

SUCCESS STORY

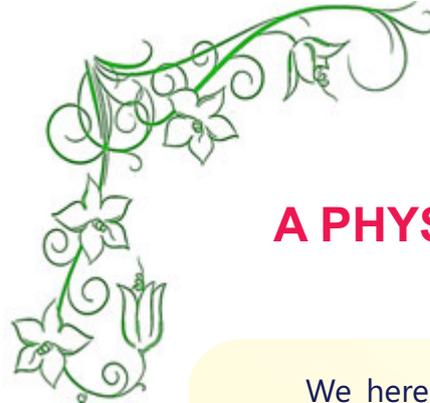


A PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED BEEKEEPER INSPIRES THE WORLD

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We here tell you the success story of a physically challenged handicap person who had a dwarfism from his birth. He was determined to vanquish the ridicule that because of dwarfism and freak body, people in society used to mock on his disabilities which provoked irritation, distress, and even outrage at times. He did not lose his courage and with a determination, aspired to do something different from other people so that society can be proud of him. He did not allow disability to come in his way and started looking for an adventure. He was impressed by the behavior of honeybees. According to him, when a small honeybee can do wonders why not I, being much larger than honeybee. He developed interest in beekeeping and started learning about their ways of life. He collected one colony of honeybee from the wild and then continued to establish a full fledged apiary. He now can support entire family comprising of his younger brother and his family. He says-

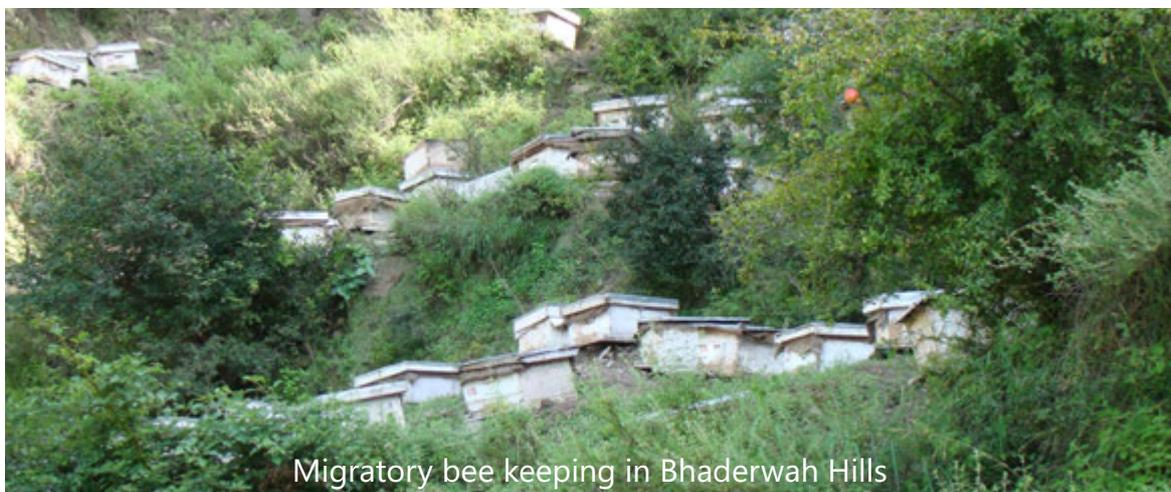
'Manzilein unhi ko milti hai, jinke sapno main jaan hoti hai ; pankhon se kuch nahi hota aee dost, hausloon se udaan hoti hai'.

Beekeeping has fascinated humankind since the dawn of civilization. Beekeeping can be practiced by any one, young and old, men and women, retired person, children and all those interested in bees and beekeeping. Even the handicapped persons can easily manage the bees provided they have keen interest in them. Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir State has obtained distinction in production of quality honey. The area has rich floral diversity and congenial climate for domestication of honeybees. The indigenous honeybee, *Apis cerana indica*, has still survived the onslaught of dreaded viral disease Thai sac brood, in this district. Both domesticated and feral colonies of indigenous honeybees *Apis cerana indica*,

are in abundance in the area.

During our frequent visits to Bhaderwah we had the opportunity to visit the apiary of Mr. Chuni Lal Sharma, a physically challenged person, at village Udrana Dandi (Bhaderwah). We realized that if one has a determination nothing is impossible. We were surprised to see his well maintained apiary. Mr. Sharma is 37 years old and a dwarf person of nearly 2.5 feet height or so. Though his height is small but his determination to do something in life is big and is an example for others to follow. He is still bachelor comprising a small family of his brother. He is illiterate and the family has very small holding. Because of his size he was unable to do some job or farming profession. He says that he learnt to live from these tiny creatures (bees) who, inspite of their small size, work throughout the day starting early in the morning till late evening making no excuse of any holiday, strike, overtime or bonus etc. they give sweet honey to the mankind and also increase the yield of crop through pollination.

