



Mystical Stone of Gurdaspur (Punjab): S. Gurdial Singh

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ABSTRACT

S. Gurdial Singh Saini, a resident of village Sallopur, district Gurdaspur is an enterprising and industrious farmer, who has taken a lead in the adoption of crop diversification and subsidiary occupations. He has proved his credentials and became an icon for those farmers who are getting stress due to unprofitable farming. He got linked with PAU in 1999-2000 and participated in various trainings relevant to agriculture and allied practices which were organized by KVK, Gurdaspur. Presently, he is cultivating turmeric, processing it and marketing his products by himself in the market. He is not dependent on the third person to sell his produce. He chose a different path from the rest of the farmer to make his own identity in the society. He had made a self help group named 'Green Gold SHG' and FPO named 'Sallopur Foods FPO' to include local farmers and youth for turmeric processing, value addition to pulses and seasonal fruits like preparation of pickles and chutneys. Besides this, he is also successful beekeeper having 200 bee hives. He is successfully using his machinery via custom hiring centre. Besides this, he is providing employment to 50 rural youths which include machine operators, mechanics and daily wagers. He is also earning two times more profit by growing turmeric crop as seed. He also engaged himself in various extension programmes as a member of various clubs, committees, boards, societies and Scientific Advisory Committee of the KVK, etc. S. Gurdial Singh has been conferred with many awards for his achievements in crop diversification, processing, packaging, marketing, entrepreneurship, bee keeping and crop residue management. Many eminent personalities and scientists have visited his farm and praised his dedicated effort.

Situation Analysis

Punjab is agricultural dominated state, where the farmers have potential to wipe out food deficiency from the country but now due to land fragmentation and increased cost of production made farming stagnated and less profitable for small and marginal farmers. From the last few years many farmers committed suicides which show the distress situation of farmers in Punjab. For making farming a profitable occupation the Punjab Agricultural University made a call for crop diversification as well as adoption of subsidiary occupation which are utmost important for economic upliftment of farmers to live a prosperous life. To achieve the goal of diversification, many progressive farmers of Punjab took a step forward to bring about a change in the traditional cropping system. S. Gurdial

Singh Saini is an example of such successful farmers. Born to S. Nand Singh in Village Sallopur of district Gurdaspur (Punjab), he completed his secondary education from Govt. School, Kahnuwan. After passing his matriculation he tried for government jobs, but getting failed after many attempts. Then he decided to go hand in hand with his father to support him in farming and engaged in traditional farming, cultivating paddy and wheat crops on his five hectares land. From the beginning, he was never satisfied with the conventional farming methods, as he knew that it will not be enough to meet daily needs of family and he wanted to do something better to establish him a successful farm entrepreneur. To increase his net income, he has decided to start some agriculture based subsidiary occupation which could complement with the existing farming system.

Plan, Implementation and Support

In order to do something challenging, S. Gurdial Singh got linked with Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana in 1999-2000. A man of determination, S. Gurdial Singh is one of the firm belief, "where there is a will, there is a way". He has proved his determination by participation in various trainings (Table 1) organized by PAU, Ludhiana; KVK, Gurdaspur; NABARD; Department of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare and Department of Horticulture, Punjab.

His village (Sallopur) was adopted by KVK, Gurdaspur and conducted various extension activities, provided technical help in raising crops, agricultural engineering, value addition, etc. In 2004, he experimented with turmeric cultivation on a small land with the guidance of KVK. For more exposure and practical knowledge, he visited to many departments like, Deptt. of Food Processing (PAU, Ludhiana), IARI (New Delhi), Turmeric Processing Plant (Sanaura, Jalandhar), Citrus Mela, (Nagpur), Turmeric Processing Plant (Kang Mai, Hoshiarpur), Pingalwara Farm (Dhirkot, Amritsar) and the centre of Excellence for Vegetables (Kartarpur). Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gurdaspur, besides providing him trainings also motivated him to go for self marketing of their products. So at present he is not dependent on the third person for the sale of his produce. Now, he is cultivating turmeric, processing it, marketing his product himself and selling it in the market. Besides turmeric processing, he started production of agri-horti and value added products. The KVK also facilitates him to exhibit his products by providing stalls during *kisan melas* and other different programs for wider publicity of his products. Besides turmeric marketing, he is also involved in production, packaging and marketing of honey, value added products of vegetables (pickle & chutney), cereals (wheat, wheat flour, organic basmati rice), pulses (Mash dal, Moong dal, lentil dal, besan), oilseeds (sarson oil/ cake, linseed), jaggery (flavoured gur & shakkar), etc.

