Empowering Lives
Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals

Unike earlier years, this year, Apple is thrilled to go to the annual fair in her village. This is not because the child would get to wear new clothes, eat puddles or ride the giant wheel there. This is because, for the first time, both her parents would be accompanying her to the event. Her father who would always be away working in the city is back for good. He makes enough money now in the village itself to live with his family.

All this is thanks to Axis Bank Foundation (ABF) which has created enough income generating avenues for people across villages in India. As a result, people who had earlier gone to cities to supplement their income have now returned to their families in villages.

Shikha Sharma, MD and CEO of Axis Bank explains that this initiative was conceptualised around 11 years ago with the sole aim of improving livelihoods of people based in rural and semi urban areas with the help of self-help groups.

"We had kept an audacious target of touching around a million households from around various villages in the country five years ago. Not very long ago, we managed to do that before the stipulated time period, but the impact of the program has also been heart-warming," she pointed out on the occasion of the Axis Bank Foundation's 3rd Annual Conference Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals.

According to Sharma, when they had conceived the idea, they wanted to ensure that at least 60 per cent of the beneficiaries would be women. "We are proud to say that we have surpassed our target and almost 70 per cent of our beneficiaries now are women who have managed to double their household income due to these initiatives," she explained.

The chief guest of the conference, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis while lauding the efforts of ABF stated that the journey towards sustainable development goals is not possible if it is dependent wholly on government initiatives.

"It has to be a society and a community led program where every section of the society comes forward to contribute towards social transformation. So there has to be a shift from PPP or CSR or corporate social responsibility but should be called ISR or individual social responsibility. If it is to succeed, the corporate sector has to ensure that efficiencies are built through the pipeline. We need to build partnerships that are viable else money and resources go to waste," he added. The initiatives of Axis Bank Foundation are implemented in partnership with NGOs by building capacity and resilience within the communities and thereby ensuring sustainability.

Through various initiatives, we have aimed at doubling our targets to 2 million households now by the year 2025.

Shikha Sharma, MD & CEO, Axis Bank

It's a phenomenal contribution to bring about a social transformation. As the income levels of those in the bottom level goes up, the disparity automatically goes down.

S Ramadorai, Chairman, Axis Bank Foundation

It's important to collaborate with the government for that's what fast tracks sustainable development of the under-served communities.

Jacob Niran, ET & CEO, Axis Bank Foundation

Recognising the Efforts

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