



## Archana's Story: Turning Crisis Into Opportunity

More than 94% of India's working women are employed in the informal sector, which lacks job security and decent and timely wages, leaving many in poverty. PRASAD Chikitsa's Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) help women become entrepreneurs through training programs. As their businesses grow, women earn and control income, allowing them to become decision-makers in their families and communities. A virtuous circle – this encourages more women to do the same.

Archana Lad lives in Saiwan with her three children and husband Haribhau, who works at the post office. In 2007, Archana joined the Mahalaxmi SHG and opened a small tailor's shop. Her income is important because Haribhau's salary is not enough to support the family. During the COVID-19 lockdown, Archana had fewer customers, and her income declined dramatically. Concerned, she asked the PRASAD team for advice; they suggested making face masks.

Now, Archana makes masks and cloth bags and displays them in her shop on the main road in Saiwan. Regular customers and shoppers at the local grocery market next door buy her wares. Archana has not only been able to bring her income back to the level she needs but has increased it from \$40 to \$48 per month! With support and advice, Archana found opportunity in what could have been a family crisis.

***“Right now is difficult. Many people have lost their jobs and many businesses have shut down. I am grateful for my long association with PRASAD and their perfect guidance. Even in this challenging situation, they are in touch with us and continue to support us.” Archana Lad***

## Creating Sustainable Food Security in COVID Times

On a plot of land as small as 1,000 sq ft, a family can cultivate an organic kitchen garden, which has multiple benefits: easy access to high nutrient fresh fruits and vegetables, adding diversity to a rice-based diet; surplus to sell at market, generating income to purchase protein-rich foods; and an improved microenvironment at the family home.

Ganesh's story shows how kitchen gardens are a sustainable solution for family's financial and food security.

Ganesh Ghatal, his wife, Anita, and his parents all work in their one-acre rice paddy during the 3- to 4-month monsoon season. Until recently, they subsisted on the rice and selling the straw. In the off season, Ganesh is a day labourer and Anita helps in her son's daycare center.

Ganesh's family regularly uses PRASAD Chikitsa's health care services. When PRASAD's doctors noticed Ganesh's son, three-year-old Viraj, was malnourished, they enrolled the family in the Kitchen Garden initiative.

The addition of nutritious vegetables would improve Vraj's health and create a new income source for the family. During the lockdown, PRASAD also supported the family with food rations. family with food rations.

PRASAD provided vegetable and marigold seeds and guidance to get started with the kitchen garden. Ganesh cultivated okra, bitter gourd, fenu-greek, cucumber, cow pea and chillies, vegetables the family couldn't afford to buy.



Anita dried the chillies and made spice mixes. Ganesh earned \$130 – increasing his regular annual salary by nearly 25% - selling surplus vegetables and marigolds. Both the kitchen garden and Vraj's health have flourished.

***“Thanks to PRASAD's training and good quality seeds, we have a bountiful garden! My son's weight has increased, and we've reduced our household expenses.” Anita Ghatal***



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