Output

S. Gurdial Singh is in constant touch with the KVK and adopted innovative and sustainable farm practices resulting into enhanced returns.

After starting turmeric cultivation at small scale, he found processing of turmeric into turmeric powder without using any machinery is backbreaking. He decided to switch to mechanized processing and eventually, installed mechanized processing unit for turmeric powder production in 2007. He named his unit as 'Green Gold Haldi Processing Plant' and 'Haldi Green Gold Spice' is one of the products of this plant. The KVK also provides guidance and consultation regarding various technical problems faced by him in production, packaging and marketing of the produce. After installation of processing plant, he also purchased raw turmeric from other farmers. He is also earning two times more profit by growing turmeric crop as seed. S. Gurdial Singh cultivates basmati, wheat, paddy, moong, mash, gobhi sarson, turmeric, lentil, gram, garlic and sugarcane. Beside turmeric, he also started processing of pulses, cereals, oilseeds & sugarcane and preparation of pickles & chutneys and bee keeping. In 2015, he had made a FPO 'Sallopur Foods FPO' and self help group 'GREEN GOLD SHG' to involve local farmers and youth. S. Gurdial Singh is president of this FPO. Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gurdaspur, besides providing him trainings also encouraged him to go for self marketing of their products so he developed a very unique way of marketing of his products by innovative concept which involves getting orders on whatsapp and then supplying the same to their doorsteps after sufficient orders. He is the founder member of Kisan Bazaar which has been initiated jointly by ATMA, Department of Agriculture and Farmer's welfare, Gurdaspur and KVK, Gurdaspur. This Kisan Bazar is scheduled on every Thursday and Sunday at a prime location in the city Gurdaspur to sell their produce to consumers directly.

Being a nature lover, he has adopted crop residue management practices in his field and never set fire to wheat and paddy straw for last thirteen years and preferred green manuring with dhaincha and moong after making wheat straw (Toori). He uses Zero till drill for sowing of wheat since 2001 and since last seven years sowing wheat with happy seeder. In addition, he has installed underground pipe line system and solar system for irrigation purpose at the Farm. For

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Table 1: The details of the training acquired.

Sr. No	Name of the Training	Dates/year	Department/Agency
1	Correspondence course in Agriculture (One Year)	1999-2000	Department of Extension Education PAU, Ludhiana
2.	Bee Keeping	15-22/2/2000	Department of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare, Gurdaspur
3.	Dairy Farming	14-23/2/2001	Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gurdaspur
4.	Mushroom Cultivation	20-27/9/2005	Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gurdaspur
5.	Hybrid seed production of Chilli	May 2006	Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gurdaspur
6.	Scientific cultivation of Turmeric	April 2007	PAU, Ludhiana
7.	Processing and packing of Turmeric	February 2008	PAU, Ludhiana
8.	Producer Organization Development Fund	19 -21/1/2015	NABARD, Bikaner, Rajasthan
9.	Value addition of cereals, Pulses, and preparation of Seasonal Summer Fruits and Vegetables.	14-27/6/2019	Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gurdaspur

resource management he has leveled his entire farm with laser land leveler and repeats it after the gap of two years on regular basis.

His family including wife and two sons plays a major role in all the activities related to the farming operations. In addition to this, currently he is providing employment to 50 rural youths which include machine operators, mechanics and daily wagers.

