

My Story, My Farming

Swarn Sandhya Bharti

Village: Khankitta, Sabour Block, Bhagalpur, Bihar | Age: 44 |

Education: Intermediate

Supported by: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Sabour



Where I started

I married into a family with very little farming land. My husband grew wheat, maize and lentils on two bigha and also worked as a daily-wage labourer, but it was never enough to run the house. I wanted to give my two sons a good education, so I began helping him in the fields. Even that did not raise our income enough. When he left for Punjab to find work, I took over the farm myself.

The hard years

I worked as a coordinator for the Khankitta middle school education committee under the Bihar Shiksha Pariyojana. The honorarium was small, and our total family income was still below ₹4,000 a month. In 2012 that work ended, and things became even harder.

How KVK changed things

Around then I met Anita Kumari, a scientist at KVK Sabour, who was encouraging village women to take up mushroom farming. I told her my problems, and she advised me to start mushroom cultivation and processing. I joined the KVK mushroom training, and later the Bihar Kaushal Vikas Mission training. KVK gave me one kilogram of mushroom spawn and the technical guidance to begin. I also learned to process farm produce into pickles and other food products.

My journey

I started in one room of my house. In 2018 I earned a net income of ₹5,000 from it. That same year, at the BAU Kisan Mela, I received the Abhinav Kisan Puraskar for value addition and for succeeding in mushroom farming. Earlier, I had won a prize at a university Mango Diversity Show for my processed mango products.

As production grew, I began making value-added products: badi, papad, pickle and murabba, all in good demand. Selling was hard at first, but KVK helped me solve that too. I now grow oyster, button and milky mushrooms in more than 2,000 bags.

Where I am today

- My net income from mushroom farming and value-added products is over **₹4 lakh a year**.

- I have inspired many women in my village and nearby villages to take up mushroom farming.
- I help interested women arrange the materials they need.
- Under ATMA, I registered two groups of trained women: **Bharti Mahila Khadya Suraksha Samuh** and **Shankar Mushroom Utpadan**.
- I work as a resource person, training participants in mushroom farming at programmes organised by different institutions.

My dream

I plan to set up a spawn lab so I can take mushroom farming further and help more women build their own livelihoods.

My Story, My Farming

Anjana Kumari

Mirjanhat, Bhagalpur | Age: 25 | Graduate (Social Science) |
Family of 4 | 2 acres of land | Phone: 8409987631 | Supported by
KVK Sabour



Note: this is an art enterprise (Manjusha painting) rather than crop farming.

Where I started

Manjusha painting is my inheritance. My mother and brother had already made a name in this art. I married into a well-off farming family while my husband was still studying. After finishing his studies he took a private job in Rajasthan, but life away from home did not suit him and he came back to Bhagalpur. Then our finances went downhill.

The hard years

My husband kept looking for a job, but when nothing worked out, I began to think about building my own livelihood. Early on I faced many problems. Because I had no experience, I took losses, and I had to listen to taunts from family members and outsiders.

How KVK changed things

KVK Sabour organised a training on Manjusha painting. When I heard about it, I went to the KVK scientist and told her my problems. That is when I decided to make Manjusha painting my source of income. My husband also started a silk cloth business.

My journey

My husband supported me in every way, and I was determined to work. He set up stalls in different places, and I displayed my products alongside him. Demand for my Manjusha-painted

cloth began to grow. I started getting government orders to paint Manjusha art in public places. People began to know me, and today I feel self-reliant. I have brought 15–20 people together so that every order is delivered on time.

Where I am today

- On one painting enterprise, my cost was ₹14,000 and my earning was ₹22,000, a net profit of **₹8,000** (benefit-cost ratio 1.75).
- My monthly income increase from ₹5,000 before to **₹15,000–20,000** now.
- I have trained around 20 people directly, and about 2,000 have benefited.
- I am training people in Bhagalpur district and beyond.
- The Bihar government has helped me move forward, and I try to connect other trained people with government schemes.
- I have been in touch with KVK Sabour for 8 years.

I am also raising my two daughters, aged 7 and 4, while growing my work.

My dream

I want Manjusha painting, the pride of Bhagalpur, to be recognized not only nationally but internationally.

My Story, My Farming

Sangeeta Devi

Panchavati Haat, Post Sabour, Bhagalpur, Bihar |

Husband: Sunil Kumar Saha | Supported by KVK Sabour

Where I started

I was mainly a homemaker. I also helped my husband in his book distribution business.



The hard years

When the lockdown came in March, my husband's source of income stopped completely. Seeing our money problems, I decided that we should take up mushroom production.

How KVK changed things

In September 2021 I contacted Anita Kumari, the mushroom scientist at KVK Sabour. With my husband's financial support and her guidance, I took up mushroom farming without owning any farmland. Under her supervision we made 10 tonnes of button mushroom compost, aiming for about 1,500 kg of mushrooms. Later I also began growing oyster mushrooms.

My journey

My financial condition improved a lot. When I had trouble selling, Anita Kumari added me to several WhatsApp groups of mushroom growers, and the selling problem was solved.