Encouraged by behaviour and way of life of honey bees, Mr. Sharma took to beekeeping. He has not received any formal training in beekeeping. He has learnt beekeeping by hit and trial, off and on consulting other beekeepers and constantly working with them (bees) and started beekeeping with two *Apis cerana indica* colonies during 1994-95. During last 7-8 years, inspite of so many ups and downs, he



Migratory bee keeping in Bhaderwah Hills

has been able to increase the strength of his apiary from 2 colonies to 14. He produces honey worth Rs. 5000-6000/- a year. He could earn more but because of limited resources and his short statured body, the colonies are not migrated. He is very much enthusiastic and determined to increase his apiary size to 100 colonies. One of the most important aspect of his beekeeping is that he has maintained the stock of indigenous honeybee *Apis cerana indica* which is most endangered species at present because, keeping in view the low economic returns as compared to exotic honeybee *Apis mellifera*, the commercial beekeepers do not prefer Indian hive bee. Thanks to Mr. Chuni Lal Sharma who still love his *swadeshi* (indigenous) bee. Though he is small in size but his determination to do every type of hard labour in managing the apiary, is an example of will power and hard earned achievements which needs to be perpetuated amongst other farmers and persons like Mr. Sharma.



Plate 1



Plate 1. a) A tiny beekeeper; b, c and d) working with bees and; e) Apiary maintained by tiny beekeeper

Plate-2



Inspecting the bee hive



Showing the bee frames with bees



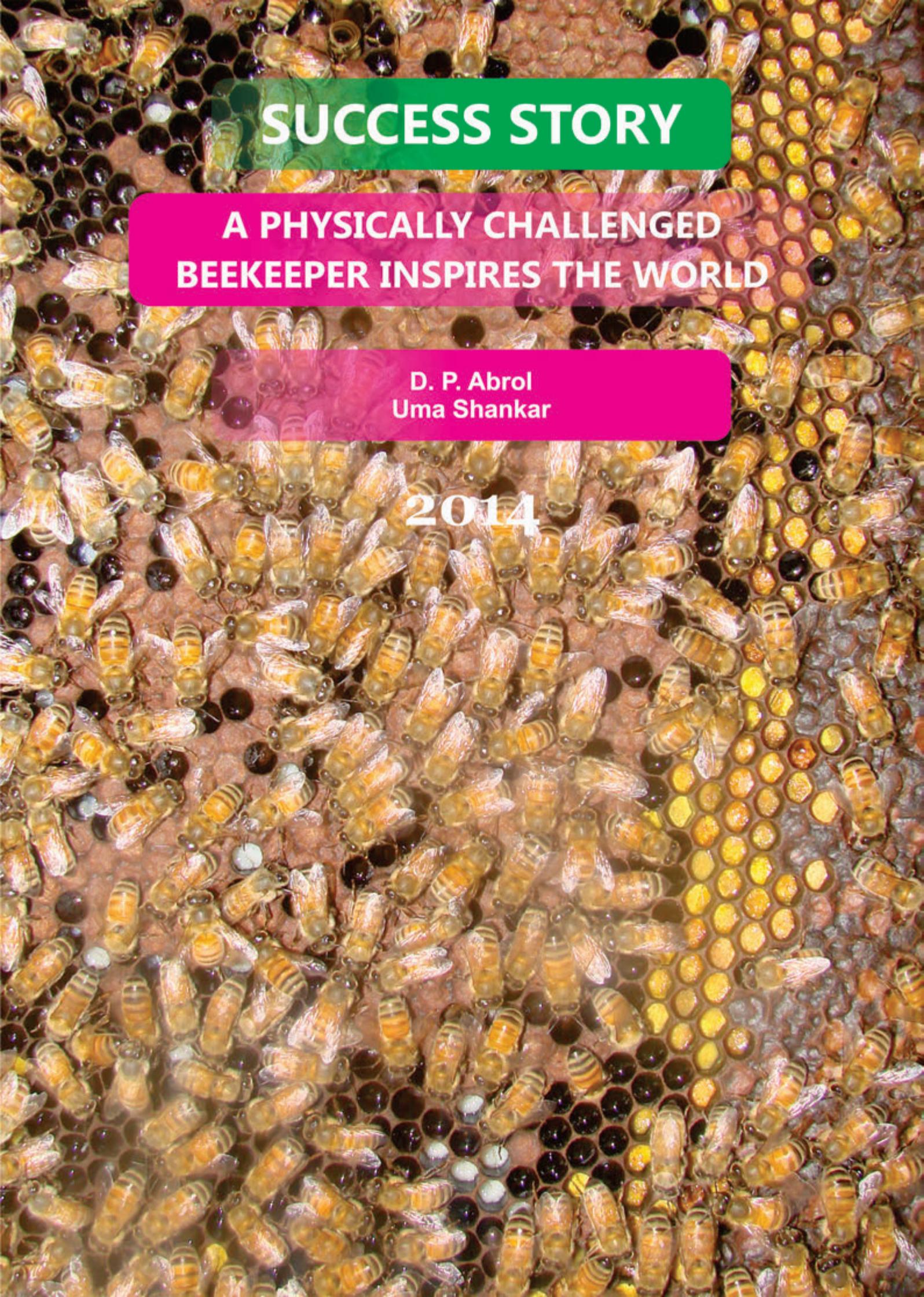
Interacting with Prof. Abrol



Interacting with scientists of KVK, Bhaderwah



A scenic view of Mr. Chunni Lal's village



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