



Lata Devi, from Malavan, Darlaghat, topped the recently held Gram Sakhi exam with 87.25%



Sakhis learning diagnostic skills during a training

This year, the UN's theme for International Women's Day is **Equal Access to Education, Training and Science and Technology: Pathway to Decent Work for Women**. For many women, in urban or rural areas, equal access to opportunities remains a dream even today. ACF is proud to say that its work with women through its various projects creates opportunities for women to make a positive difference. Fittingly, our work with sakhis – ACF's cadre of women health workers – is in line with the UN theme, creating pathways to decent work for women.

It is difficult for Lata Devi Bansal to wipe the smile off her face. She's just topped the Gram Sakhi exam for village-based health workers with a whopping 87.25%, and her entire village is suddenly in awe of her.

She is now the pride of her family and her village.

Lata Devi, from village Malawan, is a sakhi, part of ACF's integrated health program and works with communities on the hilly outreaches of Darlaghat.

Over the past few years, sakhis working on health and sanitation in villages across locations have felt the need for official accreditation.



Madhuben Rawal, from Valadar, Kodinar passed with distinction, despite being ill throughout the exam.



Sakhis during one of their regular training programs

This, they felt, would add a stamp of authority, and ease their work with local panchayats, and public health systems. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) conducts the Gram Sakhi examination for health workers, and this was an ideal opportunity for women to prove their potential.

It was easier said than done. Most sakhis came from underprivileged groups, had low educational qualifications, and had left formal school systems years ago. Suddenly they had to juggle studies along with their work, home, children and farms, and write an exam at the end of it all. The mere thought was terrifying.

Their greatest qualifications however were their experience, understanding of community

health issues and willingness to work hard. Backed by ACF's regular revision sessions and tests, sakhis began their training. They would not miss out on a single practice session, and would share notes, discuss questions and debate their subjects threadbare.

51 sakhis were registered for the exam, and made it to Pune and Chandigarh to give their best shot.

Madhuben Rawal from village Valadar, Kodinar was one of the examinees. Unfortunately, she fell ill on day two of the 7-day exam, and was diagnosed with dengue.

Despite the illness, she was determined to write her exams. Every day her strength was taxed to the maximum. Fortified by her will, and some medicines, Madhuben not only attempted each paper, but passed them with distinction!

We are proud to say that of this batch, 26 passed with distinction and 22 with a First Class. The result reflects the hard work put in by each sakhi and the support provided by the respective ACF teams.

This success has raised their confidence and self-belief. This Women's Day, they would be felicitated for their efforts. In this case, however, sakhis embody the spirit of empowerment, every day.

Ambuja Cements Wins the India CSR Shining Star Award, 2010.

Ambuja Cements Ltd., has won the inaugural India CSR Shining Star Award, 2010 in the Cement category.

Ms. Pearl Tiwari, VP-CSR at ACL and Mr. Vishal Bharadwaj, GM-Community Development, ACF, received the award on behalf of the company



The India CSR Shining Star Award, 2010

The award instituted by Wockhardt Foundation was presented at the Thought Leadership Conclave, held at The Taj Mahal Hotel, on 19th Feb, 2011 by Mr. Salman Khursheed, Hon. Minister for Water Resources and Minority Affairs. .

The other nominees included ACC and LaFarge, but ACL won the award based on their consistent commitment to CSR activities through its dedicated CSR arm, Ambuja Cement Foundation. The award acknowledged the impact and spread of our work.
