Obstacles Of Flower Marketing In Tamilnadu With Reference To Madurai District

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Floriculture is a highly advanced industry in this country due to its diverse eco-geographical regions and varied agro-climate conditions, which provide ideal growing conditions for all types of flowers all year round. Flowers are a valuable source of foreign exchange earnings, and the potential for exporting them to foreign markets has increased significantly. However, marketing flowers is more challenging than other agricultural commodities due to their high perishability, steady decline in price, involvement of more intermediaries, and being mostly grown by small and marginal farmers. A researcher took the initiative to analyse the obstacles faced by farmers in flower growing and marketing. One hundred and fifty farmers were randomly selected in and around the Madurai district for this analysis.

Key Words: Flower growing, Marketing, Price instabilities, Perishability, Unorganised market,

1. Introduction:

Flowers are one of the most beautiful things on Earth. They bring to mind beauty, pleasure, and joy. Flowers have played a significant role in human civilisation and social development, as seen by our culture, art, ideas, emotions, religion, philosophy, and social customs, all showing their connection to flowers. Floriculture, the art and science of growing flowers to perfection, has become increasingly important over time. Floriculture involves growing flowers and ornamental crops from planting to harvesting, including producing planting materials through seeds, cuttings, budding, grafting, and marketing of flowers and flower products. Floriculture is also involved in cultivating flowering and ornamental plants for sale or as raw materials in the cosmetics, perfume, and pharmaceutical industries. Flowers are the

reproductive organs of any plant. They can appear on their own or in groups, known as florescence. Both male and female flowers can be found on separate or the same plant. Flowers are symmetrical about an axis and consist of numerous spirally arranged floral parts such as sepals, petals, and stamens, along with anthers, pistils, and other structures attached below the ovary on an elongated floral axis. It's safe to say that the world would not be as beautiful as it is without flowers. For millions of years, the world had no flowering plants. However, the evolution of flowering plants brought about a significant change in the world's appearance. Flowers come in various colours, sizes, forms, and anatomical arrangements, presenting many combinations. They vary in size from tiny blossoms to giant blooms. Some plants, such as poppy, magnolia, tulip, and petunia, produce a single, relatively large, prominent flower. In contrast, others, such as aster, snapdragon, calla lily, and lilac, bear multiple, relatively small flowers arranged in a distinctive cluster.

Flowers come in over 200,000 varieties, exhibiting various colours and unique or irregular shapes. Along with their beauty, flowers also emit a pleasant fragrance, making them a popular choice for decoration and as a gift for birthdays, functions, and ceremonies. They are also considered symbols of love. Flowers can be grown indoors and outdoors and grow naturally worldwide except in the Polar Regions. Flowers can be expensive, rare, cheap, or abundant, but flower enthusiasts will always have a rich variety to choose from. Beautiful flowers are accessible to everyone, and their perfect form and colour bring joy and comfort to humans. The flowers known to humankind can be classified into three groups based on their lifespan: annuals, biennials, and perennials.

2. Profile of sample unit:

Madurai is an ancient city in the southern part of the Indian peninsula. It has been continuously inhabited for thousands of years and is known by various names, including Koodal Maanagar, Thoongaa Nagar, Malligai Maanagar and Athens of the East. Madurai is considered the cultural capital of Tamil Nadu and is situated on the banks of the River Vaigai in the Madurai district. We can easily locate it on an interactive map using the coordinates 9°56′N 78°07′E / 9.93°N 78.12°E / 9.93 78.12. The city's average elevation is 101 meters above sea level. The climate in Madurai is dry and hot, with occasional rains occurring from October to December. During summer, temperatures can reach a maximum of 40 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 26.3 degrees Celsius, while winter temperatures range between 29.6 and 18 degrees Celsius.

3. Review of Literature:

Sehgal (2020) states that the Indian government has launched many measures to encourage the use of playhouses in floriculture. To determine the advantages and challenges farmers encounter while utilising polyhouses for producing flowers, research was undertaken on 100 farmers in the state of Haryana who practise floriculture in these structures. According to the findings, 31% of farmers had completed high school, 29% had completed senior secondary school, and 67% had 4-6 acres of land. With a WMS of 1.67, environmental benefits came out on top, followed by economic advantages (1.64) and technical benefits (1.62). (WMS 1.58). The most often observed restriction was economic, which received a WMS score of 1.61 (rank I), followed by other constraints, which received a WMS score of 1.55 (rank II), and technical

constraints, which received a WMS score of 1.32. (rank III). Therefore, the government must increase awareness by offering farmers training on using poly houses to alleviate the limits they encounter.

