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METRO ORACLE

There is Joy in Hard Work!

by Vengrai Parthasarathy

Thunderstorm or scorching sun, she is there at the doorstep with satchets of milk, every morning. That's DEVAKI fro you. A hard working lady, she has no weekly 'offs', because people need the first sip of invigorating coffee to get their blood circulating, and, but for Devaki, they will miss it.

A former resident of Egmore, this mother of four, now resides in Otteri, but her bonds with Egmore are unbreakable. She caters to over 30 houses and distributes 80 or 90 satchets of milk to people who eagerly await her arrival. People buy more or less, and she has to keep accounts meticulously. "If you say so, it must be right", is how her customers show faith in her.

Devaki's day begins at four in the morning, and she pillion rides

with her husband, Pazhani, who works for a doctor. She collects the satchets of milk from the central booth, and goes about distributing them to houses on a well-charted route. "Though my husband is employed, he too works, distributing newspapers, (including METRO ORACLE) to earn extra money because that's how we make both ends meet. Even with my earnings, it is a hard grind, but seeing that we have put our four sons on the road to education, I feel a sense of joy and job satisfaction", she says with a glint in her eyes.

Both Pazhani and Devaki are getting practical training in Siddha medicine and her goal is to set up a clinic some day and be of service to the poorer people.

"We are looking for better days". says this diligent, self-employed lady whose ambition is to make one of her sons become an engineer or doctor. "At the time of Diwali or Pongal my customers show their affection by presenting me with sarees and sweets for the children", she says.

Devaki is at pains to make a point or two. "Considering the fact that the prices are going up and up, I wish women and men would practise family planning. I know because I speak from experience. Point two : Those days when women were confined to the kitchen are gone. She has a role to play in the career front as well as in keeping the home fires burning".

It is a sign of the times that more and more self-reliant, self-starters like Devaki are crowding the horizon. May her tribe increase