

Transformation is a Conscious Choice

“Enhancing Livelihoods Security for the Rural Women in Maharashtra through Sustainable Agriculture & Entrepreneurship Development” is a flagship program of AFARM. The Project is built around a comprehensive, multi sector approach that focuses specifically on capacity building of women through community-based organisations for livelihoods development.



The program started in April 2018, with 10,000 women from 50 villages of four districts of Maharashtra - Pune, Nasik, Thane and Ahmednagar.

Yogita Santosh Yerande is one of the project participants belongs to a remote village called Thugaon, Ambegaon block, Pune district. She took initiative and was excited to participate in the project.

Agriculture is the only source of income for her family; they own only 2 acres of land forcing her family to work in the neighbouring farm field as farm labour. The annual family income from the farm and labour work was Rs. 25,000/-, which was not enough to fulfil the basic needs of her family of 6 people.

She heard about this project from one of her friends and she decided to grab this opportunity to bail out her family from the financial distress. Since, she was passionate about tailoring, she chose this as her enterprise and joined the producer group called Durgamata. Being a part of this project, she received skill training which helped her to improve the quality of stitching and learnt new designs. She also got the knowhow about enterprise management.

This was the trigger that got her excited to restart the enterprise and support her family financially. She received a support of Rs. 7,500/- from the project as part of a revolving fund, she pitched her own contribution of Rs. 1,500/- and purchased an advanced sewing machine. The outcome of her passion about tailoring was that her business bloomed in full swing and very soon she became famous because of mouth to mouth publicity. She started getting orders from the adjoining villages; she got many more orders in the summer seasons when most of the marriages happened. She earned sum of Rs. 10,000/- to her kitty within these three months. Now, she is earning Rs. 3,000/- per month regularly from her enterprise, and she has taken charge of her family's financial affairs. Her business has grown at an enormous pace with the timely inputs provided by AFARM and it's partner organisation, SAMPARC-Pune.

Ratan's success story begin with one cow

Mrs. Ratan Mandalkar is one of the dairy micro-entrepreneurs resident of village Patas of Daund block of Pune district. She got selected as one of the women entrepreneur in digital sakhi project in June 2017. She says that her journey began initially with one cow and many difficulties. Now, she is the owner of 9 cows and 1 buffalo. She is grateful to Digital Sakhi program for all the support and assistance that has been provided to her over two years. Now, the enthusiastic dairy entrepreneur is also supplying value added products like curd, paneer, ghee etc. prepared from the milk as per the demand.



Ratan mentions that she attended series of training sessions on upskilling and entrepreneurship development. She learnt about how to secure the best quality of ingredients for feed, specific way for milking and appropriate vaccinations for cows. With this information and an entrepreneurial drive, Ratan built a permanent shelter for 9 cows and is currently selling 90 litres of milk every day to nearby dairy.

From providing appropriate quantity and quality of fodder, to using cow dung for manure through composting, to providing value added products door-to-door, Ratan lives and breathes the business.

Through her sincerity and quality of products, she is getting positive customers responses and thus profit in the long run. “I am becoming well-known within my community. Other micro women entrepreneurs respect me when I provide them easy solutions. I have also used to share my experience with dairy farming with the entire community”, she remarks.

Ratan has been able to use profits to buy a two-wheeler and to set up a small restaurant for his son to provide another source of livelihoods for the family.

Ratan feels empowered as a women entrepreneur building a real business in the dairy sector in Daund. She says, “I don't feel tired of the work rather I enjoy it a lot as I can contribute to my family income”.