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From Field to Freight: Unlocking India's Floriculture Potential for Global Markets

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Floriculture is an emerging sector in India that majorly contributes in farm income and employment creation opportunities. With its diverse climatic conditions and wide variety of flowers, India has considerable potential to expand flower production and exports. However, making better use of this potential and increasing India's presence in international markets remain important challenges. This article examines changes in the area and production of flowers, along with the export performance of Indian floriculture, using secondary data from APEDA and DA&FW for the period 2015-16 to 2024-25. Between TE 2017-18 and TE 2024-25, the area under floriculture increased by 8.4 per cent, while flower production rose by 39.3 per cent. Floriculture exports also showed an increase in value between 2022-23 and 2024-25, although the growth was modest. Greater attention to product quality, post-harvest management, cold-chain facilities and market development is needed to strengthen India's floriculture exports and improve returns for farmers.

Introduction

From ancient times, flowers have held tremendous importance to humans, as they are part of the human cycle, from birth to death. References to flowers were also found in ancient literature like the *Rig Veda* (3000-2000 BC) and *Ramayana* (1200-1300 BC). We use these flowers in celebrations, worship, religious events, women's hair ornamentation, and to decorate homes and environments. The floricultural sector creates employment opportunities for unskilled people, poor women, illiterate, and marginalised people in India (Shilla *et al*., 2019). Due to Himalayan valleys, seasonal differences, diverse species and dense rainforests, India is the second-largest flower-producing country after China at the Asian level, with the production value of 4.12 million MT in 2024-25. Flowers are commercially cultivated in numerous states of India, such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha (Pathak *et al.*, 2022). In India, commercially cultivated flowers such as rose, gladiolus, carnation, chrysanthemum, orchid, tuberose, lily, gerbera, anthurium, jasmine, rose, chrysanthemum, and marigold. In 2024-25, India exported 21,039.14 MT of floriculture products with a value of 88.58 million USD (APEDA, 2026). The trade of floriculture products with an 11.03 per cent growth rate was estimated during the period from 1994-95 to 2018-19 from India. Though the annual domestic demand for flowers is growing at a rate of over 25 per cent and international demand is around Rs. 90,000 crore, India's share in the international market of flowers is negligible (Patil, 2022). So, the current study is undertaken to assess production and exports and explain how export opportunities can be pursued.

Materials and Methods

This article is based on secondary data collected from the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW). It examined the changes in the area and production of flowers and the volume and value of floriculture exports over the selected study period [Triennium

ending years (TE) 2017-18 and 2024-25]. The absolute and relative changes were calculated using the following equations: Absolute change = New value - Old value and Relative change = (Absolute change / Old value) x 100.

Result and Discussion

Along with a diverse treasure of flora and fauna, India also had a massive capacity to trade with an advanced and well-structured trade system. As we consider India's flower production in 2015-16, it was only 2.2 million MT, which increased to 3.6 million MT in 2024-25, along with an absolute change of 1.4 million MT (APEDA,2026). Figures 1 and 2 represent the explanation of Indian floriculture production and area with their relative change between the two triennium-ending years, 2017-18 and 2024-25. The area of flower production has increased from 302.7 thousand ha to 328.1 thousand ha in one decade with the increasing share of 8.4 per cent. In terms of the production of total flowers, both loose and cut, in India, it has increased from 2453.7 thousand MT in TE 2017-18 to 3418 thousand MT in TE 2024-25, with an increment of 39.3 per cent. This percentage share increment showed the advanced position and new opportunity to expand our floral markets from the domestic to the international level. With the increase in production of flowers in India, its export volume and value tell a different story. In terms of production of flowers, only 1 to 2 per cent of the product is exported (Makwana, 2026). India's floriculture export performance shows a mixed trend, as export volume showed a decline from 21,024.41 MT in 2022-23 to 19,677.89 MT in 2023-24 and then recovered to 21,039.14 MT in 2024–25. Whereas the export value increased marginally from 88.38 million USD to 88.58 million USD between 2022-23 and 2024-25. Figures 3 and 4 suggest that export expansion has not been consistently strong over the period examined. With strengthening market access, product quality, post-harvest handling and logistics could help improve the competitiveness of Indian floriculture in international markets.

