



## Improving Living Standard of Mountain Community through Integrated Community Approach: Case Studies on Farming Innovation and Women Empowerment

(Pratibha Rawat \* Anita Trivedi and Navprabhat Negi)

Mount Valley Development Association, Ghansali, Tehri Garhwal

\*Corresponding Author's email: [pmbi@mvda.org.in](mailto:pmbi@mvda.org.in)

Government brings number of schemes for the right holders majorly for the development of rural areas. But do these schemes really reach to the one it belongs? Are they even aware of these schemes? If yes, how easy is it for them to access these schemes? Who guide them in the documentation process? Do they have enough money or the transport facilities are good enough for them to reach the government department for the submission of their documents or to clear any of their query?

Summarizing all the above questions, the people in rural areas lack awareness about the government schemes & policies as the demography of rural area especially of the hills areas is quite scattered. For 10-15 villages, there lies a single market. The villagers living in the rural market area, close to Banks & different departments are somewhere aware of the schemes. But those living at distant location, sometimes are not even aware about the name of the schemes, knowing about its detail is another topic. Even if, the information reaches at distant villages, the one who is active avail for the schemes, leaving behind those actually deserves the benefits. Along with that, the district head offices are also quite far with poor transport facilities, adding to the list of the struggles. The travel cost is also high. If someone even reaches twice or thrice to the district office but fails to fulfil the required documents, loses his hopes and sets back to finally not applying for it. The people of the rural areas face the documentation process hassling, as most of the time their documents are not even complete, which creates a one more gap to avail for schemes.

So, the schemes barely reach to the one who actually needs it or for whom it was actually made. Considering this a serious issue and a hindrance in the development of the rural areas, Mount Valley Development Association, under the IM- Supported program collaborated with the Haqdarshak Empowerment Solution Private Limited (HESPL), the first ever enterprise to digitise welfare schemes and provide application support to beneficiaries of these schemes in low-income areas in both rural and urban communities.

A 5-day residential training program was organised at Paukhal Cluster Office, MVDA, Tehri Garhwal for 25 participants from 23 villages across the Tehri Garhwal from different Blocks, with the objective to train people offering services at grass root level to link the right holder to different eligible schemes through easy-to-use Haqdarshak- Application, where at first screening of the person is done, filling their personal details & documents that have at present. After the detailed screening, government schemes get enlisted. The trained Haqdarshak details the right holder about the different schemes & suggested or ask them the about the schemes that want to benefited from. After the selection of the schemes, the Haqdarshak help the right holder in the best way possible in the entire process from

documentation to the submission of the document at government department till ensuring that the right holder gets the schemes benefits for which they ask for minimum charges as well.

### ‘Haqdarshika’: Making it possible for right holders to access Government Schemes and Policies

A case study on Meena Devi of district-Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand

Village: Paukhal, Block: Bhilangna

District: Tehri Garhwal



Meena Devi, one of the trained Haqdarshak helping the right holder from Gram Molno in the documentation process through Haqdarshak Mobile app

Mrs. Meena Bisht, 46, from Molno Maya, Paukhal, Tehri Garhwal is a home maker. She is one of the trained Haqdarshak. This was her first training on digitally assisting right holders for any government schemes. Although the interface of the Haqdarshak app is relatively simple, but Meena ji had some difficulties at first because digital working was a new experience for her. She used to practise on app during her spare time in order to acquire a firm grasp on it. Meena ji used to help people with documentation as much as she could in the past. However, post the training on Haqdarshak, she could service more people, which has also created an income source for her.

*In her words, ‘ मैं हमेशा से ही अपना जीवन सामाजिक कार्यों में समर्पित करना चाहूंगी। समाज में लिए जो भी नेक कार्य, मेरे द्वारा हो सके तो उसके लिए मैं स्वयं को भाग्यशाली समझूंगी। गरीब व ज़रूरतमंद को उसका अधिकार जरूर मिलना चाहिए। यह हम जागरूक लोगो की जिम्मेदारी बनती है, की उन्हें उनके हक के लिए दिशा दिखाए। ’*

“I’ve always wanted to dedicate my life to social service. I will consider myself fortunate for whatever wonderful contribution I could do for the society. The poor and needy must get access to their rights. It is the responsibility of the conscious people to guide them in the proper direction.”

*She also adds, “ ज़रूरतमंद को उसको हक दिलाने के लिए, मेरी बहुत सरकारी अफसरों व प्रधान से भी लड़ाई हो गई है, वो मुझे बोलते है कि आप अपनी बलाई देखो, क्यों किस ओर के लिए अपना समय व्यर्थ कर रहे हो। पर यहाँ सब बातें, मुझे मेरा कार्य करने से रोक नहीं सकती। ”*

“I have fought with many government officials and Pradhans in order to get the right to the poor; they tell me, you should only care about your own work, why are you spending your time for others?” But their words will not discourage me from completing my duty.”

After the training in April, 2022, more than 500 application of different schemes & certificates related to pensions, Aadhar card, pen card, job card, birth certificates, death

certificates, Jeevan Jyoti bema yojana, Nanda Gauri kanya Dhan yojana etc have been registered by her, benefiting more than 100 right holders, wherein she earns average of about INR 15000- INR 20000/month.

