

GAURA SHG – FOOD PROCESSING (UTTARAKHAND)

In a nutshell: Gaura SHG was formed in 2018, when community resource persons (CRPs) from UNDP-Uttarakhand State Rural Livelihood Mission (USRLM) visited the village of Valli in Pauri Garhwal district to provide information about forming SHGs and the associated benefits of the same. The prospect of getting financial assistance and support for livelihood activities was lucrative and soon five women in the village came together and formed the SHG.

Nodal agency: UNDP and Rural Development Department, Government of Uttarakhand

Many farmers in the village of Valli in Pauri Garhwal district are marginal, owning land between 0.25–0.5 Ha. With low volumes of production and lack of markets, they often did not get the right price for their produce. Their interaction with the CRPs from UNDP and USRLM opened new opportunities and a chance to increase their income.

After considering the locally available resources and market opportunities, the group expressed an interest in undertaking a food processing activity for augmenting their income to the business motivation model.

UNDP-USRLM provided support in setting up the venture, starting with organizing hands-on training for the members on food processing activities. Besides being trained on different methods of preservation, processing and value addition to fruits and vegetables, developing processed products with increased shelf life, packaging and storing, they were also imparted training on hygiene and good manufacturing practices.

USRLM also facilitated a fund of ₹50,000 through cash credit linkage (CCL) from the local bank at 7 per cent interest as seed fund for the group to start the business. Armed with the new skills and financial support, the women sprang into action. Since the village has an abundant supply of fruits such as mango and amla, the first products that the group prepared for sale were mango and amla pickle, amla juice and amla and tamarind candy. With a good response from the market, the group expanded their product range and are now preparing various pickles based on traditional recipes using local fruits and vegetables such as turmeric, timla and garlic, along with mango, malta and amla squashes.

Impact

In about one year, the SHG has been able to sell enough to cover their expenses and earn a nominal profit. They also have ₹10,000 unutilized from the CCL availed at the beginning. The group is assured that soon the quantum of profits will increase to meet each members' needs.

By encouraging them to participate in different melas, USRLM helped them create a market network and build good brand value.

Social recognition is one more achievement of the women through the group. A member from another SHG in the same village was elected as the Panchayat Pradhan with the support from Gaura SHG during the elections and her claim to popularity was her association with the SHG. Owing to their work, the members have become popular in their area as well as outside. They have received more respect and support from their families and their self-confidence is also higher.

Challenges

- The site selected for a few of the enterprises/unit were very challenging in terms of logistical connectivity and market outreach.
- The SHGs have yet to take ownership of their own enterprises. They are completely dependent on BMMs for sourcing raw materials, marketing, and sales.

Plan for scaling up implementation

The SHG has plans to scale up production. The group plans to include a wider range of products made from local fruits and vegetables. They also plan to establish polyhouse farming for certain fruits and vegetables so that they can get raw materials locally at lower costs and provide income to others in the village. They also wish to establish a low-cost packaging unit which will help make their work easier and more efficient.

The group would like to venture into other activities like mushroom cultivation for which they have requested the USRLM team for training. For the activities such as increasing production, adding new products, packaging units and setting up poly houses, the SHG will require a loan of ₹5 lakh, for which the USRLM team is trying to link them with a local bank for availing a loan on lower interest rates.



Gaura SHG being felicitated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Govt. of Uttarakhand for best SHG in Uttarakhand