

PRESS RELEASE

Vedanta Launches 6 Mushroom Cultivation Units to Empower Women Entrepreneurs in Odisha

Vedanta Iron ore Odisha (IOO), as part of Project Jivika and in collaboration with six Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from Nadidihi and Rengalbeda villages, has set up six Mushroom Cultivation Units. This initiative marks a significant step towards providing entrepreneurial support to women community members and fostering sustainable livelihoods.

The event marking the inauguration of the Mushroom Cultivation Facility was attended by community members, NGO partner Punaruthan, and Sambit Nayak, Head of CSR/ER at Vedanta IOO, along with other company officials. The initiative included a comprehensive one-day training program led by Mr. Shishir Kumar Mohanta from OUAT, BBSR. Mr. Mohanta's extensive experience and expertise were invaluable in preparing the ground work for the successful launch of the initiative. The training session emphasized the significance of the project and its potential to promote sustainable livelihoods and entrepreneurship within the communities.

To further ensure the success of these Mushroom Cultivation Units, IOO will provide support in establishing market linkages, thereby maintaining a robust supply chain. This assistance will help the women entrepreneurs reach broader markets and secure fair prices for their produce, fostering economic stability and growth.

Nirupama Naik, a Community Resource Person from Nadidihi Village and a representative of the five SHGs, expressed her enthusiasm: *"We are thrilled to start our mushroom farming project with the support of Vedanta Sesa Goa IOO CSR. We are grateful for this opportunity and are committed to making it a success. Seeing results in just 15 days keeps us motivated, and the nutritional benefits of mushrooms are an added bonus."*

The enthusiastic response from the women SHG members reaffirms IOO's commitment to empowerment through skill development. By providing the necessary training and resources, IOO aims to enable these women to cultivate mushrooms effectively and sustainably, ensuring both quality and affordability for consumers. Project Jivika is designed to empower women through upskilling, providing material support for vocational & entrepreneurial avenues & guidance & mentoring for achieving financial viability.

IOO remains steadfast in its commitment to nurturing entrepreneurship and sustainable practices that contribute to the socio-economic development of communities. This initiative is a testament to the ongoing efforts to create a positive impact on society and the environment.