

Solar Mini-Grid Launched in Patratoli, Jharkhand under Urja Mandala Initiative



Mr Shrashtant Patara (CEO) DA, inaugurating at Gumla, Jharkhand, of a 32.5 kWp solar mini-grid

Development Alternatives (DA) has taken another significant step toward inclusive and sustainable energy solutions with the inauguration of a 32.5 kWp solar mini-grid in Patratoli, Nawagarh, Raidih, Gumla, Jharkhand. Established under the Rani Urja Mandala Mahila Samiti, this launch is yet another step towards DA’s commitment to decentralised, women-led clean energy ecosystems in rural India. Alongside this launch, two additional solar mini-grid sites were soft-launched in Lassia and Lachragarh, Simdega district, advancing the vision of community-driven renewable energy transition.

At the core of this effort is the Urja Mandala initiative, a Public-Private-Community partnership model, developed by DA in collaboration with HSBC. The initiative empowers women entrepreneurs to manage and operate solar mini-grids, ensuring affordable, reliable, and clean energy for local businesses. By placing women at the forefront of rural electrification, Urja Mandala promotes local economic development, gender equity, and climate action.



A 32.5 kWp women-led solar mini-grid in Nawagarh Patratoli, Raidih, Gumla district, Jharkhand, providing clean energy and strengthening micro-enterprises for sustainable rural development



Lighting of the lamp alongside esteemed dignitaries and stakeholders of the Urja Mandala initiative

The inaugural event, attended by over 100 stakeholders, highlighted the growing support for clean energy-driven entrepreneurship. This milestone was made possible through partnerships with HSBC Bank, Mlinda Charitable Trust, Mlinda Sustainable Environment Pvt. Ltd., Nawagarh Cluster Level Federation (CLF), Jharkhand State Livelihoods Promotion Society (JSLPS), and local women's collectives.

Despite India's rural electrification efforts, millions still face unreliable energy access, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs),

which rely on costly fossil fuels. Women entrepreneurs, who often lack access to finance and infrastructure, are disproportionately affected. Urja Mandala addresses these challenges by empowering women in the management of solar infrastructure ensuring financial independence and community leadership.



Women Leading the Way – The Rani Urja Mandala Mahila Samiti

Urja Mandala is a key initiative under the 30-month "Energy Transition for Rural Empowerment" project, implemented by DA and HSBC. The project aims to establish eight Urja Mandalas, generating a combined 7.5 MW of renewable energy, and mitigating 10,000 tCO₂e of greenhouse gas emissions by replacing diesel and coal-fired energy sources.

So far 12,408 individuals have benefited from operational Urja Mandalas in Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, leading to a 30% increase in micro-entrepreneurs' annual income. Other impact include:

- 17+ strategic partnerships built to scale clean energy access
- 20 tonnes of CO₂eq mitigated through 122.50 kWp installed capacity
- 50% projected income increase for women-led collectives
- INR 15.36 million leveraged from entrepreneurs, private sector, and community institutions.

With Urja Mandala, DA is proving that clean energy access can be inclusive, sustainable, and economically transformative by placing women at the helm of rural electrification.