

Flower business, a profitable venture and emerging tool of women empowerment

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Introduction

The floriculture business in India is not limited to growing of flowers as this sector stretches from growing of annual and perennial flowering plants, to ornamental garden plants, ornamental foliage plants, potted plants and also ferns. Those days are gone when flowers were used only to offer deities, to perform basic rituals and decorating hairs. With time in today's era, flowers or ornamental plants are used for decoration and also used as gifts on various occasions.

Flowers are needed to make auspicious occasions more beautiful and glorified, as flowers are used to decorate the location. Flower decoration can change the entire landscape. Whether it is a religious ceremony, parties, birthdays, betrothal ceremonies, weddings, house warming parties, naming ceremonies, corporate meetings and the list goes on. In India from the ancient times flowers are being used to decorate the entire pavilion, Pergolas, entry arches of wedding ceremonies. Some flowers are also considered sacred and its presence is considered to be auspicious.

In spite of being used to decorate they are also used as essential raw materials for essential oil extraction and in pharmaceutical as well as in perfume industries.

In the era of entrepreneurs, ferns and petals is one of the fastest growing industries. As it is a gender neutral business and also provides a good opportunity to women, Youth women are now involving themselves in activities of this fast growing business which was mere for them earlier and increasing their living standards.

In some parts of India like Himachal-Pradesh and North –eastern states unemployed women are highly involving in the business of flowers and ornamentals. As the demand of these flowers is increasing day by day there is a huge gap between demand and supply especially in small cities and in peri-urban areas. To overcome these gaps with some scientific knowledge a retail flower business can successful fulfill this gap up to some extent and can give employment to women on large scale. Before starting it make a NGO by evolving women of that area.

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To start a retail business of flower, first of all you need to have answers of few questions like

- Location of the retail? like urban, peri-urban or rural?
- What type of the ornamentals and flowers you are going to deal in with?
- Do you have knowledge of how to handle flowers?
- Do you know about the factors that can deteriorate the quality of flowers?
- What is shelf life? And how it differs from flower to flower?
- Knowledge of some post harvest physiological activities that can increase or decrease the shelf life of flowers.
- What will be the required capital for the initial investment?
- If possible do training before starting it.

Plan before executing:

Draw your plan before executing it, having started with the location, that what is the distance of source to sink i.e buying source whether grower or whole seller to the retail shop, as more the distance more will be the transportation cost and chance of deterioration of flowers. Secondly you have to be concern about the work force required from arranging it to delivering it. What will be your targeted market? Focus on fixed cost and recurring cost of starting this business. Have a good catchy

name that can be easy to remember and related to it and secondly license your business to run it legally with insurance. Decide reasonable retail price according to flower and locality. Understand the demand for your business in local community. Must do market research and understand market situation. Collect as much information as possible to know the size of market, competitors etc. This will help you to attract more attention towards your brand. Make sure to have a website as now a day's customers mostly search there nearby shops on internet. These websites will help customers to know more about your business and products or services you are going to offer. Also be active on social media to be in touch with latest trends.

After establishing retail of ferns and petals:

First of all, you need to contact a wholesale flower supplier and growers of the area. If possible Advertise in local news papers and on radio of the area. To fetch more profit, do make a stock of flowers which will be in demand for the upcoming festivals and other ceremonies. In India festival season starts from Navratri (Oct-Nov) to Navratri (March-April). For navratri festival mostly loose flowers of red and pink colors are demanded. As per the starting of winter season flowers like marigold, rose, hibiscus, red nerium are easy to arrange and should be stocked in. Contact to nearest grower for the upcoming demand and promote

the growers to grow flowers according to market demand. Moving towards the next festival of Dashera there is a great demand of garlands. As winter progresses marigolds are more easily available, so manage it and arrange skilled women for making quality garlands. Also collect orders before festivals from different agencies like vehicle showrooms, malls restaurants etc. The next upcoming festival will be of Diwali.

This festival is related to lights and devoted to the mother goddess Laxmi. As per the religious faith red color flowers like red roses and red lotuses are offered to the Goddess so, they will in great demand so stock them and keep them in particular pulsing solutions to preserve it. This will help to fetch more profit.

After Diwali marriage ceremonies starts on large scale. According to different themes marriage pavilion, pergolas are decorated and this depends from customer to customer.

Now a day large marriage gardens are shifting from main city to peri-urban area this gives a good opportunity to peri-urban flower growers. For decoration arches, entry gates, pergolas, pavilions different types of decorating flowers are needed. It also depends on season to season like in winter chilling season warm color flowers are used. Mostly

warm color includes red roses and other red flowers like gerbera, chrysanthemum etc.

