

## AN 1.0\_Saksham Report

### **PTVAIM's "Project Saksham" - Empowering Rural Women through Skill development and Revenue Generation – Livelihood Project for Adivasi Women of Tansa River Valley area, Palghar**

A joint Project between PTVA's Institute of Management (PTVAIM), Learning Space Foundation (LSF), and Amhi Udyogini

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Empowering women through education, skill development, access to the knowledge as well as developing entrepreneurial acumen among them is necessary for making India a developed Nation. However it cannot be the responsibility solely of Government or Policy makers. Individuals and organizations can contribute in different ways.

Understanding need of time, PTVA's Institute of Management (PTVAIM) through its Centre of Entrepreneurship & Innovation(COEI) and Research Cell, initiated PTVAIM's Project Saksham since 18th January 2020. The project is conceptualized, planned and been implemented in collaboration. PTVAIM has collaborated with two NGOs – Learning Space Foundation (LSF) and Amhi Udyogini.

PTVAIM's Project Saksham is a livelihood project for tribal women of Tansa River Valley situated in the Thane- Palghar area, (on the outskirts of Mumbai).

#### **1.2 Project Objectives**

- 1) To sensitize management students to the problems faced by rural population.
- 2) To create opportunities of applied research
- 2) To provide experiential learning opportunities for faculty-students of running a business
- 3) To mend knowledge, opportunity and demand supply gap
- 4) To provide handholding to rural youth, specifically rural women in starting a rural enterprise and creating jobs for local women.



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## 1.3 Our Partners

### Learning Space Foundation (LSF)

LSF, a Public Charitable Trust, founded in 2006, has served the villages of the Tansa River Valley with many game changers in the field of education. LSF has been developing a keen interest of the local communities towards the environment. The focus has been on co-existence of the villagers with all other elements of Nature, in the villages and the forested areas around. This interest has been kindled over the last few years, when many of the team members have witnessed the need for doing some active intervention in the sphere of children & adult perception and attitude towards animal and plant life. In April 2017, LSF decided to support the family members of Smt. Shevanti Dodhade, an Adivasi community resident of Dodhade Pada, in Gorad village close to LSF Trust office & Learning center, by adopting their farm land about 3.5 acres, and initiating a project called "Jeevamitra". The Jeevamitra project, in the year 2017-18, helped set up the farm as an education-livelihood support programme, where about 200 middle level and high school students from schools in the vicinity of LSF, were imparted with classroom lessons in organic farming and brought to the farm to learn and practice the methods during the year 2017-18. In year 2018-19, LSF has been trying to form suitable partnerships with CSR and knowledge resource teams to be able to build a project that is holistically planned on a sustainable basis to provide employment for the native family, and many benefits to the community.

### Amhi Udyogini

"Aamhi Udyogini Prathishthan" is an organization started by Mrs. Meenal Mohadikar, working for women entrepreneur for the last **22 years**. We organize seminars, counseling program, education visits and conferences in various states of Maharashtra for women entrepreneur at no extra cost. We also provide a platform for women entrepreneurs to showcase their products by organizing exhibitions in Maharashtra, Goa and UAE. This inspires a lot of women who aspire to attain some position in their life and become independent as well as those who are already doing business on a small scale but are not aware how to expand their business globally or on a wider scale. The main office of „Aamhi Udyogini“ is situated at Dadar (W) Mumbai with its branches spread at New Mumbai, Kalyan, Goregaon, Vileparle, Dombivali, Thane, Pune, Nasik, Ratnagiri, Aurangabad, Kolhapur, Panjim, Margao & Dubai. It is said that if a women get educated, her whole house get educated, likely if a women becomes entrepreneur, then her entire family gets



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influenced by her skills . „Aamhi Udyogini“ firmly believes that all ladies have qualities & potential for starting a business, only thing needed is to find the hidden qualities & nurture them from business point of view & this is what we strive for. Because of Team efforts „Aamhi Udyogini Pratisthan“ was awarded „Unch Majha Jhoka“ award by „Zee Marathi“ in August 2018.

## **1.4 Preliminary Research findings**

### **1.4.1 Rural area research**

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2019, four students of PTVAIM had done survey of 161 adivasi women of 24 self-help groups (registered under Umed Foundation) from five villages of Vajreshwari & Palghar district. Focus group approach was used to collect information.

