

# Earning of recognition...

Siripala (53 yrs) lives in Thuduwa, Hungama. He was a daily wage labour and worked under a concrete fabricator in Ambalantota. Also he worked as a labour during paddy harvesting season with his wife, Somalatha (45 years), though it was not a permanent job. He has three sons, including a mentally disabled one, Roshan (19 years), which is the burning concern of the family. He has to earn not only for lodging and education expenses of children, but also for medical treatments of that poor child. The situation was terrible and their income was not sufficient even for lodging.

When they are experiencing a tough time, struggling with these troubles, as a couple with three children, they got to know Practical Action through the partner organization, Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP), Tangalle. With the contacts of CRMP, he participated in the Compost Bin Fabrication Workshop conducted by Practical Action in Matara, August 2005. He was very much interested in bin fabrication work after attending the workshop. He identified this as a good opportunity to develop as an income generating activity.

Practical Action launched the Sustainable Waste Management project in Southern Province, aiming to solve the problem of waste in the area, while increasing the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. Three Compost bin fabrication trainings were conducted by Practical Action in Galle, Matara and Hambantota, with the intention of introducing an income generation activity, while making the availability of bins for the increasing demand.



Siripala & Roshan engage in the work

“I am very happy and proud to say that Practical Action gave me a compost bin mould since I have been able to perform my ability to make compost bins as a result of my participation at the work shop”, Siripala said with a happy smile.

Siripala's wife, Somalatha, said with a cheerful smile, “I am so much happy women because now my poor child also very keen to build our income. Roshan also engaged in compost bin fabrication with his father. He involves in activities such as, separating the mould from the bin, which was fabricated previous day, and reset the mould and measuring the materials for the concrete mixture. He spends his whole day helping his father. Earlier he was marginalized in the society and was a dependent child. My husband and I always worried of him, thinking of his future. All those worries have faded away with the launching of this new family business. My husband wishes to forward this business to Roshan one day and then he can stand on his feet.”

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Siripala starts the day after perform religious rituals. Backyard of the house is his working area. He has four composting bin moulds for the moment. The initial mould is worn out now. He got three more moulds from Practical Action as a result of his continuous requests, and he bought another one, too. Except Siripala and his son, there are two labours working

under him for a daily wage of Rs.400.00. “I lived as an underprivileged person in the society, before I enter to this business. I can remember the days I worked as a labour for a daily wage of Rs.400.00. Now, I am an employer. As a bin manufacturer and entrepreneur, now we have a good business, good income and recognition in the society. I am no more a labour, but an Entrepreneur and my son also a respected individual in the society”, Siripala said with full of satisfaction, looking at his son.

There are seven compost bin fabricators in Hambantota District, including Siripala, who were trained by Practical Action. They have a network of compost bin fabricators, facilitated by Practical Action. Siripala plays the leading role of this network. When there is a demand or request by an organization, he supply bins collectively with them. He had get request for 276 bins from Coastal Resource Management



Project and 250 bins from World Vision Lanka. Out of that, he had sold 354 bins for the moment Siripala took telephone facilities to the house, as it was an important item with the growth of the business. Now they save money to complete their house, which was partially built with the money earned by Somalatha, when she was in Middle East from 1999 to 2001. They were able to buy beds and mosquito nets, which was an essential item to the house. These things give you an idea about the impact of the business on their living standards.

Commence of appropriate technology with community specific approach; facilitate to change the lives of people while improving the livelihoods. This family can be taken as a good example. A labour to an Entrepreneur and an underprivileged to a well heeled. If we can commence the interventions creating a sound background, people can continue the rest by their own.



Siripala shows the bins to the buyers