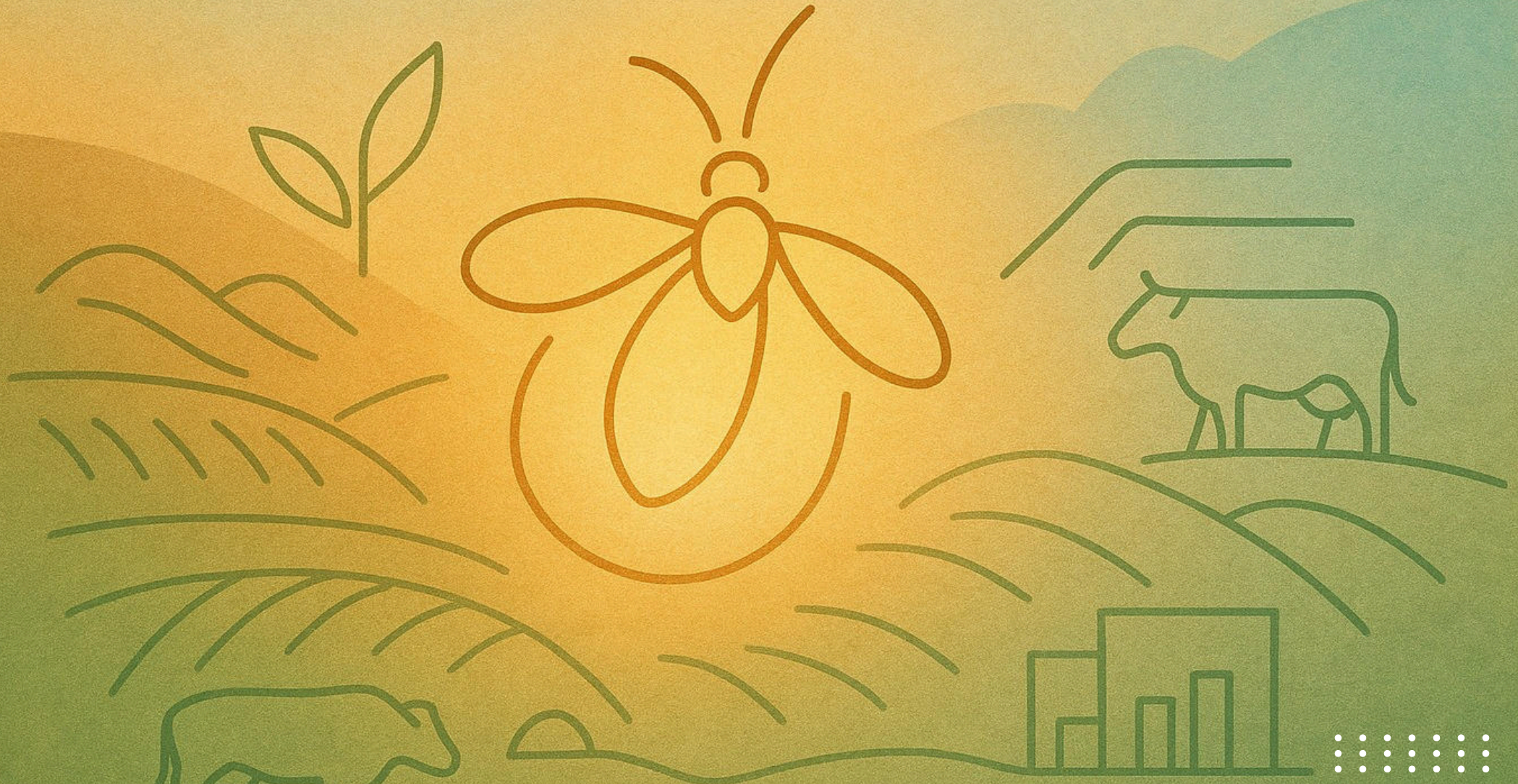




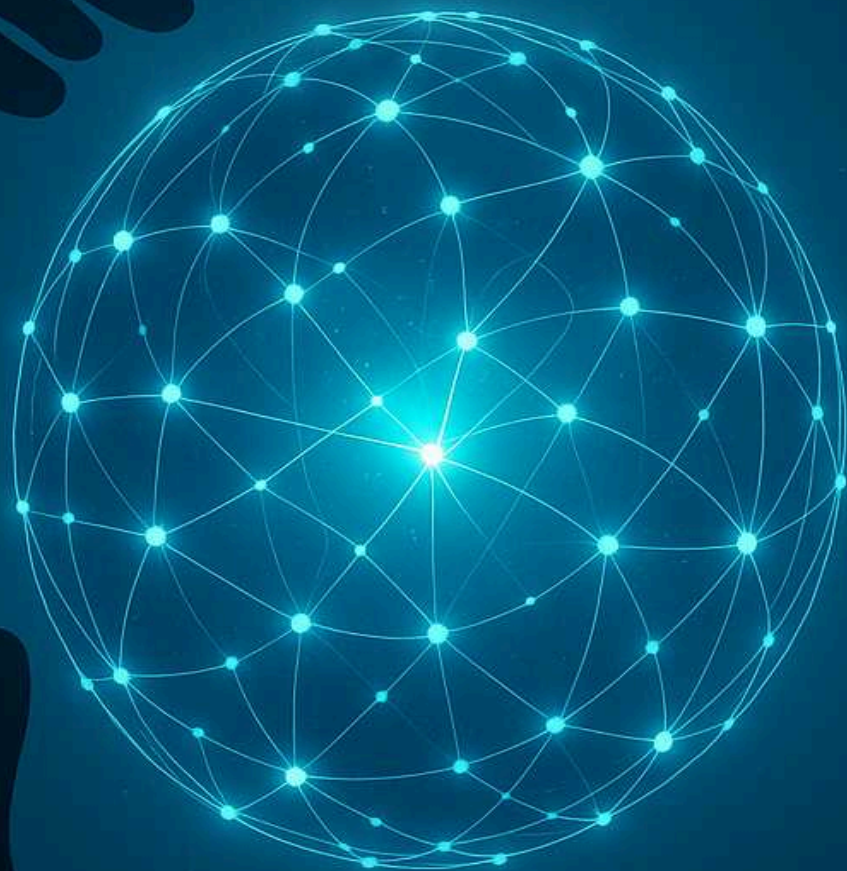
# JONAKI, 2025

*One Year- Many Stories*



**Annual Report of Sayanant Group 2024-2025**







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Parag Baruah  
CEO of the Group

## Forward

People | Purpose | Process | Prosperity

It is my privilege to present the Annual Report 2024-25 of the Sayanant Group - a year that reflects our steadfast commitment to our goal of 'accelerating sustainable and inclusive growth through partnerships'. This year, our journey was guided by four cornerstones: People (building capable, motivated teams across all entities of the Group), Purpose (aligning everyone with our shared vision), Process (strengthening systems to deliver excellence), Prosperity (creating tangible, lasting improvements in rural livelihoods)

### *People*

The people who serve across the different entities of the Sayanant Group are our greatest asset in bringing transformative change to rural communities. Last year, we invested significantly in building a shared understanding of our vision and mission, ensuring that every professional understands the "why" behind their work and the direction of our collective journey. We rolled out the Organisational Development Process for the Group, fostering leadership and inclusion in decision-making through the creation of the Management Group (MG) and Operations Group (OG). These forums are empowering our teams to shape the future of our organisation from within.

### *Purpose*

Our purpose remains clean & unwavering : 'to accelerate sustainable and inclusive growth through partnerships'. This year, we formally articulated our Vision 2030 - a commitment to transform the lives of 1 million rural households by harnessing the collective strength of all Sayanant Group entities.



### *Process*

Excellence in our work depends on strong processes. In 2024-25, we focused on strengthening our engagement with clients and communities to ensure measurable, high-quality results. As institution building and capacity development are among our core areas, we organised a series of training programmes to enhance the skills, leadership, and sectoral expertise of our professional teams. Our processes now integrate both 'field insights' and 'digital tools' enabling us to track impact more effectively and respond to challenges in real time.

### *Prosperity*

The impact of our work is best measured by the prosperity it brings to rural communities. This year, Poultry Producer Companies in Bihar supported by SDS - collectively achieved a turnover of over ₹11 crore. Our focus now is to ensure these businesses remain sustainable beyond project periods through regular review, mentoring, and market support. In Tripura, we have worked with 12,000 fish farmers, using digital tools to track technical adoption and production practices at the field level. Our Research & Study team has generated high-quality insights for clients, particularly in the field of climate-smart livelihoods in the Northeast, and supported multiple organisations in monitoring and evaluation. Meanwhile, Ayanant Ventures Pvt. Ltd. has continued to provide valuable market linkage support, ensuring that rural producers can access fair and profitable markets.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all four organisations (Sesta Development Services, Sayanant Development Services Pvt. Ltd., Ayanant Ventures Pvt. Ltd, and Sayanant Development Foundation) of the Sayanant Group for their dedication, expertise, and meaningful contributions to rural development. Our shared vision is bold, our foundation is strong, and with unity of purpose, we will continue to drive sustainable change in the years ahead.