Some moments I will always remember:

- The **first prize** for button mushroom at the ATMA exhibition, presented by the Agriculture Minister.
- A prize for **button mushroom pickle** at the university Kisan Mela.
- **Third prize** for oyster mushroom at a horticulture festival competition in Patna.
- At the 2022 ATMA Bhagalpur Kisan Mela, **second prize** in button mushroom and **third prize** in oyster mushroom.

When I made button mushroom compost again in 2021, I also sold compost to more than a dozen small mushroom growers in Bhagalpur district. That earned me a profit and helped them improve their own incomes.

Where I am today

My finances are steadily improving, and I am training local women and inspiring them to become self-reliant.

My Story, My Farming

Sheela Kumari

Village Deori Maheshpur, Kahalgaon Block, Bhagalpur, Bihar |

Supported by KVK Bhagalpur (BAU Sabour)

Where I started

I was once an ordinary homemaker.

How KVK changed things

I received training in food processing, mushroom production and value addition at KVK Bhagalpur and started my own enterprise. Later I also trained in processing and value addition of millets (Shree Anna), and developed many nutritious, value-added products.

My journey

I now run the **Shiv Guru Mahila Khadya Suraksha Samiti**. Under it, about 700 rural women from 28 self-help groups earn a livelihood through food processing and mushroom production.



Where I am today

- My enterprise gives me a net saving of about **₹1,20,000 a month**.
- Each woman in the samiti earns an average of **₹5,000–7,000 a month** in extra income.
- For my contribution to women's empowerment, food processing and rural entrepreneurship, I have received many awards, certificates and honours from Bihar Agricultural University Sabour, KVK Bhagalpur, ATMA Bhagalpur and the district administration.

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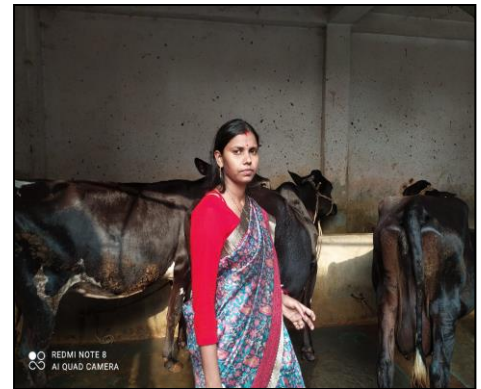
Sugandha Bharti

Sajaur, Shahkund, Bhagalpur | Age: 24 |

Graduate (Hindi) | Family of 5 | 1 acre of land |

Phone: 7292979112 | Farming/enterprise experience: 3 years |

Supported by KVK



Where I started

I was married at 21. My husband, Amit Kumar, works as a computer operator in the agriculture department, but his income alone could not support the family properly. I realised I needed to do something extra for our upbringing and household.

How KVK changed things

I got in touch with the KVK and trained in dairy and vermicompost production. I bought 5 cows and built a small shed to look after them.

My journey

Dairy brought me a net profit of **₹8,800 a month**. Building on that, I started vermicompost production, which added about **₹30,000 a year**. Working with KVK made me self-reliant and showed me the value of science. I learned about the major diseases of cows and about artificial insemination, so I can care for my own animals properly and help others too. I then completed a 15-day training at KVK.

Today I also look after other people's cows, which brings in some extra income. I now have 8 cows and 4 calves.

Where I am today

Enterprise	Cost	Gross income	Net profit	Benefit-cost ratio

Enterprise	Cost	Gross income	Net profit	Benefit-cost ratio
Dairy	₹2.5 lakh	₹3.56 lakh	₹1.06 lakh	1.42
Vermicompost	₹0.25 lakh	₹0.55 lakh	₹0.30 lakh	2.22

- My income went from nothing before to about **₹11,330 a month** now.
- About 225 people have been trained or benefited through my work.

My Story, My Farming

Beauty Bihari

Siyargarh, Gorahdih Block, Bhagalpur | Age: 30

| Matriculation | Supported by KVK Sabour



Where I started

I grew traditional paddy and wheat, but it did not give me a satisfying profit. Despite this difficulty, I wanted to do something new and profitable.

How KVK changed things

On a visit to KVK Sabour, I heard about the success of nurseries and realised that I could earn by setting one up. I trained at KVK in plant propagation and nursery management, which taught me the basics and the resources a nursery needs.

After the training, I received resources through the Arya project: mango, guava, lemon, pomegranate, litchi and other fruit plants, along with shade nets, sprinklers, cocopeat and polybags. With these I set up my nursery and made sure it had everything it needed to succeed.

My journey

I began supplying quality plants. My nursery raises healthy saplings that sell in nearby and distant places. I sell teak and mahogany saplings at ₹20 each, and I have sold about 26,000 of them. I also sell locally, and my plants are in demand in areas across the border in Jharkhand.

Where I am today

	Before KVK	After KVK
Enterprise	Paddy and wheat	Nursery, with plants supplied to the forest department and MNREGA
Plants	—	About 1,10,000 teak,

	Before KVK	After KVK
		mahogany and other saplings
Value	—	About ₹7 lakh
Net income	₹16,000	Substantially higher

My hard work and the right guidance have made me a successful entrepreneur, with my nursery known in nearby and faraway areas. I went from an ordinary farmer to a successful nursery owner who supplies plants to my community and to people in Jharkhand too. My story shows how a person can get the opportunity and support to fulfil their dreams.