

ENERGY AND ENTREPRENEURS - INDIA

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Weaver Radhuli Devi

In the remote village Diguli, three hours walk from the nearest road, Mrs Radhuli Devi uses PV to light her weaving activities in the evenings.

Radhuli Devi earns income for her family by weaving for a nearby NGO. She is the only one in the household with a regular income, although her brother sometimes does some labouring or collects pine resin. There is always enough food. Most important for the family livelihood is their land - they have a small plot on which they grow rice (enough for one month) pulses and soy beans (enough for three months if the monkeys do not eat them).

The family has recently invested in Radhuli's weaving activities: they have made a roof over a small area next to the house where the weaving loom is now placed. Having the loom next to the house allows Radhuli to work flexibly between household activities and working on the land.

The family bought a heavily subsidised solar home system a few years ago. Since the weaving loom is placed next

to the house, Radhuli can also weave in the evenings by the light of a PV-powered lamp. She can only do this until a thread breaks, which happens once every few hours, because tying the correct threads together requires more light. The electricity grid is being extended to the village, and will probably be available in less than a year's time. However, this is not of

interest to Radhuli Devi, or most of her fellow villagers, as they expect that electricity bills will be expensive, and the supply unreliable.

There is a diesel-powered flour mill in the village, but Radhuli Devi's family only makes use of it if she is ill. She normally spends one to one and a half hours per day grinding flour.



Photo: Kooijman



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Tailor Kumar Ram

In the village of Majkali, located at a road junction in the northern hill state Uttarakhand, India, there are five tailors with their own workshops, and a tailoring workshop set up for women by a local NGO. One of the tailors in the village is Mr Kumar Ram. Kumar Ram has two sewing machines and a press in his premises. Customers bring cloth for him to sew. Both sewing machines are manually or foot operat-

ed. One of them has been operational for forty years. The tailor does not use electricity, not even for lighting. He does not want to have a commercial electricity connection because it would be too expensive. Besides, he would still use his old sewing machines even if he did have electricity, as these are trustworthy machines. He shows off a fifty-year-old machine that belonged to his father which is still in use.