

Strengthening Rural Economy in Chhattisgarh: Gramshree Value Addition to Forest Produce

Gramshree is an NGO focused on activating local people, mainly women, who are often from very disadvantaged social groups (tribal people in particular) to be more economically self-sufficient. This is accomplished by adding income from processing of their abundant forest produce. This group succeeded in helping around 700 families of the **Grashiya** and **Bhil** tribes in 30 villages outside Udaipur and Rajsamand districts of Rajasthan. Encouraged by the success of this project (which now has taken a legal shape in the form of “Vandhan Shakti Mahila Producer Company”), Gramshree decided to continue and spread their work to communities in Chhattisgarh, where forest produce of custard apple, tamarind, Jamun and mango are abundant.

Main goal: Improving incomes by processing of Tamarind, Custard apple, Jamun and dry Mango.

Organizing: Main mode is the formation of producer companies of women who are its shareholders. Self Help Groups are also organized for education/training.

Economic benefits:

1. Better prices for the produce, more money to villagers by sale of processed item.
2. Additional employment in the processing units.
3. Upliftment, both with learning new skills and better Incomes.



Happy members of a successful Producers Group

Chhattisgarh Tamarind Intervention: Started in January 2022.

Tamarind collection units were set up in 9 villages with 11 centers, where seeded Tamarind was directly purchased from the community. This has helped more than 60 families to get a higher price of Tamarind, Rs 25 per kg compared to Rs15 per kg during this season previously. Gramshree established 2 processing units at the village level where de-seeding process was done. Around 25 to 30 women worked in the processing unit and for the first time these women learnt about cleanliness required in the Tamarind processing.



Manual de-seeding under strictly hygienic conditions



Scooping of pulp

Impact at the community level:

- No of collection centers established: 11
- No of processing centers established:
- No of women wage days created: 30
- Total wages paid: Rs 67,534
- Amount received by the community for sale of Tamarind: Rs 3,69,984.
- Number of Tribal families/ Women benefited directly from the sale of Tamarind: 60.

Plan for Jan-December, 2023:

- Procurement of 50,000 Kg of Seeded Tamarind; will yield 30,000 kg de-seeded Tamarind
- Packaging in 250-gm, 500 gm and 1 kg packs. Expected to benefit 250 families.

Custard Apple Intervention: pulp processing started in October, 2022 ending on November 23, 2022.

- Finalization of venue for processing of Custard Apple pulp and getting one year agreement.
- Procurement/ Purchase of following critical machine and equipment:
 - o Blast Freeze (Capacity of blasting 200 Kg of pulp on daily basis)
 - o 3 Deep Freezers (500 Liter Capacity Each)
 - o 1- Pulper (De-seeding Machine, Capacity 50 Kg per hour)
 - o 250 Fruit Crates
 - o Weighing Machine – 2 Big and 2 Small
 - o Sealing Machine
 - o Packaging Material
- Formation of 12 Producer Groups & finalization of 12 villages for opening of the fruit collection centers.
- 12 women were selected and trained as collection Centerin- Charge for purchase of custard apple at the villages level. Farmers have received average rate of Rs 21/ Kg compared to Rs 5-8/ Kg in past years.
- Gramshree Value chain expert Mr. Vikas Bundela from Rajasthan provided training to all the staff on different aspect of food processing (30 women were trained).
- Gramshree team has visited Hyderabad and Bangalore to explore the market. Gramshree sales team is in continuous touch with different buyers. Most of the buyers have shown interest and are looking for a sample.



Women workers at the Kanker Processing Unit

- **Quantity of Custard Apple Purchased: 11,785 kg**
- **No. of families benefit through sale of fruit: 10**
- **Amount received by families from sale of fruit: Rs 2,58,032.**
- **Amount received by Women as labour till date: Rs 57,870.**
- **Total Pulp Manufactured: 2,650 kg**

Leveraging of IFA Support:

IFA support was instrumental in getting this project going in Udaipur and is now supporting the start and setup in Chhattisgarh. Gramshree has successfully received additional funding of Rs 15 Lakhs from the Nudge foundation.



David Robinson, an IFA supporter and member of the Orinico foundation visited the Gramshree project last winter and was extremely impressed by their work. Here he is seen with the Producer Group Members on the left and visiting a wheat plot with the Gramshree head, Rakesh Gupta.

-- IFA Liaison: Anita Bajaj

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