

Kashi Prerna cafes inspire women to be self-reliant

Lalita always wanted to contribute to her family financially but could not find the way ahead. "I would spend my days at home, caught up in household chores and rarely stepping outside. My world was limited to taking care of my family, and I had no opportunity at my disposal," Lalita recalls.

She then joined a voluntary organization in Varanasi, Maa Sheetla Self-Help Group,



which transformed her life completely.

Lalita is now a dedicated worker at Prerna Cafe operating in the office of Varanasi Development Authority (VDA), one of the 125 Kashi Prerna Cafes being operated by Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission in Varanasi. "After joining Prerna Cafe, my life changed. Now, I earn Rs 20,000-30,000 a month. We no longer face financial struggles. But it's not just about the money; working here has in-



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stilled in me a sense of independence and confidence that I never had before," she said.

These cafes not only provide employment opportunities to over 700 women from SHGs but have also emerged as a vital source of nutritious and hygienic food to students and the community.

Kashi Prerna Cafes, strategically located in high-traffic areas, emphasize hygiene and nutrition, and offer millet-based and protein-rich dishes like ragi burgers and millet pizza.

Mission director, UPSRLM, Deepa Ranjan said, "The impact of this initiative goes beyond providing food.

Women employed at the cafes are earning good money, significantly enhancing their economic independence and self-esteem. The mission also contributes to the promotion of 'Shri Anna', aligning with govt's efforts to reintroduce millets into the daily diet as a nutritious and sustainable food option."

Aarti, another worker at Kashi Prerna Cafe said, "Before joining this initiative, I often felt dependent on others for financial support, but now, I feel truly 'atmanirbhar' (self-reliant). I no longer have to ask anyone for help with expenses, and it has brought a new sense of confidence and pride."