



Returning to Work

Listening to Radio Bundelkhand enabled Meera Bai to return to her family business of selling earthen pots.

Meera Bai lives in a nondescript village called Bangaun in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. For several years, she was involved in making earthen pots which was also her family business. Due to a lack of demand of earthen pots in the market, she was unable to make any money from this work. Disappointed, she left her family business and started working at a crusher site as a labourer.

But life wasn't easier at her new work site. She would work for long hours to earn a meagre amount of INR 200-250 every day which was no better than the earlier work. This was neither good for her own income or for her own health as she had started facing health issues (lung infection and breathing problems). Moreover, this work kept her away from her family for a long time so she was unable to give them time. This left her children unsupervised. She thought of taking them to the work site but fearing their health, she dropped the idea. The only person at home was her sick father-in-law who also required special care. To run her house she had to earn.

Meera Bai regularly listened to Radio Bundelkhand 90.4 FM. After listening to their Aajeevika programme, she realised that earthen pot making can also be turned into a profitable business. This made her realise that going outside her home was not a wise decision in her case as this affected not only her children but her own health.

The Aajeevika series was launched on October 2017 with the objective of creating awareness among people about alternative forms of livelihood that required minimal investments. This was designed to check migration from rural areas and to eventually improve the economic conditions of villagers. The main challenge Meera Bai faced while returning to her old family business was to bring creativity and find solution to the marketing challenge. This included creating demand for her products.

Meera Bai aims to increase her business and making more products (earthen pots, toys and utensils). To meet the increased demand of her products during festive season, she plans to hire 2-3 worker for assistance.