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Analysis of flower marketing in India: A case study of Pune flower market

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Abstract

India is going to be urban nation which shall be adding 404 million people to its urban population between 2014 and 2050. The annual growth in urban population in India between 2010 and 2015 was 1.1% the highest among the major economies, according to the UN World Urbanisation Prospects Report 2014. Indian cities are already contributing more than 62% to our national GDP. This increasing population in urban areas and increased saying with flowers shall create the huge demand for the floricultural products in urban and peri-urban parts of many cities of India. To cater the need of flowers in urban areas, the flower markets are an important aspect of floriculture industry. Proper marketing facilities shall bridge the gap between producers and consumers and thereby fetching better returns to the farmers. Therefore efforts were made by our team to study the Gultekdi Market of Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC), Pune wherein traders and flower marketing patterns was studied. During survey, direct personal interviews were conducted at flower market and at flower shops. This was done with the aid of a questionnaire of open- end questions. Based on the data collected from 65 traders for their educational qualifications it was observed that most of respondents had attained higher secondary school education (41%), those who had attained secondary school education were 27%, the least had attained only post graduate (9%) and 20% had attained graduation. 100% of the respondents were men with variable ages. 31-40 years old were the majority with 32.30% followed by 41-50 years old with 29.23% and 51-60 with 20.00% whereas, the least were above 61 years old which constituted 6.15% followed by 21-30 with 12.30%. In APMC traders are creating jobs for youth and farmers. Based on the survey scoring was given and efforts were made to identify the major difficulties. The price fluctuation is major issue for traders and about 64% traders said its major difficulty for them. Whereas, lack of storage facility at market place is another issue which was raised by 54% of traders interviewed. Among traders, knowledge about market is also major challenge and about 50% of traders facing problem in everyday business. Based on the data obtained about 84% respondent provide guidance about planting time of flower crops and 83% respondents give information about trending varieties in the market. Such information shall be highly useful for the farmers for getting better returns and planning of crop calendar.

Keywords: Flower market, traders, infrastructure, grading, cold chain

Introduction

Indian floriculture industry is growing in domestic as well as international levels. With increased purchasing power of consumers and changing lifestyle, the demand for flowers is ever increasing in domestic market. The area under flower crops in India is expanding which is presently stands at 3.06 lakh hectares with a production of 16.99 thousand MT loose flower and about 6.93 thousand MT of cut flowers (NHB Horticulture Statistic at a Glance, 2017) ^[1]. Intensive cultivation and higher returns per unit area in shorter time span attracted many growers into the business of floriculture. With increasing demand for flowers in urban and peri-urban areas the marketing of flowers as per need and at consumer's doorsteps is becoming a challenge to growers. As per recent report India is going to be urban nation which shall be adding 404 million people to its urban population between 2014 and 2050 (UN World Urbanisation Prospects Report, 2014) ^[2]. The annual growth in urban population in India between 2010 and 2015 was 1.1% the highest among the major economies (UN World Urbanisation Prospects Report, 2014) ^[2]. Indian cities are already contributing more than 62% to our national GDP. This increasing population in urban areas and increasing trend of saying it with flowers shall create huge demand for floricultural products in urban and peri-urban parts of many cities of India. To cater the needs of flowers in urban areas, the flower markets are an important aspect of floriculture industry.

Proper marketing facilities shall bridge the gap between producers and consumers and thereby fetching better returns to farmers. In Asia cut flowers were initially produced for export, the market potential has rapidly changed to include opportunities for supplying to the local market as well. This unique development is on account of the rapid strengthening of economies in the region (Wernett, 1998) [3]. The market demand is changing rapidly. The domestic markets are catching up due to high population densities, and the changing consumer perception towards use of flowers in improved lifestyle. The demand for novel exotic flowers as well as indigenous flowers and filler is increasing. This calls for more organized local flower markets in order to enhance the flower trade and business.

In India, historically consumers purchase floricultural products because of traditions, culture and lifestyle. Most of the floral products are used to offer to the god either at homes or in temples. Institutional use of floricultural products in India is also slowly increasing and that is contributing to the growth of floriculture in the country. Consumers require products with uniform quality, regular supply, steady price and novel products at accessible location and price. Most of the florists, local stores, garland makers, decorators directly purchase the flowers from market. Due to clear market positioning, increased buying power, they have become large buyer with specific demands. This has started showing the positive effects on the local markets and resulted in the growth of market. Therefore, there is need to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the market. So that concentrated efforts can be made to improvise the marketing infrastructure and market chain. Efforts were made by our team to study the Gultekdi Market of Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC), Pune wherein traders and flower marketing patterns were studied.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The research was carried out in flower market located at Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC), Gultekdi Flower Market, Pune (Maharashtra). Pune is at a height of 560 m (1,840 ft) above sea level on the western margin of the Deccan plateau. It is on the leeward side of the Sahyadri mountain ranges, which forms a barrier from the Arabian Sea. It lies between 18° 32" North latitude and 73° 51" East longitude. Pune region is one of the major flower growing regions in the country due to favourable climatic conditions for flowers cultivation. The major flower market like Mumbai and Pune give opportunity to sell the flowers in vicinity. Being nearest to Mumbai it has advantage of exporting flowers through air and sea route to overseas market in the shortest span of time.

