



Buds are blooming again!

In May 2004, Kudumbashree recognized that the needs of the most marginalized of the poor were not being addressed and realized that differently abled children, especially intellectually disabled children in situations of poverty, while being the most vulnerable, were not being reached by any of the variety of poverty programs. In fact, these children often live in isolation and alienation, neglected by the community due to social stigmas and by their families due to already scarce resources. In this situation Kudumbashree in convergence with Local Self Government Institutions established the BUDS Special Schools for Intellectually Disabled Children in 2004. The disabilities catered are mental retardation, cerebral palsy, autism and multiple disability. At present 202 BUDS institutions are working under the supervision Kudumbashree and in the ownership of Local Self Government Institutions. There are 6125 intellectually disabled persons who are educated, rehabilitated and under vocational training in these institutions.

Cherkavu BUDS School, Malappuram established in 2006, took a step ahead to make these children economically self-reliant through income generation. BUDS school team of 35 students and 2 teachers are manufacturing numerous home care products which includes Hand wash, Detergent, Soaps, Washing Lotion, Toilet cleaner, Floor cleaner, dish wash liquid etc. Reasons for your success?

Selection of right products at the right time and tapping the untapped plays an important role in the success of any venture. So accordingly our school selected the daily use homecare products which have a steady demand in market ensuring an opportunity to tap the existing market with good quality.

Challenges faced?

Competition from commercial products of multi- national companies in the market with attract- ing package and label.

Turning point in business?

The positive response from the Kudumbashree District Mission of Malappuram gave us im- mense motivation to our enterprise all the time. Sales through the weekly markets, fairs and office fairs helped us to introduce our products to the people and to make them aware of the same.

Future plans/ambitions?

We are planning to increase the production capacity by ensuring uniform quality and blending ratios using automatic machineries under the leadership of an experienced chemist. We also plan to establish a microenterprise on coffee vending machine in the panchayat building run by a team of students, their parents and teachers. This will help us to ensure a steady income generation activity for the students and their families. From this enterprise, our BUDS school is targeting to invest dividend share of profit amount into the student's account.

Most happy moment?

It was really a great pleasure to watch these students manufacturing and selling their own hand made products in the stalls and fairs. This helped to make their parents realise that they can earn and support themselves.

Message to aspiring women?

Never underestimate the differently abled children. Every person has got some capacity hid- den inside, all they need is a small support and a helping hand.

Cherkavu BUD school team of 35 students and 2 teachers are manufacturing various home care products and selling it with annual turnover of 3 lakhs.

Aishwarya V. A.