

Svatantra Microfin: Providing Unwavering Support to Women Entrepreneurs

Bardhaman, West Bengal: Microfinance has been playing an essential role in improving the lives of many aspiring women in West Bengal by helping them become independent. The growth story of Puspa Santra, a resident of Bardhaman District, West Bengal, is no different.

Until September 2019, Puspa was living her life as a home-maker with her small family of three. Her husband was a daily wage labourer working on agricultural land of other villagers. The income generated by him was not enough to suffice the daily needs of the family. The education of their child also got severely impacted due to their monetary condition.

The family was looking for a way to improve their financial condition when Puspa came across Svatantra Microfin and their micro-credit offerings. She became a member of Svatantra Microfin with an aim to support her family.

She took her first loan of Rs. 33083, and opened a small grocery shop near her house. Gradually, the family conditions started improving with the help of the income generated from the grocery shop. The couple was now able to provide better education to their child and hoping for a better future for their family.

During the nationwide lockdown, her business got impacted, and she opted moratorium for one month. However, looking at all the benefits she was getting from Svatantra Microfin, she opted for timely repayment of her loan, despite the moratorium offered by the institution.

Showing her gratitude towards the microfinance company, she said, "Svatantra Microfin has helped us run our small business and has come to our aid time and again. We are thankful to Svatantra Microfin for standing by in the hour of need."

Svatantra is a next-gen microfinance entity offering differential banking solutions. At Svatantra, we constantly leverage technological innovation in order to bank the unbanked.

Our aim is to encourage entrepreneurship where traditional banking systems cannot penetrate. We achieve this through a holistic financial and non-financial offering, with micro-credit being the main focus. The organisation is based on the tenets of entrepreneurship, transparency, and disruption through innovation. We were honoured to be the first microfinance institution to receive the Non-Banking Financial Company – Microfinance Institution (NBFC-MFI) license from the Reserve Bank of India. Also, rated A+ (CRISIL) and graded M1 (ICRA) company.

The Indian microfinance sector has come a long way. Early estimates show that the industry / sector would have closed Mar'19 with a credit portfolio outstanding of nearly Rs 2,00,000 crore serving over 50 million end clients (of which 99% plus are women and for most of whom this would be the first credit facility in their life) across 30 states through an employee

strength of over 1 Lakh. For an industry almost written off in mid-2011 after the Andhra Pradesh (AP) crisis, this is no mean feat indeed.

NBFC-MFIs are the only regulated financial institutions in the country which give unsecured loans to the borrowers from low income households. These institutions fill an unfunded credit gap for women who do not have the wherewithal to provide collateral or security of any sort. The aim of NBFC-MFIs is to build sustainable livelihoods. Through providing last mile financial services even to clients in remote rural areas, these institutions promote the Government's financial inclusion agenda.

NBFC-MFIs are an important partner for Prime Minister MUDRA Yojana and almost 50% of the loan disbursements under this programme have been done through microfinance companies. NBFC MFIs are registered with the Reserve Bank of India and are stringently regulated right from the size of loan, the tenure, the rate of interest and a Fair Practices Code (FPC) and an Industry Code of Conduct (CoC) which governs their functioning. The Reserve Bank conducts regular supervision of all NBFC MFIs.

For further information, please connect with:

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