

## Ergonomic assessment of existing methods of harvesting flowers from the fields

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■ **ABSTRACT :** Woman plays a significant and crucial role in agricultural development, livestock production, horticulture and floriculture post harvest operation, agro-social forestry and fisheries etc. as a manager, decision maker and skilled farm worker. Women in agricultural families perform many farm related activities both within and outside the household in most parts of the country. So far, as floriculture is concerned, women participate in almost all activities right from preparatory tillage to harvesting of the flowers. In this study attempt has been made to study the role performed by farm women engaged in floriculture. Punjab ranks high on the horticulture map of the country. The demand for flowers is escalating fast with the rising living standards of people. The cultivation of flowers has turned into commercial venture due to high returns per unit area, generation of employment opportunities and as a viable option for diversification in agriculture. Harvesting of flowers is also one of the tedious activity and plucking of flowers is done mainly with hands. There is intensive involvement of rural women in this activity and further they perform this activity with drudgery prone methods thus putting large demands on their time and energy. Moreover, wrong practices followed while plucking shortens the life of flowers and also such flowers are not acceptable in the market. Therefore, keeping this in view, All India Coordinated Research Project on Home Science, FRM Component of PAU, Ludhiana have done the ergonomic assessment of existing methods of harvesting flowers from the fields being performed by women workers. The parameters for ergonomic assessment were working heart rate, energy expenditure and drudgery scores on five point scale. The results revealed that as no improved technology and methods were used/available for plucking of flowers from the fields this activity was considered as drudgery prone activity by the women workers. All the respondents (30 women) were plucking the flowers with only one hand while other hand was used for holding the polythene bag used for collecting the plucked flowers. It was observed that more time was needed to pluck the flowers as plucking was done with only one hand. Further they found this way of plucking flowers very tedious which also reduces the output of work.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Ergonomic, Harvesting, Drudgery

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