



Unleashing Entrepreneurship on International Women's Day

On the occasion of International Women's Day - 8 March 2021, the Development Alternatives (DA) team celebrated the day with the real changemakers. Events were organised in four geographies: Bundelkhand, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Haryana, where we are co-working with partner organisations to enable young girls and women to realise their aspirations. More than 400 girls and women participated in these events to share their experiences, stories, and thoughts. Aligning with the international theme of #ChoosetoChallenge, a 'Wall of Change' was put up in every location where women wrote down their views on what they want to challenge and change in their life and community. Some inspiring and interesting narratives came up during these sessions, for instance: many young girls shared that they want to travel freely, outside of their homes without any restrictions being imposed upon them by their family or community members. Entrepreneurship is enabling them to play a pivotal rather than peripheral role in the local economy. The sector of women entrepreneurship reflects the huge potential to pave the way for inclusive, sustainable, and equitable development. DA through its varied projects in rural India is working towards empowering these women by unleashing their entrepreneurial energies and is facilitating systemic change at the grassroots level.

Kanika Verma, Programme Director, DA also participated in #UnlockingHerPotential Webinar: A series on Literacy-led empowerment of women. In the panel, she shared thoughts on *Opening Avenues for Women's participation in the Workforce* and talked about the need to co-design sustainable solutions with women that not only ensure their literacy but also provide them with employment opportunities. She emphasised that deep-rooted social, patriarchal, and behavioural challenges need innovative solutions and we need to move away from a scheme-based approach to working towards nurturing the ecosystem to help women uncover their true aspirations. The webinar reached out to 20,000 people.

A social media campaign was also run on @JobsWeMake to share stories, live updates from the ground, and major highlights from the webinar. Through online engagement, the campaign was able to reach 1500+ individuals on Twitter, Medium, and Instagram.

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2017-18 only about 22% of women of working age (defined as 15 years of age or more) were gainfully employed, down from about 31% in 2011-12, as estimated by the 68th Round of the NSS. DA's work is continuously inspired by the efforts of women who are working every day to fight social, cultural, and economic complexities to build a new and inclusive India.