



Tuesday, September 24 2024

PRESS RELEASE

From Cane Harvester to Tractor Entrepreneur: FSC's novel TSP concept fuels Murti's aspiration and brings hope to young cane Farmers

Lautoka, Fiji. In the heart of Solove Sector, Seqaqa, a remarkable success story is unfolding—one that highlights the power of perseverance and innovation within Fiji's sugarcane farming community. Mr Sanjay Murti, a 47-year-old father of two, and contractor and founder of Isharat Farm Services, has transformed his life and the livelihoods of countless cane farmers by stepping into the role of a Tractor Service Provider (TSP), addressing a critical need in the sector. His journey is both inspiring and motivating, offering hope to other farmers looking to improve their livelihoods through alternate revenue-generation schemes in cane farming.

Mr Murti's journey began humbly. After leaving school in Form 4, he worked as a cane harvester before taking on the role of manager at Food Process (Batiri Citrus Farm). His true calling, however, came when he recognised a significant opportunity within Fiji's sugarcane sector with a new concept initiated by FSC. In 2022, with the sole support of the Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited (FSC) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr Murti took the bold step of becoming a TSP.

"I saw a shortage of tractors in the sector, which made it difficult for farmers to prepare their land," Murti explained. "Many growers couldn't afford to pay upfront, but with FSC's business plan concept and work order system, I could offer services without needing immediate cash payments. It was a win-win for everyone."

Starting with just one tractor, Mr Murti applied his experience from Food Process to assist local farmers with land preparation. His dedication to offering reliable services soon caught the attention of farmers throughout the sector. Today, his business has expanded significantly, boasting a fleet of six tractors and a range of essential implements, including disc ploughs, tillers, slashers, and boom sprayers—tools vital for sugarcane farming.

"It wasn't easy, but with perseverance and support from FSC field officials and the team, I was able to grow the business. The work order system allowed me to run it like a proper business, and the farmers benefited, too," he added.

In addition to running a successful tractor service business, Mr Murti has also resumed cane farming. This year, after years of lapse, he cultivated 7.5 acres of cane and is planning further expansion with an aim to grow his cultivation to 30 acres. His goal is to not only be a major tractor service provider but also become a key cultivator in the sugarcane industry.

In just two years, Mr Murti's turnover as a TSP has grown. Despite facing challenges in securing financing—loans were obtained through Merchant Finance—he has successfully repaid 30% of his debts. His goal is to break even and become debt-free by 2026, but his vision for the future extends even further.

"My vision is to expand further. I want to purchase a digger and other mechanical implements to offer even more services to local farmers," Mr Murti said, showcasing his determination to continue growing his business.

Local farmers, who once struggled to access machinery, now rely on Mr Murti's services to prepare their fields. Many credit him with helping to increase their cane yields, as his modern equipment and affordable payment terms have made land preparation more accessible.

"I've come a long way, but I'm not done yet," he said with a smile. "My goal is to help more farmers and make their work easier by offering a wider range of services. I believe in the future of cane farming, and I want to be a part of that growth."

Mr Murti's success story is a beacon of hope for others in the farming community. His journey, marked by hard work, intelligent financial decisions, and community support, demonstrates what can be achieved with determination. His advice to other farmers is simple but powerful: "Take advantage of the opportunities available. There's always a way forward if you're willing to put in the effort."

His story is one that resonates with farmers across Fiji, serving as a reminder that with persistence, vision, and community support, it is possible to overcome challenges and build a thriving future in the sugarcane industry.

Mr. Murti's achievements stand as a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit and the positive impact one individual can have on an entire community.

Bhan Pratap Singh
Chief Executive Officer

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