

Floriculture enterprise: Blooming the flower of life

This is a success story of a professional driver who transformed himself into a successful entrepreneur in floriculture. Arun Chhetri (45 years old) having middle school level of education was residing in a small village of Kalimpong district, West Bengal. Horticulture always has a scope in the hills and particularly floriculture is gaining popularity among rural youth in the region. The economic analysis of last 5 years shows that the B:C ratio of enterprise was 3.33 annually and annual net income from the enterprise was ₹2.27 lakhs from a small piece of land of 35 decimal. Further, he has reported, if marketing channels were well established then the income can be enhanced many fold.

HORTICULTURE always has a scope and particularly floriculture is gaining popularity among rural youth in the hills. This is a success story of Mr. Arun Chhetri, 45 years old, with middle school level of education, residing in a small village of Kalimpong district, West Bengal. He was a professional driver since the time he left the school at an early age of about 15 years. As a professional, he used to take tourists to the nursery hot spots in Kalimpong. While visiting these nurseries he got fascinated with plants and the lucrative income associated with their production. He became so obsessed with the nursery business that he gave up his primary profession of driving and took up full time nursery business.

Initiation of his enterprise

He started his first nursery with few local flowers like gladiolus and marigold in a plot of 5 decimals. The profit gained thus inspired him to produce more flowers on a larger scale. Meanwhile, he came in contact with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Kalimpong through 3 day skill training programme on cultivation and plant protection practices on vegetables and flowers. After assessing his entrepreneurial behaviour and his interest in the business, he was assisted to get a loan of ₹ 1.7 lakhs from a bank. Inputs like planting materials, sprayers with pesticides were also provided by KVK with which he started and expanded his business by incorporating many varieties of flowers like Azaleas, Gerberas, Anthuriums, Zygus, Marigolds, Chrysanthemums, Pines, hanging creepers and vegetables like Cabbage, Cauliflower, Broccoli, Tomato, Dalle Chilli (a very pungent local chilli), etc.

Production practices

Mr. Chhetri was growing Azalea, succulents and cactus and also from the cutting of the mother plant used to prepare potted plant during February to May. Marketing

of these plants were usually started from October onwards. Marigold is one of the important flowers for decoration and has good market demand during Dashian (Dussehra) and Diwali. Sowing of seeds of marigold was done during May-June and marketing of these seedlings were started from June onwards and flower potted plant from October onwards. Due to high demand of vegetable seedlings, he has also started growing and selling of off-season varieties of vegetable seedling from August onwards and season flower throughout the year. A brief detail of crop grown in the enterprise is given here.

Table 1. Crops grown in enterprise

Crop	Planting / sowing time	Selling time
Azalea	March-May	October onwards
Succulents	February-March	October onwards
Cactus	February-March	October onwards
Marigold	May-June	October onwards
Vegetables seedlings	June-July	October-December
Seasonal flower	Throughout the year	Throughout the year

All operations regarding cultivation were carried out by his family members and one permanent labour with a temporary hiring of 25-30 mandays during the peak period for harvesting, packaging and marketing purposes.

Marketing

The products were mainly sold in the local market of Kalimpong. Further, he marketed his products to neighbouring states like Sikkim, Bihar, and Jharkhand through different marketing channels. He also produces for exporting it to neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Gross income from the enterprise



A. House before establishing the flower enterprise; **B.** Planting of flower cuttings; **C.** Management of nursery plants; **D.** Flower nursery; **E.** Awards received, **F.** Newly constructed sale counter

Table 2. Economic analysis of floriculture enterprise

Year	Avg. plant production (nos.)	Gross expenditure (₹)	Gross return (₹)	Net income (₹)	B:C ratio	Rate of return
2017	20320	268750	221350	-47400	0.82	-0.18
2018	26250	45350	250000	204650	5.51	4.51
2019	30550	49791	354625	304834	7.12	6.12
2020	33470	53876	239290	185414	4.44	3.44
2021	37440	68753	554625	485872	8.07	7.07
Avg.	29606	97304	323978	226674	3.33	2.33

Note: B:C ratio, Gross return/ Gross expenditure; Rate of return, Net income/ Gross expenditure.

was around ₹3.24 lakhs annually whereas his net income was around ₹2.27 lakhs annually from a land of 35 decimal.

Technology transfer

He is a very optimistic person; he constantly participates in the seminars, meeting, conference and *Krishi melas* organized by Government and Private sectors to gather recent and suitable technologies for his enterprise. He has adopted the practice of space utilization and high density crop cultivation and management from KVK, Kalimpong. Further, he is now master trainer for training on floriculture and nursery management for large scale technology dissemination.

Environmental and social implication

Organic system of farming was followed keeping in mind the impact of inorganic farming on environment in long run. Further, rural youth were also motivated by him to adopt this farming for their self employment which will also help in marketing of their product to distant places due to bulk product.

Economic analysis

There was no written record of his income from the enterprise of floriculture, so economic analysis of his enterprise was done on recall basis. The economic analysis of last 5 years shows that the B:C ratio of enterprise was

3.33 annually and annual net income from the enterprise was ₹2.27 lakhs.

In the first year, no profit was earned from his enterprise due to the high establishment cost. From the second year onwards he earned profit in an inclining way. But, in the year 2020 his profit margin was reduced as the world was hit by pandemic COVID-19 and lockdown issues. After the relaxation of lockdown issues, he started marketing his flowers to different states of India and now earning a good profit out of it. Through this profitable enterprise, he was able to repay his loan on time.

SUMMARY

The enterprise of floriculture has a high potential for employment generation for rural youth in hill region. Economic analysis has already shown the profitability of this enterprise. The keys to be successful in this enterprise are scientific knowledge and entrepreneurial attitude. Therefore, rural youth having interest in floriculture with entrepreneurial attitude are continuously motivated by KVK to start this enterprise for their employment generation.

For further interaction, please write to:

Rakesh Roy (Head), Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Kalimpong, West Bengal 734 301.
*Corresponding author email: rakeshvetext@yahoo.co.in