

Jijabai – Inspiration for Rustic Heart

This is a real story and the success drives home the point that women can raise themselves from complete despondency to become shining beacons, which can ignite the flame of inspiration in many a rustic heart.

Jijabai Bhosure is a woman who struggled against all odds and overcame grave difficulties to create successful life for herself and set an example of what women can achieve. This story set in the Bosursthal which is a Wadi of Kendur village wherein AFARM had implemented watershed management project over last three years. Her struggle started when she stood for her rights and demanded to be part in the decision making of the family. She realized that she needs to stand up for herself when her son in law took charge of the property that was allocated to her daughter. This adverse stand against her son-in-law resulted in being completely isolated by all her family members including her daughter. This isolation resulted total dejection, acute trauma and loss of self esteem. Even in this difficult situation, she was not a person who would give up on herself. The only way to counter this social repression was to gather all her strength and fight for herself.

She flipped all her negativity by sheer hard work and an unswerving focused effort toward fighting injustices. She started cultivating on her unused land. At this point of time, she came in contact with Sunehara Kal team of AFARM two years before. AFARM team decided to compliment her efforts through various land based interventions for her livelihoods security. She was supported for land development, farm pond, drip irrigations based pomegranate plantation and provided technical training.

The orchard is 2 years old, but the income started from the very first year. Cultivation of crops like green gram, onion, ground nuts and vegetables like fenugreek, coriander, and cluster bean as inter crop on the same piece of land was done and earned more than 1 lakhs. Sugarcane was cultivated in the remaining 2 acres land that added another 1 lakh rupees to her pocket.

This did not change the social situation in the family and she was still isolated socially by her family members but improvement in her financial situation gave her the confidence to continue her struggle and move forward with her life. She has created a new identity for herself and improved her confidence to become independent and surge ahead in life.

Jijabai says, "I was an emotional wreck after facing social isolation from within my family. Getting appropriate guidance from AFARM, turned my life around and restored my self confidence. I was able to earn more from the single small piece of land than the income from the entire land that was owned by the family. I continue to work towards improving my life and others around me."

