



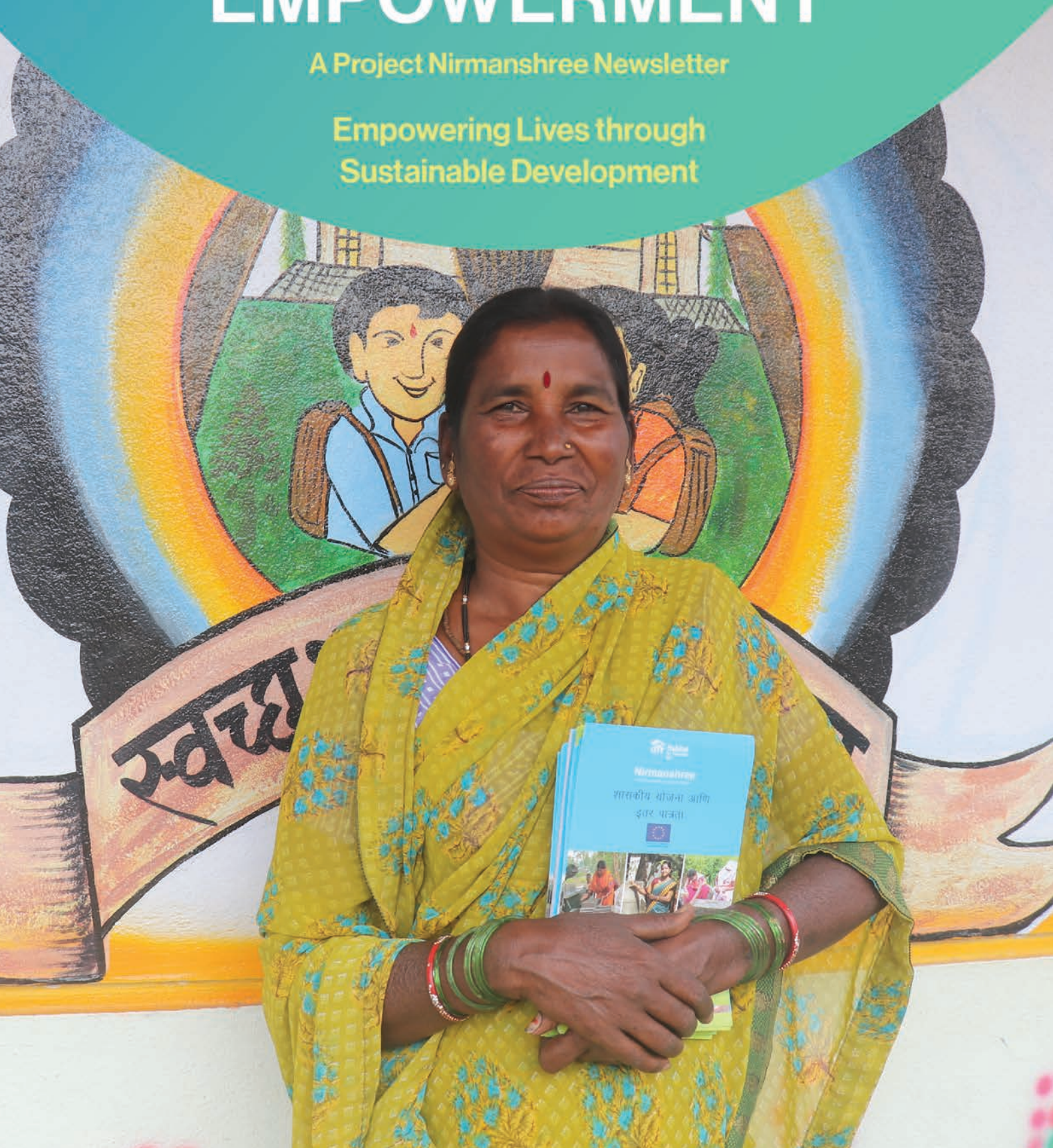
**Nirmanshree**  
Empowering Women through Social Enterprise



# WINGS OF EMPOWERMENT

A Project Nirmanshree Newsletter

Empowering Lives through Sustainable Development





# FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear friends,

“Housing is a right, not a commodity.” This statement was made by Leilani Farha, a former Special Rapporteur appointed by the United Nations on the Right to Adequate Housing. “The right to adequate housing is more than having a roof over one’s head, it is the right to live in safety and dignity in a decent home,” the human rights expert goes on to state. The right to adequate housing and shelter in India is seen as an extension of the “Right to Life”. Article 21 of the Constitution upholds the “Right to Life” and Indian courts, through numerous judgments, have affirmed that this right encompasses entitlements such as shelter/housing, access to clean water, electricity, sanitation, and the means of livelihood, among other essential elements.

We, at Habitat for Humanity India, believe in partnering with communities across

the globe to develop holistic, sustainable and inclusive housing strategies that can lead to enduring economic and social development. Project Nirmanshree, funded by the European Union, is one such initiative that aims to facilitate a partnership with women in Maharashtra and Odisha that will help them build stable lives and livelihoods. The project was formulated envisioning a gender-just society. It has been able to engage with participants and stakeholders to train over 3,000 women from Maharashtra’s Beed and Osmanabad districts and Odisha’s Dhenkanal and Jajpur in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Entrepreneurship Development Programme. Around 50 social enterprises have been established as standalone businesses or as collectives.

