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From Struggle to Sustainability: The Rise of a Progressive Farmer in Punjab

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Farmer's details

- Name: Mr Sukhdev Singh (35 years)
- Father's Name: Sh. Harish Singh
- Village: Mehmampur District – Fatehgarh sahib
- Education: 8th
- Family Type: Nuclear family
- Family Members: 5
- Farming Experience: 15 years
- Landholding: 5 acres (owned)
- Primary Occupation: Agriculture

Background of the farmer

Like most farmers in his village, Sukhdev Singh inherited about five acres of land from his father. For many years, his family followed the traditional cycle of wheat and paddy cultivation. The income was barely enough to sustain the household, and every year, the uncertainty of the weather and fluctuating market prices. But Mr Sukhdev was not satisfied with doing farming the same way his ancestors had done for decades.

One day, he attended a training programme organised by the KVK. There, he learned about an **integrated farming system**, a method where crops, livestock, fisheries, and other enterprises are combined on the same farm to create multiple income sources. Such a system helps farmers earn year-round income and improve sustainability by linking farm activities. So, he decided to opt for it for himself.

First, he converted one acre of land into a **vegetable cultivation area**, growing tomatoes, onions, potatoes, chillies and ladyfinger. These vegetables provided him better return compared to cereal crops, and these were consumed by his family themselves, eliminating the need to buy vegetables from the market.

Next, he started **dairy farming** with two cows (Holstein Friesian) and one buffalo (Murrah). He not only used the milk for his own family but also started selling to Verka dairy, which provided them daily income depending on the amount of milk

Also, instead of buying chemical fertilisers, he began using cow dung to prepare **vermicompost**, which ultimately improved the soil fertility and reduced the input costs. Soon after, Mr Sukhdev Singh added more components to his farm, which were- trees of eucalyptus

He planted it around the farm, which also served as a shelter belt for the farm and the crops grown at the time. It also proved beneficial as it protected the crops from heavy wind impact. This also turned out to be beneficial, as the wood from the mature tree would be useful for selling and helping in generating more income.

Gradually, the villagers noticed Sukhdev's success. While many farmers struggled with fluctuating crop prices, Sukhdev Singh earned income from several sources throughout the year.

Soon, people began calling him the “**Progressive Farmer of Mehmampur.**”

Impact

Today, Sukhdev Singh's farm produces:

- vegetables
- fruits
- milk
- wood
- organic compost

His income has increased almost **four times compared to traditional farming**, and his farm has become a symbol of hope for young people who once thought agriculture had no future.