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NEERA

The Exquisite Elixir from Nature's Bounty

Neera, an exquisite nectar derived from the sap or secretion of palm, date, or coconut trees, captivates with its sweet, nutritious, and milky composition. This remarkable juice stands apart with its distinguished non-toxic essence. A fascinating characteristic of Neera is that if it is extracted from the trees before the break of dawn, it retains its purity, preserving its inherent sweetness without causing any intoxicating effects upon consumption. Neera possesses a myriad of benefits, nourishing both body and soul. Its natural sweetness appeals to the taste buds, while its nutritional properties contribute to overall well-being.



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Neera serves as a testament to the intricate interplay between tradition, innovation, and sustainability. Its production holds the promise of sustainable livelihoods for communities involved in its cultivation and processing. The rich agricultural landscape of regions such as Bihar offers an ideal environment for the growth of palm and date palm trees, thereby unlocking immense potential for Neera production. Moreover, the Neera industry

holds the key to economic empowerment, offering alternative sources of employment for families dependent on these magnificent trees. By promoting Neera as a viable livelihood option, it not only supports local communities but also preserves the cultural heritage associated with these trees.

Additionally, Neera presents a gateway to explore diverse culinary possibilities. Collaborative efforts with organizations like COMFED have facilitated the introduction of Neera as an alternative beverage, expanding its reach beyond its traditional boundaries. The creative transformation of Neera into delectable products such as Jaggery, Peda, and other palm-based delicacies further enhances its versatility and appeal.

The initiative known as the Neera activity was initiated by JEEVIKA following the complete prohibition of alcohol in the state. The state has an abundance of Neera producing trees, with statistics from the Agriculture Department indicating a presence of 92,19,373 palm trees and 40,09,565 date palm trees.

This endeavor commenced in the fiscal year 2017-18 with the support of the Industries Department and the Government of Bihar through the formation of producer groups across 12 districts. These districts include Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, Gaya, Patna, Samastipur, Vaishali, Aurangabad, Bhagalpur, Nawada, Jehanabad, Banka, and Saran. Subsequently, in 2018, the initiative expanded to encompass all 38 districts of Bihar.

The objectives underlying the initiation of the NEERA activity are as follows:

- To foster livelihood opportunities for the Pasi community by promoting Neera production, local sales, and the utilization of food products derived from palm trees.
- To introduce an alternative source of employment through Neera production for families dependent on palm and date palm trees.
- To endorse Neera as an alternative beverage in collaboration with COMFED, as well as to promote various Neera-based products such as Jaggery, Peda, and other items derived from palm and date palm trees.

Accomplishments under the Neera activity within the Jeevika Project include:

- Training 16,700 tappers in Neera production techniques, along with the manufacturing of various products like Jaggery and Peda. Bihar Agricultural University conducted the training programs for these tappers, employing expert trainers.
- Establishment of 660 producer groups as organized entities to promote Neera activity, with support provided for the procurement of necessary equipment to facilitate further progress.
- Establishment of 1,982 local Neera sales centers, managed by the respective Neera producer groups, to facilitate the sale of Neera at a community level. Additionally, three chilling centers with a capacity of 500 liters each have been

Lead Story : NEERA - The Exquisite Elixir from Nature's Bounty

established in Silav, Bihar Sharif, and Rahui in the Nalanda district to ensure the preservation of Neera.

The cumulative outcome of these endeavors has resulted in the production of 1,31,215 liters of Neera in FY-23-24.

Inauguration of Bihar's First Solar Powered Neera Café in Patna

Commendations are in order for the ground-breaking initiative undertaken in Bihar's, as the first-ever solar-powered JEEVIKA Neera Cafe was inaugurated in Vidyut Bhavan, Patna. This pioneering effort towards sustainability and renewable energy implementation is indeed praiseworthy and serves as a sterling example for others to emulate.



The inauguration ceremony took place in the august presence of CMD Bihar State Power Holding Company Limited, Mr. Sanjeev Hans, CEO Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society, Mr. Rahul Kumar, and MD BSPGCL, Mr. Mahendra Kumar. The solar-powered cafe is a joint initiative of Bihar State Power Holding Company Limited (BSPHCL) and Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS).

The JEEVIKA Neera Cafe serves a range of refreshing and healthy beverages made from the sap of the palm tree. The cafe is powered entirely by solar energy, which makes it a sustainable and eco-friendly option. The initiative not only promotes the use of renewable energy but also provides an opportunity for local women to become self-sufficient entrepreneurs by running the café.

