

# Mandeepa;



## Meet Mandeepa,

a farmer who is *leading the way* in sustainable agriculture practices. Mandeepa Patel, 30, of Gauhaniya in Uttar Pradesh had been growing various crops, ranging from wheat and paddy to flowers and vegetables, but the income was just not enough for her family of five. Mandeepa's problem: her farm is too small to give her good margins. Her 1.5 bigha (3,763 square meters) holding is less than half the size of a FIFA football field, defined as 105m x68m or 6,825 sqm. Such small holdings do not yield enough to give the farmer selling **power** or economies of scale in buying inputs.

Mandeepa is not unique: **85% of India's farmers are labeled "small and marginal"**. A farmer, renter, or sharecropper cultivating less than one hectare is "marginal", and those with 1-2 ha are "small". But things changed when Mandeepa, whose village is in Prayagraj district, became a shareholder of Dharavats Bio Energy Farmer Producer Company Ltd in July 2020. Grameen Foundation partners with organizations like Dharavats to ensure women smallholder farmers can increase their access to ownership and best practices like using natural fertilizers. Mandeepa

shares, "Earlier, I relied on synthetic fertilizers which resulted in lower production. However, after connecting with Dharavats, I switched to vermicompost as a manure and now produce 15-16 quintals of paddy in the same area that earlier, was limited to 10 quintals. Not only did the use of vermicompost improve the production of my crops but it also added to our health and taste of food. I have also motivated other farmers in the surrounding area to adopt these practices." Consequently, the women farmers in the area are producing with higher efficiency and by selling their excess to Dharavats, they are able to boost their income leading to increased financial resilience and resilience against climate change. Your gift to Grameen Foundation ensures women like Mandeepa can access their **full potential and power**. Women who are already providing for their families and communities but who are waiting for the antiquated systems around them to catch up. "Since becoming a Grameen Mittra, my fellow villagers are very delighted. The nearest bank is 15K from our village. But now I am able to help them with their banking needs from electric and water bill payments to transactions and money withdrawal which is great. Most of the people in my area are

### ***daily wage laborers***

and now they don't have to lose their day's wage for visiting the bank. Therefore, they are very happy that there is a Grameen Mittra in their village. I have gained recognition and respect in my village. Now I am able to help all the villagers, which makes me happy," she says. *One Mittra can serve, on average, 100 households in a year.* The regions in which they work have an average household number of three people. With thousands of Grameen Mittras currently working in India, the ripple effects they have are felt through entire communities.

# She believed she could. *So she did.*

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