



# JEEVIKA NEW

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November 2024/ Vol. 85

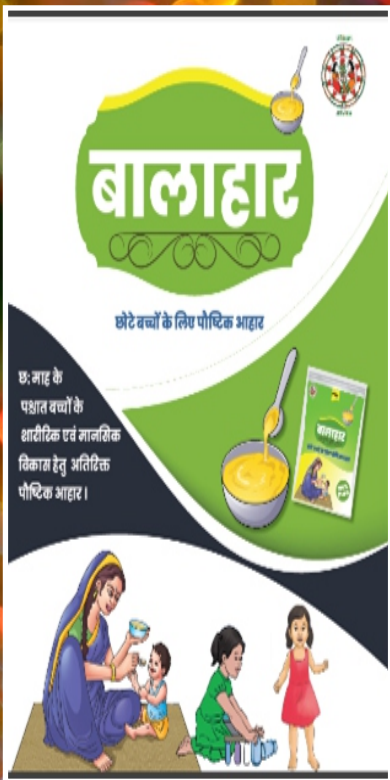
## Balahar Food Processing Unit, Narayanpur : A New Milestone in Nutrition and Women's Empowerment

The Safalta JEEViKA Mahila Vikas Swavalambi Sahakari Samiti Limited, Narayanpur, has set a remarkable example by establishing a new dimension in community health and women's income enhancement through the Balahar Food Processing Unit. This unique initiative not only addresses children's nutritional needs by producing a wholesome food supplement, Balahar, but also serves as a path for economic independence for JEEViKA Didis—women associated with the JEEViKA program.

### Step Towards Entrepreneurship and Nourishing Children

The Balahar Food Processing Unit, is a health and nutrition enterprise initiated under the Safalta JEEViKA Cluster Federation. It is operated by the Annapurna JEEViKA Mahila Balahar Producer Group and includes 20 dedicated JEEViKA Didis. This unit produces and markets Balahar, a carefully formulated supplementary food for children. Since its inception, the unit has produced 2,465 kilograms of Balahar, out of which 2,230 kilograms have been sold, generating Rs. 4,90,600 in revenue. This endeavor not only meets children's nutritional requirements but also offers a steady income to the participating women, who have collectively earned a profit exceeding Rs. 43,000 after expenses.

### Nutritious Food for a Healthier Childhood



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## Lead Story : Balahar Food Processing Unit, Narayanpur



Balahar is a nutritious food supplement specifically designed for children, particularly those aged six months and above. Its ingredients, including processed wheat flour, mung dal (green gram) flour, milk powder, sugar, and ghee, provide essential nutrients. It offers 370 calories, 14 grams of protein, 3 grams of fat, 279 milligrams of calcium, and 3 milligrams of iron per serving. With its balanced blend of calories, proteins, vitamins, and minerals, Balahar supports children's physical and mental development while strengthening their digestion. It can be easily prepared at home by mixing with warm water or milk, making it both nutritious and convenient for families.

### Research and Quality Assurance

The formulation and research for Balahar were conducted by Dr. Usha Singh, Dean of the Community Science Department at Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University, Pusa, Bihar. Under her supervision, the Annapurna JEEViKA Mahila Balahar Producer Group maintains stringent quality checks to ensure the high nutritional value of Balahar. The ingredients are carefully selected, cleaned, and processed to retain their health benefits, making Balahar a reliable supplement for children's dietary needs.

### Production Process of Balahar

The production of Balahar follows a community-centered approach, using locally available ingredients to make it affordable and accessible for families in rural areas. The primary ingredients are processed using specific methods to enhance their nutritional value:

1. **Wheat Processing:** Wheat is cleaned, soaked, and germinated to enhance its nutritional quality. It is then dried, lightly roasted, and ground into a fine powder.
2. **Mung Dal Processing:** Mung dal is selected, cleaned, soaked, and sun-dried. It is then roasted and ground into a fine flour.
3. **Other Ingredients:** Sugar is powdered, and high-quality milk powder and ghee are sourced and mixed with other ingredients.

**Lead Story : Balahar Food Processing Unit, Narayanpur**



These components are blended in precise proportions to create a balanced and nutritious mixture. After preparation, Balahar is packaged for distribution, ensuring convenience and accessibility for families.

**Economic and Social Impact**

The production of Balahar not only addresses the nutritional deficiencies among rural children but also empowers women economically. With the affordable pricing of Balahar, even families from low-income backgrounds can provide their children with essential nutrients. The initiative supports the holistic development of children while creating an economically viable model for women's empowerment. The affordable price also makes it accessible to the rural poor, fostering a sense of community ownership and responsibility.

