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Original Article**Success story of Reeta Thakur- From Adversity to Achievement**

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INTRODUCTION

Majthai, a small village in the district Shimla of Himachal Pradesh is renowned for its picturesque landscapes, peaceful environment, fertile land because of which most of the population here depend on farming for their livelihood. Among all of them, Reeta's journey is most inspiring and commendable. She is a living example of woman empowerment and a source of inspiration for all those women who want to break the chains of bondage and want to become self-reliant. From working in other farmers' field as a labourer to meet livelihood to becoming a successful entrepreneur in capsicum cultivation oneself, Reeta's journey demonstrates that if a person is determined, then anything can be achieved through hard work and honesty.

Early life and Hardships

Reeta Thakur was born in Dharyali village located in the district Shimla. She is the eldest among her two sisters and one brother. Her whole family was involved in farming. Her father was a marginal farmer but since the earning wasn't sufficient to maintain such a large family, Reeta and her siblings used to work as labourers in the field of other farmers where they were mainly involved in operations like weeding, seed sowing, watering the crops, harvesting etc. Due to financial issues and family responsibilities, Reeta was not able to go to school. Despite this, Reena always aspired to achieve something big in her life.

When Reeta was 21 years old, she was married in the village Majthai which is located in the same district where Reeta's parent's house is located. Her husband has few acres of land but due to lack of knowledge and poor financial conditions, he was not able to utilize his land properly because of which productivity of the land was very low. Reeta and her husband decided to gain proper knowledge of crops which can be grown in their field and start doing farming in a profitable manner so that productivity and ultimately earning can be increased. For this they attended Krishi mela and got help from nearest Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). The major problem was the attack of wild animals like monkeys which always caused heavy yield loss by feeding on the crops and destroying them. So extension officers suggested them to setup polyhouse after which they decided to setup polyhouse in their field and do farming of capsicum.

Initial investment and efforts

After deciding to setup polyhouse and cultivate capsicum, the main issue was that of financial investments and selection of land where all the resources optimum for cultivation of capsicum are available. Reeta selected a land of area 500 meter square for the cultivation purpose. The initial investments done by Reeta Thakur are:-

1.Establishment of polyhouse

Reeta established polyhouse which included Heating system,cooling system,shedding system,watering system etc. which overall costed INR 4 lakhs.

2.Labour and carriage cost

The biggest challenge faced in establishing polyhouse in hilly area is that of labour and carriage of polyhouse equipments from one place to another due to difficult path and natural phenomena like heavy rainfall.So she had to hire more number of labourers due to which she had to invest more capital in labour and carriage cost which costed her around INR 25000.

3. Cost to buy saplings

Reeta Thakur spent around INR 16000 to buy saplings of capsicum for her polyhouse.

4.Cost to buy agrochemicals

Reeta Thakur spent around INR 25000 to buy various agrochemicals like fungicides,insecticides etc.for her polyhouse.

5.Transportation cost

The final yield of capsicum is sold is Chandigarh.So every season,Reeta Thakur has to spend around INR 15000 to transport her produce from Himachal Pradesh to Chandigarh.

First harvest of capsicum:- The turn of the tide

After facing so much challenges, finally the hardwork of Reeta Thakur paid off when her crop yield turned out to be better than expected. She harvested around 25 quintal of capsicum in the year 2021 and her gross profit was INR 4.81 lakhs and the net profit was around INR 3 lakh rupees.

Developing and Widening the Business

As Reeta's farm thrived, she recognized the opportunities for further growth. She took bank loans and availed subsidy from the government and established 4 more polyhouses in her field.In the year 2023,her net profit from all the 5 polyhouses was around INR 16 lakh. From this profit,she bought 3 cows (of breed Holstein Friesian) and 2 buffaloes(of breed Murrah) and by selling the milk, Reeta increased her earnings.



Influence on the Community and Future Initiatives

Reeta's success not only encouraged her, but also instilled the belief in other women that through hard work, they too could achieve something great in life. Reeta now advises and helps those women of the village who want to start farming. In this way, she is lighting the torch of women empowerment. Reeta's future plans include setting up more polyhouses and also wants to diversify her income by including apiculture and dairy farming.



CONCLUSION

The successful journey of Reeta Thakur is a source of inspiration for many rural women who want to become self-reliant through farming and hope to achieve significant personal and professional growth through this endeavor. She has proved that with hard work and patience, anything can be achieved in life.

Farmer's message

It's not necessary that all circumstances are favorable to us. We have to make adverse circumstances favorable to us through our hard work and persistence. Many a times, it feels like we are not getting the desired results, but sooner or later, hard work always leads to success.