The cafe is a part of the Decentralized Renewable Energy (DRE)-powering livelihood technology project by JEEVIKA, J-WiRES (a company nurtured by JEEVIKA working on clean & green energy solutions) and CEEW, which aims to empower women in rural areas of Bihar by providing them with livelihood opportunities. The Programme will generate awareness, promotion and deployment of clean energy-powered livelihood technologies amongst women micro-entrepreneurs as well as provides training and support to women in setting up and running small businesses, including cafes, handicrafts, and agriculture.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Mr. Sanjeev Hans, CMD Bihar State Power Holding Company Limited, said, "The solar-powered JEEVIKA Neera Cafe is a significant step towards promoting sustainable development in Bihar. It is heartening to see the positive impact of the JEEVIKA project, which is helping women become self-sufficient entrepreneurs and contributing to the development of the state."



Digital Transformation Conclave, 2023 - A Digital Initiative from JEEVIKA



The Digital Transformation Conclave, heralded by JEEVIKA, commenced with the ceremony of lamp lighting, graced by the delegates and domain experts which include CEO JEEVIKA, Mr. Rahul Kumar, Director JEEVIKA Mr. Ram Niranjana Singh, Mr. Vishal Anand from the IT Department, Mr. Raj Ganguly from the World Bank, Mr. Jim Hancock from FAO, World Bank, and Mr. Mahua Roy Choudhury, Program Coordinator – Governance and Knowledge Management, JEEVIKA. This conclave sought to accentuate the paramount significance of digitalization within JEEVIKA, spanning diverse realms like the digitization of work processes, efficient manpower management, and the seamless integration of technology into agricultural practices.

The CEO of JEEVIKA, Mr. Rahul Kumar, took a moment to extend profound recognition to the digital partners who actively contributed to the success of the conclave. In his address, the CEO emphasized the criticality of staying informed and updated about the ever-evolving landscape of technologies. He recognized that in this fast-paced digital era, embracing new technologies is not just an option but a necessity. By acknowledging the potential of these technologies to revolutionize various sectors, he demonstrated his visionary leadership and commitment to keeping JEEVIKA at the forefront of progress. Representing the IT Department, Mr. Vishal Anand cast illuminating insights upon the present state of Bihar's IT infrastructure. He introduced the visionary concept of "Bihar One," an all-encompassing platform that would proffer citizens with facile access to government services while serving as a centralized nexus for interactions between the government and its people.

Mr. Raj Ganguly, a distinguished Senior Agribusiness Specialist hailing from the World Bank, shared his invaluable perspectives on the pivotal role of digitization in empowering farmers. Delving into the far-reaching impact of climate change on the agricultural sector, he emphatically underscored the need to educate communities about resilient practices and emerging technologies. Furthermore, he shed light upon the fascinating concept of carbon trade, elucidating its potential advantages for the agricultural domain.

A transformative moment during the conclave arrived with the presentation delivered by Mr. Prem Prakash, State Project Manager – Management Information System, JEEVIKA titled "JEEVIKA-Marching towards Digital Transformation." This captivating presentation centered on the pivotality of implementing digitization at the grassroots level, in real-time. He accentuated the dire need for facile access to digital solutions and the astute utilization of data for informed decision-making, thereby charting a trajectory towards efficacious outcomes.

The presentation charted a trajectory towards efficacious outcomes by highlighting the significance of implementing digitization not only as a superficial overlay but as a deep-rooted transformation that permeates every aspect of JEEVIKA's operations. He emphasized that digital transformation should be an integral part of the organizational DNA, ingrained in the mindset of every stakeholder.

The conclave encompassed a series of captivating panel discussions, each dedicated to exploring distinct facets of digital transformation.

The first panel discussion, titled "Emerging Technology - AI/ML, GIS, Remote Sensing, etc.," featured a distinguished lineup of experts from renowned organizations.



Lokesh Bhat, Principal Architect at Automation Anywhere, captivated the audience with his impassioned emphasis on data-oriented results and the significance of well-designed dashboards for accessing information. He enthralled the attendees by showcasing the remarkable Co-pilot tool, which seamlessly transformed cumbersome document files into engaging presentations, illustrating the power of data utilization for driving business growth.

Raj Ganguly, Senior Agribusiness Specialist affiliated with the World Bank Group, mesmerized the audience with an inspiring success story of the Kisan Raja application, operational in the fertile lands of Andhra Pradesh. This innovative app empowered farmers to efficiently irrigate their fields by precisely meeting their crops' unique water requirements.