## Stakeholder Engagement Framework



Multilateral Organization

**1**



State Government

**10**



Central Government

**6**



National NGOs

**15**



CSR Initiatives

**2**



Private Organization

**2**



International Organization

**3**

## Cumulative Outreach



**13**

States

**93**

Farmer  
Producing  
Organization  
(FPCs)

**99%**

successful  
community-owned  
FPO promotions

More than

**60000**

households have  
been directly  
affected by the  
formation of PGs,  
VO, CLF and FPCs



Agriculture  
21440

+



Poultry  
7138

+



Fishery  
31072

+



Livestock  
2980

=

**62,630**



People impacted directly  
sustainably improving lives  
and livelihoods

PG's:



**2,389**

PG member reached

**47,040**



IBCB: **1,21,783**

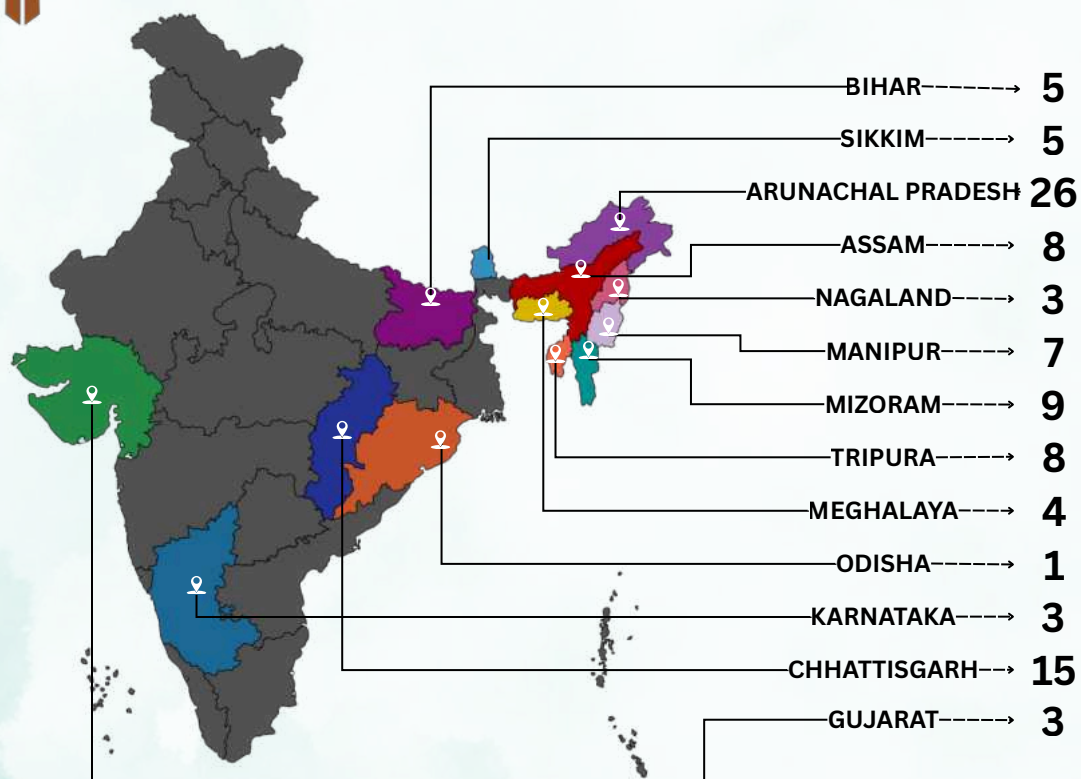
People impacted through  
community institutions and  
capacity building

More than **1.8 lakh** people have been  
directly and indirectly impacted by the operations  
and activities of SDS





## STATE WISE DISTRICTS COVERED



## OUTREACH



State → **13**



District → **97**



Block → **298**



Village → **3452**



Family/HH → **184413**

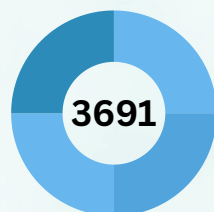


PGs → **2389**

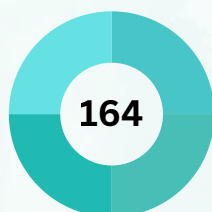


FPCs → **93**

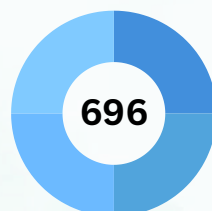
## CAPACITY BUILDING OF CRP/STAFF



CRP



FPC Staff



Staff of client



Sayanant Group is a group of four social enterprises that are dedicated towards advancing sustainable and equitable development. Rooted in the belief that communities should have the power to shape their own futures, we design and deliver innovative, inclusive, and community-owned solutions that drive meaningful impact. Our work spans partnerships with governments, multilateral agencies, private entities, and grassroots organizations, ensuring that solutions are not only visionary but also practical and scalable through our dynamic verticals. From strengthening institutions and building capacity, to fostering entrepreneurship and supporting smallholder enterprises, Sayanant Group is committed to creating ecosystems that enable sustainable livelihoods and lasting social change.

The distinct entities that work together toward this vision are: Sesta Development Services, Sayanant Development Services Pvt. Ltd., Ayanat Ventures Pvt. Ltd, and Sayanant Development Foundation. Each of these arms plays a unique role in addressing different dimensions of development while remaining united in their mission to create inclusive and sustainable impact. Together, they form a holistic ecosystem that connects policy, practice, innovation, and community action to drive meaningful change at scale.





## **Building Ecosystem**



**Building Ecosystem for sustainable and Inclusive Growth**



## **Consulting**



**Accelerating Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Through Partnerships**



## **Agribusiness Marketing**



**Growing Communities, Growing Business, Growing Future**



## **Nurturing Innovation**



**Nurturing innovation of communities for the communities**



## Sesta Development Services (SDS)

Established in 2013 as a registered trust, Sesta Development Services (SDS) has grown from being a consultancy firm into a catalyst and ecosystem enabler. While rooted in development consulting and capacity building, SDS today focuses on creating an environment where organizations, farmers, and entrepreneurs can thrive.

We work across sectors to foster partnerships, mobilize financial linkages, strengthen institutions, and build market awareness, ensuring that communities and enterprises are not only supported but empowered to sustain themselves. With a diverse clientele — from Central and State governments, multilateral agencies, and private entities to CSR initiatives and NGOs — SDS combines technical expertise with a holistic ecosystem approach that drives sustainable growth and equitable development.

At its core, SDS is more than a consultancy; it is a partner in building resilient ecosystems that unlock opportunities, nurture innovation, and transform lives.





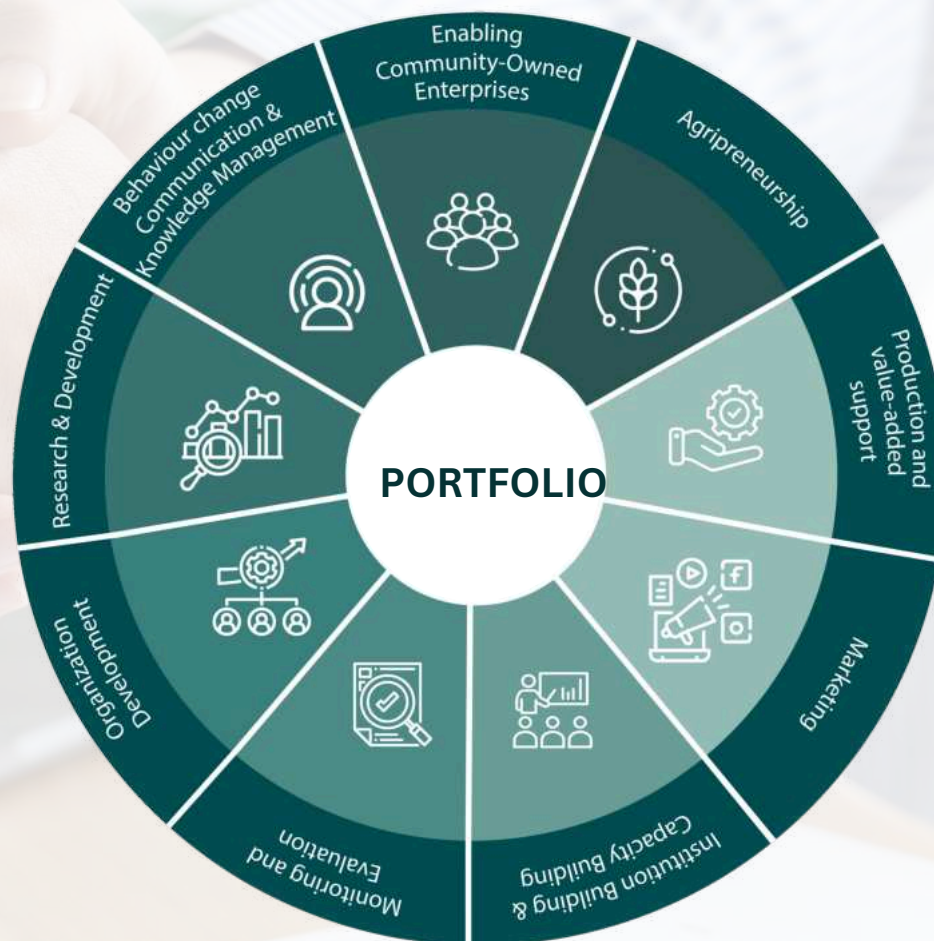


## Sayanant Development Services Pvt. Ltd. (SDSPL)

Sayanant Development Services Pvt. Ltd. (SDSPL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Sesta Development Services (SDS), delivers strategic support services designed to strengthen institutions, empower communities, and unlock opportunities for underprivileged sections of society. By combining knowledge, partnerships, and innovation, SDSPL creates sustainable solutions that drive inclusive development.

Our work focuses on five thematic areas: strengthening value chains, fostering agri-entrepreneurship, promoting local economic development through Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), enhancing institution building and capacity development, and conducting applied research and studies. Together, these efforts enable communities, farmers, and entrepreneurs to build resilience and thrive in changing socio-economic landscapes.

At its core, SDSPL is committed to gender-inclusive development, ensuring women's active leadership and decision-making in livelihoods and enterprise. More than a service provider, the organization positions itself as an ecosystem enabler—building networks, linking markets, and delivering solutions that are sustainable, scalable, and impactful.





