

Floriculture: A lucrative sector in Bangladesh

The current challenges for floriculture and exporting flowers are the need for knowledge of many farmers on floriculture technology, the unavailability of seeds, and the lack of special compound fertilizers, among others.



Flowers are the symbols of beauty and purity.

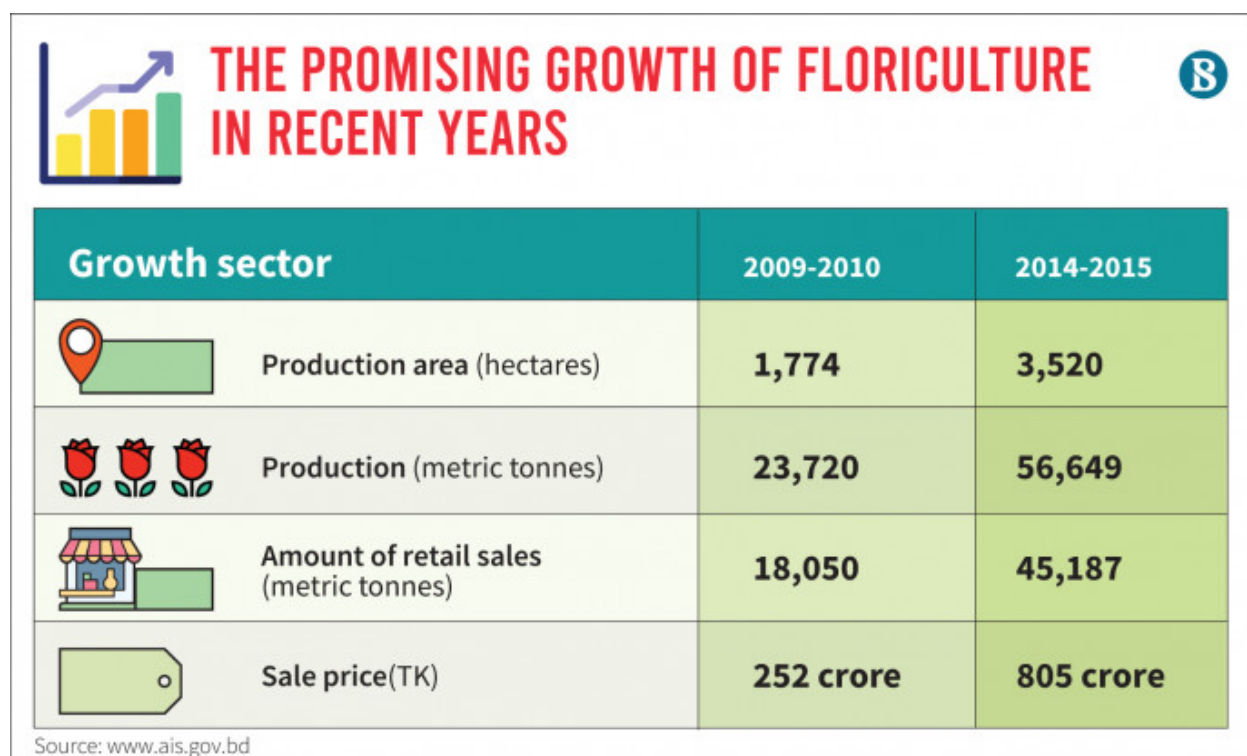
Nowadays flowers have become an important part of the country's economy. Over the years, the demand for flowers as an agricultural product has been rising in Bangladesh making floriculture a potential sector.

The soil and climate of Bangladesh are quite suitable for floriculture. Many exotic flowers can be grown in our country as the weather is tropical.

In 1983, a farmer named Sher Ali Sardar started commercial floriculture with tuberose flowers on a 30-acre of land in Jashore. At present, flowers are cultivated on 6,000 hectares of land in 24 districts including Jashore, Kushtia, Jhenidah, Chuadanga, Gazipur, Chattogram, Narayanganj, and Cumilla.

About 15 to 20 lakh people are earning their livelihood through floriculture. Various flowers, especially tuberose, gladiolus, rose, marigold, lotus, gerbera, hyacinth, chrysanthemum, and lily, are now being commercially cultivated in Bangladesh.

According to recent statistics published by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), the local market of flowers and cut foliage has reached TK1,600 crore per annum and is growing by 10 percent every year.



In 2014-15, approximately 57,000 tonnes of flowers were cultivated which generated a revenue of TK800 crores. The development and growth of floriculture in the last five years has been promising.

Also, the overall growth in various sectors of floriculture development has been very encouraging in the last few years since 2014-15.

In 1991, the government of Bangladesh listed flowers as an exportable product. According to floriculture industry insiders, Bangladesh exported flowers and floral products to several countries including India, Italy, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Germany, France, Denmark, and Britain.

According to Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the country's export earnings from cut flowers and foliage for the July to January period of the fiscal year 2018-19 touched \$3.98 million, which was \$0.02 million in the 2017-18 fiscal year.

EPB data revealed that Bangladesh exported cut flowers, leaves, trees, plants, bulbs, and roots worth \$86,000(about TK72 lakh) in 2016-17 fiscal and \$78,000(about TK65 lakh) in the previous fiscal.

The current challenges for floriculture and exporting flowers are the lack of knowledge of many farmers on floriculture technology, the unavailability of seeds, and the lack of special compound fertilizers, among others.

Besides, shortage of international standard production technology, greenhouse construction materials, high airfares, dependence on imports from India and lack of necessary research on flowers and not having a national flower policy are also barriers to prosperous floriculture. Florists are also at natural risk like floods, cyclones, tidal surges, etc.

For the further development of the potential floriculture sector in Bangladesh, authorities must take some steps including ensuring the supply of sufficient and newer seeds, covering farmers and traders under high-value crops, increasing credit opportunities on easy terms by Bangladesh Bank, private banks, and microfinance institutions, establishing permanent flower wholesale market in big cities is mandatory.

Also, infrastructure development through investing in more cold storage and warehouses, lowering airfares, allowing more space for flower export, arranging training programs for florists for the cultivation of flowers in a scientific way, and giving opportunities to florists to participate in national and international conferences and workshops and strengthening the research activities on flowers of the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute and formulating a national flower policy at the initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture, is much needed.

If the agro-friendly government provides the necessary assistance to the farmers, it will be possible to expand flower cultivation on a large scale on a commercial basis, and as a result, it will create employment opportunities for many unemployed people, which will contribute a lot to the development of socio-economic conditions of the country and alleviation of the rural poverty.