

“A post graduate youth gave up lucrative career to work in rural area”

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Ramesh Chand at his polyhouse with plants laden with tomatoes

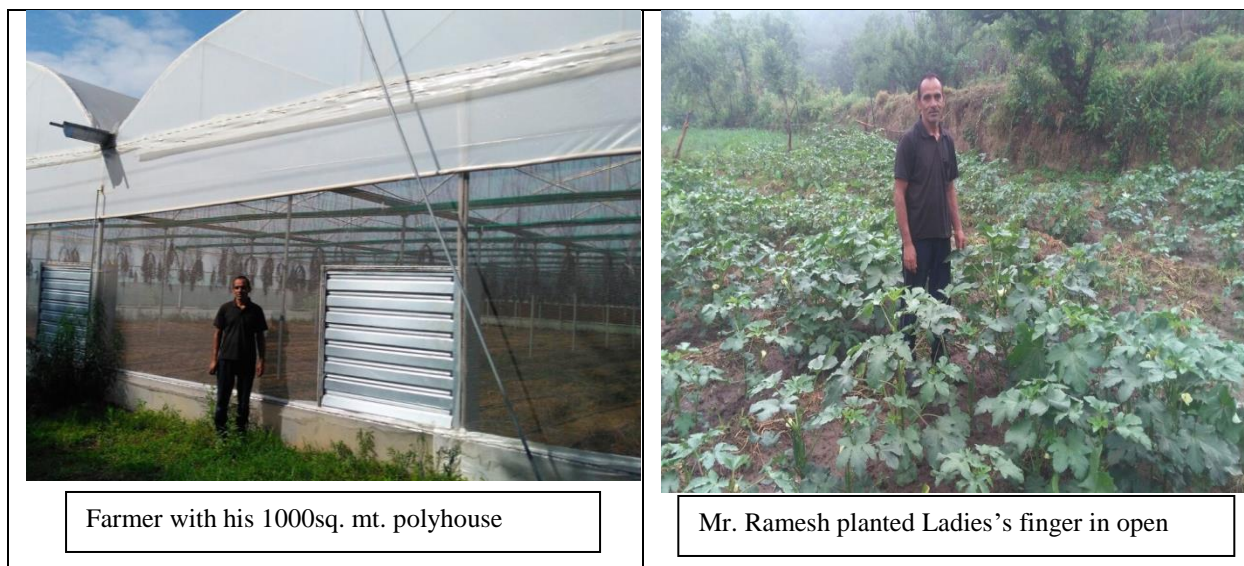
India is witnessing a radical transformation where highly qualified youngsters are giving up cushy jobs to make a difference in rural areas by adopting farming. This is what happened with 40 years old Mr. Ramesh Kumar s/o Sh. Mehar Singh who belongs to a small village Bilkar Kahan, PO-Bhota, Tehsil- Barsar, Distt. Hamirpur of Himachal Pradesh. After

pursuing MA (Political Science), he joined a private firm at Delhi. He fall victim to the polluted environment of Delhi, so came back to Himachal. To meet out the daily expenses, he moved towards vegetable cultivation during 2006-07.

He grows seasonal vegetables like ladies's finger, bitter gourds, pumpkins, bottle gourds, peas, cucumbers, cauliflowers, leafy vegetables, coriander leaves, beans etc. in his open field around 25 kanal area. He has 2 separate green houses with an area of 500 sq. mt. each. He is now grows tomatoes in both the polyhouses. Earlier he used to grow colored capsicum in them. But due to marketing problems, he shifted to tomatoes, because lot of tomatoes are consumed within the district, that too with a good return. On the visit to his field, tomato crop was in bearing (above photograph) and was in good health. His fields are near Research station of Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni, Solan; so scientists also regularly visits his fields and advised him. He is already following scientific practices and has been able to fetch good price in the market due to his crop quality.

Earlier Mr. Ramesh, as a small time farmer used to bring his vegetables for sale to the market. Once he started growing in large scale and local vegetable vendors came to know about the quality and quantity of his produce, the vendors themselves came to his place and purchased the produce from the field. Mr. Ramesh is a hard working farmer and he is able to grasp the technologies faster and adopt it. He is actively involved in all day to day working of the farm and marketing. He has given employment to 2 people along with his 4 family members.

During our field visit, we observed the problem of nematodes in his field. We advised him to go for either tomato plantation as intercrop or specially only main crop for some time to check the nematode growth. Crop rotation can also check the growth of nematodes up to some extent. During our CFA Module-II, we were taught that after every 8 rows of capsicum, go for 2 rows of marigold. It not only checks the growth of nematodes but also reduce the attack of fruit eating caterpillar. He was also facing some problem of whiteflies. I advised him to hang some yellow sticky mats in the polyhouse.



Income generation analysis from Mr. Ramesh Chand:

Sr. No.	Activity	Vegetables grown	Area covered	A/v selling rate (In Rs.)
1	Vegetable cultivation in open field	Summer veg.- Bittergourds, bottlegourds, cucumbers, off-seasonal radish and coriander	25 kanal area	6,00,000
		Winter veg.- Cauliflower, cabbage, turnip, sugar beet and spinach		
2	Vegetable cultivation in Hi-tech Polyhouse	Tomato	1000 sq. mtr. (100 Q annually)	1,00,000

The key to his success seems to his eagerness to learn and understand very soon, hard work & positive attitude.

It is the mutual responsibility of Agriculture/Horticulture department along with state Agriculture Universities/ ICAR Institutes to address the problems of the farmers and make them available suitable and authentic planting material along with timely advisory so that he can earn better returns and continue agriculture as his own occupation. The course “Certified Farm Advisor” program sponsored by National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, Hyderabad, Telangana is a good initiative of ICAR to improve the technical know-how of the states agriculture/ horticulture officers so that they can dispense better and right information at the doorstep of the farmer.