



Colgate & Seva Mandir launch Women Empowerment Program and inaugurate an anicut in Alsigarh village of Udaipur, Rajasthan

The program aims to make the women of Alsigarh financially independent and create a positive societal impact

Udaipur, November 23: Colgate Palmolive (India) Limited, the market leader in Oral Care, in partnership with the Udaipur-based NGO, Seva Mandir, launched a Women Empowerment Program in Alsigarh village today.

As a part of this initiative, Colgate & Seva Mandir will be working towards women empowerment and their economic development through floriculture and backyard poultry, while also supporting the overall water augmentation in 9 tribal villages of Alsigarh. The program will be benefiting more than 3500 people.

Inaugurating the program at an anicut in Alsigarh, **Mr. Issam Bacchalani, Managing Director, Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited**, said, "At Colgate, we believe in serving communities where we live and work. Women empowerment is a cause we wholeheartedly support and champion. Along with our NGO partner Seva Mandir, we have been working on the social and economic upliftment of women in the region, and shall continue to do so, as we believe that everyone deserves a future to smile about."

Mr. Ronak Shah, Chief Executive, Seva Mandir, said, "Women's Empowerment project implemented with Colgate's support has opened new opportunities for women, who can build livelihoods in floriculture and backyard poultry. Program is also supported with water augmentation through construction and renovation of structures to enhance water availability to communities. This is an important milestone in our longstanding partnership with Colgate and will help alleviate rural poverty in Udaipur region."

Also present at the occasion were the senior leadership team from Colgate, along with members from Seva Mandir including Sh. Ajay Mehta - Board Member, representatives from the Panchayat and several other members from the community.

Backyard poultry and floriculture know-how can offer income enhancements for women and give them control of their finances. The Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have provided them with a platform to encourage in them a habit of regular savings which creates an overall positive impact in the society.

The feasibility assessment for the program in this region, which began earlier this year revealed that women have an average literacy rate of 34%, and 76% women have never attended school. Most of these women are unskilled and end up with low-paying jobs, and loans from local money lenders, who often charge an interest rate as high as 120%.



The Seva mandir team has so far created 13 SHGs with a total of 250 women members and efforts are being made to train beneficiaries through technical trainings and regular meetings. The backyard poultry program so far has supported beneficiaries with the provision of poultry birds, cage making, vaccinations and floriculture has been supported by giving seedlings of rose and marigold flowers and ensuring, field trainings for the women. Additionally, the renovation of 9 wells, 1 anicut, and the recharge of 21 wells has been accomplished, along with the construction of 1 check dam, 5 water tanks and 10 drip irrigation systems that is ongoing. This will give access to water throughout the year for the communities.

Colgate-Palmolive (India) Ltd: Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited is India's leading provider of scientifically proven oral care products with multiple benefits at various price points. The range includes toothpastes, toothpowder, toothbrushes and mouthwashes under the 'Colgate' brand, as well as a specialized range of dental therapies under the banner of Colgate Oral Pharmaceuticals. The Company also provides a range of personal care products under the 'Palmolive' brand name. Colgate has been ranked as India's #1 Most Trusted Brand across all categories for seven consecutive years from 2011-2017 by Brand Equity's Most Trusted Brands Survey. To know more about Colgate, please visit www.colgate.co.in

About Seva Mandir: Seva Mandir is an award-winning NGO started by Dr. Mohan Singh Metha in 1968. It has been working on the development of rural and tribal communities in Udaipur and Rajsamand Districts of southern Rajasthan for 50 years. The NGO's participatory approach empowers communities to take charge of their own development and ensures the long-term sustainability individual projects. Its scope too has evolved over the years to include a variety of vital capacity building programmes, across education, income generation activities, natural resource development, health, early child and development, youth engagement, women empowerment, and local governance. www.sevamandir.org