The second panel discussion delved into the realm of "IT Infrastructure, IT Security, Automation Systems" and featured an illustrious array of experts from leading organizations.

Gaurav Srivastava, CE-Infrastructure Modernization specialist from Google, held the audience captive with his illuminating discourse on the paramount importance of robust IT infrastructure as the foundation for successful digital transformation.

Amitabh Ray, Business Manager associated with Netwitness, cogently elucidated the paramount significance of impregnable IT security within the digital realm. He emphasized the acute necessity of adopting cutting-edge security measures to safeguard sensitive data and fortify systems against pernicious cyber threats, thereby preserving the integrity and sanctity of the digital ecosystem.

Aloke Baidya, Solution Architect Leader representing AWS, eloquently expounded upon the indispensability of automation systems in streamlining processes. He adeptly highlighted the manifold advantages of leveraging automation to enhance efficiency, minimize errors, and boost productivity across various domains, thereby providing organizations with an unparalleled competitive edge.

The third and final panel discussion, titled "Capacity Building on Digital Solutions, Digital Learning Platforms, and Communitization of Systems," brought together luminaries from esteemed organizations.

Girdhari Bora, Chief Innovation Officer affiliated with Tattva Foundation, fervently emphasized the dire need for comprehensive capacity building to empower communities with transformative digital solutions.

Pankaj Shukla, Head Customer Engineering representative from Google, passionately expounded upon the transformational power of digital skills development for individuals and organizations alike.

Miti Sinha, Executive Director associated with Cloudstats, skillfully unraveled the essence of communitization of systems. She emphatically accentuated the indispensability of collaborative efforts among diverse stakeholders, seamlessly weaving a tapestry of an inclusive digital ecosystem that leaves no individual marginalized, while collectively reaping the dividends of harmonious progress.

Prashant Kumar, Program Officer-Digital at the venerable Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, artfully elucidated the momentous role played by digital solutions in transforming the lives of marginalized communities. He underscored the foundation's unwavering commitment to supporting and nurturing digital initiatives that serve as harbingers of positive social change, unfurling a tapestry of newfound hope and possibility.

Transforming Lives

Empowering Transformation : Minta Devi's Resilience and Success Story

Being affiliated with the Shila Jeevika Self Help Group in Arwal Sadar block of Arwal district, Minta Devi has transcended the clutches of the liquor trade to provide for her family. Formerly, her husband, a resident of Mushari Tola in Sakri village, was a driver engaged in the production and sale of Mahua liquor, which he would consume as well. Minta Devi, assisted her husband in the liquor business, which became the family's sole means of sustenance. Unfortunately, her husband's excessive drinking led to his untimely demise in 2019.



With her husband's absence, Minta Devi's financial situation gradually deteriorated. She resorted to working as a laborer in other people's fields, tirelessly striving to support her family. However, her journey was fraught with hardship and lacking familial support. Even her neighbors in the tola subjected her to torment. It was during these challenging times that the compassionate JEEVIKA Didis and workers from the village group uplifted her spirits and encouraged her to seek employment opportunities. Motivated by their support, Minta Devi resolved to find employment, but faced the hurdle of capital. In 2020, a turning point arrived when Minta Devi was selected as a beneficiary under the Bihar government's ambitious Satat Jeevikoparjan Yojana, facilitated by the Aarti Jeevika Mahila Gram Sangathan. Recognizing her economic status, she received assistance through the Livelihoods Investment Fund (LIF), with a capital of Rs. 20,000, to establish a grocery shop. This financial boost paved the way for employment opportunities for Minta Devi. As the shop began operating, her income gradually increased.

Guided by the Satat Jeevikoparjan Yojana, Roopa Kumari, a Community Resource Person, played a pivotal role in ensuring Minta Devi's proper management of the grocery shop. Roopa Kumari provided guidance on stock management, understanding customer demands in neighboring villages, purchasing and selling strategies, customer interaction skills, and the importance of savings. To enhance the shop's appeal, Minta Devi received an additional Rs. 10,000 from the Special Investment Fund (SIF). Moreover, to support her family's expenses, she received Rs. 1,000 per month through the Livelihoods Gap Assistance Fund (LGAF). This assistance continued for seven months, and Minta Devi received unwavering support from Roopa Kumari, the dedicated Community Resource Worker, in all aspects of the shop's operations.

