

SHGs – Empowering Women Financially & Socially



Eight of the ten members of the Ekta Self-Help Group (SHG) from Kalamthon accepting their award and a cheque from the Government of Maharashtra in January this year at a ceremony in Mumbai.

REAPING THEIR REWARD

Every year the Government of Maharashtra holds a prestigious ceremony to encourage rural women who have succeeded in developing successful, life-changing programs in their communities. For the eighth year in a row, Self Help Groups (SHGs) monitored and supported by PRASAD Chikitsa have won recognition for their achievements.

Like so many other remote villages with a poor socio-economic standing, the Ekta (Unity) SHG was trained in group development by PRASAD Chikitsa. It was the beginning of their path towards economic empowerment and self-sufficiency. The SHG initiative has helped them discover livelihood options and how to improve their standard of living. A savings goal is collected every month by the members. They also grant monetary loans within the group, make regular repayments and manage bookkeeping records. The PRASAD Chikitsa staff helps them to maintain their financial records, audits and banking transactions.

The women are also encouraged to participate in community issues (like tree planting and the use of foods from the forests) as well as social issues (like health awareness and the eradication of malnourishment).

The group secretary, Ms. Bhavna Patil, said, "What an unbelievable journey it was! For the first time in our lives, we got an opportunity to go on the stage and receive the award from the governor and the minister. Without the efforts and guidance of PRASAD Chikitsa this would never have been possible. The award gives us new hope to achieve even more. We will keep focusing on improvement."

For two years PRASAD Chikitsa regularly monitored the SHG so it could apply for the awards. The application process involved documenting each step and submitting their efforts and outcomes to the appropriate government authorities.

DID YOU KNOW...?

In 2001, there were 11 PRASAD Chikitsa SHGs in the Tansa Valley. Today, there are 251 SHGs, with more than 2,900 members. The women have generated \$500,000 in net assets since SHGs began in 2001. The success of these SHGs continues to inspire more and more women to form their own groups.

You can help PRASAD Chikitsa !

Sponsor the training of a SHG over a year
\$130

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Women in groups at a training session at Ambarbhui

SHG TRAINING WORKSHOPS

The Skill Development initiative for SHG women is part of the Community Development project run by PRASAD Chikitsa. The objectives of the one-day workshops are:

- To understand the concept of SHGs and the power of unity in group development
- To identify areas of conflict and undertake training in conflict resolution
- To be aware of the importance of clear communication and ways to improve it
- To understand the importance of savings.



“Earlier we were dependent on our husbands, but now we don’t need to go to our husbands for anything. We are all doing vegetable cultivation.

Individually we were unsure of what to do but now we are enthusiastic and know we have support in our SHG.

I was shy, too shy to speak but the SHG has given me confidence to speak. I have become a member of my village governing body. Wow! And I have become a member of the District Level Livelihood Program. It’s a program to provide livelihood options to women.”

Bhavna (Ekta SHG)

How you can help

- Pay for a water filter for a family \$ 20
- Provide indigenous rice seeds for 40 farmers for one year \$ 60
- Support the plantation and caring of 200 shade trees for one year \$100
- Sponsor the construction of an hygenic toilet \$200
- Allow for school material to go to 100 children \$750

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www.prasadaustralia.org

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