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A Kitchen Garden in Every Home!

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The high price of vegetables and fruits in market and weekly Sunday bazaar is hitting hard into food budget of every common man. .Market research of vegetable and fruit marketplaces demonstrate a clear, rise in prices of necessary vegetable with no hope of respite. Vegetable price have jumped as much as 100% percent in past few years alone due to substantial rise in fuel prices, growing gap between supply and demand and also due to growing population dwindling resource of water and reclaiming of land for other purposes. This surging and volatile food Prices are affecting the poor the most. Higher food prices is leading poor people to limit their food consumption and shift to even less-balanced diets, with harmful effects on health . There is great need now to restart an awareness program of home kitchen gardening and encourage everyone to acquire self-sufficiency in food by growing their own vegetables in their backyards. Recently Kitchen Gardening: Free seeds and lesson: Pakistan ,

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started an awareness program in slums of Chak Shahzad.It is sprawling slum opposite Chak Shahzad farms In Islamabad, Pakistan. The aim is to reach the poor communities so as to empower the women to better their lives which could be achieved through food security, and family empowerment.These affords will also facilitate Change from the humdrum routine of daily tasks of girls and women at home to adopt kitchen gardening as past time hobby or to income generating activities. Lesson was given to these women to impart basics of kitchen gardening with free seeds, seedlings, and demonstrating so that each member gains the skills and knowledge to set up her own Kitchen gardens at home. Most families in this slum area live in one or two -room shacks with small open court yard and toilet at one end and kitchen at another end and water running into open drain outside. The majority of bread winners are casual laborers or low paid employees who on average earn an equivalent of four U.S. dollars a day. Every morning, women from the slum walk to a nearby Neighborhood to do menial jobs as maids and cleaners. The men folk who are not hired as laborer wait on road side near market with shovels in hopes of getting a job for the day. The majority of residents of this slum find it difficult to afford to eat, let alone to buy nutritious food. The learning session of Kitchen gardening was organized at a mason house comprising of his wife and eleven children. The age of children range from eldest daughter being 24 years and youngest son nine months old. The participation was beyond expectation and I discovered these women have tremendous innate power and sense of commitment, very keen learner and good listener. They only need to be awakened to their true identity and empowered to realize their role of well being to their family, community and society at large. These Slum women have all the enthusiasm and will power. They are only lacking in education and direction. I am over whelmed by enthusiasm show by these slum women and hope to conduct more such learning sessions in other slum areas in future.

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