



TRANSFORMING RURAL LIVELIHOODS

In Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, Sakhi Utpadan Samiti empowers rural women, transforming livelihoods through innovation and collaboration By Team BW

IN THE heartlands of Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, where traditional roles often limit women's opportunities, Farsana and the Sakhi Utpadan Samiti have been breaking barriers. Founded in 2018, this women-led microenterprise reshapes rural livelihoods through innovation, collaboration and empowerment. With over 335 women at its core, the organisation exemplifies how grassroots initiatives can drive lasting social change.

A Story of Empowerment

Sakhi Utpadan Samiti emerged as a beacon of hope for over 27,000 rural women spanning 201 villages. From humble beginnings, it has grown into a network of 12 production units and 10 selling points, offering over 250 products under two distinct brands, Daichi and Upaya. These initiatives provide income and restore agency to women who are now decision-makers and breadwinners in their households. "This journey is about showing rural women that they can lead, innovate and thrive," Farsana reflects.

The organisation has inte-

grated sustainability into its operations, ensuring eco-friendly packaging and leveraging natural methods in its textiles and FMCG products. Its diverse market access, spanning general trade, modern trade, rural markets and ecommerce, has turned Daichi and Upaya into household names/

Overcoming Challenges

Like many enterprises, the Covid-19 pandemic posed significant

hurdles. "When the units shut down, we came together to stitch 270,000 cloth masks, ensuring safety and livelihoods for our women. This unity also helped us achieve 100 per cent vaccination in the surrounding villages," Farsana recalls. Beyond the crisis, reaching rural markets proved to be another challenge. This was addressed through Sakhis, a business where local women were trained to drive distribution and expand the reach of their products.

The social and economic impact of Sakhi Utpadan Samiti is undeniable. Women in the initiative earned Rs 34.7 lakh in FY 2024, producing 70 tonnes of FMCG goods and collaborating with over 15 production and marketing partners. Beyond financial gains, the initiative has changed societal attitudes.

Ecosystem of Growth

The organisation's focus on skill development has enabled many women to start their microenterprises. Samiti continues to grow through initiatives like Sakhi Haats, collaborations with Reliance Supermarkets, and ecommerce partnerships with Amazon and Flipkart, connecting rural products with urban markets.

Farsana envisions a future where the Sakhi Utpadan Samiti reaches greater heights. Plans include expanding the product range to 500 varieties and establishing cooperatives and farmer-producer organisations for white-label sales. "Our vision is rooted in empowering women, fostering sustainability and ensuring financial inclusion," she asserts. **BW**



Photograph by Syed Azhar Husain

