

Beside running their own canteen, the group is looking forward to provide direct employment to at least 2 other unemployed women as helpers and service providers. The Group has been recognized by the local administration for their outstanding achievements in various fields, festivals and fairs and was awarded numerous times for empowering and inspiring other women.

Now the group looks forward to offer financial and social support to other women with a strong network which will help the needy women in addressing different forms of social and domestic issues. The group also provides important economic advantages for their members, including microfinance initiatives such as savings and loans, access to livelihood activities which will give opportunities for the members to increase their incomes for their families.

"These canteens will help poor women in alleviating poverty in the grassroots level and the state government always takes initiative to create employment opportunities for women throughout the state" says Abhedananda Baidya, Santirbazar Sub-Divisional Magistrate. "We have also provided spaces, table, chair, fan, water filter and other necessary items to the "Maa Laxmi" SHG from our end" he added.

In its endeavour the women SHG provides tea, light meal, light breakfast etc to the office visitors and staffs at Santirbazar SDM office campus. Since 19 April, 2022 the canteen facility became functional. This is the first such canteen across santirbazar, which has been set up by a local self-help group in an office campus.

"We are in the process of earmarking space for canteen to be run by women SHGs in different spots under Santirbazar Municipal Council" says Satyabrata Saha, Vice-Chairman of SMC.

If this model gets successful, we will tie up with other SHGs and submit a proposal to the government to replicate it in other government run places as well," said Anindita Bhowmik, Livelihoods Coordinator.

"The canteen will serve the purpose of providing some good foods to the visitors who come for official work from different nook and corner of the Sub-Division" Said, Bikram Debbarma, a visitor of Rajapur in the canteen.

Aiming at empowering women, the self-help groups (SHGs) have been provided Rs 10,000 and a loan of Rs 50,000 by the Santirbazar Municipal Council to operate the canteens under Tripura Urban Livelihoods Mission. The women running the canteen at the office campus are earning of Rs 1,500-2,000 daily by serving delicious food to visitors and staffs at affordable rate.

Though women bear most of the societal responsibility today women can be seen outperforming man in creating income sources and self-help groups like "Maa Laxmi" are the most powerful conduits that can bring changes in the society by empowering women to move from subsistence to sustainability. And these women are living examples; they are breaking the shackles of poverty, experiencing self-reliance, uplifting themselves and making positive impact among the communities.