## Ayanant Ventures Pvt. Ltd. (AVPL)

Ayanant Ventures Pvt Ltd. stands as a visionary social enterprise born in 2018. Our goal is to cultivate a supportive ecosystem that empowers small-scale entrepreneurs and enterprises paving the way for sustainable livelihood opportunities.

At Ayanant, our unwavering commitment revolves around transforming the agricultural landscape, particularly in the realm of market development for agricultural and allied products. Our approach hinges on forging strategic partnerships with Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Community Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Government entities. Together, we embark on a journey to bolster the resilience of small-scale producers by elevating their production and marketing systems. To achieve this, we provide them with access to premium quality inputs, cutting-edge technology, robust information management systems, and unwavering market support. Our vision is clear- to pave the way for a brighter future for smallholder farmers, enabling them to not only elevate their agricultural practices but also to thrive within dynamic markets. Ayanant's journey is marked by Empowerment, Sustainability and Transformation. We are dedicated to making a profound and lasting difference in the lives of those we serve, one step at a time.

### OUR SERVICES

**Packaging Materials**  
Pouches & Containers



**Design Support**  
Customized Packaging  
Designs



**Compliance Support**  
FSSAI, eNAM, GEM, APEDA  
ONDC, GST



**Agri Trading**  
Quality Agri Products (B2B)



**Packaging Machinery**  
Sealers & Price Tag  
Printers







## Sayanant Development Foundation (SDF)

The Sayanant Development Foundation (SDF) empowers small and marginal farmers in Northeast India by enhancing skills, strengthening institutions, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. With a strong focus on women and marginalized households, SDF nurtures leadership and confidence, enabling communities to drive their own socio-economic transformation. Its interventions are closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in poverty reduction, food security, gender equality, and climate resilience.

At the core of its approach, SDF seeks to transform farmers into agri-preneurs—individuals who see agriculture not just as production but as an entrepreneurial opportunity. Through collectivization in Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), access to markets and resources, and capacity-building initiatives, SDF addresses key challenges such as low profitability, lack of infrastructure, and declining youth participation in farming.

Guided by its 4Cs strategy—Cognitive Transformation, Collectivization, Collaboration, and Climate Smart practices—SDF positions itself as a change-maker in rural development. By building resilient institutions, fostering innovation, and promoting sustainable agriculture, SDF works towards an inclusive future where farmers, especially women and youth, can thrive as entrepreneurs and leaders of change.





# Climate Smart Agriculture Overview



## CSA Study Coverage



State cover Includes 8 NE states



Crops Studies Focused on 18 different crops for analysis



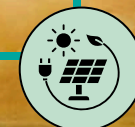
Lead Organization SDS leads the CSA Study initiatives



Collaboration Partner NEDFi collaborates on the CSA

## Climate - Smart Practices Promoted by SDS in Assam

Solar Energy Intregation (Chaiduar, Darrangi , Siroseuji , Swarang , Ujjwal).



Foxtail Millet Cultivation ( Pub Chaiduar , Bihali , Daranhi FPC ).



SRI Adoption ( Ujjwal FPC , Kalaigaon .



Submergent & Drought - Tolerant Rics HYV CR Dhan varieties ( Darrangi , Rodali Star FPCs.



Adoption of flood - tolerant rice varieties ( By 12 FPC's out of 13 FPC's of SDS in Assam







# FARMING THE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## Navigating Climate Smart Agriculture

Dr. Monashree Sarma Bora



Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) is vital for strengthening food security and sustainability in Northeast India, a region highly vulnerable to erratic climate events, from unpredictable rainfall and floods to droughts and rising temperatures. This puts the region's rainfed, smallholder farming sector at serious risk. Sesta Development Services (SDS) is actively promoting resilience and agricultural innovation in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

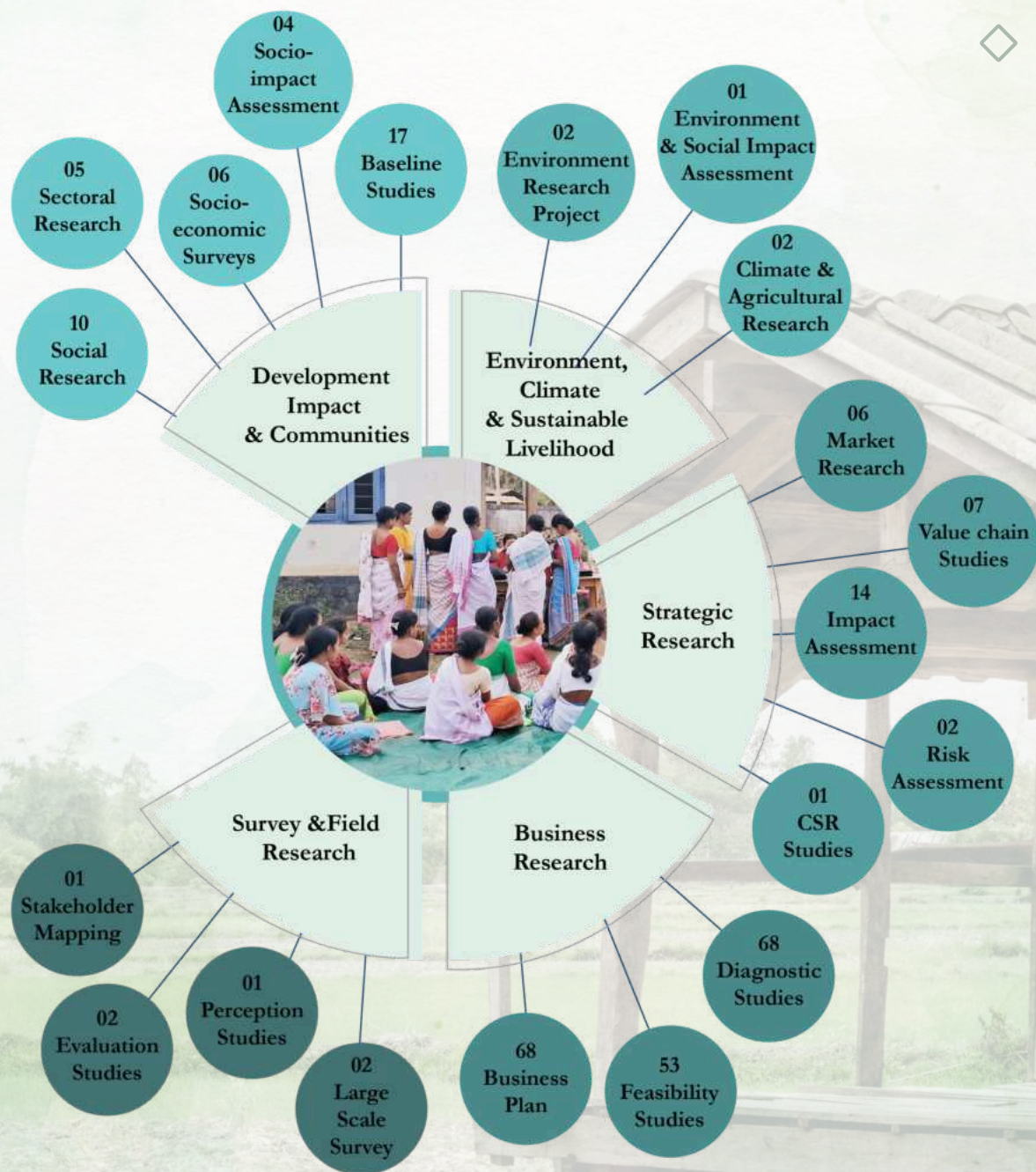
Since joining SDS, I have been involved in the NEDFi CSA study, focused on the climate-smart agricultural market assessment of 18 selected crops across eight northeastern states. Our field visits highlighted farmers' climate-induced challenges, especially with rising temperatures that have escalated pest and disease pressures, affecting yields and livelihoods. The iconic Muga silk industry in Assam is also threatened by higher temperatures that disrupt silkworm seed viability and severely impact the entire value chain, which is reflected in the surge of cocoon prices.

To address these challenges, SDS promotes farmer-driven, climate-resilient solutions. Introduction of high-yielding, flood- and drought-tolerant rice varieties across most SDS-supported Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) is buffering crops against climate shocks. The implementation of System of Rice Intensification (SRI) and crop diversification, including the adoption of sustainable alternatives like foxtail millet by FPCs, strengthens resilience and nutritional security.

SDS also empowers FPCs with green post-harvest solutions, deploying solar bubble dryers, pulverizers, and dehydrators to reduce losses, preserve produce, and enhance value addition. Joint efforts with SELCO are bringing Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) technologies to FPCs such as Siroseuji, Darangi, and Swarang, cutting costs and improving sustainability.

Throughout all these community-anchored and technology-driven initiatives, SDS integrates traditional agricultural wisdom with contemporary, climate-adaptive strategies. My work with SDS, deeply rooted in community engagement, underscores the vital role of farmer-led, climate-smart initiatives for regional food security, rural livelihoods, and environmental stewardship. SDS remains committed to advancing this transformative journey toward a resilient and sustainable agricultural future for the region.

“**SDS is committed to empowering Northeast India's farmers with climate-smart solutions, blending tradition and innovation to build resilient, sustainable rural livelihoods.**”







## SEEING BEYOND

### Research as a Lens for Development

Anukanksha Mohanty,  
Farhan Ahmed



In the development sector, the field is the primary site of action where change unfolds. It is not a fixed physical space but a fluid concept shaped by lived realities, sometimes a remote village near Rangjuli, a conflict-affected zone in Manipur, or a hilltop village in Mizoram. Beyond geography, the field is defined by people's stories, aspirations, constraints, and resilience.

Research in development is more than a tool, it is a lens to uncover patterns, social dynamics, and power structures that lie beneath the surface. It offers a systematic approach to uncover the layered realities of the field, allowing practitioners to move beyond mere generalisation and simplification by collecting evidence, analysing patterns and translating this raw data into actionable insights. When development is guided by research, it becomes more inclusive and impactful.

