

Enhancing and securing livelihoods - an all-women beekeeper enterprise

Babli Devi, Rangila Devi, Dharmshila Devi, Sarita Devi, Poonam Devi, Ganga Devi, Priyanka Kumari and Asha Kumari are a group of women who started a bee keeping enterprise to ensure a steady income for their households. These women from Ajitpur Harpur village of Pirapur Panchayat in Bandra Block, Muzaffarpur district (Bihar), belong to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. Prior to starting this enterprise, these women worked as temporary farm hands, with unstable income sources.

This all-women enterprise was established, operated, and managed under the UN Women's Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning (SCE) Programme in India. For the SCE programme in India, Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) is the lead implementing partner and the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme -India (AKRSP) is a consortium partner.

The women were identified as SCE candidates through a village survey by AKRSP. While these women often contemplated setting up a group bee-keeping and honey-harvesting initiative, the lack of funds, technical skills, as well as other know-how, held them back. As part of UN Women's SCE programme they received financial and technical support as well as skills training from the partner organizations, PRADAN and AKRSP.

Through the training, the women were taken for exposure visits. They received expert advice from scientists at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). They were also given guidance on developing marketing linkages and on fetching better prices for their produce.

The AKRSP provided crucial support to these women in obtaining the necessary equipment for beekeeping. The women successfully created their bee-keeping and honey-harvesting enterprise through their enthusiasm and the continuous support offered by partner organisations. They began by selling their honey at INR 300 per kilogram and began profiting from their endeavour. In the very first year, they made a total profit of INR 3,34,000. As a next step, they also started exploring wholesale markets/vendors for their next harvest, following which they were linked with Dabur India Limited.

This story indicates the critical support of the SCE programme and the grit and determination of these women, which led to their successful venture and changed their lives for the better. This story also proved to be an impetus and a guiding example for other women/female groups/SHGs to work collectively and develop group enterprise units. The story reflects a change mechanism with measurable positive results under the SCE programme.

The Original UN Women Story

Link to Twitter post:

https://twitter.com/unwomenindia/status/1490589026768023553?s=20&t=7DTspa45DjG2gGUU_aiaKQ