

## Success Story: Kalaburagi farmer Sri. Lakshmikant Hibare converts barren land into a self-sustainable natural farm

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The farmer Lakshmikant Hibare S/o Digambarao Hibare is a matriculate progressive farmer from Hagaraga Village, about 15 km from Kalaburagi city, is a living example for the farming community as he has adopted agroforestry along with various scientific technologies and techniques for conservation of natural resources, while earning a good income cultivating in his three acres of land. The untiring efforts of the farmer have helped him convert his barren piece of land into a self-sustainable green farm.

Laxmikant Hibare originally from Maharashtra, Laxmikant's father moved to Karnataka many years ago to settle down. "Soon after class 10<sup>th</sup> I took up various odd jobs to make ends meet. It was a difficult time growing up. I managed to get a job as a typist while simultaneously working on trying to cultivate the land. My father had a total of seven acres of land, of which only about three acres was fertile and cultivable. As the years went by, the land was divided between my father and his brother, and what remained with my family was barren land," he shares.

He explained that it takes at least 15 years to 18 years to procure usable sandalwood from the plantation. Meanwhile, farmers from across the district and students from agriculture & other colleges visit his farm to take his advice and to learn more about his farming techniques. He says 'In the beginning faced big hurdles due to lack of knowledge about natural farming, marketing issues and proper guidance but later he found success after adopting organic method of cultivation with the support and

guidance from the KVK, Kalaburagi scientists especially the Senior Scientist and Head Dr. Raju G. Teggelli, who helped him through various stages. "It was on their advice that I learnt all about forest farming and started growing crops following their instructions," he adds. Forest farming is the cultivation of high-value specialty crops under a forest canopy that is intentionally modified or maintained to provide shade levels and habitat that favour growth and enhance production levels. Now he is growing different varieties fruits, sandalwood and along with various other crops and components in organically.

He is practicing natural farming for 15 years, by way of using organic agricultural methods, which now has 850 sandalwood trees and red sanders trees, 850 drumstick tree, 225 java plum trees, 225 Lucknow-49 guava plants, 225 Thai orange trees, 225 grapefruit (red orange) trees and 125 Mahogany timber plants and 125 meli dubia trees, amla, turmeric and moringa along with fruits plantations, was once a barren land, without water. The farmer has also planted lemon trees and fever nut trees as border fencing. Though he has a bore well and a water harvesting pond on the farm, he has installed a drip irrigation system for water supply.



Lakshmikant Hibare has adopted the organic way of farming and composting process for improving soil fertility and important factor is he is nothing procured from outside. Manure, jeevamrutha, compost every agri-input required for farm operations



is generated at his own farm in-situ. He has different lowcost units in his farm like bio digester tank, vermicompost, like jeevamrutha, panchagavya, gokrupamrutha, waste decomposer, Agni astra, brhamstra, neemastra, dashaparni kashaya, neem oil, goatry unit, farm pond etc., besides growing seasonal fruits and vegetables, Lakshmikant Hibare has established a poultry farm that breeds a special variety of chicken, BV-380. The farmer earns between Rs. 40,000 and Rs. 50,000 per month by selling eggs, vegetables and fruits from his farm. Lakshmikant Hibare, who planted sandalwood and red sanders two years ago, also runs a nursery and bee keeping successfully for additional sources of income for his family.

He also has innovative way of reaching the customers for selling his produce. He says, "I find it

easier to directly sell to the customer by using various social media. This way, the middleman is completely eliminated and I get a sense of what customers are actually looking for. I am part of a many WhatsApp groups where customers directly deal with the farmer to buy the produce." Laxmikant serves close to 1000 customers *via* WhatsApp and says that some stores in and around the village also stock up on his fruits and vegetable produce. In diversifying and growing various seasonal crops, Laxmikant has been able to retain a steady income. "The Lucknow Guava, when in season, earns me close to Rs 80,000 and the moringa crop, close to Rs 1.5 lakhs a season," he says.

**Achievements:** He had been honoured by Government of Karnataka prestigious "**Krishi Pandit**" award during 2019-20 under organic farming category, he was received "**Best farmer**" pakwada award from Bank of Baroda, Kalaburagi Regional Office, Zonal level award during 2020-21 and leading newspaper Vijaya Karnataka '**Super Star Farmer**' Award (Instituted by the noted Kannada Daily Vijaya Karnataka during 2019) held at Kalaburagi and He was recognized as district level "Negilayogi" Karnataka Rakshna Vedike, Kalaburagi during 2020 and many organization honoured for his tremendous achievement in organic cultivation. His success story published in many leading magazines and TV channels in different languages of the India.

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