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A revolution that brightened their lives

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All 32 houses in Bommalapura village of H.D. Kote taluk have solar lamps

H.D. KOTE (MYSORE DISTRICT): While the entire State is facing acute power shortage, Bommalapura, a remote village in the backward taluk of H.D. Kote in Mysore district, is getting uninterrupted power supply. But, it is not the Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CHESCORP), which is supplying power to this village.

The houses of the tribal families in the village are lit up by solar lamps thanks to a joint initiative by Cauvery Kalpataru Grameena Bank (CKGB) and the Solar Electric Light Company (SELCO), a Bangalore-based venture.

Bommalapura, which is about 10 km from the taluk headquarters, is located deep in the forest and does not have basic infrastructure. The residents were dependent on kerosene and oil lamps. They had to go to H.D. Kote once every two days, to recharge their cellphones by paying Rs. 5.

But now all 32 houses in the village boast two solar lamps each and the residents have each been given an adapter so that they can recharge their phones.

When leader Shambu Gowda (40) of the village, who learnt about solar lamps, approached CKGB to find out whether the facility could be extended to his village, the bank decided to take the initiative to provide lighting to the village under the Joint Liability Groups Project (JLGP). It then approached SELCO for technical assistance. Three self-help groups were formed in the village and a loan of Rs. 1 lakh each was sanctioned under the JLGP.

According to manager of the CKGB S.N. Raghavendra, the bank extended a loan at the rate of 11 per cent spread over five years.

“It took one month to complete the process of providing them solar lamps. One can see the smiles on the faces of the residents now. On the recommendation of Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank, a delegation from Canada recently visited the village and appreciated the joint effort,” he said.

Project officer, SELCO, B.P. Prasanna said that the project was designed to suit local needs and the income level of the residents. “If they switch on one lamp the solar power will last eight hours and if they switch on both it will last four hours.”

Mr. Shambu Gowda said, “There is no question of power failure in the village now.”

Enthused by the success of Bommalapura, CKGB has identified three more tribal haadis, including Sonali haadi in the taluk, where the facility would be extended, said Mr. Raghavendra.