

From selling bangles to writing letters

DHANBAD: If one thinks "Sarva Siksha Abhiyan" is just another non-starter government programme, one should have a rethink as 53-year-old illiterate Hakiman Bibi showed how the universal education programme could be turned to her advantage.

Bibi, who still sells bangles to eke out for a living, picked up a pen at 45, learning the basics under the programme at Baliapur in Dhanbad district.

"She was a fast learner and used to be first among her batch that started learning in 1994 under the programme," says Mohammad Sarfuddin, a sociology teacher at BBM College, Baliapur.

"She completed the course in just three years and started to teach the basics to the women in rural areas thereafter, adds Sarfuddin, also a member of the district Saksharta Abhiyan committee.

People in the village now look for Bibi from getting lessons to filling up bank deposits or withdrawal slips.

Bibi said she wanted to be a woman of letters so that she would not be cheated by moneylenders, grocers and bangle dealers.

This is not the end of the road for Bibi, for she is one among the seven women from Jharkhand and Bihar reportedly selected for a telefilm which would depict their success stories as part of an awareness campaign. — **PTI**

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