

# Multiplying the Farmers' Income through Floripreneurship

*The Success Stories of Shri Oinam John and  
Shri N. Joy Singh from Manipur*

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## INTRODUCTION

Floriculture has proven to be a lucrative venture in India where it has been practised professionally. The governments are making an effort to make this industry appealing by putting in place the required infrastructure. The plan outlays have increased in the subsequent budget estimates in consideration of the employment potential, export and income creation, and profitability. Commercial agriculture in North-eastern region is being held back by a few issues that need to be solved to maintain economic welfare, but new agri-business avenues like floriculture can provide additional momentum in this respect. For a vibrant rural economy, APEDA has already recommended promotion of floriculture in the North-eastern states. A distinct advantage in the floriculture industry is also provided by the region's favourable climatic and geographic characteristics. Given the significance of floriculture in the North-eastern region, Sikkim has established an Agri-Export Zone (AEZ) specifically for the industry. The floriculture industries in Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Nagaland have also made significant strides.

Manipur has good potential for commercial production of flowers. The floriculture in Manipur is characterized by cultivation of traditional flowers (loose flowers) and cut flowers by small and marginal farmers to meet the demand for worship, garland making and decorations. In 2019-20, the state produced 90 MT of cut flowers from 60 ha area. Of the total flower produced in the State, about 86% flowers are grown under open condition mostly in homestead garden and the remaining 14% under protected conditions mostly supported by centrally sponsored schemes. In Manipur, however, floriculture as a profession is at a nascent stage and a large volume of cut flowers are imported by the commercial flower outlets located in Imphal city. Given this background, outreach activities on floriculture has been undertaken with specific focus on agripreneurship development.

**Technological Interventions:** The major interventions are described below.

- Organization of gardeners skill training programme
- Supply of quality planting materials (saplings and bulbs).
- Supply of critical agro-inputs like biofertilizers, biopesticides, etc.
- Bridging the knowledge gap on production technology starting from land preparation to harvesting.
- Business incubation support from Agri-Business Incubation Centre.

Production technologies of four commercial flower crops namely, gerbera, gladiolus, liliun and alstroemeria were demonstrated. Beneficiaries were made aware about planting, nutrient management, weed management, irrigation management, plant protection, harvesting and quality indices of flowers. For some beneficiaries, the floriculture activity was merged with protected cultivation component. Besides the target flowers, technical guidance was also provided on cultivation of succulents and foliage plants. Regular monitoring was done by the ICAR and need based technical assistance was provided to the beneficiaries as and when required.

After our intervention, floriculture has blossomed into commercial activity with a considerable growth and a useful crop diversification option, particularly for small and marginal farmers. Gerbera has come up as a best choice for cut flower production with high market demand; whereas Alstroemeria received a good demand as loose flower. Market linkage was also established with Imphal based commercial flower outlet. Realizing the potential of floriculture sector, many farmers, especially farm women are contacting ICAR. Steps are also being taken to encourage people to take up flower cultivation.

Further, to transform the area expansion activity into potential business venture, the beneficiaries were provided business incubation support under Agri-Business Incubation Centre. Under the programme, two beneficiaries Mr. Oinam John and Shri N. Joy Singh have been promoted as potential nurserymen. One flower group (Shirui Kashong Timrawon Flower Society) involving 50 tribal women has also been established in Shirui village, Ukhrul district.





## Success Story of Shri Oinam John

Shri Oinam John from Wabagai Mayai Leikai, Manipur had keen interest in gardening since his childhood. He has 1 acre farm land where he had started a small fruit nursery during his school days as a hobby. After completion of Bachelor in Science, he started growing water mimosa, an aquatic vegetable, and earning Rs. 30000.00 to 40000.00 annually. But he found it very hard to sustain his family with water mimosa business. He started a small flower nursery and participated in the 1-month long Gardener Skill Training Programme organized by ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Manipur Centre in 2017 for gaining advance knowledge on floriculture.

After observing his keen interest in floriculture and hardworking nature in practical classes, he was selected as beneficiary in area expansion programme on floriculture with specific focus on flower nursery. He was provided planting material of gerbera, gladiolus, liliun along with critical agro-inputs. He started flower cultivation as well as production of planting material and soon expanded his area under flower. He started earning Rs. 3.50 to 4.00 lakh per year by selling cut flowers and planting material which was more than 10 folds increase in annual income. From a job seeker, he became a job doner to the local people. With the enhanced income, he constructed one low-cost shade net house and started planting of various flower and ornamental crops like Bougainvillea, Ixora, Golden cypress, Azalea, Gerbera, Gladiolus, Liliun, Chrysanthemum, Michellia and different foliage plants, etc.