The groundwork that has

been laid under Project Nirmanshree has been possible because of the tireless efforts of our teams in Maharashtra and Odisha. We are also grateful to the European Union for making this project a reality and for their continued support. In addition, we extend our appreciation to the local communities whose collaboration and commitment have played a pivotal role in the success of the project.

Through Project Nirmanshree, we aspire to empower women at the grassroots level, equipping them with the strength, stability, and self-reliance necessary to construct a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

In partnership,

**James Samuel**  
**National Director (Interim)**  
**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.

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.

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'.

Participants in the project have received training and support in the following areas:

### **Construction Skill Building:**

3,007 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, around 2,956 women have received their pass certificates issued by the NSDC.

### **Entrepreneurship Development Programme:**

Habitat India has also trained

3,256 women in technical and entrepreneurial skills under Project Nirmanshree.

### **Backward and Forward Linkages through government schemes:**

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).





# MAHARASHTRA

## State-level workshop on women construction workers in Maharashtra

A state-level workshop centred around women working in the construction sector was conducted in collaboration with the Maharashtra District Building and Other Construction Worker's Welfare Board in Beed on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The workshop included the launch of a study that provided policy recommendations that would benefit women construction workers in the state. The objective of the study was to map the problems faced by women construction workers, identify the gaps that lead to gender discrimination and recommend measures to the government to bridge those gaps.

The purpose of the workshop was to disseminate the study findings, and explore and collate the perspectives of various stakeholders in the sector towards initiating dialogue on reviewing the policies and guidelines for women construction workers.

Participants at the workshop included Dr Arundhati Patil, Professor, Manavlok College of Social Sciences; Mr. Khade, District Officer, Economic Development



Corporation; Mr. Nitin Chavan, District Labour Officer; Mr. T.S. Yadav, District Officer, District Industries Centre; Mr. Sunil Gaikwad, District Officer, District Industries Centre; Mr. Ramesh Bhise, President - Janvikas NGO; and Ms. Manisha Kupkar, Advocate, District Court, Beed. Other officials from State government departments such as the District Labour Officer, Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission, Economic

Development Corporations from Beed and Osmanabad, partner NGOs, members from the Nirmanshree women's collective and representatives from Habitat India also actively contributed.

Observations from the study were supplemented with recommendations from various stakeholders to initiate an informed dialogue on the emerging relevance of reviewing the policies.

## Improving the Habitat of 2,00,000 Women

Habitat India has made use of its cascade model to engage women through the provision of an orientation on basic construction topics. This model leverages the over 3,007 RPL-trained women to engage with 20,000 self-help groups (SHGs) to eventually help facilitate 2,00,000 women to help improve their habitat. This benefits not only them but their households as well. The orientations provided are intended as a springboard for

the women to pursue more advanced learning related to construction, and to access government funding schemes. Of these, many women have indicated that they would want to pursue further learning and have been referred to the appropriate local government institutions/departments facilitating their house improvement.

Up until August, around 41,553 women have been reached

out to by RPL-trained women, with the help of women's SHGs in Maharashtra's Beed and Osmanabad districts. The teams in Odisha have also coordinated with different SHGs and organised training sessions with them for the outreach programme. Various SHGs have participated, and, with their help, 46,518 women have been reached out to in Odisha's Dhenkanal and Jajpur districts.



# 200k outreach in Maharashtra and Odisha





# VOICES FROM THE FIELD



Despite having a small plot of land near the state highway, Anuradha Satpute was not able to construct a home. A resident of Yusuf Wadgaon Block at Kaij in Beed district, she has two daughters and a son. Anuradha has studied till Class 12. She and her husband work as construction labourers.

Anuradha's situation took a turn for the better after she heard about the work done by Project Nirmanshree from a few staff members

of the team. She signed up for a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) construction training session under Project Nirmanshree. She also participated in the Entrepreneurship Development Programme.

"I was able to learn more about the various government schemes available to me and also understand how I can plan my business," Anuradha said. She also participated in a four-day training on Enterprise Skill Development

organised by Project Nirmanshree. Anuradha then decided to begin a centring plate rental business. Centring plates are widely used in RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete) casting work as the alternative to wooden plates. It provides reliable support for the materials used in constructing slabs, canopies, and beams.

Anuradha charted out a business plan and registered her enterprise. She was finally able to begin her entrepreneurial journey. "By



**“I was able to learn more about the various government schemes available to me and also understand how I can plan my business.”**

marketing it well, I will try to increase the business of this enterprise,” she said. With a burgeoning enterprise in hand, Anuradha then sought out to build a home for her family. Equipped with the knowledge of what government schemes she could avail for herself and with counselling from Nirmanshree staff, Anuradha submitted the necessary documents needed for approval under the Chief Minister Employment Generation Programme (CMEGP) to the bank. The CMEGP, initiated by the Government of Maharashtra, is a credit-linked subsidy initiative designed to create employment opportunities by facilitating the establishment of micro and small enterprises

in both rural and urban areas across the state. Her claim for a house under the Pradhan Mantri Gharkul Yojana was also approved.

The Nirmanshree team also helped her draw out the plans for a house with a toilet and bathroom in the small plot that she owned. “This helped me correct the mistakes in the mortgage needed.” Anuradha was gradually able to build her house as the instalments started coming in. “Our home is ready,” she said. “We now have plans to build a shop along the highway in the future.”





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