Research begins even before a project takes shape. Pre-project research helps understand socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and existing gaps, ensuring interventions are relevant and rooted in local realities. Post-project research, on the other hand, reflects on what worked, what didn't, and why, while documenting community voices, unintended impacts, and sustainability.

Sayanant Development Services (SDS) exemplifies this approach through its research across Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Bihar. These studies demonstrate SDS's ability to adapt to diverse socio-cultural and economic contexts. By bridging the gap between data and development, SDS provides critical insights for clients and captures subtle grassroots shifts. This evidence-driven approach strengthens strategies and ensures that development remains inclusive and responsive. In a world where challenges like climate change, migration, unemployment, and gender inequality are constantly evolving, development cannot rely on assumptions or one-size-fits-all solutions. Progress begins with a nuanced understanding of context and research makes this possible. It allows us to ask the right questions, uncover hidden realities, and move from vague generalisations to actionable insights. Grounded in evidence and inquiry, research transforms development practice, enabling us to truly 'see beyond'.

**“For SDS, the field is more than a place, it is the stories, struggles, and resilience that guide inclusive and responsive development.”**



## Strengthening FPOs and FIGs Across Regions

61 CLFs  
Strengthened



**Community-  
Based  
Organisation**



2,500 Producer  
Groups Supported

**64**



**FPO**

Farmer producer  
organizations

**600**



**FIGs**

Farmer in  
interest groups





## GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER

### The Role of Organizational Development in Strengthening Community-Based Organizations

Madhurjya Madhob Borah



Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) remain pivotal to inclusive development, serving as vehicles for social, economic, and livelihood transformation. While they may originate through government schemes, NGOs, donor programs, or local leadership, their long-term sustainability depends on community ownership—active participation in governance, decision-making, and accountability. Without this, even well-resourced institutions risk dependency and eventual decline.

Under DAY-NRLM, over 3.5 lakh Primary Level Federations (PLFs)/Village Organizations (VOs) and 31,781 Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) have been promoted nationally, while Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) are being scaled through the Central Sector Scheme for 10,000 FPOs, PMMSY, and PM-MKSSY. However, institutional effectiveness requires structured systems, leadership accountability, and member-driven ownership.

Recognizing this, SDS applies an Organizational Development (OD) approach to strengthen community institutions. As a Technical Support Agency under the Institution Building and Capacity Building (IBCB) framework, SDS works with 61 CLFs and 2,500 Producer Groups (PGs) promoted by TRLM in Tripura, institutionalizing governance, management, and operational systems. Beyond Tripura, SDS extends OD support to 64 FPOs and nearly 600 Farmers' Interest Groups (FIGs) across the Northeast, Odisha, and Bihar, enabling efficiency, transparency, and scalability.

A notable intervention has been the revival of 22 Primary Fishery Cooperatives in Tripura with OD support and financial assistance from NAFED under PMMSY—restoring long-standing but dormant institutions into active, self-sustaining enterprises.

Through investment in organizational development, SDS ensures grassroots institutions evolve into resilient, accountable, and member-owned entities capable of driving sustainable change. By embedding strong governance, financial systems, and leadership capacity, these CBOs are positioned not just as beneficiaries of development but as architects of community-led transformation.

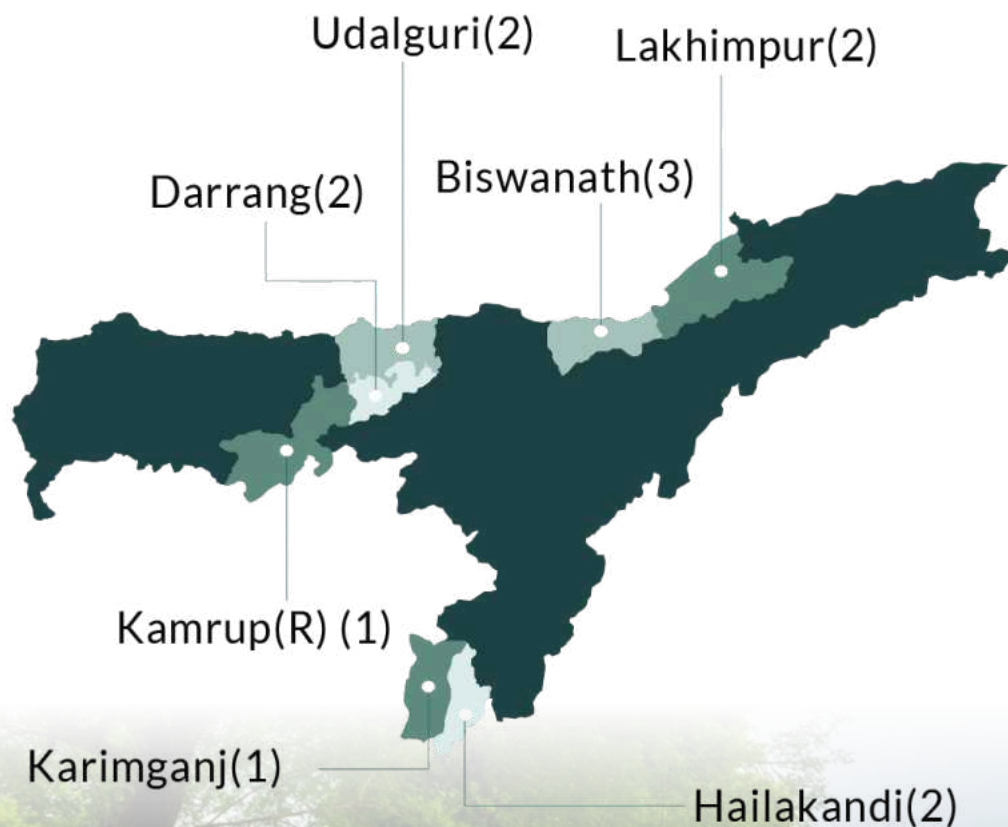
“**Strong institutions are not built by resources alone but by the ownership and participation of the very communities they serve. Our work with SDS is about embedding this ownership, so CBOs evolve into resilient, self-sustaining engines of change.**”





## Overview of FPO Promotion in Assam

### District wise distribution



### Members Mobilized





## WHERE MANY HANDS CULTIVATE ONE DREAM:

### FPOs Powering Agricultural Growth in Assam

Priya Thiing,  
Saunak Jyoti Bhuyan



In Assam's agrarian landscape, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) are emerging as pivotal institutional mechanisms, enabling small and marginal farmers to transition from fragmented subsistence to collective enterprise. Under the Central Sector Scheme for the Promotion of 10,000 FPOs, thirteen entities across seven districts have mobilised 4,857 shareholders, including 3,548 women, contributing ₹48.57 lakh in equity. Matching Equity Grants of ₹26.39 lakh with one FPO securing ₹6.19 lakh—have reinforced organisational credibility.

Economic outcomes are tangible. In FY 2024-25, combined turnover reached ₹2.22 crore, averaging ₹17.12 lakh per FPO, with Maa Chandka FPC surpassing ₹41 lakh. Digital integration has advanced market access through ONDC, eNAM, and GeM, while MoUs with Big Basket and Flipkart exemplify structured private-sector linkages. Compliance adoption has been systematised: all FPOs operate with Tally Prime, GST and FSSAI registration, while 11 have seed licenses, with others pursuing fertiliser and pesticide accreditation.

Convergence with state and central schemes has facilitated tangible assets: tractors, threshers, and cage wheels under VLFMB; agro-processing units through PMFME and PMEGP; and a notable Agro-Voltaic Unit in Hailakandi under the India Hub-IIT Guwahati initiative. Product diversification is evident in ventures such as mustard oil extraction, spice branding under "Jyotirupa Masala," and certified seed marketing through "Dhanjit."

Capacity-building has been integral. Trainings in climate-resilient paddy, mushroom cultivation, and scientific nurseries, alongside exposure visits, have strengthened technical competencies. Women-led enterprises, notably Darrangi Women FPC, have received formal recognition under the Aspirational District Programme, highlighting gendered leadership in agrarian entrepreneurship.

Institutional scaffolding provided by SFAC, NAFED, NCDC, NABARD, and NFDB has been decisive facilitating equity infusion, managerial support, compliance enablement, and exhibition participation. Their interventions have fostered an enabling ecosystem, anchoring FPOs within broader policy and market architectures.

Collective action has thus generated more than economic returns. It has cultivated leadership, confidence, and institutional resilience, transforming farming into both a livelihood strategy and a participatory movement for rural regeneration.

“FPO in Assam aim to empower farmers through collective enterprise, value addition, and market linkage, with a future focused on sustainability, digital integration, and inclusive rural growth.”



