

Biodiversity Act and the cut-flower export

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India's export of cut flowers have declined from Rs 340 crore in 2007-08 to Rs 294 crore in 2009-10, stated a paper published in the journal of Asian Business Management by Ms Kirandeep Kaur and Mr Imran Saleem of GNIMS, Mumbai University.

Experts in the field believe that the volumes and quality along with the lack of infrastructure are the major deterrents in flagging off the export of cut flowers. Since flowers are perishable commodities, care is needed at the production level. Giving attention to production/productivity factors, quality of produce and availability of quality planting material, will encourage the business. Post-harvest management systems and infrastructure also needed to be developed.

"The shelf life of flowers needs considerable improvement. On-shelf management practices must be standardized and research should focus on lowering input costs and on improving low cost indigenous systems. Tissue culture and biotechnology hold a lot of promise and should be exploited to ensure better high yielding floral varieties with in-built resistance to plant diseases," according to a paper published in CAB (college of agricultural banking) calling by Mr EV Murray and Mr KRP Rao.

In order to achieve this an extensive amount of research is needed. But, unfortunately, the NBA act does not make it conducive for research, as highlighted by the experts in the story. Series of long approvals which are time consuming and uncertainty stops anyone who wishes to do explore the field for research purpose.

The country's diverse agro-climatic conditions and geographical locations is suited for growing various types of flowers. India has a rich biodiversity and its proper utilization can be very beneficial both scientifically and economically to the country. But, in a zeal to protect it from exploitation, the Act is proving to be suicidal.

Biodiversity resources are renewable resources and as suggested by Dr Ramaswamy, dean, inStem, the best way to conserve these is to make it commercially an important thing. The more it is used, the better it is conserved.