

Supporting small business : Story of Roseline Rongpipi



Fig: Roseline Rongpipi

Roseline was born to a peasant family in a remote village, Tapat, around 35 km away from Hamren, the sub-divisional headquarter of West Karbi Anglong district, Assam. With five siblings (two brothers and three sisters) Roseline, being the second eldest of all, had to face the hardships of life from a very young age. It was with the support from Don Bosco missionaries that Roseline and her siblings could avail support for education.

Roseline had studied till Class X at Don Bosco School, Hamren, she could not continue with her education due to various financial problems and responsibilities at home. She started teaching in different village schools for supporting the family. During this time the

North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP) adopted her village. As per the project design, Self Help Groups (SHGs) were formed and Roseline along with 12 other women from the village formed their group and named it *Jirsong SHG* and Roseline was elected as the Secretary of the group. With continuous trainings supported by the project on operational and management aspects of SHGs, the women of the village were made to understand the importance of working together, the concept of savings and various income generating activities. Initially the group concentrated on ginger cultivation and livestock rearing activities and gradually diverted to non-farm activities such as making 'murhas' (Bamboo Stools), handloom etc.

Roseline actively participated in all project activities and attended a number of trainings. When the different SHGs joined together to form a SHG federation, Roseline was once again elected as the Secretary of Rongpangbong SHG Federation.

The responsibilities conferred to her, made her gain confidence and she took active part in the various developmental initiatives of the village. Under her initiative, Rongpangbong SHG Federation, applied for a bakery unit, the project also supported them with a grant for opening a bakery unit. Due to various local problems, setting up of a bakery unit in a remote place like Hamren was a major hindrance. Getting technical support for construction of the clay oven was a problem because of unavailability of masons. However, the group could overcome all the problems with relentless efforts of the community members and the district support team of NERCORMP. The bakery unit soon started its operations was started



Bakery Products

and two SHG members, viz. Roseline and Lucia were trained at Roy Bakery, Diphu, headquarter of Karbi Anglong district. A retail selling outlet was also started for catering the local market needs.

The Rongpangbong SHG Federation has come to an agreement for a benefit sharing arrangement with Roseline and has given her the responsibility of running the unit. According to the agreement, Roseline is to pay an amount of Rs 500 per month to the federation for a period of 3 years, after which the amount can be

revised. All maintenance expenses related to the bakery and the retail outlet is to be borne by Roseline.

Through the bakery unit, Roseline is earning a monthly income between Rs 12000-15000/- and has she has employed a baker and two assistants. She is able to save around Rs 3000/- per month after paying the other expenses. The bakery unit as built up good clientele with the local consumers, and also supplying to different institutions, occasional religious and social functions.

A confident Roseline says *“With the earnings from the bakery, I am able to feed and take care of my family. I hope to expand the bakery and also get a larger retail shop and add varieties of bakery products. I have two children and being the sole earner of the family, this bakery is the only source of income for shaping their future.”*

Submitted by : NERCORMP-Karbi Anglong, Assam