

*An Assessment of Workers' Rights in Three Floriculture Industries around Debre Ziet: With Particular Reference to Employment Security and Occupational Safety and Health*

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## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declared this is my original work and has not been presented in this or any other university and all sources of materials used for this thesis have been appropriately acknowledged.

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## ACRONYMS

EEF	Ethiopian Employers' Federation
EHDA	Ethiopian Horticulture Development Agency
EHPEA	Ethiopian Horticulture Produces Exporters Association
EU	European Union
EUREP	Euro-Retailer Produce Working Group
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GHOWERN	Global Horticultural Workers and Environmental Rights Network
ICC	International Code of Conduct ICC
ILO	International Labour Organization
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MPS	Milieu Project Sierteelt
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
TPAWU	Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union
UDHR	United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization

## *Abstract*

Floriculture industry is one of the newly emerging industries of Ethiopia. Since its beginning in the early 1980s, it has created much needed employment opportunities for a large section of the population and helping the country to generate foreign exchange. Understanding its capacity to generate employment and foreign exchange, the government is also encouraging investors to invest in the sector.

This paper was intended to assess the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health of floriculture workers working on the flower farms based on a case study of three flower farms namely: Ever Green Farm, Minaye Flowers and Dugda Flora around Debre Zeit. This study used both qualitative (e.g. interviews and case studies) and quantitative (e.g. questionnaire method) data gathering instruments in the collection of data.

Looking at the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health of workers, results of both qualitative and quantitative data indicate that the workers in the three flower farms studied are working in poor working conditions. Workers are working in insecure working conditions and many workers are employed on temporary basis and have not signed contracts with their respective employers. Many workers lack employment security as they are vulnerable to arbitrary dismissal from their work. Yet, employers reject the existence of violations of employment security rights of workers and claim that the national labour proclamation allows seasonal work and they said flower production is by nature seasonal.

Another serious issue in the flower farms surveyed is the condition of workers health. The exposure to harmful pesticides and deficiency of the necessary work facilities make workers' working conditions harsher in the surveyed farms. In general, while the health conditions of workers are becoming desperate, prevention interventions are by and large neglected.

Therefore, as a whole, it is concluded that the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health of workers of the sampled of floriculture is poor. Considerable suggestion and recommendation was given to improve these conditions.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Justification

Floriculture industry is one of the booming and widely spread sectors in contemporary Ethiopia (Malefia, 2009:1; Getu, 2009:240; EHDA, 2012:3). Emerged in Ethiopia in the early 1980's (all years are in European Calendar) and growing rapidly (Gebre, 2011:46; EHDA, 2012:18), this fastest growing sector makes Ethiopia the second largest producer of flowers in Africa (Altenburg, 2010:24-25; EHDA, 2012:18). The rapid growth of the sector is mainly due to strong initiative of the Government of Ethiopia, suitable weather conditions and proximity to the EU market (Tewodros, 2010:11; Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:9).

Floriculture industry has its own developmental benefits for Ethiopian economy (Malefia, 2009:1). As of 2012, the industry is employing more than 50,484 workers and the revenue from the flower export has reached 220 million US Dollars (Tewodros, 2010:11; EHDA, 2012:18). Moreover, in addition to changing the image of Ethiopia in global economic order (Gray, 2007:12; GHOWERN, 2010:10-11), the industry is a means to acquire new technology (Taylor, 2011:192).

However, there are a number of challenges that must be addressed in order to continue the development of the sector with present rapid speed (Malefia, 2009:2; Getu, 2009:240). The industry has been beset by allegations of poor workers' rights mainly because of the nature of the industry (GHOWERN, 2010:4; Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:3). In particular, it is contended that the industry's seasonal nature makes the workers' employment insecure; and the industry's use of high amounts of pesticides affects the health of workers (Riisgaard, 2009:2; Tewodros, 2010:1).

This study, therefore, assesses conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health rights of workers in the floriculture farms around Debre Zeit town taking the ILO's Conventions specific to the two key areas ratified by Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003 as main points of references.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

There is an increasing evidence and concern that the economic benefits of the flower industry come at the expense of employment security and occupational safety and health rights of workers (Sepúlveda, 2009:5; Malefia, 2009:3; GHOWERN, 2010:4). From the very few researches that are conducted on the labour rights conditions in Ethiopia (Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:3) and from the experiences of other countries where floriculture has been operating for relatively longer time than in Ethiopia, insecurity of employment mainly because of seasonal nature of the sector and workers' health problems because of high amount of pesticides used for flower production expose the sector to condemnation (Sepúlveda, 2009:18; GHOWERN, 2010:10; KHRC, 2012:10).

Employment security is an important dimension of quality of employment; and secure employment is the main means to secure income (Dasgupta, 2001:2; Riisgaard, 2009:2). Seasonality of the cut flower trade -with demand peaking at European festivals such as Valentine's, Mother's day and Easter and lowest demand during the European summer-is a major force behind the employment of large numbers of temporary workers at times of peak demand (Sepúlveda, 2009:5; GHOWERN, 2010:4). Due to this, the majority of the workers in flower farms are employed as daily labourers or as fixed-term employees (Sepúlveda, 2009:5; Tewodros, 2010:5). Employing temporary workers means employers can hire and fire easily and temporary workers do not receive the same benefits permanent workers entitled to (Oxfam, 2008:3; Tewodros, 2010:5). Occupational safety and health right of workers is another issue for which floriculture industry is criticized (Oxfam, 2008:1; Malefia, 2009:5; TPAWU, 2011:9). There is no better example of workers' exposure to pesticides than in the floriculture industry, where remarkably high amounts of pesticides are applied (GHOWERN, 2010:4). These pesticides can cause serious health problem in workers (GHOWERN, 2010:5; ILO, 2011c:1). Assessing these two themes is the focus of this study.

## **1.3 Rationale of the Study**

The fact that I grew up around the area of study exposed me to the working environment of floriculture workers and makes me look the employment security and occupational safety and health rights of the workers from human rights perspectives. In addition to this, there are very

few researches conducted on the labor rights in the study area though there are different researches from gender, developmental and environmental perspectives, for example.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The general objective of the study was to assess the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health rights of workers in floriculture industry of the study area.

The specific objectives of the study were to assess:

- The situation of workers with specific focus on the two themes (employment security; and occupational safety and health);
- Alignment to or a mismatch of employment security; and occupational safety and health rights (OSH) between the legal provisions (mainly the labour proclamation) and reality;
- Discuss factors for the mismatch, if any;
- Measures adopted by employers for improving employment security and OSH rights and
- Good practices on the employment security and OSH conditions.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

To continue the development of the industry, employment security and occupational safety and health rights of should be given attention. The study is important to create awareness on the two themes among employers and workers. Moreover, the study is helpful for the investors of the sector. Generally, understanding the issues of employment security and OSH rights will strengthen the positioning of Ethiopian flower products in the competitive industry.

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

The following questions were answered after carrying out the study:

1. What are the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health rights in the selected floriculture farms of the study area?
2. To what extent are the labour proclamation and ILO's conventions related to employment security and occupational safety and health rights adhered to?
3. Are there problems of employment security and OSH rights in the study area and if there are problems, what are the underlying factors and solutions for the problems?

## **1.7 Research Methodology and Data Gathering Instruments**

### **1.7.1 Research Design**

A research design is a plan on how the study will be undertaken (Berg, 1995:21). The design indicates the type of information to be collected and kind of data collection methods. It indicates whether to use one type of data collection or a combination of two or more methods-triangulation method. Accordingly, the study use both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

### **1.7.2 Data Sources and Types**

The data sources for this research are from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from the workers, employers and the management of the selected flower farms. The questionnaire, case study and interview are used as data collection instruments to collect the primary data. The data were also supported by the direct observation of the researcher. In utilizing secondary sources, different publications, previous studies, books and internet sources will be reviewed.

### **1.7.3 Data Collection Instruments**

The researcher relayed on key informant interview, questionnaire, case studies and direct observation to gain the relevant primary data.

#### **1.7.3.1 Interviews**

The first data collection technique employed in this research was interview conducted with workers, the management and/or employers and Woreda officials. This provides a chance to have face to face interaction and clarify questions. According to Fontana (1994:60) interview is a tool by which both the researcher and the researched assume to have an equal status for at least the time being. Therefore, interviews were employed to seek personal opinions, attitudes, values, feelings and perceptions. The response of the respondents was captured in local language and translated into English language after the interview.

#### **1.7.3.2 Questionnaire**

The second data collection technique used in the field survey was distributing questionnaire to the study participants. According to Marshal and Rossman (1995:36) the aim of administering a questionnaire is to gain knowledge about the quantitative distribution of characteristics, attitudes

and beliefs. Moreover, questionnaire helps to get opinion and attitude information not easily observed or is not already available in written or computerized form (Remenyi, 2002:150).

### **1.7.3.3 Case Study**

The third data collection technique was case study. For an in-depth treatment, five case studies of flower farm workers were selected and presented. According to Yin (2003:13), a case study is an empirical examination that ‘investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’. Moreover, a case study allows for multiple sources of evidence, which increases reliability as this provides the basis for data triangulation (Yin, 2003:13).

### **1.7.3.4 Observations**

Finally, in order to get primary information on the labor rights conditions in the study area, the researcher made direct observation to the selected floricultures. This provided an opportunity in getting first hand information.

## **1.8 Area of Study and Sampling Units**

The study was conducted around Debre Ziet town. Debre Zeit is selected because of accessibility and proximity issues. Debre Ziet is situated in East Shoa zone of Oromia Regional State at about 38km from Addis Ababa.

According to Ada’a Woreda Labor and Social Affairs, there are about 16 floricultures around Debre Zeit. Dugda Flora, Rainbow, Bukito, Yassin Legesse, Minaye Flowers, Roshanara, Omin Biloosonii, Joy Tech, Spirit, Evergreen, Zk, Friendship, Olij Roz, Vegpro Agriculture and Iyasu Siraq and one other.

Three flower farms i.e. Ever Green Farm, Minaye Flowers and Dugda Flora were purposefully sampled for this study based mainly on size.

Size of flower farms and labour rights of workers has relationships (Sepúlveda, 2009:12). The situation for workers on smaller farms was noted as being of particular concern in the research reports (Sepúlveda, 2009:12). One reason is that smaller farms lacked the capacity and expertise to supply directly to export markets and were selling their products to larger farms (UWEA,

2011:16). They suffered financial instability, incurring losses when their products were rejected by larger farms or when payments were delayed (UWEA, 2011:16). A larger percentage of non-permanent workers were found on these farms as well as more severe and widespread labour rights violations (ibid.).

Ever Green farm is one of the smallest flower farms around Debre Zeit and it has a total area of 16 hectares while Dugda Flora is one of the biggest flower farms around Debre Zeit and it has a total area of 27 hectares. Minaye Flowers has a total area of 20 hectares. The flower farms selected included those as explained in table 1 below.

Table 1: Names, Establishment Year, Ownership and Size of the Selected Farms

No.	Name of the farm	Establishment Year	Ownership	Size/in hectares
1	Dugda Flora	2005	Ethiopia	27
2	Ever Green Farm	2008	Saudi Arabia	16
3	Minaye Flowers	2007	Ethiopia	20

Source: Data collected from farm managers and Union leaders

## 1.9 Scope (Delimitation) of the Study

Since there are about 16 floricultures around Debre Ziet, a comprehensive study covering each and every single labor issues in all these floricultures calls for an extended deal of time and other resources beyond what is available for this research. As a result, the study is restricted to focusing on assessment employment security and occupational safety and health conditions of workers in three floriculture industries. Therefore, the study is not going to cover all floriculture industries in the study area.

## 1.10 Ethical Considerations

Undertaking human-focused research such as this requires that attention to be given to individual feelings and emotions during the process of data gathering. Ethical considerations are needed to be ensured that the participants of the research are informed about the whole research process (Marshal and Rossman, 1995:40). This includes adhering to confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to an attempt to hide the participants' identities from being revealed in the recorded information.

Therefore, it was explained to the participants that the information given by informants and their identities would be kept confidential.

### **1.11 Study Limitations**

To date some farms still have not well appreciated the importance of conducting studies by other parties other than themselves and especially on subjects such as a focus on labour. Consequently, the owners and managers of flower farms are generally reluctant to grant access to their precincts and workers; it therefore took repeated requests and making of trips to physically seek appointments. Generally, during the execution of the study, the researcher encountered the following challenges:

- Suspicion by some respondents as regards the purpose of the research;
- Most farm-managers were unwilling to give detailed information related to labour rights;
- Difficulties in getting some managers on the farm.

Notwithstanding the above limitations, the researcher dedicated more time to the research and reached all planned farms and respondents

### **1.12 Organization of the Paper**

The thesis is organized in four chapters.

**Chapter One** is an introduction.

**Chapter Two** presents an overview of the Ethiopia floriculture industry.

**Chapter Three** focuses on the conditions of employment security; and occupational safety and health of floriculture workers in Ethiopia.

**Chapter Four** provides the findings and analysis of major findings followed by conclusion and recommendation.

In order to understand the working conditions of flower farm workers in general and the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health in particular, it is important to have the general idea of Ethiopian floriculture industry. Accordingly the following chapter i.e. chapter two takes a closer look at the Ethiopian floriculture industry in brief.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Overview of the Ethiopia Floriculture Industry**

From the onset, it is important to look at mainly the history, characteristics, developmental benefits and critiques against Ethiopian floriculture industry and experience of other countries in the sector; and this chapter is going to touch up on these points to have a clear understanding about floriculture in Ethiopia.