Survey Findings are –

- 1) 89% women were from the age group of 20 to 50 years
- 2) 56% women were illiterate, 40% had secured secondary education and only 11% had obtained higher secondary education.
- 3) Average family size was 5 members with 1:4 as earning - dependency ratio.
- 4) 32% respondents were found to be busy in farming for 4 months per year.
- 5) 40% women work in nearby production units on temporary basis with average gainful employment was roughly for 100 to 150 days only with daily income not more than 100/-
- 6) Little more than 50% women were found to be non-earning members of SHGs. Each SHG has 15 to 20 members with main activity is contributing 100/- per month and transferring the lump sum amount to the needy of the group.
- 7) All women had shown interest in getting engaged in gainful employment in case it is available in their own of neighboring villages.
- 8) They had shown interest in starting production unit in the group in case they get support from experts. They also had shown interest in contributing for skill development of other women.
- 9) Where existing skill sets were concerned, 22% respondents claimed to be very good in sewing, 32% in farming and 23% in making agro-based food products like „papad“, „pickel“ etc. These findings recommended that, by tapping the existing skill sets and providing training for new skills, a cottage unit can be started in those villages. Fully functional unit will be handed over to the same group of women who are working in it.



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It was decided to explore the possibility of setting up a cottage unit using “sewing skills”.

#### **1.4.2 Urban Market Research -**

This also necessitated research of urban markets. So in the month of October the new batch of MMS students were given a market survey project under the subject of managerial economics, where almost 18 groups (approx 100 students) had done market survey of retailers, wholesalers in Mumbai to understand different options adopted by them to replace plastic bags and tap requirement of cloth bags. Students also got many samples during survey.

The research findings indicated demand and supply gap for cloth bag. Representatives of PTVAIM and Amhi Udyogini visited LSF to discuss the possible cloth bag making project. It was decided to start the cottage unit that will make cloth bags of used as well as unused cloth and sell those to urban market. In the visit, cloth bag samples were scrutinized, tentative sizes and types of bags to be stitched were decided, the area at LSF office that was to be made as a temporary workshop was seen. A meeting of adivasi women interested in the project also was taken by all the three partners.

**Picture 1.1**  
**Initial visit to LSF**



Responsibilities were divided between three partners and the project was initiated. The work division between partners decided was -

PTVAIM – Raising crowd fund for the project



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Marketing products of the unit

Providing hand-holding to young girl Chaitali Mhaskar from the village (appointed by LSF) in running the cloth bag unit

LSF – Operation Management

Providing temporary space for the unit

Provide required handholding to the project

Amhi Udyogini –

Providing training as well as marketing support

## 1.5 The Project

Team was formed at PTVAIM and crowd funding strategy was formed under the guidance of Mr. Pawan Sawant. Targets were fixed and team PYVAIM started gathering fund for the project.

Picture 1.2

Team PTVAIM with Saksham Banner



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Picture 1.3

A Meeting with Team Saksham



Table 1.1

Team PTVAIM's Project Saksham 2019-20 to 2020-21				
<b>Faculty Members</b>				
<b>Dr. Sucheta Pawar - Project Head &amp; Finance</b>				
<b>Mr. Ajinkya Kumavat - Marketing</b>				
<b>Mrs. Aparna Patil - Operations</b>				
<b>Student Members</b>				
Sr.No.	Class	Roll No.	Name	Role in the project
1	FYMMS	B208	Raj Chandorkar	Finance & data base
2	FYMMS	B202	Anushka Arukar	Finance
3	FYMMS	B250	Namita Sharma	Finance
4	SYMMS	H403	Saurabh Chavan	Project Head & Finance/ data base
5	SYMMS	F433	Alka Parkar	Project Head & Finance
6	FYMMS	B257	Abhay Waghmare	Project Head & Digital Marketing
7	FYMMS	B249	Sahil Shaikh	Digital Marketing
8	FYMMS	B238	Nidhi Nikte	Digital Marketing
9	FYMMS	B232	Sushma Mishra	Marketing/ Sales & operations



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10	FYMMS	B229	Kinali Mehta	Project Head & Marketing/ Sales/ data base
11	FYMMS	A256	Shweta Wairkar	Marketing/ Sales & Data base
12	FYMMS	B204	Siddhi Bhagat	Operations
13	FYMMS	B230	Namrata Mhatre	Operations
14	FYMMS	B246	Anushka Rane	Operations
15	FYMMS	B216	Chinmayee Gurav	Operations
<b>Industry counsellors</b>				
<b>Fund Raising - Mr. Pavan Sawant</b>				
<b>Cost calculations - Mr. Sarvottam Rege</b>				
<b>Marketing - Mr. Kumar Subramaniam</b>				
<b>Support &amp; Guidance from Partners</b>				
<b>Mr. Nitin Orayan - Founder LSF</b>				
<b>Mrs. Minaltai Mohadikar - Founder - Amhi Udyogini</b>				
<b>Mrs. Nandini Tanksale – Support from society</b>				

Cost calculation guidance was given to the team by Mr. Sarvottan Rege sue to which students could plan fund allocation.

