

## Meet Pathmini...

Kumaravel Pathmini (56) is a mother of ten – nine girls and one boy. Seven of her daughters are married. Other two daughters - Vasantha (20) and Kalaivani (19) work in a garment factory in Colombo and come home once a year. At home with her are her son Krishnakumar (16), Vasantha's son (and her grandson) Kabilash (6) and her granddaughter Suvanthini (16). Pathmini's daughter – Rukmanidevi left Suvanthini in her care when she left for work in Kuwait.



Pathmini's husband passed away 15 years ago. Her youngest child – her son – was only two years then. He was a farmer and one day he went to guard the farm in the night and was found dead in the morning. The police concluded it was a suicide.

“After his death, I had to do something to provide for my family,” Pathmini says, “I started making chilli powder, roasted flour, thosai/dhosa and appam at home and sold and sometimes took them to the shops close by.”

“I continued this until last year when the coconut prices went up during Covid and I had to stop making the food items. People were not able to pay more,” she says.

“I'm getting old, so I decided to rear goats because it is much easier,” she says. She asked her married daughters to send her some money to buy goats. “Currently I have two 2 males 1 female and 2 kid goats,” she says.

“Goats give birth to at least four kids a year and I can sell a grown one for about 16,000/- rupees,” she says, “I also sell eggs every 3 days.” Even during the pandemic, her sheer determination has led her to care for the goats and enhance her means of income.

A large portion of her income is used for her son's education and on the schooling needs of her grandchildren. Her daughter who is working in Kuwait also sends money to support her daughter.

“But sometimes when there is an emergency like a child falling sick and I don't have money in my hand, I borrow from my married daughters,” she says.

Pathmini hopes to get two more female goats because selling their milk and selling their kids would help her to get a more sustainable income.

She wants her son and her grandchildren to study well and achieve their dreams.

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