

CAN I to ... I CAN

A joyful journey of shifting food insecurity to livelihood security

With just over one-tenth of its population classified as urban, Jharkhand remains one of the backward rural states in India. A majority of the population does not have adequate source of livelihood opportunities thereby perpetuating vulnerability and exclusion. Even the government initiatives like the flagship livelihood programme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) does not reach the intended marginalised group. The worse affected area in the state is the north covering districts of Deogarh and Santhal Pargana region.

VSO India with support from ACCENTURE India implemented the Livelihood Opportunity Initiative for the poor and disadvantaged women in Deoghar district of Jharkhand. NEEDS, a local organisation was the technical partner in the implementation process. Leela Devi tells us her story.

My family

"I lived in constant fear of the drought. I worry whether there will be enough food for the family or will my children suffer from pangs of hunger," quoted a concerned Leela.

She and her husband Gulab Rajwar with two children were leading a life of uncertainty, depending on traditional practices of agriculture until Leela and Gulab joined the local self help group. As active members, they attended trainings on Systematic Rice Intensification (SRI) techniques of paddy production. Through these trainings, they cultivated paddy in 50 decimal and maize in 50 decimal during the monsoons, and tomato, chilly and potato during the winter season.



Leela with Paddy seedlings in her hand

The above interventions not only addressed their concern of food security but the family also earned an additional income of Rs. 12,000 (approx. 136 pounds). Leela and her family are overwhelmed and plan to continue with the new technique. They even intend to expand cultivation to a larger area in the coming season. The family has also come out of uncertainty about agriculture production by gaining some technical knowledge.

What VSO India did?

VSO took the initiative to enhance the livelihood of tribal women by training over 1000 women on animal husbandry, bio farming mechanisms, leadership and developing marketing skills through these self help groups. VSO enhanced livelihood opportunities for over 10,000 women by effective use of technology and connecting them to the livelihood schemes of the government.