His commercial floriculture unit “Oinam Nursery” is now a well-known brand. He also received many awards and recognition by various organizations like Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Manipur and Central Agricultural University, etc. He always express his gratitude to ICAR and NEC for the help and technical assistance for transforming his livelihood. Shri Oinam John has become a role model for the unemployed rural youths and his social prestige has also increased in his locality. The project has completely changed his life and from a struggling farmer, he has now become a successful agripreneur.

## Success Story of Shri N. Joy Singh

Mr. Nongmaithem Joy Singh, an energetic youth from Kakching Sumak Leikai, Manipur, started farming in 2003. He was engaged in cultivation of sugarcane, king chili, watermelon and seasonal vegetables to sustain his livelihood. Despite producing good quality produces, he was not making good profit. His earning was Rs. 1.50 to 2.50 lakhs annually. However, due to his sincere effort, Department of Horticulture and Soil Conservation, Govt. of Manipur gave him an opportunity to participate in awareness and exposure programmes and farmers fair. In 2016, Department of Horticulture and Soil Conservation, Govt. of Manipur displayed his capsicum and king chili grown in polybags at the Manipur Sangai Festival which received appreciation of many visitors. Later, Department of Horticulture and Soil Conservation, Govt. of Manipur provided him a



polyhouse. Participation in the Manipur Sangai Festival changed is the first turning point in his life. The various flowers displayed and sold in the festival ground ignited a new enthusiasm in his mind and he started collecting sapling of various flower plants and started growing them. However, he did not have much knowledge about scientific production of flowers and floriculture business.

In 2017, he participated in a 1 month long Gardener Skill Training Programme organized by ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Manipur Centre. Come into contact of ICAR and the said training programme he consider the second turning point in his life. At the training, he learnt many things on floriculture and landscaping from ICAR experts. After observing her dedication, he was selected as one of the beneficiaries under the project for floriculture component. ICAR not only provided him planting material and other agro-inputs, but also provided technical guidance. With more confidence and enthusiasm he started production of flowers as well as nursery plants. He was motivated to start a commercial flower nursery "Shaiyon Nursery Farm". Business incubation support was provided under Agri-business Incubation Centre of ICAR.

His gross earning has now been doubled from Rs. 1.50-2.50 lakhs (before intervention) to Rs. 4.0-5.0 lakhs (after intervention) per year. Of this he is making 30-40% profit. With the enhanced income, now he is also producing high value flowering plants such as Monstera albo, pink princess Anthurium, Phillo and other seasonal flowers. Now 50-60 different varieties of bougainvillea are there is his collection. He also established a mother block of various perennial flowering plants and producing a large number planting material. Though during COVID19 pandemic, he incurred loss in season plants; but now he somehow recovered the loss through perennial flowering plants.





With the increasing number of people interested in flowers and ornamental plants, the number of customers every year. Consequently, his profit is also increasing every year. Media platforms such as DD Kisan and local newspapers like Labuk Maikei Panglashi and Hotnajamal covered his success story. He always acknowledges ICAR and NEC funded project for the physical support and technical guidance, without which, he admitted that his floriculture venture would not have been a great success. The floriculture intervention has clearly shown a viable option for doubling of farmers' income in North Eastern Region.

## CONCLUSION

Availability of quality planting material has emerged as main bottlenecks for expansion of floriculture sector. Establishment of flower nursery is the best solution which we tried to address under the problem. For remote villages, marketing of flowers is problematic and farmers do not get premium price if they sell in local market. Hence, floriculture should be first promoted in peri-urban areas under buy-back agreement. One major constraint our beneficiaries have faced in continuing the flower cultivation is the drastic drop in market demand for fresh flowers during COVID19 pandemic. For this reason, some farmers discontinued floriculture and shifted to cultivation of high value food crops after lockdown period. However, as situation is improving, some of them again started the flower cultivation. As flower is highly perishable, uncertainty of market demand is a major risk associated with floriculture sector. Despite the constraints, floriculture interventions made by the ICAR could able to make farmers prosperous.









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