

Illuminating Underprivileged Lives



Joint Initiative of Dishantar & Excellence Dhyas Foundation

About the Organizers:

Excellence Dhyas Foundation: The foundation was incepted in 2008. Social work at “Excellence Dhyas Foundation” is a structured mechanism of engaging and bringing together all the social activists to ultimately serve the downtrodden and deprived part of the society.

Excellence Group has always been the first to extend a helping hand to those in need. The support are countless, and the commitment strong. Indeed, it is one of the few institutions who walk the talk. Because, the Group’s investments are not just on paper, but can be seen in the smiles of millions.

Dishantar: The grassroots NGO established in 2012 is working with the underprivileged community which is still living in the medieval ages. The vision of Dishantar is to make the society Patriot, Knowledgeable, Ethical and Progressive. Objective of the Institution is to create enabling social, political, economic and legal conditions wherein underprivileged community can exercise their rights and realize the freedom from fear and want.

Background:

While part of our nation lives in the late 20th century, another part is still living in the medieval ages. No nation can progress much beyond the "national average". When these differences are too wide, they create not only social tensions but slow tensions slow down progress and make it expensive, as we are finding. In Ratnagiri district, Adivasi Katkari (ST) and Dhangar (shepherd - NT) communities are inhabitants of Sahyadri mountain Ranges. These communities are still deprived of access to basic amenities and infrastructures e.g. clean water, shelter, roads, electricity, education, health care and gainful employment. Acute water scarcity is one of the major problems of the hamlets. The hamlet faces acute scarcity of water especially during March to June (till monsoon arrives in June). Roads have not reached the hamlets; community has to walk a distance for around 3 to 6 hours daily. This has adversely affected the connectivity of the hamlets to development. Electricity is not available even after 67 years of Independence. It also results in severe accidents like snake-bite, scorpion-bite, sometimes resulting in human loss. As per government records all the hamlets in Chiplun block of Ratnagiri district have electricity, but there are many hamlets in remotest areas where procedures have been completed till bringing electricity poles to hamlets and M.S.E.B. had kept them for getting rusted. We cannot deny this fact when we see it and this is the most heartbreaking for us that even today, underprivileged community is getting exploited.

Preparations:

Dishantar team had visited the hamlets to see the present situation. 7 hamlets have been visited to select the final target groups from among the identified groups. Information about the initiative had been provided to the community members with regard to this initiative.

Project Intervention Hamlets' Profile:

Dalvatne Rajawadi (Katkari (ST) community hamlet):

Dalvatne Rajawadi hamlet is in Chiplun block of Ratnagiri district. Adivasi Katkari hamlets in the district are called Rajawadi as this community was considered as King of Forests. They are one of the most primitive communities. Hamlet is at the distance of 15 kms. From Chiplun block place. The total population of the hamlet is 91 out of which male population is 41 and female population is 50. Total No. of Families is 30. Although being closer to block place, this community still deprived of electricity. The process for providing them electricity have been initiated two years back but only 4 families have received the electricity. Others are still deprived due to objections taken by the land owners in the village. Proximity to city has developed a bit of sense of civilization and all children have access to schooling. Most of the family members are laborers and offer labor to Landholders in Dalvatne and surrounding villages. Most of the male community is engaged in woodcutting under the contractor. Very few youngsters are doing jobs in nearby MIDC or city.

Kalkavne Khalipawadi (Dhangar (Shepherd) (NT) community hamlet:

Kalkavne Khalipawadi hamlet is in Chiplun block of Ratnagiri district. Shepherd community hamlets are settled mostly on top of the hills in Sahyadri mountain ranges. Accordingly Khalipawadi is settled in the region, which is arrived after crossing 6 hills from the plateau region. This is the only hamlet at such a great distance from the village. Hamlet is at the distance of 6-8 kms from village place. The total population of the hamlet is 91 with 15 families. Being aloof from even village place, this community is deprived of electricity. Children travel a great distance to go to school but still all the children go to school. Their schooling is not that easy, everyday children walk 6-8 kms from hills to reach the schools. The community is still in the medieval ages and not aware of technology. A cattle rearing and lease farming are primary occupations but cattle rearing is not much flourished due to unavailability of grazing grounds and unavailability of water. Families have some cattle but milk selling is very limited. Men go to surrounding village places to sell the milk. They start early in the morning and come back late in the afternoon. If somebody is ill, then it becomes very difficult to make medical facilities available and in most serious cases, patients cannot

reach the doctors due to unavailability of pucca roads. Now days, threat of tiger has disturbed their goat rearing activity.

