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SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2025:

Where Entrepreneurial Spirit of Rural Women Shines in the Heart of Delhi

Lakhpati Dreams Now a Reality

20 September, 2025

Where tradition meets ambition and rural dreams blossom into thriving businesses, Delhi's heart is glowing with the colours, sounds, and spirit of the **SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2025**. With its inspiring tagline, *"Making of Lakhpati Didis,"* the Mela is not just an exhibition, it is a celebration of women rewriting their destinies.

Organized by the Union Ministry of Rural Development under the **Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihood Mission**, this initiative brings together the extraordinary entrepreneurial journeys of rural women from India's farthest villages. The participation process involves online registration/nomination of self-help groups.

Since **1999**, the **Ministry of Rural Development** has been nurturing the spirit of rural enterprise through the **SARAS Aajeevika Mela**. By offering **workshops on packaging and design** along with training in **communication and business-to-business marketing**, the Mela equips these women with the tools to compete in mainstream markets.



From **5th to 22nd September 2025**, the **Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium** transforms into a vibrant showcase of determination, skill, and enterprise—where every stall tells a story, every product carries the spirit of empowerment, and every smile is a testament of ambition and resilience.

For the very first time, Delhi is playing host to the Mela in its full glory, with all its components-including food stalls and product exhibitions-coming together at one venue. Imagine strolling through **200 bustling stalls**, each a treasure chest of tastes and traditions, while meeting **over 400 rural women entrepreneurs from Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** who have journeyed from various States and Union Territories. It isn't just a fair, it's a **pan-India celebration of talent, enterprise, and community spirit**. Visitors can explore a **wide range of products** that highlight India's rural diversity, such as handlooms, handicrafts, organic food items and natural cosmetics.



The **SARAS INDIA Food Court** brings flavours from across the country, while **cultural programs, environment-friendly initiatives, cart services for senior citizens, entertainment zones for children, and competitions for students** add to the festive spirit.

The Mela not only offers a **platform for rural women** to market their products but also helps them **connect directly** with urban customers, **learn about market trends**, and **refine pricing and packaging strategies**. Through this platform, these women are not just creating sustainable livelihoods, they're weaving **stories of resilience** and charting **bold pathways** of women-led empowerment for communities across India.

A **Lakhpati Didi** is a Self-Help Group member whose household earns at least **₹1,00,000 annually**, with a sustained average monthly income of **₹10,000 over at least four agricultural seasons or business cycles**. With **2 crore women** already becoming **Lakhpati Didis** as part of the Government's **target of 3 crore**, countless inspiring stories of rural women transforming their lives and communities are emerging across the country.



The Making of Lakhpati Didis: Tales of Transformation



In the lush heart of Assam, a woman from **Sristi SHG** once sold her handmade products- **sarees, stoles, cushion covers, Mekhela Chador** (traditional dress of Assam) only within her locality. Customers trickled in slowly, orders were rare, and despite her immense talent, the market felt like a closed door.

The turning point came when she became a part of the **Self-Help Group (SHG)** and got connected to the **SARAS Melas**. Her craft found a stage to reach audiences beyond her locality. Today, her products are not just admired locally- they're reaching homes across the country. Through the mela, she learned vital skills like **marketing strategies and customer engagement**, and with this support, her sales have surged **three to four times!**

She even secured loans from her **Village Organisation and cluster-level federations**, allowing her to expand production and meet growing demand. Now, she earns **lakhs of rupees in just a few months**-something she never imagined before.

Moving westward to Rajasthan, the women of **Laddu Gopal Rajeevika SHG** had their own struggles. With limited resources, every day felt like an uphill climb — even fulfilling basic needs, like securing a good education for their children, seemed like chasing a mirage in the desert.

Things began to change when they joined the self-help group and, a year later, got connected to SARAS

Melas. With a **₹4 lakh loan from the government**, she along with other *Didis* of the SHG, installed machines at home and started producing **iron utensils**—a healthy alternative to harmful nonstick products. What began as a small venture to support their families soon turned into a lifeline.

Today, their dreams have turned into realities with their **monthly sales reaching ₹6-7 lakh** and an annual profit of **₹10 lakh**. This transformation gave them a new found passion and spark. Their **stock has increased six to seven times**, and most importantly-their **children are thriving**, studying confidently up to graduation level, with proper support and hope for a brighter future. Their journey is proof that **when women are given opportunity and trust, entire families rise with them**.



Laddu Gopal Rajeevika SHG, Rajasthan



Mahir Women's SHG, Goa

Down the western coast in Goa, the women of **Mahir Women's SHG** stitched away in silence — crafting cotton prints into short kurtis, long tops, skirts, and delicate block-printed designs. Yet, despite their skill, their creations rarely travelled beyond a handful of customers.

Six years ago, the women joined the **Mahir Women's SHG**, and two years ago they stepped onto a bigger stage through the **SARAS Melas**. Since then, their world has transformed. Customers who once stopped briefly at their stalls now return, save their contacts, and place online orders, turning their small home-based effort into a business that has grown **three to four times!**

With government support covering their travel, stay, and stalls, the women are free to focus entirely on what matters, expanding their craft and their dreams. What once felt like an impossible leap is now within sight: the journey from **Lakhpatti Didi to Crorepatti Didi**. After all, the income that once trickled in as ₹1 lakh a year is now flowing in as ₹1 lakh a month!

Further south in Andhra Pradesh, the journey of a woman from **Srisai SHG** reflects how passion and determination create lasting impact. Over the past **10 years**, she has been proudly participating in SARAS Melas across cities like **Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi and Hyderabad**, giving her handmade creations the wider audience that she deserved.

Starting with a modest ₹1 lakh, her business has **grown steadily to ₹8–10 lakh**, with profits rising as her products reach more and more customers. The support she receives—including free stalls at SARAS events—has been invaluable in helping them expand without worrying about costs.

Her specialty lies in **handmade leather products, from decorative hangings and bed lamps to stunning paintings showcasing Charma Chitrakaari**. Each piece reflects her skills, creativity, and deep-rooted tradition.



Srisai SHG, Andhra Pradesh

In Bihar, the journey of **Quraisha Khatun** is a powerful tale of resilience. Once burdened by poverty and uncertainty, she found a new beginning when she joined the **Sahara Self-Help Group (SHG)**. With her exquisite **lac bangles**, she stepped into the spotlight of the **SARAS Melas**, where her craft began to shine far beyond her village.

Today, her home's **financial situation has improved remarkably**. With orders coming in not only from stalls but even over the telephone, she's building a business with confidence and dignity. Traveling to various SARAS Melas across the country, Quraisha has found community in her customers who believe in her craft.



Sahara SHG, Bihar

From Assam to Rajasthan, Goa to Andhra Pradesh, and Bihar: each story carries a common thread: the **transformative power of SARAS Melas**. By opening doors to employment and providing vital marketing support, these platforms have changed the lives of lakhs of rural women, turning challenges into opportunities and lighting the way for a future where empowered women lead with unyielding courage and brilliance.

As **SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2025** unfolds, it carries this spirit forward, bringing the richness of rural innovation and tradition right to the heart of urban India, while lighting the way for a future shaped and led by empowered women.

References

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