An epitome of women empowerment

Sunita Devi is indeed the testament to the oft-cited statement that "the 21st century will be the century of girls and women".

On the occasion of International Women’s Day, 32 years old Sunita Devi of Udaipur village in Latehar district was awarded the Nari Shakti Samman by the honourable President of India. Sunita was motivated to do community service since her childhood. And, her dream got realized when she joined Vikas Aajeevika Swayam Sahayata Samuh in 2014 and started working as an Active Woman. However, the introduction of SBM-G in her village in 2017 was the biggest turning point in her life. Despite holding a Master's degree and having a better career prospect, she chose to become a Rani Mistri under DAY-NRLM. For this new role, she got proper training and also mobilized other women to get trained for the same. Post-training, she along with 10-12 Rani Mistris constructed 100 good quality toilets in her village and nearby areas.

Recognizing her good work and leadership quality, she was selected as the Master Trainer in January 2018. As the Master Trainer, she is credited to have trained 456 and 1571 women in her own block Latehar Sadar and Latehar district respectively. She has also provided her valuable services as SBM consultant.

In short, Sunita Devi ventured into a Male dominant occupation with élan and proved her mettle. Further, besides making the people aware about sanitation, she also played a key role in making it a mass movement. Most significantly, she successfully challenged the female stereotyping.
Valuable Learning Experience for the Mizoram Team

The exposure visit familiarized the team with some of the innovative initiatives of Sakhi Mandals in Jharkhand.

Sakhi Mandals are not only proving to be the source of livelihood generation for the vulnerable sections, but also act as a source of knowledge dissemination. In this context, 64 members from different Community Institutions of Mizoram SRLM, under Interaction & Knowledge Program, visited several blocks of Ranchi district from 12 to 14 March 2019.

The team visited and participated in SHG/VO/CLF meetings of Silli, Nagri, Angara and Namkum blocks where they keenly observed how the meetings of Sakhi Mandals of Jharkhand are conducted. Apart from this, the team also went to observe the ongoing practice of Drip Irrigation in all these blocks. They found the overall idea of women farmers handling this scientific method of farming quite fascinating. The team also got firsthand experience of non-farm activities being carried out by the rural women and was quite impressed. The visiting members were quite fascinated by the skills of Sakhi Mandal women engaged in agarbatti (incense stick) making and tailoring activities.

In the course of the visit, the team also visited the Tamarind Processing Unit along with the processing units of medicinal plants such as Lemongrass, Tulsi, etc. in Khunti district. They showed special interest in Lemongrass processing model as its cultivation is quite feasible in their region. Apart from this, they also saw the entire process of Lac production. The main motive behind this visit was to provide the visiting team an exposure of successfully running higher Community Institutions such as VOs & CLFs in Jharkhand. At the end of the visit, a debriefing session was organized wherein the visitors shared their views and experiences. The visiting members were quite motivated and expressed hope that they will be able to adopt some of the unique Sakhi Mandal initiatives in their place as well.

PSS camps successfully organized

Around 2,500 members of 400 Sakhi Mandals across Deoghar district were covered.

For Sakhi Mandals running under the fold of JSLPS, one-day Pre Sanction Survey (PSS) camps were organized by leading Commercial Banks such as State Bank of India, Vananchal Gramin Bank and Allahabad Bank in Palojori, Deoghar and Mohanpur blocks of Deoghar district on 22, 23 and 25 February 2019 respectively. A total of 13 such camps were organized. The program was headed by Branch Managers and Field Officers of respective branches of the participating banks. Around 2,500 members of 400 Sakhi Mandals attended the program across Deoghar district. The officials checked the documents including KYC and Record Books of each Sakhi Mandal. They also verified 364 Sakhi Mandals from all the three blocks for credit linkage. The staffs from JSLPS and SBI provided their valuable support to ensure smooth conduct of the programme in all three blocks.
Goat Farming: A viable and profitable enterprise

Producer Groups and Pashu Sakhis are working in tandem to improve the knowledge of women goat rearers and help them produce better livestock.

Jharkhand Opportunities for Harnessing Rural Growth (JOHAR) is a World Bank funded project which aims to diversify the household income in selected farm and non-farm sectors in the project areas of Jharkhand. Sakhi Mandal members are the targeted beneficiaries and over 200,000 farmers are expected to benefit from the project. To realize this, Producer Groups (PGs) are being formed throughout the project areas.

