

Improving livelihoods-Journey of a spinster

This is a story of a young spinster who lost both the parents when she was 20 years old. Kamalakshi is the last sibling among 7 children to her parents, Thimmappa Poojary and Varija.



‘ I was 20 years old when my mother expired. Three sisters and one brother got married when our parents were alive. We had 6 acres of land which we got under Land Reforms Act. We were tenants. During declaration we got it in our parent’s name. Parents have sold 0.30 cents and remaining land came into our name. I was very much engaged in agriculture. After parents death I was fully engaged in agriculture. But my brother was not interested and he was going for cooly works. Sometimes he was simply at home not supporting agriculture. Deeply disappointed I took 0.55 acre of land in my name and I built a small house. I have planted 300 areca plants. I also planted 10 coconuts and 20 cashew plants. I have planted these plants with a hope to get income so that I can manage my life without any dependency. To water these plants I have dug an open well. But it started caving in. I took a Loan of Rs 100,000(one lakh)for planting areca and fixing 5 rings for the well. By doing so I got little more water which helped me to save 200 areca out of 300 plants planted. Though I applied for well work and areca plantations under MGNREGA with our panchayath, I got only Rs3000 for areca plantation. I purchased 3 cows and started rearing them. I sold milk to nearby Punchame milk society.

I joined Rajashree FDG promoted by Disha Trust. I was elected as the Secretary of the group in 2019. I have been active in the activities conducted by the group. I was given an opportunity to renovate my drinking and irrigation well. But due to shortage of money I didn’t do it. For renovation I had to contribute Rs 15520. This year I managed to raise my contribution selling one of my cow and balance amount was made available by DISHA under AHB supported NRM project grants. With total amount Rs48,500, I ventured to renovate the well. I

have given the work to a contractor who took some money but didn't do the work. To my bad luck same time Corona Lock down enforced. But I didn't panic and managed to recover the money from the contractor. With the help of my cousin I contacted another contractor and completed the work. Now no fear of further caving in' she narrates her efforts with confidence.

Other than areca and coconut I have planted 8 fruit plants. I grow vegetables and also I grow fodder for my cattle. She sells some of her vegetables in the shops in her neighborhood. She earned about Rs25,000 from sale of vegetables in this year.

"I am happy with my well. I can confidently water my plants, rear a cow and keep improving my agriculture." she quips when asked how you manage life.