Sampling and Research Approaches

The sample for this research work comprised of mainly flower traders who deal with purchase of various flowers as well as direct selling in the market. Traders are the major link for marketing in the flower market on whom the farmers rely. Farmers depend t on them for ensuring better price as well as for other useful information like trending flowers, varieties, colour, seasons, etc in the market and most importantly information about rate variations. Therefore, traders were selected by random sampling and total 65 respondents were identified.

Data Collection and Analysis

During survey, direct personal interviews conducted at flower market and at flower shops. This was done with the aid of a questionnaire of open-end questions. Simple tabular form and percentage techniques are used to present the study findings.

Results and Discussion

APMC, Gultekadi Market, Pune

Pune Gultekdi flower market is one of the major flower markets in the state followed by Mumbai (Dadar) Flower Market. In Gultekdi flower market about 41 different types of flowers and cut greens are being traded and they are like Jasmine, *Kagada*, Tuberose, Marigold, *Tuljapuri* Marigold (French Marigold), Balsam, Annual Chrysanthemum (*Bijali*), Aster, Gaillardia, Lily, Rose, Rose Gladiator, Tuberose, Golden Rose/Desi, Gladiolus, Larkspur, Candytuft, Lady Lece, Statis, Gypsoplilla, Cocks Comb, Gerbera, Carnation, Crossandra, Anona hexapetala, Hibiscus, Liliium, Orchid, Anthurium, Grass/ Sprengeri, Leaf/Filler, Parsely, Murraya, Chrysanthemum, tabernaemontana, michelia, etc.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents at APMC Pune

Demographic characteristics included sex, age, marital status, education levels and the occupation of the respondents. Based on the data collected from 65 traders for their educational qualifications it was observed that most of respondents had attained higher secondary school education (41%). About 27% attained secondary school education and 20% obtained their graduation degrees. About 9% of the respondents were post graduate. 100% of the respondents were men with variable ages. 31-40 years old were the majority with 32.30% followed by 41-50 years old with 29.23% and 51-60 with 20.00% whereas, the least were above 61 years old which constituted about 6.15% followed by 21-30 years with 12.30%. Majority of the traders own their shop (87.70%) or in partnership (3.10%). Only 9.2% of the shops are rented by the traders.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents at APMC Market, Pune

| Variables | Frequencies | Percentages |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 65 | 100 |
| Female | 00 | 00 |
| Total | 65 | 100 |
| Age | | |
| 21-30 | 08 | 12.3000 |
| 31-40 | 21 | 32.30 |
| 41-50 | 19 | 29.200000003 |
| 51-60 | 13 | 20.0000000000000 |
| Above 61 | 04 | 6.15 |
| Education level | | |
| Primary | 01 | 1.54444 |
| Secondary | 18 | 27.6 |
| Higher secondary | 27 | 41.5 |
| Graduate | 13 | 20.0 |
| Post graduate and above | 06 | 9.2 |
| Sub Total | 65 | 100 |
| Ownership | | |
| Sole Proprietor | 57 | 87.7 |
| Partnership | 02 | 03.1 |
| Other (Shop on Rent) | 06 | 09.2 |
| Total | 65 | 100 |

Analysis of APMC Market

APMC, Gultekdi flower market is very important market for farmers of the region. Being placed at central location of Pune it caters the need of various stakeholders like, flower decorators, garland makers, temples, retailers, household consumers, corporate offices, etc. In this study we have tried to analyze the different components of market chain like flower growers, retailers, wholesalers, traders, marketing infrastructure, consumers, etc. The main emphasis was given to traders and problems faced by the traders in the market arena.

Marketing Issues at APMC Pune

Based on the discussions and open end type questionnaire the following issues were identified and scoring was given based on individual responses. The major issues identified were 1. Lack of transportation facility 2. Absence of grading facility 3. Low sale absorption capacity of market 4. Too much price

fluctuation 5. Lack of storage facility 6. Market knowledge 7. High tax payment and 8. License & marketing fee.