Mrs. Meena, is a motivation for all the middle age women, who thinks that they are not serve, learn or earn at this age. There is no defined age for any things that you desire to accomplish.

In the words of Israelmore Ayivor: “Age in just a number. It carries no weight. The real weight is in impacts. The truth is that you can do it at any age. Get up and be willing to leave a mark.”

### **A case study on as SHG of District Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand**

**Name of the SHG: Rajrajeshwari**

**Mount Valley Mahila Kisan Samuh**

**Name of the Farmer: Sunita devi**

**Village: Manthal**

**Block: Bhilangna**

**District: Tehri Garhwal**



Farming Innovation for women empowerment is a programme initiated by MVDA and SOIR-IM (now IM-Swedish Development Partner). It aims to address enhancing the livelihood of women through conservation and rejuvenation of wild and cultivated spices and condiments of the local region.

**Sunita Devi**, a female farmer from gram Manthal, Tehri Garhwal is one of the right holders of FIWE project. Before initiation of this project, she was engaged in the traditional way of farming and previously she used to grow only wheat & paddy in her field. To increase the overall income of our farmers, organic spice cultivation was introduced as one of the project interventions.

With the assistance of this project, she is now organically cultivating spices, turmeric, onion, garlic, ginger & some vegetables as well in her field. She believes with the efforts of team through training & demonstration of Integrated Pest Management & Integrated Plant Nutrient Management like use of Amritpani liquid fertilizer, Shivansh & Sanjeevani. Now, I feel we were depleting our soil & health by the use of Urea & DAP. We also follow Package of Practices to enhance agricultural productivity by following traditional ways of farming along with scientific technologies for the overall protection of the crop, for example, practising line sowing which has resulted in increased growth, productivity and also weeding has become an easier task. Spice cultivation has increased her income as well.

In her own words, “मसालों की खेती की वजह से हमें आर्थिक लाभ अर्जित हुआ है। मुझे लगता है कि ऐसी और परियोजनाएँ होनी चाहिए, ऐसी योजना महिला सशक्तिकरण में मदद करती है। अब मुझे बाजार मूल्य के बारे में अच्छी तरह से पता है और मुझे ज्ञात है कि मुझे अपनी उपज को बेहतर दरों पर किसको बेचना

है। अन्यथा हम अपने द्वारा उगाए जाने वाले कृषि उत्पादों के स्वयं उपभोग तक ही सीमित थे। साथ ही हम जैविक खेती के महत्व के बारे में भी जागरूक हुए हैं जो हमारी मिट्टी और स्वास्थ्य के लिए फायदेमंद है। "

(We have benefited financially from the growing of spices. More of these projects, in my opinion, should be undertaken because they contribute to women's empowerment. Now I am quite aware of market prices and I know who I need to sell my produce to in order to get higher prices. Otherwise, we were limited to self-consumption of the agricultural products we produced. We've also learned how important it is to practise organic farming, which is good for our soil and our health.)

Women like them serve as role models for others who rely on agriculture for a living. Sunita Devi not only practises the aforementioned practises herself, but she also encourages other women in her area to do so.

### **A case study on as SHG of district Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand**

**Name of the SHG: Nagraj**

**Mount Valley Mahila Kisan Samuh**

**Name of the Farmer: Swara Devi**

**Village: Swati**

**Block: Bhilangna**

**District: Tehri Garhwal**

With the rapid changes in technology, the necessity of agricultural machinery has been witnessed largely at present time. Agriculture in the hills, on the other hand, is usually practiced on a sloppy or terrain-like structure. Also, the use of machinery in agricultural techniques has become essential benefiting our farmers as it resulted in increased production, saves



time and labour which may be used for other purposes. The Uttarakhand government's 'ATMA' (Agriculture Technology Management Agency) scheme is assisting farmers in purchasing machinery at reduced prices. Tractors, flour mills, pesticide sprinkling machines, chep cutter machines etc. that can be purchased in groups or individually.

'Swara Devi' is our one such active women farmer & the right holder of the project from Gram Swati, Tehri Garhwal. In January 2021, she received a tractor and a pesticide spraying machine at a subsidised price.

Because of the challenging geography and scarcity of bulls in the area, traditional ploughing is challenging. Swara Devi acknowledged the issue and saw it as an opportunity. She rented out her tractor to other farmers and earned money from it. She converted a challenge into business model & earned 1600 rupees this season by this activity.

In her own words, "जब से किटकनाशक स्प्रे मशीन और ट्रैक्टर हमें आत्मा परियोजना द्वारा मिला हैं। इससे हमारे समय की बचत होती हैं। आत्मा परियोजना के बारे में हमें MVDA से पता चला और उस ही वजह से हम इस परियोजना का लाभ उठा सके।"

(Through the ATMA scheme, we were received a tractor and a pesticide sprinkling machine.) These machineries save time. We can now do our tasks swiftly. MVDA informed us about ATMA scheme, as a result we got benefited by their efforts.)

Any government scheme's success is determined by how well it is implemented. The MVDA is serving as a catalyst in the policy implementation process. MVDA is reaching out to people on the ground in villages and assisting them.

### **Acknowledgment**

The authors appreciate all field staff and farmer communities who supported for conducting this study. This study was conducted under the funding partner 'IM Swedish development Partner' entitled "farming innovation for women empowerment & Improving living standard of mountain community through Integrated community.