

# Smart village to open new chapter

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

**Jamshedpur, Aug. 2:** Kantashol panchayat in East Singhbhum's Dumaria block, around 70km from Jamshedpur, will soon get a library full of Hindi and tribal literature under the chief minister's smart village scheme.

Besides Kantashol, a panchayat each in Burmu (Ranchi), Petarwar (Bokaro), Churchu (Hazaribagh) and Ghaghra (Gumla) blocks has been selected as the pilot project under the smart village scheme that aims to introduce technologies for renewable energy, agriculture, education, micro-enterprise, waste management, environment protec-

tion, health services, agriculture and irrigation.

For Kantashol panchayat, city-based NGO Kalamandir has signed an MoU with the District Rural Development Authority under the rural development department, to implement the programme in sectors such as micro-enterprise, skills and jobs, solid waste management and off-farm livelihoods.

"The first thing in the pipeline is a library for the panchayat. We want to fill it with Hindi and Santhali books for villagers to read. This is something that Kalamandir will do separately. We selected this village as it is in one of the most backward districts of

East Singhbhum. We are also planning to set up smart learning centres under this project," said Amitava Ghosh, vice-president of Kalamandir.

Ghosh said the village would be made a plastic-free zone and its residents would be trained on waste segregation.

"Developing micro-enterprises will be one of the major areas of work for us. An enterprise on rice crispies was a huge hit in the district and so we will look for similar businesses that are sustainable," Ghosh added.

Bundu panchayat in Petarwar block has identified education, health and agriculture as the core areas. "Education is a problem in our villages.

English is taught from Class VI. Moreover, there is hardly any scope for use of modern technology in education such as digital classrooms, which help students understand concepts better," Bundu panchayat mukhiya Ajay Singh said.

A health centre and pathology services such as ECG and ultra sonography are also on the anvil because the absence of such facilities compels patients to go to Bokaro city, about 40km away from Bundu.

Villagers of these panchayats are excited and hope the scheme will help their villages stand in good stead.

"Who wouldn't be happy with better livelihood? Villages cannot be cities but we

too want to be self-sustainable. We consider ourselves lucky to have been selected under the smart village scheme," said Budhua Kumar, a resident of Bhagudih village in Kantashol panchayat.

Bangalore-based Sun Moksha will provide sustainable energy solutions to these villages, while NGOs and panchayati raj institutions have been entrusted with the task to implement the programme.

"Sun Moksha's vision of smart village revolves around moving the villagers up the value chain to improve their socio-economic status leading to 'Gram Swaraj'," said Ashok Das, founder and CEO of Sun Moksha. **The Telegraph**