

Through the Lens of Change: Empowering Stories from Bundelkhand



Laxmi Temple in Orchha

This year, Development Alternatives (DA) embarked on a mission to document its grassroots work in Bundelkhand, through the power of photography. This journey wasn't just about capturing breathtaking landscapes, but rather, about diving into the diverse stories woven into the fabric of this vibrant region. Through the lens, narratives of resilience, innovation, and community spirit unfolded.

The exploration began at the magnificent Laxmi Temple in Orchha. Its intricate architecture stood as a testament to the region's rich cultural heritage, reminding everyone of Jhansi's historical significance and its deep-rooted connection to faith.

However, the true essence of Jhansi lies beyond its historical monuments. It resides in the unwavering spirit of its people, particularly the women who are transforming their communities. In the village of Madore, the impact of the Renewable Energy Based Drinking Water System, spearheaded by a group of women, was evident. This project has eliminated the daily struggle of fetching water, freeing up time and energy for other opportunities.



Village of Madore

The fields echoed with the spirit of innovation. One farmer, utilising the Vadi model of farming, witnessed a remarkable threefold increase in his profits. This sustainable approach demonstrates the potential for economic growth while preserving the environment. Similarly, Inder Singh, another farmer, benefitted from improved water management and new farming techniques thanks to the Jal Sangrahan Pariyojana initiative. His land flourished, leading to increased income.

The camera also captured the inspiring story of the KBBL award-winning women in Jhansi. This competition, designed to empower women and ignite entrepreneurial spirit, showcased the immense potential within these communities. Witnessing their presentations and the support they receive from organisations like the ILO and IMEDF fills one with hope for a future where women can thrive as business leaders.

Sustainability was another recurring theme. Anand Sahoo, an entrepreneur, embraced a greener path by switching to a solar-powered oil expeller. His story highlights the positive impact individuals can have on the environment through responsible choices.

Finally, there was a group of women who create beautiful craftwork from recycled cotton paper. Their enthusiasm and dedication were evident, and their words resonated deeply. They spoke of finding not just employment, but also a sense of belonging and support within the TARAGram community.



KBBL award-winning women



Women making handbags out of handmade paper

This brief glimpse into Jhansi, as captured through photographs, paints a picture of a region brimming with potential. From historical monuments to thriving businesses, from sustainable solutions to empowered women, Jhansi offers a unique blend of tradition and progress, resilience and hope. This experience serves as a reminder that the most powerful stories are often found not in grand narratives, but in the everyday lives of ordinary people who are shaping the future of their communities.



A farmer working in a farm