

Women Enhancement and Empowerment Livelihood Bond (WEEL)

India has one of the lowest female labour force participation rates in the world. Social norms and lack of alternative job opportunities continue to constrain women from accessing jobs. On the other hand, women's primary duties are supposed to be in the household. For economic reasons they have to work, but must do so in addition to their domestic responsibilities, and are therefore only able to enter the labour force as subsidiary workers. Because of their status, they are not able to contribute even to make decisions that affect their own lives.

Jhabua, Dhar and Alirajpur districts in Madhya Pradesh are predominantly inhabited by tribal communities. Due to low fertility of land, soil erosion, and scarcity of rainfall in these districts, the women are even forced to migrate out of the region in search of alternate livelihoods, where they mostly end up working as low paid laborers. During migration, these women face various social challenges in terms of abuse, exploitation, etc. while they work as labourers.

Aim



To promote entrepreneurship among low income rural women aged 18-30 years and address local economic livelihood problem, by imparting skills and facilities to practice eco-friendly poultry management and farming.



Vision and Approach



Under its umbrella program 'Innovative Financing 4 Development', ChildFund India envisioned to create an enabling and safe environment for tribal and rural women. It believes one way to do this is to promote entrepreneurship among women, thus enabling them to become self-confident and economically self-sufficient. This intervention was envisaged to directly contribute towards establishing economically-viable business models and increased marketing channels led by women entrepreneurs, in turn allowing them to have a strong voice, influence and control over decision-making both at the household and community levels.



Target Area:

46 villages across Jhabua, Dhar and Alirajpur districts in Madhya Pradesh



Beneficiaries:

1000 tribal rural women aged between 18 to 30 years



Project Period:

1-2 years





Highlights



- Through socio-economic empowerment of women, the program has made positive impact on addressing gender issues at the district and state level. It has improved their overall nutrition status, as well as that of their children, and created additional income generation opportunities among the rural communities.
- Several pieces of research state that production of livestock generates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The program adopted eco-friendly practices to reduce GHG emissions by 30% through better feeding, health management, manure management practices that ensures recovery and recycling of nutrients and energy contained in manure, and energy saving and recycling along supply chains.
- In the long run, the program will help members to diversify their business to other locally viable enterprises. In this tribal region, people cultivate maize and soya. These cereals have assisted in reducing feed costs for the poultry farmers and simultaneously increased agricultural production to meet the demands of their business.
- The women's organizations formed at the grassroots level and the producer company has initiated establishing required linkages with other stakeholders to sustain the project beyond its life cycle.
- To some extent, the project has successfully reduced and aims to eventually end the migration of young women to nearby states, where they are abused, exploited and have to live away from their families for longer durations.
- The project is well aligned with the Government of India's important 'National Rural Livelihood Mission' and 'Skill India Mission'.



Impact



- Trained 1000 women as entrepreneurs, and provided 100 chickens and a poultry shed to each woman to start their poultry farming business - creating 1000 new enterprises and helping them to earn around Rs 3000 to Rs 4000 as additional monthly income to support the family, over a period of 1 year.
- Over 800 women have opened personal bank accounts and 80% of the targeted women now have increased understanding on financial management.
- All the 1000 women members are demonstrating adequate financial knowledge by keeping and tracking the record of investments from the start of the poultry units.
- Out of the 1000 beneficiaries, nearly 300 beneficiaries have so far sold approximately 5000 chickens worth Rs. 10,00,000; chickens of rest of the beneficiaries are still growing.
- To support these 1000 entrepreneurs, "Sramadha Adiwasi Mahila Murgi Paalan Producer Company Private Limited" has been established which is also managed by these women.
- At the family level, these women entrepreneurs have started getting support from their family members for management of poultry farm and involved in the decision making process.