

## Vermicomposting – an alternative source of income for women



Two Self Help Groups namely, Star SHG and Sanis SHG have been successfully involved in vermicomposting activities in Shivapuram Gram Panchayat (GP) of Rangat Block in the North and Middle Andaman district. Their initiative has shown that women can play a vital role in vermicomposting that would not only increase crop yield but also treat solid waste, while contributing to visual cleanliness of the villages.

Composting is done using dry and wet cow dung, dry grass, earthworms, etc.

Notably, vermicomposting is a great way to improve the flavour, yield and overall health of plants and vegetables. The finished product from the vermicomposting process is called vermicast (worm castings) which is important for soil amendment, increasing the

biodiversity and fertility of the soil. Healthy soil results in the growth of nutritious food and healthy plants.

The activity is in keeping with the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II, the world's largest behavioural change programme with a focus on scalable and commercially viable solutions to make the sanitation economy attractive to private businesses. The programme will strive to generate revenue through Solid Waste Management activities.

Vermicomposting enterprise is a relatively concept that is spreading rapidly among women in rural areas. As vermicomposting is relatively less expensive in terms of cost and more intensive in terms of labour, it provides them reasonably good employment with less investment.

Vermicomposting is an excellent technique for recycling food waste. It is a complete plant nutrient that is environmentally friendly and affordable while improving soil health and productivity.