#### **2.1 Brief History of Ethiopian Floriculture**

Floriculture is commonly defined as the cultivation and management of ornamental and especially flowering plants (Getu, 2009:240; Atkure, 2011:11). Floriculture industry falls under the agricultural industry and is frequently used interchangeably with ‘flower industry’ (KHRC, 2008:1). Flowers are delicate and, once harvested, highly perishable, requiring careful management of growing conditions and postharvest handling to ensure product quality for consumers (Whitaker and Kolavalli, 2006: 337).

World consumption of flowers is growing at a rate of 6 to 9% per year, compared with only 2% for staple crops (Gioè, 2006:17; Trade matters, 2007:4). Traditionally, flower production was dominated by North America, Europe and Japan (Whitaker and Kolavalli, 2006: 335; Rikken, 2010:21). But, in recent years, new flower producers such Colombia, Kenya and Ethiopia because of their comparative advantages in growing climate, land and labor costs, have challenged the historical dominance of North America, Europe and Japan as producers of floricultural products (Whitaker and Kolavalli, 2006: 335; Tewodros, 2010:11). In addition to the availability of cheap labour and land, production by the traditional methods used in the developed countries entailed the use of heaters and coolers which are naturally available in the new countries (Taylor, 2011:56).

The inception of flower production in Ethiopia dates back to early 1980s (Diriba, 2007:23; Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia, 2007:2) while others take it to mid-1990s (Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:4). The first private floriculture company, Ethio-flora, started activities around 1997 on a few hectares of land (Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia, 2007:2; Getu, 2009:240). In 1999, Golden Rose – a foreign owned firm and so-called pioneer – started rose production (Taylor, 2011:66; Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:5). In 2002, the industry has organized itself into an association called

the, Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (here after EHPEA) which is helping the sector (Getu, 2009:242). In 2004 there were six growers that regularly exported to the Netherlands (Taylor, 2011:66). From 2005 onward Ethiopian floriculture industry becomes the fastest growing in the world and to overtake Ethiopia's traditional hard currency earner – coffee - and brings new employment opportunities for the unemployed (Tewodros, 2010:11; Taylor, 2011:66; EHDA, 2012:18).

## **2.2 The Rapid Growth of Floriculture in Ethiopia**

Floriculture was first developed in Ethiopia around early 1980s (Diriba, 2007: 23; Daniel, 2009:14; Gebre, 2011:48). Within this short time, Ethiopia grew to second largest exporter of cut flower in Africa (GHOWERN, 2010:10).

Why has this success happened? The combination of favorable climatic conditions (Gebre, 2011:49), the availability of land, low labour costs, a favourable investment climate (Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:5; Altenburg, 2010:24-25), availability of a world-class airline of Ethiopian (Gray, 2007:13), the shift of production sites from Kenya to Ethiopia (Mano et al, 2010:10) and a relatively shorter distance to the European market than other exporters (Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:5) are the reasons for the success of the sector in Ethiopia.

## **2.3 Characteristics of Ethiopian Floriculture Industry**

Currently, the floriculture industry of Ethiopia can be divided into three groups: roses under greenhouse, cuttings under greenhouse and summer flowers (Ayelech and Helmsing, 2010:44). About 80% of the total production area is covered by roses (Taylor, 2011:67; Gebre, 2011:49).

In Ethiopia, the flower industry – and especially innovation in it – is largely driven by foreign investors (Altenburg, 2010:24-25). As of 2012, the ownership of flower farms in Ethiopia is as follows: 30 % of the investors were known to be nationals, 61 % are foreign and the rest are joint venture undertakings (EHDA, 2012:16). According to the Oakland Institute (2011:43), as of June 2009, 251 foreign investors had been registered in the floriculture industry of which 61 are operational, 21 are in the implementation stage, 134 in pre-implementation, and 36 cancelled.

In Ethiopia, floriculture industry is an export-oriented sector (Mano et al., 2010:11; Tewodros, 2010:11). Almost all exports of floriculture are destined for Europe, with the Netherlands

receiving the largest share followed by Germany (EHDA, 2012:12). The Netherlands, which has a strong position in the global flower market, is the largest producer of cut flowers but also has the status of importer and exporter, serving as a channel for third world country exports, as well as distribution to importers (Trade matters, 2007:4; Sepúlveda, 2009:6). And the cut flower industry in Ethiopia is characterized by a dominant role of Dutch foreign investors. Dutch trade auctions which dominate the export trade, and the Dutch development cooperation which plays an important role in the development of the sector (Ayelech and Helmsing, 2010:35).

## **2.4 Developmental Benefits of the Sector for Ethiopia**

Floriculture plays crucial roles in the economic development of Ethiopia (EHPEA, 2011:17). *First*, the industry is a source of foreign exchange (Taylor, 2011: 87; EHPEA, 2011:30). Ethiopia has been one of Africa's largest exporter of flowers to European Union (EU), making 4.7 million dollars in 2001 to 100 million of dollars in exports in 2008 (Malefia, 2009:13; Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:2). By 2010, the export value of flowers rose above 166 million dollars (Mulu and Iizuka, 2012:13). *Second*, in Ethiopia, women workers are the majority in floriculture and the sector offers good opportunity to empower women economically (Diriba, 2007:10; EHDA, 2012:18). The main reasons why women are the majority seem women are 'obedient', 'careful', 'industrious', 'have little complaints' and are 'not aggressive' like men (TPAWU, 2011:27). Out of 50,484 jobs created by floriculture industry in Ethiopia 70% are women (EHDA, 2012:18). *Third*, floriculture creates employment opportunities, for it is a labor intensive industry (EHPEA, 2011:14; Kibru, 2012:10). It accommodates 10-25 or even 30 workers per hectare and this is more than any other agro-industry offers (Gudeta, 2011:13). As of 2008, the floriculture farms engage around 30,000 employees (Getu, 2009:241). This number reached 50,484 in fiscal year 2011/2012 (EHDA, 2012:18). *Fourth*, technology for the production of flowers is matured and easily available in the foreign farms in Ethiopia (Taylor, 2011:192). Some of these technologies have subsequently been endogenised with Ethiopian companies (ibid.). *Fifth*, some companies are keen to contribute to society and return their profits to the local community (Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia, 2007:8). For example, Sher Ethiopia, which is the biggest group company with several subordinate farms, has constructed a hospital and a school (ibid.). *Sixth*, according to Perry (2012:25), floriculture industry presents a unique opportunity to bring social change in exporting countries due in part to the quality pressures, safety and environmental standards from the West.

Finally, floriculture industry plays positive role in changing the image of Ethiopia (Gray, 2007:12; GHOWERN, 2010:10-11). Ethiopia - a country that holds a Least Developed Country (LDC) classification - becomes the competitor exporter of flowers in the world market (Gray, 2007:12).

## **2.5 Impacts of industry on life of workers**

The industry has three main influences on the lives of workers: the first and most important aspect is income (Taylor, 2011:145). For the vast majority of which are for manual labourers, the industry has created many new jobs (Gray, 2007:12). The second impact of the industry is on workers welfare through peripheral benefits (though this is not universal) (ibid.). Because of the industry, many people now have improved access to a range of services including medical care, education, social and sporting activities (Taylor, 2011:145). Third, the internationally and nationally recognized standards (code of practices) that have been implemented throughout the industry, are intended to ensure that minimum standards have to be met in areas such as wages, worker welfare and environmental standards (EHDA, 2012:18).

## **2.6 Critiques against Floriculture Industry in Ethiopia**

Floriculture industry is criticized on the basis of the following points that directly or indirectly affects workers' rights (Getu, 2009: 243; Tewodros, 2010:11; Taylor, 2011:58): *first*, floriculture industry is notorious for the heavy use of toxic pesticides, which cause illnesses in workers (Oxfam, 2008:1; Tewodros, 2010:1; GHOWERN, 2010:4). *Second*, pesticides used by floriculture cause environmental problems (Malefia, 2009:5). Flower farms let too much organic fertilizers into soil so that the soil develops salinity and saline soil will not grow plants thereafter (GHOWERN, 2010:11). Moreover, the land once used by flower industries will take 40 to 60 years to rehabilitate if intensive treatment was conducted to that extent (ibid.). *Third*, studies have displayed (in all developing countries including Ethiopia) the poor standards of worker welfare and low wages in floriculture for local labourers (Taylor, 2011:58). *Fourth*, though the cut flower industry holds important lessons for other horticultural crops, it is difficult to replicate technological and policy learning from the cut flower industry and encourage similar innovations in fruit and vegetable production (Altenburg, 2010:27).

*Fifth*, intense competition, heavily depending on imported inputs and barriers such as quality standards from developed countries affect Ethiopian farms negatively (Getu, 2009: 243-244; GHOWERN, 2010:11; Altenburg, 2010:27). *Finally*, the generous incentives (such as a five-year tax holiday and duty free import of capital goods) offered to flower exporters come at a considerable cost (Tewodros, 2010:11). What is more, for how long the subsidies are given for investors? (Altenburg, 2010:27).

## **2.7 A Quick Look at Labour Rights Conditions of Floriculture in Ethiopia**

This topic is important to gain general knowledge on the conditions of labour rights in floriculture industry of Ethiopia.

Although the Ethiopian government has created regulatory framework and published guidelines, the speed with which the sector is growing impedes adequate monitoring (Getu, 2009:258; GHOWERN, 2010:12). The majority of floriculture workers live in appallingly poor working conditions (Tewodros, 2010:2). Here are the conditions of the main labour rights:

*Freedom of Association and collective bargaining:* According to the study by Tigist (2007:54), flower farm owners are not willing to allow workers form associations, as this will enable workers to become aware of their rights through their involvement in the association. Moreover, workers hesitate to join the union in fear of harassment or losing their jobs and there are some evidences where trade union leaders have been harassed and some lost their jobs in the process of fighting for workers rights (Trade Matters, 2007:10; Tewodros, 2010:12).

*Working Hour and Overtime:* Basically long working hours is the characteristic feature of floriculture in all exporting countries (Riisgaard, 2009:5). The perishability of the product means that workers often have to work long hours to complete critical tasks such as harvesting and spraying (Riisgaard, 2009:5; Tewodros, 2010:5). Though the legally stipulated regular working hours of 8 hours a day is adhered in Ethiopia; overtime is compulsory especially during peak season (Tewodros, 2010:4). Overtime pay isn't always distributed and workers are often forced to work without rest or compensation (ibid.).

*Health and Safety:* Floriculture workers are more likely to be exposed to higher levels of pesticides which cause health problems (Atkure, 2011:4). Well-known acute health problems in cut flower industry with pesticide exposure, such as nausea, dizziness, vomiting, headache,

abdominal pain, and skin and eye problems were common in floriculture industry (Getu, 2009; Atkure, 2011:4).

*Provision of Facilities:* Generally the facilities provided for workers by Ethiopian floriculture industry are inadequate (Getu, 2009; Tewodros, 2010:4).

The next section gives highlight of the employment security and occupational safety and health conditions and experiences of other exporting countries before going to look at the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health of floriculture workers of Ethiopia.

## **2.8. Employment Security and Occupational Safety and Health Conditions in Floriculture Industry: Experience of Three Exporting Countries**

This section reviews the employment security and occupational safety and health conditions of floriculture workers in Colombia, Ecuador and Kenya: where floriculture has been operating for relatively long time (Sepúlveda, 2009:18; KHRC, 2012:10). Developing countries such as Colombia, Kenya and Ecuador have become strong players in global cut flower markets and flower exports are a notable part of the economy in these countries (Taylor, 2011:54). Since the flower trade is defined by regions, Ecuador and Colombia are United States' suppliers and African countries are important suppliers to European markets (Dolan, Opondo and Smith, 2004:13).

To understand the employment security and occupational safety and health conditions of floriculture workers in Ethiopia it is important, to conduct a comparative study of the Ethiopian flower industry with these three countries, since, according to Taylor (2011: 35-36), floriculture is a truly global industry. Colombia (18%), Ecuador (9%) and Kenya at 6% are the top exporters in global cut-flower market next to the Netherlands which accounts for about 55% of total global exports (KHRC, 2012:10).

### **a) Colombia**

Colombian is the second-largest producer of cut flowers in the world (Sepúlveda, 2009:6). Initially located in the United States, the cut-flower industry moved south, to Colombia, in 1965 in search of lower production costs (Friedemann-Sanchez, 2006:2). The working condition of the floriculture workers in Colombia is precarious (Sepúlveda, 2009:18). Many workers have

low job security (Friedemann-Sanchez, 2006:40). Workers' terms of employment, and the seasonal nature of work in the floriculture sector, lead to job instability in Colombia (Oxfam, 2008:2). This is evident in such hiring practices as fixed term contracts (generally no more than 4 months) and contracts based on production (Sepúlveda, 2009:9). Termination without just cause was the primary reason for legal consultation, making up 24% of complaints (ibid.). Moreover, Colombia floriculture industry is notorious for the heavy use of toxic pesticides, which cause illnesses in workers, but particularly reproductive health problems in women (Oxfam, 2008:1).

