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## Human resource management practices in floriculture industry: A comparative study of public and private sector nurseries in Himachal Pradesh

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**Abstract**

The present study is focused on analyzing the existing human resource management practices in public and private sectors with special emphasis on floriculture in the state of Himachal Pradesh. A total of 12 public and another 12 private flower nurseries located in different agro ecological were randomly selected for making it a representative sample of the state of Himachal Pradesh. A well designed questionnaire was administered among the respondents to collect the required information. Data was analyzed through Statistical Program for the Social Science (SPSS 20) software. The concept of human resource planning was observed to be seriously entering into the nursery management both under the private and public flower nurseries. Workers have started feeling the importance of human resource planning. Compensation and incentive policy of human resource management was found to be an important factor for ensuring loyalty of employees towards the organization. It was suggested that the working conditions must be made gender sensitive as most of the nurseries are in isolated field situations with restricted privacy and security issues for the females. It was reported by the respondents of the public sector that there is need to examine and motivate employees for skill upgradation so that individual performance levels may be maximized.

**Keywords:** human resource management, floriculture industry, compensation, retention, skill upgradation

**Introduction**

The Human Resource Management (HRM) practices refer to the organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human resource and ensuring that the resources are employed towards the fulfillment of organizational goals (Schuler and Jackson 1987) [4]. Human resource is very important asset for any organization and it is the foundation of achieving competitive advantage. Managing human resource is very challenging as compared to managing technology or capital. The HRM system should be backed up by sound HRM practices. Human resources are the source of achieving competitive advantage because of its capability to convert the input resources like money, machine, methods and materialism in to output products and services (Tiwari and Saxena, 2012) [5].

Floriculture industry in India has emerged as an industry with staffing of human resources in different aspects of crop production, harvesting, packing, grading, standardization, processing, transportation and marketing. Different specialized persons are required for different activities. Staffing is needed in this sensitive agro vocation to decide what type of people should be hired, recruiting prospective employees, selecting employees, setting performance standard, compensating employees, evaluating performance, counseling employees, training and developing employees. Similarly, being a sensitive and time bound crop, production and marketing, directions is required for activating group efforts in achieving the desired goals.

The study is therefore focused on analyzing the existing human resource management practices in public and private sectors with special emphasis on floriculture in the state of Himachal Pradesh. The present study is a comparative study on the practices of human resource management followed by public and private floriculture in employees' perspective only at the administrative levels. Keeping in view the wide scope of the practices of human resource management, the present study was confined to analyze the concepts of Human Resource Acquisition and Retention Policies with the following specific objectives.

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### Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the prevailing practices of human resource management for identification of key human resource management variables/ factors affecting the floriculture business of both the government and private floriculture nurseries.
2. To analyze the comparative aspects of human resource management in floriculture business on various parameters for the public as well as the private sector nurseries.
3. To suggest suitable measures for improving floriculture business through effective human resource management practices.

### Methodology

A total of 25 public flower nurseries are operational in the state of Himachal Pradesh. In addition a large number of private flower nurseries are also operational in the state of Himachal Pradesh. In the present study 50 per cent of the public flower nurseries were selected with equal number of private flower nurseries to ensure statistical validity of comparison of Human Resource Management Practices implemented and followed for the employees of different hierarchical set up. Thus a total of 12 public and another 12 private flower nurseries located in different agro ecological were randomly selected for making it a representative sample of the state of Himachal Pradesh. Proportional allocation method was followed for the selection of data from different strata by ensuring homogeneity within the stratum and maximum heterogeneity between different strata.

A well designed questionnaire was administered among the respondents to collect the required information. Data was analyzed through Statistical Program for the Social Science (SPSS 20) software. The statistical tools of percentages,

standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, Cronbach alpha, Chi-square test and 5 Point Likert Scale were used for the analysis of data. Chronbach's alpha was used as the most common measure of internal consistency ("reliability"). The reliability test was conducted and the value of Cronbach's Alpha varied from 0.756 to 0.912 depicting thereby that all the values were in the acceptable range meaning thereby that there is internal consistency amongst the attributes studies for the Human Resource Management. The following null hypotheses were framed which will be tested by using some appropriate statistical tools.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** The human resource management practices adopted by both the public as well as private sector floriculture nurseries do not differ significantly. The prevailing practices of Human Resource Management and the identified key human resource management variables/ factors are equally affecting the floriculture business of both the public and private nurseries.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the attitude of different categories of employees towards human resource management practices in public and private sector flower nurseries.

