

# Role of women in floral decorations, floral crafts and floral jewellery - Review Article

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## Abstract

Since times immemorial, women are actively engaged in preparation of floral decorations, crafts and jewellery and their business. Crafting in floriculture has been gaining impetus with the rapidly growing flora industry in India. Value addition in the fields of flower decorations and use of improved techniques has played a vital role in exploring different opportunities in this field. Thus, forms of crafting in floriculture like art of cut floral arrangements, bouquet making, loose flower arrangements, hair adornments, floral jewellery, dry flower articles, potpourris, etc. are gaining momentum and popularising in our country. There is a vast opportunity in value added floriculture trade through crafting at entrepreneurial level for rural and urban people specially women besides growing and selling flowers. Women at small scale can set up small enterprises where floral crafting in the form of garlands, bouquets, veni-gajara, flower arrangements in different containers, dehydration of flowers, etc. that has high potential for earning and improving livelihood.

**Key word:** Role of women, Flower craft and flower jewellery

## Introduction

India's rural women are involved in different types of work and contribute considerably to the economy of our country. However, much of their work is not systematically accounted in the official statistics (Agoramoorthy and Hsu, 2012). Moreover, Government of India had declared 2001 as the 'Year of Women Empowerment' by passing a policy, much of the rural women's work but still it has not been accounted in official statistics and data collection agencies (Leach and Sitaram, 2002). Indian women in rural areas are actively engaged in agricultural activities from sowing to harvesting which is highly labour intensive. There for, future agro-technology needs to be concentrating on developing 'women-friendly' approach in reference to their skills, artistic approach as well as there is need of substantial support from the government and corporate sectors as well. Crafting in floriculture is low input and high output based work where, lots of creative and artistic skills as well as long hours of perseverance and thorough involvement. Women can play a vital role, besides these crafts are small scale based industries which can

be managed by women or group of them from their homes without disturbing their family responsibility. Rural women can very well take up projects involving flower drying and dry flower articles.

Further, crafting in flowers involving skills of bouquet making and flower jewellery with loose flowers has a good potential for earning livelihood for urban women these days. The small-scale floricultural craft in rural areas has the potential to undoubtedly energize and empower tribal, rural as well as urban women to enhance their livelihoods and economy and therefore it has the potential to contribute significantly to India's sustainable development in future.

## **Floral decorations**

India is a country with lots of festivals and occasions, where flowers play a very important role in decorations and improving beauty. A potentiality and popularity and commercialization of floral craft i.e. based on flower arrangement art is rapidly increasing in our country as depicted from the magnificent floral decorations costing from Rs 10,000 to 20 lakhs in wedding and religious ceremonies. The growing popularity of special day celebrations like Valentine's day, women's day and mother's day has also contributed to the growth of this art cum industry. This sector is rapidly expanding with the growing rate of flower consumption. Some of the foreign bouquet factories from U.K., Thailand and China are providing online facility for consumers providing different floral decorations and flower arrangement at your door step but it comes with high price ranging from \$ 10 to \$ 300. It is evident that locally this sector can provide all the products at very cheaper rate for consumers. Although, this floral live art has become an integral part of ceremonies, it is yet to enter our homes and offices on regular basis.

The concept of floral designing has great application in modern bouquets and decorations on stage, walls, ceilings, curtains for various ceremonies including wedding. Flower Arrangements are an important part of the ambience on any occasion like weddings, birthdays, parties, or any other events in life as well as beautify homes and offices alike. There are basically three styles of arranging flowers viz., western style (Oriental), Ikebana (Eastern style) and Contemporary free style which are generally composed of cut flowers, foliage, twigs, stems with some accessories (Hiller 1974 and Packer 1998).

Western style of flower arrangement puts more emphasis on use of 'many flowers as a mass'. This style follows geometrical forms and consists of more number of flowers and depicts a complete and full effect (Mc Daniel 1996). The traditional flower arranging styles combine lines and masses and create many variations of the line, line mass and mass arrangements (Packer 1998). A good knowledge of the traditional styles provide a base for the basic learning of flower arranging skill. Floral foams were being used to make lovely designs in western style of flower arrangement. In business terms this has taken the

form of various type of floral bouquets like round or triangular baskets, spheres, cascades, hand bouquets, etc. where in women are playing a significant role either as an entrepreneur, teacher or florist.

Easter style flower arrangement is also called as Ikebana, symbolizes Living flower. It is a Japanese word, meaning: Ike (To set in/To live/) + bana (flower). These arts have great application in décor at five star hotels as well as in high profile wedding ceremonies. The basic principles of ikebana are ii) Asymmetry: There is never symmetry in the ikebana types yet the arrangement looks balanced, iii) Few flowers: Few flowers are used to form basic lines of ikebana and it gives filling effect. The arrangement depicts space and creativity, iv) Proximity to Nature: Ikebana signifies life, it appears associated with nature as it inspired by nature v) Continuity: Ikebana always give a growing and live look. It should not appear inert but should appear persisting and maintaining continuity. Ikebana consists of three basic lines viz., i) Shin- It forms the most important basic line of the ikebana. It symbolizes Heaven and expresses truth. Hence, this should be strongest, firm and tallest among all. Size of shin equals to (Length + width of the container) x 1.5-3 times. ii) Soe: Soe is the second important line of ikebana. It symbolizes man and expresses body, the human being. The shape of ikebana container varies from shallow, tall, broad, rectangular, round, oval, informal to curved types and double or partitioned types and are available in varied forms of porcelain, lacquer ware lined with copper and glass. Women ikebana experts are highly paid for designing ikebana in five star hotels as well as for wedding or special occasions and are also engaged in teaching the technique in ikebana schools.