#### **b) Ecuador**

In Ecuador (the third largest exporter of flowers worldwide) the flower farm workers suffer from labour right violations (Mena, 2005 as quoted in Tigist, 2007). Workers face problems such as exposure to toxic chemicals without enough protection wears and training; unpaid overtime work, non-affiliation to social security; pressure to fulfill their company's excessively high production rate and sexual harassment (GHOWERN, 2010: 4). Production cycles of flower are planned, timed and executed to meet the periodic demand of North American market and this makes the labour demand highly uneven (ibid.). Again, one study of female workers in Ecuador's flower industry and their children found that "parental pesticides exposure may adversely affect brain development" (Taylor, 2010:5) though it is hard to prove casual links between chemicals and individual illnesses because chronic pesticide exposure has not been studied in enough detail (Goodman, 2010:8). What is more, often, workers were expected to continue their tasks while pesticides were being applied near them- a serious breach of safe practices (GHOWERN, 2010:5).

#### **c) Kenya**

Kenya is the largest cut flower exporter in Africa, and the third largest cut flower exporter in the world, after Colombia and Ecuador (Mano, et al., 2010:9). Though cut flower production is a major part of the Kenyan economy, the country's success in the sector has brought with it the problems of workers' rights (Dolan, Opondo and Smith, 2004:7). Hazardous work, low pay, job insecurity coupled with discrimination and lack of labour laws enforcement are just some of the issues that characterize the Kenyan flower Sector (KHRC, 2012:4).

Job insecurity is a major concern of Kenyan workers, even though casual and temporary workers are legally required to be given permanent status after eight months employment (Trade Matters, 2007:10). The ways workers are affected depends to a degree on the employment contract, with permanent workers experiencing significantly more security, opportunity and fringe benefits compared to seasonal and especially casual workers (Dolan, Opondo and Smith, 2004:7). Sixty-five percent of the workforce in the Kenyan cut flower industry are seasonally employed or temporarily employed, which means that they do not have access to the benefits of permanent employees (Christopher, 2011:10). Moreover, termination was found to be the most violated provisions in employment relations (Whitaker and Kolavalli, 2006:351; Christopher, 2011:10). According to study by KHRC (2012:56), 82% of respondents reported high cases of unfair dismissal while 89% of respondents reported workplaces not to have fair disciplinary hearing processes.

Serious health and safety violation is also the characteristics of Kenyan floriculture (Gudeta, 2011:20; KHRC, 2012:63). Not observing re-entry practice, no rest days during busy period and standing for long work hours without work breaks are the situations in the sector (GHOWERN, 2010:13; KHRC, 2012:63).

#### **d) Measures the Three Countries Have Taken**

The countries have taken different measures to reduce precarious work and the exploitation of the workforce (Trade Matters, 2007:13; Getu, 2009:244; Spulveda, 2009:3). *First* the countries have attempted to create strong trade union for the benefit of economic and social rights of workers (GHOWERN, 2010:12; KHRC, 2012:63). *Second*, certification of codes of conduct and labour standards is promoted. Such certifications have tried to become tools to reduce labour rights violations and guarantee to consumers abroad that their products comply with standards (Spulveda, 2009:23; Gudeta, 2011:20). In addition, these standards encourage the right to associate, salary levels and forms of contracting (Spulveda, 2009:23). *Finally*, the deterioration of labor conditions is hindrance, among other things, to attract foreign investment. For this reason, these countries are working to profitability of the companies proportional to the respect for labor rights (Trade Matters, 2007:13; Christopher, 2011:10).

### **e) Lessons from the Three Countries**

Almost employment security and occupational safety and health conditions in the three countries reflect a pattern: across the three countries employment insecurity and workers' health problems are common (Sepúlveda, 2009:18; KHRC, 2012:10; GHOWERN, 2010:5). Though these countries have a long history of flower production, still employment security and occupational safety and health problems endure (Sepúlveda, 2009:5; KHRC, 2012:2). The seasonal nature of flower production is the main reason behind the employment insecurity which leads to employment of large numbers of temporary workers at times of peak demand (Riisgaard, 2009:5; Mano, et al., 2010:9) where as the intensive use of pesticides is the cause of health problem of floriculture workers (Trade Matters, 2007:13; Getu, 2009:244; GHOWERN, 2010:5). The other cause of health problem is the lack (weakness) of policy and legal framework to regulate the health and safety issues of floriculture workers (Oxfam, 2008:1; Rikken, 2010:4; KHRC, 2012:50). Moreover, (in Kenya) the high unemployment rate is another cause that makes workers vulnerable to unfair disciplinary action as they are easily replaceable (Trade Matters, 2007:10; KHRC, 2012:57). Finally, violations of labour rights by companies in the sector largely went unmitigated due to failure by governments to protect workers from violation of their rights (Goodman, 2010:8; KHRC, 2012:2).

The next chapter (Chapter Three) analyzes the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health of floriculture workers in Ethiopia.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. Employment Security; and Occupational Safety and Health Conditions of Floriculture Workers in Ethiopia**

#### **Introduction**

In order to understand the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health of floriculture workers in the selected flower farms, it is important to look at the general conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health of floriculture workers in Ethiopia. Therefore, this chapter presents some important points of employment security and occupational safety and health issues of workers in general and floriculture farms workers in particular.

This chapter has three sections with a number of sub-sections. Section 1 briefly explains about employment security in general and the situations of floriculture workers' employment security in particular. Section 2 explains about occupational safety and health conditions of floriculture workers. Section 3 describes about guiding legal and institutional framework.

#### **3.1 Employment Security Conditions of Floriculture Workers**

##### **3.1.1 Definition, Importance and Indicators of Employment Security**

Employment security refers to protection against unfair or unjustified dismissals (Dasgupta, 2001:2). It also means that workers have protection against arbitrary, unlawful dismissal and short notice dismissal from employment, as well as having long-term contracts of employment and having employment relations that avoid casualisation" (ILO 1995:18). Employment security as a term is used interchangeably with job security (Schmid, 2008:325) and also used interchangeably throughout this paper.

An employees' right not to be unlawfully dismissed is a modern cornerstone of the law relating to the termination of employment (ILO, 2000:5). However, this right is not universal since some countries with developed economies do not recognize such a general right and this leads to debate over employment security protection legislation (ibid.).

Why Employment Security is important? Though, from the employers' perspective, employment security is a constraint that interferes with the firm's efficient working system (Dasgupta, 2001:6), employment security for the worker means not only the main means of income security but also expression of humanity (Kibru, 2012:1). It is why the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948, provides that it is the right of all persons "to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment" (Article 23). In Ethiopia where there are high unemployment and widespread poverty, employment security is very important (De Gobbi, 2006:17; Tigist, 2007:25). Loss of employment leads to loss of income, and loss of livelihood (Kibru, 2012:2). This may mean hunger and misery not only for the person losing his employment but his or her family and dependents (ibid.). For workers, the longer workers stayed on the job, the more their wages rose and their benefits vested, giving them a greater chance in the firm over time (ibid.).

What are the indicators of employment security? One is individual's perception and an individual's perception of employment security is his feeling about the likeliness of his continuing employment: feelings of security relate to a wide range of labour market developments, which includes the expected threat of job loss (MOLSA, 2009:38). The other indicator is the length of employment i.e. the greater the length of present employment the more secure employment can be assumed to be (Dasgupta, 2001:22). However, because of rapid technological change, the focus now is very much on skills (ibid.). But floriculture workers are basically low-skilled workers (KHRC, 2008:3). So-called low skilled workers, whose skills are easily transferable, are more likely than others to lose their employment (KHRC, 2008:3; Pacelli et al, 2008:2). The last main indicator is the existence of institutional support (trade union) to the individual for continuing employment (Sepúlveda, 2009:5; KHRC, 2012:2). If a high proportion of workers are unionized, or if all workers in the firm are covered by collective bargaining agreements that pertain to 'hiring and firing', then there is likely to be greater employment security in the firm (Dasgupta, 2001:21).

### **3.1.2 The Debate over Employment Security Protection Legislation**

Employment security right is not universal (ILO, 2000:5). For that reason, there is debate on protection of employment security versus labour flexibility (ILO, 1995:138; Dasgupta, 2001:6). Employment security protection legislation refers to regulatory provisions that relate to hiring and firing practices, particularly those governing unfair dismissals (ILO, 2000:2).

Employment security protection legislation was introduced with the aim of enhancing workers' welfare and improving employment conditions though the same provision that protect employees translate into a cost for employers and thus could have a negative impact on hiring (Autor et al, 2002:1; OECD, 2004:2).

Here are opinions on positive and negative effects of employment security protection legislation on labour market performance (Bertola et al, 1999:6; OECD, 2004:2; Schmid, 2008:316). To start with the opinions' positive effects; first, employment security has the benefits of investing in on-the-job training (OECD, 2004:4; Schmid, 2008:317). Second, employment security is viewed and valued as mandated benefit by employees (OECD, 2004:4). Third, since labour market regulation conveys economic benefits, economic flexibility may crucially rely on the presence rather than the absence of labour market regulation and employment security (Bertola et al, 1999:6). Fourth, employment security protects individual workers against unfair labour market developments (ibid.).

On the other hand, here are the opinions on negative effects of employment security protection legislation: first, the rigidity of some protective measures is criticized as prejudicing productivity and the mobility of workers (ILO, 1995:137). Second, employment security may diminish firms' ability to cope with a rapidly changing world (ILO, 1995: 137; OECD, 2004:2). Third, it restricts the freedom of the employer to terminate employment (ILO, 1995: 137). Finally, some critics argue that employment security and employment protection legislation are burdensome which make difficult to hire workers and costly to dismiss them (Autor et al, 2002:1; Berg and Kucera, 2008:1).

### **3.1.3 The Irony of Employment Security in Floriculture Industry**

Ethiopian floriculture industry workers and workers' family depend on the industry for their salaries and survival (Gioè, 2006:3; Sepúlveda, 2009:16; Kibru, 2012:2). But most of the time the employment of workers of floriculture industry is insecure globally in general and in Ethiopia in particular and the following are the main reasons for the insecurity of employment (Malefia, 2009:3; Tewodros, 2010:5; GHOWERN, 2010:4).

#### **a) Seasonal Nature of Flower Production**

Much criticism has been forwarded against seasonal nature of floriculture- an issue that has been identified as particularly problematic on floriculture farms (GHOWERN, 2010:4). Seasonality of the cut flower trade -with demand peaking at European festivals such as Valentine's, Mother's day and Easter and lowest demand during the European summer-is a major force behind the employment of large numbers of temporary workers at times of peak demand (Sepúlveda, 2009:5; Riisgaard, 2009:2; Tewodros, 2010:5; GHOWERN, 2010:4). Temporary workers are the most disadvantaged group amongst Ethiopian floricultural workers (Tigist, 2007:25), since they do not receive the same benefits permanent workers entitled to (Oxfam, 2008:3).

Almost the seasonal nature of floriculture industry is an avoidable (Tigist, 2007:25; GHOWERN, 2010:4). What makes the issue of seasonality sensitive is that floriculture companies have taken seasonality as pretext to reject the existence of labor rights violations in their farms (Sepúlveda, 2009:5; Tewodros, 2010:5). Particularly, employers take seasonality as pretext for the using strategy of employing temporary workers though their main aim is to reduce production costs since this strategy is used to easily fire these workers (Tewodros, 2010:5). So, seasonality affects employment security negatively (Tewodros, 2010:5; GHOWERN, 2010:4); and in Ethiopia where there are high unemployment and widespread poverty, the issue of employment security in floriculture is sensitive (Tigist, 2007:25).

### **b) Globalization**

Floriculture industry is a truly global industry and embodies all aspects of globalization (Friedemann-Sanchez, 2006:2; Taylor, 2011:35). Factors such as cost of labor and climatic conditions drive the globalization of flower production (Whitaker and Kolavalli, 2006: 337).

The era of globalization is termed as one of the cause of instability for floriculture workers with increasingly insecure forms of work and declining permanent terms of employment (Tewodros, 2010:5; TPAWU, 2011:9). The reason is that, in countries that produce flowers for export there is a global trend towards more flexible work characterized by flexibility in the job market, with increasing deregulation and changes to contracts which facilitate the firing of workers (Sepúlveda, 2009:5; Taylor, 2010:5).

### **c) Intense Competition**

Intense competition from other producing countries that forced several producers to close down and others to reduce labour costs is another big challenge for Ethiopian firms (Altenburg, 2010:24; Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:10). The competition leads to oversupply, which explains the

fall in the price of flowers in the international market (Sepúlveda, 2009:7; Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:10). In such a situation, there is the need to reduce labour costs in order for farms to stay in the market has led to a significant reduction of employment benefits and finally to job insecurity (Tigist, 2007:25).

#### **d) Characteristics of the Workers: poorly educated and cheap labour**

Floriculture industry involves unskilled jobs and the majorities are low-skilled (illiterate or poorly educated) workers (KHRC, 2008:3). As the level of education decreases, the likelihood that these workers will be employed as temporary workers increases (Pacelli et al, 2008:2). Moreover, these low-skilled floriculture workers, whose skills are easily replaceable, are more likely than others to lose their employment (Pacelli et al, 2008:2; KHRC, 2008:3).

#### **e) Lack of Capacities**

Floriculture production is technology and capital intensive (Altenburg, 2010:25). With very high cost the production technology is mainly imported from Europe (Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia, 2007:9). Moreover, growers need to know which varieties fetch good prices, and which ones are suitable for specific regions (Altenburg, 2010:25).

Developing production technology, skilled personnel and marketing knowledge takes time for 'latecomer' countries like Ethiopia (Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:3). For example, the average sized greenhouse is a hectare in size and may cost between 200 to 400 Dollars per square meter to build (Altenburg, 2010:25). Lack of the above mentioned capacities create uncertainties in the firms which affect the labour conditions in the sector (Altenburg, 2010:25; Tewodros, 2010:15).