### Results and Discussions

The results of the present study are presented below

#### Floriculture in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh is bound between 30° 22" to 33° 12" North latitude and 75° 47" to 79° 4" East longitude. Himachal Pradesh is gifted with varied agro-climatic conditions ranging from sub-tropical to dry temperate zones, to grow excellent quality of flowers throughout the year

**Table 1:** Agro Climatic Zones for Floriculture in Himachal Pradesh

Zone description	Elevation range (Meters)	Rainfall (cms)	Suitable Flower Crops
Low Hill and Valley Areas near the plains	350 – 900	60 - 100	Gladiolus, Carnation, Lilium, Marigold, Chrysanthemum, Rose
Mid Hills (Sub Temperate)	900 – 1500	90-100	Carnation, Gladiolus, Lilium, Marigold, Chrysanthemum, Alstroemeria, Rose
High Hills and Valleys in the interiors (Temperate)	1500 – 2750	90-100	Gladiolus, Carnation, Lilium, Marigold, Chrysanthemum
Cold and Dry Zone (Dry Temperate)	2750 – 3650	20-40	Seed/ Corm/ Bulb production

**Source:** State Department of Horticulture, Navbahar, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.

In Himachal Pradesh, floriculture industry contributes to the development of economy by providing regular employment to the farmers and helps in the development of the local economy and improving the standard of living. Himachal government as per its policy has made it mandatory for

Himachal Road Transport Co-operation (HRTC) bases to ferry flowers to markets at subsidized rates. Area and Production of flower crops in Himachal Pradesh is depicted in table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Area and Production of flower crops in Himachal Pradesh

Year	Area (in ha)	Production	
		Loose (in MT)	Cut (Lakh Nos)
2014-2015	801.0	27204	1868
2015-2016	719.0	23400	1594
2016-2017	708.61	17951	1482

**Source:** Department of Horticulture, H.P. 2016-17.

### Socio-economic perspectives

The study of socio- economic profile of the respondents and its influence on the decision making process helped in understanding the validity of human resource management interventions. It also led to critical understanding of the farm

decision related nursery production management and marketing. The organizational behavior of the private and public nurseries in relation to the HR related policies could also be critically assessed with the help of socio-economic profile. The nursery production is dominated by males and

only 26.60 per cent of females were found to be engaged. This may be due to the requirement of long working hours, physical strength and working conditions in isolated field situations with restricted privacy and security issues for the females. There was more participation of middle aged persons in the age group of 36-45 years. The restricted formal education and lack of diversified vocational skills was predominantly found amongst the workers as most of males (77.86%) were educated to the level of 10+2 and majority of females observed (31.83%) were educated to the level of

matriculation. The salary in the range of Rs 5000 to Rs 10,000 was significantly providing supportive family income as most of the respondents belonged to rural farm families ranging from Rs 5000 to Rs 10,000 per month. The presence of joint family helps in sustaining their family systems. The apprentice without any job experience are also provided job opportunities in private sector nurseries which points towards easy and fruitful job accessibility for low skilled and formally less educated human resources