Whereas in spring to summer season flowers which give a cooling effect are being used more extensively. Like white roses, gerbera, white or blue orchids and many more. Also involve skilled women for making bride and groom garlands. Besides this, flowers of jasmine group are also being used to decorate gallery or other areas as they are rich in natural oils which emit pleasant fragrance that last longer. However retail business mainly depends on the locality as we can say that it is a locality based business. If you are having a religious place nearby you, then there will be a great demand of loose flowers and garlands for offering deities, etc. It also depends on some specific days that are related to particular deity. On the other hand if you are having big marriage gardens nearby you then there will be a demand of cut flowers more than loose flowers.

Whereas Business and corporate ceremonies requires flowers but there demand will be more in the form of bouquets. However if your business in nearby an educational institution then there will be a different demand of ferns and potted plants and indoor plants to decorate corridors and offices. These potted plants can be sold as well as can be given on rent on some special occasions. Educational institutions also conduct yearly

programmes, like convocation, fresher's parties, farewell parties, annual days, seminars and so on and these occasions needs flowers too, to decorate auditoriums and bouquets for guests.

Dried flower business:

On the other hand in the contrary of fresh flower business dried flower business is also much more profitable as it has a great demand both in national and international trade. This business can be done part time. Now a days there is a fashion of decorating offices, indoor corners by dried flower, and even gifting them in the form of bouquets.

Dried flowers can be used alone or with fresh flowers like Floral arrangements, Bouquets, Gift boxes or packs, Decoration in Festivals, Flower pitchers, floral balls, greeting cards, wedding cards, sweet smelling pot porris,

dried lotus seeds and the list is stretching day by day with new innovations and ideas. In last few decades most of the people may be unaware of it that floriculture is a fastest growing sector and out of total fresh flower trade exported from India more than 60 percent of it is being exported in the dried form and India exports dried plants and flowers of about 100 crore per year to 20 countries with more than 500 types of flowers and plant parts.

This business not only include flowers but also have a wide range of ornamental plant

parts like stems, roots, Shoots, Flowers, Fruits, seeds, buds, bracts, bark, lichens fleshy fungi, mosses, fruiting shoots, sellaginellas, etc. Dried flowers can be stored for a longer period in contrast to fresh flowers with a little care and maintenance. Pot-porris a special dried floral arrangement .It is the mixture of sweet smelling leaves, spices, seeds, roots, petals mixed with some essential oil which is filled in pillows or sachets etc. *Rosa indica* has a great tendency of shredding petals while handling or while making garlands that can be collected for further use as it has a fragrance So, instead of wasting its petals can be used in pot-porris.

Other dried flowers are also used for pot-porris like lilacs, lavender, pinks, hyacinths, lilies, violets, wall flowers, marigold and many other associated with perfumes.

Important points to be remembered while starting retail business of dried flowers:

As all we have discussed earlier in this article like name of business license for it, insurance and all, good market research before starting it. Few more points are important like how to handle and keep them and protect from insects and pests.

Dried flowers due to less moisture are very brittle. Thus packaging should be two in one protection and containment. Should not be handled roughly, Superior grade of packaging material should be used, dried plant parts

absorb atmospheric moisture and loses its shape and also become susceptible for fungus to grow in like *aspergillus*, *Penicillium*, *Rhizopus*, therefore it should be protected from moisture throughout the marketing channel. Different containers like glass desiccators, tin boxes, cartons, wrapped with plastic sheets or wax paper. Small amount of silica gel should be placed to absorb moisture. Protect the material from direct sunlight or more light intensity especially from incandescent lamps. Dried parts of plants are very much susceptible to Silver fish, book lice, mice etc so proper fumigants should be done.

Risk in flower business:

Every business has some risks in it but while dealing with live plants, risks extends a lot. As flowers are perishable in nature they need special care while handling, and storing, demand and supply should be on time as any delay in supply can deteriorate quality.

Storage chambers should be fumigated at regular intervals to suppress growth of fungus and other bacteria. Moisture absorbents for dry flower and ethylene inhibitor for fresh flowers should be maintained at priority.

Conclusion:

The floriculture business in India encompasses a wide range of activities, from growing various types of flowers and ornamental plants to their use in decoration, gifting, and even essential oil extraction.

Flowers are no longer just religious offerings; they adorn auspicious occasions, ceremonies, and events, creating a vibrant market. The business opportunity is particularly attractive for entrepreneurs and women, providing both gender-neutral and gender-specific opportunities. To succeed, entrepreneurs must consider factors such as location, flower types, quality preservation, capital investment and training. A well-executed plan involves sourcing from wholesalers or growers, strategic stocking for festivals and catering to diverse demands, from religious offerings to wedding decorations. Additionally, dried

flower business presents a profitable alternative, with international trade opportunities. However, this sector requires careful handling, packaging and protection against moisture, pests and other risks associated with live plants.