### **3.2 Occupational Safety and Health Conditions in Ethiopian Floriculture**

ILO/WHO define occupational health as “the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well- being of workers in all occupations” (Ali, 2008:22). It is also defined as a discipline dealing with the prevention of work-related injuries and diseases as well as the protection and promotion of the health of workers (Vincoli, 2000:724; ILO, 2011:1).

#### **3.2.1 Why Floriculture detrimental for the Health and Safety of Workers?**

Floriculture industry uses high amount of pesticides (Malefia, 2009:12; Taylor, 2010:5). Flowers carry 50 times more the amount of pesticides allowed on foods (Kargbo et al, 2010:7405). Hence

the greatest dangers flower workers face are high temperatures in the greenhouses and the exposure to harmful pesticides which make them experience horrifying illness (Trade Matters, 2007:13; Goodman, 2010:8). In Ethiopia, what makes the problem more serious is that, Ethiopia has a worrying history in relation to the use of pesticides (The Oakland Institute, 2011:45). For example, as of 2009, in Ethiopia's floriculture industry, one hundred and twenty chemicals are used of which WHO classifies as carcinogenic which cause lasting damage to brain cells (GHOWERN, 2010:11). Moreover, cut flowers have loose regulatory status in the importing countries because they are not edible crops and are exempted from regulations on pesticide residues; hence they are not inspected for residues (Kargbo et al, 2010:7405).

### **3.2.2 Impacts of Floriculture Industry on Health of Workers**

Floriculture industry is notorious for the heavy use of toxic pesticides, which cause illnesses in workers of both sexes (Oxfam, 2008:1; GHOWERN, 2010:4). Health problems – including rashes, vision and respiratory problems, back problems and carpal tunnel syndrome – are common in flower production, due to pesticide exposure (Oxfam, 2008:4). At the same time, these workers are exposed to many diseases such as cancer, birth defects and nervous system damage (Getu, 2009:244). According to Malefia (2009:12), in Ethiopia, worker exposure is of particular concern in greenhouses, where up to 127 different pesticides are used in enclosed spaces- increasing risk of exposure through the skin and by inhalation.

The other health problem impact of flower production is specific to mothers i.e. reproductive health problems (Oxfam, 2008:1; GHOWERN, 2010:6-7). For example, according to Tewodros (2010:6), only 41% of women workers were entitled to paid maternity leave while 23% were entitled to unpaid maternity leave in Ethiopia. The lack of other employment opportunities for women (mothers) makes women to have a lower turnover than men and forces women who suffer from occupational illnesses to fight to keep their jobs and even when their health is deteriorating day by day (Tewodros, 2010:19). Finally, health problem impact of floriculture is on the child whose mother is working in flower farms (Taylor, 2010:5). Mother's exposure to pesticides during pregnancy exposes the child to neurological impairment, including a significant decrease in visuospatial performance (GHOWERN, 2010:5). At the same time, mother's pesticide exposure may adversely affect brain development of the child (ibid.). The daughters exhibited learning delays, distributed brain function and altered thyroid levels (ibid.).

### **3.2.3. Potential Contributing Factors for Health Problems**

In addition to toxic pesticides used by floriculture industry, the following factors are contributing for the deterioration of the health of workers: *First*, there are gaps in the sphere of implementation of laws and codes of practice to regulate the floriculture sector in Ethiopia (Getu, 2009:253). For example, re-entry periods (that is the set period of time that is left after spraying before workers enter the area) were not being observed (GHOWERN, 2010:12; Tewodros, 2010:29). *Second*, because of high unemployment and widespread poverty, workers do not have an alternative means of making a living (Tigist, 2007:28). The lack of other employment opportunities in Ethiopia forces those who suffer from occupational illnesses to fight to keep their jobs, even when their health is deteriorating day by day (Tewodros, 2010:5). *Third*, there is no national occupational safety and health policy which deals with how occupational safety and health is handled at a national level and undertaking level as per the principle stated by Convention No. 155 for which Ethiopia is a signatory. Occupational safety and health services have not yet developed programs to address problems in the sector due to lack of trained manpower and material and financial resources (ibid: 57). *Fourth*, lack of training, knowledge and experience among the local Ethiopians is a limiting factor (Gray, 2007:14). Further, the shortage of skilled personnel in the production of flower is one of the problems facing Ethiopian producers (Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:13). The health problem is further exacerbated by the illiteracy of workers that prevails in Ethiopia (Atkure, 2011:6). *Finally*, the consequences of pesticides used for flower production are not exactly known in developing countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia due to poor data documentation (Kargbo et al, 2010:7405).

### **3.2.4 Main (Areas of) Actions, Facilities Provided for Workers and Preventive Measures to Mitigate Health Problems in Floriculture Industry**

#### **3.2.4.1 Main (Areas of) Actions**

##### **a) Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment**

The identification of hazards and subsequent assessment of the risks arising from these hazards is a legal requirement and an essential part of the health and safety management system (Malefia,

2009:12). In flower industry where high amounts of pesticides are used (Malefia, 2009:12; Taylor, 2010:5), hazard identification and risk assessment are very important (Getu, 2009:260).

A hazard is any condition which has the potential to cause injury or harm to health (Taylor et al, 2004:132). It can be biological, chemical, physical, mechanical, human-made (Vincoli, 2000:475 and ILO, 2011:1). The identification of hazards in the floriculture industry is mainly the identification of those chemicals that may pose a threat to human health (Vincoli, 2000:477; EHPEA, 2011:75).

Once hazards have been identified, the risks arising from these hazards should be assessed (Taylor et al, 2004:138). Risk is the combination of the likelihood that a hazard will actually result in an accident and the consequences of that accident, often expressed as the product of the two (Taylor et al, 2004:5). Risk assessment is a process that identifies hazards, considers what harm could happen (risk) and how this risk can be reduced or removed by the implementation of specific mitigating actions (EHPEA, 2011:75). Risk assessment is the responsibility of the employer to undertake (ibid.).

## **b) Training for Workers**

Training is one of the systems to build up workers skill on issues directly related to their work place in order to have a guarantee of job security and lead a better life (Aman, 2011:36). It is important means for empowerment of workers to realize their rights in general (GHOWERN, 2010:8). Moreover, training is assisting trade union leaders to cope successfully in the functions of CBA negotiation, handling grievances, and great efforts for workers right and benefits (Aman, 2011:36).

A lack of knowledge and experience about pesticides among the local Ethiopians (particularly workers) is a limiting factor (Gray, 2007:14). Workers must be made aware about pesticide and its use at work and this is provided through training (Taylor, 2011:80). What is more, as for traditional flower farms, much better training is needed-not just unsafe use at work, but also safe practices in the home, such as washing exposed clothes separately and minimizing in-home pesticide use (Taylor, 2010:6; GHOWERN, 2010:8).

## **c) Health and Safety Inspection**

The enforcement of legal provisions concerning occupational safety and health should be secured by an adequate and appropriate system of inspection (Alli, 2008:59-60). According to the

Ethiopian Labour Proclamation “supervise, executive, educate, study, make research and prepare a standard of work to ensure the implementation of the provisions issued in accordance with this Proclamation and other laws regarding working conditions, occupational safety, health and working environment” are among the activities of labour inspection service (Art. 177(2)). At the same time, according to EHPEA Code of Practice for Sustainable Flower Production, during the inspection the auditor will examine and verify, using appropriate techniques, the evidence presented by the farm and all findings and observation (EHPEA, 2011:18). It is the responsibility of the farm to demonstrate/prove their compliance, not the responsibility of the Auditor to ‘find out’ if the farm is compliant (ibid.).

#### **3.2.4.2 Provision of Work Facilities**

Appropriate facilities for good working order are mandatory for anyone handling and raising flowers (GHOWERN, 2010:20). One of the facilities that should be provided for floriculture workers is first aid and the employer is obliged to provide it (Art. 104 (1) (a) of LP). Farms should have facilities and equipment on site to allow staff to administer first aid treatment (EHPEA, 2011:45). In the context of occupational safety and health, first aid means the immediate measures taken at the site of an accident by a person who is trained in first aid (Ali, 2008:86). Still, all pesticide handlers, (i.e. stores personnel, spray operators, measurers and mixers) and their supervisors should have an annual medical check for general health (EHPEA, 2011:46).

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is another important facility that should be provided for floriculture workers (TPAWU, 2011:34). The EHPEA Code sets provision of PPE as mandatory for a flower farm to get the certification for the Bronze Level (Getu, 2009: 260; EHPEA, 2011: 29). All workers involved in handling pesticides should have appropriate personnel protective equipment (EHPEA, 2011:48). Boots, overall long wrap round apron or spray suit, respirator, gloves and goggles or face shield are among PPE that should be provided (ibid.). Furthermore, appropriate toilet (separate for male and female) and washing facilities should be provided for floriculture workers (GHOWERN, 2010:11).

#### **3.2.4.3 Preventive and Protective Measures**

Prevention is better than cure i.e. the best way of protection is to take action before occurrence of a fatality, injury, or an illness (Hurst and Kirby, 2004:41). Preventive measures concerning

functional occupational health and safety programs are essential to safeguard the health and safety condition of workforce (Takele and Mengesha, 2006:202). Occupational diseases and injuries are, in principle, preventable (Takele and Mengesha, 2006: 200; Alli, 2008:105). They are all caused by preventable factors which could be eliminated by implementing already known and available measures and methods which are confirmed by continuously reduced accident rates in industrialized countries (Alli, 2008:4). There are four major categories of prevention and control measures: elimination or substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment (Hopkins, 1995:9; Alli, 2008:104).

Elimination or substitution is the ideal way to deal with the hazard is to eliminate it totally or to substitute a less hazardous substance, process or piece of machinery (Hopkins, 1995: 9-10; Takele and Mengesha, 2006:206).

An engineering control involves controlling the hazard at the source and may mean changing a work process to reduce exposure to a hazard; working a limited number of hours in a hazardous area (Hopkins, 1995:10; Takele and Mengesha, 2006:206; Alli, 2008:106). Administrative controls limits the amounts of time workers spend at hazardous job locations (Hopkins, 1995:10; Takele and Mengesha, 2006:211).

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the least effective method of controlling occupational hazards and should be used only when other methods cannot control hazards sufficiently (Hopkins, 1995:11; Takele and Mengesha, 2006:212). Though it is the least effective method of protection and should only be used as a last resort to supplement prevention and control measures, personal protective equipment is often the only measure offered by employers (Hurst and Kirby, 2004:42).

### **3.2.5 Magnitude of Occupational Safety and Health Problems in floriculture**

Developing countries use only 20% of the world's agrochemicals for flower production, yet they suffer 99% of deaths from pesticide poisoning (Atkure, 2011:5). Women (the majority in floriculture industry) are least protected and most affected (Takele and Mengesha, 2006:9).

According to a study of fern and flower workers in Ecuador, over 50% of respondents had at least one symptom of pesticide poisoning, such as headache, dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, skin eruptions or fainting (Handal, 2009 as quoted in Atkure, 2011). But no studies on this issue have yet been done in Ethiopia (Trade Matters, 2007:10).

### **3.3 Guiding Legal and Institutional Framework**

Ethiopian Labour Rights, particularly employment security and occupational safety and health of rights of workers derive from international (most importantly from the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions) and domestic labour rights laws (particularly Ethiopian Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003). Out of the ILO conventions Ethiopia has ratified, the ones relevant to employment security and occupational safety and health respectively are Termination of Employment Convention, No. 158 (1982) (hereinafter convention No. 158) and Occupational Safety and Health Convention, No. 155 (1981) (hereinafter convention No. 155). In addition, the Ethiopian Constitution devotes a separate Article to Labour Rights (Art. 42).

This guiding legal framework section, therefore, looks at the applicable provisions of Convention No. 158 and Convention No. 155; and Ethiopian Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003 (hereinafter the Labour Proclamation (LP)) (and amendment in Proclamation No. 494/2006) that are applicable to the workers of the sector.

#### **3.3.1 Ratified ILO Conventions relevant to Employment Security and Occupational Safety and Health**

Ethiopia ratified the two ILO conventions i.e. Convention No. 158 and Convention No. 155 in 1991(De Gobbi, 2006:27) and Art. 9(4) of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia provides that, “All international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land”. These conventions clearly impose a duty on each State party to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that everyone is protected from unemployment and insecurity in employment and can enjoy the right to safe and healthy working conditions as soon as possible (ILO, 2009:30). Article 3 of Convention No. 158 states the terms termination and termination of employment mean termination of employment at the initiative of the employer. One of the key provisions of Convention No.158 is Article 4 which states “The employment of a worker shall not be terminated at the initiative of the employer unless there is a valid reason for such termination connected with the capacity or conduct of the worker or based on the operational requirements of the undertaking, establishment or service”. In case of unlawful termination the worker shall have the right to compensation (Article 10 of Convention No. 158). A worker whose employment is to be terminated shall be entitled to a reasonable period of notice or compensation in lieu thereof (Article 11).

