

Project Chirag to light up 400th village with solar power

SANDEEP CHAVAN

MUMBAI: January 10, 2019 will be a special milestone for Project Chirag as well as the underprivileged beneficiaries of rural India whom the NGO serves, when solar power will be provided to light up the homes, schools, and livelihoods of residents of Baldyachapada, Hirve, in Mokhada block, Maharashtra, making it the 400th village to benefit from their intervention. And to think this village is a mere 4 hours away from the bustling megapolis Mumbai!

What started as a student initiative in 2010 has today grown into an NGO that is working in the area of sustainable energy for rural masses. Says Pratibha Pai, Co-founder & Director of Chirag Rural Development Foundation "What better way to usher in the New Year... we have been instrumental in not just giving light to all the homes and the aanganwadi & primary school in the village, but we have succeeded in bringing water to the village for its drinking and agricultural needs through solar-powered lift irrigation, ensuring that 23 acres of farmland that was being cultivated only during the paddy season will now have year-round cultivation of 'mogra' and vegetables."

Baldyachapada is located on the Sahyadri range, and from most parts of the village a perennial river 'Khunti' is visible – however it is a daily



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Children excitedly await street light installation.

challenge for the villagers to walk down a few kilometres of rough terrain and climb back balancing 2-3 huge pots of water on their heads. So now to get water at their village from a tap and have pipes irrigating their farms brings excitement and hope into the lives of these tribals. As one elder farmer commented "We are in the winter of our life, but we owe it to our children to give them a better farming option so they do not migrate to the city in search of a living."

Chirag Rural Development Foundation (CRDF), under its flagship Project Chirag, has been working extensively in the tribal areas,

providing solar electrification in dark villages across 7 states, namely Maharashtra,

Proposal for Adgaon in Nashik district

We already have a request from Adgaon on Harsul side of Khunti River in Nashik district. We're awaiting donors for the purpose. Our grass root partners Diganta Swaraj Foundation - Shradha & Rahul have been very helpful and totally involved in ensuring that beneficiaries demands are satisfied.

- Pratibha Pai



10 KW solar Grid

Rajasthan, U.P., Karnataka, Meghalaya, Assam & Uttarakhnad since 2010. By installing solar home lights, street lights and solar mini grids to bring light, water and livelihoods into the lives of villagers, Project Chirag has crafted over a hundred thousand bright smiles across over 400 villages.

"At CRDF, we aim to be the preferred sustainable energy partners for communities-in-need, and hope to bridge the gap between a modern India that aspires to take its rightful place as a global leader and a part of India that is yet struggling to get the most basic of necessities," Pai adds.



Team chirag

ABOUT PROJECT CHIRAG

* This project was started as a student initiative by the Faculty of H. R. College in Mumbai, Pratibha Pai and students in 2010. It grew so fast that in 2011, Pratibha Pai along with her student Jyotirmoy Chatterji and two other advisors to the project, Nikunj Jhaveri & Sajju Jain decided to set up Chirag Rural Development Foundation, an NGO.

* The growth story of Chirag and its impact is the result of the Team effort of the core team, Nachiket, Lana and Kiran under Pai's guidance.



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