



## Educated youth in agriculture: Lessons from Ayodhya pratap kushwaha's journey

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### Abstract

Agriculture has long been considered a traditional occupation, often associated with low profitability and outdated practices. However, with the infusion of educated youth, innovative techniques, and modern market strategies, agriculture can transform into a lucrative and sustainable profession. This case study examines the journey of Shri Ayodhya Pratap Kushwaha, an M.A., LL.B. graduate who chose agriculture as his primary livelihood. His venture into floriculture and integrated farming in Jhansi district demonstrates how an educated approach to farming can bring economic prosperity and inspire social change. His approach, combining floriculture, vegetable farming, and cooperative leadership, has set a benchmark for sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Innovative farmer, Case study, Floriculture, Cooperative farming, Market-driven farming, Agripreneurship

### Introduction

Agriculture has been the backbone of civilizations for centuries, playing a crucial role in economic development and food security. In India, where a significant portion of the population depends on agriculture, the sector faces challenges such as climate change and outdated practices. Traditionally seen as a subsistence activity, agriculture is often perceived as less lucrative than white-collar professions. However, educated individuals are transforming the sector with scientific techniques, innovative marketing strategies, and efficient management. Educated youth bring technical expertise, data-driven approaches, and global agricultural insights. By leveraging their knowledge, they enhance productivity, adopt climate-smart practices, and modernize supply chains. Innovative farming methods, such as precision farming and agripreneurship, increase profitability and sustainability (Wunscher, 2014) <sup>[6]</sup>. Farmers introducing such innovations contribute significantly to economic and social development (Million, 2001).

One such example is Shri Ayodhya Pratap Kushwaha, an M.A., LL.B. graduate, who chose agriculture as his primary livelihood. His venture into floriculture and integrated farming in Jhansi district demonstrates how an educated approach to farming can bring economic prosperity and inspire social change. His approach, combining floriculture, vegetable farming, and cooperative leadership, has set a benchmark for sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship.

“What changes can happen in society, when an educated youth steps into agriculture?”- Ayodhya Pratapji's venture has become testimony for this. Shri Ayodhya Pratap Kushwaha M.A., LLB graduate, who decided to take farming as a primary livelihood activity. He belongs to outskirts area of Jhansi district which is known as Nanabhai ki Bageecha. Once upon a time this was Garden place which was maintained by Nanarao, brother of Jhansi Rani Laxmi Bai.

Ayodhya Pratap Kushwahaji has land area of 3.5 acre. When all his neighbour farmers are focusing only on cereal

crops like wheat and pulse, he thought to do something different. Then he decided to go for floriculture to take advantage of the nearest market of Jhansi. He learnt about the cultivation of flower crops from his friends and cultivators and sought help from state horticulture departments. Finally he started cultivating many varieties of roses of different colours, gladiolus, chrysanthemum, jasmine and marigold. Season wise he used to cultivate the flower crops and vegetables and sells to nearby markets. He used to harvest the flowers and send to market daily morning. He has also grown other crops like ginger, pea, cauliflower, cabbage, drum sick, guava, lemon, mango and also many medicinal plants and herbs. As a supplementary, he is doing Dairy also. His annual income is about 6 lakh.

He is managing director of co-operative of Krishak Bandhu Udhesia Vipram sahkari Samiti limited of U.P and M.P. He used to conduct training for farmers on integrated farming system and cultivation of flower crops, grafting and layering of fruit and flower crops. Every year 300-400 farmers used to visit his farm. In that surrounding area nearly 20-30 farmers started adopting the cultivation of flower crops and fruit crops through his inspiration.

### Methodology

This research follows a qualitative case study approach, utilizing primary and secondary data sources. Information has been gathered from direct observations, interviews with local farmers, and documented reports on floriculture and integrated farming. The economic impact has been analyzed using financial data from Ayodhya Pratap's farming enterprise, emphasizing key indicators such as land utilization, investment, revenue, and profit.

Data was collected through field visits, farmer interviews, and secondary sources such as government reports and scholarly articles on floriculture and integrated farming. Economic metrics such as benefit-cost ratio, revenue generation, and productivity improvements were analyzed to assess the viability of his approach.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Economic Viability of Floriculture and Vegetable Cultivation

- **Land Area:** 3.5 acres
- **Initial Investment:** ₹2,00,000
- **Annual Revenue:** ₹8,00,000
- **Net Profit:** ₹6,00,000
- **Benefit-Cost Ratio:** 1:4
- **Farmers Trained Annually:** 350
- **Farmers Adopting New Techniques:** 25

Ayodhya Pratap's model demonstrates a fourfold return on investment, which significantly surpasses traditional cereal crop farming. His approach to floriculture has led to consistent income generation, reducing financial instability among farmers.

### 2. Innovative Farming Approach

- **Floriculture as a Profitable Alternative:** Focus on high-value crops like roses, gladiolus, chrysanthemum, jasmine, and marigold.
- **Diversified Farming Strategy:** Cultivation of vegetables, medicinal plants, and dairy farming to mitigate risks and ensure a stable income.
- **Market-Driven Farming:** Eliminating middlemen by directly supplying produce to urban markets, increasing profit margins.