Outcome

S. Gurdial Singh has different roles by profession- a farmer and an entrepreneur. Presently, he is being recognised as a “King of turmeric” in the gurdaspur district. He is involved in production, packaging and marketing of turmeric powder, honey, value added products of honey, vegetables (pickle & chutney), cereals (wheat, wheat flour, organic basmati rice), pulses (Mash dal, Moong dal, lentil dal, besan), oilseeds (sarson oil/ cake, linseed), jaggery (flavoured gur & shakkar), etc. The details regarding annual production of major products, share of different products in annual turnover and net return during last 9 years is presented in Figure 1 (A, B and C, respectively).

Impact

As per S. Gurdial's saying, with the help of KVK Gurdaspur, he attained more knowledge about new technologies, value additions in agricultural produce, financing solutions and new ways of creating market linkages for its produce. His hard work and reservoir of experience in every aspect has earned him a status of very successful farm entrepreneur in the country. Therefore, several organizations invited him to deliver lecture in different trainings organized by the PAU, KVKs, banks, different societies, department of horticulture and department of agriculture & Farmer's welfare etc. S. Gurdial Singh is president of Sallopur Foods FPO and Green Gold Self Help Group, Sallopur. He has been an active member of PAU, Farmer's Committee, Ludhiana; Bee keeper Association, PAU, Ludhiana; PAU Kisan Club, Ludhiana; District Production Committee, Gurdaspur; Governing Board, ATMA, Gurdaspur; Punjab Bee Keeping Board, Chandigarh; Potato Production Association, Jalandhar; Scientific Advisory Committee, KVK Gurdaspur and Young Progressive Farmers Producers Organization. The

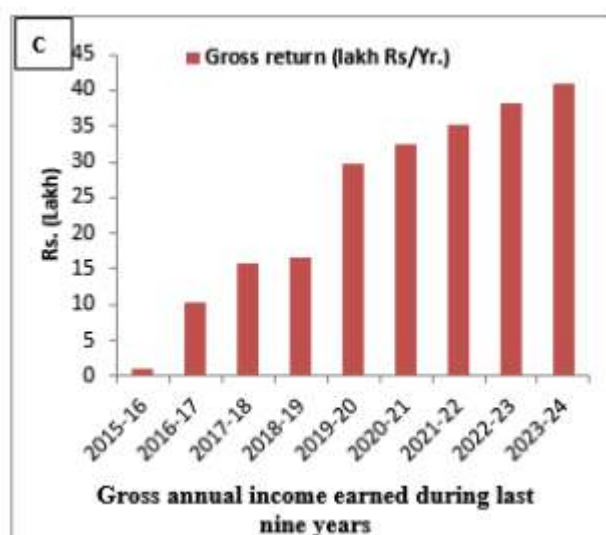
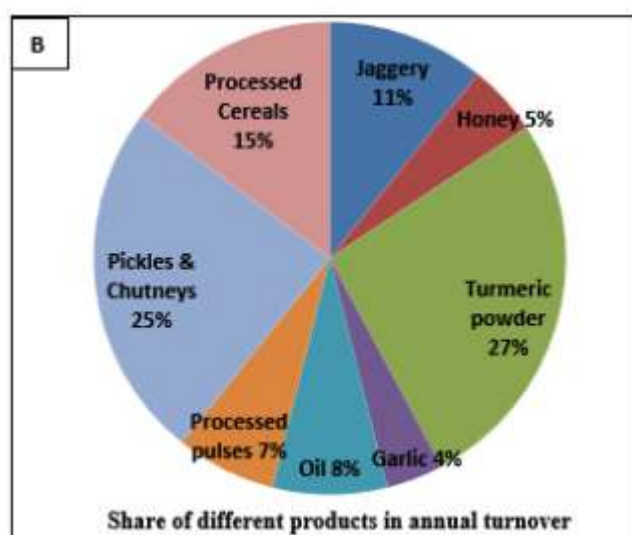
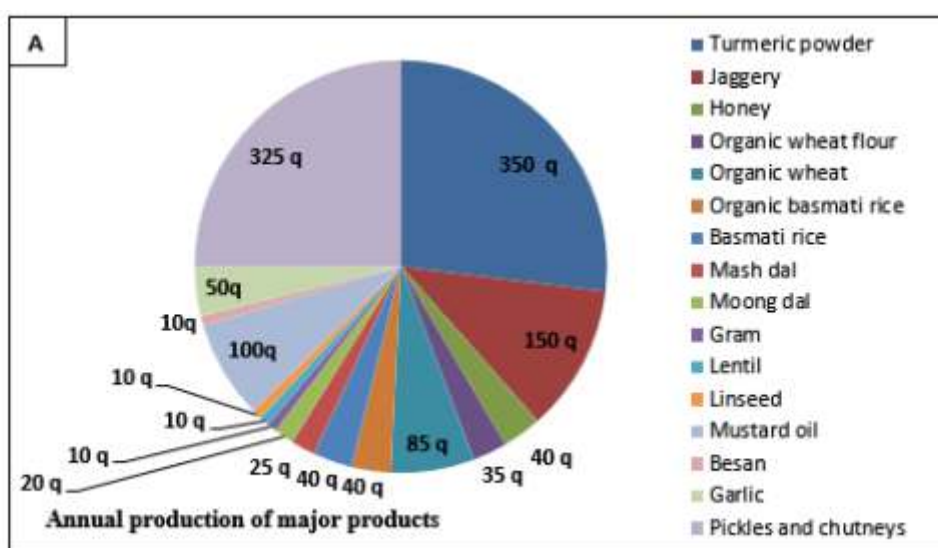