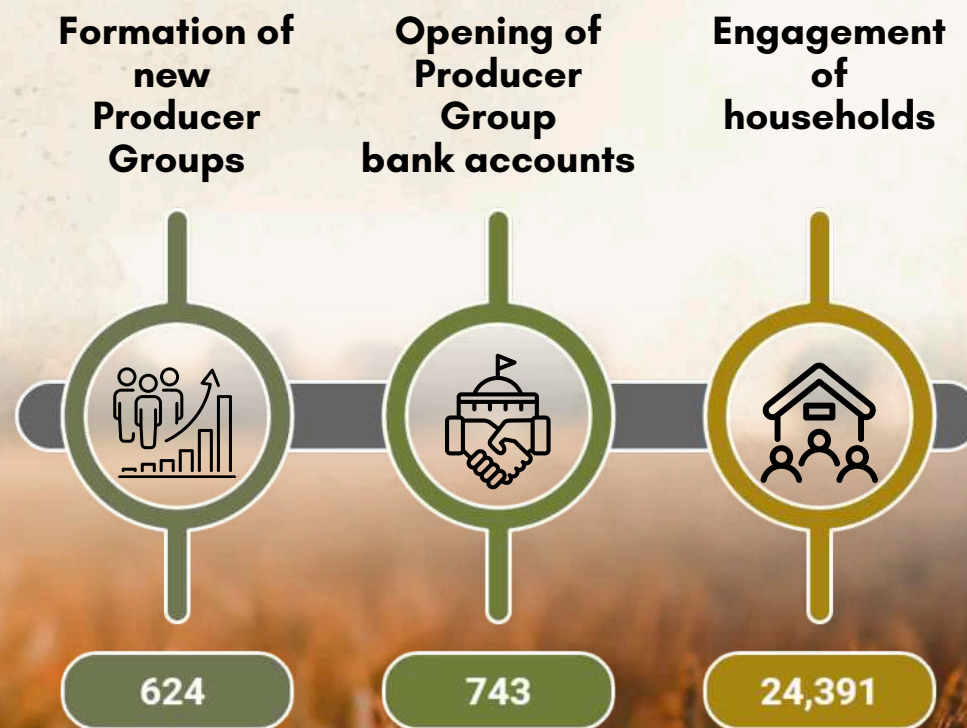


# Strengthening Grassroots Institutions: PG Formation and Capacity Building 2024-25

## State-Level Master Trainings with Participants



## Block-Level Trainings for Cadres







## Communities that Lead:

### The Power of Institution Building and Capacity Development in Tripura

Arpita Roy,  
Subrata Datta



Under the TRESP project, SDS is driving institutional strengthening by facilitating the formation and promotion of community-owned organizations comprising smallholder farmers, marginalized households, and SHG women. The core mandate is to build sustainable, self-reliant, and enterprise-ready grassroots institutions that act as platforms for collective action, financial inclusion, and livelihood diversification. Working in close coordination with TRLM the Project Implementation Unit and community leadership structures, SDS supports the development of Producer Groups (PGs), Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).

The scale of outreach in 2024-25 reflects significant progress: 624 new PGs formed across agriculture, fisheries, and animal husbandry; 743 PG bank accounts operationalized; and 24,391 households mobilized this financial year. These milestones highlight the increasing participation of rural women in leadership and financial governance, with many transitioning from members to decision-makers.

Capacity building remains the backbone of this transformation. SDS and SeSTA have conducted 2,000+ training sessions aligned with a structured three-year training calendar. State-level master training has enhanced competencies in PG finance, governance, and business planning, while block-level cadre training has created a pool of skilled grassroots leaders. Over 1,300 women are now actively leading group activities, supported by cadres trained in finance, governance, and enterprise planning.

The impact is evident: enhanced financial literacy, transparent record-keeping, and improved access to banking have strengthened institutional credibility. Technical training in goatery, poultry, fisheries, and agriculture have improved productivity, reduced losses, and raised household incomes. Importantly, many trained women have emerged as Community Resource Persons mentors guiding peers toward self-reliance.

Through TRESP, SDS is not merely forming groups it is building resilient, women-led institutions that transform rural households into stakeholders of their own development. This is institution building as a people's movement, embedding leadership, governance, and sustainability at the grassroots.

“**TRESP is not just a project it's a people's movement. And we, at SDS, are proud to walk every step with the communities of Tripura building strength, together.**”







## ORGANIZING POTENTIAL

### Unlocking livelihood through Poultry Entrepreneurship

R. Lalchhuanchhuaha



It is evident that many envision to be an entrepreneur, however the roadblocks in the path derails their dreams. Self-esteem and willpower are not enough to overcome these blocks, what is required is systematic support, strategy and blueprints. SDS in collaboration with MzSRLM, a long term partner are providing the dreamers with such support. One such example is the Chhimphai Women's Poultry Producers Company Ltd. (CWPCCL). While it is a registered organisation, CWPCCL had limited market visibility, low institutional trust, and significant production-level challenges. Farmers were experiencing recurring losses due to high bird mortality, unreliable power supply, and inadequate awareness of vaccination and biosecurity protocols. Poultry farming as a livelihood option had lost credibility, making the task of rebuilding systems and confidence a priority.

Initial assessments revealed critical gaps. Frequent power outages made chick survival difficult, leading to heavy losses for households. Through facilitation by SDS and technical collaboration with SELCO Foundation, 19 families adopted subsidized solar inverters, stabilizing rearing conditions and restoring farmer confidence.

The winter months further exposed systemic vulnerabilities, with sharp increases in mortality. Investigations identified unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, weak biosecurity, and irregular vaccination schedules as underlying causes. Immediate interventions were implemented, including veterinary treatment drives and the alignment of vaccination schedules with state-level programmes. These measures significantly reduced mortality, improving resilience at the farm level.

Alongside production issues, market visibility remained limited. To address this, CWPCCL, with SDS guidance, introduced value addition through branded poultry products. The launch of Chhimphai Frozen Meat marked a milestone as Mizoram's first FPC-led frozen poultry line. Supported by licensing, trademark registration, and modern packaging, the brand quickly established linkages with multiple retailers, creating consistent demand and stronger market positioning.

This initiative has redefined CWPCCL's trajectory. What was once a collective struggling for identity has transformed into a model FPC that integrates disease management, farmer capacity building, and market-oriented value addition. The journey reflects how collective action and institution building can unlock sustainable poultry-based livelihoods and enhance rural incomes.

“**Sustainable livelihoods are built not only by overcoming production challenges but by strengthening institutions that empower farmers to become resilient entrepreneurs.**”





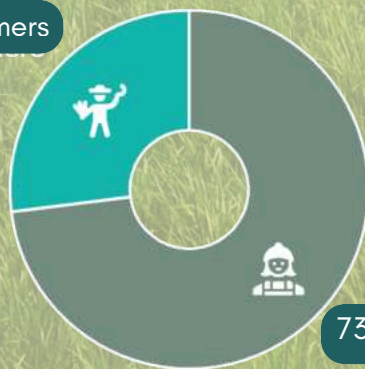
## Leadership Within the Organization

Leading efforts in key  
Organisational area  
women



## Gender Distribution of Mobilized Farmers

27% male farmers



73% female farmers

## Participation Percentage







# BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING EQUITY

## Advancing Gender-Inclusive Development

Sonali Boro,  
Menoka Bordoloi



As women researchers, our paths have been shaped not only by intellectual pursuits but also by the negotiation of ingrained socio-cultural norms. Gendered restrictions on mobility and the stigmatization of working alongside men functioned as structural barriers, often internalized as normative constraints. But within both of us, we retrospect a force quietly, insistently, and resiliently, that refused to be contained by anyone's definition of what women can or cannot do.

This resilience became a turning point. We made a conscious decision not just to challenge the "glass ceiling," but to break it whenever we encountered it. Over time, the fear of judgment, failure, or stepping outside prescribed roles began to fade. We no longer saw ourselves as hesitant women, but as individuals grounded in self-belief and supported by organizations like SDS that recognize women's potential at every stage.

At SDS, we have witnessed an important shift in gender equality. Progress is not about simply adding women into existing structures, but about empowering them to influence, design, and lead. Token gestures, like inviting women into the room, are not enough. SDS ensures that women's voices actively shape agendas, policies, and outcomes.

This vision is reflected in tangible results. Over the past year, 4,857 farmers joined hands with SDS, with women making up 3,548 of them 73 %. Even more striking, 70.1 % of board positions within these collectives are now held by women, driving decisions in finance, procurement, and compliance. Women are no longer passive participants, but leaders ensuring strategies reflect their realities and aspirations. Within SDS itself, gender mainstreaming is a daily practice. Today, 25.7 percent of women lead across research, program design, implementation, finance, monitoring, and communications.

Our story is one of resilience, determination, and hope for ourselves and for the many women who will continue walking beyond the "glass ceiling."

“As women navigating both field realities and institutional spaces, our journey has been about moving from observing barriers to actively reshaping them.”





## Tracking Growth: A Year in Numbers

(SDS)

45.36%

(SDS)

A Part of Sayanant Group

60.04%

ayanant

73.00%

2024-2025

Growth Percentage

31.45%

24.42%

27.00%

2023-2024



# SUSTAINING GROWTH WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

## The Foundation of Trust and Sustainability

Amit Saha



At SDS, we recognise that accounts are not merely instruments of financial record-keeping but the foundational architecture that sustains institutional integrity, transparency, and long-term resilience. Present in every sphere of life, from households maintaining expenditure logs to community collectives managing shared resources, accounts represent the universal discipline through which responsibility and foresight are operationalised.

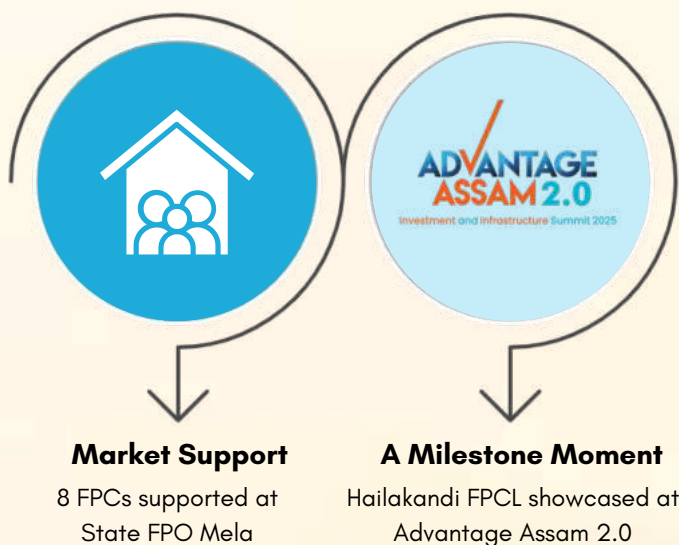
In a development context, the function of accounts extends far beyond compliance. It is through meticulous accounting practices that we ensure fiscal prudence, resource optimisation, and accountability to multiple stakeholders. Accounts serve as the empirical evidence of our commitments, demonstrating that investments are strategically channelled toward advancing livelihoods, strengthening social enterprises, and enabling inclusive growth.