In accordance with article 8 of convention No.155, each member shall, “by laws or regulations or any other method consistent with national conditions and practice and in consultation with the representative organizations of employers and workers concerned, take such steps as may be necessary...” for the action taken at the national level. In Convention No. 155, there are clear responsibilities placed upon employers to identify hazards, evaluate risks, and implement preventive and protective measures (Art.16). Convention No. 155 also addresses steps to be taken to prevent accidents and injury to health (ILO, 2009a:6). Moreover, Convention No. 155 states that the enforcement system shall provide for adequate penalties for violations of the laws and regulations (Article 9(2)). Articles 16-21 of convention No. 155 are about the actions taken at the level of the undertaking. Using safety devices and protective equipment correctly; reporting promptly to their immediate supervisor any situation which they have reason to believe could present a hazard and cooperation with employers are among the duties of workers vital for the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases (Article 19 of Convention No. 155). What is more, providing safety equipments and training about safety equipments are the most important tasks to be carried out by employers (Article 16(3) of Convention No. 155). The employer is obliged to provide first-aid to the injured worker in time (Art. 18 of Convention No. 155) and occupational safety and health measures shall not involve any expenditure for the workers (Art. 21 of Convention No. 155).

### **3.3.2 Employment Security and Occupational Safety and Health Provisions under Ethiopian Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003.**

#### **3.3.2.1 Employment Security**

##### **a) Termination of Employment at the Initiation of Employer**

Termination of employment for this study is termination of employment at the initiative of the employer and it does not include termination at the initiative of the worker or as a result of a genuine and freely negotiated agreement between the parties.

The Labour Proclamation provides that “Lawful grounds for termination of a labour contract are related to the conduct of the employee, the ability of the worker to perform his/her task, and operational requirements of the undertaking” (Article 26 (1)). The Labour Proclamation rules out

dismissal on grounds of worker's: membership in a trade union; seeking or holding office as a worker's representative; submission of grievance against the employer his participation in judicial or other proceedings; nationality, race, colour, sex, religion, political outlook, marital status, family responsibility, pregnancy and lineage line (Art. 26 (2)). Non compliance with the provisions of the Labour Proclamation makes contract termination unlawful (Article 14(1) (c) of LP).

## **b) Remedies for Unlawful Dismissal**

Generally, the procedures employed for unlawful dismissals in case of individual dismissal and collective dismissal are not the same (ILO, 2009c:41). Individual dismissal (the focus of this study) is dealt with by regular courts (Art. 138(1) of LP) while collective dismissal has to be resolved through conciliation or optionally arbitration; or as a last resort through adjudication by Labour Relations Board (ILO, 2009c:41).

In case of individual dispute, remedies against unlawful termination that are specified in the Labour Proclamation can be reinstatement of the worker (Arts.26(2)& 43(1)), compensation together with severance payment(Art.43(2),(3)(4) &39(1)(b)), payment inleu of notice period(Art.44 & 45) and fine(Art.14(1)(c)&184(2)(c)).

An employer is obliged to reinstate the worker in case of unlawful termination (Art. 26 (2) and 43(1) of LP). The labour dispute settlement tribunal, may order the dismissal of the worker upon payment of compensation even if the worker demands reinstatement where it believes that the continuation of the particular worker employer relations, by its nature is likely to give rise to serious difficulties (Art. 43 (3) of LP). Where the first instance court orders the reinstatement of the worker, the court shall order the payment of back -pay not exceeding 6 months wage (Art. 43(5) of LP). If the decision of reinstatement is confirmed by the appellate court it shall order payment of back pay not exceeding one year (ibid.). Regarding limitation, any claim to be reinstated by a worker arising from the unlawful termination of a contract of employment shall be barred after three months from the date of the termination of the contract of employment (Art. 162(2) of LP). Second, if reinstatement is not ordered, unlawful termination results in compensation together with severance payment (Art. 43 ((2), (3), (4)) and 39 (1) (b) of LP). Third, payment inleu of notice period is also a remedy of unlawful termination provided under Article 44 of the labour proclamation. Fourth, according to the labour proclamation, “An

employer who terminates a contract of employment that is not based on legitimate grounds for the termination shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Birr 1200 (Birr one thousand and two hundreds) (Arts. 14 (1) (c) and 184 (2) (c)).

Protection mechanisms and remedies are very important particularly to safeguard workers' rights and to enforce the obligations of the employer and worker (GHOWERN, 2010:12).

### **3.3.2.2 Occupational Safety and Health**

#### **a) Responsibilities of Employer and workers**

The employer is obliged to put in place all the necessary measures in order to ensure, work places are safe, healthy and free of any danger to the well being of workers (Art. 92 of LP). Workers also have some obligations to fulfill which include: observing health and safety regulations; carrying out work safely in a manner that does not endanger themselves and others and co-operate in the formulation of work rules to safeguard the workers health and safety, and implement same (Art. 93 of LP).

#### **b) Employment Injury**

The labour proclamation divides employment injury into two: occupational accident or occupational disease (Art. 95(2)). "Occupational accident" means any organic injury or functional disorder sustained by a worker in connection with the performance of his work (Article 97 of LP) while "occupational disease" covers any disease contracted as a result of an exposure to risk factors arising from work activities ( Art. 98(1) of LP).

Once injury sustained, the provision of Articles 104-105 of Labor Proclamation details of obligations, types of benefits and duration of benefits liability are put on the employer (Dawit, 2006:15). The Labour Proclamation provides that the employer should pay disablement payment and dependants' benefits (Arts. 109 and 110). The disability sustained by the worker may be partial, temporary or permanent disability; and disability compensation systems frequently request a determination of the extent and permanence of a disability condition (Takele and Mengesha, 2006:165). In the case of death of worker the employer is obliged to pay dependant's compensation and funeral expenses (which shall be not less than two month wages of the worker) (Art.110 (1) (a) and (b) of LP).

### **3.3.3 Codes of Practice Primarily Regarding Labour Rights Issues in Ethiopian Floriculture**

Over the past three decades, as Western corporations grew both in size and influence over all aspects of the floriculture industry globally, there have been calls to act justly (Rikken, 2010:4; TPAWU, 2011:40; UWEA, 2011:30). One of the strategies that have been proposed to address the problems of poor labour conditions in floriculture sector is certification linked to voluntary codes of conduct (Rikken, 2010:4; UWEA, 2011:30). The codes contain basic human right in workplaces, based on the ILO Conventions (TPAWU, 2011:40).

Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA) developed its own Code of Practice in 2007 which is voluntary industry standard (EHPEA, 2011:5). In the process of developing the EHPEA code of practice, review of Ethiopian laws, the concerns and labels of the international market, stakeholders' concern and the interests of farmers have been taken into account (Getu, 2009:259).

EHPEA code seeks to compliment the Law of Ethiopia but does not substitute for the Law and farmers should be aware that where the Code standard falls below the Law or where the Code is silent, then the standard set by the Law prevails (EHPEA, 2011:5).

The EHPEA Code is divided into three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold (Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:20). The Bronze level is a minimum requirement and compulsory for a flower farm to obtain EHPEA Code of Accreditation (Getu, 2009:256; Rikken, 2010:21). The Silver level sets internationally recognized standards for Good Agricultural Practices, Protection of the Environment and Responsible Employment Practices and includes requirements equivalent in content and standards to the international market labels widely used in the sector (EHPEA, 2011:6). The Gold level sets higher standards beyond the sector benchmarks (Mulu and Sonobe, 2011:20).

In Ethiopia, compliance of farms to different codes of conduct differs from farm to farm (EHDA, 2012:15). Several farms acquired international standards such as Milieu Program Sierteelt (MPS) and GlobalGAP (Tewodros, 2010:36). So far about 16 farms have received MPS certificates and about 8 have received GlobalGAP (EHDA, 2012:14-15). Producers seek certification from MPS and EurepGAP, depending on the market they want to access (Whitaker and Kolavalli, 2006: 358).

In the cut flower industry, the most recognized international standard, the Milieu Project Sierteelt (MPS), was developed in 1995 for the Dutch flower auctions to reduce the negative impact of floriculture (Whitaker and Kolavalli, 2006: 357; Malefia, 2009:17; Rikken, 2010:4-5). MPS is a certificate that allows growers to demonstrate that their products are cultivated under good working conditions and includes requirements on health, safety and terms of employment, and respect for universal human rights (Getu, 2009:265; Gudeta, 2011:23). This certificate is becoming a pre-condition for entry into the market system in some nations now, and will likely be used by many in the future (Gudeta, 2011:23).

The other is GLOBALGAP which began as EUREPGAP in 1997 as an initiative by retailers from the Euro-Retailer Produce Working Group (EUREP) (Greenpeace, 2010:1). GLOBALGAP is a private sector body that sets voluntary standards for the certification of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) around the globe (Greenpeace, 2010:1; GlobalGAP, 2011:1). Its standards are performance-based, i.e. certified farms go beyond just having the right documents and systems in place and must demonstrate proof of application at the initial farm inspections, followed by yearly internal self-assessment and external farm visits by trained auditors (Greenpeace, 2010:2). In GLOBALGAP, to avoid duplication, existing national or regional farm assurance schemes that have successfully completed the independent benchmarking process are recognized as an equivalent to GLOBALGAP (GlobalGAP, 2011:1). GLOBALGAP provides free of charge support services to producers including training manuals for smallholders, access to tools and information (Ibid.).

To conclude, codes of conduct have come about as a result of civil society pressure to improve poor working conditions and can play great roles in the sector (Barrientos et al, 2003:1522; UWEA, 2011:30). For example, according to the study by Omosa et al. (2006) in code-adopting farms, the majority (89%) of the workers were employed on permanent terms while, 62% of workers in the non-adopting farms were employed on temporary terms. In terms of employment status, the same study proves about 92% of the workers in code-adopting farms are permanent compared to about 36% in non-code adopting farms.

### **3.3.4 The Mechanisms and Institutions for Resolution of Labour Disputes**

There are three major peaceful labour disputes resolution mechanisms: conciliation, arbitration and adjudication (ILO, 2006:87). Conciliation is a mechanism by which a third party helps the

parties to the dispute in resolving their dispute and arbitration is the mechanism by which a third party hears and passes a binding decision while adjudication is a mechanism by which institutions that are part of the state machinery adjudicate the case (ibid.).

Labour dispute means any controversy arising between a worker and an employer or trade union and employers in respect of the application of law, collective agreement, work rules, employment contract or customary rules (Art. 136 (3) of LP). Labour dispute can be individual labour dispute (which is the focus of this study) the labour dispute that is raised between a worker and an employer and collective labour dispute which is raised between trade union and their employers (ILO, 2006:87).

The mechanisms for collective labour disputes resolution is different from individual labour disputes (Getu, 2009:260; Tewodros, 2010:32). Collective labour dispute is mainly resolved through conciliation or optionally arbitration (ibid.). But as a last resort, collective labour dispute is resolved through adjudication by Labour Relations Board (EHPEA, 2011:45).

Individual labour dispute is to be settled through adjudication by the regular courts-Regional First Instance Court then appeals to Regional High Court (EHPEA, 2011:45). Disciplinary measures including dismissal; claims related to the termination of employment contracts and claims related to employment injury are among individual disputes settled by the court (Art. 138 (1) of LP).

Article 138 (1) of the labour proclamation provides that the regional first instance court have the jurisdiction to settle and determine individual labour disputes. The court is expected to give decision within sixty days from the date on which the claim is lodged (Art. 138 (2) of LP). If one of the parties is not satisfied by the decision of regional first instance court, he/she can take appeal (within 30 days from the date on which the decision was delivered) to the regional high court and the decision of regional high court is final (Art. 138 (3) of LP).

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **Finding and Analysis**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings and analysis based on the data collected from the results of questionnaire, interview and case studies on employment security and occupational safety and health conditions.

A total of 272 workers (used as respondents throughout this chapter) from the farms were sampled for questionnaire and 249 workers filled and returned the questionnaires. The selection of these workers to fill the questionnaires was, to the extent possible, random. During selection of the workers special attention was paid to distribution across sexes, employment status and period worked. All of these workers are those who have worked at least for the last 12 months in the farm. This was on the assumption that workers at this level have been sufficiently exposed to the work related employment security and occupational safety and health conditions.

In depth interviews were conducted with workers and farm managers. Interviews were also conducted with Woreda officials who were conversant with employment security and occupational safety and health situations of the farms. Moreover, for an in-depth treatment the selected case studies were used. The purpose of presenting these case studies is to complement the information gained from questionnaire and interviews.

The presentation is organized as follows: first, the total number of workforce and category of workers of the selected farms are presented; Second, general background information of respondents focusing on sex, age, marital status, education and number of working years as flower farm workers are described; Third, employment security conditions of the workers of the farms, focusing on employment security and job satisfaction; employment contract; temporary workers and their conditions and termination and dismissals, are discussed; and finally, occupational safety and health conditions of the workers of the farms, focusing on description of occupational safety and health, trainings and instructions, occupational safety and health, availability of work facilities and medical check-ups, are explained and presented.

## 4.2 Total No. of Workforce and Category of workers of the Selected Farms

Observation derived from table 2 below: the majority of the workers were females for all the three farms (Dugda Flora, Ever Green Farm and Minaye Flowers). Women constituted on average 69% of the total work force on each farm and males constituted on average 31%. According to one manager from Ever Green farm, the high level of women working on flower farms seemed employers prefer to employ females because they are 'less demanding, more stable and can easily be managed'. Another manager from Dugda Flora said, women are 'obedient', 'careful', 'industrious' and have 'little complaints'. Respondents in this study indicated that floriculture employers prefer women than men to certain jobs like sorting, grading, harvesting, and cleaning the green houses.

