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TAILORING A BRIGHTER FUTURE



GURUBAYI (Karnataka)

When given the training and a helping hand, some part-time sewing at home can turn into the emerging village fashion boutique!

The colourful cloth store in the narrow lanes of Mannikati village in Belgaum, Karnataka is the centre of Gurubayi Muthappa Girisagar's dreams.

A wife and mother of two, Gurubayi's family have been scrapping by to meet daily needs. They survived with no stable income, depending on tailoring she did from home earning just ₹120-150 a day and her husband's sporadic jobs as an electrician. There was also no family support, having lost both her parents-in-law years ago.

Then one day Gurubayi attended an orientation session for women micro-entrepreneurs and it opened her eyes to new possibilities. The session was led by the women cadres trained under Project Disha – an initiative by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and implemented by Future Green Samsthe in Karnataka. These are women community leaders who have gone through 'Train the Trainer' programmes on micro-enterprise management and capacity building.

For Gurubayi, the session was inspirational. It provided insights on many aspects of a micro-enterprise; benefits of joining a self-help group; how and where to procure raw material; and which businesses are locally more popular and lucrative.

Immediately, she enrolled for a 3-day workshop on textile design held by Future Greens Samsthe. It was here that she learned about different varieties of indigenous cloth designs and methods. With

“ Women in villages often have to travel to nearby cities to find work. With the help of programmes like Disha, we don't have to do that anymore; we can work in our village and support our family”, says Gurubayi exuberantly. **”**

the programme's help, she secured a ₹50,000 loan from ICICI bank and set up a small clothing store in her village.

Today, Gurubayi sells women's and children's clothes worth ₹1,000-1500 on a daily, making an average profit of ₹300 a day. It increases substantially during festivals. Gurubayi is also planning to turn into a designer by investing in an embroidery machine and making her designs. Besides, she wants to expand to men's clothing and diversify in setting up a roti and papad business alongside tailoring.

Not only has this intervention helped her understand the opportunities available, she says, but also her potential. It has sparked the hope of a better life.