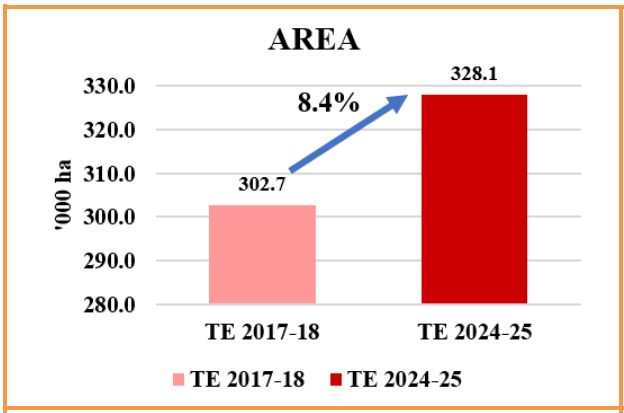


Figure: 1

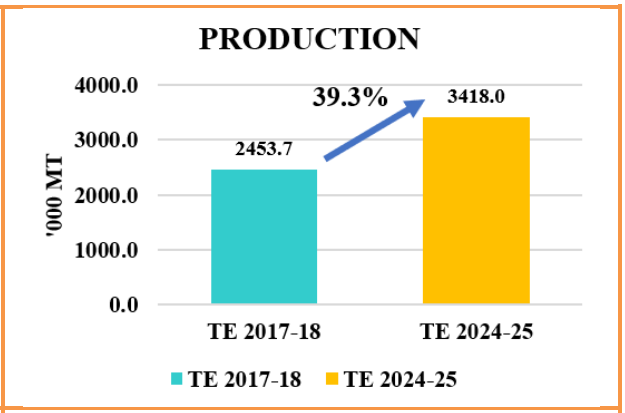


Figure: 2

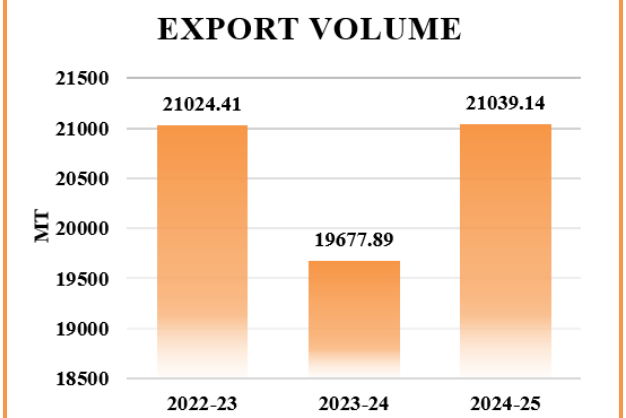


Figure: 3

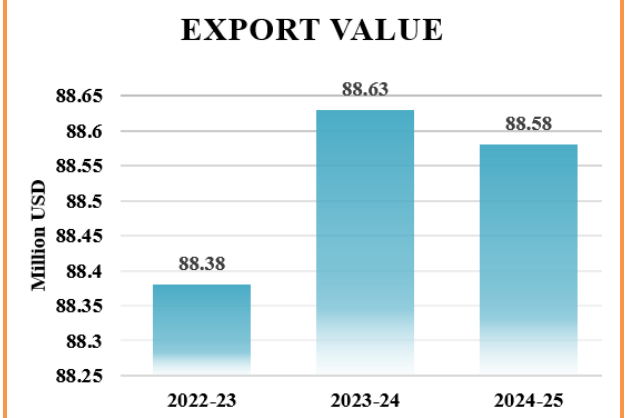


Figure: 4

To export floriculture or other agricultural products from India, exporters have to complete the necessary registration formalities and follow the rules of the importing country. The first

step is to obtain an Importer-Exporter Code (IEC) from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), and as our product falls under APEDA's scheduled categories, exporters also need to obtain a Registration-cum-Membership Certificate (RCMC). Depending on the type of flower or plant product and the destination country, documents such as a commercial invoice, packing list, shipping bill and phytosanitary certificate may also be required. Before sending a shipment, exporters should check the latest guidelines on the official websites of APEDA (https://apeda.gov.in), DGFT (https://dgft.gov.in), ICEGATE (https://icegate.gov.in) and the Plant Quarantine Management System (https://pqms.cgg.gov.in).

