

Skill Development in Rural India: Case Studies of Social Entrepreneurs

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Abstract: Indian villages are facing challenge of basic sustainability, forcing migration of members of families to cities in search of employment. There is a gap between existing skills and those actually in demand. The present paper is case study based on published secondary sources. This paper narrates the Model developed by two social entrepreneurs. Drishtee is an organization working for rural communities helping them become self-sufficient by ensuring local livelihoods, services and basic infrastructure. It is working on 4 C approach –Community, Capacity, capital and channel. To provide financial services Daristee has 1600 customer service points across 6 states and over 2.3 million bank accounts were opened by it. Mandeshi Udyogini(MDU) is capacity building unit of Mann Deshi foundation headed by Chetna Gala Sinha. MDU started mobile school and started visiting villages. The mobile van consists Sewing machines, Laptops and other equipment. Hundreds of women are now confident, capable leaders in their families and local communities. These women help to lead self help groups, manage accounts, and keep financial records. Problems of farmer suicide had reduced considerably in the area due to MDU.

Key Words: Capacity Building, Skill Development, Case Study.

INTRODUCTION:

Indian villages are facing challenge of basic sustainability, forcing migration of members of families to cities in search of employment. There is a gap between existing skills and those actually in demand. In rural India the spirit of entrepreneurship, which had been their mainstay of livelihood generation, is dying slowly. This slow death was partly due to the subsidy culture adopted by the Government but the major reason was the absence of skill and supply chain. To fill this gap several Social entrepreneurs are working in Rural India.

CASE STUDY OF DRISHTEE:

Drishtee is an organization working for rural communities helping them to become self-sufficient by ensuring local livelihoods, services and basic infrastructure. Drishtee is having mission to collaborate with marginalized communities to develop and nurture rural enterprises and support the community ecosystem. It achieves its tasks by partnering with local entrepreneurs for starting micro enterprises for the adjoining clusters. Drishtee supports these micro entrepreneurs by building their capacity, providing credit and an efficient supply chain. As cities grew, markets retreated and became more sophisticated. Drishtee encourages members within these communities to initiate livelihood generating activities in the form of micro-enterprises. These enterprises range from ICT, rural BPO, farming and textiles, and provide not just an excellent platform for creating local livelihood opportunities, but also create work options for people to stay in their local communities.

Drishtee is set up by Mr. Satyan Mishra 16 years back, In year 1999 Mr Satyan got the opportunity to work for Gyandoot, a project funded by the Madya Pardesh (MP) government. This project was intended to develop a well connected computer network in the district of MP. Gyandoot had generated an idea of Drishtee. While working in Gyandoot project satyan realized that connectivity can be established in better manner, if the operations were done by local rural peoples. Drishtee had established kiosks for village entrepreneurs. These kiosks provide access to online information like government records, agricultural data, and commodity product rates education services like computer courses, and spoken English programmes; and digital processing of health insurance and the purchase of consumer durables. Kiosk selection follows a cluster approach, with a single kiosk serving a radius of 4-5 villages. Drishtee staff collaborate with the sarpanch of the panchayat to identify villagers for this role. The majority of kiosk owner are relatively well-off men with the ability to undertake capital investment Initial training on marketing, sales and accounting is provided by Drishtee, and technical support is provided on a need-only

basis. Kiosk space and recurrent costs are borne by the kiosk owner with fixed revenue sharing for services provided through the Drishtee channel. Initially, the business model was very clear, where they were targeting entrepreneurs at village level. They were purchasing computers to provide different kind of services. Each service had a different fee structure. Most of them were government based services. It was absolutely a village-oriented marketplace, where Drishtee was working on commission based and was used to earn 50p commission for each Rs 1 transaction. In 2012, Drishtee launched an integrated approach for lasting impact and started working on 4 C approach –Community, Capacity, capital and channel. Drishtee started moving forward by engaging deeply with rural communities and making them co-owners in all our initiatives. It was they who guided them to identify their skills and gaps. Drishtee launched a separate organisation, DSDC (Drishtee Skill Development Center) focused on training rural youth in rural skills such as textile, agriculture and construction. With the support of government Drishtee started training sidelined women in textiles sector. DRAP is a social enterprise owned by rural women producers and supervised by textile professionals. The organization envisions enabling underprivileged women community and craft clusters by providing sustainable employment opportunities in traditional textiles. Drishtee is running project naming Madhukrishi where training is provided to farmers for organic farming. After getting training from Drishtee several men and women are working as agriculture extension workers. Grondaa is another project where Drishtee is working on innovative rural housing. Drishtee realised that apart from skill development people in villages should be provided with facilities like banking, credit and financial services. Drishtee tied up with State bank of India(SBI) for setting up banking kiosks to provide these services. Drishtee has presently trained and set up 1600 customer service points across 6 states and over 2.3 million bank accounts were opened. Drishtee is also working on supply chain in villages. Drishtee's supply chain is non-captive to either any brand or products. Drishtee provides right from FMCG products (all brands) to services such as books for education, medicines for health, cash for Micro Financing and rural banking etc. These products are targeting existing as well as new customers who form the market base of the micro entrepreneurs. On the Supply chain side, Drishtee partners with different organizations for supply chain. In FMCG side like Nestle and Danone, on the health side Merck (maternal health) and Novartis (Arogya parivar), on Credit and banking side with SBI. The micro entrepreneurs supported by Drishtee earn their livelihood by charging the villagers. They share a portion (between 5 - 33%) of what they earn with Drishtee, based on the value which Drishtee provides.

CASE STUDY OF MANNDESHI UDYOGINI:

Mann Deshi Udyogini(MDU) is capacity building unit of Mann Deshi foundation headed by Chetna Gala Sinha. Mann Deshi Udyogini teaches the rural women, who are willing to learn, from illiterate women to school dropouts - all are given training in technical, financial and marketing skills to start and improve their own small enterprises. Mann Deshi Udyogini is a Business School for Rural Woman. This business school was started by a Non-Governmental Organisation called the Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank in collaboration with the Indian arm of HSBC, a leading global bank. Unlike the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), this B-school has just three rooms where classes take place on shared basis and its fee structure starts from Rs 150 for the entire course that may go up to Rs 600. The school offers a wide variety of courses on how to run enterprises in areas such as purse and bag making, photography, screen-printing and mobile telephony kiosks, apart from teaching women how to manage books of accounts and finance. MDU is path breaking institution as it recognises that women need relevant and appropriate training to enable them become good entrepreneurs, managers of their businesses and financial affairs.

MDU has created 16,720 women entrepreneurs in the region around Mhaswad. The clientele consists of poor women with annual incomes averaging 22,000 rupees. Mann Deshi Business School offers vocational skills like tailoring, repair work etc. and also soft skills like financial management, business management, marketing, computers and other financial literacy programmes.

MDU had faced problem in initial days, no student was willing to come to school. Most of the prospective students of the school were poor daily wage earner, rural women and coming to school meant losing daily wage for them. So MDU started mobile school and started visiting villages. The mobile van consists Sewing machines, Laptops and other equipment. Mobile school covers three villages in 45 days and then move on to the next village to teach. The B-school also offers counselling sessions every Friday, free of cost, for women who are not able to decide which course to pursue and which would be the potential area best suited for their aptitude. Hundreds of women are now confident, capable leaders in their families and local communities. These women help to lead self help groups, manage accounts, and keep financial records. Problems of farmer suicide had reduced considerably in the area due to MDU.

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