

Better than the rest!

So you think handicap is an impediment for great enterprise? Then meet Mrs. Gowroo Somanna, a self made entrepreneur, who has also provided training and employment to over 50 disabled people. The fact is that she herself is deaf by birth!

Born in Ponnampet in Coorg as the eighth child of late Madirira Chengappa, Mrs. Gowroo Somanna was encouraged by her parents and she completed her matriculation from the Blind and Deaf School at Mysore.

She mastered the art of dressmaking working in Coorg. After her marriage to Mr. Mathanda Somanna (also, hearing impaired), an non-officer in ITI, she settled in Bangalore. She is now the proud mother of two sons who are normal.

Her hearing disability deprived her of a suitable job and she had to struggle. She worked as Assistant Instructor in Technical Training Centre for the Deaf.

Finally, in 1987, she started her own business : The Gowroo Fashion Designers, to manufacture ready-made garments. She trained and employed hearing impaired women.

In recognition of her efforts to help other disabled women she was given the national award as an Outstanding Self-employed entrepreneur with disability by the then President Mr. Shankar .Dayal Sharma. That was in 1995. She has reached greater heights now.

She has many firsts to her credit. One of them being the first handicapped lady to receive a valid driving licence. Last year, the Governor of Karnataka, Mrs. V.S. Ramadevi presented her with the State Award for her achievements. She has been felicitated by the Rotary and Lions Clubs and from the Kodava Samaja.

Mrs. Gowroo has also started an voluntary organisation, the "Deaf Women Development Trust (DWDT)" to provide training to people with disability in tailoring and fashion designing and also plans to open a training centre and school for deaf children in Kodagu (Coorg) District for which she needs your help in cash or kind.

Mrs. Gowroo, a brave and woman, has shown the path of self-reliance and confidence to other hearing impaired women. She is an out-standing example showing that determination and hard work can achieve things that seem impossible.

Mrs. Gowroo looks forward to your helping hand to reach out to many poor and needy disabled women and children.

-Reethu.J, Anuradha. S. H, Pavithra.P, X std, The New Cambridge English School, Vijayanagar, Bangalore.