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Asha Kirana

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OUR MISSION

To maximise financial well being of every individual and every enterprise by providing complete financial services in the remote rural parts of Ganjam and Khurda Districts.

Customers Speak



B. Kamala Reddy

Low interest rate is going to help every individual in the village. Though the weekly payment mode is easy as the amount to be paid back is less; monthly would have been still better. The arrival of KGFS in our village has made life worth-while and meaningful for us. Everything that they have done till now has helped us immensely. We hope that in the future KGFS will provide financial assistance to many more in various different ways.



Mamata Patra

First and foremost, money arrives at every villager's doorstep and that too depending on the individual's requirements and capabilities. This is being done by personal interaction and in-depth questioning sessions which also helps us in understanding our needs better. KGFS has helped us enormously as there is no wastage of time, effort and money in gaining financial assistance. Their main aim in fact is to seek us and reach out to us; not vice-versa.

The Team: Our Thoughts

The pleasant winter morning of 8th Dec '08 heralded the beginning of a new chapter in the lives of a multitude of villagers in and around Berhampur. We, the team of Dhanei KGFS, started our operations in a small makeshift office in Berhampur, a small town located in the Ganjam



The Dhanei Team

district of Orissa. The members of the team came with varied experiences; Shirish and Arun brought in microfinance experience while Pravash and Biswaranjan came from a banking background. Ashit, the "Mukhiya", came from the Army with his 20 years of military discipline! The team shared a common dream - to help uplift the financial wellbeing of the rural masses of Orissa. The work had to start immediately with a great sense of urgency. The Team displayed their unconditional commitment by pitching in to take on any task without anchoring on to their backgrounds. We sailed on to face the challenges, which of course were quite a few in number. Villages had very poor connectivity in terms of public transport and roads. Getting a decent lunch in the villages is asking for too much! The hygiene factor in these areas is in dismal state with the village approach roads being used as toilets. To compound it further, the weather turns hostile in the summer months with both the heat and humidity being at its peak. Despite all odds, the team has toiled hard to give shape to the entity - "A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step".

Journey so far...

The thought process behind naming of the entity as Dhanei Kshetriya Grameen Financial Services (Dhanei KGFS) started during the early part of July 2008. Dhanei is the name of a tributary of river Rushikulya, which is the prominent river of Ganjam District. More importantly, the name implies to prosperity and richness and suits our mission of “promoting financial wellbeing of every individual and enterprise” in an un-biased manner. A team of capable professionals were being trained on the products, processes, technology and culture building for about five months in the pilot endeavour of IFMR Trust i.e. Pudhuaaru KGFS. The team actually landed in Berhampur in the month of December 08. By now, we have successfully recruited, inducted and trained the Wealth Managers (WM) for four branches. Apart from this, we have built a strong local team consisting of Manager - Infrastructure, Manager - Accounts and Administration, Executive IT, Manager – Training and Manager- Product and Process. The new recruits are gradually tightening their grip on the respective assignments given to them. We have already rolled out our first branch at Badakusasthali on 4th of Apr 09, second branch at Hugulapata on 1st June 09 and 3rd branch at Deegipur on 18th June 09. On the technology front, we have tried out several innovative and cost effective measures.

Last but not the least we are persistently investing our time and energy on building an excellent work culture. We want to project ourselves as an organization where customer centricity, high degree of urgency and commitment, high level of integrity, transparency and humanity are valued the most.

Activities Undertaken

Survey: - Before we actually operationalise our branches we have had a thorough survey of the area under operation and our branch selection criteria is very much in tune with the IFMR Trust remote rural (ITRR) criteria. Survey work to identify potential branch location is an ongoing process for us and one of our managers is continually monitoring the same. To identify potential branch locations, initially the three adjacent blocks i.e. Rangeilunda, Chatrapur & Kukudakhandi were extensively surveyed. A total of 400 villages were surveyed from which 40 villages were short listed as potential branch locations. Most of these villages are centrally located to all other neighbouring service area villages and as the panchayat offices are in these villages, a natural flow of public is continuous. We learnt a lot about the locality, its people, their way of life and their needs. It was really a lifetime experience to talk to them, mingle with them and share their feelings.

