

Chetna Cycle Rally

“An innovative initiative of Maharashtra Gramin Bank for Financial Literacy and Financial Inclusion”

“Harghar Tiranga”: Bank account in every household

Maharashtra Gramin Bank organized a 604 km Chetna Cycle Rally from Aurangabad to Umarga from 20th July to 31st July 2022 on the occasion of the Thirteenth Anniversary of Maharashtra Gramin Bank and the “Amrit Mahotsav of Independence”. In this cycle rally, Bank Chairman Shri. Milind Gharad himself participated in cycling while 14 other officers also participated in the rally.

Flag off of cycle rally was conducted on 20th July at 6.30 am at the hands of District Magistrate of Aurangabad Shri. Sunil Chavan & General Manager of NABARD Shri. M J Shrinivasulu at Head Office of Maharashtra Gramin Bank.

After traveling to Aurangabad, Jalna, Beed, Parbhani, Nanded, Latur districts, this rally reached to Umarga, Osmanabad District which is aspirational special focus district & priority for banking sector. The main objective of the rally was to promote financial inclusion with digital banking through Financial & Digital Literacy awareness camps to identify the Banking needs of Marathwada Region, an underdeveloped region where bank majorly operates. During this rally total of 103 financial literacy camps were conducted while 30 branches were visited through 604 km journey.

Less Speed More Agility:

In the words of Maharashtra Gramin Bank Chairman Shri. Milind Gharad: “in order to understand the Banking needs of Marathwada region, there is a need for more and more visits to the villagers, farmers and customers. If we go with speed, our vision becomes narrow; we miss lot of important things around us. If speed is less, vision gets wider and thus we have been able understand the scope and constraints by communicating about half a million customers in twelve days during this rally.”

Warm welcome:

Bank Chairman along high ranking officials of the bank, Bank officers riding bicycles themselves, as a result of this innovative initiative, villagers, people's representatives, women of savings groups, Students and teachers of the school welcomed the rally by themselves. Garments, garlands, shawls, lazim pathaks, floral arrangements were welcome part of the rally. The cycle rally was also welcomed with digital banners placed at various places on the route of rally. The female sisters of the savings group welcomed the bank officials in the rally with waves of hands. It is immensely felt that there is sense of trust among the banking customers of Maharashtra Gramin Bank which ultimately becomes true to our bank's motto of “Saath Vishvasachi vat Vikasachi”.

Financial Inclusion and Economic Literacy Camps:

103 Financial & Digital Literacy camps were conducted in villages during this cycle rally. In these camps, awareness was disseminated among customers about importance of Savings, SHGs/JLGs, proper use of loans, moneylender exemption, Jan Dhan accounts, Prime Minister's Social Security Schemes and Life & general Insurance, Atal pension Scheme, timely loan repayment, digital and paperless banking, loan scheme of Gramin Bank including crop loan, home loan, loan scheme for micro and small industries, personal loan scheme. Messages were presented in a simple and easy language. A beautiful example of customer education and training has come forward on this occasion. About one thousand people had directly participated in each gathering.

Before the conclusion of each meeting, the people were given an opportunity to raise their concerns and thoughts & also suggestions about services and as a result of this people were directly provided proper answers by the Chairman of the Bank himself, and wherever possible, the problems were solved on the spot. As a result, Maharashtra Gramin Bank has created a new chapter in Banking and Financial Literacy.

Mahagramin Baliraja Taranhar Yojana:

Bank had started an innovative scheme namely “Mahagramin Baliraja Taranhar Yojana” from January 1, 2022 to provide crop loans to NPA farmers by providing interest concessions. The term of this scheme was expired on 30th June 2022 but on this occasion the deadline has been extended till 30th September 2022 for the farmers who are eligible for this scheme but are still deprived of the loan. The cycle rally has created strong message about freedom from Savkars. The chairman of Bank himself welcomed the farmers who availed the benefits of this scheme. They were also gifted with fruit trees. Around 10,000 mango, guava, custard apple, pomegranate, tamarind, amla tree saplings have been distributed during cycle rally. This conveys the message that bank-customer relationship develops like a fruit tree and after its cultivation, the fruits of development are obtained.

Kisan Credit Card : Crop Loan Disbursement :

Maharashtra Gramin Bank has disbursed crop loans at a faster pace this year. Around 225,000 farmers have been provided loans of about Rs.1900.00 Crore till now.

As such, Gramin Bank is at forefront in Maharashtra as highest crop loan disbursing Bank. A bicycle rally was aimed at renewing crop loans for some farmers and providing them with crop loans in this year's harvest season. According to this, around 25 thousand farmers have been given Rs. 30.00 Crore worth of crops loans during the cycle rally. Due to regularization of crop loans, the information about benefits of subsidy in the form of interest subsidy scheme of the Government of Maharashtra and the Government of India was given to all customers in these programs during cycle rally.