Shukla et al. (2022) conducted the current study, "Constraints in Marketing of Flowers: A Study in Solan and Sirmaur Districts of Himachal Pradesh," to show how significant cut flowers are as a marketable product and to outline the constraints faced in marketing flowers. Himachal Pradesh's Solan and Sirmaur districts were specifically chosen for this investigation. A random sampling approach was employed to choose the final sample of respondents from the chosen districts. According to the concentration of farmers and practicality, the data-collecting process chooses an equal number of respondents from each of the two districts (25 each). This research demonstrates that the many issues mentioned by the farmers include poor transportation infrastructure, disorganised marketplaces, intermediaries that take a long time to pay, exorbitant intermediary commissions, uncontrolled markets, a lack of storage facilities, and high beginning costs. In addition, to prevent the larger price fluctuation of flowers, adequate institutional structures must be in place to reduce pricing uncertainty. This may be backed up by establishing minimum support prices for flowers and other agricultural goods.

4. Statement of Problem:

Flower cultivation is a profitable business for many farmers in the Madurai district. It is an important crop that helps increase the economic conditions of flower growers. However, it is not an easy task as the marketing of flowers remains highly unorganised. Flowers are marketed through agents in markets, who pay farmers after deducting their commission. Moreover, farmers must bribe bus drivers and conductors to ensure timely transportation of their produce to the market. Once the flowers reach the market, farmers have no control over them. They are unaware of the price at which their flowers are sold and must accept whatever their agent gives them. Flowers marketing is more challenging than other agricultural commodities due to their high perishability, steady decline in price, involvement of more intermediaries, and being mostly grown by small and marginal farmers. In addition, flower growers are affected by problems such as time of sales, price fluctuations, non-availability of fertile seedlings, high wage rates, non-availability of labourers, high transport costs, high commissions, and malpractices by intermediaries. The inadequate technical know-how and the government's apathetic attitude have compounded the problems of cultivation and marketing of this crop. Farmers are thus facing numerous difficulties in the disposal of their produce.

5. Objectives of the study:

- ✓ To analyse the obstacles faced by flower cultivators in the study area.
- ✓ To offer suggestions to improve the production and export of flowers

6. Null and Alternative Hypotheses:

H_O: There is no significant association between the profile variables of the selected respondents and their opinions about the obstacles in flower marketing in the study area.

H₁ There is a significant association between the profile variables of the selected respondents and their opinions about the obstacles in flower marketing in the study area.

7. Scope of the study:

The researcher studied the challenges facing flower marketing in the Madurai district, which comprises eight taluks. The taluks were divided into two categories based on flower cultivation: flower cultivation-based taluks (Madurai North, Thirumangalum, Usilampatti, and Vadipatti) and non-flower cultivation-based taluks (Madurai and Aravakurichi). The study focused on the agricultural-based taluks due to their agro-climatic conditions and high concentration of jasmine cultivation. The research analysed various factors such as cropping patterns, land use patterns, and irrigation potential of different types of flowers, including Jasmine, Mullai, Rose, Crossandra, Chrysanthemum, Marigold, Tube Rose, Arali, Jathimalli, and others across different areas of Madurai District. Finally, the study selected all the villages in the chosen taluks for the research.

8. Methodology:

The present study is empirical, so the field survey and personal interview techniques were adopted. Multi-stage stratified random sampling has been adopted for the present study with Madurai District as the universe, the taluk as the stratum, the village as the primary unit of sampling and the farmers as the targeted population. The researcher constructed an interview schedule based on the previous studies and present objectives. The exact population of farmers is unknown, so the researcher selected 150 farmers from the population using a simple random sampling technique. Then, the researcher collected the primary data from the selected respondents with the help of a survey instrument.

9. Limitations:

The sample size of farmers chosen for collecting primary data is relatively small compared to the overall population. However, it may have limitations in terms of generalisation. Farmers typically don't maintain any record of costs and returns, so they provide data from memory, which could introduce recall bias. Nevertheless, measures were taken to minimise this bias through adequate crosschecks.

10. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1 Profile variables of Respondents in the study area

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	83	55.43
	Female	67	44.57
Age	Below 30 Years	33	22.29
	30 – 45	72	48.00
	Above 45 Years	45	29.71
Religion	Hindu	75	50.29

	Christian	54	36.00
	Muslim	21	13.71
Education	Illiterates	27	18.29
	High school level	40	26.86
	Higher secondary school	55	36.57
	Others	27	18.29
Monthly Income	Below Rs.10,000	45	29.71
	Rs.10,000 – 20,000	68	45.14
	Above Rs.20,000	38	25.14

(Source: Primary Data)

It is obvious from Table 1 that 55.43 per cent of respondents are male, and the remaining 44.57 per cent are female. A maximum of 48 per cent of respondents were 30 – 45, followed by those above 45 and below 30 years. Further, they found that 50.29 per cent of respondents are Hindu, 36.57 per cent of respondents have completed higher secondary school, and 45.14 per cent of respondents have a monthly income of Rs. 10,000 – 20,000.