**Table 3:** Demographic profile of the public and private sampled respondents (n=166)

Sr. No.	Demographic Variables	Particulars	Male	Female	Mean	S.D
1	Gender		122 (73.49)	44 (26.50)	79.8313	39.384
2	Age	18-25 years	17 (13.93)	17 (38.63)	15.97	1.76
		26-35 years	52 (42.62)	17 (38.63)	37.20	18.11
		36-45 years	27 (22.13)	9 (20.45)	19.37	9.31
		46-55 years	13 (10.65)	0 (0)	7.88	6.5453
		55 and above	13 (10.65)	1 (2.27)	8.21	6.36
3	Educational Qualification	Metric	30 (24.59)	14 (31.81)	22.86	8.3152
		Plus two	47 (38.52)	13 (29.54)	32.84	17.698
		Graduate	9 (7.37)	0 (0)	5.45	4.79
		Post Graduate & above	33 (27.04)	11 (25)	23.68	11.38
		Under Metric	3 (2.45)	6 (13.63)	3.81	1.990
4	Salary per Month	Below Rs.5000/-	3 (2.45)	5 (11.35)	3.486	1.33
		Rs. 5001-10000/-	51 (41.80)	26 (59.09)	39.60	12.645
		Rs 10001-15000/-	6 (4.91)	2 (4.54)	4.30	2.06
		Rs.15001-20000/-	3 (2.45)	0 (0)	1.81	1.59
		Rs.20001-25000/-	11 (6.62)	3 (6.8)	7.67	4.16
		Rs. 25001 & above	48 (28.91)	8 (18.18)	31.78	21.04
5	Work Experience	Less than 1 year	14 (8.43)	10 (22.72)	11.82	2.02
		1-5 years	46 (27.71)	25 (56.81)	36.235	10.57
		6-10 years	6 (3.61)	3 (6.8)	4.63	1.51
		11-15 year	33 (27.04)	6 (13.63)	22.01	14.18
		More than 15 years	23 (18.85)	0 (0)	13.95	12.25
6	Background	Rural	95 (77.86)	19 (43.18)	63.95	39.8
		Urban	24 (19.67)	23 (52.27)	22.22	2.26
7	Knowledge of computer	Yes	95 (77.2)	19 (43.18)	63.95	39.8
		No	23 (18.85)	24 (54.4)	21.2851	2.72
8	Marital status	Married	100 (81.9)	33 (75)	71.65	34.67
		Unmarried	22 (18.25)	11 (25)	17.01	5.57
9	Category of Staff	Controlling Officers	34 (30.32)	11 (25)	25.10	12.35
		Executive Officers	9 (7.3)	2 (4.54)	6.12	3.66
		Field Functionaries	79 (64.75)	31 (70.45)	58.25	24.378
10	Family Type	Nuclear	43 (36.88)	15 (34.0)	31.62	14.72
		Joint	79 (64.75)	29 (65.90)	57.58	25.272
11	Nature of Job	Regular	54 (44.26)	34 (77.27)	44.08	10.00
		Contract Basis	68 (55.73)	10 (22.72)	31.50	19.94
12	Sector	Public	47 (38.52)	9 (20.45)	31.50	19.948
		Private	35 (28.68)	35 (79.5)	32.89	3.64

**Note:** Figures in parentheses show percentages

### Human resource planning

The concept of human resource planning was observed to be seriously entering into the nursery management both under the private and public flower nurseries. The first hypothesis was accepted on the basis of its statistical inferences. Workers have started feeling the importance of human resource planning. The shortage of staff was observed to be further necessitating the need for proper human resource planning. The parameters of human resource planning were identified and positive response was observed for these identified parameters that is objectives, business plan, work load analysis, economic factors and changing technology in public and private nurseries. The workload analysis and changing technology were assessed as first and second ranked parameters by the public sector employees. The economic

factors were first ranked by the private sector employees. The study of the controlling officers in public sector led to the conclusion that they were engaged in human resource planning keeping in view the organization goals. The controlling officers were also considering proper job analysis and specifications before assigning job responsibilities. Similar response was observed for the public sector executive officers. The future organization structure was also kept in mind while deciding for human resource planning. The attitude of field functionaries in public sector also supported the statement that human resource planning is done keeping in view the organization goals.