· “Balahar has not only helped us provide better nutrition for our children but has also given us a sense of pride in running our own enterprise,” says Rekha Devi, a member of the Annapurna JEEViKA Mahila Balahar Producer Group.

· “Through this project, I've been able to contribute to my family's income. I feel empowered and proud to support my community,” shares Sita Kumari, another JEEViKA Didi.

“This initiative is a game-changer for us. It has brought economic independence and a new sense of purpose to our lives,” adds Sarita Devi, one of the key members of the unit.

**Conclusion**

The Safalta JEEViKA Mahila Vikas Swavalambi Sahakari Samiti Limited's Balahar initiative in Narayanpur is a significant step forward in community health and women's empowerment. By producing a nutritious food supplement for children and providing economic opportunities to local women, this initiative is a model of sustainable, community-led development. It exemplifies how locally sourced, affordable nutrition can address malnutrition while fostering economic independence among women. As more such initiatives are encouraged, Balahar will continue to nourish children and empower women, fostering a healthier, more resilient community for future generations.

## Programs & Initiatives

### Overview of the Training Initiative

The training program titled "Institution Building and Capacity Building for Manipur Team" was successfully conducted at BIPARD Gaya. This initiative aimed to enhance the capacity of Self-Help Group (SHG) members from Manipur, focusing on the critical areas of institution building and capacity development. By empowering participants with the necessary skills and knowledge, the training sought to foster sustainable development through the formation and strengthening of SHGs, Village Organizations (VOs) and Cluster Level Federations (CLFs). This foundational work is essential for creating a robust framework for community-based organizations (CBOs) that can effectively tackle local challenges and improve socio-economic conditions in the region.

### Participant Demographics

The training program attracted 30 participants, all SHG members selected from various parts of Manipur. These individuals were chosen for their potential to lead and positively influence their respective groups. The diversity among participants enriched the training environment, facilitating an exchange of ideas and experiences that contributed to collective learning. Recognizing the pivotal role of SHGs in promoting women's empowerment and economic independence, the program emphasized building a strong network among participants to encourage future collaboration and support.



### Core Training Modules

The training was structured around several key thematic areas essential for effective institution building and capacity enhancement.

#### Building Strong Institutions

The first module revolved around institution building, encompassing the formation and governance of SHGs, VOs, and CLFs. Participants engaged in discussions about best practices for managing these organizations, emphasizing the significance of strong governance structures to ensure accountability and transparency. By gaining insights into the roles and responsibilities within their groups, participants were better prepared to lead their organizations toward sustainable growth.

#### Enhancing Capacity for Development

The second module focused on capacity building, covering critical areas such as leadership development, effective communication, and financial management. Participants explored the qualities of effective leaders and how to cultivate these traits within their SHGs. Communication skills were particularly emphasized, as they are crucial for fostering

## Programs & Initiatives

collaboration and ensuring all members feel valued and heard. Furthermore, financial management was a key area, with practical techniques introduced for budgeting, saving, and resource allocation, all tailored to the specific needs of SHGs.

### Additional Training Elements

Beyond the primary themes, the training included components on team building, conflict resolution, and various livelihood interventions. Recognizing that teamwork is vital for any group's success, participants engaged in exercises that fostered collaboration and trust. Conflict resolution strategies were also discussed, equipping participants with tools to navigate disagreements constructively. Additionally, information about various livelihood interventions provided participants with ideas on diversifying income sources to improve their financial stability.

A significant focus of the training was understanding the three-tier structure of SHGs, VOs and CLFs, along with the review systems that support these organizations. Participants were introduced to the concept of a review system, including the SHG Review Cadre Review and Subcommittee Review, which help ensure groups function effectively and meet their goals. Establishing a systematic approach to evaluation enabled participants to assess their progress and identify areas for improvement, ultimately leading to stronger organizations.

### Engaging Training Methodologies

The training employed a methodology designed to promote active participation and engagement among attendees. Interactive sessions allowed facilitators to gauge participants' understanding of the material and adapt content to meet their needs. The use of visual aids, such as flip charts, helped illustrate complex concepts in a straightforward manner. One notable activity involved exploring the concept of poverty and discussing pathways available for women to escape it, reinforcing the importance of empowerment through SHGs.

