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## Women self-help groups to help check practice

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At a time when the entire northern region is choking under smog due to the ongoing paddy harvesting season, Guru Gobind Singh Refinery (GGSR) has been motivating farmers in the vicinity villages not to burn the paddy straw.

The refinery formed five women self-help groups and provided them new high powered tractors and happy seeders on Tuesday. The women self-help groups would provide crop sowing services through happy seeders to the village farmers, which would mulch the crop residue and help restricting stubble burning. This would serve the dual purpose of generating income for the rural women as well as provide resolution for stubble management.

The women self-help groups from four villages in Punjab viz. Pakka Kalan, Kamalu, Jajjal, Bangi Ruldu and Asir from Haryana, were handed over tractors and happy seeders yesterday at Phullokhari village by top officials from HMEL. Last year 10 women self-help

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groups from Tarkhanwala village, Raman, Malkana, Sekhu, Bagha, Giana, Kanakwal, Phullokhari (Punjab) and Hassu and Naurang (Haryana) were provided tractors and happy seeders, which are now earning decent income by renting these equipment. The groups are regularly monitored and guided by the HMEL CSR teams.

These groups are supported by the district administration of the respective state, which shall act as a custodian, in order to regulate the working of the groups, while the group members shall contribute the cost of a new trolley unit out of their own pockets. The groups would charge the government approved rate for giving the implements on rent to other farmers interest-

ed in management of paddy straw, which includes their own tractor, driver, fuel and machinery. All the group members shall be provided training regarding the operations of happy seeder.

Speaking on the occasion, Krishan Tuteja, VP, operations, HMEL, appealed to the farmers to refrain from burning the paddy stubble, rather take advantage of the equipment provided by GGSR for in-situ management of crop residue through happy seeder, which also enhances the productivity of the soil.

The group members pledged not to burn the paddy straw and appreciated the support of the refinery for providing them with a sustainable source of income and helping in saving the environment.