

CASE STUDY KITCHEN GARDEN

Project Rakshan aims at empowering women to become economically self-sustained by giving them opportunities to earn through various interventions.

One such intervention that has been successful is giving resource-poor women an option to start kitchen gardens at their homes. Manju Sain is one of the kitchen garden beneficiaries from Kacholiya village in Rajasthan. There are eleven family members in her household. She lives with her husband, son (studying), mother and father-in-law. In addition, her brother in law's family of 6 members also stay with her. Amongst them there are only 3 earning members – Manju, her husband Mahavir and sister-in-law, Lada Devi. Lada's husband is disabled and hence not able to work. All three are daily wage labourers and work either in their own or neighbouring villages. Manju has been associated with Project Rakshan for the last two years. She has been an active member of the Self-Help Group (SHG) formed under Project Rakshan.

Since kitchen gardens can be easily maintained on a small patch of land with minimum expertise, it has provided many families under the project to grow supplementary vegetables while improving their nutrition at the same time. With minimum amount of skills involved, women are encouraged to start this initiative which also helps in fighting crop loss and make kitchen gardening a profitable source of supplementing their family income.

The field team has distributed a variety of seeds through SHGs to start kitchen gardening at their backyards. Manju feels that the kitchen garden initiative of iPartner India has had a huge impact on her family and in her village. Since her association with the project, she has successfully planted the initial batch of seeds and turned her backyard into a beautiful kitchen garden. She uses natural manures such as cow manure, ash, and neem leaves. They no longer buy vegetables from the local vendor and more importantly, Manju is able to save precious funds by selling surplus vegetables.

During the second debilitating lockdown, Manju was able to cook for her family using vegetables from her garden. During the first wave of the COVID pandemic, Manju and her family were provided with ration kits to sustain the family for a couple of months. When the second wave hit, Manju was able to feed her family through kitchen gardens and did not require the ration kit.



MANJU SAIN