

NREGS – FROM DISTRESS AND DESPAIR TO RESTARTING LIFE

Case Study of a farmer – turned labourer from Chapiri village

Mr. Vannur Swamy is a poor farmer from Chapiri village of Kalyandurg mandal. He is living with his mother, wife and three daughters in a small hut. He has 3 acres of dry land in which he used to grow groundnut crop under rainfed conditions.

The income from agriculture was in no way sufficient for the family of 6 members. To add to the families' woes, droughts were occurring with alarming regularity, which made him dependent on money lenders for crop investments. Both the debts and problems started growing year after year./ so he and his wife were reduced to agricultural wage labourers to feed the hungry mouths at home and to clear the growing debts. But this paltry earning of Rs.30/- per day was grossly insufficient, as they had to clear the debts also, apart from running the family. They were forced to stop the education of their elder daughter and their children looked weak and sick because of malnutrition. This almost drove them to a point of no-hope!

We did not invest any capital other than our labour and earned good income from NREGS. This additional income helped us in getting out of the clutches of money lenders

Vannur swamy & his family members

Chapiri

During 2007-08 National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was launched in the district. AF staff conducted village level awareness campaigns to the farmers and labourers on NREGS. Vannur Swamy and his wife attended the campaigns, and realized that it was very good opportunity for them to recover from their pathetic condition. So, they applied for a job card and for employment under NREGS with the help of AF staff.



During 2007-08, wife and husband together accessed employment for 125 days in bunding, farm ponds, bio-diesel plantations and earned an amount of Rs.11,825/-. The remaining days they worked as agricultural labour and earned Rs.7,200/-. Now there is a life regained and noticeable change in the living standards of the family. This year they re-admitted their elder daughter in school. Now the children are getting nutritious food and have new books and clothes. They have cleared old debts upto Rs.2,500/- and purchased groundnut seed worth Rs.1,000/- for sowing in their lands. They started saving small amounts in their

children's names in the post office. Now his family is happy. They say they are extremely thankful to both NREGS and AF for supporting them and saving them from distress.