

LEADS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Sustainable Livelihood Promotion Initiative

MODEL: SKILL PROMOTION FOR SUSTAINED SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE SET-UP

Background

Rural youth in Jharkhand continue to face livelihood insecurity, unemployment, underemployment and distress migration, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas. Limited access to quality education, market-relevant skills and employment opportunities often pushes young people to migrate in search of work, weakening household and local economies. In response, LEADS has developed an integrated skill development model that connects training with employment, entrepreneurship, financial access, market linkages and post-training support. Targeting youth aged 18-35 years, particularly from rural and economically vulnerable households, the model covers trades such as retail management, electrician work, LED repair, plumbing, tubewell repair, two-wheeler repair, driving, beautician services, tailoring, Sohrai painting and Kantha stitching. The model also incorporates emerging opportunities such as solar energy installation and maintenance, providing practical training in electrical safety, wiring, solar-panel installation, maintenance and troubleshooting. LEADS's experience shows that skill development is more effective when supported by practical exposure, certification, toolkits, placement or enterprise support, access to finance and continued handholding. The approach can be summarised as:

Skill → Practice → Certification → Linkage → Employment/Enterprise → Handholding → Sustainable Income

The key components include community mobilisation, selection of vulnerable youth, market-oriented training, practical exposure, soft skills and entrepreneurship development, certification, placement and market linkages, access to finance and government schemes, toolkits and start-up support, and post-training follow-up. This approach ensures that training is not an end in itself, but a pathway towards sustainable employment, self-employment and enterprise development.



Steps-wise Strategic Plan and Implementation

Step 1: Selection and mobilisation of potential trainees/beneficiaries.

LEADS follows a community-based mobilisation and transparent process to identify beneficiaries in consultation with local stakeholders, community leaders and mobilisers. Priority is given to economically disadvantaged, unemployed/underemployed and rural youth, women and marginalized groups, particularly those seeking practical, market-oriented skills for employment, self-employment and sustainable livelihoods.

Step 2: Market-Oriented Trade Selection

Training trades are identified and selected based on local market demand, employment potential and the scope for self-employment opportunities for enterprise set up and development. The trade includes: 1) Retail Management & Delivery, 2) Electrician 3) LED manufacturing and repairing, 4) Plumbing & Tubewell Repair, 5) Scooty/Bike Repair 6) Repairing and installation of solar equipments,

7) Beauticians 8) Jute Craft 9) Bamboo craft, 10) Kantha Stitching and Sohrai painting, 11) Cloth designing and stitching, 12) Driving 13) Security guards 14) ATM Guards 15) Petrol pump refilling workers, 16) Animal Husbandry, 17) Paravet service providers, 18) Furniture manufacturing and painting/polishing 19) Women meson work 20) Hotel service staffs 21) Small enterprises like potters solarised wheel, 22) Solarised cloth designing and stitching, 23) Common Service Centre (CSC) and many more.



The inclusion of solar-energy related skills provides an additional pathway for youth to enter a growing technical and renewable-energy service sector.

Step 3: Structured Technical Training

The training follows a structured, short-term model of approximately 200–600 hours, depending on the trade. In some project training is designed for around three months, comprising approximately 220 hours @ 3 to 4 hours a day. The training combines theoretical learning, practical demonstrations Hands-on practice, site exposure, on-the-job training, soft skills, entrepreneurship development, safety practices and industry-oriented learning. Sessions are delivered in Hindi and local language, to ensure accessibility for rural youth. Where appropriate, LEADS also explores convergence with government schemes and other agencies to support training costs and subsequent livelihood opportunities

Step 4: Practical and Experiential Learning

A major strength of the LEADS approach is its emphasis on learning by doing. For example, in electrical training, participants learn: Electrical safety, Voltage, current and resistance, Electrical tools and their correct use, Wiring theory, Circuit diagrams, Series and parallel



circuits, Safe handling of electrical equipment and Practical wiring. Similarly, solar-energy training includes: Understanding photovoltaic technology, Types of solar panels, Installation, Wiring and connections, Maintenance, Troubleshooting, Efficiency considerations, and Safety procedures. As part of experiential learning, participants also visited a solar installation at the LEADS Resource Centre, Perka Murhu, helping them connect classroom learning with its practical application.

Step 5: Soft Skills and Entrepreneurship Development

Technical skills alone may not ensure sustainable income. The model therefore includes communication, customer handling, teamwork, problem-solving, business planning, basic financial management, market identification and customer relationship management. This equips youth not only to seek employment but also to provide services, start small enterprises and pursue self-employment opportunities.

