

# Present Status and Future Scenario of Floriculture Industry in Sri Lanka

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Floriculture industry is considered as a high income generating agribusiness and it can potentially be harnessed as a means of socioeconomic development in Sri Lanka. Uses of flowers in the country are blooming with the development of living standard of Sri Lankans and people use flowers in many events in their life such as for greetings, weddings and funerals and the usage of flowers in religious places is also very high (in Buddhists temples and Hindu Kovils). By exporting floriculture products to foreign markets, the country earns around 14.0 billion in year 2014. However, Exporters inform they earn profits by selling their products in local markets instead of exporting cut flowers. Limited literature and the lack of data are the main barriers to develop policies in this sector. Sri Lanka is a home to an enormous botanical diversity and has a wide range of floricultural items. However, the potential has not been used properly. The business is handled by few exporters, middle level growers and small scale growers. The National Policy Framework, Government of Sri Lanka, 2010 aims to develop floriculture sector as a source of income generating pathway to unemployed women in the country. It is expected that Sri Lankan floriculture products will be recognized as one of the best quality floriculture production centers in the world. Therefore, this research examines the present status of the floriculture industry in Sri Lanka and the future needs.

The observation and analysis presented in this paper are based on a questionnaire survey and interviews conducted during the period April – August 2014 in Colombo and Gampaha Districts of Sri Lanka and growers' views in the workshop on "Setting new horizons in horticulture 2020" held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at Colombo. Data were collected for qualitative analysis through direct questions and open ended questions. The evidence from this research acknowledges that collective actions of growers drive the development of floriculture in the country. Indirectly the growers highlighted that the increased utilization of flowers in the country, created a favorable demand for their products and therefore, growers need more market expansions. The main constraints of the growers are financial difficulties to purchase land to expand their productions. This is because many growers start their home-based business and with their success, they try to increase the cultivation. Therefore, growers as well as the government need to develop a proper market for the floriculture products at national and international levels. Institutional support is one of the crucial factors to promote this industry. This was also highlighted by the growers in the process of interviews. Thus, it is important to establish a strong institutional framework for the expansion of the floricultural industry in Sri Lanka.

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