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Entrepreneurship in Cultivation of Shatavar (*Asparagus racemosus*) : A Success Story of a Rural Youth

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Shri Dharmendra Sahay Gangwar, 36 year old rural youth of Rajendra Nagar, Bareilly is a potential medicinal plant grower in Rohilkhand region with the production of high quality *Shatavar* (*Asparagus racemosus*) which has tremendous market value at present. His farm is located at Kaziapura, Tehsil Milak, Rampur. He has completed his Master Degree in Environment Science from Bareilly College Bareilly . He lives with his 9 year girl child and 1.5 year boy child in the village. He has 4 cows at home.



Before 2010, Dharmendra was growing wheat, paddy and sugarcane on his 12 acre of parental land. He wasn't satisfied with these traditional crops because of its lower yield and lower income due to inappropriate market value. He was also making some attention towards his small property dealing business in Bareilly district. Earlier, he had attended the training programmes on animal husbandry and mushroom cultivation at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, IVRI Izatnagar . One day, when he visited Krishi Vigyan Kendra to collect the information about mango plantation, he held discussion with Scientists of KVK-IVRI, Izatnagar, about the cultivation of *Shatavar* . How to grow it? How to make its wealthy processed roots? How and where to get Market? Afterwards, he started his regular visits to Krishi Vigyan Kendra to collect the information about *Shatavar*. He also collected the information, on the advise of KVK's SMSs, from relevant books, agricultural websites, visiting major markets in big cities like Lucknow, Kanpur, Delhi and even country Nepal. Initially, he procured *Shatavar*'s seeds @ Rs. 15,000/kg for one acre of land and after 2.5 years he sold the produces at Delhi and earned Rs. 6 lakh /

acre. He then identified and recognized the potential market opportunities and the demand of *Shatavar* in the area that he could satisfy. He got Rs. 12 lakh loan via Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme and started *Shatavar* cultivation in his entire agricultural land by spending all his saved money.



From nearly six year of experience, Shri Dharmendra obtained nearly 1000 quintal raw *Shatavar* roots in his total land. By further processing, he obtained net 300 quintal of dry processed *Shatavar* roots which has the market value of Rs.20,000 to 55,000/quintal. He is producing best quality *Shatavr* dry processed roots by direct contract with emerging pharmaceutical companies. He also sold *Shatavar* roots in local and regional agricultural market and earning the maximum profits.

He also provide farm advisory services to many progressive farmers and growers nearby area and supplying Shatavar plant roots at reasonable price to them. He has developed the strong information network system consisting the growers, sellers and the personnels of pharmaceutical companies to realize the reasonable price of his farm produce. He is providing the employment to others who are looking after the managerial, accounting and farm operational work of his farm besides the employment to the daily wage workers. He has covered all his crop under insurance. He has also received many awards, honor and appreciation from the research institute, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Line Department and NGOs. He is disseminating the information about his enterprise through radio and television by delivering his talk in association with KVK-IVRI and All India Radio and Doordarshan. Presently, he is also the Pradhan (Village Head) of his *Gram Panchayat* which has been possible by the recognition he got through enterprise of medicinal plant cultivation.





In recent time, he is applying the compost at the rate of 6 trolly / acre (20qtls./trolley) and bio fertilizer (Delza) at @ 18 kg/acre (2 times) for promotion of organic cultivation. He is practicing seed rate at 2 kg/acre. For fertilization, he is applying urea @ 200 kg/acre, phosphorus @ 50 kg/acre, potassium @ 50 kg/acre. Regular soil testing with the help of KVK-IVRI helps him to make appropriate nutrient management of land. He has also established one tube well in the farm for the irrigation purpose. For on-farm research, he has established protector mulching sheet in small area to obtain the idea about weed control and proper water and nutrient management through advanced technology. He strongly adhered with life cycle of *Shatavar* plant as 6 months nursery, 18 months in field, 3 month in processing period. From his knowledge about the medicinal plants, he has started the cultivation of another plants i.e, *Akarkara (Anacyclus pyrethrum)*, the roots of which can easily sold in market @ Rs. 1000 / kg for mouth freshener and other pharmaceutical products.





Although, Dharmendra faces many difficulties in cultivation of Shatavar crop which is prone to fungal infection, hail storm, problem related to finance, electricity supply shortage etc. He assume that farming of medicinal plants is very much profitable. His future plan is to increase the quality of roots of the medicinal plants. He is keen interested in mechanization of his farm in terms of easy post harvest processing and packaging to reduce the cost in venture. He is also planning to procure more agricultural land on lease basis to produce the more quantity of medicinal plants so that he can export to foreign countries.