Table 2 Obstacles Faced by Flower Cultivators for Marketing in the Study Area

Variables	Mean	S. D	C.V	"t" value	Rank
Poor market information	3.614	1.892	49.768	14.574	VIII
Long distance	3.439	1.674	45.716	18.906	XIII
Price instabilities	4.681	1.626	32.03	20.427	I
Low price	3.858	1.771	43.137	16.767	VI
Cyclical demand	4.328	1.804	39.059	19.067	II
Absence of proper local market	3.454	1.946	53.685	14.583	XII
Absence of organised Retail markets	4.134	1.621	36.299	19.818	IV
Lack of finance	3.469	1.661	44.873	19.084	XI
Lack of adequate cold storage facilities	3.84	1.722	42.015	17.113	VII
Perishable nature	4.22	1.797	39.928	17.999	III

Irregular payment by commission agents	3.554	1.899	52.09	14.583	IX
Lack of adequate cold storage facilities	3.872	1.615	38.729	18.792	V
High Commission	3.493	1.725	46.519	14.108	X
Inadequate export facilities	3.143	1.942	47.359	13.542	XIV
Exploitation by the middleman	3.052	1.985	48.746	12.863	XV

Table 2 discloses the ranking of obstacles flower cultivators face in marketing in the study area. The researcher identified fifteen variables based on the previous studies and consulted with the farmers. It is observed that the first rank is allotted to the variable "Price instabilities" with the "t" value of 20.427, followed by the second rank assigned to the variable "Cyclical demand" with the 't' value of 19.067 and the third rank given to the variable "Perishable nature" with the "t" value of 17.999.

Table 3

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Obstacles Faced by Flower Cultivators for Marketing in the Study Area					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2280.901[a]	22	25.343	74.727	**< 0.05**
Intercept	685.638	1	685.638	867.452	**< 0.05**
Gender	90.381	4	22.595	66.624	**< 0.05**
Age	12.919	4	3.230	9.523	**< 0.05**
Religion	59.673	6	9.946	29.325	**< 0.05**
Education	44.803	5	8.961	26.421	**< 0.05**
Monthly Income	26.029	2	13.015	38.375	
Error	386.286	4	.339		
Total	15288.000	150			
Corrected Total	2667.187	149			
a. R Squared = .855 (Adjusted R Squared = .844)					

Table 3 discloses the two-way Annova between the selected profile variables of the respondents and their responses to the "Obstacles Faced by Flower Cultivators for Marketing in the Study Area". R Squared = .855, Adjusted R Squared = .844 values exceed the threshold level of 0.60, so the model is fit. The "F" value of the independent profile variables is more

than three, and the corresponding significance value is less than 0.05 at a 95 per cent confidence level. Hence, it is concluded that There is a significant association between the profile variables of the selected respondents and their opinions about the obstacles in flower marketing in the study area.

11. Findings:

✓ It is observed that 55.43 per cent of respondents are male, and the remaining 44.57 per cent are female.
✓ A maximum of 48 per cent of respondents were 30 – 45, followed by those above 45 and below 30 years. Further, they found that 50.29 per cent of respondents are Hindu,
✓ The study revealed that 36.57 per cent of respondents have completed higher secondary school, and 45.14 per cent of respondents have a monthly income of Rs. 10,000 – 20,000.
✓ It is observed that the first rank is allotted to the variable "Price instabilities" with the "t" value of 20.427, followed by the second rank assigned to the variable "Cyclical demand" with the 't" value of 19.067 and the third rank given to the variable "Perishable nature" with the "t" value of 17.999.
✓ There is a significant association between the profile variables of the selected respondents and their opinions about the obstacles in flower marketing in the study area.

12. Suggestions:

The government has to take care of Infrastructure facilities in the Floriculture sector. The problem of small holdings, Inputs, Irrigation, Finance, Storage and Transport facilities. The area under floriculture should be enlarged so that the production will be increased. India's performance in the global floriculture market is not up to the mark compared to several other countries.

13. Conclusion:

Madurai is a city in Tamil Nadu known for its flourishing floriculture industry. However, there is still untapped potential for further growth, and efforts are required to increase the area under floriculture across the district and state. The government should encourage more growers to take up commercial floriculture by providing technical know-how, improved planting materials and attractive subsidies. The support of the Horticulture department would be crucial in this regard. Many Indian growers use excessive fertilisers and pesticides to reduce production risks, which can negatively impact the quality of flowers for export. To improve the quality of the flowers and meet international standards, growers should be made aware of the importance of using minimum prescribed or fewer chemicals. Expert government guidance can also help produce quality products that fetch higher returns. To further support the industry, international exposures can be arranged to help growers understand the processes and methods towards systemic entrepreneurship support. Also, since flowers are highly perishable, proper post-harvest handling and storage are necessary. The flower market yard should have proper market infrastructure facilities like an auction platform, electronic weighing, pack house, cold storage, etc.

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