



A PROJECT FUNDED
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

Nirmanshree

Empowering Women through Social Enterprise



Habitat
for Humanity®
India

WINGS OF EMPOWERMENT

A Project Nirmanshree Newsletter

Building Resilience





Dear friends,

We are delighted to share the final edition of Wings of Empowerment – the newsletter of Project Nirmanshree a transformative initiative undertaken by Habitat for Humanity India. It gives us great joy to announce that the project has successfully concluded, and we are thrilled with the positive impact it has made on the lives of women in Maharashtra and Odisha.

Project Nirmanshree, made possible through the generous support of the European Union, exemplifies our commitment to fostering holistic, sustainable, and inclusive housing strategies. Our vision was to create a gender-just society by empowering women at the grassroots level. Today, we are proud to report that we have exceeded our goals and expectations.

Our dedicated teams in Maharashtra and Odisha have worked tirelessly, overcoming various challenges and restrictions, to implement the project effectively. Through innovative methods and

unwavering dedication, they have successfully trained over 3,000 women in the Recognition of Prior Learning and Entrepreneurship Development Programme. This training has not only equipped them with essential skills but has also paved the way for the establishment of around 50 social enterprises..

The success of Project Nirmanshree wouldn't have been possible without the collaboration and commitment of the local communities. Their active involvement played a pivotal role in shaping the outcomes we celebrate today. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to these communities for their invaluable contribution.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to the European Union for their continuous support throughout the project. Their belief in our vision has been instrumental in making Project Nirmanshree a reality.

As we celebrate the conclusion of this project, we reflect on the positive change it has brought about and the empowerment it has



provided to women in Beed, Osmanabad, Dhenkanal, and Jajpur. Together, we have laid the foundation for brighter futures, not only for the women directly involved but also for their families and communities.

In closing, we want to thank everyone who has been part of this incredible journey – our teams, the European Union, local communities, and all our supporters. Your collective efforts have made Project Nirmanshree a success. As we wrap up this chapter, we look forward to continuing our mission of creating lasting and positive change in communities across the globe.

With gratitude,
Team Habitat for Humanity India

PROJECT IN BRIEF

Habitat for Humanity India, in partnership with the European Union, is implementing Project Nirmanshree in Maharashtra's Beed and Osmanabad districts, and Dhenkanal and Jajpur districts in Odisha.

Project Nirmanshree is aimed at empowering marginalised women in Odisha and Maharashtra by providing them with economic and social opportunities by primarily improving their access to housing-related government services, providing construction and entrepreneurial training, and identifying gaps with key stakeholders for women in construction.

The project aims to facilitate the entry of a well-trained women workforce into an otherwise male-dominated construction sector. This opens the door to better livelihood opportunities for women and allows for the gradual transformation of the housing eco-system. Habitat India is bringing women



together by collaborating with women federations and self-help groups.

Project Nirmanshree set out with the aim to provide technical and entrepreneurial skills to 3,000 women and establish around 50 social enterprises. Participants are also made aware of the various schemes and subsidies established by the government and how they can explore different linkages of financial support. They are also given the handholding

support needed to apply and access these schemes, an example of which is the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

The term 'Nirmanshree' is an amalgamation of two words. 'Nirman' comes from Hindi and means 'construction', while 'Shree' finds its roots in Sanskrit and represents the 'female gender'. When brought together, 'Nirmanshree' means 'building women'.

BY THE NUMBERS



3275

women trained in technical and entrepreneurial skills under Project Nirmanshree.



3007

women participants have undergone Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) training, which is recognised by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the Government of India. Out of the 3,007 participants, 2,956 women have received their passing certificates issued by the NSDC.



4

Business promotion events – 2 in Maharashtra and 2 in Odisha – were organised. These were also promotional events that served as a platform for the women-led enterprises to showcase their products and establish market linkages. A few selected enterprises were given a platform to present their products in government offices and other public forums.

2528

people reached out through 60 awareness sessions - **30 in Maharashtra and 30 in Odisha** –organised at the community level to raise awareness about the project.



8

Nirman Haats – **4 in Maharashtra and 4 in Odisha** - organised to exhibit the products as well as services offered by the women-led social enterprises.



4

Street plays – **2 in Maharashtra and 2 in Odisha** – conducted to raise awareness about the project and about the rights of women .



VOICES FROM THE FIELD



In the tranquil village of Barakoli, nestled amidst the lush green landscapes of Dhenkanal (Odisha), resides a woman whose resilience and determination have become the bedrock of her success story. Meet Pramila Malick, a beacon of hope and empowerment in her community.

For two decades, Pramila has called Barakoli her home. Yet, it was not until she embarked on a journey with Habitat for Humanity India's

Project Nirmanshree, that her life took a transformative turn. Initially confined within the walls of her home, Pramila's world expanded as she eagerly enrolled in the Recognition of Prior Learning – a training programme organised by Habitat India under Project Nirmanshree.

With each passing day of the training, Pramila's confidence soared. From mastering the art of bricklaying to understanding the nuances of construction materials,

she absorbed knowledge like a sponge, eager to break free from the confines of her previous existence. It was during this time that she discovered her latent potential - the ability to construct her own home.

Armed with newfound skills and determination, Pramila embarked on a journey to build her dream home. Alongside her three daughters, she toiled tirelessly, mixing sand and cement, laying bricks, and



“The training I got from Project Nirmanshree equipped me with skills, knowledge and strength. This experience enabled me to build a home of my own.”

overseeing every aspect of construction including supervising and at times correcting the work done by local labourers. Her efforts

bore fruit, as she and her daughters watched their humble abode take shape brick by brick.