Table 2 Total No. of Workforce of the Farms

Name of the farm	Total No. of Workforce	No. of Male	No. of Female	% of male	% of female
Dugda Flora	677	201	476	29.6	70.4
Ever Green Farm	120	39	81	32.5	67.5
Minaye Flowers	450	140	310	31	69

Source: Data collected from farm managers and Union leaders

## 4.3 General Background Information of Respondents

Workers of different categories, age, gender and education background were part of the respondents and provided their inputs.

Table 3 showed that female respondents were the majority (174) accounting for 67% and their male counterparts were 75 accounting for 33%. As to the type of job category of respondents, 28.5% were sprayers, 32.9% were from pack house, 35.3% were from green house and 3.6% were from other job categories. Among respondents, a total of 190 (accounting for 76.3%) were permanent as compared to 59 (23.6%) temporary.

Table 3 Number, Job Category and Category of Respondents

Name of the farm	No. of Respondents					% of Respondents to Total Workforce	Job category respondents				Category/status of Respondents	
	Male	Female	Total	% of male	% of Female		Sprayer	Pack house	Green house	others	Permanent	Temporary
Dugda Flora	39	93	132	30	70	19.4	40	45	42	5	101	31
Ever Green Farm	9	18	27	34	66	22.5	6	9	11	1	21	6
Minaye Flo.	27	63	90	30	70	20	25	28	35	3	68	22

Source: Data collected from farm managers, Union leaders and respondents

Table 4 showed that 70.6% of the respondents were uneducated, 9.6% could read and write, 10.8% attended primary school, and 3.2% attended secondary school and no diploma and degree holders. From table 4, marital status of workers varied much across the industry. However, much of the sectors' labour force consisted of single workers. 40.1% of respondents were married while 59.8% were single.

Concerning work experience of respondents, about 28.1% had the experience of less than 2 years; around 58.2% had work experience of between 2 and 5 years while 13.6 had experience of greater than 5 years.

Around 48.5% of respondents were below the age of 25 years and around 31.3% were 26-35 years old. 19.6% of respondents found between 36-45 years old and one respondent was above 45 years.

Table 4 Education Level, Work experience, Marriage Status and Age of Respondents

Name of Farm	Education Level of Respondents						Work experience			Marriage Status		Age of Respondents			
	Degree	Diploma	Secondary Sch.	Primary school	Read and write	Uneducated	Below 2 years	2-5 years	Above 5 years	Married	Single	Below 25 years	26-35 year	36-45 years	Above 45 years
Dugda Flora	-	-	2	8	24	98	27	90	15	45	87	82	18	32	-
Ever Green Farm	-	-	-	11	3	13	8	13	6	20	7	15	9	3	-
Minaye Flowers	-	-	6	8	11	65	35	42	13	48	42	24	51	14	1

Source: From respondents' response

## 4.4 Employment Security Conditions

The focus of this section was to assess the conditions of employment security. Within this context then and in order to bring the evidence more closely to the conditions of employment security, I adopted the following key issues: opinions on employment security and job satisfaction; employment contract; temporary workers and their conditions and termination and dismissals. The views of managers of the farms and Woreda officials on these key issues followed the responses of workers.

### 4.4.1 Response of Workers on Employment Security Conditions

#### 4.4.1.1 Response of Workers on employment security and job satisfaction

Table 5 showed that there was low satisfaction of respondents in their employment security. Over 53% of respondents were unsatisfied in their employment security. Employment security means that individuals have the confidence, based on their experience, that they will be able to continue their employment career, but the respondents have not that confidence since their

experience showed them the frequent firing of workers. Floriculture industries are characterized by short-term contracts, as short as a day base contracts which makes employer-worker relationship is on an informal basis and difficult to keep the right and securities of the workers. This insecurity had specific gender implications related in some cases to women's exclusion from benefits such as maternity leave and sick pay. Insecure job exposed to work exploitation, direct repression and unfair dismissal.

The ILO conventions recognize that workers should be employed on a regular basis (Omosa and Kimani, 2006:39). Temporary terms of employment are discouraged due to the associated limitations to various benefits for the workers. But almost all respondents said that when they first employed they were employed under temporary terms and with time may either become seasonal or permanent, depending on the satisfaction of the management with the worker's performance. It may also result in the loss of the job if management considers the new employee's work unsatisfactory. Respondents added that the employers do not want to develop its work force through training and education, both on-and-off-the-jobs. Therefore, though seasonality is the nature of floriculture industry, most of the respondents fell insecure because their managers fire them if they are not satisfied according to respondents. What is more, information from workers interview showed that the main reason (in addition to seasonality of flower industry) why there is high insecurity of employment in flower industry is the majority of workers are uneducated and as the level of education decreases employment insecurity increases.

So there were high feelings of insecurity in employment. As shown in table 5 about 72% of respondents were not satisfied in their current jobs because of the insecurity of their jobs and managers claim that the insecurity is due to the seasonality of production.

The majority of respondents (79.5%) worried about the possibility of losing their jobs (table 5). Their main reason to worry about losing their job was that firing of workers occurred frequently in their farms according to some key informants. Workers interviewed also said that most workers do not have job security since they can be told to stop work and go home any time if the manager is not happy with their work performance. Floriculture industry involves unskilled jobs and the majorities are poorly educated workers. The question, therefore, why the employers (companies) do not want to develop its work force through training and education instead of firing the workers?

Generally, information obtained from workers' interview confirmed that there were employment insecurity and less job satisfaction. Moreover, there were instability and high employee turnover according to interviewees which clearly shows employment insecurity in the farms.

Workers interviewed also confirmed that their job satisfaction is declining from time to time. The decrease of job satisfaction can negatively affect the health of workers and the productivity of flower farms (Takele and Abera, 2007:3). According to the study by Sepúlveda (2009:9), the risk of work-related injury increases with the decrease of job satisfaction.

It needs to be noted that there are differences in terms of the feelings of insecurity of workers between the farms. The situation of employment security of workers in Dugda Flora is good and the feeling of insecurity of workers of Dugda Flora is less. There is no delay in awarding permanent contracts in Dugda Flora. Workers of Dugda Flora sign letter of acceptance of the terms and conditions of employment as soon as possible.

Table 5- Respondents' response on employment security and job satisfaction

Question	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1) How satisfied are you with your present employment security?	Highly satisfied	-	-
	Satisfied	83	33.3
	Unsatisfied	134	53.8
	Highly unsatisfied	32	12.8
Total		249	100
2) Are you satisfied by your current job?	Yes	178	71.5
	No	71	28.5
Total		249	100
3) Do you worry about losing your job?	Yes	198	79.5
	No	51	20.4
Total		249	100

Source: from respondents' response

## **Case 1: Opinion on Employment Security and Job Satisfaction**

This case is about a 23 year-old female worker from Ever Green farm around Debre Zeit. She has many tasks in the farm including harvesting the flower, de-leafing, grading and packing the flower. She is not happy with her work. She said that she has many reasons for why she is not happy. One reason she stated that, though she has worked almost for two years in the farm, she still has no confidence that she will continue her job. She said that the destiny of workers is in the hand of employer and the employer can dismiss workers if he/she wishes. The other reason she stated for unhappiness with her work was that she cannot even find another job because she is uneducated. She informed me that she has many friends who have lost their job without valid grounds and maybe (as she said) she may face the same thing in the future.

The informant said that she is paid 22 Birr per day which is the lowest wage to cover her daily subsistence. She said she is working as cooker after she returned from her job for two governmental workers in Debre Zeit town. According to her, she has a plan to go to one Arab country for work and she said she has passport at her hand currently.

### **4.4.1.2 Response of Workers on Written Employment Contract**

Written contract of employment is very important for the worker (EHPEA code of practice, 2011:13). Written contract of employment gives workers security of their jobs and provides them with legal basis to deal with employers when their rights are violated or not respected (ibid.).

According to labour proclamation No. 377/2003, any verbally (not made in written form) entered employment contract shall be translated in to written form within 15 days from the conclusion of the contract; and given to the worker (Art. 7(1)). Again according to EHPEA code of practice, it is mandatory for the staff to receive a signed copy of her/his contract (EHPEA code of practice, 2011:38).

Regarding whether the respondents had signed written employment contracts, the majority of the respondents answered 'no' (table 6). As seen in table 6, above 59% of respondents had not signed written employment contract when they were employed. Some workers who are interviewed said they do not whether they are employed permanently or temporary because they have not signed any contract with their employers.

From those who signed the contract 78.5% of respondents had not given the copy of their employment contract (table 6). Regarding the language of contract, from those who received the copy of their employment contract, only 13.6% of respondents understand the language in which their employment contract was written (table 6).

Table 6- Respondents' response on employment contract

Question	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1) Have you signed employment contract when you were employed?	Yes	102	40.9
	No	147	59.1
Total		249	100
2) Have you given the copy of employment contract?	Yes	22	21.5
	No	80	78.5
Total		102	100
3) Is your employment contract in the language you understand?	Yes	3	13.6
	No	19	86.4
Total		22	100

Source: from respondents' response

#### **4.4.1.3 Response of Workers on Temporary Workers and Their Conditions**

In all farms, there were two categories of workers: permanent and temporary workers. Table 7 showed that the percentage of temporary workers on all farms studied ranged from 44.8% to 54% of the total work force, with an average of 48.76%. From table 7, it is clear that many workers are hired for definite period.

Most of the flower farms employers decide to recruit an employee for a definite period of time to avoid benefits associated with contract of employment for an indefinite period; and the employees may not object to it because the labour proclamation allows it. This affects employment negatively security since workers are not provided with a degree of long-term stability. Security of employment for temporary workers in floriculture industry is dependent mainly on the marketability of farms' products and in case of products market shrink these workers exist from employment to unemployment. The managers of the farms claim that it is not

possible to insecurity of employment in floriculture since seasonality is the nature the industry. Again sometimes the insecurity of employment in the sector is due to growing pressures of competition in the international market according to the managers.

The researcher also observed that temporary workers were often not given personal protective equipment (PPE) on the grounds that the workers were deemed ‘unreliable’ by their employers. Moreover, temporary workers were not organized since the short length of contracts has meant that unions were not able to locate and unionize temporary workers. The exception to this is in Dugda Farm where the union had unionized some temporary workers, although more work needs to be done here.

In all farms it was found that it is very difficult for temporary workers to fulfill their reproductive role according to workers interviewed. Pregnancies can lead to termination of employment of many women who were working with them. Workers were often not permitted to take any maternity leave to care for their babies and whilst pregnant they could be expected to perform the same labour intensive work as their colleagues the interviewed workers added. Moreover, they said that many workers have found that they have to choose between starting/expanding a family and retaining their job. Article 35 (5a) of The Ethiopian Constitution states that women have the right to maternity leave with full pay. And the same article (5b) indicates that maternity leave may, in accordance with the provision of law, include prenatal leave with full pay. However, women in most of the flower farms surveyed are not exercising their constitutional rights.

Table- 7 Temporary workers of the farms

Name of the farm	Total workforce of the farm	No. of permanent workers	No. of temporary workers	% of temporary workers
Dugda Flora	677	312	365	54
Ever Green Farm	120	63	57	47.5
Minaye Flower	450	248	202	44.8

Source: Data collected from farm managers

## Case 2: Conditions of Temporary Worker

A 31 year-old man from Dugda Flora has agreed to be interviewed regarding his experience on the conditions of temporary workers in the farm. He has been a temporary worker two times. He

worked in Roshanara Roses which is found around Debre Zeit for about nine months in 2010. Currently, he is working as temporary worker in Dugda Flora.

According to him, since he is temporary employee he lost many employment benefits such as the right to join a union, breaks and payment during public holidays and opportunities for promotion. Plus, temporary workers are often not given personal protective equipment according to him. Moreover, the daily rate of payment for temporary workers is lower than the daily rate of payment for permanent workers he said. In general, he said, it is better to stay home than working as a temporary worker and he has no moral for the work he is working.

According to the informant, employers are not caring for temporary workers since workers are easily replaced because of high unemployment in the city. Temporary workers are dismissed on the whim of a supervisor or manager, according to the informant. He is of the opinion that employers seem to reflect an attitude something like: *“If a worker leaves the farm, another worker will come and work. No problem of finding workers”*.

#### **4.4.1.4 Response of Workers on Terminations of Employment**

Under this sub-section, the main intention is to take the opinion of the workers though their opinion may be right or wrong. Knowing the opinion of the workers is very important to know what they think about their respective farms and how far there are satisfied in the conditions of their farms.

More than 57% of respondents thought that employment terminations happened all the time in their farms (table 8). Asked whether employment terminations in their farms were based on valid grounds/lawful, about 77% of respondents answered ‘no’ (table 8).

Information from the qualitative interview of workers revealed that terminations in their farms are without just cause.

Table- 8 Terminations of employment

Question	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1) What do you think is the frequency of employment terminations in your farm?	All the time	144	57.8
	Sometimes	86	34.5
	Rarely	15	6.3
	I do not know	4	1.4
Total		249	100
2) Do you think employment terminations in your farm are based on valid grounds/lawful?	Yes	5	2.1
	No	191	76.7
	I do not know	53	21.2
Total		249	100

Source: from respondents' response

### **Case 3: Terminations and Dismissals**

This is a case about a 28 year-old female worker who is working in Ever Green farm. She said that, she has seen many workers dismissed in her farm and thinks that the dismissals are unlawful. Employers have unfettered power to dismiss workers. Workers cannot speak to their employer if they have problems fearing they are dismissed from their work. The firing of workers who tried to exercise their rights is common according to her. She also added that sometimes going to toilet without the permission of supervisors can lead to termination of employment. The informant said anyone who asserts their rights is often fired by the company. She said that sometimes pregnancies can lead to termination of employment. Women workers are often not permitted to take any maternity leave to care for their babies and whilst pregnant they could be expected to perform the same labour intensive work as their colleagues, according to the informant.

