

## Featured Project: Women's Empowerment, TOS Odisha Region

One of the main focuses of the International TOS over the past several years has been Women's Empowerment. The TOS Odisha Region leads the way in these endeavours. Recognition of the work being done has resulted in financial assistance from other TOS countries, namely TS/TOS Italy and the TOS in New Zealand. We applaud the initiative of the TOS Odisha Region and the support given by TOS Italy and TOS New Zealand. The women's empowerment program in the Odisha Region offers several avenues for training for women to better their livelihood and another to help protect young girls and women from violence.



### 1. Financial assistance for higher education:

The Mahabharat Group of TOS, Odisha Region has started a project which is a five-year financial assistance programme to poor but meritorious young women for pursuing higher education in college. The annual assistance is Rs.10,000 per student. Currently 25 students are benefiting from this programme. A sum of Rs.125,000 per annum (Rs.5,000 per student) has been donated by the members as scholarships in memory of the donors' near and dear ones. The TS and TOS Italy have kindly extended a matching grant which will ensure the recipients of Rs.10,000 per year for the five-year period. The Mahabharat Group expresses its gratitude to the members of TS & TOS Italy for their generous assistance in this worthwhile project. The scholarships were awarded as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference of TOS Odisha by its Chief Guest, Mr Abasar Beuria, IFS (Rtd.),

former ambassador of India in the presence of TOS India National Secretary, Br. K. Sivaprasad.



## 2. Skill development programme:

### - Tailoring training unit

As one of its important women's empowerment activities, Mahabharat Group has also been operating a skill development programme for the girls/women from slums to help them become economically self-reliant. During the last two years, under the initiative, they have already trained 40 underprivileged persons of Nilamadhab Basti and 30 of Somnath Basti. Currently, the mobile tailoring training programme is operating in the slums of Bhimtangi, Bhubaneswar, where 10 ladies have been trained and the training of 10 more is underway. The duration of the training for each batch of 10 women is three months and is closely monitored by TOS members.

This year Rs.20,000 was received from the National TOS in Varanasi to help fund the programme. In addition, since August 2018, they have taken a franchise from Usha International Ltd under their "Silai School" programme for the tailoring training course. On successful completion of the course, the learners receive a certificate from Usha International Ltd. TOS New Zealand has also given financial assistance for this initiative. We are grateful to TOS New Zealand for their generosity.

## 3. Masseur Training Unit:

Masseur training has been organised for a batch of ten slum ladies in Bhimtangi with a view to helping them earn extra income for their livelihood.

4. Self-defence Karate training for girls in slums:



Karate training courses are being conducted by the TOS Mahabharat Group, Odisha Region for girls in slum areas, orphanages and schools. This assumes special significance in the context of the recently reported spurt in crime against girls, particularly minors.