Om Ajeevika Bakri Utpadak Samuh is one such Producer Group that was formed in Bhadgawan village of Chainpur block of Palamu district in November 2018. This PG consists of 38 members from different Sakhi Mandals of the village. Munni Devi, a member of Tara Ajeevika Swayam Sahyata Samuh, is the President, Soniya Devi, a member of Khusboo Ajeevika Swayam Sahyata Samuh, is the Vice-president and Amrita Devi, a member of Tara Ajeevika Swayam Sahyata Samuh, is the Secretary of this PG. The PG conducts meeting on 13th and 24th of every month. All the members of PG are involved in goat rearing and each one owns at least two goats. Reflecting upon the agenda of the meetings, the Pashu Sakh, Puneeta Devi says, "Besides discussing the diseases that affect goats vaccination and medicines required for keeping goats healthy; techniques of goat care, insurance of goats and other benefits under the project are also discussed in detail".

Forty-year-old Bimal Devi, a member of Durga Ajeevika Swayam Sahayta Samuh, sharing her PG experience said, "Two years ago, I lost 10 goats that died because of some disease. However, after becoming a part of this PG, I became familiar with the diseases that affect goats and their cures as well. Moreover, I got to know about the benefits of de-worming and vaccination. Whenever our goats fall sick now, we consult the Pashu Sakhi and buy medicines from her. The Pashu Sakhi comes to our houses to de-worm and vaccinate the goats. Now, our goats are better protected and hopefully we will not have to incur any loss."

Due to the efforts of the PGs and Pashu Sakhis, women goat rearers are increasingly becoming aware of the many benefits available under JOHAR project. Unlike the earlier practice of informal goat farming, women farmers are now engaged in scientific goat rearing. As a result, not only livestock loss has been minimized, they are also rearing healthy and heavyweight goats. This, in turn, fetches them better selling price in the market.
How a daughter helped improve her family's 'Quality of Life'

Ruhi Parveen has not just transformed her own life but also that of her family by becoming the support her father and family can count on.

Ruhi Parveen and her family were leading a miserable life. But, it was not acceptable to Ruhi and she was determined to better their living condition. Thanks to her enterprising mind and hard work, her family is leading a much happier life now. In the process, she carved her own identity and is justifiably proud of her achievements. Her story is a truly inspiring one.

Ruhi's father, who was the sole earner in the family, would roam the streets on his bicycle hawking to sell clothes. After his long tiresome routine, he used to reach home exhausted every evening. Despite his hard work, the income could earn through hawking clothes was barely enough to maintain the basic needs of the family. Ruhi was deeply concerned by her father's daily struggle and helplessness to increase his income. This motivated her to do something to ease her father's burden and help him in improving the family income.

One day, she determinedly told her father about this. And very soon, during a visit to Employment Fair, her father got to know about Wazir Skill Development Centre that was providing tailoring training to youths and helping them in getting meaningful employment. He decided to send Ruhi to this centre for training in tailoring.

Initially a little hesitant, Ruhi soon adapted to the new environment. Being a keen learner, she learned to handle the industrial sewing machines in no time and also mastered basics of computer and working knowledge of English simultaneously. The trainers were very pleased with her progress and during training itself, she got associated with J. J. Mills India Private Limited as an intern. After completion of training, the company offered her a job at a salary of Rs 11,400.

With this, her dream to support her father and family came true and she became more confident. She regularly sends money to her family and recently helped her father with around Rs 50,000 to purchase a Maruti Omni van. Now, her father is no longer required to go through the daily hardship and has also expanded his business. Her father and entire family are very proud of her achievements.

DDU-GKY has played a great role in transforming Ruhi's life. And rightly so, Ruhi is very grateful to DDU-GKY along with Wazir Skill Development Centre and JSLPS for helping in realizing her dreams.

Ruhi Parveen's successful journey could be aptly summarized in one line – "Where there is a will, there is a way".
On 26 February 2019, a one-day Mega Credit Linkage Camp for Sakhi Mandals of Deoghar district was organized by the State Bank of India at Shivlok Parisar, Deoghar. The event was chaired by Deoghar MP, Dr. Nishikant Dubey. Deoghar MLA, Shri Narayan Das was the Special Guest. Many leading commercial banks from Deoghar took part in this event. The attendees included Mr. Sohan Kumar, SBI DGM, Mr. S. K. Ghoshal, Chief Manager, Allahabad Bank, Mr. Ravi Prakash, GM, VGB, DPM Deoghar and more than 2,300 Sakhi Mandal members.