The lecture method was another essential component of the training, with sessions delivered in English to ensure accessibility for all participants. This structured approach facilitated discussions on relevant topics, while case studies and experience-sharing sessions led by Community Resource Person (CRP) Noorjahan Khatoon, a successful Lakhpati DIDI, provided real-life examples of effective practices and success stories. Participants were inspired by her journey and learned valuable lessons from her experiences.

Role-playing exercises played a crucial role in helping participants practice the formation and meeting processes of SHGs, VOs, and CLFs. This hands-on approach allowed participants to simulate real-life scenarios, enhancing their understanding of group dynamics and decision-making processes. Additionally, video clips showcasing the formation of SHGs and VOs were presented, providing visual context to discussions and reinforcing key concepts.

Demonstrations of leadership qualities through interactive activities further enhanced the training experience. Participants engaged in various energizers and team-building games that broke the ice and encouraged collaboration and communication. Activities like "Fight Without Touch" and clapping games contributed to a lively and supportive atmosphere throughout the training.

### Practical Exposure and Learning

An important aspect of the training was the exposure visit, which enabled participants to interact directly with existing SHGs in Gaya and learn about successful livelihood interventions in Nalanda. These visits provided practical insights into the functioning of SHGs and VOs, allowing participants to observe firsthand the impact of effective organization and management. Interactions with members of established SHGs inspired participants and motivated them to implement similar practices within their own groups.

## Programs & Initiatives

### Anticipated Outcomes of the Training

As the training concluded, several key outcomes were anticipated. Participants were expected to leave with a comprehensive understanding of community-based organizations (CBOs) and their role in promoting sustainable development. Improved leadership and governance skills were also anticipated, empowering participants to assume more significant roles within their organizations. Additionally, enhanced capacity for financial management and planning was seen as crucial for the long-term sustainability of their SHGs.

### Participant Feedback and Areas for Improvement

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing newfound confidence in their ability to contribute to their SHGs and communities. Participants highlighted the practical nature of the training, which allowed them to apply concepts immediately. They appreciated the interactive methodology and the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences.

However, several areas for improvement were identified. Participants suggested that ongoing training for the project staff of Manipur SRLM (State Rural Livelihoods Mission) would be beneficial in further facilitating CBO development. There was a consensus that establishing a cadre of Community Resource Persons (CRPs) to regularly support and guide CBOs would significantly enhance their effectiveness. Participants emphasized the importance of continuous learning and exposure to successful SHGs and interventions to inspire and motivate them in their journeys.

### Conclusion and Future Directions

In conclusion, the training successfully equipped SHG members from Manipur with essential skills and knowledge for institution building and capacity enhancement. The participatory and interactive methods used fostered an engaging learning environment, enabling participants to share experiences and develop practical skills. By the end of the training, participants demonstrated increased confidence and commitment to apply the concepts learned in their respective SHGs. The successful execution of this training lays the groundwork for future initiatives aimed at strengthening SHGs, VOs, and CLFs in Manipur, ultimately contributing to sustainable development in the region. The potential for further growth and development within these organizations is immense, and ongoing support will be critical in realizing this potential.

• "This training has opened my eyes to the power of strong institutions. I now understand how we can build and manage our SHGs more effectively and contribute to the growth of our community." – Mutun Bedabati Devi, SHG member from Manipur.

- "The hands-on activities and case studies helped me gain practical knowledge that I can implement in my own SHG. I feel more confident to take on leadership roles." – Khundrakpam Roma Devi, participant from Imphal.
- "Learning about financial management and communication skills has equipped me to better serve my group and ensure that we remain financially stable. I now know how to help my SHG grow sustainably." – Yumnam Ibencha Devi, SHG leader from Manipur.
- "The exposure visit to the SHGs in Gaya was a great learning experience. Seeing real-world examples of how other SHGs function has inspired me to implement similar practices in my own group." – Laishom Anita Leima, SHG member from Manipur.
- "The training was very interactive and engaging. I'm excited to apply the knowledge I've gained and work on strengthening my SHG. This has been an empowering experience for me." – Naorem Ichantombi Devi, participant from Manipur.

## Transforming Lives

### Empowering Change Through Education and Entrepreneurship

#### Introduction

Sita Devi, a determined and resilient woman from Kasiyauna village in the Madhubani district, has transformed her life and her family's future through education and entrepreneurship. Married in 2003 to Suresh Prasad, Sita faced numerous challenges, including her husband's alcoholism and financial instability. However, with the support of her community and her own unwavering spirit, she turned her life around.