Step 6: Certification and Recognition

Wherever applicable, participants are provided with industry-aligned and recognised certification upon completion of training. Certification enhances the credibility of trained youth, strengthens their employability and helps them compete more effectively in the labour market.

Step 7: Job Placement and Market Linkage

LEADS facilitates linkages between trained youth and local businesses, industries, service providers, employers, employment agencies, job portals, government programmes and corporate opportunities. Job fairs and placement drives further enable direct interaction between trained candidates and potential employers, while market linkages also support those pursuing self-employment and enterprise opportunities.



Enterprise Promotion and Self-Employment Strategy

For youth interested in self-employment, LEADS provides an enterprise-development pathway that links skills with viable business opportunities.

Skill Training → Business Idea → Business Planning → Finance → Toolkit/Equipment → Market Linkage → Enterprise Launch → Handholding → Income Stabilization

Potential enterprises include: Electrical service units, LED repair and assembling, Plumbing services, Tubewell repair services, Two-wheeler repair shops, Retail and delivery services, Solar installation and maintenance services. The Enterprise support includes: Entrepreneurship orientation, Business-plan development, Financial literacy, Linkage with microfinance, Linkage with government schemes, Access to tools/toolkits, Market linkage, Customer acquisition support, Mentoring and troubleshooting.

Six-Month Post-Training Handholding

A key feature of the LEADS model is six months of post-training handholding to help beneficiaries transition from training to employment or self-employment. During this period, beneficiaries receive support for: Job applications and placement, Enterprise establishment, Government-scheme linkages, Access to financial services, Market connections, Mentoring, Troubleshooting, Regular follow-up and Stabilization of income-generating activities. This continued support helps address a common gap in skill-development programmes - ensuring that training is followed by practical assistance to secure employment or establish and sustain a livelihood.

Benefits of the LEADS Skill Promotion Model

A. Benefits to Youth who have Improved technical and practical skills, Increased employability, Better access to jobs, Opportunities for self-employment, Increased earning potential, Improved confidence and communication, Access to certification, Access to tools and equipment and Better understanding of business opportunities.



B. Economic Benefits: Creation of local employment, Promotion of micro-enterprises, Increased household income, Reduction in dependence on irregular employment, Improved utilization of local skills and Development of local service markets.

C. Social Benefits: Reduction in distress migration, greater participation of women, Inclusion of marginalized communities, Increased confidence and independence among rural youth and strengthening of community resilience.

D. Environmental Benefits: The introduction of solar-energy skills also contributes to Promotion of renewable energy, Creation of green livelihood opportunities, Increased awareness of clean energy and Development of local capacity for solar installation and maintenance.

LEADS Experience in Skill Promotion:

LEADS has substantial experience in implementing skill-development initiatives across agriculture, traditional trades, service sectors, enterprise development and non-traditional livelihood opportunities, demonstrating its capacity to deliver skill promotion at scale.

Key Achievements

Intervention	Achievement/Reach	Key Impact
Skill for Agriculture Promotion	4,500+ individuals trained	Improved agricultural productivity, livelihoods and sustainable employment opportunities
Trade-Based Skill Promotion	7,000+ youth/community members trained	Enhanced employability and income-earning potential
Service-Sector Skill Promotion	380 youth trained	Training in electrical work, plumbing, driving, Beautician and LED bulb repair
Service-sector income impact	₹5,000–₹10,000/month	Enabled trained youth to earn through employment/self-employment
Self-Employment/Enterprise Set-Up	150 individuals supported	Skills and guidance provided to establish enterprises and sustainable livelihoods
Non-Traditional Trades for Females	450 girls trained	Training in driving, carpentry, motor mechanics and other non-traditional trades
Government-Certified Courses	68 trainees across listed courses	Improved access to professional career pathways
ANM	8 trainees	Healthcare career opportunities
GNM	32 trainees	Professional healthcare opportunities
B.Sc. Nursing	1 trainee	Higher-level professional opportunity
B.Ed.	10 trainees	Education-sector career opportunity
TTC	12 trainees	Teaching-related livelihood opportunity
Fashion Designing	3 trainees	Vocational/self-employment opportunity

The figures demonstrate that LEADS has experience not only in large-scale skill training, but also in translating training into income generation, employment and enterprise opportunities.

