

# Putting away something for a rainy day is impossible for this tribal

Problems have multiplied of late as a result of the price rise

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**UDHAGAMANDALAM:** Rani, a member of the Kurumba tribal community of Semmanarai says that her age is 30 but it is hard to believe because her grey hairs make her look much older.

However, in the context of her every day struggle to make ends meet, the premature greying of hair is not surprising.

Listening to her at Kotagiri on Saturday, one felt sorry for her and her ilk whose problems have multiplied of late as a result of the price rise.

Belonging to a marginalised section of society, the price burden has made Rani feel more marginalised.

Pointing out that she and her husband Mathan (35) a semi-skilled labourer together



Rani. — PHOTO:  
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er earn about Rs. 800 a week, she says that though the Rs. 2 a kg of rice scheme takes care of their daily requirement buying vegetables was becoming increasingly difficult. While on the one hand more

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money is required to go to the market on the other the vegetables and other cooking inputs purchased last only for a couple of meals.

With great difficulty chicken is bought once a week and that too because the vendor extends credit facility. Stating, milk and sugar are luxuries we have learnt to do without, Rani says that clothes for their family comprising them and their 15-year-old school going son are bought once a year during Thai season with a loan of Rs. 2,000 obtained from a usurer.

Since the monthly income hardly matches the requirement putting away some-

ing for a rainy day is almost impossible. Despite that, "I have started contributing Rs. 10 a week towards a group savings scheme", she says proudly and adds "I will surmount any odds to educate my son".

She says that though she is an illiterate and her husband has studied only up to Standard V, her son's ambition is to become a software engineer.

Pointing out that they don't even think of eating out or viewing a film in a theatre, she fears that if the trend on the price front is not reversed soon their future will be a question mark.