#### **4.4.2 Farms Managers' Views on Employment Security**

According to the farms managers that were interviewed, the employment security condition of their farms is good. If there is the problem of employment security of their workers, it is not

because of the problem/weakness of their farms but it is because of the seasonality of flower production.

Farms managers that were interviewed cited their workers are given a copy of their employment contract. Asked whether workers were automatically transferred to permanent terms upon completion of probationary period the managers of the farms had doubt.

Farms managements/ administration deny the existence of unlawful terminations and dismissals in their farms and said their farms have enabled conditions that allow their workers to have a decent life. But they do not totally deny the existence of terminations initiated by employer but argue that the terminations happened because of seasonality of the production and the labour proclamation allows. According to Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003, a labour contract seasonal work can be for a definite (Article 10 (1) (f)).

It is therefore possible for flower farms employers to repeatedly recruit employees for a limited duration thereby avoiding the application of the higher protection standards provided to workers recruited with contracts for an indefinite period (De Gobbi, 2006:28). And the possibility for employers to terminate labour contracts without limit of time for production seasonality reason would reduce employment protection in current jobs (Takele and Abera, 2007:3).

#### **4.4.3 Woreda officials' Views on Employment Security of Workers**

According to Woreda officials, employment security is not only important for the purpose of providing income security but also important the non-pecuniary benefits of employment - the sense of social participation that it provides, and the psychological effects on self-confidence and self-respect that employment brings. However, it seems the employers do not understand this importance of employment security and workers are becoming careless about their work and this negatively affects the development of farms according to key informants.

The officials held the opinion that the requirements of the employment security rights of workers are not fully complied with by the employers. Almost the officials back up the views of workers respondents that there is high employment insecurity and the insecurity is much higher with female workers as compared to male workers. According to officials, though workers had strong interest in indefinite period employment contracts, in almost all farms many workers are hired for definite period as temporary workers. The officials said the majority of the workers in flower farms are employed as daily labourers.

Woreda officials indicated that employers are reluctant to give permanent written contract for workers and if employers give written contract for workers, workers have to spend many years as daily labourers. They said employers usually prefer to hire workers on daily or temporary basis fearing that if they become permanent they are likely to raise human right issues. Moreover, information gained from Woreda officials' interviews confirmed that employers were less willing to give written contracts to workers in order to avoid labour costs such as maternity leave and sick pay. The officials also added that, if the workers have not signed a contract with employers, they can be easily fired out of their jobs without sufficient legal reasons at the wish of their employers.

Generally, the most disadvantaged group amongst floricultural workers was temporary workers and they are usually excluded from any opportunities for promotion and they get very few (if any) employment benefits in addition to their wages according to Woreda officials. Temporary employment was found to have Temporary workers were also usually excluded from any opportunities for promotion.

In relation to employment security of workers, terminations and dismissals were found to be the most violated provisions in employment relations according to Woreda officials who are familiar with the conditions of workers in flower farm. The officials reported that it is common practice to see terminations most of which are unlawful. They confirmed that most of the time terminations and dismissals were used to deny employment benefits.

The same officials have said employers always said they are working to improve labour rights conditions particularly the issues of unlawful terminations but in reality the condition of terminations is becoming desperate. Again officials indicated that many workers jobs have been lost and they have seen workers dismissed who have served the flower farms for years and have developed occupational health problems. The legal department of the Woreda said much of the complaints brought are about termination without just cause and much of this was a result of employers' failure.

#### **4.5 Occupational Safety and Health Conditions**

The focus of this section is to assess the conditions of occupational safety and health. Accordingly, the section begins with the description of occupational safety and health. Following, trainings and instruction, availability of facilities and medical checkups are discussed.

The views of managers of the farms and Woreda officials on these key issues followed the responses of workers.

#### **4.5.1 Response of Workers on Occupational Safety and Health Conditions**

##### **4.5.1.1 Response of Workers on Description of Occupational Safety and Health**

With regard to matters dealing with workers' health and safety issues, respondents indicated that they face problems that affect their health conditions. More than 80% of the respondents said that the conditions of occupational safety and health in their farms are bad (table 9). The respondents argued that they are unhappy with their working environment since their working environment exposed them to different health problems mainly because of different chemicals and high temperature.

The majority (82.8%) of the respondents indicated that their respective farms do not regularly check workers' health conditions (table 9). Respondents said that the top priority of owners is not workers' health but to reduce their production costs and to increase their profit. The cost reductions have been applied primarily to the workforce, leading to labor rights violations particularly occupational safety and health rights of workers.

Asked whether they faced health problems, respondents indicated that they face problems that affect their health conditions. The majority of respondents (72%) responded that they had developed at least one health problem after they join the work (table 9). The proportion of respondents that faced respiratory problem, skin problem, headache and other health problems are 65.1%, 58.2%, 44.3% and 38.5 respectively (table 9).

The qualitative assessment of this study shows that most symptoms of disease, especially skin problems were reported during contact; due to lack of personal protective equipments and volatile nature of chemicals in use. Most interviewed workers mentioned "Most health problems also occur because of high stress in the work area, the heat in the green house and primarily the chemical". They said that they faced extreme temperatures (cold in the grading and heat in the greenhouses) during the peak days (such as St. Valentine's Day) without work breaks.

Interviewed workers highlighted they sometimes experience health and safety problems due to long hours of standing in the greenhouse causing their feet to swell and also causing kidneys problems. One worker said that “..... you bend the whole day while sowing or weeding and at the end of the day you feel back ache.... sometimes you feel very tired due to long standing”.

The researcher strongly feels that generally the occupational safety and health conditions of the flower farm workers need to be improved before causing ill-health effects on workers. For example, packing house workers perform their tasks by standing for eight hours. According to some interviewed workers, this may cause kidney infection and some explained they sometimes experience swellings on their legs as a result of long hours of standing and working in the packing house. They added the management (like Ever Green Farm) did not seem to be concerned about worker’s health, as they did not seem to be taking measures to improve the conditions of occupational safety and health.

Table 9 Response on description of occupational safety and health conditions and health problems by respondents

Question	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1) How do you describe the conditions of occupational safety and health in your farm?	Good	48	19.3
	Bad	201	80.7
Total		249	100
2) Do owners and the management regularly follow employees’ health conditions?	Yes	43	17.2
	No	206	82.8
Total		249	100
3) Have you faced health problems after you join the work?	Yes	178	71.9
	No	71	28.1
Total		249	100
4) If your answer is ‘yes’ for question No. 3 what type of health problem?	Respiratory problem	162	65.1
	Skin problem	145	58.2
	Headache	108	44.3
	others	96	38.5

Source: From respondents’ response

## **Case 4: Health Problems**

This is about a 31 year-old woman who is working at Dugda Flora farm around Debre Zeit town. She is a single mother of one son living with her mother who is 67 years old. She is working as sprayer in green house.

Asked whether she faced health problems after she has joined the work, she said that she is facing one main health problem: experiencing fainting at least twice a day. She told me that she has faced this problem at many place: in transportation, at work place and at home. But she can't forget one moment. One Sunday while she was cooking, she was experiencing fainting as always. She was falling on fire and burned on her right hand. Fortunately, her son who is 14 was with her and he saved her from the fire. She said that because of the burned injury, in addition to fainting, she has faced psychological problem because she always covers her burned hand. Moreover, the informant said that she always fears participating in social life with others since she is experiencing fainting.

### **4.5.1.2 Response of Workers on Trainings and Instructions**

The respondents were asked if owners and the management regularly give trainings on occupational safety and health. The majority of the respondents indicated that their respective farms did not give trainings. As shown on table 10, 78% of the respondents were not given training on health and safety. This implies that there is an urgent need to give workers' proper health trainings focusing on precautionary measures designed to reduce workers' vulnerability to accidents and other health hazards. The situation was more difficult in Minaye Flowers where none of the respondents have given training on health and safety.

Workers in the flower farms need to have some knowledge about safe use of pesticides so that they know the safety procedures and take the appropriate measures. Regarding, training on safe use of pesticides respondents were asked if they have received training in their respective farms. 87% of respondents said they did not receive any safe use of pesticides training (table 10). There was also a problem that workers had not been trained in the use of personal protective equipments and its importance in protecting them from dangerous chemicals.

More than 84% of respondents said that there was no instruction on re-entry periods (that is the set period of time that is left after spraying before workers enter the area) and re-entry periods

were not being observed. Workers interviewed noted that sometimes spraying is done while the workers (who normally do not wear protective clothes) were working in the greenhouse.

Table 10- trainings and instructions

Question	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1) Have you given training on health and safety?	Yes	55	22
	No	194	78
Total		249	100
2) Have you given training on safe use of pesticides?	Yes	32	12.9
	No	217	87.1
Total		249	100
3) Does your farm provide you instructions on re-entry time?	Yes	38	15.3
	No	211	84.7
Total		249	100

Source: From respondents' response

### **Case 5: Provision of Trainings and Instructions**

This case is about a 25 year-old female worker who is working in Minaye Flowers. She has worked in this farm for about two years. She said that when she was hired for the first time in the farm she has not given any instructions. According to her, it is must for new employee like her to get trainings on: use of PPE, re-entry periods, safe use of pesticides or occupational safety and health. Regarding her two years experience about training provision in the flower farm, the informant said that almost she has not given any training on any issues listed above.

The informant complained about the many problems she has faced because of lack of trainings. She said she does not know what care should be taken while working with pesticides and she does not know how to protect herself from pesticides. She also added that she does not know about re-entry periods. According to her, what makes her problem more difficult is her illiteracy.

She concluded that, there is no arranged training considering new employment, equipment and other changes.

### **4.5.1.3 Response of Workers on Availability of Work Facilities**

The survey questionnaire also included questions dealing with workers' working conditions including whether the flower farms provide workers with the necessary working facilities such as personal protective equipment (PPE), availability of drinking water, toilet facilities, soup and shower.

Generally, each of the three farms surveyed are deficient in basic facilities like availability of drinking water, toilet facilities and shower.

All the farms surveyed had inadequate provision of personal protective equipment. Most of the workers did not have the necessary personal protective equipment. Table 11 showed that the majority of respondents did not have full PPE. About 85% of respondents were said that they had not given PPE. Information from interview also revealed that many workers had not given PPE and those who had PPE had not been trained in the use of PPE and its importance in protecting them from dangerous chemicals though having and using PPE properly is a preventive factor. For this reason workers were choosing not to wear the equipment.

In Ever Green farm, it was found that non-permanent workers were often not given personal protective equipment (PPE) on the grounds that the workers were deemed 'unreliable' by their employers according to workers interviewed. Where workers were not wearing PPE, incidences of chemical poisoning were seen added the workers.

Provision of drinking water, toilet, shower and cleaning supplies like soap would be very crucial for workers according worker respondents. Unfortunately, the majority (74.2%) of respondents said that farms did not provide drinking water, toilet, shower and soap (table 11).

Worker respondents said that many workers are bringing their drinking water from their home added the key informants. In one of the surveyed flower farms, the researcher was also able to observe the complete absence of clean drinking water in conditions where the temperature in the greenhouse was running really hot during the time of her visit. It was also noted that in farms where drinking water was provided, workers were not provided with drinking cups and used pipes that were not hygienic.

The workers reported that quality of toilet is very poor and sometimes male and female workers are using the same toilet. Workers and supervisors of Ever Green Farm informed the researcher

that there is no toilet available on this farm and explained that workers are using plain fields as toilets. This will bring hazardous effect on workers' health.

Provision of cleaning supplies like soap would be very crucial especially for those workers who often get in contact with pesticides and chemicals added the workers interviewed. Unfortunately, most of the flower farms surveyed has not been able to make this supply available for the workers complained the workers.

The lack of shower is particularly worth noting in view of the fact that the workers had to work for 8 or more hours in an environment with very high temperature according to workers interviewed (temperature in the greenhouse running up to 35 or even more Degree Celsius). Added to this is the apparent location of the farms makes the conditions more worse i.e. farms are found in the rift valleys where the temperature tends to be normally high. Therefore, shower service is very important for the health of workers.

Table 11- provisions of facilities

Question	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1) Does your farm provide you PPE?	Yes	37	14.9
	No	112	85.1
Total		249	100
2) Does your farm provide you drinking water, toilet, soap and shower?	Yes	64	25.8
	No	185	74.2
Total		249	100

Source: From respondents' response

#### 4.5.1.4 Response of Workers on Medical Check ups

As shown on table 12, two hundred two participants (81.1%) said there were no medical checkups. If there was medical checkup, according to respondents, it was only for the sprayers but not for the other workers found in production. But according to EHPEA code of practice, all pesticide handlers, (i.e. stores personnel, sprayers, measurers and mixers) and their supervisors should have an annual medical check for general health (EHPEA code of practice, 2011:38).

Asked who was covering medical (check-ups) cost when workers faced health problems or whenever medical checkup is required, more than 88% of the respondents said that medical

expenses were paid for by the workers. Few workers who said medical cost is covered by employer added that the worker got that money from the farm after a long period of time. But according to Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003, it is the obligation of employer to defray the cost of medical checkup (Art. 12 (5)).