Based on the survey 8 types of above issues were identified and ranked after through discussion with different traders. Price fluctuation is the major issue for the traders and about 64.61% traders said its major difficulty for them. Whereas, lack of storage facility at market place is another issue which was raised by 53.84% of the traders interviewed. The low sale absorption capacity of market is one of the major challenges in most of the market and Pune flower market is not exception to it and hence 56.92% trader said this as one of the difficulties. Among trader knowledge about market is also major challenge and about 50.76% of traders face the problem in everyday business. Other problems like absence of grading facility (26.15%), high tax payment (24.61%), license and marketing fee (21.53%) and lack of transportation facility (16.92%) are the other challenge faced by the traders.

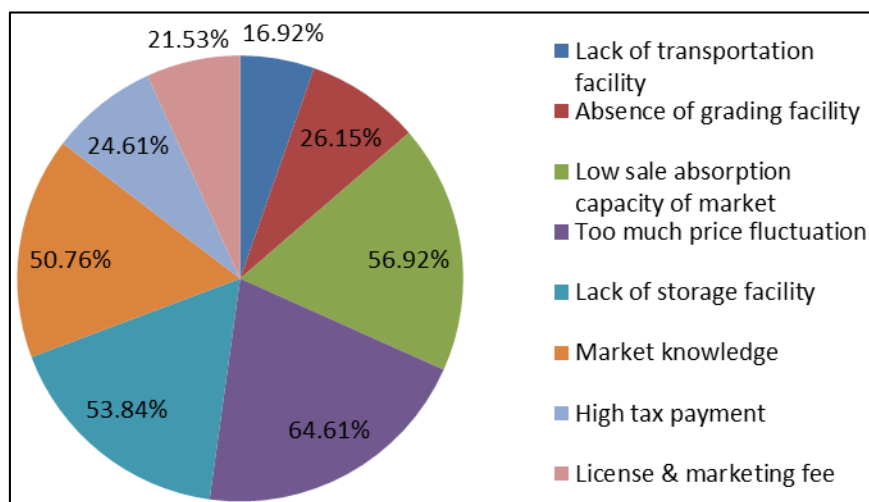


Fig 1: Problems identified by the traders at APMC, Pune

Support Rendered by Traders to Farmers at APMC, Pune

Based on the discussions with the traders and farmers, we have listed about 17 critical areas where the traders extend support to the farmers. The support includes production and marketing related issues. Information of cultivation of flower crops like 1. Time of planting, 2. Varieties trending in market based on acceptance and commerce. 3. Supplying of pesticides. 4. Supply of planting material and seeds 5. Information about use of fertilizers 6. Credit facility 7. Purchase of produce at farmer's field 8. Transportation support 9. Grading of flowers at farm level 10. Giving fixed rate and buy back support 11. Time of delivery & place of delivery 12. Information about assembling /cleaning /grading. 13. Packing 14. Storage 15. Credit 16. Retailing 17. Grading at trader level.

The detailed questionnaire open end type was prepared accordingly and the observations were recorded for the support rendered by the respondent (traders) to the farmers. Based on the data obtained about 84% respondent provide guidance about planting time of flower crops and 83% respondents provide information about trending varieties in the market. Such kind of information shall be highly useful for the farmers for getting better returns and planning of crop

calendar. The traders are not very keen to supply inputs like pesticides (3.08%), seeds (4.62%) and fertilizers (3.08%) to the farmers. For such information farmers depend on the agro-clinics located in his/her vicinity or neighboring farmers. About 47% traders provide the credit facility to farmers. Traders are not comfortable in providing the support like purchase of produce at farmer's field (0%), transport (3.08%), grading at farmer level (21.54%), giving fixed rate and buy back support (9.23%), information about assembling /cleaning /grading (7.69%), packing (9.23%) and storage (3.08%). Most of the traders deal with retail marketing (90.77%) therefore grading as per colour, shape and size is followed by 52.31% traders at APMC. Marketing of highly perishable commodity like flowers is always a tricky and with the proper marketing facility and cooperation from traders it can be done effectively in short span of time. The demand for fresh flowers is increasing and to meet the growing demand the marketing infrastructure at the vicinity of consumer is key for area expansion under floriculture. The market need to be strengthened with modern facilities like cold storage, value addition units, grading and packaging units, etc which shall help in avoiding glut condition in peak season and can overcome the losses to some extent.

