

ALL FIRED UP

The Making of Sukhvinder's Achaar Business

Name: **Sukhvinder Kaur** | Location: **Delhi**
Business: **Achar, chutney, and spice mix maker**

"When I see people less fortunate than me, I get inspired to do more."

Long before achar became her business, Sukhvinder was known simply as someone who could cook. She was always good at it, and the people around her never let her forget it.

In fact, Sukhvinder is a woman of many skills, but for years they remained confined to informal, inconsistent work. In 2004, she met with an accident that left her relying on a wheelchair for the rest of her life. Refusing to give up, she first started off with a home-based crochet and embroidery business. Then came some tailoring here, a few mehendi orders there, small jobs that brought in cash but never quite added up to enough to run a home. There was no support from her own family to fall back on either, emotionally or financially.

What she had was talent and very little else to build on. She considered giving everything up several times, but something in her heart stopped her.

Her resilience and desire to make something of herself grew stronger when Sukhvinder Kaur became the first EDP trainee of NEDAR Foundation. She started small, selling home-made achar to people around her who had always loved her cooking; the kind of spicy, tangy Punjabi flavour that people kept coming back for. Growth wasn't a straight line. She started with small orders, and the business paused during COVID-19 pandemic like so many others.

Through the Entrepreneurship Development Training that followed in 2022 with support from Samhita-CGF, she learned the nuances of actually running a business: government support schemes, how to manage accounts, how to think about a business rather than just a kitchen skill.

And that is where ***"Chatkara Punjabi Achar"*** Sukhvinder's brand, started. Quite literally, from her own kitchen. Along the way, the programme even taught her to drive a scooty, adding one more layer of independence to a life that has steadily been building towards it.







Despite every hurdle that propped up, Sukhwinder kept coming back to it, setting up stalls at functions and festivals, supplying her products for kitty parties, birthdays, and adding vibrancy to every local celebration. Soon, her pickles travelled farther than she ever had, reaching customers outside India, in Germany, the UK, and Japan, accompanying people who wanted a taste of home with them in these far-off lands.

In the last four years, her product range has grown alongside her reach: achar, murabba, and chutney today, with a line of special masalas next on her list. Her pickles carry the pitch of home. Mango, carrot-cauliflower, garlic, and ginger, each one made not just for taste but for the health benefits she's happy to explain to anyone who asks. She still does all her own packaging, by hand.

The business side has scaled just as much as the product line. She used to deliver every order herself; now she relies on services like Porter to manage her deliveries. The Returnable Grant of Rs. 15,000 she received in 2022 alongside the training, went towards machines and raw materials, and she repaid it entirely through her own profits over 12 months. Even after facing an accident along the way, she didn't miss a single repayment, and closed it out with no pending interest.

Sukhwinder's monthly income today touches nearly Rs. 30,000. She keeps her business visible through daily WhatsApp and Instagram status updates and active Facebook groups, and has built up a base of regular customers who send her feedback videos. One of her videos even went viral on YouTube, bringing in a wave of extra orders. More recently, she's begun receiving bulk orders from a customer, starting at 15–30 kg and scaling up to 40–100 kg for larger requirements.

Sukhvinder doesn't keep what she's learned to herself. She actively tells other people about the training and encourages them to start businesses of their own, and has built a WhatsApp group as a space to connect with others and share what she knows. Her own motivation comes from the same place: seeing people who have even less than she once did pushes her to keep going, to do more. She has one clear hope for how she'll be remembered: not just for the achar, but for the name she's building: achar wali didi.

Her efforts have not gone unnoticed. Sukhwinder was honoured with the Vijaylakshmi Award, receiving Rs. 1 lakh and a wheelchair; recognition that speaks to both her business achievement and her personal resilience.

"Apna naam chhor kar jaana hain. I want to leave my name behind."

Today, Chatkara continues to grow into a brand with several loyal customers. What started as informal, uncertain work to survive through a most difficult phase of life, has evolved into a business that ships orders overseas, mentors other other aspiring entrepreneurs, and carries Sukhvinder's name with pride. Her story is proof that a single skill, given the right support, can travel further than anyone expects.

