

## Export and Import Scenario of Orchids in India

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### ABSTRACT

Orchids are consistently ranked among the best sellers in the global potted plant trade and also comprise 10% of all fresh cut flowers traded internationally. Thailand is the largest exporter of orchid cut flowers to India devoting 80.67% of total import followed by Netherlands 15.54%, New Zealand 2.29% and China 1.5%, respectively. Highest import of orchids was recorded in 2013-2014 (Rs. 3425.76 Lacs) followed by 2015-2016 (Rs. 2985.19 Lacs) and 2018-2019 (Rs. 2321.84 Lacs). Maximum export of orchids was found in 2016-2017 (Rs. 5.23 Lacs) followed by 2017-2018 (Rs. 4.89 Lacs). A number of strategies can be taken up to promote orchid export and to reduce the import of plastic flowers from other countries.

### INTRODUCTION

Orchids are traded in a wide range of purposes and at many different scales, from large-scale commercial trades through to subsistence use such as medicines, materials for weaving, ornaments, food, dyes [1]. There are also other, emerging commercial uses of orchids, such as in perfumes and cosmetic products, etc.

The vast majority of contemporary orchid trade involves artificially propagated plants and cut flowers cultivated in commercial greenhouses. The Reported Convention on the International Trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) trade in live artificially propagated plants is dominated by a small number of genera, with a large proportion of trade in hybrids (e.g. *Cymbidium* Sw., *Dendrobium* Sw. and *Phalaenopsis* Blume). Orchids are consistently ranked among the best sellers in the global potted plant trade and also comprise c. 10% of all fresh cut flowers traded internationally [2]. This represents an economically significant global trade, with exports of potted orchids from the Netherlands alone valued at almost €500 million in 2015 [3]. The largest areas of production are in Thailand, Taiwan, The Netherlands and Japan, with demand for both potted and cut flowers growing in economic value annually [4].

### EXPORT SCENARIO IN ORCHIDS

Thailand is the largest exporter of orchid cut flowers to India devoting 80.67% of total import followed by Netherlands 15.54%, New Zealand 2.29% and China 1.5%, respectively. Countries that export *Dendrobium* to India are Thailand and The Netherlands. Maximum export of orchids was found in 2016-2017 (Rs. 5.23 Lacs) followed by 2017-2018 (Rs. 4.89 Lacs) (Tables 1 and 2).

**Table 1.** Export of orchids from India (Rs. in lacs and quantity in MT).

Country	2013-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Total	0.72	2.72	2.09	3.24	0.99	2.11

Source: DGCIS Annual report

**Table 2.** Export of orchids to India from other countries.

2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019	
Quantity (MT)	Rs. in lacs	Quantity (MT)	Rs. in lacs	Quantity (MT)	Rs. in lacs
0.74	5.23	2.54	4.89	0.00	0.00

Source: DGCIS Annual Import

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**IMPORT SCENARIO IN ORCHIDS**

It indicates the increased trend of import value of orchids as compared export value since 2013-2014 to 2018-2019

(Tables 3 and 4). Highest import of orchids was recorded in 2013-2014 (Rs. 3425.76 lacs) followed by 2015-2016 (Rs. 2985.19 lacs) and 2018-2019 (Rs. 2321.84 lacs).

**Table 3.** Import of orchids to India (Rs. in lacs and quantity in MT).

Country	2013-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Total	1248.77	3425.76	640.49	1901.12	1532.09	2985.19

Source: DGCIS Annual report

**Table 4.** Import of orchids to India from other countries.

2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019	
Quantity (MT)	Rs. in lacs	Quantity (MT)	Rs. in lacs	Quantity (MT)	Rs. in lacs
84.61	146.15	832.66	1,193.80	1,044.36	2,321.84

Source: DGCIS Annual Import

Artificial flowers become popular because these are cost effective, available in desired color, size and quality, used in multiple events and available round the year. Although artificial flowers may last longer than real flowers, they miss the beauty of the real ones.

In India, the market of plastic flowers is still small compared to fresh flowers. It has a total turnover of around Rs.1,000 crores a year whereas the fresh flower market has a turnover of around Rs.8,000 to 9,000 crores a year. In India, the total natural flower business covers 60% of the floriculture market, artificial flowers contributes 30% of the total turnover and 10% is taken up by dry flowers. Incidentally, due to vast improvements in the quality of artificial flowers as well as lifestyles that demand low maintenance home decorating items, the market for them has grown into a multi-billion dollar business in countries like Thailand and China.

**STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ORCHID EXPORT AND TO REDUCE THE IMPORT OF PLASTIC FLOWERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES**

- Exploration and identification of unique orchid germplasms having aesthetic values in terms of genetic resources as parental materials, cut flowers, potted ornamentals, hanging baskets, medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Development of market driven hybrids of Cymbidium, Dendrobium, Vanda, Phalaenopsis, Cattleya, Oncidium and Paphiopedilum with attractive blooms of various colors, forms, shapes, sizes and long keeping quality.
- Production of planting materials of commercial hybrids and valuable species at mass scale through micropropagation and other propagation techniques.

- Round the year production technology of orchids through growing of selected hybrids and species.
- Area expansion of production in Cymbidium and Paphiopedilum in temperate regions, Oncidium, Cattleya, Zygopetalum in subtropical regions and Dendrobium, Vanda, Phalaenopsis and Mokara in tropical region.
- Improved post-harvest technologies and value addition, through dry flower production of unmarketable species and hybrids, single Floret packaging and wealth from waste.
- Domestication, multiplication and popularization of lesser known but high value orchids such as *Dendrobium nobile*, *Renanthera imschootiana*, *Rhyncostylis retusa*, *Aerides* spp., native Paphiopedilum species, *Vanda coerulea*, *Cymbidium whiteae*, *Malaxis* spp., *Habenaria* spp.
- Vertical gardening with suitable orchid genera such as Phalaenopsis, Coelogyne, Dendrobium, Bulbophyllum, Aerides, etc.
- Development of epiphytic orchid based farming system, including other ornamentals like Anthurium, Alstroemeria, Gerbera and terrestrial orchids.

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