

## LEDP SUCCESS STORY

### LOW COST SANITARY NAPKIN MAKING, PALAMU

#### **A. NEED FOR THE LIVELIHOOD ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (LEDP):**

Menstrual health and hygiene has been a critical issue, especially in our rural hinterlands. For millions of adolescent girls, menstruation continues to be associated with unwarranted stigma, unsafe practices and unease, resulting in school absenteeism and even drop-outs. A significant population in our country still follows unhygienic practices (ie. use of leaf, rags/ old clothes etc.) resulting in a wide range of complications e.g. urinary and reproductive tract infections and associated financial burden.

For the government, menstrual health and hygiene has been one of the priority areas; they have been putting in considerable amount of effort and resources to create awareness. In light of above, the NABARD - LEDP project in Palamu district was envisaged to -

- Address a social issue afflicting women in our area;
- To de-stigmatise periods and encourage women towards safe hygiene practices;
- To supplement govt. interventions eg. “CHUPPI TODO ABHIYAN”.
- Most importantly, the LEDP project sought to demonstrate feasibility of a successful and sustainable rural women lead enterprise that addressed the key gaps (ie. in terms of accessibility, cost, quality etc).

The LEDP project sought mass production of low cost, bio-degradable sanitary napkins, which were not only medially certified but also fulfilled the Bureau of India Standards (BIS) norms; and competent enough to compete with major brands available.

#### **B. IMPACT OF THE LEDP:**

The LEDP project on Low cost Sanitary Napkin making (10 days) and Organic Nutritional Kitchen Garden (05 days) was sanctioned to M/s. Bihar Pradesh Yuva Parishad (NGO) for Palamau district on 12 Feb’2020. One Hundred Fifty (150) women from Thirty four (34) SHGs covering Panki, Satbarwa and Sadar blocks were trained on production of gel based sanitary napkin ie. Semi-automatic machine based, as well as, manual based of various dimensions. Commercial production activity formally commenced from Feb’2021 onwards.

As on date, one (01) Technology demonstration cum central production unit has been established in Abadganj, Daltonganj and Five (05) ancillary units set-up in Danadarkala & Sagalim (Panki), Piprakala & Khamdih (Satbarwa), Kundelwa (Sadar) under the Hub and Spoke model.

The leading/ key SHG womenfolk were mobilised into a producer group “SANGINI CARE”. The initial operating costs were met from grant-in-aid from NABARD and subsequently from bank loan availed by respective SHGs. E.g. after receipt of training, one of the group viz. Harijan Milan SHG, from Sagalim received a RFA of Rs.25,000/- and Bank loan of Rs.80,000/- which it deployed in the sanitary napkin production activity. Four members of this SHG also graduated to become trainers. The group is actively engaged in marketing and sales.

The production cost of one (01) napkin packet (06 pieces, gel based) was approx. Rs.21.75/- which is amongst the lowest in its segment. The napkins have been certified by a Chennai based accredited lab for being safe for use and fulfilling the BIS specification.

As on 31 Jan’2022, the “SANGINI CARE” SHG producer group has undertaken a business of over Rs.50,815/, making a net profit of Rs.15,811/-. What’s significant is that this business has been carried out during a very tumultuous period viz. 03 waves of covid pandemic, as well as, adverse market ie. availability of napkins under other govt schemes at either free of cost or MRP of Rs.1/- per pad.

The enterprise has sustained the phase and expanded its marketing linkages now covering three (03) districts Palamu, Garhwa and Latehar. Wholesale marketing outlet is at Abadganj, Daltonganj, whereas, retail outlets run by SHG women has been set-up in Dindarkala, Polpol and Sagalim in Palamu district.

After developing quality, now packaging has been given a lot of emphasis; improved packaging material (ie. at par with leading MNC brands) have been now been received viz. approx. 30000 packets. New tie-up with local retail outlets are in process; in the long-run the producer group seeks to supply the napkins in Hospitals and Schools e.g. Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalayas. The SHG producer group would also be shortly venturing into E-commerce arena e.g. India Mart, Amazon etc. and requisite documentation formalities are underway.



Figure 1 Demonstration unit with semi-automatic machinery at Abadganj, Daltonganj



Figure 2 Production at tech demonstration cum central processing unit, Abadganj





*Figure 3 Manual production of sanitary napkins*



*Figure 4 Ancillary unit for sanitary napkin production*





Figure 5 Visit of production unit by the CGM and DGM NABARD, Jharkhand RO



Figure 6 Marketing exposure to the LEDP at various fora



Figure 7 Marketing exposure to the LEDP at various fora



Figure 8 Upgraded branding and packaging of the LEDP product