



KHETI VIRASAT MISSION

Kheti Virasat Mission (KVM) was formed in March 2005 with headquarters at Jaitu town in Faridkot district of Punjab. KVM mainly works on Sustainable Agriculture, Environmental health (particularly the health impacts of intensive agriculture), Water and Ecological Crisis, Rural livelihood, issues related to food security, seed diversity and food safety. It seeks to bridge the gap between various stakeholders- farmers, consumers, experts, academicians, youngsters, women and commoners; providing them with a platform to interact, discuss, guide and serve each other.

Our Mission:

KVM focuses to revive and conserve natural farming practices, traditional and healthy food, organic clothing, traditional handicrafts, vernacular architecture and edible food forests in Punjab. It aims to save the precious seeds of wisdom and knowledge so that it can be passed on to the generations to come.

ORGANIC KITCHEN GARDENING:

Project Description:

With the support of Association for India's Development (AID), we started the 'Women Action for Organic Farming and Rural Livelihood' in 2011. Under this umbrella, we are training rural women to establish Organic Kitchen Gardens (inclusive of vegetables, fruits, medicinal plants and mushroom cultivation) in their backyards. Started from 4 villages in 2011, it has now spread across 60 villages with 6,000 women involved.



Grow your own Safe Food

Abolish the Hospital bills

Restore Nature in the Backyard

Discover the journey of plants from Pot to Platter

Eat fresh and Healthy

Nurture your body, mind & soul with Living Food

OUR INITIATIVES:

Through Kitchen gardens, we are connecting with the non-farming community - urban folks, women, youngsters & students; who would have otherwise been alienated from the entire organic movement.

- **Kitchen Gardening Workshops:**

KVM delivers trainings which include designing the garden; making natural growth promoters; pest management; seed conservation & much more. The key feature is that majority of our trainers, project coordinators and trainees are women. The field coordinators pay their regular visits to the gardens every month, addressing the challenges faced by the gardeners.

- **Seed Banks:**

Punjab was void of its indigenous seed diversity. Working with women, we realized that they can play a key role to restore the same. So, native seeds, collected from various states and adapted into the environment of Punjab, were distributed to the gardeners. KVM distributes 'seed kits' to the newcomers comprising of seeds of 15 - 20 seasonal vegetables.

- **Young Seed Keepers:**

A group of 20 young girls were trained to manage the farm; grow organic and indigenous vegetables; conserve the seeds, preserve them with traditional practices and market them in various public events, under the auspices of KVM.

- **Mushroom Cultivation:**

To add-on to their livelihood, we organise Mushroom Cultivation workshops for our gardeners. Seeds and other raw materials are made available, along with.

Check out the link below to see more of KVM's work:

<https://khetivirasatmission.org/projectkitchengardens/>



"THE ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS"

Jagmeet Singh from Chaina, Faridkot is 30 years old and has four family members. Ten years ago, he started organic farming. He learned it from Umendra Dutt, who taught him many methods. From his teaching from Umendra and KVM, he learned to fertilize and manage the pests by using cow dung, cow urine, buttermilk, raw milk, compost, and ash.

Jagmeet talks about the ecological benefits of growing organically. Firstly, he says, for the soil, organic kitchen gardening maintains the power of the soil. The soil is more aerated. An organic kitchen garden also uses fifty per cent less water than conventionally grown because of the use of the garden beds. He says that when organic growing is practiced, the air is fresher and the birds come; the parrots, sparrows, and crows come to his organic kitchen garden which makes him happy.



”A COPING MECHANISM”

65-year-old Jaginder Kaur lives in Chaina village in Faridkot in a family with 4 members. She has no formal education and is SC caste. She has been keeping an organic kitchen garden for 10-15 years, first learning how to grow from her father, a farmer, when she was a child. He taught her how to grow vegetables.

Her eldest son died six years ago and keeps thinking of him whenever she has free time. When she works in the garden, she can concentrate on the garden and it helps to distract herself from the grief of losing her son. She knows that she can struggle with depression connected to the grief of losing of her son hence she has chosen to develop her organic garden not solely as a source of healthy food for her family but as a coping mechanism in order to better her own mental health and emotional well-being.



”A HOLISTIC TRANSITION”

Swarnjit Kaur is 46 years old and lives in village Chaina in district Faridkot and has a family of four. She learned how to grow plants from her father before she was married and also, then, attended a meeting of KVM to learn more. She has had her organic kitchen garden for 3 years now.

For Swarnjit, gardening is a hobby. First, she grew flowers and then she thought that if she began to also grow vegetables, she might make some profit by selling them. But now instead of selling her extra produce she decides to distribute it to other women. Her case shows how what initially brings someone into organic kitchen gardening can change and evolve and become more holistic over time. The impetus for starting the garden was to potentially make a profit from selling extra vegetables but it changed over the course of time. In the learning and growing process of having the garden, she has come to equally value the health of family, environment, and community.



”CHANGING HABITS”

Kuldeep Kaur is 50 years old and lives in Dabrikhana, Faridkot. She has 7 family members, is of SC caste and has no formal education.