### **Floral crafts**

Floral crafts like corsages and boutonnieres are small floral decoration designed to be worn on different outfits and are very popular in western countries although gaining popularity in our country as well. Corsages are also sold extensively during the Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day holidays in western countries. One of the more important uses for corsages in Europe is for weddings. Flowers should be positioned for best effect and firmness in construction. Flower colours should be coordinated with the dress, the complexion and hair colour of the wearer, and the lighting available (for day or evening occasions). These are not so popular in our country but some designer forms of corsage and boutonniere are now in increasing demand for wedding occasion in some parts of western and Northern India.

Another type of floral crafts like floral wreaths are A floral arrangement in the form of a circular garland, usually woven of flowers and foliage, that traditionally indicates honor or celebration. Wreaths are especially very popular on funerals as a symbol of honoring the deceased. These are exclusively ordered in defence forces, government bodies and sophisticated societies for particular occasions. Women artisans are being involved in designing the wreaths which are sold at good prices.

Floral crafts prepared from dried flowers and dried planting materials are having great potential as a substitute of fresh flowers in indoor as well as various commercial uses. In India, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, and Kolkata have emerged as major hubs of dry flowers industries in recent times. For making dry flowers, flowers and plant parts can be collected from wild sources of some flower crops like Dahlias, marigold, jute flowers, wood roses, wild lilies, helichrysum, lotus pods, etc. Although, India is rich in its biodiversity in native ornamentals, at present the industry is not properly established and depends on plant material available in forests and no systematic growing of specialized flowers for drying exists anywhere in the country (Bhutani, 1993).

Dry flowers is a significant component of export in floriculture industry in India where potpourris are very popular. The exclusive 'Potpourrie' made of dry flower with added fragrance to serve as an attractive room freshener is highly popular at global level. The important dried ornamental plants used for making potpourris are roses, lilacs, lavender, pinks, hyacinths, lilies, violets, wall flowers, marigold and many others which are associated with essential oil viz., geranium, daisy bush, bergamot, sage, savoury, thyme, angelica and sweet cicely. In addition, foliage of ferns, pine- cones, lily pods and driftwood and other items from nature's treasure of exotic bloom are collected from forests and gardens (Singh 2003). Mostly women are engaged in collecting such products and further in semi processing them for drying, bleaching and making some crafts. In earlier days it was considered as women's art and the grandma's knowledge which has now become a successful business having high export potential.

### **Floral Jewellery and other loose flower crafts**

Different floral crafts and jewellery prepared from loose flowers are crafted in form of garlands, flower ornaments and hair decoration. Loose flower craft in form of garlands, String, veni, bridal crown, Jadai (Hair adornment), loose flower based corsage for hand wrist etc, have great demand especially during festivals and South Indian weddings. The quality flowers with fragrance and aromatic leaves are used to make garlands to worship Hindu deities. Some of those fragrant flowers include jasmine, plumeria, lotus, lilies, nerium, chrysanthemum, roses hibiscus, etc. Also in wedding the couple wears a wedding garland through the country as a rich tradition. Wedding Garlands, Bridal crown-crowns made jasmine flower buds are used in some marriages for adorning the couple, Jadai-it is unique decoration of women's hair with Jasmine and crossandra tied to base material like banana fibre, corsage for hand wrist-it is made up of jasmine buds and rose petals. In the western region of the country floral beautiful jewellery and hair decor made up of buds of spider lily, jasmine, tabernaemontana and petals of rose are specially designed for brides and are priced during wedding occasion. Only women are involved in

making these designer floral jewellery and hair adornment business which gives around 250% to 1000% value addition in flowers.

## Conclusion

Components of floriculture industries like dry flower making, floral decor, bouquet making, dry flower frames and articles, potpourris and floral jewellery by using the ornamental plants is considered as an ideal venture in the recent past for livelihood and women empowerment. Small scale women groups can work together in processing enterprises to create new markets for higher value floriculture products. Besides, utilization of the plant products from the forest places has created an employment opportunity and rural areas to people to realize this venture. There is a great potential to start a home scale establishment with a meagre amount of rupees fifteen thousand and woman may supplement her income by employing other members of the family. An industry based on crafting should be started as 'Small' by first investing ingenuity, second labour, and third money. One may need an independent source of income to cover the costs for at least the first three to five years where government can play a role to help creating small scale start-up programmes related to these industries. Crafting in floriculture can be the source of the uniqueness of flowers as communities. If properly explored, flower crafting can develop into a successful industry by the prospective women entrepreneurs in our country.

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