Figure 1: A, Annual production of major products; B, Share of different products in annual turnover; C, Gross annual income earned during last nine years.

farmer is also involved in the KVK's campaign against paddy straw burning and other campaigns like Jal shakti abhiyan, Swachhta abhiyan, Parthenium control, Nutrition week, Energy conservation etc. S. Gurdial Singh has been conferred with number of awards, prizes and appreciation certificates at district level, state level

and national level for his hard work (Table 2). Recently, he has been honored with Millionaire Farmer Award (Dec, 2023) (Krishi Jagran) by Governor of India. Many eminent personalities and scientists have visited his farm and acknowledged his dedicated efforts.

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Table 2: Awards/honors/certificates

Sr. No	Name of the Award	Particulars	Department/Agency
1.	Udmi Kisan Award (Rs. 51000)	Crop Diversification & Processing, Packaging & Marketing of Turmeric powder	Progressive Punjab Summit, Mohali (2014)
2.	JAT Expo 2015	Crop Diversification	Advisor Publications, Jalandhar (22.11.2015)
3.	Best Enterprise Award	Best Entrepreneurship Award	PAU, Ludhiana (11.9.2007)
4.	Appreciation Certificate	Self Help Group & Crop diversification	Deptt. of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare, Gurdaspur (22.10.2005)
5.	Merit Certificate	Agriculture	Deputy Commissioner, Gurdaspur (15.8.2007)
6.	Second Prize	Quality production of Turmeric	PAU, Ludhiana (18 -19.3.2008)
7.	Consolation Prize	Quality production of Turmeric Powder	PAU, Ludhiana (Sept. 2009)
8.	Appreciation Certificate	Stall Competition	CII Fair, Ludhiana (2016)
9.	Best Farmer Award	Crop Diversification & Processing, Packaging & Marketing of Turmeric powder	Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gurdaspur (2022)
10.	Appreciation Certificate	Permanent member of Kisan Bazar	Deptt. of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare, Gurdaspur (1.4.2019)
11.	Appreciation Certificate	Crop Residue Management	Deptt. of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare, GOI (9.9.2019)
12.	Appreciation Certificate	Crop Residue Management	Deptt. of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare, Gur daspur (16.11.2021)
13.	Honour Certificate (Rattan -e- Baghbani)	Bee Keeping and Turmeric processing	State Level Function of Deptt. Of Horticulture, Punjab.
14.	Special Honour Certificate	Crop Residue Management	Honourable Speaker, Vidhan Sabha, Punjab



Sale of products at Kisan Bazar, Gurdaspur



Training-cum Demonstration on CRM Technologies at my Farm



A visit of ICAR team to his fields



Appreciation Certificate for Crop Residue Management by Govt. of India



Udmikisan Award



Progressive Farmer Award



Exhibition-cum-sale of products