

The Weekly Rural Newsletter



Women's Special Edition

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About the Newsletter



Greetings Readers!

Welcome to the Final Edition of our Weekly Rural Newsletter, the Women's Special Edition. The aim of this Newsletter has always been to highlight stories, struggles, and triumphs from rural India, with this special edition, we aim to bridge another gap in rural reporting by placing women at the centre.

This newsletter contains stories that document the developments unfolding in the socio-economic, political and cultural spheres of the countryside, centred around women from the period of mid-August to the end of November.

**With rustic regards,
The Rural Sociology Students' Team, 2024**

Bihar

Women's silent revolution in Bihar through microfinance



Microfinance initiatives have significantly transformed the lives of women in rural Bihar by empowering them economically and socially. Access to small loans has enabled women to start small businesses, improve their family incomes, and gain decision-making power in their households. The success of these programs is attributed to self-help groups (SHGs) and community-driven financial models that foster collective growth. Challenges remain, such as the need for better financial literacy and the risk of over-indebtedness, but the progress highlights the potential for inclusive development.

(4th December, 2024,

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/opinion/women-s-silent-revolution-in-bihar-through-microfinance-12882506.html>)

Haryana

Subsidy scheme to empower women launched

The Haryana government introduced a new scheme helping in the empowerment of women in not only rural but also urban areas, improving their socio-economic status. The “Haryana Matrushakti Udyamita Yojana Subsidy Scheme” has been established by the Haryana Women Development Corporation which is a part of the Haryana ‘Uday Campaign’. This initiative helps women in their entrepreneurial endeavours and opening start-ups like running taxis or opening beauty parlours among others.



(17th November 2024,

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/subsidy-scheme-to-empower-women-launched/>)

Himachal Pradesh

Him Ira: Creating opportunities for women through self-help groups



(7th November 2024,

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/him-ira-creating-opportunities-for-women-through-self-help-groups/>)

The state government of Himachal Pradesh has taken up this initiative of empowering women. As part of this mission, the state has implemented the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) under the banner of Him Ira to create opportunities for women through self-help groups (SHGs), transforming lives in the district. Through Him Ira, women will receive substantial compensation for their products, benefiting both themselves and the local community. The sales centers for the products, strategically located across various development blocks in the district, ensure reasonable pricing for SHG products while providing quality goods to the community. Him Ira markets are organized weekly to promote SHG-produced products to a wider audience, further expanding their reach.

Jharkhand

Freebies for women take centre stage in Jharkhand

Political parties in Jharkhand are increasingly focusing on women voters in rural areas by announcing a variety of freebies ahead of elections. These include schemes such as free LPG cylinders, financial aid for women's education, and incentives for women's entrepreneurship. The move reflects a growing trend of targeted welfare measures aimed at garnering support from women, who constitute a significant voter base. Critics argue that these measures often lack long-term vision and sustainability.



(8th November 2024

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/freebies-for-women-take-centrestage-in-jharkhand-101731005303438.html>)

Karnataka

Sanjeevini Milk Associations Empower women in Shirahatti Taluk



(10th October 2024,

<https://newskarnataka.com/karnataka/sanjeevini-milk-producer-associations-empower-women-in-shirahatti-taluk/02102024/>)

Sanjeevini Milk Associations is a potency in Shirahatti Taluk of Karnataka which is helping in bettering the livelihood of rural women fostering self-reliance and equality among the individuals in the region. The Taluk Panchayat Sanjeevini partnered with Karnataka Milk Federation forming an initiative helping in economic development and social empowerment of women. The initiative is helping women equip themselves with skills to manage their dairy farms efficiently. It includes strategies like comprehensive training in dairy farming, ranging from selecting cow breeds, to creating balanced animal feed with locally sourced components and healthcare practices along with awareness about banking and insurance.

Kerala

Salva Marjan could be the first female F1 racer from Kerala

At 25, Salva Marjan, from rural Kozhikode, began her journey in formula racing with Formula LGB racing in India, defying several odds to shine. She took part in the F4 Indian championship in 2023 and the F4 UAE championship the same year.

Salva's family has always been supportive of her. However, her parents had to face some economic challenges and backlash for allowing her to go after her dreams. "They were lectured on how to bring up girls, how girls were not supposed to take up such risks or be so independent. But my parents never differentiated between us based on our gender. Neither did they set any limits for me," Salva said. She added that women need to put in double the effort to excel in motor sports compared to men.



(11th August 2024,

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/salva-marjan-could-be-the-first-female-f1-racer-from-kerala/article68509465.ece>)

Maharashtra

BharatPe, Nasscom Foundation Collaborate To Empower Rural Women Entrepreneurs In Maharashtra



(22nd October 2024)

<https://thecsr universe.com/articles/bharatpe-nasscom-foundation-collaborate-to-empower-rural-women-entrepreneurs-in-maharashtra>

BharatPe Group has partnered with Nasscom foundation to empower women entrepreneurs across Maharashtra as a CSR initiative. Under the 'Formal Registration and Digital Market Linkage Program for Women Entrepreneurs', 1,500 rural women from six districts of Ahmednagar, Beed, Buldhana, Latur, Sindhudurg, and Kolhapur have been provided with the tools to formalize and scale their businesses, facilitating their integration into the formal economy. They also conducted training sessions for rural women entrepreneurs and are expected to provide continuous support to enable their business growth.

