

Women break free from clutch of poverty, thanks to GMRVF

Sudipta Sen Gupta
@timesgroup.com

Hyderabad: A group of 26 odd women at the GMR's Varalakshmi Foundation (GMRVF) are completing their biggest assignment ever - of stitching 10,000 jute bags for an upcoming international conference at Orlando, US. While these women have been part of GMRVF's 'Empower' initiative for eight years now, this assignment assures to finally help them earn the big bucks of anywhere between ₹15,000 and ₹20,000.

Such tales of hope and improving livelihoods are a plenty at this foundation, the CSR arm of the GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited. Its expansive Shamshabad campus is found swarming with young men and women roaring to break free from the clutches of poverty, unemployment and poor education. That the airport is helping them find jobs within the facility, once trained from the GMRVF, has only further allowed their dreams take flight. On offer are a host of employment choices: electrician, AC maintenance staff, cashier, retail executive and buggy driver among others.

The foundation, not too long ago, added an 'incubator operator training' to this list which



The group of women making jute bags at the GMR's Varalakshmi Foundation

7,000 people trained over last decade

Over the past decade, since its inception, the training centre has trained about 7,000 candidates in various skills. And while initially, it was only the youth from the neighbouring villages who trooped in to join the centre, its reach has now gone beyond the immediate surroundings. **rw**

changed Santosh's life forever. A butcher before he set foot in GMRVF, the man in his 20s now works at an open cast mine-earning a decent monthly salary of ₹65,000. On Thursday he had returned to Shamshabad to seek a better opportunity at the airport. "While

the job is much better than what I did as a butcher, I am hopeful of making more money at the GMR airport," the Karimnagar boy said.

But 22-year-old Ganesh has other plans. Currently being trained to be an electrician, young boy from Vikhakhabad wants to become entrepreneur. "After I learn the skill, I will work for two years and then open something of my own," Ganesh said. "GMR Group believes that growth can be sustainable only when it is inclusive. And for this, communities and corporates must work together. As a group, we believe we need to bring not only our resources but also our competencies, processes and networks to this mission," said Meera Raghunathan, director, community services, GMRVF.