#### Early Struggles

When Sita married Suresh, the family relied on her father-in-law for financial support, as Suresh was unemployed and struggled with alcoholism. His addiction led to violence and abuse, creating a toxic environment for Sita and her children.

With a 15-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter, Sita felt trapped and desperate to change their circumstances. Despite her desire to earn a living, societal norms limited her ability to seek work outside the home.

#### Discovering JEEVIKA

Sita learned about the **JEEVIKA program** through local BPIU representatives. They explained the benefits of joining a self-help group (SHG), but her husband initially opposed the idea. However, with her father-in-law's support, Sita joined the **Gyaan Jeevika Self-help Group** in 2013. Her education, having graduated in History, enabled her to excel within the group, and within three months, she was appointed as a Community Manager (CM).

#### Facing Challenges and Taking Action

In early 2014, Sita faced a major setback with the death of her father-in-law, the family's primary breadwinner. This tragedy left her struggling to provide for her children and continue their education. To make ends meet, she took a job as a teacher in a private school while also tutoring children at home. However, her income of Rs. 2,500 was insufficient to cover household expenses.

In December 2014, Sita decided to leave her teaching job and invest her savings of ₹4,000 to open a general store. She began with limited stock but gradually expanded her inventory by taking a ₹30,000 loan from her SHG and another Rs.30,000 from the village organization. By combining these resources with her savings, she invested Rs. 1,00,000 in her store.

#### Business Growth and Family Support

Sita strategically stocked her store with items relevant to local festivals, selling products such as **rakhi** for Raksha Bandhan, **colors** for Holi, and **bangles** for Chhath Puja. This seasonal approach significantly improved her financial situation. Additionally, with the government's implementation of alcohol prohibition, Sita was able to encourage her husband to seek help at a rehabilitation center, resulting in his successful recovery from alcoholism.

Now, Sita's business thrives, with an estimated capital of Rs. 3,00,000 to Rs. 4,00,000 and daily earnings of Rs. 400 to Rs.500. Her husband and children actively support her in managing the store, fostering a positive family environment.

#### Continued Community Engagement and Future Aspirations

Sita remains active as a Community Manager, earning Rs. 2,750 per month, and she generates an additional

## December

Calendar of Events

### COMING UP IN THE NEXT EDITION

- Boosting Fisheries & Nutrition: JEEVIKA and BMGF Unite for Sustainable Livelihoods in Bihar

Rs.3,000 to Rs. 4,000 through tutoring. Her children are now thriving academically, with her son in the 10th grade and her daughter in the 8th grade at a reputable school. Sita attributes their educational progress and family stability to the support and resources provided by the JEEVIKA program.

Reflecting on her journey, Sita states, "If it weren't for the support of the JEEVIKA group during our difficult times, our situation would have been dire. My ultimate goal is to elevate my family further and continue to pave the way for their success."

### Conclusion

Sita Devi's story is a testament to the transformative power of community support, education, and entrepreneurship. Through her perseverance and the resources provided by the JEEVIKA program, she has not only improved her family's financial situation but also instilled hope and aspiration for a brighter future. Sita's journey inspires many others in her village, showcasing the potential for change when individuals are empowered to take control of their lives.



## Bachchaday Devi's Transformation : A Journey from Hardship to Entrepreneurship with JEEVIKA

Rekha Devi, a resident of Yogwana Bazaar in Sitamarhi district, has shown remarkable resilience and determination in her journey toward self-reliance. Married to Naveen Kumar, who previously worked as a salesman in Delhi earning ₹6,000 to ₹8,000 a month, Rekha's family faced significant challenges. Their financial struggles intensified when Naveen suffered a serious car accident in April 2022, rendering him unable to return to work. This unfortunate event left Rekha overwhelmed with worry about managing medical expenses and providing for her two children. In 2020, she decided to join the Jeevika program, which offered her essential guidance to improve her family's livelihood. With the support of her self-help group, Rekha invested in her small grocery store, taking loans of ₹20,000 in 2020 and another ₹20,000 in 2023. Today, her grocery store generates an income of ₹10,000 to ₹12,000 per month, enabling her to support her family and ensure her children's education. Looking ahead, Rekha plans to repay her previous loans and take out another one to further expand her grocery store and open a beauty shop to increase her earnings. Her journey exemplifies the power of self-reliance, and she remains an inspiring figure in her community, aiming for a brighter future for her family.