His integration of modern agricultural techniques, such as grafting and layering in floriculture, has optimized productivity and enhanced the quality of farm produce. Market-oriented farming has allowed him to capitalize on seasonal demands, ensuring consistent cash flow.

### 3. Social Transformation

- Conducting training programs for 300-400 farmers annually on sustainable farming practices.
- Assisting in the formation of farmer cooperatives to enhance collective bargaining and profitability.
- Motivating youth to engage in agriculture by showcasing its economic potential.

By leveraging his education, Ayodhya Pratap has built a cooperative farming model that strengthens the agricultural community. Through Krishak Bandhu Udhesia Vipram Sahkari Samiti, he has facilitated collective farming, providing farmers with better market access and improved profitability.

### 4. Impact on Rural Employment and Economic Stability

- Increased employment opportunities in the floriculture and vegetable farming sectors.
- Higher disposable income among farmers, leading to improved living standards.
- Reduction in migration to urban areas, as agriculture becomes a viable livelihood.

## Reflection

### Agriculture as a Profitable Occupation for Youth

- Ayodhya Pratap Kushwaha's journey demonstrates that farming, when approached with the right strategies, can be highly profitable.

- He has shown that educated youth can make agriculture an economically viable career instead of relying on traditional white-collar jobs.
- His success challenges the prevailing notion that farming is a low-income occupation, proving that innovation, diversification, and modern techniques can yield high returns.

### Utilization of Market and Seasonal Advantages:

- By studying market demands, he strategically cultivates flowers and vegetables that are in high demand, ensuring better pricing and profit margins.
- His proximity to Jhansi and other urban markets allows him to directly supply his produce, eliminating middlemen and maximizing earnings.
- Seasonal crop planning helps him maintain year-round production, avoiding market saturation and price drops.

### Interest in Horticulture and Floriculture Leading to Innovation

- His passion for floriculture motivated him to learn advanced farming techniques, such as grafting and layering.
- By experimenting with different flower varieties like roses, gladiolus, and chrysanthemums, he has successfully created a niche market for himself.
- His knowledge of floriculture has helped him optimize land usage, increase productivity, and diversify income sources.

### Knowledge Sharing and Farmer Training

- He actively shares his expertise by conducting training sessions for 400-500 farmers every year.
- His training focuses on integrated farming, floriculture, and modern cultivation techniques.
- By demonstrating sustainable practices, he encourages farmers to move beyond conventional wheat and pulse cultivation.

### Inspiring Farmers to Diversify Crops

- His success has motivated 20-30 farmers in his area to shift from traditional cereal farming to floriculture and vegetable farming.
- He emphasizes the importance of crop diversification to reduce risks and enhance income.
- Through his guidance, farmers have started cultivating high-value crops that offer better returns compared to traditional grains.

### Leadership in Farmer Cooperatives

- As the Managing Director of Krishak Bandhu Udhesia Vipram Sahkari Samiti Limited, he plays a crucial role in organizing and supporting farmers.
- He assists farmers in forming cooperatives, enabling them to access better markets, financial aid, and bulk purchasing benefits.
- The cooperative model strengthens small farmers by improving collective bargaining power and reducing dependency on intermediaries.

### Promotion of Sustainable and Integrated Farming

- His farm includes a mix of floriculture, vegetable cultivation, fruit orchards, medicinal plants, and dairy farming.

- By integrating multiple agricultural activities, he ensures a steady income and reduces financial risks.
- His sustainable approach includes organic farming techniques, reducing chemical dependency and enhancing soil health.

#### **Boosting Rural Economy and Employment:**

- His success has created employment opportunities for local laborers, reducing rural unemployment.
- Farmers trained by him have experienced better income stability, leading to improved living standards in the region.
- His model discourages migration to urban areas by making agriculture a lucrative profession for the younger generation.

#### **Conclusion**

Ayodhya Pratap Kushwaha's journey illustrates the transformative impact of educated youth in agriculture. His story is an inspiration for aspiring farmers, proving that with knowledge, strategic planning, and market intelligence, farming can be a sustainable and profitable career. By adopting modern agricultural techniques, promoting floriculture, and organizing farmer cooperatives, he has brought economic prosperity to his community. His efforts highlight the importance of integrating education with agriculture to create a self-reliant and progressive rural economy.

His initiative has not only improved his financial stability but also contributed to a larger movement toward sustainable agriculture. His work underscores the importance of knowledge sharing, cooperative farming, and market-driven strategies for the future of Indian agriculture.

#### **Recommendations for Future Initiatives:**

- 1. Government Support for Agri-Entrepreneurs:** Financial aid, training, and policy support can encourage more youth to enter agriculture.
- 2. Technology Integration:** Digital platforms can help farmers access real-time market data, weather forecasts, and best farming practices.
- 3. Awareness Campaigns:** Success stories like Ayodhya Pratap's should be widely promoted to inspire more educated youth to consider farming as a profession.
- 4. Expansion of Cooperative Models:** Encouraging the formation of more farmer cooperatives to enhance collective bargaining and profitability.
- 5. Research and Development in Floriculture:** Investing in advanced floriculture techniques to improve productivity and market reach.

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