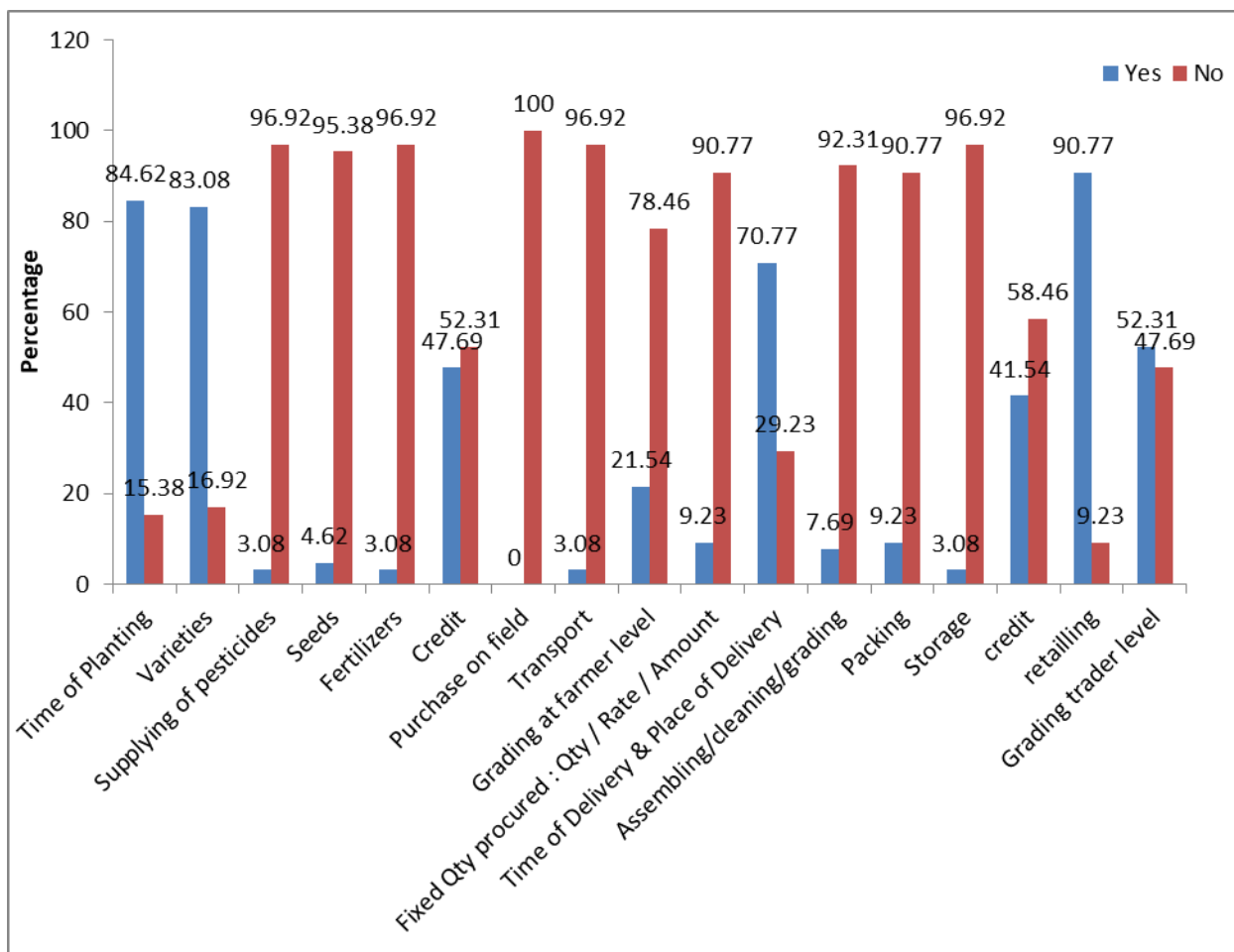


Fig 2: Support rendered by the traders to farmers at APMC, Pune

Conclusion

The nearest marketing facilities with better absorption capacity can lead to significant reduction in post-harvest losses along with better returns to growers. The traders and flower growers' symbiotic association is key for marketing of highly perishable commodity like flowers. The timely availability of information like arrivals of produce in the market and price shall give better understanding about price fluctuations in market. Since market fluctuation depends on demand and supply principle the traders are also caught unaware about the daily arrivals of produce in the market. Farmers also largely depend on the traders for information like trending varieties in market, time of planting (for off season market), market demand and most importantly the credit facility which is rendered by the traders. The good marketing infrastructure is lacking in the most of the flower markets. With better marketing facilities and improved market infrastructure one can create better opportunities to the flower growers in the vicinity. Flower marketing shall receive proper prioritization within public planning and initiatives. The favorable climatic condition and natural competitiveness can be exploited for better production if the marketing facilities can be strengthened near the vicinity of flower cultivation.

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