

## **Microfinance lends a support to women entrepreneurs**

**Orissa, January, 2019:** Pinku Sahu is a resident of Mohana in Gajapati district of Orissa. She and her husband were settled in Surat and had to migrate to Mohana for personal reasons few years back. Initially, to support the family, Pinki's husband had to wander in search of work and the flow of work was inconsistent. As a daily wage labourer her husband could not make much money and the income was very inconsistent. Her kids and family was facing severe financial hardships. Pinki came to know about Saggraha Management Services, microfinance service provider and Business Correspondent of IDFC Bank, RBL Bank and IDBI Bank among others, from the ladies in her neighbourhood that provided easy access to collateral free credit to low income household women. She approached Saggraha, discussed her problem and after few days, she was provided with a loan of Rs 26000 to open her own grocery store. This was a calculated decision as her locality didn't have any such store already.

Before being associated with Saggraha, Pinki had no idea that it was possible for her to get credit at such simple terms. As she became a part of Saggraha's Joint Liability Group, apart from micro credit, Saggraha also helped her in taking an informed decision regarding which business to set up and what products to keep in the store. She was also advised on various financial necessities as and when she asked for it. Currently, she is earning an average daily profit of Rs. 400 per day and has also expanded her store to accommodate the stationary products to cater to the needs of school going kids.

Similar to Pinki Sahu, many women have benefited from association with Saggraha. The company plays an important role in the woman empowerment in Orissa. In its endeavour to provide easy access to financial services to its clients Saggraha has impacted over 2.5 lakh lives. The company provides micro-credit services in over 41 districts of three states including Orissa. The company has helped many local women entrepreneurs to improve their economic status and realise their dreams to improve their quality of life.

According to Microfinance Institutions Network, a self-regulatory organisation and an industry association of microfinance industry in India, women constitute 99% of micro-credit beneficiaries in the country. Microfinance institutions are working towards providing an easy access to financial services to underserved and unbanked population in India.

Microfinance 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 these micro credit providers 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.