



## **The journey from despair to hope – The story of a Karwar Fisherwomen**

Build your business success around something that you love — something that is inherently and endlessly interesting to you.”

—*Martha Stewart, businesswoman, writer, and television personality*

### **Saroja Ramanath Sarangekar**

Every woman’s success should be an inspiration to another. She develops herself as well as her family. This success story that is presented here complements this statement.

Smt. Saroja Ramanath Sarangekar, aged 48, is a resident of Karwar in Uttara Kannada District. Coming from a poor fishing family, she lives with her husband Ramnath, a fisherman and two children. The daughter has completed her graduation and is working in Karwar. The son is physically challenged from birth.



Saroja earns her living from the money she gets selling fish in the market. Taking care of the son requires money for his medicines; neither can he be left alone at home. Since none can afford to stay at home, they leave him with their neighbor’s and go out to earn their livelihood.

“In every fishing community, men, women, and children have clearly defined activities to perform daily. The actual fishing operation is performed by men. They go out in their canoes with their various types of fishing gear. Other activities performed by men in their various fishing communities are boat building/repairs, and net (fishing gear) mending. Besides the role of being

housewives, women are now becoming more involved in diverse fishing activities ranging from processor/trader to boat owner”, says Saroja.

When MANUVIKASA team visited Karwar for women’s group formation, Saroja was impressed with the concept of the Sangha (Group), and decided to become a member. She joined Satyanarayana MANUVIKASA Mahila Swasahaya Sangha (SHG). At first, she hesitated to join the group because she was cheated in another organization's group, but she joined the group after observing the MANUVIKASA’s objective & functioning.

“Our family lives by fishing. Every day my husband goes fishing and I sell the fish. We are eking our livelihood with this money. With our son's health issue, his medication costs a lot of money, " shares Saroja, talking about her life.

“We did not have any kind of equipment for storing fish; neither could we afford it. This caused the fish to perish very quickly, causing huge loss in business. When MANUVIKASA freely provided thermocol ice boxes for fish sellers, it made it possible to keep



perishable fish that lasted only for a day, for more than one day. Due to this, daily losses were reduced to an extent and Income also improved. As incomes increased, these thermocol boxes also became smaller for business. Later when I requested MANUVIKASA, they gave me a larger fiber box. This allowed the fish to be kept up to 3 - 4 days, reducing the losses in the fish trade," says Saroja.

Prior to this, fish perished very quickly, so Saroja had to go to everyone's homes and trade. The income was Rs 500 - Rs 600 per day. But after getting the fiber box the profit went up to Rs.2,000 per day, exceeding their expectations.

Saroja hopes that MANUVIKASA can help them set up a small shop, upon which her son could rely on for his livelihood, in the future. will be a basis for their son's life when he grows up.

	Per day income on an average	Weekly income on an average	Monthly income on an average
Before getting the Fiber box	500	3500	15000
After getting the Fiber box	2000	7500	22000

*"MANUVIKASA convinced us to join the Self Help Group in time and gave us fish storage boxes. I am eternally grateful for their help and cooperation and are highly appreciative of the social work done by them,"* say a grateful Saroja and Ramanath, in unison.

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