

Mushrooms that changed the destiny...

Mrs. Kusum Priyanthi a young mother of two children in Kanthale struggled to supplement the daily wages of her husband and to meet the basic food needs of the family. Sometime back she attended a training seminar conducted by the Department of Agriculture on 'mushroom cultivation', dreaming that it would help them to start a new avenue of income.



Her ambition was to find educational expenses of the children. After this seminar she invested Rs. 5000, which she saved during her lifetime in constructing a small mushroom cultivation hut and with the husband worked hard to produce compost by themselves. No sooner their determination, commitment and hard work began yielding results - additional income and little savings. Being able to save she decided to join the Pubudu Women's society in Kanthale, and for nearly a year she continued saving Rs. 100 monthly with the society. She was also able to sell a considerable portion of her mushroom production through society members.

After one year with the society she was able to borrow Rs. 10,000 under the CBO loan scheme offered by Sewa Finance through Pubudu women's society, which she invested in the mushroom venture. It brought lasting joy to the entire family when part of that income was able

to meet children's educational needs.



She utilized this loan to buy equipment, build additional production sheds, and increase compost production. Not contented with the progress and being aware of the future challenges of their family with two growing children she consulted the officials of the Department of Agriculture and the Industrial Development Board for advice to further expand the mushroom cultivation. Since Priyanthi is adequately equipped with experience and knowledge, and recognizing her commitment and entrepreneurial character Sewa Finance lent her Rs. 40,000 after repaying the earlier loan.

Now 6 months after this loan their daily sales income averages to about Rs. 1300. The entire family is very pleased with the progress they have made with mushroom growing, which started as a small self employment by Priyanthi and has now evolved in to a household venture. Priyanthi is more than happy when she says 'we can now meet all educational expenses of our children, that was my prime goal when I started this'. She also adds 'this achievement is not due to my commitment alone - my family support, technological support from the Department of Agriculture and IDB, guidance from my society and the two loans from Sewa Finance were helpful to reach where we are now'.