**Picture 1.4**

**Counseling on - Cost calculation and allocation of funds 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020**



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Fund of 74232 rupees was raised by the student in which PTVAIM's alumni contributed. . Students also conducted used cloth donation drive. One second hand machine was donated by lady entrepreneur from Amhi Udyogini. Two brand new machines and other required accessories were bought and send to LSF office where temporary unit for the project was created.

**Picture 1.5**

**Tempo loaded with Machines, Accessories and used cloth leaves for LSF on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020**



Through Amhi Udyogini lady entrepreneur Mrs. Tejal Maladkar agreed to train the rural women for stitching bags. Chaitali Mhaskar had gathered a group of 20 -22 interested rural women. On 11<sup>th</sup> March the team PTVAIM went to LSF office for inauguration of the project. On the same day training of rural women was started by Mrs. Maladkar



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Picture 1.6

Team PTVAIM goes to LSF for inauguration of the project on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020



The project was formally inaugurated at LSF in the presence of rural women who had shown interest in the training as well as the work.

Picture 1.7

Meeting and inauguration by Chaitali and Mr. Nitin Orayan at LSF



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After initiating training, marketing the stitched bags was PTVAIM's responsibility. Thus on 12<sup>th</sup> March, the team discussed various marketing strategies with the industry expert Mr. Kumar Swaminathan.

**Picture1.8**

**Planning marketing strategies – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020**



Simultaneously at LSF, from 12<sup>th</sup> March to 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020, 19 adivasi women took training on stitching different types and sizes of cloth bags. During training period 28 different types of bags were stitched. Meanwhile we fetched our first order of 40 bags. Post training, from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March, in 4 working days 16 women made 56 bags by working in two shifts. Each shift was of two hours. Total amount paid as wages was 2800/-

However from 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020, lockdown was declared and the production was stopped.

During lock down one more web meeting was done with Mr. Kumar to discuss what can be done with project Saksham which had stopped. The team decided to convince Chaitali from LSF to think of making cloth masks instead of bags since that was the need for time. However since villages were strictly following lockdown, nothing could be done. However Chaitali at LSF was patiently trying to persuade some women to start the work and she got success in June. Cloth from Hindmata market was bought over the video call and was delivered to LSF with order for 125 masks. Women started making masks by looking at you tube videos downloaded by Chaitali.



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## Picture 1.9

### Chaitali supervising the mask production



Following the rules of social distancing, everyday 3 to 4 women started working at the unit in two shifts (9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and they completed 125 single layer masks with threads in 8 days and earned wages at the rate of 20/- per hour. However the post 27<sup>th</sup> June the project got another set back. The unit stopped working again since they started finding CORONA cases in their villages.

However through Chaitali's efforts, the unit was restarted from 27<sup>th</sup> July where now women are taking shifts of 3 hours, per shift 4 to 5 women are stitching single layer, double layer masks with better speed and better quality. Around 1300 masks are made till 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020. Per day close to 100 masks are stitched with production cost of 9.15 rupees per mask. On 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> August training for making scarves and double layer masks was given by Mrs. Tejal Maladkar and now the unit will start making printed, coloured cloth single, double layered masks for grown ups as well as small children along with scarves and cloth bag.



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**Picture 1.10**

**Second round of training and expanded unit**



From 27<sup>th</sup> July to 21<sup>st</sup> August, the unit created job for 360 hours and income of 7200 was generated for 10 to 12 women who stitched 1324 masks. Two more machines were bought by LSF and the unit was expanded from 3 machine unit to 5 machine unit. Chaitali Mhaskar is identified as the potential entrepreneur who will be running the entire unit in future. Thus Chaitali entered into COEI's pre-incubation programme and received handholding through tele calling about various aspects of businesses. Meanwhile two more girls Vaishali Katkar and Neha too were trained for stitching as well as business organization. Team PTVAIM is now geared up in trying to set marketing channels for the products. So experiential learning for team PTVAIM continues.



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Picture 1.11

The Products



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