

independence

# The winged race

*WOMEN ON WINGS* IS A JOB CREATING BUSINESS MODEL FOR RURAL WOMEN IN INDIA. DRIVEN BY COMPASSION AND A FEEL FOR BUSINESS, THEY LINK WOMEN'S STRENGTHS WITH KNOWLEDGE. **SATARUPA BOSE ROY** REPORTS



India as one of the growing economies in the world is busy shaping the urban life. The lower middle class or the rural people of India (700-800 million people) are still in abject poverty. They live in small villages and in clusters and remain unnoticed and far away from city civilisations. Women are the most disadvantageous people in the rural population. The major reason behind this utter poverty is lack of access to productive assets and financial resources. High levels of illiteracy add to that.

In this Women edition Indiyana feels proud to introduce the name of the Netherlands based organisation, Women on Wings, which works for the rural women in India. They create jobs for rural Indian women and are committed to make meso enterprise development, which eventually generates income and enable women to improve their living conditions. Their slogan "A woman with a job spends her income on education for her children". With a compassionate heart and an in-depth business expertise, they add wings of independence to these rural women. Ellen and Maria are the founding directors of the organisation and their vision is to create one million jobs by the year 2018.

In a candid talk with Indiyana, Maria van der Heijden, one of the founder directors shared her feelings and dreams about rural Indian women. "There's a yawning gap between western women like us and an rural Indian women. By creating jobs we can support these women. Give them their identity. Women on Wings aims to encourage economic activity in order to provide women with opportunities. Our twenty-years of work experience have taught us how to advise businesses pragmatically and creatively in order to take advantage of new opportunities. When we first