Recruitment & Training: - An organisation always grows with as its employees grow. We don't just think of providing financial services to our target population but also to help them in ways that would maximise their well-being and lifestyle. That was the reason

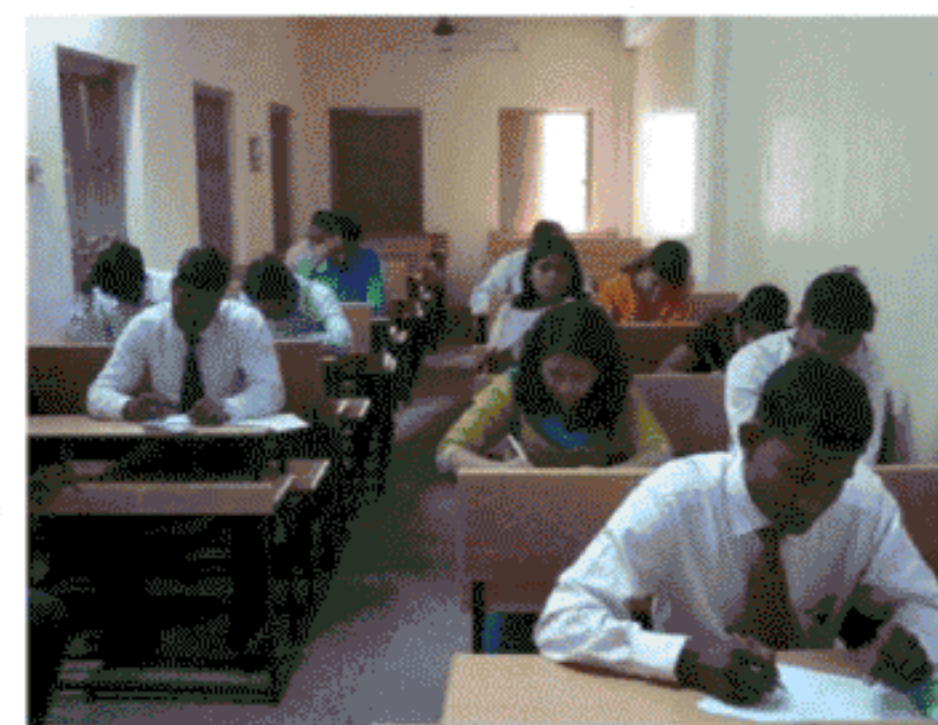


Presentation of Dhanei KGFS is being given to the candidates

why we decided to go ahead

with tapping resources which in the rural areas. So we recruited our second batch of WMs only from the villages

by giving Dhanei KGFS the required publicity. We believe that local WMs would have a better understanding of the



A recruitment test is in progress

people and they could serve them in a more natural way, which would result in better customer satisfaction.

In addition, their fresh background will help us in their doctination to our unique culture. Dhanei has already conducted seven rounds of recruitment; One for infra and admin, one for jewel appraiser, one for HR, IT & Training and four for WMs and ARM. The result of these rigorous drives has provided Dhanei with 12 WMs and one for each of the other posts. The initial response was overwhelming. We received 100+ CVs for WMs and 200+ CVs for HR, IT & Training. Now Dhanei has 31 members in its family and still growing by the day.

In order to align and equip our employees to achieve our mission, we put them through rigorous training spanning over 40 days. At the start of training, they are being to Pudhuaaru KGFS in Thanjavur to familiarise with the culture of the organisation. This ensured that our replication would be a carbon copy of the pilot project.

Before and after the Thanjavur stay, they are put through extensive training regime in Berhampur on our mission, guiding



A group discussion is in progress

principles, product and processes and CMS and CBS.

