

Mangesh Janardan Gangurde (Age: 30 years)

Village: Bharuna, **Taluka:** Peth, **District:** Nasik. **State:** Maharashtra

Mangesh is an enterprising farmer living in Bharuna village with his parents, wife, children and younger brother. He is employed with Maratha Vidyaprasarak School in Peth as a Laboratory Assistant, and assists on his family farm where he cultivates mango, cashew, sunflower, seasonal vegetables and rice on 3.5 acres of land. Mangesh earns Rs. 30,000/- annually from selling his farm produce locally.



In 2011, he got to know about beekeeping from Mr. Chabildas Jadhav, UTMT's Master Trainer from Peth who at the time worked with BAIF, UTMT's partner NGO in Nashik. Interested, he purchased a bee box from UTMT and learning the basics from Mr Jadhav, attempted filling it with an *Apis cerana* colony he found in the nearby forest. However, the bees absconded in 10 days, leaving Mangesh extremely puzzled. He decided to learn beekeeping in depth, and on hearing that UTMT's next training would be held in Peth in 2012, he immediately signed up for it. Mangesh was very satisfied with the training, having learned technicalities of the activity like bees' life cycle, natural colony transfer, seasonal maintenance and honey extraction, among others. Moreover, he understood why his bees absconded from the box. Over the next 2 years, he took a keen interest in the activity, researching and reading more about bees and expanding his number of beehives to 11 by 2014.

In 2013, he harvested 3-4 kg honey from 6 bee boxes, of which he kept 1 kg for his family and sold the rest to his fellow school teachers at a rate of Rs. 500 per kg. The income goes towards his purchasing more beekeeping boxes and equipment. This year he hopes to obtain more honey than last year, and if it exceeds 12 kg he plans to supply some of it to UTMT.



Mangesh testifies to the pollination benefits from beekeeping, having closely tracked his yields for years. Mangesh says his sunflowers are bigger in size and more in number ever since the beehives were kept in the field. There has been a 30% increase in sunflower production since 2012. Encouraged, he cultivated more sunflower in 2014 than last year. He is now a firm believer in the potential of beekeeping, and teaches his young children about bees in their free time. They often accompany him during beehive cleaning and maintenance, and do not fear bees. He aspires to have 25 beehives on his farm eventually.

Mangesh goes beyond just being a beekeeper. Using his teaching skills, he has prepared charts on the benefits of bees and honey, and installed them near the beehives in his farm. His success has drawn many curious visitors to his farm – school teachers, an Agriculture Department officer, BAIF staff, who in turn spread the word. Earlier in 2014, a Forest Department officer from Wardha and Kerala visited his hives after learning of them through BAIF staff. Mangesh wants to help others become successful at beekeeping too. He assists beekeepers from neighbouring villages in Peth, by demonstrating natural colony transfers, honey extraction and speaking of his experiences at new trainings.