

Women empowerment by self-help groups

Within Dhanegaona the local money lending system was abolished, and instead replaced by self help groups. Self help groups empowered women, and provide them an opportunity to start their own enterprise. Women from self help groups also built home toilets and play an influential role in community.....

In 2005, in the village of Dhanegaona, Latur there are only 5 self-help groups. Because there were no other options, villagers would borrow money from the moneylenders and ended up paying large amounts of interest. After women received information about the SHGs, which provided an alternative path to loans and funds they decided to start their own group.

Now there are 30 SHGs in the Dhanegaona and life has changed greatly for the women involved. Women are now able to go outside the confines of their homes are able to keep accounts and start new businesses. Because of the experience and capital they have received from being part of SHGs they are also able to get loans/funds from banks and MFIs as well.

The participation in SHGs furthermore increased opportunities women had to leave their homes and become active participants in the community. Women through SHGs became empowered and have taken a leading role in schools, with the SHGs distributing uniforms, notebooks and books to needy students, and nutritious food to Andanwadi children.

Around the time that women from SHGs took a leading role in empowering women in the community, a female Sarpanch (village head) was also elected. An Empowerment Committee was also created in the village and women were encouraged to participate in various study tours and training to build their skills and experience.

The women in the Dhanegaona have already taken a study tour to Bornad Wadi village, which has a leading sanitation campaign. From the study tour, the women returned to the village and built toilets in their homes, constructed drains and stopped water spilling on the village roads. As a result of study tours provided by SSP, sanitation has improved greatly in Dhanegaona and become much cleaner.

Enterprises started

Because of the successful operation of SHGs more and more loans are given to women who are starting business activities like selling clothes, tailoring, dairy, bakery, sheep rearing, grocery shop, agriculture etc. In addition to these enterprises many women in the village also started the sell of Oorja, smokeless stove and started home retail marketing and health insurance.