

NGO Chirag to light up 400th village in India

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NGO Chirag Rural Development Foundation is set to light up the 400th village in India at Baldyachapada in Mokhada, Palghar district on January 10. Started in 2010 by professor Pratibha Pai of Mumbai, the NGO has introduced solar lamps at 16,000 homes covering one lakh people across seven states in India.

Pai, 62, was working as a full time professor at HR College, Mumbai, teaching leadership, ethics and governance, community development, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, her passion to bring about change in students through social work made her start an NGO — Chirag — based in Tardeo.

“There are thousands of villages in this country with no electricity and we wanted to bring about a change in rural India,” said Pai, speaking about her motive behind starting the NGO.

With this single-minded purpose and devotion, she gave up her full-time job and dedicated herself to light the lives of the rural population of India. Through her NGO, she introduced to the villagers the idea of harnessing solar power. “We used solar power for lighting up homes, street lighting, and now have solar powered lift irrigation to water the fields for farming also,” she said.

The NGO relies on funds from corporate and individual donors for their projects.

Along with like minded individuals, the NGO also involves the youth in this noble cause. “We take our college students on field trips to these villages to sensitise them about the scenario in rural India,” she said.

She teaches part time in business schools in Mumbai and Bombay Stock Ex-



A family looks on in amusement as a solar-powered lamp lights up their home; (Bottom) Beneficiaries of the project in Dhanau district

LIGHTING UP LIVES

■ NGO Chirag is active in seven states of India — Meghalaya, Assam, Uttaranchal, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan.

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By 2020, the NGO wants to lit up 15,000 more homes in the country taking their to-

tal to 30,000 homes touching 2 lakh lives. “Instead of focusing on just home lighting, our village model has a 10,000 kilo watt grid that powers homes and school, and helps with solar lift irrigation too. Our dream is to be a sustainable energy partner for any community that needs power. If you think energy, you should think of project Chirag,” she said.