LEADS Experience in Women-Centred and Non-Traditional Skills

LEADS has also demonstrated the potential of skills promotion to challenge traditional gender roles and expand livelihood opportunities for women and girls. Around 450 girls have been trained in non-traditional trades, including: Driving, Carpentry, Motor mechanics, Other traditionally male-dominated occupations. These such interventions promote: Economic independence, Confidence and decision-making, Greater mobility, Occupational diversity and Social acceptance of women in non-traditional occupations.

At the same time, LEADS has promoted traditional knowledge as both a livelihood opportunity and a cultural asset. Around 90 girls and women were engaged in Kantha stitching, helping promote livelihoods while preserving and reviving traditional cultural knowledge. Similarly, Bal Sansad members were encouraged to promote traditional Sohrai painting as a school-based extracurricular activity, connecting cultural heritage with creativity and community knowledge. These experiences indicate that LEADS' skill-promotion approach can combine modern employment-oriented skills with traditional knowledge and cultural livelihoods.

Impact of the LEADS Model

The available achievements point towards impact at multiple levels.

Individual level: The model enables individuals to move from: Unskilled/underemployed → Skilled → Certified → Employable → Earning → Self-reliant.

Household level: Improved income can contribute to better household economic security, Reduced dependence on uncertain income sources, greater ability to meet household needs, and Increased investment in education and livelihoods.

Community level: When trained youth work locally, they contribute to the development of a local service ecosystem. Electricians, plumbers, mechanics, retailers and solar technicians provide services within their communities while retaining income locally.

Migration level: By creating local employment and enterprise opportunities, the model has the potential to reduce the pressure for distress migration and enable youth to remain connected with their families and communities.

Gender level: Women's participation in non-traditional occupations and livelihood activities contributes to increased economic agency and challenges conventional occupational norms.

Sustainability Strategy

The sustainability of the LEADS model is based on creating independent livelihood pathways rather than dependency on project support.

- **Skills remain with the beneficiary:** Technical skills acquired through practical training remain a long-term asset that beneficiaries can use to generate income.
- **Toolkits enable immediate practice:** Trade-specific toolkits can help trained youth begin providing services immediately after training, particularly electricians, plumbers and mechanics.
- **Local market linkages:** Linking beneficiaries with local households, businesses, industries and institutions creates a continuing customer/employer base.
- **Enterprise orientation:** Participants are encouraged to become service providers and entrepreneurs rather than remaining dependent solely on wage employment.
- **Financial linkages:** Microfinance and government schemes can provide access to capital required for establishing or expanding micro-enterprises.
- **Continued mentoring:** Six months of post-training handholding helps beneficiaries overcome initial operational and financial challenges.



- **Diversification of skills:** The inclusion of emerging sectors such as solar energy creates opportunities beyond conventional trades.
- **Community-based sustainability:** Locally available electricians, plumbers, mechanics, retailers and solar technicians address ongoing community demand, thereby creating a sustainable local service ecosystem.
- **Women's economic participation:** Women's involvement in both traditional and non-traditional trades creates additional household income sources and strengthens the sustainability of family livelihoods.

LEADS's Replicable Development Model

Based on the project design and LEADS' experience, the model can be summarized as: “Identify – Train – Practise – Certify – Equip – Link – Finance – Handhold – Earn – Sustain”

- Identify vulnerable and motivated youth through community mobilization
- Provide market-oriented technical and soft skills
- Ensure practical sessions, site exposure and on-the-job learning
- Provide industry/government-aligned certification wherever applicable
- Provide access to trade-specific tools, learning materials and safety equipment
- Connect youth with employers, markets, industries and customers
- Facilitate access to microfinance and government schemes
- Provide six months of mentoring, follow-up and troubleshooting
- Enable wage employment, self-employment or enterprise development
- Support income stabilization, business growth and local economic development

Concluding Remarks:

- LEADS' experience shows that skill development is most effective when linked with employment, entrepreneurship, finance, market access and post-training handholding. Its integrated approach moves beyond training to help youth become skilled workers, service providers and entrepreneurs, creating pathways to sustainable income and reducing livelihood insecurity and distress migration.
- With 4,500+ people trained in agriculture-based skills, 7,000+ through trade-based training, 380 in service-sector skills, 150 supported for self-employment and enterprise development, and around 450 girls trained in non-traditional trades, LEADS has a strong foundation for scaling this model.
- By combining technical skills, practical exposure, certification, enterprise support, financial and market linkages, and continued handholding, the model positions skill development as a pathway to self-reliance, inclusive livelihoods and stronger local economies.



Photographs





