

A farmer with a difference

Sabir Hussain, age thirty-two, from Jakh village in Punhana block in district Nuh, does not look like the typical image of a farmer. Dressed suavely, he keeps updated with the latest knowledge on farming and related subjects.

Farming happened to him entirely by chance. The eldest boy in a family with ten children, Sabir managed to study until high school despite many odds. Forced into marriage when he was in grade eight, he soon became a father. Financial pressures related to parenthood put an end to dreams he had for himself, and the sudden changes in his life caused him to fail his exams that year.

Sabir took a job as a medical assistant at a local hospital and tried hard to strike a balance between managing his profession and farming. But as his family grew, he realized that income from his medical practice would remain stagnant, so he started spending more time farming. He was confident that he would succeed because of an ideal blend of traditional farming knowledge inherited from his family and new knowledge he sourced through community radio.

Sabir tunes into *Alfaz-e-Mewat* daily to listen to the agricultural program called *Tohfa-e-Kudrat: Jal, Jungle, Zameen* (gifts of nature-water, forests, and land). Information on laser land leveling caught his attention, and he was prompted to find out how he could reap the benefits of this technology.

When he decided to have his field leveled with a laser leveler, "What followed was unbelievable," said Sabir. His one-acre field sown with wheat crop yielded much more than before. In the past, his family members came forward to help at the time of irrigation. He says, "Soil salinity was so high that even though my field was irrigated with canal water, the crop wasn't good."



Sabir listening to radio

But since Sabir resorted to laser leveling, his produce has increased and irrigating the fields is much more convenient and easily managed by one person. Sabir is extremely positive in his approach and wants to use the

extra income for the betterment of his family and provide equal opportunities to his four children: two girls and two boys.

"I have received lot of other useful information from *Alfaz-e-Mewat*, not just farming. Whenever songs on social issues are played over radio, specifically the one on gambling, I increase the volume so that it reaches our neighbors' ears. My neighbors are in a difficult situation, and I want to help them in whichever way possible," said a concerned Sabir.

According to Sabir, information is the lifeline that can transform the way one thinks and acts. "For people like us, community radio serves as that lifeline."

(This article by Fakat Hussain, senior reporter, community radio Alfaz-e-Mewat, was translated from Hindi.)