

• MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2009 •

THE HINDU



INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

FROM THE STATES

7

U.N. project a boon for Rajasthan villages

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JAIPUR: A pilot project on Food for Human Development (FFHD), sponsored by the U.N. World Food Programme, has benefited hundreds of villagers in the tribal-dominated Banswara, Dungarpur and Pratapgarh districts in southern Rajasthan by way of distribution of 958 metric tonnes of food grain through service delivery centres.

A total of 237 self-help groups were involved as core

implementing partners in reaching out to the beneficiaries in 350 villages of the three districts. The project of two years' duration, which brought major changes in the lives of rural people, was implemented through the State Government and a Banswara-based non-government organisation.

The NGO, Vaagdhara, helped the SHGs in establishing service delivery centres as the successful replicable models for promoting human development through food-

grain distribution and generation of awareness on health, hygiene and education.

Vaagdhara secretary Jayesh Joshi said here on Sunday that the SHGs functioned as trustworthy partners during FFHD's execution for helping out the tribal populations which made out their livelihood through primitive agriculture and minor forest produces. The project benefited a total of 2,702 persons in the three districts.

While using food as a re-

source for human development, the SHGs learnt the art of campaigning for generating awareness on health and education and motivated women to make progress. Two of the SHG members have been offered the government assignment as Anganwadi workers.

Mr. Joshi felt that the support of the State Government and the U.N. bodies could help the tribals, facing deprivation in terms of human development possibilities, for their uplift and reduce their

migration to the nearby cities. He pointed out that the FFHD had put its focus on women, children and persons with disability.

Though Vaagdhara functions primarily as a grass-roots development agency, it has also addressed its work to the issue of rural migration which it believes is linked with globalisation. Mr. Joshi said the local development issues, rather than being resolved in isolation, should be addressed in a "larger national perspective".