

# SMART POWER INDIA

## OBJECTIVE

A solar power company delivering viable electricity solutions through decentralised renewable energy mini-grids, wanted to spur socio-economic growth in rural and semi-urban areas. They wanted to create an ecosystem to encourage this segment of people to become entrepreneurs on the back of reliable supply of energy. We came in as knowledge and implementation partners to bring rural women into mainstream employment through setting up of micro-apparel manufacturing centres.

## SATTVA'S APPROACH

We designed and executed a programme on an entrepreneur-led model for the company. The first step was developing a site selection framework based on basic criteria: choosing a location for the manufacturing centre close to a solar plant to ensure a steady supply of electricity. Secondly, it had to be at a radius within 200 kilometres from the market, and thirdly we targeted married women to maintain high retention rates. We went to 8-10 villages to select women who were brought to the centre for visit and gauge their interest in joining the programme. We charged selected candidates a monthly sum of Rs 100 to ensure accountability and retention. This 20-seater centre, in Kamalapur near Lucknow, trained women in apparel making over six-months. Our on-ground training partner trained women to use automatic machines. Post this we worked on a job-order model securing bulk orders from vendors (wholesalers or retailers) in Lucknow which in turn were executed by these women over the next few months as part of on-the job training.



## KEY LEARNINGS

The program had far reaching socio-economic impact as it saw women from orthodox families venture out of home into mainstream employment. As a result they were now empowered to improve personal livelihood and educational aspirations. In parallel, it highlighted the importance of creating market linkages for rural entrepreneurs as a crucial component for any skilling program. To achieve this, we demonstrated that not only is a well-designed model imperative but motivating and building trust with women is as important to mobilise them. During the course of the programme we saw women build personal relationships with each other and worked together with complete solidarity. The company was able to make the first crucial step in solving problems of migration, gender gap in mainstream livelihood opportunities and unemployment in Uttar Pradesh. The Kamlapur centre served as the anchor in that area, so that the energy service company was sustainable enough to provide energy at community level covering more beneficiaries. Also, it is confident of replicating the model for similar projects in other locations.



## **OUTCOME**

**No. of women in program: 20 women**

**Centre location: Kamlapur, Uttar Pradesh**

**Increase average income: Rs 2000-3000 per month from Rs 200 per month**

**Age bracket: 21+ years**

## **BLURB**

“The program had far reaching socio-economic impact as it allowed women from orthodox families to venture out of home into full-time mainstream employment.”