CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND FUTURE SCOPE

The research undertaken has been based on the primary and secondary data that were collected from different sources. The study began with an introduction to the prevailing status of Sikkim cymbidium and then moved over to identification of important factors that influence the success of the venture to make cymbidium an important sector of the economy. Next, we identified the grower's views on the kind of support they need to make their endeavor better. Thereafter we developed a realistic vision for the State of Sikkim based on the present growth patterns. Next, we explored the marketing challenges along with possible directions for solving them. Several other applications like Analytical Hierarchy Process, Discriminant analysis and DEMATEL have been used to analyze in the chapters subsequent to the methodological approach to the study. The methodology adopted to satisfy the research objectives were achieved through a rich mixture of literature review, questionnaire-based survey, case studies, open-ended meetings and interviews. Overall responses to questionnaires on different issues were analyzed for appropriate answers to the research objectives and subsequent recommendations.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Status: A lot of opportunities exist to make Sikkim Cymbidium and important sector of economic growth but to achieve it major challenges also exist.

5.2 Factors influencing the economics of Sikkim cymbidium

Important factors that need to be focused upon include infrastructure, Policy, certification (GI, Phytosanitary, organic farming, quality), technology and floriculture parks. The government may focus on these for, evolving Cold chain, quality, promotion, pricing, E-marketing, Market Development, Flori-entrepreneurship and Farming. Development of market and product is an important area
of focus. A realistic vision for Sikkim Cymbidium: A family of growers that earn about Rs. One lakh per annum now can go on to earn a profit of Rs. 5,00,000 by the year 2023.

5.3 Support to Growers

Growers seems to have adequate support for pre-harvest technology but find little support for post-harvest marketing effort including supply-chain infrastructure. Tissue culture support is available locally for cultivating cymbidium quality cymbidium orchids is available in the state of Sikkim, but most of the growers do not have much knowledge about it. Few passionate growers are into Tissue culture while the rest are full-time casual growers. They are professional in growing cymbidium but when it comes to marketing, their interest and knowledge are second to none. The Government is supporting the farmers with Tissue culture support but not many of them are keen to learn. Tissue culture support for cultivating new varieties of hybrid cymbidium is not present. Pre-harvest and Post-harvest technology for growing Cymbidium is available locally and the Government has done its best to provide the growers with saplings of Cymbidium free of cost and give them training on how to grow good quality cymbidium.

5.3.1 Growers lack marketing capability

Majority of the growers know that there exists a cooperative society that markets their cymbidium, but they have not taken a keen interest in marketing their products themselves. The growers do not want to market their products themselves as they lack knowledge and information about marketing and most importantly, they lack interest. Facilities for temperature management are not available locally. Pre-cooling units are not available locally, but the growers had no information regarding this. Cooling storage units are also not available, and the growers know about it. Refrigerated vans are not available which reduces the life of the cymbidium during transportation. There is no exclusive space in Air Cargo for the cymbidiums of Sikkim and this acts as a barrier in supplying fresh orchids to every corner of the country and abroad too. According to the growers, a training institute for training new techniques of production and marketing exist locally but they are not interested
in marketing but there is no institute that exists locally which helps them to market their products. The farmers have no sense of marketing. To them, marketing is just selling. The growers do not know the need of the end consumers. The growers have not done need analysis of the customers and this is the reason why not many combo product packs are introduced in the markets. The growers depend on their heavy buyers (intermediaries) and keep no connection with the end consumers. The growers have segmented buyers according to the benefits they seek but these buyers are few and heavy buyers. The growers need to segment the end consumers. They have also segmented the buyers according to the benefits they seek but once again, they are not the end consumers. The growers will have to look beyond their intermediaries and believe in marketing too.

5.3.2 Alternate uses of Cymbidium

Growers are not aware that Cymbidium has medicinal and edible value. They do not know that cymbidium orchids are used as a delicacy in Bhutan and they have no plans to sell their orchids to Bhutan for this purpose. In Bhutan, cymbidium is used for cooking a delicacy. The growers do not even know the medicinal properties of cymbidium. They only know that cymbidium is used for decoration and gift giving. This clearly shows how uninterested these growers are when it comes to finding the efficient utilization of their product

5.3.3 Satisfaction of growers with the return to their efforts

Growers are satisfied with their existing quality. They are keen on continuing with growing cymbidium orchids but are reluctant innovators when it comes to marketing and distribution. They do not prefer any other profitable option than growing cymbidium. This is partly because the government support in growing cymbidium is very encouraging.