Dr. Nishikant Dubey, in his address, requested the participants to actively take part in the process of financial inclusion and underlined the importance of timely repayments. Thereafter, an announcement was made that a total of Rs. 16.99 crore will be distributed among 364 SHGs as the credit linkage amount by the leading commercial banks. The beneficiaries were given 10 symbolic cheques of Rs. 1 lakh each by SBI and a cheque of Rs. 5 crore and 25 lakh by Allahabad Bank. Two Sakhi Mandal members, Pooja Kumari and Purnima Devi shared their success stories. In the end, the stalls put up by Sakhi Mandal members from Mohanpur block showcasing products like mushrooms, pickles and handmade soft toys were visited and appreciated by the guests.

Goat Distribution under Mahila Swawalamban Yojana

On 2 March 2019, a one-day Goat Distribution Programme under GoI's Mahila Swawalamban Yojana was organized by JSLPS at Block Campus, Palojori. Its objective was to connect the needy Sakhi Mandal women with livelihood opportunities. The programme was chaired by the honourable Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Minister, Shri Randhir Singh. The attendees included Palojori BDO, DPM Deoghar, DM Livelihood, Livelihood Consultant, BPM Palojori, FTC, 11 Community Coordinators and around 250 Sakhi Mandal members. The Livelihood Consultant informed the beneficiaries about the provision of insurance and other facilities for the goats. For instance, if goats die, they will be replaced by new ones. Around 30 beneficiaries selected from Virajpur village of Palojori Block were given five healthy advanced breed goats by Shri Singh. Addressing the participants, the Minister said, "I have seen poverty and the government is committed to alleviate poverty from our villages quickly". The beneficiaries were quite happy and expressed hope that the advanced breed goats will help in improving their income.
Farmers of Jharkhand have traditionally been engaged in cultivation of crops like paddy which fetch very low incomes to them. A report from ICAR, Jharkhand, states that out of 1.8 million ha cultivated land, 1.36 million ha land is under paddy cultivation. However, with the farmers gradually shifting towards cash crop cultivation, the scenario has started changing now. In this regard, Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) of JSLPS is playing a key role. Under MKSP, farmers are being encouraged to cultivate medicinal plants like Tulsi, Lemon grass, etc., which will help them earn a good income.

Amdiha village of Barwadih block in Latehar district is one such village where women farmers have started Tulsi cultivation with much enthusiasm. About 20-25 women farmers of Sakhi Mandals cultivated Tulsi in 10-30 decimal of land. They bought 50 gm of Tulsi seeds for Rs. 50 through MKSP of JSLPS. Other than the seeds, homemade organic fertilizer and water, no input was required. After harvesting the seeds from Tulsi plant, they sold it to the Amdiha Aajeevika Utpadak Samuh formed by JSLPS. The Producer Group then sold it to Sindhupriya Rural Service Centre at Rs. 500 per kg. At the RSC, an oil extraction plant worth Rs. 5 lakhs has been set up through MKSP. The plant is being run by 30 women of various Sakhi Mandals.

Notably, Tulsi cultivation requires less labour but is very profitable. It can be cultivated 3 times a year and can be harvested in just 4 months. Also, 5-6 litres of oil can be extracted from Tulsi cultivated in 25 decimal of land. The cost of the oil is Rs. 500-600 per kg. Though the women farmers of Amdiha village cultivated Tulsi for the first time, they were very happy with the overall experience.

To sum up, with minimal investment, they had earned a good profit. For example, Sarita Devi aged 34 cultivated Tulsi in 30 decimal of land and harvested 45 kg Tulsi seeds that fetched her Rs. 22,500. Likewise, 52-year-old Jayanti Devi cultivated Tulsi in 15 decimal of land and earned Rs. 16,750.
PM Samvad boosted confidence, restored faith of Sakhi Mandals

On the occasion of International Women's Day on 8th of March, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the National Women Livelihood Meet–2019, held at Deendayal Hastkala Sankul in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. He addressed thousands of SHG members gathered at the venue and over 65 lakh women from around 75,000 locations through video conference.

In his inspirational address, the PM saluted the indomitable Nari Shakti and said that women have an important role in creating New India. Appreciating the exceptional work done by the Sakhi Mandals all across the country, he categorically said, "Their work is not only resulting in the betterment of their families but also leading to the development of nation. The government is giving new energy to the SHGs in terms of better bank loans and support systems. Presently, there are around 50 lakh SHGs that cover around 6 crore women in the country." He further said that the Government's vision is to connect at least one woman member in every family with an SHG and urged the SHGs to be innovative and utilize the GEM portal to sell their products to the Government.