The attitude of private sector controlling officers supported and prioritized the statements that human resource planning is done keeping in view the organization goals and proper job

analysis is done keeping in mind the job description. The attitude of executive officers in private sector supported the statement that human resource planning is done keeping in view the organization goals. The private sector field functionaries assigned equal rank and priority to the statements that human resource planning is done keeping in view the organization goals and various sources are compared before starting the human resource requirement process. Least priority was assigned to the statement that the future organization structure and manpower required are considered. During focus group discussions, it was observed that the recruitment and selection policy of the organization was addressed as positive by more than 50 per cent of respondents who were satisfied with the existing recruitment and selection policy. The organization also provided orientation or induction programme before joining to the organization. Trainings are regularly conducted by the government organizations for the achievement of various goals and objectives. Majority of respondents attended internal training as well as refresher course. There was also presence of transfer and promotion policy in public sector. On the other hand there was no transfer and promotion policy in private nurseries. Compensation and incentive policy of human resource management was found to be an important factor for ensuring loyalty of employees towards the organization. All respondents of public sector agreed on the statement that there was proper compensation and incentive system prevailing in their organization. In private sector there was no compensation system but there was the presence of incentive system. The second hypothesis was rejected as it was found that there is significant difference in the attitude of the different functionaries.

Majority of respondents in government and private sectors were satisfied with the performance appraisal system adopted by their organization. The satisfaction level of different categories of respondents towards welfare and social security factors pertaining in public and private floriculture nurseries was observed to be at the optimum levels.

### Suggestions

The conduct of the research work has led to the following suggestions for improved Human resource Management in public and private flower nurseries.

- The working conditions must be made gender sensitive as most of the nurseries are in isolated field situations with restricted privacy and security issues for the females.
- The economic factors were first ranked by the private sector employees. It is therefore needed to rationalize the staff salary as majorities are in the range of Rs 5000 to Rs 6000 per month. This meager salary is maintaining their livelihood as most of them belong to rural areas and are living in joint families.
- It was reported by the respondents of the public sector that there is need to examine and motivate employees for skill upgradation so that individual performance levels may be maximized.
- Effective promotion and transfer policy is needed for improved job satisfaction and higher productivity in public nurseries. Compensation and incentive policy of human resource management is needed in private sector nursery personnel. The private sector nursery growers must work towards the retention policy through certain welfare oriented policies as nearly 35.54 per cent employees of private sector were looking for some alternative opportunities.

**Table 4:** Attitude of respondents towards the existing practices of HRP followed by public sector functionaries

Sr. No.	Particulars	5	4	3	2	1	Aggregate score	Rank	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	CV	Skew
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree								
1	HRP is done keeping in view the organization goals.	3	24	8	0	0	135	I	27	15	0	39.91	147.82	1.888
		(15)	(96)	(24)	-	-								
2	The future organization structure and manpower required are considered	3	19	8	5	0	125	III	25	15	0	29.79	110.36	1.773
		(15)	(76)	(24)	(10)	-								
3	Proper job analysis is done keeping in mind the job description and specification	3	17	5	10	0	128	II	25.6	20	0	25.48	94.37	1.464
		(15)	(68)	(25)	(20)	-								
4	Various sources are compared before starting the Human Resource requirement process.	0	20	13	2	0	123	IV	24.6	4	0	35.03	129.77	1.306
		-	(80)	(39)	(4)	-								

\*SD=Standard Deviation

\*CV= Coefficient of variation

\*Skew=Skewness

\* Figures in brackets are weighted scores.

**Table 5** Attitude of respondents towards the existing practices of HRP followed by private sector controlling officers

Sr. No.	Particulars	5	4	3	2	1	Aggregate score	Rank	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	CV	Skew
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree								
1	HRP is done keeping in view the organization goals.	5	5	0	0	0	45	I	9	0	0	12.44	46.11	0.69
		(25)	(20)	-	-	-								
2	The future organization structure and manpower required are considered	0	4	6	0	0	34	III	6.8	0	0	9.33	34.58	0.64
		-	(16)	(18)	-	-								
3	Proper job analysis is done keeping in mind the job description and specification	0	10	0	0	0	40	II	8	0	0	17.88	66.25	2.24
		-	(40)	-	-	-								
4	Various sources are compared before starting the Human Resource requirement process.	0	10	0	0	0	40	II	8	0	0	17.88	66.25	2.23
		-	(40)	-	-	-								

\*SD=Standard Deviation

\*CV= Coefficient of variation

\*Skew=Skewness

\* Figures in brackets are weighted scores.

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