

I Plan My Day Well...

Laxmi, 34, lives in Nandyala town, Kurnool district and telling her and her family situation. In an interview with "Livelihoods" she talks about how she overcame challenges arising out of her poverty. She is depending on three livelihoods and working hard for her family.

Q: Did you go to school?

A: Yes, I studied up to 5th standard in a government school in Nandyala. I was not encouraged to study any further as my parents are illiterate did not realize the value of education.

Q: Is Nandyala your native place?

A: Yes, I was born and brought up in Nandyala in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh. My husband is from Nandyala, so even after marriage I live here.

Q: Tell us about your family.

A: We are four members in our family- my husband, I and our sons. We live in road-side hut. We have no assets and did not inherit any either. But we hope to create some assets we can pass down to our children, at least a house.

Q: What do you do for a living?

A: We are poor, and it is difficult to make ends meet. I work as a daily wage labour, sell flowers and make stone grinders. Most of time goes in working as a daily wage labour

Q: What do your family members do?

A: My husband is working in a motor mechanic shop. Our sons are studying in a government school. My children are helping me in my work.

Q: How much do you earn in a month?

A: I earn approximately Rs 2500-3000 in a month. We are saving money for children's education.

Q: Tell us about your flowers business.

A: Every day I sell flowers at the temple. I am earning Rs 500-600 a month from this occupation.

Q: Tell us about your stone grinder business.

A: I make stone grinders after coming home from the fields (where I work as a labourer). At times, when there is not labour work available, I spend the whole day making stone grinders.

Q: Where did you learn to make stone grinders?

A: My mother used to make stone grinders and I learnt from her in my childhood. I used to help her back then.

Q: How do you sell the stone grinders?

A: People come to my home to purchase the stone grinders. Nowadays people prefer electric mixer grinder and wet grinders. There is a very small market for stone grinders and this makes matters worse for us.

Q: How do you manage three occupations?

A: In the morning, I sell flowers. After 10 o'clock I go for labour work (agriculture work and construction work) and in the evening I make stone grinders at my home. In a month I make 10-15 stone grinders. I sell on grinder at Rs 150-200. I sell 10-15 stone grinders in a month. I bring raw material from nearby Thadipathri village. At a time I buy raw material worth Rs 5000. Sometimes, if I get the time and energy, I make more than 15 stone grinders. My husband and children support and help me in my work. I plan my 24hrs plan correctly.

Q: Have you joined any SHG?

A: No, I have no awareness on SHGs, though I heard a woman talking about them at work one day. I am not getting any government benefits either.

Q: What kind of problems are you facing?

A: We have no house of our own and we are living in an unsafe place. Our house does not protect us from the sharp heat of the summer, the moist of the monsoon or the chill of the winter.

Q: What are your future plans?

A: We want our own house and will give good education for our children. There are a lot of bank and other coaching centers in Nandyala. I see there is potential for a small tea stall in student areas. My husband is considering starting his own mechanic shop. For these plans to materialize, we need a good amount of credit to invest.

Information till March – 2012.