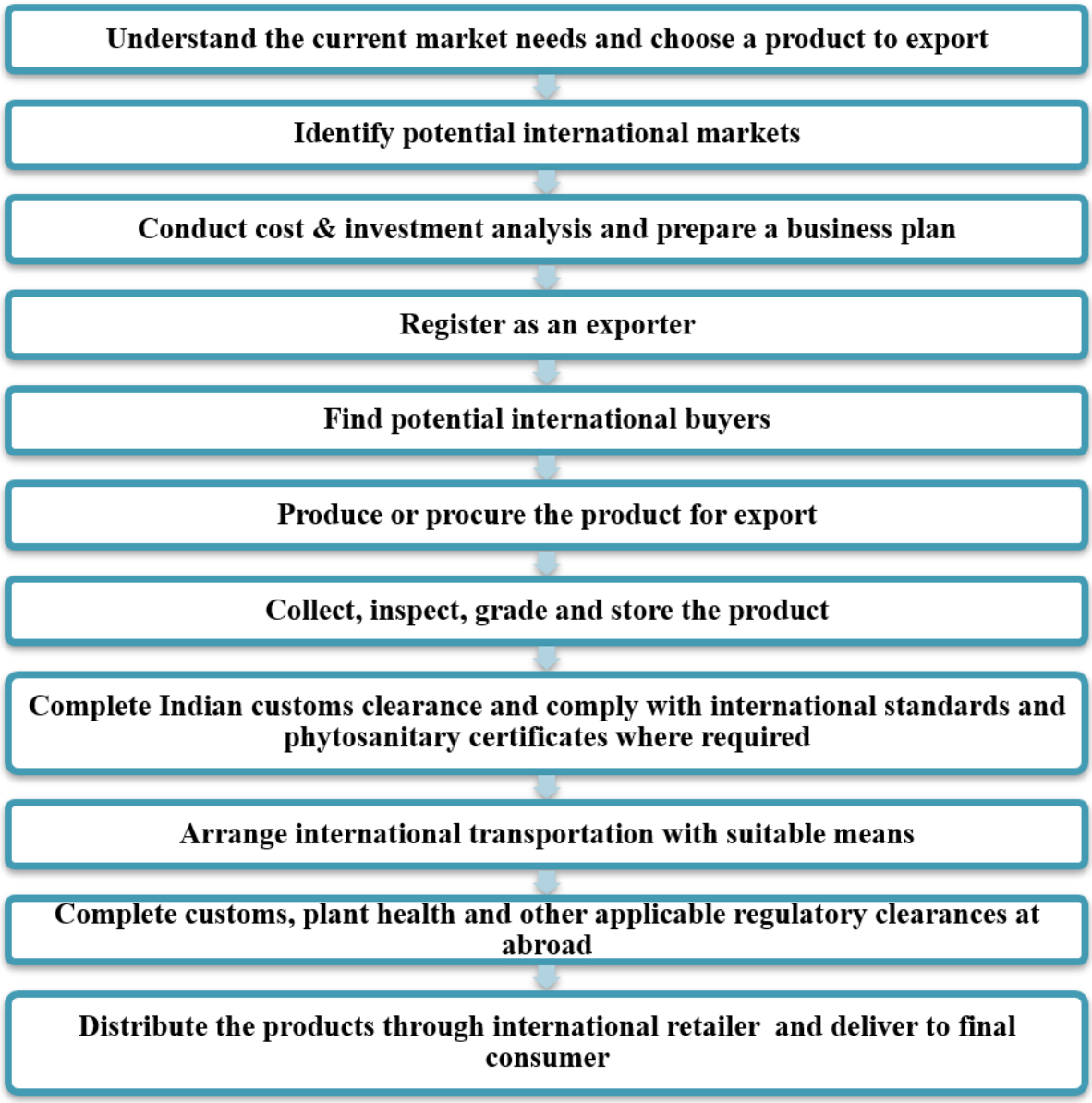


Figure 5: Major steps involved in exporting floriculture products from India

Conclusion

In sum up, India has good potential to expand its floriculture exports because of its favourable climate and wide variety of flowers. Yet, increasing flower production alone is not enough to succeed in international markets. Farmers and exporters need to maintain good product quality, reduce post-harvest losses, improve cold-storage facilities and understand the needs of foreign buyers. They must also meet the quality and certification requirements of importing countries. Better coordination among farmers, FPOs, exporters and government agencies can make it easier to reach international markets and earn better returns. Thus, by improving production practices, transport facilities and market connections, our country can create more opportunities for farmers and agri-entrepreneurs in the floriculture sector.

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