For SDS, robust accounting systems are integral to organisational governance. They underpin informed decision-making, enhance programme efficiency, and safeguard the trust placed in us by communities, partners, and donors alike. More than a technical function, accounts constitute a strategic instrument of legitimacy, ensuring that the translation of resources into social impact is both measurable and credible.

In essence, accounts are omnipresent, shaping not only the way resources are managed but also how institutions build trust, credibility, and sustainability. At SDS, they remain central to our mission of transforming resources into enduring social value.

“**Finance is not just numbers; it is the architecture that enables accountability, progress, and social transformation.**”





# BRIDGING MARKETS AND ASPIRATIONS

## Enabling Pro-Poor Market Linkages

Through our experiences working on various agricultural projects, we realized that farmers often do not lack technical knowledge; they have been practicing farming their entire lives and understand their crops deeply. What they truly struggle with is selling their produce. Even when they manage to sell, they often receive poor prices, which directly affects their livelihoods. This challenge stems from weak connections between farmers and markets, highlighting why market linkages are so critical and crucial. Recognizing this gap, we developed a shared interest in agricultural marketing and committed ourselves to addressing this pressing need.

We at Sesta Development Services (SDS) have been committed to empowering rural communities through sustainable development initiatives. With a strong focus on agriculture, livelihoods, and enterprise promotion, SDS works to build capacities, improve market access, and create opportunities for smallholder farmers and rural households. Its approach emphasizes community participation and long-term resilience, ensuring that interventions address real grassroots needs while fostering inclusive growth. This vision resonated deeply with us, aligning perfectly with our drive to support farmers and transform rural markets.

Ayanant Ventures Private Limited (AVPL), a subsidiary of Sesta Development Services, was established to connect smallholder farmers with fair markets, enabling sustainable livelihoods and resilient rural economies. In 2024–25, AVPL saw a 150% income growth, reaching ₹44.81 lakhs with a 12% gross margin, and partnered with 30 Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), impacting over 12,000 farmers.



Under its flagship brand NE LOCALS, AVPL promoted 22+ indigenous products. Mustard oil led sales with 22,000 litres sold by June, 2025. By appointing FPCs as official distributors, AVPL fostered local entrepreneurship and deeper value chain ownership.

AVPL supported farmers with product packaging, compliance, and market readiness, while training them on branding, food safety, and marketing. Its core belief remains: as farmers grow, so does AVPL.

With 32 tie-ups and one NE LOCALS retail outlet at Dharapur, Guwahati and B2B tie-ups across seven Northeastern states and South India, AVPL also conducted consulting projects, including a major feasibility study across four districts.

Key initiatives included 30 branding and FoSCoS training sessions, compliance training for 40 BoDs under TRLM, and support for 8 FPCs at the State FPO Mela in Tripura.

In FY 2025-26, AVPL targets ₹2 crore in revenue through retail, bulk trade, and consulting, along with plans to open new stores, onboard five new crops, and digitize inventory systems.

AVPL in association with SDS isn't just building markets—it's nurturing rural aspirations. By placing farmers at the center, it's enabling growth that is inclusive, sustainable, and rooted in community ownership.



**Our journey with AVPL is rooted in one belief—that when farmers thrive, communities prosper. By strengthening market linkages, we are not just selling produce, but nurturing dignity, resilience, and rural aspirations.**



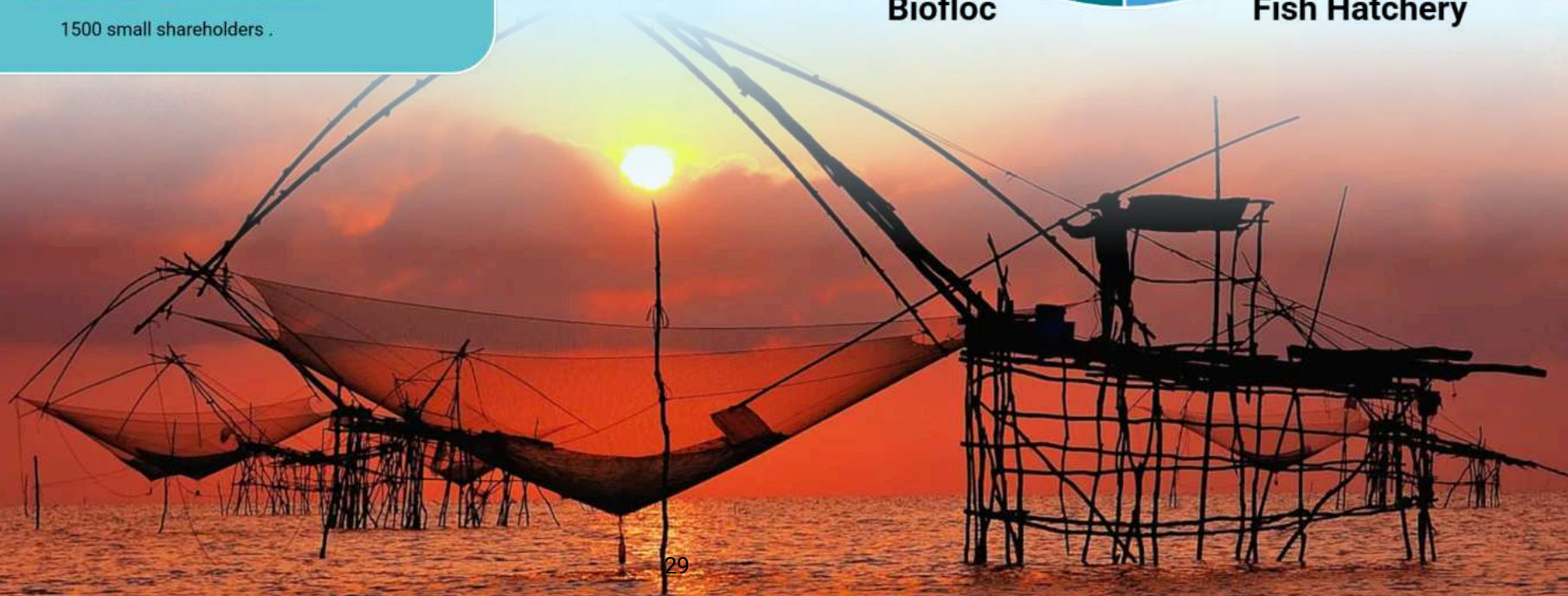
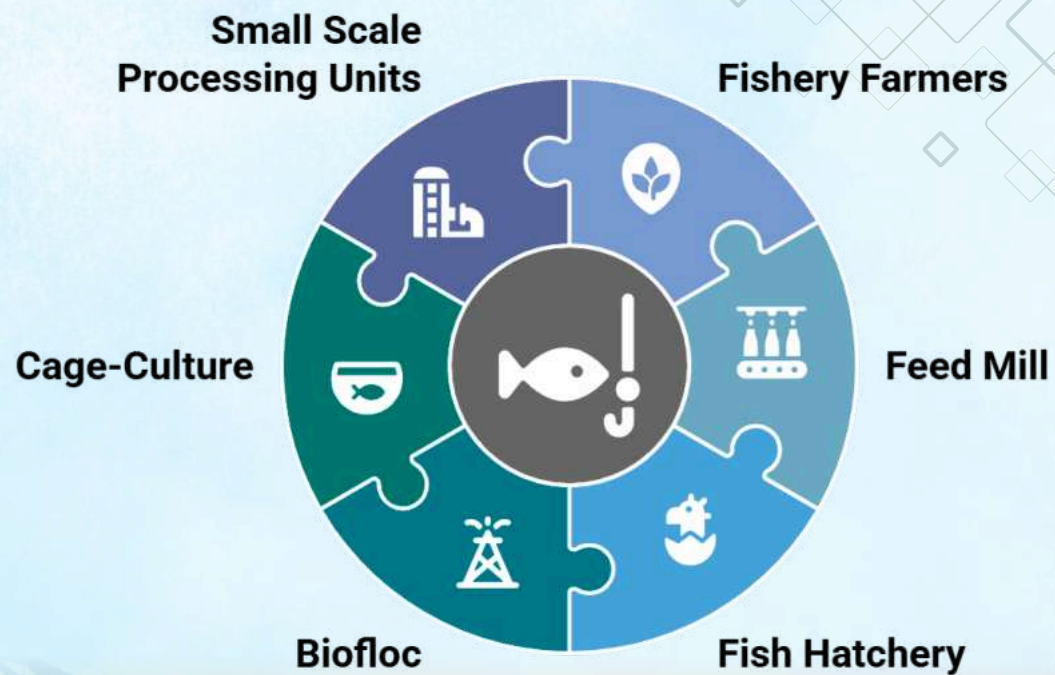
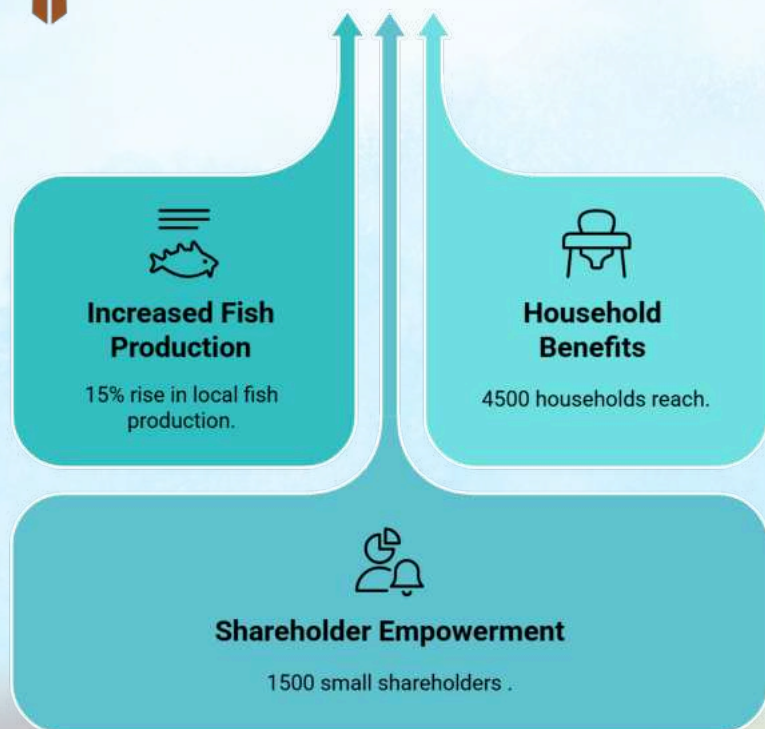
Manash Das,  
MD Ruhul Amin







