

# Beating the odds: How Chaurasia community is trying to hold on to the age-old tradition of betel farming

*Future of Betel Farming and its importance to the Chaurasia Community.*

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, March 10, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There was a time when betel leaves were called green gold due to their immense demand and use. However, it

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*Ramesh Chaurasia*

has been observed that due to falling demands, crop failure and changing climate, many betel farmers are leaving the practice of betel farming and moving on to other professions. This includes marginal farmers from the Chaurasia community. Let us see why this is happening and what is being done to combat it.

India is a sub-tropical country and growing paan or betel leaves requires a lot of care. The betel vines need to be supported by bamboo sticks so that they can entwine and climb. Farmers have to grow the betel vines in a

greenhouse where the humidity has to be kept at an optimum level. Regular sprinkling of water is required for the proper growth of paan leaves. Farming of betel leaves is a labour-intensive job because the plants need regular watering, plucking and management of the greenhouse.

The problem of rainfall and water

Farmers say that rainfall has become highly unpredictable and inconsistent. Sometimes, it happens that rain which should happen over two months happens in just a few days. This leads to waterlogging and ruins the crops.

There are also few years where rains are too scarce and farmers have to rely on ponds or to buy additional water to ensure that the crop is sustained. Some farmers report that up to 30 percent of their income is spent on watering because rains are inconsistent.

Rising temperatures

Rising temperatures are also a growing cause of concern for betel farmers because betel vines are extremely vulnerable to temperature changes. Agriculture experts say that betel cannot be

harvested if the temperatures cross 40 degrees Celsius. However, temperatures have been crossing 45 degrees in many states. This causes the betel leaves to turn yellow and fall prematurely.

To add to all this, input costs are rising because everything has become expensive. The watering costs are high along with the cost of material required to build and maintain greenhouses.

Even though farmers from the Chaurasia community have been historically involved in betel farming, they also face the same problems. The youth of the community is attracted towards corporate jobs and thus the man power required for betel farming is not fulfilled.



Ramesh Chaurasia helping the betel farmers in India

### Solving the problems faced by Betel farmers

Mr [Ramesh Chaurasia](#), president of the Akhil Bharatiya Adarsh Chaurasia Mahasabha is working towards the upliftment of betel farmers from the Chaurasia community. It is well known that the Chaurasia community has been engaged in the farming and trade of betel or Paan leaves since ancient times. This is why Mr Chaurasia believes that it is more important for the Chaurasia farming community to hold on their tradition and overcome the problems that betel farmers are facing.

Seminars and workshops are organized where farmers are educated about methods of multi-layer farming and how they can improve their yield and income with it. Various benefits of multi-layer farming are discussed with farmers.

### What is multi-layer farming?

Multi-layer farming is a type of inter cropping technique where multiple compatible crops are grown in the same field. This type of farming is best to use vertical space efficiently.

### Benefits of multi-layer farming for marginal farmers

Since it is a farming method best suited for small lands, marginal farmers can highly benefit from this. Multiple crops are grown in the same area so income per unit of land increases three to four times according to the crops that are grown. Betel leaf farmers can grow other cash crops along with betel vine and increase their income.

This vertical farming method protects sensitive crops from harsh climate so the risk of yield loss is also minimized. This system creates a micro climate which is good for the crops. Due to increased bio diversity, the risk of pests also falls drastically.

Since there are crops of different heights, sensitive crops can be grown at the ground level while the higher plants can provide the shade which is needed. The shade prevents up to 70% water from evaporating, thus a lot of water is saved. This is also a remarkable benefit that enhances ecological preservation.

Solutions like these can change the lives of farmers from hard working communities who deserve a better life. Mr Chaurasia ensures that farmers of the Chaurasia community are made aware of the benefits of multi-layer farming as a means to put an end to their problems.

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