



Sumitra Bhoya, Nadagkhadi

Sumitraben Bhoya, 43, is the latest addition to the cadre of Woman Master Trainers in UTMT. Educated till Class VIII, Sumitraben expected to continue the routine she was used to. However,



things changed when she heard of a NABARD supported beekeeping training being conducted by UTMT in her village of Nadagkhadi. Beekeeping sounded very new and different, so she decided it was worth a try and attended the training in April 2014. Sumitraben liked what she learned, and became the first from her village to start practising beekeeping.

The proud owner of 4 beehives, she says the bees are part of her family now. She worries about them like she does about her own children. During a follow up visit by UTMT staff in February 2015, she spoke of her distress following the absconding of one beehive, “Someone from the village opened my box and now all the bees have absconded. I feel as if a family member has left home.”

Sumitraben has experienced first-hand the benefits that keeping bees can bring. On her 5 acres of land, she cultivates *nagli* (finger millet), rice, *vari* (proso millet), *khurasani* (niger), *udad*, *sunhemp*, groundnut, tuvar, ladies finger, moong, onion & water melon during different seasons. She says she has seen a 30-40% increase in the yields of sunhemp and tuvar.

Due to bee-pollination she has more vegetables for home consumption. Both the pulses - tuvar and udid - had seen a large increase in productivity and the quality of seed was superior.

Crops	Before beekeeping	After beekeeping	Increased economic value (Rs)
Ivy gourd (Giloda)	5 kg	18 kg	195
Gawar	3 kg	5 kg	30
Brinjal	8 kg	20 kg	240
Valpapdi	15 kg	20 kg	100
Tuvar (pigeonpea)	15 kg	60 kg	5,400
Udid (black gram)	5 kg	10 kg	750
TOTAL			6,715

Sumitraben saw honey in her beehive for the first time in May 2014, when 1 kg honey was extracted. She was thrilled, and sold it for Rs. 220.

Being from a small village Sumitraben is grateful to have had the opportunity to learn a new livelihood generating activity. She feels her confidence and leadership qualities have improved.



Sharmila Dhum, Nanapada

Sharmilaben Amrutbhai Dhum, 30, is the Master Trainer of Nanapada village. They are a family of 5 - two sons, a daughter and her husband, a farmer-cum-carpenter. She attended the 2-day basic beekeeping training in January 2015. She is among the few who are excellent at Natural Colony Transfers (NCTs) – she has done highest number of NCTs in Dangs, no other Master Trainer has achieved this feat. Further, she manages 25 bee boxes in her village.



Sharmilaben cultivates on 7 hectares of land where they sow multiple crops like pigeon pea (tuvar) and jowar with some fruits and vegetables. She sold 35 kg cashew in 2016 at the rate of Rs. 90 per kg which gave her additional income. The production earlier was only 15 kg. Other crops which she says were positively impacted were mango and pigeon pea.

Crops	Before beekeeping	After beekeeping	Changes in quality	Increased economic value (Rs)
Mango	15 kg	30 kg	Bigger size	450
Cashew	15 kg	35 kg	Good quality nuts	2,000
Pigeon pea	20 kg	25 kg	No pest attacks	600
TOTAL				3,050

Bee colony divisions are done by Sharmilaben herself without wearing a protective bee veil. When advised by UTMT Technical Assistant Somabhai to use the bee veil, she told him, ***“Arre Somabhai kaini thay, makhi odkhe che mane. Nai karde”.*** (***Nothing will happen to me as bees know me, hence they will not sting***). Such is her ease with beekeeping.



Parul Pawar

Parulben Pawar is a 26-year old beekeeper from Dangs district of Gujarat. A Higher Secondary School graduate, Parul's primary occupation is subsistence agriculture reliant on rain. Married at a young age like most girls in her forested tribal village of Bhapkal, Parul faced hardships after her husband tragically died in an accident in 2014. But the courageous girl has ploughed on, tackling her challenges with a smile and ever-ready to learn something new.



In September 2014, UTMT staff visited her village to orient the community on beekeeping as a livelihood. Initially very apprehensive at the idea of boxing bees, Parul underwent the training and after a year and a half of intensive learning, not only owns 3 bee-boxes but is also a junior Master Trainer selected for her skill. What distinguishes Parul from majority of the trainees is her ability to conduct Natural Colony Transfers (NCTs) - the technique of transferring bees from the wild into a bee-box. In her capacity as a Junior MT, Parul teaches fellow trainees the art of managing bees. **She feels proud to work with the women in her community, to empower them with a skill that will bring multiple benefits. "This is an activity that can be done by any woman".** She enthusiastically tells people of the honey she harvested from her beehive a few months ago, and eagerly awaits the next honey flow season. She is happy to have come a long way since her first training.