In Jharkhand, proper arrangements were made in every block so that the Sakhi Mandal members could listen to the PM's address without any interruption. As the Sakhi Mandal women were informed that this event is all about Aajeevika, they had gathered to the arranged venues on time. The women were quite excited about the live telecast.

PM Samvad boosted the confidence and restored the faith of Sakhi Mandals as though they were directly connected to the thoughts expressed by the PM. Sharing her experience, Anju Mahto of Maa Tarini Swayam Sahayata Samuh, Manoharpur block, West Singhbhum said, “After listening to our honourable PM and his concern for us (women), we can clearly see that the government is with us. We are not alone and without any fear we can discuss any problem with them.”

Similarly, the Sakhi Mandal women of Nagari block in Ranchi district were quite active throughout the telecast. They got very emotional when the PM was handed a cheque of Rs. 21 lakh for the “Veer Kosh” (dedicated to the welfare of the martyrs' family) by a UP Sakhi Mandal. In fact, Sunita Bagwar of Barsa Aajeevika Mahila Gram Sangathan called upon fellow members to do something similar.

Their beaming faces and active participation proved that the Sakhi Mandal members were quite satisfied. They also took a resolve to connect the left out women to the SHG movement and spread their activities to new areas as suggested by the PM.
Saras Aajeevika Mela 2019: Nurturing Rural Art, Empowering Rural Artisans

Jharkhand with its unique presentations was a show stealer.

India is well known for its rich cultural and traditional heritage and its soul lies in rural India. Because of their uniqueness, rural artifacts and handicrafts have always attracted art lovers and commoners alike. However, commercialization has taken a toll and many of these art forms have lost much ground. To address this problem, different platforms for promoting rural art and artisans have been created lately.

Saras Aajeevika Mela is one such platform where the rural women associated with SHGs across India showcase their art, skills and products. Saras Aajeevika Mela 2019 was organized from 26 February to 7 March at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. Around 700 women artisans, handicrafts persons and entrepreneurs from SHGs all over India assembled there to exhibit and sell their products. Rural artisans from Jharkhand also made their presence felt through exhibition of products like handlooms, handicrafts, bamboo crafts, decorative items, homemade pickles, jewelries, etc. The 12 stalls of Jharkhand attracted sizeable footfall. Besides bulk shopping, the visitors also appreciated the tribal art.

The event was inaugurated by Shri Amarjeet Sinha, Secretary, MoRD. The other dignitaries included Leena Johri, JS, NRLM and Anita Baghel, Director, RL. In his inaugural address, Shri Sinha praised the will power and determination of the rural women for coming up with unique ways to tackle livelihood challenges. He also visited various stalls put up by rural women entrepreneurs and appreciated their skills.

Apart from the regular stalls exhibiting the products and artifacts, the stalls of Community Journalist (CJ) and Banking Correspondent Sakhi (BCS) from Jharkhand were the major centers of attraction. JSLPS had deployed 6 CJs from Jharkhand who successfully documented the entire event. This great initiative was well appreciated by one and all. In fact, the entire documentation by these CJs was reported directly to MoRD and JSLPS and was also put up on their respective social networking channels. In the closing ceremony, a compiled magazine of their documented work was launched by Mr. Sanjeev Kumar, Additional Secretary, RD and Ms. Anita Baghel.

The BCSs providing hassle free banking facilities within the premises was also a highly praised feature of the fair. The on-spot services (like deposit and transaction of money) proved to be very convenient for the visitors and entrepreneurs alike. People were enthralled by the expertise of these JSLPS cadres.

Apart from these, the live demonstration of the entire process of Tussar Silk production proved to be a great crowd-puller. Shri Sinha and Ms. Leena Johri lauded this MKSP initiative for encouraging tribal women farmers of Jharkhand into Tussar cultivation.

Besides, the Sakhi Mandal members had something special to offer to the food lovers as well. Under the initiative of Aajeevika Didi Café, a thematic India Food Court was organized where the SHG members from different regions put up their stalls offering Indian culinary varieties. The Food Court was visited by thousands of visitors who relished delicious dishes from Jharkhand and other states.

Aajeevika Saras Mela, once again, turned out to be a huge success. By providing valuable exposure to rural artisans, it continues to contribute towards its ultimate goal of nurturing and reviving rural art forms.
The purpose of the program was to provide access to clean drinking water to the PVTGs who are deprived of this basic right.

According to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, there are 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India. Of which 8 PVTGs, namely Asur, Birhor, Birajia, Korwa, Parahiya, Sabar, Mal Pahariya and Souriya Pahariya reside in Jharkhand. PVTGs are those Tribal groups who prefer to live in secluded areas and their population is very low. Moreover, these PVTGs are living under abject poverty and have poor access to the basic needs including clean drinking water.