The impact was evident as Minta Devi's grocery shop began generating a steady income of Rs. 150-200 per day. The improved financial stability brought about a significant enhancement in her family's well-being. With the gradual growth of capital, Minta Devi expanded her shop to meet customer demands, venturing into breakfast food services. Offering items like water chestnut, bread pakoda, and namkeen, she witnessed a surge in income. Throughout her journey, Minta Devi received continuous cooperation from the Jeevika project personnel. In conversation with Minta Devi, she expressed her newfound happiness. In the past, while selling liquor, she endured verbal abuse from customers, their demeanors worsened by alcohol consumption, which often left her feeling dejected. Minta Devi acknowledges that alcohol was the root cause of her husband's demise and has taken a firm stance against its sale and consumption. She credits the Jeevika project workers and community promoters, who consistently educated her on the detrimental effects of alcohol. Today, Minta Devi rejoices in leaving the liquor trade behind and thanks to the continuous livelihood scheme, she successfully supports her family through meaningful employment. Minta Devi's inspiring journey showcases resilience, determination, and the transformative power of support and opportunities provided by the Jeevika project.

JUNE

Calendar of Events

COMING UP IN THE NEXT EDITION

- Harit JEEVIKA Harit Bihar
- Satat Jeevikoparjan Yojna - Urban



05 जून 2023, गया, आज विश्व पर्यावरण दिवस के अवसर पर डीपीएम आचार्य मम्मट द्वारा गौतम बुद्ध जीविका महिला प्रशिक्षण एवं शिक्षण स्वावलंबी सहकारी समिति लिमिटेड, बेलागंज, गया के प्रांगण में पौधारोपण कर पर्यावरण की रक्षा का संदेश दिया। जीविका दीदियों ने भी जिले में वृक्षारोपण किया।

इस अवसर पर उन्होंने कहा "पेड़-पौधों के बिना जल-जीवन-हरियाली नहीं हो सकती। हमें पर्यावरण को बचाना है, तो वृक्षारोपण करना ही होगा।"

जीविका दीदियों के माध्यम से गया में इस वर्ष 4 लाख 37000 पौधे लगाने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है। आम, अमरुद, आवला, जामुन जैसे फलदार पौधों के अलावा सीसम, महोगनी, सागवान, पीपल, आदि विभिन्न प्रकार के पौधे जीविका दीदियों को घर के आस-पास एवं खाली जमीनों में लगाने को दिए जाएंगे।

आज से जीविका दीदियों ने जगह-जगह अपने घरों के समीप वृक्षारोपण किया। परियोजना कर्मियों ने भी पौधे लगाए।

वृक्षारोपण अभियान के लिए वन विभाग से प्राप्त पौधों को लगाया जाएगा। जीविका दीदी की नर्सरी द्वारा तैयार पौधों को वन विभाग के सहयोग से सामुदायिक संगठनों की दीदियों को उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा।



Empowering Dreams :

The Inspiring Journey of Bank Sankhi Babli Devi

Babli Devi, a resident of Kharudah panchayat in Thakurganj block, has embarked on a journey as a bank sakhī, an ambassador of financial empowerment. In 2018, she joined the esteemed Jeevika initiative. Initially, she established a fruit shop, securing a loan from the group. Her husband plays a pivotal role in supporting her entrepreneurial endeavors. Prior to this, Babli Didi's life, despite her education up to the 12th standard, had been confined to household responsibilities. However, an innate desire to engage in meaningful work had always resonated within her. The family had encountered financial hardships due to her husband's struggling business, pushing them towards the brink of poverty.

In 2021, Babli Didi's perseverance paid off as she was selected as a Bank Sakhī through the esteemed Jeevika program. With a bank loan of Rs. 30,000 obtained from the group, she embarked on operating a Customer Service Center. Through this center, she facilitates money transfers and financial transactions for the well-being of her fellow didis within the village and panchayat. Babli Didi's hard work yields a monthly income exceeding Rs. 10,000. She extends banking facilities to elderly and disabled sisters within the comfort of their homes. In addition to her banking responsibilities, she derives income from her fruit shop and the craft of cloth stitching.

Babli Didi's association with Jeevika has instilled in her the ability to realize her aspirations and dreams. Presently, she juggles three distinct sources of livelihood, thereby attaining financial stability. Her improved standard of living is a testament to her unwavering determination. People now recognize her as the esteemed Bank Sakhī Didi, a symbol of empowerment and economic progress in the community.