But Pramila’s journey didn’t end there. Empowered by Project Nirmanshree, she ventured into the realm of entrepreneurship. Equipped with a sewing machine and training in tailoring, she, began stitching clothes - petticoats, blouses, and later masks during the pandemic - to sell to local shops. Their small enterprise flourished, providing a steady source of income for the family.

Today, Pramila’s home stands as a testament to her indomitable spirit and unwavering determination. As she stitches clothes in the comfort of her humble abode, she dreams of a brighter

future for her daughters. With the eldest aspiring to become a teacher, the middle one pursuing higher education, and the youngest still in school, Pramila’s aspirations know no bounds. Despite the challenges that lie ahead, she remains steadfast in her commitment to provide her daughters with the best opportunities life has to offer.

Reflecting on her journey, Pramila acknowledges the profound impact Project Nirmanshree has had on her life. From a simple homemaker to a confident entrepreneur, she has defied the odds and emerged triumphant. And as she looks towards the horizon, she does so with hope, knowing that with determination and perseverance, anything is possible.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD



The story of Suchitra Swain is a tale of resilience, empowerment, and community spirit. Suchitra, a devoted wife and mother of three, resides in a close-knit household alongside her husband, children, and in-laws. Their lives, once centered around the rhythms of agricultural labour, were forever transformed when Suchitra became involved in Project Nirmanshree.

It was through a village acquaintance that Suchitra

first learned of Project Nirmanshree's transformative potential. Intrigued by the promise of new opportunities, she wasted no time in rallying her fellow womenfolk to explore the programme's offerings. Recognizing the importance of unity and solidarity, Suchitra believed that together, they could unlock a brighter future for themselves and their families.

Under the guidance of Project Nirmanshree's team, Suchitra and her peers embarked

on a journey of discovery, immersing themselves in the intricacies of construction work. From mastering the art of cement mixing to embracing vital safety measures, they gained the skills and confidence needed to thrive in a male-dominated industry. For Suchitra, the training was not merely about learning new techniques; it was about reclaiming her voice and asserting her worth in a world that often overlooked the contributions of women.

“Through Project Nirmanshree, I have had the opportunity to conduct 16 sessions and train 165 women. Witnessing their excitement as they learn new skills and discover ways to support themselves and their families has been truly inspiring. This experience has not only given me the confidence to step out of the house but also enabled me to empower other women by introducing them to the opportunities in construction. Moreover, it has opened my eyes to various government programmes that can further support us on our journey to self-reliance.”



As construction commenced on Suchitra’s own home, she seized the opportunity to put her newfound knowledge into practice. Guiding the process with diligence and care, she ensured that every brick laid was a testament to her resilience and resourcefulness. With the support of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Suchitra’s dream of a safe and secure dwelling for her family began to take shape, all made possible through the foundation laid by Project Nirmanshree.

But Suchitra’s journey didn’t end there. Empowered by her experiences, she embarked on a mission to empower others, training over 160 women in the art of construction

and entrepreneurship. As she stood before her eager students – fellow women from Odisha - Suchitra’s confidence soared.

For Suchitra, Project Nirmanshree is more than just a training programme; it is a lifeline, a pathway to a future filled with promise and possibility. Through her tireless efforts, she dreams of a world where women are not just seen but celebrated for their invaluable contributions to society. And as she looks towards the horizon, Suchitra envisions a future where her children are free to pursue their dreams, armed with the knowledge that anything is possible with determination and resilience.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD



Sanghamitra Sahoo, a resident of Odisha, stands as a beacon of empowerment and resilience in her community. In her modest home, nestled amidst the serene landscapes of her village, Sanghamitra's journey unfolds, revealing a tale of determination and growth.

Living in a joint family with her husband, children, and in-laws, Sanghamitra's life revolves around the bonds of

kinship and the aspirations of her loved ones. Her husband, Arun Kumar, runs a vegetable-selling business, while her daughter, Lakshmipriya, and son, Atanu Sabyasachi, are pursuing their studies. Amidst the warmth of familial ties, Sanghamitra found herself drawn to Project Nirmanshree, a transformative initiative aimed at empowering women through skill development and entrepreneurship.

Introduced to Project Nirmanshree by a fellow villager, Sanghamitra was captivated by the promise of opportunity it held. Eager to seize the chance for growth, she enrolled in the programme, embarking on a journey of learning and self-discovery. Through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) training, Sanghamitra gained invaluable insights into construction practices and government schemes, laying



“Project Nirmanshree has given me more than just skills; it has given me confidence and purpose. I am building a better future for myself and those around me.”

the foundation for her future endeavors.

Armed with her RPL certificate, Sanghamitra returned home, her heart brimming with newfound knowledge and confidence. She wasted no time in applying her learnings to improve her own home and guided her neighbours as well. With a keen eye for detail, she advised the local labourers on proper cement mixing and material usage, earning the respect and admiration of her community.

By leveraging her training, Sanghamitra not only contributed to her household

but also extended her expertise to train 160 women in various construction aspects, thereby empowering them to forge their own paths to success.

For Sanghamitra, the impact of Project Nirmanshree transcends the realm of skill development; it has breathed new life into her aspirations and instilled within her a sense of confidence and purpose. Through her unwavering determination and dedication, she embodies the true spirit of women's empowerment - the ability to uplift oneself and those around her, one brick at a time.



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