

I can afford healthcare now. What I earn from selling vegetables goes towards my son's medical costs.

Prafulla Chhatra

BEHERABAHAL, ODISHA

Prafulla Chhatra lives in a remote village with her husband and two sons. Like most neighboring families, Prafulla and her husband would migrate over 200 kilometers to work for six months as daily wage laborers in the fields. The remainder of the year they survived on meager earnings from odd jobs.

The family faced a crisis when Prafulla's younger son became sick, regularly suffering from fever, hiccups, and convulsions. Needing to provide her son extra attention, it became impossible for Prafulla to migrate to earn.

Through MPOWERED, she received training, seed capital, and a smartphone to help her with her agricultural activities. Prafulla started cultivating long beans, eggplants, tomato, and bitter gourd. Today, the profits from Prafulla's produce pay for her son's medical costs.

The phone became important not only for business, but also medical emergencies. "I am grateful for the phone," says Prafulla. "In cases of emergency with my sick child, getting in touch with the doctor has become so easy. I can explain symptoms over the phone and we can take immediate measures to keep my child safe. That has been a boon."

"It feels I will soon be on my way to improve my financial condition," says Prafulla. "I just want my children to have a healthy life. I'm confident that I will be able to do that much for them."

Upwardly Mobile

Trickle Up launched the MPOWERED (Mobile Connections to Promote Economic Development of Women) project with Tata Communications and India's National Rural Livelihoods Mission in 2016. The project applied Trickle Up's proven Graduation Approach to building sustainable livelihoods, but with the addition of putting the power of mobile smartphones directly into the hands of women striving daily to overcome conditions of extreme poverty and vulnerability.



The Most Vulnerable

1,800 women participated in the MPOWERED pilot. They generally live at the deepest levels of poverty – well below the US \$1.90/day global threshold for extreme poverty. Often left out of mainstream government programs, they have few assets and little or no savings. They depend on sporadic and unreliable sources of income—75% of participants were primarily reliant on daily wage or migrant labor. Their families often don't have enough to eat, access to decent health care, or the ability to send their children to school.



Subodhini Hansda

LALCHUA, JHARKHAND

"I know I can move ahead in life and I can help others move ahead in life as well."



Participants' median income doubled over 3 years



Golapi Devi

NARANGA, JHARKHAND

"The savings group has completely changed the way I think. It has made me believe that if others can, so can I."



Participants went from having negligible savings to INR 3,000 (US \$42) on average



Mungli Lohar

CHHOTA NAGRA, JHARKHAND

"I stood up for myself, I worked hard, followed a plan, and now I am a leader in the community."



Participants generated INR 8.3 million (US \$117,000) in loans through group savings



Kuntala Pradhan

SUDERGARH, ODISHA

"My communication skills have improved so much and I am not the same shy person anymore."