing outlet.
- \* Post harvest handling technology should be developed for ornamental plants.
- \* Research should be directed towards identification of indigenous ornamental plants for export.

## CONCLUSION

The Nepalese floriculture business though very young has tremendous potential. The present situation of domestic market indicates that there is good hope for cut flowers such as gladioli, tuberose, gerbera, carnation and chrysanthemum. However, due to lack of proper production technology, quality planting materials and trained manpower, the nurserymen are still lacking quality services.

This sector can be strengthened by good research back of which should concentrate on the technology development, technology transfer, plant improvement and postharvest handling studies. Besides, government should provide other facilities such as soft loan policies, waiving of import duty on inputs required for floriculture business and manpower development. Further, remarks both for product and market should be explored for export business. Efforts should be made to identify and multiply indigenous ornamentals.

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