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PROTECTED CULTIVATION OF COLOURED BELL PEPPER BY SUBHASH PALEKAR NATURAL FARMING IN SOLAN DISTRICT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH- A SUCCESS STORY

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Name of the farmer: Mr. Shailender Sharma
Address : Village- Dyrag
Bukhar , PO-Jauna Ji, District- Solan, H.P
Education : Graduation
Area under Cultivation: 25 bigha
Crops grown: Coloured bell pepper
in polyhouse, cherry tomato, tomato, french
bean and exotic vegetables

SITUATION ANALYSIS/ PROBLEM STATEMENT

Shailender Sharma is a progressive grower from a small village, Dyrag Bukhar from district Solan, who converted adversity into opportunity with his hard work and dedication. Solan is known as the basket of off-season vegetables to plains. Mr. Shailender Sharma is growing coloured off-season bell pepper in protected conditions under Subhash Palekar Natural Farming. He is producing quality natural bell pepper of excellent quality, which was also appreciated by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Sh. Narinder Modi, while his visit to Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, in December, 2021, in an exhibition.

Farming is very close to his heart. Earlier, he used to practice chemical farming in his fields but soon he became allergic to chemicals and found difficult to use the chemicals. He also noticed that he was spending about Rs. 80,000 to Rs. 90,000 for purchasing chemicals for farming which he realized was too high for getting an handsome benefit: cost ratio.

A spark of natural farming ignited his mind and he started to gather information about natural farming. He attended the workshop on Subhash Palekar Natural Farming in 2015 at Dr Yashwant Singh Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni, Solan and since then he is following Subhash Palekar Natural Farming successfully. Now days, Mr. Shailender Sharma has become inspiration to many farmers and his success story is being shared all over India for producing quality natural bell pepper free from poison and chemicals.

KVK INTERVENTIONS:

KVK has been instrumental in developing a successful natural farming model for bell pepper production in protected



conditions. Farmer was advised to follow the practice of intercropping and mulching. Farmer was told to cultivate leguminous crops in orchards alleys for nitrogen fixation due to which the income of the farmers increased. On Farm Trials were laid out at the farmers field on the effect of natural liquid sprays on tomato, bell pepper and rainy season cauliflower. Inputs were also provided to the farmers along with the recent production technology of cultivation of vegetables. The idea got clicked off and now the farmer is producing bell pepper naturally in 1750 m² of polyhouse along with the natural cultivation of cherry tomato, tomato, seedless cucumbers and french bean in 1400 m² of area.

Output: Farmer is growing mainly red and yellow capsicums in 1750 m² area of polyhouse. The weather conditions in his village are extreme cold with snowfall in winters. In the month of march, transplanting of coloured bell pepper is done and the crop is continued till the month of January. Before transplanting, jeevamrit is applied and beds are prepared for transplanting of the crop. Seedlings are transplanted at a distance of 30 cm from plant to plant and 45 cm row to row distance on the raised beds.

A schedule of natural liquid sprays is followed. Generally Jeevamrit is applied once in week and alternately a mixture of Jeevamrit and Sour butter milk is applied in the following week. The schedule is repeated every week. Agniasthra and Neemastra is used to control insect-pests. Natural Farming has increased the fertility of the soil and reduced the insect-pest and diseases in his polyhouse and open fields. According to the farmer, the expenditure is only incurred to purchase besan and jaggery from market to prepare Jeevamrit, which has reduced the cost of cultivation of bell pepper in protected

conditions. Each plant of bell pepper produces an average yield of 2 kg per plant and the average price in the market fluctuates around Rs, 100 to Rs. 150 per kilogram. In addition natural cultivation of vegetables is also done in open in tomato, cherry tomato, french beans, zucchini and exotic vegetables. He also got a Prakritik Sansadhan Bhandhar from Department of Agriculture; where he is preparing the natural farming spray liquids viz., Beejamrit, Jeevamrit, Dashparni Ark, Agniasthra and Sanjeevani. By his scientific temperament, the farmer has prepared an automatic system for the preparation and application of natural liquids, thereby reducing the labour involved in the process.

Benefits of Natural Farming: According to the farmer, followings are the benefits of natural farming experienced by him during natural cultivation of vegetables:-

- The cost of cultivation is reduced
- Soil health and texture is improved
- Higher yields
- Increased shelf life of the produce
- Enhanced income

Table 1: Economics of Cultivation of vegetables by Subhash Palekar Natural Farming

Crop	Area sown (m ²)	Production (q)	Gross Income (Rs.)	Net Income (Rs.)
Protected cultivation of coloured bell pepper by Natural Farming	1750	160	9,60,000	8,10,000
Cherry tomato in open (Natural)	400	10	35,000	30,000
Seedless cucumber in open (Natural)	500	15	30,000	21,000
French Bean in open (Natural)	500	10	50,000	40,000
Total	3150	195	10,75,000	9,01,000



OUTCOME AND IMPACT

Farm of Mr. Shailender Sharma has become a “**Model Farm**” and a large number of farmers, often visit his fields to see the production technology used by him in the field of Natural Farming of coloured bell pepper and other vegetables. He has been playing an instrumental role in the dissemination of technology to the fellow farmers and farmers are getting benefitted from his scientific temperament.

He has presented his activities on several platforms and many dignitaries including Director General, ICAR along with Deputy Director General, ICAR and several ministers have visited his farm to see the technology adopted by him in natural cultivation of vegetables. He is always in touch with the scientists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra Every now and then; he keeps calling scientists for solving his queries. He is always available for answering any queries raised by KVK. Overall, he is very cooperative and sincere farmer. We wish him a grand success in his endeavor!



**Visit of Scientist to Farm
Yellow Bell pepper production in
polyhouse**



**Quality bell pepper production in
polyhouse Prakritik Sansadhan Bhandar
and Automatic system to apply Jeevamrit
by drip irrigation**



Visit of Scientists to the field of farmers