Manipur

Women a soft target in Manipur

This violence in Manipur shows the brutal intersection of gender and ethnic conflict. Zosangkim's tragic death exemplifies how women's bodies become battlegrounds in militarized zones, perpetuating trauma that extends beyond individuals to entire communities. Despite a history of women-led resistance, Manipur's current crisis reveals systemic failures, from state complicity to laws like AFSPA. Ethnic violence normalized sexual aggression, and inadequate justice mechanisms highlight the urgent need for gender-sensitive frameworks in conflict zones. Apathy from leadership, disinformation, and societal stigma deepen the crisis, demanding immediate intervention and accountability to prevent further atrocities.



(13th November 2024,

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/women-a-soft-target-in-manipur/>)

Odisha

Youth smears orphan tribal girl's face with faeces in Odisha



(21st November 2024)

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2024/Nov/21/youth-smears-orphan-tribal-girls-face-with-faeces-in-odisha>

In a disturbing incident in Jurabandh village, Odisha, a youth named Abhay Bag allegedly smeared human faeces on the face of an orphaned tribal girl following a dispute over damaged crops. The confrontation escalated when the girl confronted Bag about his tractor running over her cultivated land. After pushing her down, Bag committed the act of humiliation, which also resulted in faeces entering her mouth. Despite the girl filing a police complaint, no action has been taken against Bag four days later, prompting local tribal organizations to demand justice and threaten protests if the situation remains unaddressed.

Punjab

Punjab Govt. to hold job skill camp for women

The Punjab government is set to launch job skill camps across all districts to empower women and boost workforce participation. Social Security, Women, and Child Development Minister Dr. Baljit Kaur will inaugurate the first camp on September 10 in Muktsar. Organized in collaboration with the Employment Generation, Skill Development, and Training Department, these camps will primarily be hosted in educational institutions. The initiative aims to equip women with essential skills, knowledge, and resources for employability, entrepreneurship, career advancement, and job placement. Highlighting the importance of reducing the gender employment gap, Dr. Kaur emphasized fostering economic empowerment and confidence among women to ensure equal opportunities in the workforce. The camps are a step toward achieving gender equality and economic inclusion.



(31st August, 2024)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/punjab-government-to-launch-job-skill-camps-for-women/articleshow/112938070.cms>

Tamil Nadu

The Fight Against Discrimination by the First Irular Woman Panchayat President in a Tamil Nadu Village



E. Sangeetha, the first Irular woman Panchayat president of Anangur village in Tamil Nadu, has been booked under the BNS Act after protesting against caste-based discrimination and harassment from her deputy, Chitra Gunasekaran, and her husband, a local DMK leader. Despite filing multiple complaints over three years, Sangeetha alleges they obstructed her duties and subjected her to verbal abuse linked to her tribal identity. Following her protest at the District Collectorate, police registered a case against her for not obtaining protest permission. The incident has sparked outrage among social groups, highlighting ongoing caste discrimination issues in Tamil Nadu.

(4th October 2024 <https://en.themooknayak.com/tribal-news/the-fight-against-discrimination-by-the-first-irular-woman-panchayat-president-in-a-tamil-nadu-village>)

Uttarakhand

Empowering Rural Women: Success of Swabhiman Mahila Bakery Unit

The Swabhiman Women's Bakery is transforming the lives of rural women. It was established on 4 July 2024 with the support of the Rural Enterprise Acceleration Project (REAP) and local community participation proving livelihood to several women. This bakery had an initial investment of 10 lakhs from REAP and a bank loan, which aims to make women independent. Initially, six women received full-time employment with the bakery products being sold within the cluster of 700 women, local shops, block offices, district headquarters canteens, and exhibitions. The bakery also sells to distant places via couriers. The bakery stores the raw materials and does not engage in competitive pricing. With support from the REAP, The bakery has enhanced the economic well-being of the women in Vikasnagar. The women are grateful to the REAP for their dedicated staff and support.



(2nd December 2024,

<https://garhwalpost.in/empowering-rural-women-success-of-swabhiman-mahila-bakery-unit/>)

Uttar Pradesh

Rural women drive Rs 27,000 crore financial inclusion transactions



In Uttar Pradesh, nearly 40,000 BC Sakhis, trained under the National Rural Livelihood Mission, have facilitated ₹27,000 crore in transactions since May 2020, earning ₹75 crore in commission. These women, recruited from SHGs and prioritizing ex-servicemen, bankers, and teachers' families, provide doorstep banking services in rural areas, boosting financial inclusion. Uttar Pradesh leads the country in BC Sakhis, ahead of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The initiative, supported by banks like SBI and Union Bank, has reduced NPAs among women SHGs and aims to place one BC Sakhi in each gram panchayat. Alongside, 27.5 million women have been trained in financial literacy under the broader "Lakhpati Didi" scheme for rural empowerment.

(8th October 2024,
<https://m.rediff.com/business/report/rural-women-drive-rs-27000-crore-financial-inclusion-transactions/20241008.htm>)

West Bengal

WCD Minister criticises Delhi, West Bengal, for failing to implement Central schemes for women's safety

Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi criticized Opposition-ruled Delhi and West Bengal for delays in implementing women's safety measures like One Stop Centres (OSCs) and fast-track courts despite receiving substantial Central funding. She highlighted issues such as unpaid OSC staff salaries in Delhi and the failure to operationalize Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) in West Bengal, undermining efforts to expedite cases under the POCSO Act. While the Centre has provided consistent support through the Nirbhaya Fund and other schemes, delays and mismanagement at the state level impede progress, drawing scrutiny from both courts and the central government.



(3rd November 2024,
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/wcd-minister-criticises-delhi-west-bengal-for-failing-to-implement-central-schemes-for-womens-safety/article68942528.ece>)

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