Infrastructure: -

The buildings of Ganjam district have a peculiar architecture. These are long and narrow like a train bogie but without windows! Adjacent buildings share a common wall. Some buildings are so narrow that one cannot sleep across the width of the building! Thus, finding a suitable



A typical row house

building for locating our

branch was a major challenge. We could manage three locations in Badakusasthali, Hugulapatta and Deegipur villages. For the rest of the branches we are in look out for land to construct our own branches. Unfortunately, the lands available are also narrow and long like the houses! We are trying our best to overcome this challenge.

The First Branch : -

The first branch of Dhanei KGFS was launched on 4th of Apr 09 in Badakusasthali village. The response of the villagers was very encouraging.

Before the branch opening, many Public Orientation Meetings (POM) and door-to-door campaign were conducted to apprise our customers of our model and products.



Badakushastali Branch



Badakushastali Branch being inaugurated



The first customer is being handed over the Smart Card by the CEO in Badakushastali Branch



Anil SG, CEO ITHC is launching the System in Badakushastali Branch

The Second Branch : -The second branch was opened on 1 Jun 09 in Hugulapatta village. The response from the village is very encouraging and in fact, the customers queued up to get themselves enrolled! Some customers were also found waiting for the branch to open for them to avoid the rush!



Hugulapatta Branch



Hugulapatta Branch being inaugurated by a Customer and the youngest WM, Shri Rabin Raut



The system is up and running in Hugulapatta Branch

FGDs : - To understand way of life, needs, problems and the specific requirements of our target population we conducted Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) in our proposed branch locations. It was a great success as it widened the approach with which we need to enter. In many cases, some specific requirements gave us directions to come up with new products or customize our existing products to suit their individual aspirations.



One of the Focused Group Discussions (FGD) is in progress

Learnings

1. Branch Opening: - Our branch in Hugulapatta was ready for around 20 days before we inaugurated it. The reason for the delay was to set the Customer Management System (CMS) in order. Meanwhile, our WMs were conducting POMs in full swing. The customers had lot of expectations from us. With the delay in opening of the branch, this resulted the customers getting impatient and they were started having doubt whether we were serious about our job. Thus, we decided to open the branch on 1st Jun 09. The response has been overwhelming.

Learning: Do not delay operationalisation of a branch once it is ready.

2. CMS Preparedness: - CMS being a comprehensive database for assessing the state of well being of an

individual, it necessitates collection of a large number of data. Our customers are not used to someone asking for so many data especially slightly sensitive one like the quantity of gold held in a household. Some customers started complaining and few in fact refused to enroll. They thought that we could share this data with the Income Tax department! Therefore, we started explaining the necessity of collecting the data which was nothing but to check how their financial well being is improving.

Learning: One has to explain the necessity of a particular procedure to the rural customers for their acceptance. The rural customers can't be taken for granted.

WM's Thoughts

Arun Kumar Nayak In my last experience I have worked for 7 years in NGO & MFI in Microfinance sector. No doubt I have experienced or gained a lot regarding Microfinance but now in Dhanei KGFS in each moment &



each day I got to learn some new thing. The system of working in this organization is very good & there is no feeling between senior & junior. Every body is very much supportive in work. So, I am confident that our organization will support me in

building a bright career.

And last but not least I would like to say something that "I am very much glad & proud that I'm a part of this organisation".

Unique Experience in the Field

On the 22nd of Apr '09 at around 4:20 p.m., I Pramod Pattanayak, Wealth Manager, was in Dhoba Sahi, Badakushasthali conducting a house survey. While I was returning to the branch, few individuals enquired about



our organisation. When I started to explain the same, one of them started abusing me saying that we are here to dupe them and we are unnecessarily bothering them by asking too many questions. He also threatened me to do bodily harm if we don't go away from the village. I listened to him patiently and did not react. After few minutes when he stopped, I started to explain our mission, products and the requirement of collecting various data of our customers. Listening to this, the other persons of the group appreciated our effort and were pleased that we are in their village. To my utter surprise and relief, the abusive person also turned around and profusely apologised for his misdemeanor.

