

# 70. Turning Banana Waste into Sustainable Livelihoods

## Profile

**Name** : Neelam Devi  
**Age** : 45 years  
**Education** : 12th standard  
**Mobile No** : 7654662166  
**Address** : Rajapakar, Vaishali, Bihar  
**Enterprise** : FIG Jan Jagriti swayan Sahayata Samuh



## Background

Mrs. Neelam Devi, a 45-year-old woman from Rajapakar village, Vaishali district, Bihar, is a member of FIG Jan Jagriti Swayam Sahayata Samuh and a 12th-standard educated rural entrepreneur. Prior to intervention, she had no organized agri-based enterprise, and banana pseudostems in her region were treated as waste. Limited technical knowledge, resources, credit access, market linkages, and social constraints confined her to irregular and low income, leaving the potential for value addition and livelihood diversification untapped.

## Catalyst of Change

A significant change occurred with her inclusion under the ARYA (Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture) Project. Through this initiative, she received hands-on training and technical guidance on banana fiber extraction and handicraft production. Support was provided to establish a banana fiber extraction unit with one machine, along with continuous mentoring for enterprise development. She was also facilitated to participate in Krishi Melas and state-level fairs, which provided much-needed exposure to markets and customers.

## Pathway to Progress

Initially, Mrs. Neelam Devi started the enterprise at an individual level by adopting banana fiber extraction technology to utilize agricultural waste. Gradually, she began producing a range of value-



### Highlights

- » Creating a sustainable waste-to-wealth model.
- » Increased net annual income from Rs. 20,000 to 3.50 lakh through value addition and market expansion.
- » Emerged as rural entrepreneur and promoting group-based women entrepreneurship.

and handicraft products. Although the cost of production rose from Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 1,00,000, her economic gains improved substantially. Her gross annual income increased from Rs. 60,000 to 4,50,000, while net income rose from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 3.50 per year. The enterprise ensured better livelihood security, efficient utilization of banana waste, and generation of self-employment as well as group-based income opportunities.

added handicrafts such as handbags, wall hangings, wall paintings, coasters, and decorative items. Encouraged by growing demand and institutional support, she expanded the activity into a group-based enterprise model, which improved production efficiency, collective participation, and marketing outreach. Her products found markets beyond the local area, reaching Patna and other parts of Bihar.

### Productivity & Income Enhancement

As a result of enterprise expansion, her production capacity increased to around 50 kg of banana fiber

### Social/Personal Empowerment, Awards & Recognition

Beyond economic gains, the initiative brought significant social impact. Smt. Neelam Devi's confidence and entrepreneurial skills improved markedly, and her role in household and enterprise-level decision-making strengthened. She received recognition at district-level programmes and ICAR-level fairs and has now emerged as a role model for rural women.

### Influence on other Farmers

Her success has encouraged others to adopt waste-to-wealth enterprises and strengthened leadership and collective action through SHG-based entrepreneurship.

She plans to further scale up production, diversify product designs, and strengthen market linkages, while motivating and training more women to adopt banana fiber-based enterprises.



[Source: Kumari Namrata and Anil Kumar (KVK, Vaishali, Bihar)]