

# Usha Devi's Inspiring Path to Entrepreneurship and Women's Empowerment

*“Self-earning, self-confidence will be self-respect.” - Usha Devi*



Usha Devi a resident of Mirzapur, lives with her husband and four children. She is the only breadwinner of her family as her husband is unemployed. With the responsibility of feeding her children she got registered with MGNREGA and would get seasonal employment as a farm labour as well. Her eldest son who does odd jobs and Usha together could only make ends meet.

One day, while working in the fields, Usha heard about a new opportunity for women to become e-rickshaw drivers. She was intrigued and wanted to learn more about the Work4Progress e-mobility project, a joint initiative of Development Alternatives and la Caixa Foundation. This program focuses on creating dignified livelihood opportunities for marginalised women and youth in rural India through enterprise development.

She was determined to seize this opportunity to improve her family's financial condition. Her eldest son contributed INR 10,000, and Usha put in INR 30,000 towards the purchase of an E-Rickshaw. She also received a loan of INR 1,00,000 from RangDe, but the money took some time to arrive. Summit, an e-Rickshaw vendor who had dealt with similar loans, knew that the money would eventually come through. He handed over the E-Rickshaw to Usha on mutual-trust. This built a strong rapport between the two and Usha preferred to repay the loan through Summit rather than the local Common Service Centre.

Despite her challenges, Usha persevered and now earns INR 13,000 per month, of which INR 6,070 goes towards her loan repayment. She continues to monitor her family's spending and is determined to be frugal until the loan is fully repaid.

Looking forward, Usha hopes to be part of women e-Rickshaw drivers' network in Mirzapur. She aims to not only grow her own business but also to create an environment for other women entrepreneurs to succeed. Through her determination and hard work, Usha is able to overcome the challenges she faced and create a better future for her family. She continues to inspire other women to pursue their dreams and create a brighter future for themselves and their communities.