## Enhancing Odisha's Fisheries





## BLUE ECONOMY IN ACTION

**Impact through promotion of Fishery as livelihoods for small and marginal farmers of Odisha**

Dr. Sunil Garg



When I first walked through the markets of Keonjhar, I witnessed a striking paradox. A few baskets of freshly harvested fish would arrive, vanish within minutes, and leave behind a duality of emotions: delight for those who secured them and disappointment for the many who returned empty-handed. For most households, frozen fish transported from distant industrial ecosystems remained the default, despite fresh fish offering both premium value and superior nutrition.

Just a few kilometres away, I met smallholder producers tending their ponds with patience and hope. Their aspirations for change were evident, but their yields were far too meagre to meet the community's demand. The constraint was not their effort but the systemic absence of institutional architecture to ensure forward-backward linkages, efficient doorstep service delivery, and access to scalable technologies. This structural deficit confined them to subsistence rather than enabling market integration.

The aquaculture intervention was designed precisely to bridge these institutional voids. By collectivizing producers into Farmer Producer Companies and producer groups, the initiative enabled aggregation, economies of scale, and technology infusion. Pond culture and cage culture enterprises became instruments of intensified production and enterprise building. In total, 4,500 households were reached, and 1,500 smallholders were formally organized into functional aquaculture collectives.

The outcomes were transformative. Local supply of fresh fish rose by 15 percent, improving nutritional access while simultaneously strengthening the village economy through localized cash circulation and reduced dependence on imports. Livelihoods became more diversified, resilient, and derisked from climatic uncertainties.

This community-driven enterprise has set the foundation for a localized “blue revolution,” reinforcing central aquaculture enhancement agendas. It illustrates how collectivization, institutional strengthening, and technological adoption can reconfigure smallholder aquaculture into a sustainable driver of food security, rural income generation, and socio-economic resilience in Keonjhar.

“ **By empowering smallholder producers through collectivization and institutional support, SDS is not just enhancing aquaculture productivity in Keonjhar, it is nurturing resilience, food security, and a true community-led blue revolution.** ”









## PRACTICE THAT PROTECTS

### Bio Security Measure for African Swine Fever in Pigs

Dr. Jogen Kolita.



Over two decades in the development sector, including seven years in piggery systems, have revealed both opportunities and vulnerabilities. Among these, African Swine Fever (ASF) has been the most devastating epizootic. Its onset in Assam during 2020, parallel to the COVID-19 pandemic, precipitated extensive mortality across 22 districts of Northeast India. Thousands of outbreaks not only eradicated pig populations but also destabilised subsistence economies. With porous borders and no vaccine, prevention through stringent biosecurity is the only viable containment pathway.

ASF, caused by a DNA virus of the Asfarviridae family, is highly virulent, producing haemorrhagic lesions, pyrexia, anorexia, and case fatality rates up to 100 percent. Transmission occurs through four principal vectors—direct pig-to-pig contact, anthropogenic pathways, wildlife interfaces, and deficient hygienic practices. Translating epidemiological insights into practice necessitates specific interventions:

- Pig-to-Pig: Institutionalise quarantine of new stock (minimum seven days); spatially isolate symptomatic pigs ( $\geq 100$  metres); source livestock from accredited farms.
- Human-to-Pig: Operationalise biosecure perimeters with restricted entry; install footbaths and handwashing stations; sterilise all farm equipment before reuse.
- Wildlife/Rodents: Construct double-layered fencing; implement rodent-proof housing systems.
- Hygiene Protocols: Conduct routine sanitation with potassium permanganate; enforce bi-weekly disinfection regimes.

#### Why It Matters

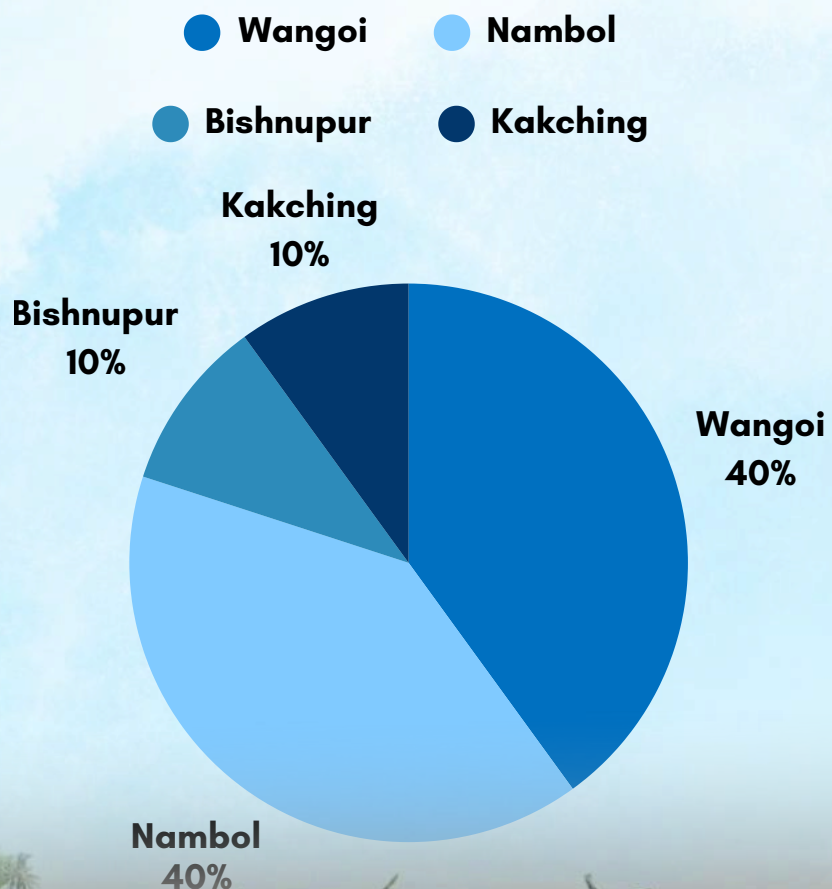
Biosecurity is often misconstrued as an ancillary cost, yet it constitutes a core risk mitigation architecture and livelihood insurance. A singular breach can obliterate cumulative household capital, while disciplined adherence sustains both herds and rural economies. From veterinary and rural development perspectives, biosecurity is not discretionary but the only effective shield against ASF. Its institutionalisation as a normative standard is imperative. Lessons from the pandemic years must inform practice: safeguarding pigs is synonymous with safeguarding livelihoods.

“**Biosecurity is not an expense but an investment the only sustainable shield against African Swine Fever and the collapse of rural livelihoods.**”





## Building Blue Economies: Fishery-led Growth in Manipur



### FFPO/EPF Distribution in Manipur





# REVITALIZING LOCAL ECONOMIES

## Empowering Communities through Fish Farmer Producer Organizations and Primary Fishery Co-operatives in Manipur

D.P Mowardun Maring  
Nahakpam Surjyabala Devi



Manipur's fishery sector is witnessing a structured transformation, spearheaded by cooperative-led growth. With the government's structured emphasis on developing the fishery sector SDS, in collaboration with NAFED and NFDB, has positioned itself at the forefront of institutional strengthening in the sector. Currently, SDS supports 12 Primary Fishery Cooperatives and 2 Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs), representing 1,469 shareholders, with women constituting 100% of FFPO members and 40% of cooperative members, thereby embedding gender-inclusive governance across the value chain.

SDS interventions cover the entire aquaculture value chain: broodstock development, breeding, nursery and fry production, aggregation, marketing, and dry fish value addition. These are underpinned by financial linkages with NCDC and enterprise development through the National Livelihood Mission's EDP. Integrated livelihood models that combine fisheries with poultry, cattle, and mustard cultivation have further enhanced resilience, resource optimization, and income diversification.

Capacity-building remains central, with SDS delivering structured training in water quality management, feed optimization, disease surveillance, and sustainable culture practices. Fish-Melas have been institutionalized as platforms for direct market linkage and consumer awareness, while crop competitions incentivize best practices in aquaculture and integrated farming.

The outcomes are tangible. Over 90% of FFPO members are actively engaged in business management, aggregation, and input-output handling, resulting in efficient scale operations. Many cooperatives now report annual turnovers in the range of ₹20-30 lakh, reflecting higher productivity, improved market penetration, and enhanced economic returns.

Through these interventions, SDS is catalyzing Manipur's fisheries into a scalable, sustainable, and market-responsive sector that aligns with national cooperative development priorities while reinforcing rural livelihood diversification.

