

From Waste to Wealth: Success Story of a Vermicomposting Entrepreneur in Bandipora

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Mr. Wali Mohd. Khan, a resident of Chapran village in the remote upper reaches of District Bandipora, nearly 100 km from Srinagar, began his journey towards organic entrepreneurship in 2022. Initially, he had three livestock animals and used their dung for small-scale composting. Inspired and technically supported by the Mountain Livestock Research Institute (MLRI), Manasbal, he realized the potential of converting farm waste into valuable organic manure through vermicomposting.

Intervention and Establishment

After gaining confidence from training and exposure visits, Mr. Wali Mohd Khan expanded his initiative by collecting animal waste from nearby households. He began purchasing dung at a cost of about ₹2,000 per tractor trolley (80 cu ft). Over time, he established 12 vermicompost pits of dimensions 10 ft × 4 ft × 2.5 ft (L×B×H). He adopted *Eisenia foetida* (red earthworm) collected from MLRI, Manasbal as the main decomposer species, known for its high efficiency in organic waste recycling.

Technical Aspects of Vermicomposting

The vermicomposting process is simple yet effective. Raw materials such as cattle dung, paddy straw, vegetable waste, and orchard prunings are layered in brick-lined pits. Moisture is maintained at 60–70% by sprinkling water periodically, and shade is provided to protect worms from sunlight. The compost matures within 50–60 days and is harvested by sieving. Worms are recycled for the next batch, making the system self-sustaining.

Economics of the Enterprise

Table-1: Summarizes the annual economics of Mr. Khan's vermicomposting unit:

Particulars	Amount (₹)
Total Production (500 quintals/year)	7,50,000 (Gross Income)
Dung Procurement & Transport	2,00,000
Labour & Maintenance	1,00,000
Miscellaneous (cover, water, tools, etc.)	50,000
Total Operational Cost	3,50,000
Net Profit	4,00,000
Benefit-Cost Ratio	2.14

Outcomes and Achievements

- Production: About 125 quintals per cycle; 4 cycles annually totaling ~500 quintals.
- Revenue: Gross annual income of ~₹7.5 lakh.
- Profit: Net profit of ~₹4.0 lakh/year.

- Employment: Created livelihood opportunities for himself and part-time workers.
- Sustainability: Recycling of more than 20 tonnes of organic waste annually into eco-friendly compost.

Environmental and Social Impact

The enterprise prevents indiscriminate dumping of dung and reduces methane emissions, contributing to climate change mitigation. It supports organic farming practices by improving soil fertility, enhancing water retention, and promoting sustainable agriculture. The model has inspired other farmers and SHGs in Bandipora to consider vermicomposting as a profitable livelihood option.

Scalability and Future Scope

Mr. Khan plans to expand his unit by establishing 20 more pits, which could raise annual production to about 1,300 quintals. He also intends to diversify into value-added products such as vermiwash, which has demand as a liquid biofertilizer. Linking with Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and pursuing organic certification would enable him to access premium markets.

Key Message

The story of Mr. Wali Mohd. Khan demonstrates that with technical guidance, local resources, and entrepreneurial drive, a farmer from a remote village can establish a profitable waste-to-wealth enterprise. His venture proves that vermicomposting is not only an environmentally friendly practice but also a sustainable business model that can empower rural communities in Jammu & Kashmir.



Fig-1: Site of the Vermicomposting Unit