



First of Many: Women in Fly Ash Brick Industry

Story of a woman entrepreneur leading a green business

Mikki Devi, former Mukhiya of Madhura South Panchayat in Araria district, was looking for an opportunity to set up an enterprise. One of her tenants, an engineer working with the National Thermal Power Corporation Limited, Kahalgaon (NTPC), encouraged her to set up a fly ash brick manufacturing unit. He shared his knowledge about fly ash manufacturing units with Mikki Devi. She then consulted Abhay Kumar Singh, present Mukhiya of Madhura South Panchayat and he extended his support to establish Bhawani Shankar Fly Ash Bricks.

In March 2017, a fly ash brick manufacturing unit was set up on Abhay Singh's piece of land in the village and the machines were provided by DA group. The unit became operational in April 2018. A government credit linked subsidy, offered to entrepreneurs through the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), was availed, which supported her in setting up the unit.

She is one of the first women entrepreneurs in the fly ash brick sector in Bihar. The enterprise was initially set up with an investment of INR 4.5million, out of which INR 2.35 million was financed through the PMEGP credit linked scheme, and the rest was raised through alternative means. Mikki manages the purchase of raw materials from suppliers and marketing of the final products to different stakeholders by herself. The bricks produced in her unit are used by private households and government projects.

Through technology inputs and training and capacity building, DA has helped her improve the productivity and profitability of the enterprise

“Although I had been producing fly ash bricks, I had very limited knowledge about the standard brick size and brick costing. I was, thus, facing problems at the sales end for my produce. I was also in a dilemma as to whether I was making profits out of the business or was going through loss. Although I received high demands for brick supply, the lack of know-how of marketability made me want to switch from this fly ash sector. After the FABQRS intervention, not only did I come to know about the production of standard quality bricks, but am also satisfied with the profitability of my business as it has crossed the breakeven within six months of the intervention.”