

# *Krishis* SUTRA 2



**SUCCESS STORIES OF**  
FARMER PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS

# 4. Adopting Floriculture As An Alternative Source Of Livelihood

Name of Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO):

Vrindavan Pushpa Utpadak Sangh

Supporting Resource Institution (RI):

Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF)

FLORICULTURE, OR 'FULSHETI', has emerged as an alternative source of livelihood for small and marginal farmers primarily because of the pioneering efforts made by the Maharashtra Institute of Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (MITTRA), a development organization promoted by the Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF). The income for these farmers, who were entirely dependent on agriculture, was very low because of dwindling natural resources and fragmented landholdings. To augment their income, 'fulsheti' – the model of floriculture suitable for small and marginal farmers – has been successfully tried in the predominantly tribal pockets of Jawhar, Vikramgad, Dahanu, Talasari and Palghar talukas

of the Thane district in Maharashtra.

Floriculture was adopted because of the various advantages associated with it, such as limited (or less) seed capital requirement since it was a small-scale cultivation, it generated faster income compared to tree-based farming, and management is easier, not to forget the permanent income opportunity from selling the flowers. The fulsheti model took shape while working with the tribal community in Thane. It includes the cultivation of 200 jasmine plants on 500 sq. m (0.05 ha) of land, with an investment of Rs. 3,000. The collective marketing of flowers through common-interest groups ensures a net income of around Rs. 27,000 a year

## DETAILS OF THE JASMINE CULTIVATION MODEL

Particulars	Details
• Plot size	500 sq. m
• Crop	Jasmine(Mogra)
• Variety	Arabian Nights, locally known as Bangalori
• Nature of the crop	Perennial
• Plant life	12 Years
• Avg. no. of plants in 500 sq.m	200
• Commencement of income	6 months after plantation
• Harvesting interval	Daily
• Avg. production per day	700 gms
• Avg. production per year	189 kg
• Avg. gross income received in one year at Rs160/kg	Rs. 30,240



» Jasmine flower

IN JAWHAR, VIKRAMGAD, Dahanu, Talasari and Palghar talukas – dominated by the tribal communities of the Kokna, Warli, Mahadeo Koli and Katkari tribes – families are predominantly dependent on agriculture. The low quality of land and lack of awareness regarding modern farming practices and money for investment leads to low productivity of crops in these areas. Due to the non-availability of irrigation, rabi cultivation is almost non-existent, while during monsoons, crops such as paddy, finger millet, proso millet (warai) and niger (khursani) are grown.

As a result of such subsistent nature of farming, many families in this region have been forced to migrate to nearby towns for survival after the Holi festival in March. This large-scale migration has a negative impact on the family's health and the children's education. Malnutrition among women and children is very high. Despite its proximity to Mumbai, India's commercial capital, these areas have shortage of basic amenities such as hospitals, schools, roads and electricity.

It was in these talukas that the Vrindavan Pushpa Utpadak Sangh (VPUS) was formed with efficient collective marketing and support from BAIF-MITTRA. Representatives of the villagers form the management committee of these organizations. There is no membership fee for the federation, and the only criterion is that the member has to be a tribal farmer and should have an interest in jasmine cultivation.

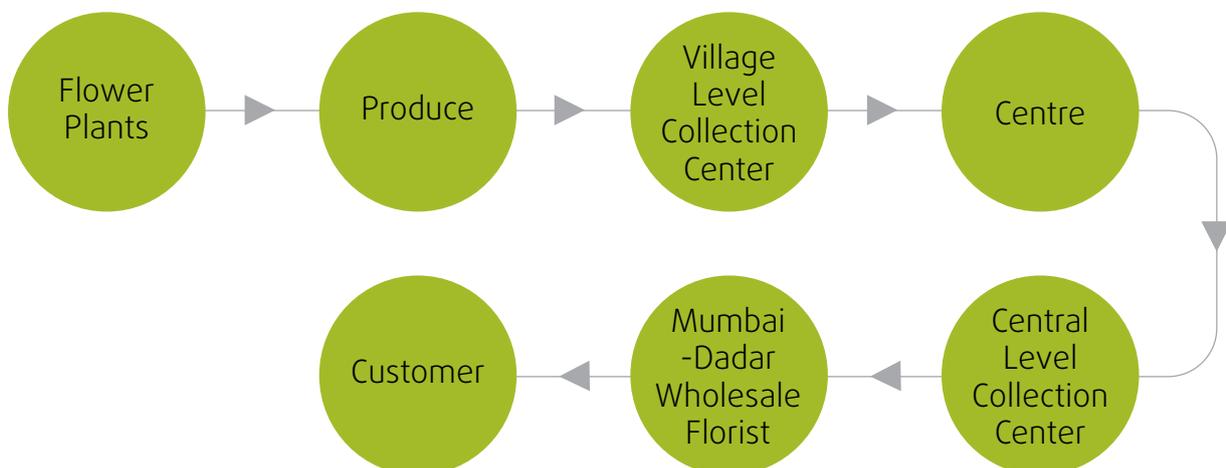
The process begins with having harvested the flowers by 7am, which are then brought to the village collection

centres. The produce from each member is weighed and packed in jute sacks; it is then collected from the village bus stands and transported to Dadar in Mumbai by either bus or train. One or two members accompany the produce for safeguarding it from damage during transportation. The VPUS's secretary keeps a record of income and expenditure to arrive at cost per kg of the flower to be paid to the producers.



» BAIF MITTRA Floriculture Training programme

## FLOWER SUPPLY CHAIN



THE FLOWER RATES in the market vary daily on the basis of demand and supply. The traders pay the Sangh every month based on the prevailing rates for each day. The amount received from the trader is deposited in the Sangh's bank account. Members are paid on a monthly basis after deducting the expenditure incurred on marketing. Each member contributes Rs. 10 per kg of flower sold, towards the sustainability fund of the Sangh – which is, in turn, used to purchase input material for cultivation. The input material is provided to the members at a cost.

About 1,904 farmers are involved in floriculture as an income-generation activity in Thane. Over the years, the farmers have earned more than Rs. 2 crore from selling jasmine. Not only has this money helped improve the quality of life, education and health of the farmers but also helped them build their asset base by constructing homes and wells, buying vehicles and other agricultural implements to aid floriculture. Working in groups has improved the social interactions among farmers by developing their communication skills and also helped in developing leadership skills at the community level. Exposure to the markets in Mumbai has boosted the confidence of the members who are now experimenting with other flower varieties such as marigold, gaillardia, rose and tuberose.

The sustainability of this model is definite because the

plants are hardy and even in the most unfavourable conditions there is scope for some nominal income. Since there is a demand for flowers all through the year, it can be categorized as a perennial source of income that helps sustaining the interest of the farmers. This initiative has successfully been replicated by 3,000 tribal families, across 14 tribal dominated talukas of Maharashtra, falling under six districts (Thane, Nasik, Nandurbar, Dhule, Nanded and Ahmednagar) with similar conditions. The formation of common interest groups and their federation at the taluka level has effectively democratized the process and brought in total transparency. Collective marketing has allowed small producers to sell their flowers, enabling producers to realize better incomes from collective bargaining due to higher volumes involved.

*Publications:*

*Article published in the prestigious magazine "LEISA INDIA", Volume 14, No. 3, September 2012, "Collective Marketing for Better Income through Floriculture".*

*Article published in "Policy Innovation.org", New York, USA, on 11 December 2012, "Buds of Hope: Organic Jasmine Floriculture Supplements Farmer Income in Maharashtra"*

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» One Year Jasmine Plot



» Flower value addition



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