5.3.4 Economically viability

Cultivating cymbidium is a difficult task but also rewarding. They believe that their income has increased after they started cultivating cymbidium
5.3.5 Distinct Values evoked in local customers mind
Consumers associate cymbidium more with beauty and spirituality than with grace and purity.

5.3.6 Pricing perceptions of local consumers
Local people find the cymbidium rather highly priced and therefore rationalization of prices may boost the sale of the product.

5.3.7 Availability perceptions of local customers
Consumers do not find availability a major issue in their endeavor to buy Cymbidium

5.3.8 Purchase motivation
Purchase motivation for cymbidium is driven by its utilitarian purpose as people find it as a stress buster as also a good commodity for gifting. It finds less use in rituals.

5.3.9 Factors influencing preference for cymbidium
Longevity, less need for upkeep and its availability in varied colours enhance the preference of cymbidium over other competing flowers.

5.3.10 Activity, Interest, Opinions (AIO) profile of customers
Consumers and non-consumers differ in their AIO profile and which can be useful for targeting right customers as well as for designing promotional campaigns.

5.3.11 Relative preference of cymbidium as gift items
Cymbidium appears to find preference over soft-toys, chocolates and books as a gift-item. This knowledge may be useful for promoting cymbidium as a gift purchase
5.3.12 Potential combo-gift prospects for cymbidium
To enhance the gift value cymbidium can be bundled with chocolate and/or wine.

5.3.13 Online promotional prospects
As any other flower online promotion does not appear to make substantial impact on sale of cymbidium. The issue could be the perishability of flowers which reduces its value as an online commodity.

5.3.14 Measure of quality of flowers on flower characteristics
Consumers perceive flower to be of better quality based on longevity, colour, aroma and size. It also has been revealed that flower preference varies across situation.

5.3.15 Potential Purchase occasions
Get well message, Honouring guests, Valentine’s Day and achievement emerge out as important occasions when cymbidium can be promoted.

5.3.16 First Purchase Motivation
Shop-display, friends purchase, and friend gifting appear to motivate consumers to purchase cymbidium for the first time.

5.4 Vision
Challenges vis-à-vis the vision and to design appropriate market strategies to enhance the demand for orchids from the Sikkim Himalayas.

5.5 Differences across local, national and international consumers
Consumers differ substantially based on value association, pricing/availability issues, AIO profile, preference for cymbidium, preference as a gift item, Benefit sought, quality perception, sensitivity to various sales promotion, and knowledge on alternate uses of cymbidium.
5.6 To design a marketing framework

Marketing framework for selling and promotion of Cymbidiums of the Sikkim Himalayas in the local, National and International markets.

5.7 Future Scope for Research

The present study spawns’ scope for intensive and extensive future research. These could be as follows:

i. Study is preliminary and hence impact of many of the approaches propose in this work needs to be measured empirically using regression analysis.

ii. Research work identifies relationship (extent and direction) shared by the major factors governing economic growth of cymbidium. This has been arrived exploratory using DEMATEL method. The results need to be validated using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis.

iii. Impact of collaborative virtual supply chain management proposed to overcome failure of e-commerce also need to be studies and verified.

iv. Behavioural segmentation on benefits sought and use occasion may also be undertaken in a more robust manner.

v. Future research could focus on a detailed study focusing on the consumption behavior for cymbidium using the approaches developed or used by Sheath et al., 1991 (The conceptualizations of consumption value theory); Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982 (hedonic consumption), Ligas, 2000 (the hierarchical model of consumer goals); and Friedmann, 1986 (the aesthetic criteria for consumption). One hypothesis could be Cymbidium has greater utilitarian value than hedonic value in the context of Sikkim’s culture. Our research work indicates this direction. It may also be interesting to find how consumption of cymbidium can be explained in terms of traditional, critical, minimalist and pragmatic approaches of aesthetic experiences. One more hypothesis could be to explore relationship between aesthetic experience and stress relieving in the context of Sikkim Cymbidium.

vi. Future researchers can also focus on a detailed study on AIO more meaningfully using bigger AIO battery of 300 items. The hypotheses will be
that consumers of cymbidium differ across demographic variables (such as ethnicity, geography (rural urban), age) and psychographic variables.

vii. Validity of developed scale for measuring floral quality needs to be established under diverse circumstances and wide geographical and time span.

