

Arohan Financial Services Ltd: A Ray of Hope for Women Entrepreneurs in Assam

Assam: The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of many in various ways and in these challenging times, unwavering support from anywhere can make a lot of difference. The story of Bimala Baruah, a small poultry farm owner living in Bihupuria, Assam is no different. During the pandemic, she received constant support from Arohan Financial Services which helped her to sail through these tough times.

Bimala started her entrepreneurial journey back in 2017 when she took her first loan from Arohan to start a small poultry farm. Over time with constant hard work and support from Arohan her business grew by leaps and bounds.

With timely repayments, she qualified to get high-value loans of up to Rs. 45,000. Everything was going in the right direction when suddenly the national lockdown was implemented by the government due to the Corona Virus outbreak.

Like many enterprises across the country, the lockdown severely impacted her business and her flow of income came to a halt. The situation became so grim that from a 'High-Value Customer' she becomes a 'Non-Starter Customer' from September 2020.

Despite the situation, Arohan never abandoned her and came to her rescue in the need of the hour with their specially curated program called 'Sakriya', curated especially for its valued customers to help their accounts get reactivated.

By getting apt support at the right time Bimala started her business and now successfully running it again. She has also expanded her business and has added 300 chickens to her poultry.

Expressing her gratitude towards Arohan Financial Services Ltd, Bimala said "Arohan has supported me during the pandemic period. I feel so relieved thanks to the provided by Arohan during this extremely difficult period. I am looking forward to a long and fruitful association with Arohan Financial Services Ltd."

.....

Utkarsh Small Finance Bank is a proud solitary Small Finance Bank from Varanasi. Established in 2009 with the mission to empower the low-income group financially, it has reached to new heights today. The objective of our bank is 'Ummeed' - giving hope to customers for fulfilling their dreams and needs. Over the years, we have extended our services to 112 Districts of 11 States. Today we boast a Customer Base of more than 15 Lakh satisfied customers with 400 Banking Outlets.

Established in 2006 in Kolkata, **Arohan Financial Services Limited**, part of the Aavishkaar-Intellectap Group is eastern India's largest NBFC MFI. As on March 31, 2019, the organisation is operational in thirteen states of which ten are low-income states across the central, east and north-east, offering financial inclusion products to nearly 1.9 million under-served clients, through 593 branches with a

loan portfolio of over to INR 4045 Cr in microfinance and MSME lending. It has a bank loan rating of A- and MFI grading of MF1 from CARE Ratings. Driven by its mission to empower the underserved through a range of financial services, in a manner sustainable for all stakeholders, Arohan plans to extend its operations and aims to become one of India's 10 best places to work in.

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:

Bhumika Panda | bhumikapanda@mfinindia.org | +919717738499

Sonia Sarin | sonia.sarin@ketchumsampark.com | +91 9910292599

Abhishek Jain | abhishek.jain@ketchumsampark.com | +91 9717663767