Ovali Dhamnadi (Dhangar (Shepherd) (NT) community hamlet:

Ovali Dhamnadi hamlet is in Chiplun block of Ratnagiri district. Dhamnadi is settled at the top of the hill which arrives after crossing the river of Ovali village. This is the only hamlet at such a great distance from the village. Hamlet is at the distance of 4 kms from village place. The total population of the hamlet is 64 with 10 families. Being aloof from even village place, this community is deprived of electricity. Children travel a great distance to go to school but still all the children go to school. Their schooling is not that easy, everyday children walk 4 kms from hills to reach the schools. The community is still in the medieval ages and not aware of technology. A cattle rearing and lease farming are primary occupations but cattle rearing is not much flourished due to unavailability of grazing grounds and unavailability of water. Families have some cattle but milk selling is very limited. Men go to surrounding village places to sell the milk. They start early in the morning and come back late in the afternoon. If somebody is ill, then it becomes very difficult to make medical facilities available and in most serious cases, patients cannot reach the doctors due to unavailability of pucca roads.

Invitees:

- Mrs. Pragya Soni, Program Manager - CSR, Excellence Dhyas Foundation.
- Mr. Umesh Salve, Program Co-ordinator, Excellence Dhyas Foundation.

Events' Schedule

Timings	Session Plan
1st Day - 30th March 2015	
06.00 - 07.30 pm	Solar Lantern Distribution Event at Dalvatne Adivasi Katkari (ST) Hamlet in chiplun block of Ratnagiri district.
2nd Day - 31st March 2015	
08.00 - 09.30 am	Solar Lantern Distribution Event at Kalkavne Khalipawadi Dhangar (Shepherd) community (NT) hamlet in chiplun block of Ratnagiri district.
10.00 - 11.30 am	Solar Lantern Distribution Event at Ovali Dhamnadi Dhangar (Shepherd) community (NT) hamlet in chiplun block of Ratnagiri district.

Distribution Details:

S.N.	Beneficiary Details	No. of Lanterns
1	Families in Dalvatne Rajawadi	21
2	Families in Kalkavne, Khalipawadi	15
3	Families Ovali, Dhamnadi	10
4	Pragati women SHG	1
5	Vishwas Jagtap, Nirbade	1
6	Sakhi Mahila Vikas Samiti, Adre	1
7	Puja Mangesh Lolam, Kondhe	1
		50

Highlights of the event:

Dalvatne, Rajawadi:

- In Dalvatne hamlet, the event was organized at late in the evening. Hence, there was scope to see the outcome of the activity. The huts of the target groups were enlightened with the light of the LED Solar Lanterns.
- It was a very touchy moment for community as well as for us. Full of emotions, children took out their books, toys to see them in the light.
- The light has not only enlightened their homes but also enlightened their lives and the best thing was we could see this on their faces.

Kalkavne, Khalipawadi:

- The event was organized at the middle of the first hill as it was difficult to go to the hamlet itself for the event as this hamlet is very far and one had to cross 5 hills to reach to the hamlet.
- All the children have participated in the event as if they have participated in the Independence Day Celebration. They have worn school uniforms and were seemed to be curious to see the lamps.
- Community member, Mr. Vijay Zore expressed gratitude on behalf of the hamlet dwellers. He also shared the problems they face and the way they are living in critical conditions. The way he shared the experience of miserable life in their hamlet made everybody speechless.

Ovali, Dhamnadi:

- The event was organized at the middle of the first hill as it was difficult to go to the hamlet itself for the event as this hamlet is very far and one had to cross 1.5 hills to reach to the hamlet.
- Eldest community member Mr. Kondiba Zore insisted to visit their hamlet next time.
- Community member, Mr. Lakshman Zore expressed gratitude on behalf of the hamlet dwellers. He also shared the problems they face and the way they are living in critical conditions.
- All the community members actively participated in the event and they were more than happy to receive this gift.

Conclusions:

- Presence of volunteers in the events was remarkable.
- Community volunteers played a crucial role in the management of all the events.
- It is very tragic that community is struggling for basic amenities even after 67 years of Independence of India.
- Everyone who participated in events must have felt that there is nothing better than enlightening lives of people.
- 10 families were given solar lanterns.
- As we all say, all those were excellence moments!