When Kuldeep began growing a garden, she used chemicals. Later, she met some members of the KVM staff and learned organic methods of growing from them. Upon learning organic methods, she didn't immediately cease doing things the way she was accustomed to; but in time, she was able to transition to completely organic. This shows that sustained support in moving towards healthier goals can be achieved over time. Now, Kuldeep speaks mostly about the impact to health and environment of growing chemical-free. That has become her primary message. Kuldeep values her relationship with KVM, saying that it is a good one and that they guide her and she follows. Kuldeep's case shows an example of behaviour change over time.



"THE HEALTH BENEFITS"

Kulwinder Kaur is 55 years old and lives in the village of Rameana, Faridkot district. There are 15 members in her family; two families living together on the same land. Although she did not have any formal training, she started her organic kitchen garden 32 years ago by learning from her husband. She did this in order to better provide for her family.

In addition to the cost savings by growing at home, no one in her family has had health problems. Kulwinder feels better when her family eats organic and urges other families to do the same. She says that it is important to eat chemical-free food as it builds up strength and immunity and also prevents from several kinds of illness. She speaks to the health benefits with such passion that she says that she would not buy chemically-grown vegetables even if she did not have vegetables ready in her garden.



”STRENGTHENING FAMILY BONDS”

Sukhjeet Kaur is 60 years old and lives in the village of Karirwali in the Faridkot district with five family members. She has a well-kept kitchen garden and more plants throughout her yard, which she has been tending to for 10 years.

She did not attend any formal trainings on organic farming but over time has gathered knowledge from Meena, the KVM community resource person for her village. She values her relationship with KVM, saying that it is very good. Her organic kitchen garden provides a space for her to spend time with her family, engage with other women and members of her community, especially by sharing her bountiful harvests. Furthermore, the work brings an emotional well-being in addition to a physical one. She has a clear pride and joy in showing off her plants and trees and flowers that have been organically grown. Her yard is unmistakably beautiful and pleasant to be in.



”ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRITS”

Subaa Singh is 59 years old and lives in the village of Bishnandi in Faridkot district. He has no formal education and is of SC caste. There are 11 members in his family. For 40 years, he has been growing vegetables. He taught himself, neither learning from anyone in particular nor attending any trainings. At first, he says, he knew nothing but that he slowly increased his knowledge.

"Subaa exhibits the most entrepreneurial of spirits, showing with pride his home and shop that he has built, the seeds he has saved and catalogued, and his quite large and full garden. Starting with only himself as a resource, he has built up a financially successful means of supporting himself while feeding his family healthy, organic food, and spreading the extra out into his community. His case is a quintessential example of utilizing an organic kitchen garden to beneficially impact one's economic situation. It is supplemented by being a practice in which Subaa acknowledges is healthy, ecologically beneficial, and tied to his spirituality. While he focuses on the economic benefits, it nonetheless continues to show the holistic beneficial impacts of organic kitchen gardening."



"THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS"

31-year-old Sukhjit Kaur lives in Karirwali in the Faridkot district. She has 4 members of her family, is of the Jatt Sikh family, and has no formal education. She learned to grow from her family when she was younger and wanted to begin this organic kitchen garden for her family now.

In her garden, she grows lady finger/okra, bottle gourd, carrots, chilis, brinjal/eggplant, ash gourd, coriander, fenugreek, spinach, radish, turnip, cluster beans, and mint. Using cow dung manure and buttermilk to fertilize the soil, she can grow enough organic vegetables to occasionally sell some of the extra at a fair enough price. By growing organically at her own farm, not only is she saving money from having to buy seeds or vegetables from the market but is also earning some extra as well. She appreciates the support provided by KVM's in making her economically strong.



”SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT”

Manjit Kaur is 60 years old from the village of Deliyawali in the Faridkot district of Punjab. She is a basket and bowl maker as well as a kitchen gardener. Her family had been farming traditionally and she knew about growing plants but Santosh, a KVM trainer, taught her how to grow organic and without chemicals.

The Kitchen Gardening has been holistically beneficial to Manjit herself as well as her family and the broader community. When asked if she is more social because of the garden, she replied that she is and that she shares her experience and the benefits of organic gardening with other women and then offers to call a bunch of women and have them come over and share the benefits of organic farming with them. While she would like to see this continue on in the youth, she herself, is benefiting socially from incorporating these practices into her life.



” MEANS OF SURVIVAL ”

Gurjeet Kaur is 35 years old and lives in the village of Kotli in Muktsar district. She has an 8th grade education, is Mistri caste, and there are 6 members in her family.

She began organic gardening because of her economic situation. Her husband was paralyzed due to a spinal injury and hence the burden of supporting the family fell on her shoulders. She manages the household expenses by doing stitching work and selling vegetables. This is making it possible for her to feed her family and add to their income at a time when that is truly needed. Her case shows that while there are a multiplicity of benefits to growing an organic kitchen garden, the practice of doing so can literally be a means of survival. She is grateful to KVM for teaching her the benefits of having an organic kitchen garden so that now she is able to grow and sell organic vegetables.

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