

# Self-sufficiency and a social cause stitched together

*Women SHG members manufacture 30,000 masks and 6,000 PPE kits for COVID frontline warriors*

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COVID-19 sure has hit every business but has also opened new avenues of livelihood. Twenty eight-year-old Sumalatha of Mamidipally village lost her husband and is the sole earning member feeding for her two children. As part of a self-help group (SHG), she was training to sew jute bags. After the pandemic struck, she got an offer to make personal protective equipment (PPE) kits.

"I am financially independent and now proud of being able to help for a social cause too," she says with a smile.

Krishnaveni (39) hails from the same village and is a group member, also trained to make jute bags and uniforms. She too is into making masks and PPE kits. "It took some time to get used to the change. From 40 kits a day, we are able to produce more than 150 kits. We are ready to customise too," she says.

Their colleague D. Renuka (45) hails from Jalpally village. "Training in making jute products has come in

handy to make the most of the current situation and enable us to contribute towards the safety of medical and health professionals," she says.

Training in making jute products earlier and currently into making two/three-layer face masks and PPE kits for the last four months has been through GMR Varalakshmi Foundation (GMRVF), the corporate social responsibility arm of GMR group.

The 14 women SHG members voluntarily came forward and have made 30,000 masks and 6,000 PPE kits so far. Their creations are now available at the 'Empower' outlet at the International Departures of Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), said an official spokesman on Tuesday.

These SHG members are part of the over 600 GMRVF-trained women volunteers across different centres involved in making masks and PPE kits. These women are working from either their own homes maintaining social



The safety gear manufactured by members of women self-help groups are available at the 'Empower' outlet at international departures of the city airport. • BY ARRANGEMENT

distancing, etc., or respective centres abiding by all the required safety norms like daily temperature checks.

Work centres are in Delhi, Warora (Maharashtra); Bajoli-Holi (Himachal Pradesh); Badrinath (Uttarakhand); Kamalanga (Odisha); Rajam, Anantapur, Kakinada (AP), apart from Hyderabad. Over 65,000 masks have been distributed to frontline workers in healthcare, police, security and other fields.

PPE gowns and entire PPE kit consisting of head caps, masks, full-length gowns, shoes-cover and hand gloves are being supplied to healthcare firms, Indian Surgicals and GMM Healthcare. Raw materials are being provided by these agencies and over 6,000 PPE kits have been successfully delivered, he claimed.

Over 1,000 masks were also sent to the Rangareddy Collectorate and another 6,000 masks were taken by

the RGIA's Notified Area Committee for distribution to the airport personnel. Free masks were also distributed in airport adjoining villages of Mamidipally, Gollapally, Shamshabad etc. and those near GMR road projects in Telangana.

"We feel proud that our GMRVF skilled women are at the forefront producing PPE kits and masks to equip the frontline COVID warriors," said GHIAL CEO Pradeep Panicker.