**For A Healthier Lifestyle, Kerala Couple Opens Home Nursery, Earns Rs 25,000 a Month**

Remya and Shijith, a couple from Kannur district in Kerala, wanted to lead a healthier lifestyle for the sake of their first child. They began growing vegetables and fruits at home, and eventually opened a nursery, wherein they sell a variety of fruits and vegetables, organic manure, groundnut cake, bone meal and cow dung powder, and hybrid seeds, among many other products.

When it comes to going the extra mile for their child’s health, one couple from Kerala has it easy — they just have to make a trip to their terrace. Close to their son’s birth, in 2014, Remya and Shijith, based in Kannur district, decided to cultivate crops on their 2,000 square foot terrace to push for a healthier lifestyle for the entire family.

“After six years of marriage, we had our first child,” Remya tells **The Better India**, and adds, “We wanted to be more conscious about our child’s health. For this, my husband and I decided to grow vegetables and fruits on our terrace. We consume pesticide-free products, and lead a healthy lifestyle.”

The two started by making a list of vegetables that can be cultivated on a terrace easily, as Remya was pregnant at the time. This list included common vegetables such as chilli, pepper, tomato, onion, beetroot and spinach. Shijith, who owns a sawmill in Panoor city, initially invested around Rs 500 to collect seeds, pots and manure.

They relied on good soil and patience to grow plants at home, Shijith says, and used organic manure such as cow dung and bone meal powder, as well as groundnut cake, to get the best results.

A growing garden

“During her pregnancy, Remya often craved certain vegetables, such as capsicum, cauliflower, radish, sapodilla and passion fruit,” Shijith recalls, and says that’s how they began growing these vegetables in their home and on the terrace.

In 2015, Remya gave birth to a baby boy. Initially, the couple found it difficult to find time for gardening while taking care of the baby. While Remya took on the latter, Shijith began spending more time cultivating crops, and his wife joined him a few months later.

As their son, Daivik, began consuming solid food, the couple’s garden diversified. Among the child’s favourite were tomatoes and carrots, which the two ensured were plentily available in their repository.

“It’s not easy to always have access to farm-fresh vegetables that you can trust have not been sprayed with harmful pesticides. So, we collected plant seed and manure from trustworthy organisations, and the oldest generation of farmers near our home,” Remya says.

A host of products

As a homemaker, Remya had enough time to spend with and nurture her plants. However, once the number of crops started increasing, she ran out of space on the terrace as well as her home. “Some of my customers, including friends and relatives, suggested I open a nursery at home, which would allow me to have enough space for my plants. So in 2019, we opened the nursery in our home,” the 37-year-old says.

The nursery sells organic manure, seeds, saplings, fruits and vegetables. It also sells cow dung powder, bone meal powder, organic compost and groundnut cake. The seeds are hybrid seeds, produced by cross-pollinating plants.

Apart from seeds, Remya and Shijith also sell saplings of vegetables and fruits, including pepper, coconut, mango, passion fruit, and the garden has a collection of ornamental flowers. The couple earns Rs 25,000 every month from the nursery, and has customers coming in from districts across Kerala.

The entrepreneur says, “There’s a misconception that a homemaker should only remain in the kitchen. But they can earn for themselves even while staying at home. With confidence, any woman can try her hands at running a business, and I believe dedication will help her succeed as a successful entrepreneur.”