Technology Corner

Technology has been a challenge in the remote rural areas of India and Ganjam District is no exception. Despite all odds, we tried to overcome these challenges by adopting some innovative measures. For all these measures, costing was kept in mind at all the time. We will bring out one issue per each edition of the Quarterly Magazine.

Energy Solution: With change in process and introduction of CMS, the forms were required to be printed in the branch unlike the earlier case where pre-printed forms were used. Thus, a printer was required to be available in the branches all the time. However, a printer consumes more electrical power and thus, at the time of power failure the present UPS was unable to take the load. If we upgrade the UPS capacity to match the additional power requirement of the printer, we needed a 3 kVA UPS with the cost skyrocketing to Rs 65,000.00. In order to reduce the cost, we looked for a low energy consuming laser printer and after evaluating a large number of printers, we selected a printer of Xerox (Model 3117) which consume about 350 watt of electrical power, which is only 25% of the earlier printer.

With this model, we needed only a 1400 VA printer (SuKam make), which costs approximately Rs 29,000.00.

A snap shot of the branch as on 12th July 09

- Total Number of Customers Enrolled: 445
- Number of Personal Accident Insurances given out : 78
- Number of Jewel Loans : 21
- Number of JLG Loans : 40
- Number of Retailers Loans: 5

Ganjam Special : Kewda - "Nature's Gift to Ganjam"

Kewda or Screw Pine (*Pandanus Faciculais*) belongs to the family Pandanaceae is a shrub whose male flowers are distilled for the production of kewda essence. Kewda is grown wild. However, due to its commercial potential, now systematic cultivation of the plant is being undertaken. The bush grows 15 ft in height and flowers after 4 to 5 years of planting and reaches maximum yield after 15 years. It flowers throughout the year but maximum yield take place between June to September. Kewda leaves are also used for making huts, fibres for making ropes etc. The rate of each flower increased from 75 paise in 1990 to about 6 rupees in 2008. About 90% of India's total production of this perfume is obtained from Ganjam district of Orissa where over 30 million flowers are distilled annually. 'Kewda attar' and 'kewda water', the most popular preparations of kewda perfume, are mostly used in flavouring tobacco and food. Increasing popularity of kewda perfumes in Arab countries has given impetus to this industry. A small group of people from northern India who organise collection of flowers and carry out their distillation, using traditionally old methods and equipment, has monopolized the industry. Introduction of superior strains, adoption of improved techniques of distillation, and better organisation of collection system are some of the measures necessary to increase the production and to improve the quality of kewda perfume.

Visit: Dr. Nachiket Mor

16th of June was the day the whole Dhanei team was waiting for with a lot of eager. It was the day when our



esteemed chairman Dr. Nachiket Mor along with President Bindu Ananth and CEO Anil SG visited our geography. The team was keen to present all the good



works it had done so far, all the obstacles came on its way and the way forward. Surely with an expectation of all value adding guidance and insightful comments on the journey so far and going ahead. During the brief visit he did not disappoint any one of us. In fact we got more



than what we expected, be it during the midnight presentation at Hotel Swosti Palm Resorts or the discussion during scorching hot afternoon at Tanganapalli village (our proposed branch location). His every word

forced us to think differently, think out of box and finding out a way when the conventional thinkers percept there is a roadblock. Disputing the conventional rural finance knowledge he brought in the aspect of wealth management, the real missing link between



rural/microfinance wisdom and what the rural customer really want. He pushed the bar high enough by assigning us the responsibility of reducing the poverty of Ganjam district and improving the quality of life of people of Ganjam district. During his short visit from 16th to 18th June he visited to all the branches we have and



inaugurated our Deegipur branch. He gave the opportunity to individual members of our team to interact with him with absolute openness and freedom.

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