Enthusiastic response of self-help group women:

An important feature of the Chetna Cycle Rally was the participation of thousands of women of hundreds of savings self help groups. A large number of women from the savings group participated in the meeting at the place. This participation was not only for enhancing beauty but it is a very hopeful picture that tells us that we also want to participate in economic development and we want to develop the economy of our family and village and ultimately for our mother nation. Loan approval letters were distributed to women self help groups and disabled savings groups. During this rally, about one thousand self Help Groups were provided sanction letters about Rs. 15.00 Crore. Savings habits, financial discipline, credit discipline, importance of savings accounts, five points of savings help groups were presented in the form of plays/drama for the women of self help groups. The women of the SHGs also presented an exhibition of their produced goods & products during this rally. The women were enthusiastically participated and asked various queries and guidance, interacted with the senior officers of the bank, recorded the program in their mobile phones, came up on stage to take photos with the Chairman of bank and also asked for mobile numbers for guidance.

Enjoyable education in schools and financial digital banking camps:

During this rally interaction with the school children, visits to potential customers of the bank were made. In these twelve days, around ten thousand school children were informed about use of ATM, made awareness about precautions to be taken while using digital banking products, RBI financial awareness messages through street plays also during this bicycle rally awareness about environment and global warming was made by planting trees in schools. Messages about the importance of cycling and health as well as conservation of the environment were also given to this generation.

Social Responsibility Undertakings:

As per the requirement of the village school, the cycle rally donated some amount to some schools and some village panchayats as social responsibility. Amount was donated for recreation of village benches, for the village cleanliness campaign, for distribution of school stationery to the needy students in the school which is one of the innovations in the implementation of social responsibility initiatives through this cycle rally.

Organization of Resident Staff Officer Meeting:

Although the cyclists were tired after cycling for at least 50 KMs a day, the Chairman of the bank, who was leading the officials, held meetings with the customers and bank officials at the place of stay each day and informed Bank officials about the concerns/ suggestions raised by the customers in the area during the rally day and discussed and provided solutions about how to make the bank's facilities more customer-centric. In these twelve days, about five hundred bank employees were sensitized to more customer centricity through this initiative.

Bank Officials Become Cyclists:

The officers who participated in this cycle rally were between ages of 30 to 60 years; they had no experience of riding a cycle and were not professional and dedicated cyclists but to promote banking facility in rural areas & with the goal of Financial Literacy and Financial Inclusion, all of them have formed an excellent team and have traveled 604 km in the sun, against the wind, ups and downs, hills, bad roads and muddy roads. This has given a different dimension to banking in Marathwada. This bicycle rally has become a milestone that has been organized to strengthen the relationship between bank customers and employees. Every day members of this rally had been working from 6.30 am to 10.30 pm during this period.

Publicity and Media Support:

This cycle rally has got a lot of publicity in newspapers, news channels, YouTube news, and Social media. Thousands of photos, news, and news about Maharashtra Gramin Bank's Chetna Cycle Rally can be found on Google. Banking, Social Banking, Rural Banking, Financial Literacy, Financial Inclusion, this innovative initiative is truly appreciated by the women of the Self Help Groups, common people, customers of the Bank and also officials involved in Financial sectors.

Closing Ceremony at Umarga:

The finale of this cycle rally was deliberately organized at Umarga. As per the directive of Government of India to provide banking services to the backward sections of the society, a closing ceremony was held at Umarga which is in special focused aspirational district of Osmanabad. Activities like waving of national tricolor flag. National love and economic development and economic progress are two sides of the same coin. A broad message that the country that has both of these will definitely become a superpower is clearly coming out through the cycle rally. Poet Dushyantkumar's famous poem lines are recalled on this occasion **"Sirf Hungama Khada Karana Mera Maksad Nahi, Koshish Ye Hai Ki Ye Surat Badnani Chahiye!"** On the occasion of Chetna Cycle Rally, Maharashtra Gramin Bank created an atmosphere on the theme of Rural Economy and Financial Literacy, Financial Inclusion. This program did not come from any senior level instead Shri. Milind Gharad, Chairman of the bank, realized somewhere inside the mind of that the banking and financial inclusion program in Marathwada should be effective and giving dimension and he organized this initiative by taking all possible efforts. It is hoped that through this activity, the counter distance between the bank and its customers will be minimized and a strong relationship will be strengthened. The new era of rural banking in Marathwada will get a new direction on this occasion.