

Meet Theveshwari...

Kanapathipillai Theveshwari (55) lost her husband six years ago when he took his life following a brawl. She helped him in his business while going for daily paid labour work in paddy fields, cultivation farms and cutting grass in houses to support her husband's income. She also reared hens at home.



Despite economic challenges after her husband's death, she was determined to give a good education to her children. Her daughter Shalini was 12 and her son Yogeshwaran was 15 at that time. She took whatever labour work she found and her hens gave her eggs to sell too. Sometimes she bought fish from the fisher folk and sold it.

“But I couldn't afford to keep both my children in school,” says Theveshwari, “My son dropped out of school and started to go for labour work in the paddy fields to support the family. He continues to do that.”

“My main livelihood is selling dry fish,” she says, “Sometimes I give the dry fish to other sellers to sell and sometimes I carry it myself in a basket walking from house to house selling.”

However, due to the current situation in the country she started selling fresh fish within the village as the demand for dry fish has declined.

“Most of the income I spend on my daughter's classes and her travel to those classes,” she says, “She is doing her Advanced Level now and classes are costly. Sometimes I even borrow from a few rich moneylenders I know. They usually give on interest but knowing my situation and knowing I always pay back on time, they lend me without interest.”

Theveshwari's plan is to improve and move her dry fish business to a small hut because currently, she has used her kitchen space for it. The smell is very hard to handle while cooking.

Her only hope is to see her children do well in life and to see her daughter complete her A/Ls and come to a better place in life. She can help them with an improved income.

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