

Audacity should not be in muscles: Rural youth

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Shri Sohan lal Sharma S/o Sh. Brita Ram coming from a middle class agricultural family in Badyal Brahmana village of Jammu district of Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Sharma is a rare individual who has achieved success in Agripreneurship by blending his talents with opportunities. Shri Sharma completes his graduation (Arts) in 1987 from M.A.M. College, Jammu. After his graduation in Arts, like any other student at that stage, Shri Sharma was at cross roads searching for his future career. He tried for employment in government but could not succeed. The idea of self-employment attracted him. The world's biggest power is the youth and we have to tap the power for the betterment of the farming community. To support his ideas with parents, he had about 40 kanals of his own family land. However, there was no clear-cut idea as to how to proceed and which agriculture field to choose. Options were many. Precisely at this time, he applied his nightmare initiative in small kitchen garden vegetables. Slowly and steady gaining some idea in the field of veggies in 1990, he started his venture with 4 kanals of open pollinated vegetables. After selling his produce in nearby market at R.S. Pura he compares his annual incomes with traditional wheat-paddy cropping pattern. Before he ventured into farming, his father Brita Ram was solely concentrating on wheat-paddy cultivation. He never purchased the seed from the market till 1998 as he learned the seed production technique from their ancestors to get the timely and reliable quality of seed for future. Moreover he also took part in departmental training programme on potato crop in 2003. Shri Sharma never looks back as vegetable cultivation offers good return throughout the year.

With the introduction of enhanced hybrid seed varieties, diversification of diets, and increase in use of hybrid seeds having advanced traits attached, Shri Sharma updated their knowledge and skills in hybrid vegetables through 4 days training in the Department of Agriculture. Hybrid vegetables are more popular due to the higher genetic potential requires higher inputs forced him to introduce milch animals. Shri Sharma acquainted himself by getting 15 days training Department of Animal Husbandry to gain their knowledge in dairy farming as a class of agriculture for long-term production of milk. Self-assured Shri Sharma doubled their dairy animal from 2 to 4. Multiple sources of income were generated in Agriculture allied sector. Additionally 20 kanal of land were acquired on rent to make farm as sustainable in the form of integrated farming system as small fruit orchard of I

kanal was added comprises of high yield fruit plants Litchi, Guava, Mango, Amla, Apple and Kinnow respectively.

A new era begins with the introduction of broccoli in the history of Jammu based agriculture. The concept of broccoli introduction was generated from mass media communication. He read the article on broccoli on Times of India news paper and wants this technology to adopt at their farm level. He collected many literatures on various aspects to make this venture successful. Finally he got the source of getting the seed of broccoli from Pune, Maharashtra through army personal, and a native of their village. The innovative crop has bumper production at the local environment, but it is difficult to cater to the market demand, and realized that he needed entrepreneurship skills. He also wanted to develop more expertise in expansion of his business. He participated in Department of Agriculture sponsored outside the state exposure visit to update the Know-How at Centre of Excellence for vegetables an Indo-Israel project, Gronda, Karnal (Haryana) in 2009 and Pusa- ICAR Kissan Mela 2018. Since the introduction, about 100 kanal area of covered under broccoli crop. The native village is called as broccoli village mainly due to his innovative intervention and Department of Agriculture in the field of vegetables. In order to seek more on dairy technology and low tunnel technology he visited NDRI and Gronda, Karnal (Haryana) in 2019 sponsored of Agriculture Department along with **Certified Farm Advisor**. Despite of training, Department of Agriculture played an important responsibility in the adoption of new technology in terms of quality seeds, farm machinery such as power tiller, deep bore well, shallow bore well, motor poly house, and shade net

In addition to vegetables, he also took part in diversified field of agriculture *i.e.* floriculture. To gain the awareness and knowledge he attended various training programme on floriculture and aromatic plants at Kanoj district of Uttar Pradesh SKUAST-J and Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneur Development Institute respectively. During the course of training he was exposed to a variety of skills ranging from personality development to financial management of various Agri-business ventures. He transfer his seeing is believing conception into his farm by introducing hybrid marigold and lemon grass in 4 and 2 kanal respectively. The lesson learnt from the marigold as there is lots of scope as it acts as repellent against nematodes, help in fruit and shoot borer in vegetables and also Jammu is called as city of temples. Lemon grass is an ideal for barren land, no loss due to animal. There is no postharvest equipment to extract the juice in the native area, discontinues it for future.

Some of his remarkable achievements of which bear testimony to his hard work, talent and entrepreneurial potential are indicated below:

- Founder member (shareholder) of ACTECH–Farm Fresh, a farmer producer company and also a member board of director.
- Conferred with innovative farmer award by Hon’ble Governor at SKUAST-J. He was also judged best farmer award at the block level by the department.
- Utilizes vegetables and animal waste efficiently in terms of compost pits are more relevant in terms of profitability and outreach, and further felt that promoting this activity would serve a noble cause of protecting the mother soil from the adverse effects of using inorganic fertilizers and pesticides.
- Maintaining soil quality through adoption of green manure and crop rotation in fields through Dhaincha and Mung and Mash.
- New market trend developed of direct marketing by selling his produce (organic / inorganic) in agriculture allied fairs and big offices/school etc.
- Offered free technological information on all crops to several farmers on cell phone and personal contact. With all these initiatives, Shri Sharma has reached out to more than 200 farmers in 15 nearby villages and formed a JAI-KISSAN group.
- Providing employment opportunities permanent (2 no) and seasonal to local peoples on part/ full time basis especially women.
- Regular charcha with farmer friend regarding market demand and preferences, their sensitivity and desires which gives insight for product ideas.
- Believe in seeing is believing as regular monitoring of field.

With all his hard work, technical and financial management, Shri Sharma informs that from all the activities comprises mainly of vegetables, dairy(4 high yielding milch cows) and traditional cereals crops earns around Rs. 10.00 lakhs with net profit of Rs 4 lakhs per annum from 60 kanal land. He manages his financial resources through Kissan credit card and regular incomes from vegetable and dairy. The strategic financial planning leads him not to avail any other type of loan which puts him into debt. Thus, from the indomitable struggle of rural youth demonstrated that an individual’s latent entrepreneurial potential can convert dreams of farmers into reality.

***“Success is not final, failure is not fatal
It is the courage to continue that counts”***