Parul says she has seen for herself the great difference bees have made to her farm produce. Brinjal and tomato were bigger in size as compared to the harvests before. The production doubled for most crops, providing the family with more grain, pulses and vegetables for consumption.

Crops	Before beekeeping	After beekeeping	Increased economic value (Rs)
Corn	10 kg	20 kg	100
Varai	40 kg	80 kg	1,000
Udid	20 kg	40 kg	3,000
Tuvar	10 kg	20 kg	1,200
Brinjal	30 kg	45 kg	300
Tomato	10 kg	30 kg	200
Valpadi	15 kg	40 kg	500
TOTAL			6,300



Manisha Birari

Manishaben Birari is a bee keeper from Jamalapada village. Trained in January 2015, she was initially confused about whether to try beekeeping. The perception bees were insects that only men could handle and the inherent fear of being stung, made her anxious.

After more than 6 months of observing UTMT staff and the new Master Trainer in her village handle beehives, she decided to give it a go. In September 2015 she filled her first bee box with the help of the MTs and her husband. Through divisions, and NCTs, she today has 4 filled boxes. She cares for them alongwith her husband. On the benefits experienced, she says, "I still have some fear of bee stings but I like to see bees in the mango and cashew *wadi* (orchard). My mango and cashew production has increased by 50%".



The most visible impact Manishaben reports, is that of the lone jack fruit tree in the wadi. She says that in 2015 there were only 5 jackfruits, but 2016 yielded a bumper crop of 35 jackfruits! She is very surprised and happy about it. With such a massive increase, Manishaben plans to sell majority of the jack fruits, keeping a few for the family.

Crops	Before beekeeping	After beekeeping	Increased economic value (Rs)
Jackfruit	5 numbers	35 numbers	4,500
Mango	40 kg	200 kg	4,800
Cashew	20 kg	50 kg	3,000
Blackberry	5 kg	9 kg	240
Custard apple	80 kg	100 kg	400
TOTAL			12,940

Swarm bag/ bee veil tailoring SHG, Nanapada

Trained by UTMT to tailoring beekeeping inputs - swarm bags and bee-veils - in early 2015, Premilaben's Self Help Group (SHG) in Nanapada village, bustles with activity. The SHG is part of UTMT's beekeeping "ecosystem" in Dang district.



Premilaben is Secretary of the SHG. She is glad that the SHG has learned a new livelihood, and has earned income that will add to their group savings. The group made 200 inputs, earning a total of **Rs.9750** from the activity. The inputs were procured by UTMT and distributed to beekeepers in Dangs. Swarm bags are used when transferring swarms of bees into a beehive and bee veils protect the face and neck from bees.

Premilaben hopes they get a chance to continue tailoring inputs whenever required, and possibly expand to tailoring other items of clothing.



Daksha Birari

Dakshaben Birari, from Jamlapada village, has been beekeeping since April 2015. Trained in January of 2015, she was initially afraid of being stung, but slowly grew to appreciate the insects. With regular follow-up visits from UTMT staff, she learned to care for her 2 bee boxes. When Dakshaben began beekeeping, her neighbours and relatives were surprised. It was their first time seeing wild bees inside a box, being cared for like pets.



Dakshaben is an enterprising woman, keen to experiment with new ideas. She owns a thriving *haldi* (turmeric) business where she grows, processes and sells organic turmeric at home. She is proud and excited to add beekeeping to her entrepreneurial basket. This year, she sold 150 kg mangoes at the rate of Rs. 20 per kg - a better rate due to the healthier size of the mangoes, she says. The few vegetables in her backyard also saw 20% to 30% increase in production.

Crop	Before	After	Increased economic value (Rs)
Mango	150 kg	200 kg	1,500
Ladies finger	10 kg	15 kg	50
Valpapdi	15 kg	20 kg	100
Corn	15 kg	20 kg	50
TOTAL			1,700

In 2015 she was thrilled to extract 700 gm honey from her bee boxes, which she kept for her family. In the next season, she hopes to sell some of the honey.