Regarding reasons for not giving medical check-ups, 81.6% of respondents said the farm does not care for workers, 10% of respondents stated lack of money and 8.4% of respondents stated other reasons. Workers complained that while they are sick it is difficult to get access the medical attendance.

Of the three flower farms, the Ever Green farm appears to be very bad in relations to medical checkups while it appears to be better in Minaye Flowers according to informants.

Table 12-Medical check ups

Question	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1) Are there required medical checkups?	Yes	47	18.9
	No	202	81.1
Total		249	100
2) Who covers the medical cost?	Worker	221	88.7
	Farm	28	11.3
Total		249	100
3) What do you think are the reasons for not giving medical check-ups?	The farm does not care for workers	203	81.6
	Lack of money	25	10
	Other reasons	21	8.4
Total		249	100

Source: From respondents' response

#### **4.5.2 Managers' Views on Occupational Safety and Health**

Almost all of the managers of the farms indicated that their respective farms regularly check workers' health conditions and indicated that the workers' health conditions of their farm is good. The managers have attempted to paint the industry as model of development and

abandoned the existence of the violations workers' occupational safety and health rights. They indicated that their farms take all necessary measures to improve the occupational safety and health conditions in farms. Moreover, managers said that their farm use less toxic chemicals.

Asked whether their farms give training for workers on health and safety issues, the managers confirmed that their farms facilitate training on general health and safety issues. According to the managers every worker of their farm receives training on health and safety issues and the training is about: working safely, first aid, cleanliness and sanitation, correct application of chemicals, use of protective clothing and storage of chemicals.

All managers of the farms visited stated that they provide all the necessary facilities. They reported that their farms have provided toilet facilities and quality drinking water. They also reported that their companies provide a free and appropriate protective clothing and equipment (PPE) and comply with internationally recognized health and safety standards.

Some managers said that their farms have formed safety committee. This committee, according to the managers, is charged with ensuring that the working environment is clean and also that the health concerns of workers are addressed. Regarding giving medical check-ups for workers, all managers confirmed that all workers of their farms' receive medical check-ups.

#### **4.5.3 Woreda officials' Views on Occupational Safety and Health**

As a whole, Woreda officials indicated that flower farms do not want workers to be involved in things since there is a fear that if the workers participate in decision making they will demand more rights. The officials added that the majority of the farms have been known for mistreating its workers in various other ways.

From interviews with Woreda officials who were conversant with working conditions of the farms, the conditions of occupational safety and health of their workers were described as poor. They explained that offering training for the workers is not a priority for employers and bosses are not interested in improving workers' working conditions, and personal development.

Woreda officials interview support the view of workers and said that there is lack/inadequacy of drinking water, PPE, toilet and shower and if exist the quality is very poor. Moreover, the officials indicated that most of time the PPE is not replaced regularly in all farms.

Results from Woreda officials' interview supported the view that there were problems associated with medical checkups. They said there was no regular checkup and if there was, workers were forced to cover their medical (checkup) expenses if they face health problems. What is more, most of the officials claimed that workers do not get medical treatment unless they are injured while working.

Asked whether why the Woreda does not take necessary measures on the farms that violate the occupational safety and health rights of workers, they answered that there are many problems. They stated the problems such as lack of trained man power, financial resources and absence of co-operation and coordinating mechanism among the stakeholders in flower industry.

Discussions with health center administrators/experts indicated prevalence of health problems in floriculture industry is obviously greater than that of other industries though there is no orderly arranged accurate data to compare and contrast the work-related health problems of different industries. Health centers experts said that almost all work-related health problems are preventable.

All together, consistent with the opinion of workers, Woreda officials said the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health of workers of the sampled farms are poor.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to assess the employment security and occupational safety and health conditions in three floriculture farms around Debre Zeit. This involved assessing the employment security and occupational safety and health practice of the farms against internationally and nationally accepted standards.

Ethiopia's floriculture industry is the recent and fast growing in Africa. The industry is playing important roles in the economic development of Ethiopia. It has been creating much needed employment opportunities and helping the country to generate foreign exchange among other things. The employment opportunities created by the sector lead to higher incomes for people - primarily women - in rural areas where employment opportunities were previously few.

Meanwhile, however, concerns about employment security and occupational safety and health conditions of floriculture workers are growing. The results of this study show that there were practices that harm employment security and occupational safety and health rights of workers. Looking at the conditions of employment security of workers, results of this study indicate that the workers in the flower farms studied are working in a poor and insecure employment conditions. Many workers are employed on temporary basis and have not signed contracts with their respective employers. This means that they have limited means to exercise their rights and they are vulnerable to arbitrary dismissal from work. The seasonality flower production and employers' need of production costs reduction are the main contributing factors for the employment insecurity of the sampled farms. The production of flower is seasonal with demand peaking at European festivals and lowest demand during the European summer which forces employers to employ large numbers of temporary workers. Moreover, in order to increase their competitiveness in international markets, flower farms always work to reduce their production costs. This cost reductions have been applied primarily to the workforce, leading to employment security rights violations. Another is the issue occupational safety and health of floriculture workers which seems to be taken seriously. The flower business is heavily dependent on chemicals and pesticides. Since floriculture workers are always exposed to these chemicals and pesticides the workers are facing health problems. So, immediate action needs to be taken to address these issues.

## 4.7 Recommendations

Based on results of this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:-

- ✓ Actions should be taken to regulate the labour rights of workers to avoid problems in relations to workers' employment security and occupational safety and health conditions;
- ✓ Ensure employers understand the full costs of violations workers' employment security and occupational safety and health rights. Necessary actions should be taken at national and regional levels by human and labor rights advocates;
- ✓ Employers must be involved in making decisions in relation to labour rights of workers;
- ✓ Workers awareness training should be strengthened on their rights to employment security and occupational safety and health rights under labor legislation;
- ✓ Each farm issue written contract for (non-permanent) workers;
- ✓ Each farm should provide full personal protective equipment for workers and try to enforce its usage like gloves, boots, gown and mask for sprayers;
- ✓ The farms should arrange prevention mechanism to minimize the exposure of workers to causative factors such as heat and chemical contact.
- ✓ All stakeholders need to work together to raise the employment standards and to ensure that workers' employment security and occupational safety and health rights are not sacrificed in the face of competitive pressures;

Lastly, the above recommendations on employment security and occupational safety and health of floriculture workers should be addressed by the trade unions, government and non-governmental organizations. The implementation of the proposed recommendations will contribute to empowerment and realization of floriculture workers rights in Ethiopian flower farms.

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## **Appendixes**

I am a final year of Masters Student in Human Rights at Addis Ababa University. As a partial fulfillment of the program, I am conducting a study on the topic of assessment of the conditions of employment security; and occupational safety and health rights of workers of floriculture farms around Debre Zeit. The results will be used to assist investors in floriculture sector, academicians and other interested parties develop a good understanding about the conditions of employment security and occupational safety and health rights of workers.

### **1. Appendix I- Questionnaire for Flower Farm Workers**

#### **1.1 Personal Information of Worker**

No	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSE
1	Sex	1. Male 2. Female
2	Age	_____ years
3	Marital status	1. Married 2. Single
4	Education	1. Illiterate 2. Read & Write 3. Primary 4. Secondary 5. Diploma 6. Degree
5	Job Category/Functional Area	
6	Sort of employment	1. Permanent 2. temporary
7	Total service in the farm	

### 1.2 Questionnaire on the conditions of employment security for workers

No	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSE
1	How satisfied are you with your present employment security?	1. Highly satisfied 2. Satisfied 3. Unsatisfied 4. Highly unsatisfied
2	Are you satisfied by your current job?	1. Yes 2. No
3	Do you worry about losing your job?	1. Yes 2. No
4	Have you signed employment agreement when you were employed?	1. Yes 2. No
5	Is your employment contract in the language you understand?	1. Yes 2. No
6	What do you think is the frequency of employment terminations in your farm?	1. All the time 2. Sometimes 3. Rarely 4. I don't know
7	Do you think employment terminations in your farm are based on valid grounds/lawful?	1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know

### 1.3 Questionnaire on the conditions of occupational safety and health for workers

	QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSE
1	How do you describe the conditions of OSH in your farm?	1. Good 2. Bad
2	Do owners and the management regularly follow employees' health conditions?	1. Yes 2. No
3	Have you faced health problems after you join the work?	1. Yes 2. No
4	If your answer is 'yes' for question No. 3 what type of health problem?	1. Respiratory 2. Skin 3. Headache 4. Others
5	Have you given training on health and safety?	1. Yes 2. No
6	Have you given training on safe use of pesticides?	1. Yes 2. No
7	Are there required medical checkups?	1. Yes 2. No
8	Does your farm provide you drinking water, toilet, soap and shower?	1. Yes 2. No
9	Who covers the medical cost?	1. Farm 2. Worker
10	What do you think are the reasons for not giving medical check-ups?	1. Farm does not care for workers 2. Lack of money 3. Others

## **2. Appendix II-Interview Guide Questions for Flower Farm Workers**

### **2.1. Employment security issues to be discussed during interview**

1. Have signed employment contract? If yes, is that in language that you understand?
2. Do you worry about losing your job? If yes, what is your ground?
3. Do you think that there are unlawful employment terminations in your farm?
4. Does your farm recruit more workers during peak season? If yes, what happen to newly employed workers when peak season pass?
5. Does your farm force you to work overtime during peak season? If yes, are you paid overtime?
6. Have I forgotten to ask something, which you think, is important considering employment security conditions?

### **2.2. Occupational safety and health issues to be discussed during interview**

- 1) Have you faced health problem at your work place arising from working environment?
- 2) If your answer is “yes” for question No. 1 above what do you think are the contributing factors/reasons for the problem?
- 3) Have you provided training on health and safety?
- 4) Does your farm give you instructions on time to enter green houses after spraying?
- 5) Have you undergo medical checkups regularly?
- 6) Does your farm provide you free and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)?
- 7) Does your farm provide you facilities (such as drinking water, toilet, shower and washing facilities)?
- 8) Have I forgotten to ask something, which you think, is important considering occupational safety and health?

## **3. Appendix III-Interview Questions for Farm Managers/Supervisors**

1. How many years have you been in this organization? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your area of responsibilities in this organization? \_\_\_\_\_

### **3.1. Employment security issues to be discussed during interview**

1. How do you describe the conditions of employment security of workers in your farm?
2. Do you think that workers of your farm are satisfied by their current job? If no, what are the causes for their dissatisfaction?
3. Do you think that lack of workers job satisfaction negatively affect your farm? Why/why not?
4. Does your farm give signed employment contract for workers?
5. There are many workers who are employed temporarily and have not given written employment contract. What is your opinion on these issues?
6. Are there employment terminations in your farm?
7. Do you think employment terminations in your farm are based on valid grounds?

### **3.2. Occupational safety and health issues to be discussed during interview**

1. How do you describe the conditions of occupational safety and health of workers in your farm?
2. Are there any recorded occupational safety and health problems?
3. If your answer is yes for question No. 2, what are the more contributing reasons for the occurrence of the problems?
4. In your experience what health problems have you observed?
5. Does the industry have meetings to discuss safety and health factors with the employees?
6. Does your farm provide training for workers on health and safety issues?
7. Is there any arranged training considering new employment, equipment and other changes?
8. Does your farm supply safe drinking water; provide clean toilets and offer shower and washing facilities?
9. Does your farm provide a free and appropriate protective clothing and equipment (PPE)?
10. How often are the PPEs replaced?
11. Is there occupational health safety officer in your farm?
12. Do the workers undergo medical treatment/medical check-ups?
13. Was there any preventive measure implemented for hazards in the working environment?

#### **4. Appendix IV-Interview Guide Questions for Woreda Officials**

3. How many years have you been in this organization? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your area of responsibilities in this organization? \_\_\_\_\_

##### **4.1. Employment security issues to be discussed during interview**

1. How do you describe the conditions of employment security of workers in the flower farms (throughout the interview with officials, flower farms is used to mean flower farms around Debre Ziet particularly the sampled flower farms)?
2. Comparing with workers of other industries what is your opinion about the security of employment of floriculture workers?
3. Does your Woreda follow the conditions of employment security of workers of the farms?
4. In your experience what employment security rights violations have you observed?
5. Do you know the major factors that expose workers for employment insecurity and what are the solutions to prevent the insecurity?
6. There are many workers who are employed temporarily and have not given written employment contract. Does your Woreda tried to improve these conditions?
7. Have I forgotten to ask something, which you think, is important considering the conditions of employment insecurity?

##### **4.2. Occupational safety and health issues to be discussed during interview**

1. How do you describe the conditions of occupational safety and health of workers in the flower farms?
2. Do you think occupational safety and health of workers issues have received enough attention from the management?
3. Do you think the working environment on the farms is safe for workers' health?
4. Are there discussions with the management of the farms to solve the health problems of workers?
5. Do flower farms in your Woreda comply with nationally and internationally recognized health and safety standards?

6. If your answer is No for Question No. 5, has your Woreda tried to take necessary measures against those who do not comply with the standards?
7. Does your Woreda supervise the farms that they undertake a regular check up and give their worker trainings? If your answer is No, why?
8. Does your Woreda help workers to raise their awareness to struggle against violation of their occupational safety and health rights?
9. Have I forgotten to ask something, which you think, is important considering occupational safety and health?

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