

JOURNEY OF A STUDENT TO AN ENTREPRENEUR

Startup Name: KV Hi-Tech Nursery
Founder: Varun Kaura (M.Sc. Biotechnology)
Address: Opp. New Grain Market, Sultanpur Road, Kapurthala



BIOGRAPHY:

My name is Varun Kaura, I hail from Kapurthala city. After completing my Master's degree in Biotechnology from one of the renowned educational institute, Punjab Agricultural University, in year 2017. I took three months training in Seed Production of Potato from Central Potato Research Institute, Shimla. Then I joined my Parental Business of Agriculture inputs and started observing the real state of basic agriculturists. My aim was to start up a Tissue Culture Laboratory for seed production of high-quality potatoes and when I observed the actual scenario of the farmers; that they are



FROM SEED TO SEEDLING

still working with their traditional techniques which dated back in early 90s. Once, I started interacting with local farmers to know the primary problems they are facing in their fields and in marketing of their products. I reached to the conclusion that there is a need of crop diversification as people are still growing paddy, wheat and potato. Along with this I also came across to an observation that the farmers who are growing vegetables are using very high quantity of fertilizers and toxic chemicals which ultimately are affecting the whole environment including soil fertility, clean water availability and overall human health. Paddy and maize are the crops, which consume a very large quantity of water because of which the water table is going down, day by day, acting as an invitation to the big issue of water scarcity for coming generations. Keeping all these points in mind, I pondered over this issue and finally came up with an idea of starting a Hi-Tech Nursery by which I can assist farmers by providing them healthy

seedlings which they can transplant directly into their fields. In addition, I will be directly linked with farmer to provide support for their crops regarding any kind of problem they are facing. I have initiated this work not only with a business perspective but it was my passion as well to work for farmers and boost them up to diversify and learn new technologies in agriculture. The main objective of this technique is to ease up the farming so that farmers will get 35-40 days old plants in which there will be very less percentage of mortality and even their crop will get mature early as compare to crop grown directly from seeds.

I started this Hi-Tech Nursery in the month of November, 2020 with 1.5-acre area on which I constructed ten walking tunnels with my own design for production of seedlings under controlled conditions and whole nursery is grown in soilless media. Presently we are raising seedlings of all vegetables, muskmelon, watermelon, and so on, by using high quality hybrid seeds from well-established companies like Seminis, Nunhems, VNR, HM Clause, Known You Seeds, Syngenta, Mahyco, etc. The uniqueness of soilless media is that, we need not to add up vermiculite and perlite to it. Instead of this, we prepare compost of cocopeat by adding different biological materials. The

main advantage of soilless media is that the soil borne diseases and fungal infections will not outbreak; along with this it retains moisture in it due to which water consumption is very low. In the whole nursery, I make use of sprinklers and drip irrigation system which saves a lot of water. After completing my nursery work, I had planted seasonal vegetables like cucumber, colored bell peppers, brinjal, and cherry tomato in my tunnels with left out place and share the produce with my nearby relatives and friends. The whole vegetable production done at my farm is without using chemical fertilizers.

In the upcoming years, I am planning to rise the horizon by starting vermicompost unit which will be beneficial for my nursery and for local farmers growing potato, paddy, maize and wheat to use as direct application in their fields. Besides this, I will expand my business by setting up new polyhouse for nursery production and proliferate the area for open nursery. Lastly, I am preparing to initiate a zero-budget farming of vegetables on large scale, which will give good health benefits to all the consumers. As human nature is to learn steadily and get experienced with time, in the same way I understood the value of the single seed just like "Each One Teach One How to Plant One".