### 5.8 Contribution of the researcher

The purpose of this research merely has been to determine the status of marketing of cymbidium orchids, propose a realistic vision and identify the challenges to achieve the proposed vision. The researcher has made following contributions:

i. Researched on virtually an unknown field.

ii. The research was envisaged in the year 2008 when floriculture was in its infancy in Sikkim. Today it is being realized that cymbidium and floriculture, in general, could be the mainstay of the local economy of Sikkim. This study identifies many ways to harvest this opportunity.

iii. Case Study method with relatively better measurement tools has not been followed for understanding economic prospects for any agricultural products so far.

iv. Methodological use of DEMATEL is a contribution as no other studies on floriculture have used the same. Results obtained may be used to understand the cymbidium-based economy in the context of Sikkim much better and which in turn may lead to better outcomes.

v. Our hypothesis-testing has followed a deductive reasoning where we have moved from a general statement to conclusions. Following are our contribution in this respect: We utilized Keynes theory that Governmental intervention is necessary to support economic activities. The infrastructure creation in this respect is an overwhelmingly government’s responsibility. We have also concluded that to make cymbidium an important contributor to the economy of Sikkim, the State government must extend support to the farmers – particularly in the post-harvest stage.

a. Need assessment is a core marketing concept. We find that in the context of cymbidium the growers have not made any effort to identify buyers need. Rather they do not even know who the buyers are. This is an important gap.
b. Cultural values are an important part of marketing theory. Do cymbidium evoke any value in the minds of the consumer was an important research query. We found it does so. Thus, the theory of cultural values has been affirmed ones again.

c. Benefit segmentation is one more theoretical concept in marketing. Various consumers seek varying benefits from the same product. We find this to be true in the context of cymbidium.

d. In marketing theory, product features play an important role. The same family of products may have varying features making them preferable for those very characteristic features. In case of Cymbidium, we find that their longevity makes them important for the consumers.

e. Activities, interests and opinions (AIOs) is an important theory in the context of lifestyle segmentation which implies that buyers differ in terms of how they spend extra money and time. We found this as highly applicable in the context of cymbidium by successfully differentiating consumers from non-consumers. The theory, therefore, stands validated.

f. Online promotion has taken the world by a storm. Yet gradually a theory is emerging that not all products are amenable to be promoted online with high success. Flowers it was reported are one commodity that does not respond well to online promotion. We have corroborated this theory through this study.

g. Cultural differences influence consumer behaviour resulting in varying behaviour across cultures. Our study conforms to this theory by identifying the important way local customers, national customers and international customers differ in this respect.

vi. Scale for measuring floral quality has been developed for this study and which can be a useful tool for other researchers also.

a. The researcher has also come up with a regression model to measure marketing capability of farmers and which can be validated by future researchers.

b. Researcher has also developed a regression preference model for cymbidium, and which can be modified for other flowers or even different products altogether.
5.9 Limitations of the study

Despite the best efforts of the researcher the study suffers from certain limitations and these are as follows:

a. Lack of prior research studies on the topic: Sikkim Cymbidium has been studied primarily for technological issues and commercialization remains untouched.

b. Nature of the study is primarily exploratory (though the conclusive approach also has been used wherever possible) as practically nothing was known about marketing details for Sikkim Cymbidium. The tools and analysis, therefore, is superficial and better approach is needed to validate and refine the conclusions that have been arrived at.

c. Case study design has been followed because of the nature of the study. Even the hypotheses and their testing tools are preliminary.

d. Sampling method and sample size have not been perfect. As data from national and international consumers have been collected online randomness has been compromised. A larger size of sample perhaps would have been more appropriate.

e. A measure used to collect data suffers from faults generally associated with humanities research. We have measured the expressed belief as unexpressed (though true) beliefs cannot be measured.

f. Severe limitations have been imposed due to lack of time and other resources.

g. The study also suffers from the unintended personal bias of researcher.

h. As cymbidiums are available in multitude colours the researcher was keen to segment market based on traditional colour symbolism in various societies India, Europe and US. However, this could not be carried out because of lack of data.

The research therefore has been able to fulfill all the objectives stated in chapter I. It does provide us with interesting possibilities and opportunities to enhance the marketability of Sikkim Cymbidium and in the process, help the government in making their endeavor successful. This will add to the economic growth of the state as well as help in inclusive growth as most cymbidium farms come up in rural regions of the state.