

Women-Led Handloom Entrepreneurship Using Indigenous Resources in Uttarakhand

Name: Bimla Devi

Age: 53 years

Address: Village–Post Sherpur, Shimla Bypass, Dehradun

Educational Qualification: 10th Pass

Mobile No: 7895887222

Affiliated Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK): Dehradun



Background

Women entrepreneurship in agriculture and allied sectors plays a vital role in rural development and livelihood generation. Bimla Devi of Sherpur village, Dehradun, stands as a remarkable example of how determination, traditional knowledge, and effective use of local resources can transform a simple idea into a successful and sustainable enterprise. Her journey from a medium farmer to a recognized woman entrepreneur has not only improved her own socio-economic status but has also empowered hundreds of rural women.

Background and Early Journey

Bimla Devi belongs to a farming family with limited financial resources. Like many rural women, she was engaged in household chores and agricultural activities, with little exposure to organized entrepreneurship. However, she possessed strong willpower and a desire to become financially independent. Around 20 years ago, she decided to explore self-employment opportunities based on locally available raw materials.

She approached the District Industries Centre (DIC) for guidance, where she received basic orientation on entrepreneurship and traditional handicraft-based enterprises. With no external financial assistance, she invested her personal savings to start the venture on a small scale, initially working from her home.

Innovation, Product Development, and Uniqueness

The core strength of Bimla Devi's enterprise lies in her innovative use of indigenous raw materials. She revived the traditional practice of utilizing bichchhu ghas (nettle fiber) and wool obtained from local Uttarakhand sheep. During his Visit to FRI, Dehradun, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Modi ji also appreciated her work.

The process involves collecting raw wool, cleaning it, and spinning it manually on a traditional spindle (takli) to produce high-quality yarn. This yarn is then woven on handlooms to create a range of eco-friendly and durable products such as:



- Shawls and stoles
- Mufflers
- Lohis (traditional blankets)
- Thulma and Chutka (traditional woolen garments)
- Uttarakhandi Jackets
- Caps
- Temple designed(Kedarnath and Badrinath) Wall Hangings

These products are highly valued for their natural texture, warmth, durability, and cultural authenticity. The absence of chemicals and the use of traditional techniques make them environmentally sustainable and appealing to conscious consumers.

Capacity Building and Women Empowerment

Understanding the importance of collective effort, Bimla Devi gradually involved other women from nearby villages. Today, 25 women are directly engaged in different stages of production such as spinning, weaving, finishing, and packaging.

In addition, Bimla Devi has emerged as a master trainer, having trained more than 1,000 women in wool spinning, weaving, and product development. These trainings have enabled women to generate income from home, enhanced their skills, and boosted their confidence. Many trained women have started contributing economically to their households, leading to improved decision-making power and social status.

Marketing Linkages and Outreach

One of the major challenges for rural enterprises is market access. Bimla Devi successfully addressed this by participating in state and national-level exhibitions, fairs, and craft melas. Her products are also marketed through Tribes India, a reputed platform that promotes tribal and traditional products across India.



Through these channels, she has established a loyal customer base, ensured fair pricing, and gained recognition for her work. The exposure has also helped her understand market trends, customer preferences, and quality standards.

Socio-Economic Impact and Income Enhancement

The consistent expansion of her enterprise has resulted in steady growth in income over the years:

Table 1: Year wise economics of the entrepreneur

Year	No. of Stoles (A)	No of Shawls (B)	Miscellaneous (Caps Wall	Gross Income	Expenditure (₹)	Net Income (₹)	Comments
------	-------------------	------------------	--------------------------	--------------	-----------------	----------------	----------

			hangings and Jackets) (C)	A+B+ C			
2022	250@Rs250 (Rs 62500)	125@Rs400 50000	Rs24000	136500	50000	86500	Starting phase of establishment
2023	325@Rs265 86125	145@Rs450 65250	Rs 44000	195375	65000	130375	Marketing done with word of mouth
2024	400@Rs300 120000	220@Rs550 121000	Rs 58000	299000	85000	214000	Expansion of marketing
2025	700@Rs325 227500	300@rs600 180000	Rs 65000	472500	10500	462000	Government Deppt Like zilaudyog department and KVK Helped in value addition and marketing

Year-wise Economic Performance (2022–2025)

In **2022**, the entrepreneur was in the initial establishment phase. Production was limited to 250 stoles, 125 shawls, and some miscellaneous items, generating a gross income of ₹1,36,500 with a net income of ₹86,500. This year laid the foundation for the enterprise. In **2023**, there was a noticeable increase in production and income due to improved sales through word-of-mouth marketing. Gross income rose to ₹1,95,375 and net income increased to ₹1,30,375, indicating better market acceptance and operational efficiency. By **2024**, the enterprise expanded further with higher production volumes and better pricing, supported by enhanced marketing efforts. Gross income increased significantly to ₹2,99,000, while net income reached ₹2,14,000, reflecting strong growth and improved profitability. In **2025**, the enterprise achieved a major breakthrough. With substantial increases in the production of stoles, shawls, and value-added products, and with support from government departments such as the Zila Udyog Department and KVK, gross income surged to ₹4,72,500 and net income to ₹4,62,000. This phase highlights successful value addition, institutional support, and effective marketing.



Table 2: Economics of the entrepreneur before and after KVK's Intervention

Particulars	Before Intervention	After Intervention
Main Source of Income	Traditional crops (mandua, wheat, maize, vegetables)	Handloom Unit Containing
Area/ Capacity	Land on lease	8 Units of Handlooms
Gross Income (Rs.)	12000	Rs.472500
Net Income (Rs.)	12000	Rs.4,62,00.00

The second table2 comparing the situation before and after KVK intervention demonstrates a transformative economic shift. Prior to intervention, the entrepreneur relied on traditional crops with a gross and net income of only ₹12,000 annually. After KVK support, she established a handloom unit with 8 looms, increasing her gross income to ₹4,72,500 and net income to ₹4,62,000.

This substantial rise in income has significantly improved the family's standard of living, enabling better access to education, healthcare, and financial security. Additionally, the enterprise has created sustainable livelihood opportunities for other women, contributing to women empowerment, poverty reduction, and inclusive rural development. This increased income has significantly improved her family's living standards, enabling better education, healthcare, and financial security. More importantly, the enterprise has created sustainable livelihood opportunities for associated women, contributing to poverty reduction and inclusive rural development.

Role of KVK and Institutional Support



Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Dehradun played a supportive role by providing technical guidance, exposure visits, and linkage support whenever required. The convergence of traditional skills with institutional handholding helped strengthen the enterprise and enhance its credibility.

Bimla Devi's success story is a powerful example of grassroots women entrepreneurship rooted in tradition and sustainability. By effectively utilizing local resources, preserving cultural heritage, and empowering rural women through skill development, she has created a model enterprise with wide social impact. Her journey inspires rural women to believe in their potential and demonstrates that with perseverance, innovation, and appropriate support, sustainable livelihoods can be built even with limited resources.

Contributors: Dr A K Sharma, Dr Kiran Pant, Dr Bijeta