To address this grave issue, JSLPS has initiated the distribution of water filters to the PVTGs under the Goal Project of UNDP. Under this project, Water Filter System will be given to the targeted 1000 PVTG households spread over 6 districts, namely West Singhbhum, Gumla, Palamu, Latehar, Lohardaga and Simdega. This programme is being implemented on a pilot basis and aims to provide the beneficiaries not only the access to clean and safe drinking water but also to mitigate water borne diseases prevalent among these communities, as healthy living is the key to development.

In the first week of March, water filters were distributed among the PVTG women of Chainpur block in Palamu district. These women are members of newly formed Sakhi Mandals. Social Development domain of JSLPS distributed 59 water filters among the members of 6 Sakhi Mandals who are the resident of Bodi, Chando and Basariya Kala Panchayats of Chainpur block. A total of 300 water filters is targeted to be distributed among the PVTG households in Chainpur, Ramgarh, Manatu, Chattarpur and Satbarwa blocks of Palamu district in a phased manner.

Similarly, West Singhbhum district was given a target of 108 PVTG households, which was duly fulfilled by DMMU, West Singhbhum in two phases. On 26 February 2019, low cost membrane-based water filter systems were distributed to the PVTG households in Keram and Rengalbeda villages of Goilkera block and on 1 March, Taliba village was covered in Noamundi block. It is to be noted that all 108 beneficiary households are members of Sakhi Mandals.

During the water filter distribution camp the beneficiaries were orientated on the need for safe drinking water and how to use this low-cost water-filter system assembled with 3 components- low cost membrane, dispenser (10 L capacity) and water container (20 L capacity). However, it was not a smooth process as the beneficiaries were initially afraid of this mechanism. They considered it as some sort of medicine and expressed their desire to continue with their conventional methods of purifying water. But after the long participatory discussion and demonstration, they were convinced that it is just a simple mechanism of purifying water and not a medicine. After coming to know that only those households which are associated with some Sakhi Mandals are eligible for availing such benefit, some PVTG women showed their willingness to join Sakhi Mandals and get access to safe drinking water and other benefits.
Social Media Buzz

JSLPS @onlineJSLPS · 28 Feb
#Community_Journalist interviewing Executive Director of Kerala SRLM at #AajeekkaSaras2019. He visited #IndiaFoodCourt & stalls showcased by SHG women. Sri Hari Kishore, Executive Director also appreciated the work of #Community_Journalist.

@MoRD_GOI @DAY_NRLM

D J Sengupta

JSLPS @onlineJSLPS · 12 Mar
MoU with JBVNL for billing and collection through CLFs and "Bijli Sakhi". In first phase, the programme will be rolled out in 33 CLFs from 7 districts of Jharkhand @DAY_NRLM #SakhiMandal #WomenEmpowerment

JSLPS

Feb 14 at 3:11 PM ·

The Better India - Hindi
Feb 13 at 4:05 PM ·

People are watching live demonstration of Tasar value chain showcased by #JSLPS at #SarasAajeekka2019.
"तसर से बदलती जिंदगी.. सशक्त होती आजीविका"
#EmpoweringRuralWomen

HINDI.THEBETTERINDIA.COM
डिजिटल गांव के सपने को साकार करती, झारखंड की टैबलेट दीदी!
Organic Farming, Processing and Selling of Arhar facilitated income enhancement and transformation of Mukka village women in Latehar district.

RD Minister inaugurated India’s first community managed Lac Processing Unit at RSC, Tiriltoli, Kalamati in Khunti district.

Sakhi Mandals go digital

Community Journalists felicitated at Saras Aajeevika Mela 2019

MoRD Officials launched the Booklet prepared by JSLPS’s Community Journalists

SHG women attending ‘Product publicity & Product photography’ Workshop at Aajeevika Saras Mela

An Initiative of Knowledge Management & Communication Cell

Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society
(Rural Development Department, Government of Jharkhand)
3rd Floor, Shanti Deep Tower, Radium Road, Ranchi – 834001
0651-2360053/2360391  jslps.ranchi@gmail.com  www.jslps.org  facebook.com/onlineJSLPS

For any feedback or suggestions email us at: kmc@jslps.in  twitter.com/onlineJSLPS

Editor - Kumar Vikash  Compilation - Abhishek Anand  Contributors - Ankita, Pooja, Ragini & Ankita