“**The real strength of Manipur's fisheries lies in its people , through cooperatives and FFPOs, SDS is enabling communities to lead their own transformation.**”





## Inclusive Growth in Aquaculture





# Fish for better future

## Reaching 12,000 Fish Farmers with Sustainable Solutions

Saikat Sarkar



In Tripura, aquaculture has historically been a critical component of rural livelihoods, yet women's participation was largely confined to unpaid labor with limited decision-making power. This structural gender gap in resource access and benefit-sharing raised an important question: how might women be repositioned from peripheral contributors to leaders within the fisheries value chain?

As a fisheries livelihood specialist with SDS, I have worked on a Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM) initiative launched in 2023 to integrate women into aquaculture-based enterprises. The project aims to empower 12,000 women across six districts by enabling their transition from subsistence producers to entrepreneurial actors and collective enterprise leaders through capacity building, financial support, and market integration.

A total of 240 Producer Groups (PGs) were established, each serving as both a social capital unit and a platform for technical dissemination. Within these groups, women receive training in scientific aquaculture practices, enterprise governance, and financial management. Initial productivity levels of 120 to 150 kilograms of fish per kani (0.33 acre) have, through semi-intensive methods, advanced towards 350 to 400 kilograms per kani.

Access to financial support of up to 1.5 lakh rupees for infrastructure and 3 lakh rupees as working capital has enabled PGs to rehabilitate ponds, procure quality inputs, and improve post-harvest management. Evidence from the field indicates an average productivity increase of 30 percent. Simultaneously, aggregation models and direct market linkages have enhanced women's bargaining power, while the establishment of women-led Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) has provided scale economies and institutional legitimacy.

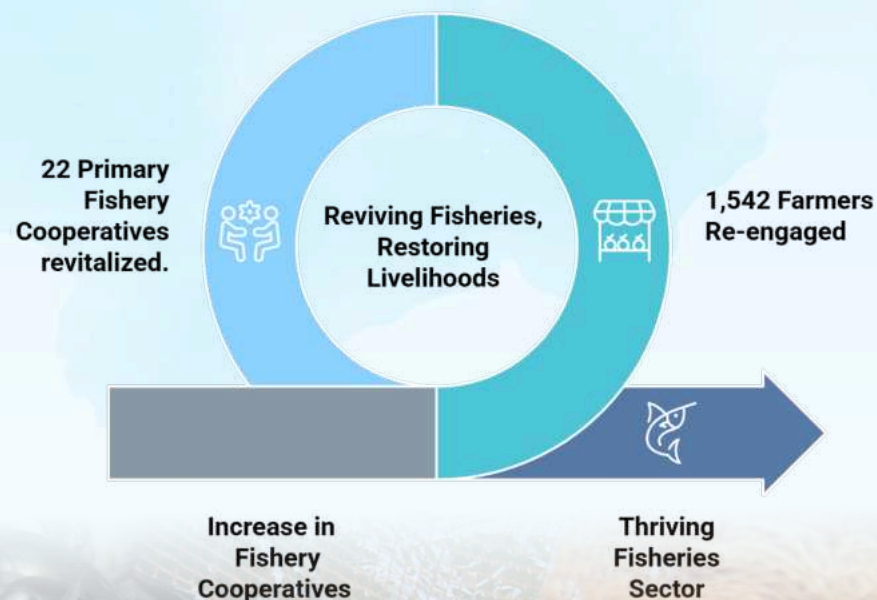
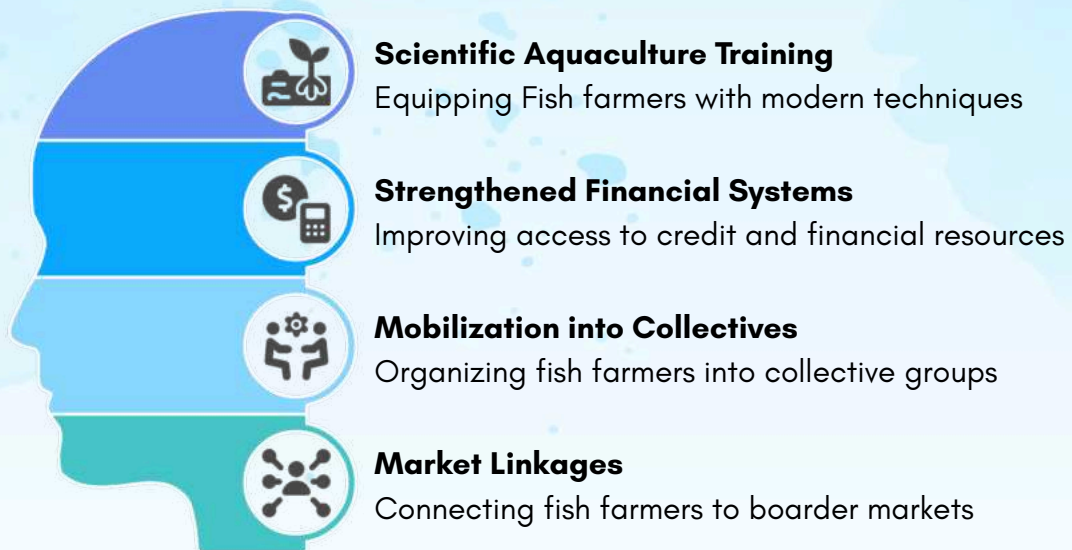
Climate resilience is a central focus of the intervention. Women are adopting polyculture systems, elevated pond structures, and adaptive measures to mitigate risks associated with floods and climatic variability.

“**We are not just farming fish; we are building women-led economies.**”





# Reviving Fisheries, Restoring Livelihoods





## EFFORTS TOWARDS AN EQUITABLE SOCIETY

### Community-led Blue Revolution through Cooperative Revival

Shib Sankar Saha



With my experience in the development sector and extensive field praxis, I remain convinced that collectivization is a critical lever for structural transformation. My engagements with farmers and fishers across Tripura have underscored how solidarity economies can reposition marginalized producers from subsistence to sustainable enterprise. This conviction informs my work with SDS, where community-led development is operationalized as a pathway to equity. At the helm of the collectivization is the cooperative movement.

The cooperative movement, emerging in early 20th-century India, exemplified an indigenous institutional response to rural economic vulnerability. Anchored in principles of mutualism, democratic participation, and distributive justice, it embodied Gandhian Gram Swaraj ideals and Durkheim's notion of collective consciousness. By pooling resources, cooperatives generated social capital, enhanced incomes, and institutionalized dignity.

Fisheries cooperatives extended this paradigm, equipping producers with credit, training, and collective bargaining power. Yet, over time, governance deficits, politicization, and weak professionalization eroded their effectiveness. Recognizing revival as imperative, SDS under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), in partnership with NAFED, is revitalizing 22 Existing Primary Fishery Cooperatives in Tripura and Manipur.

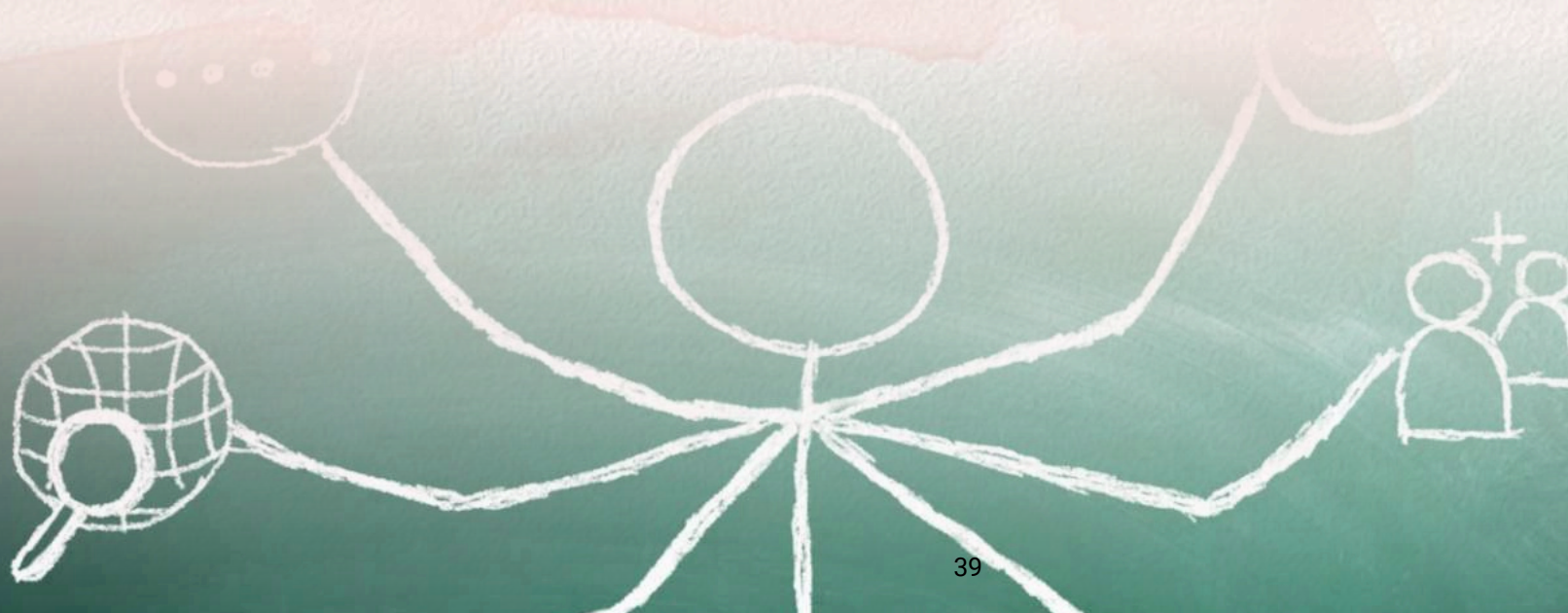
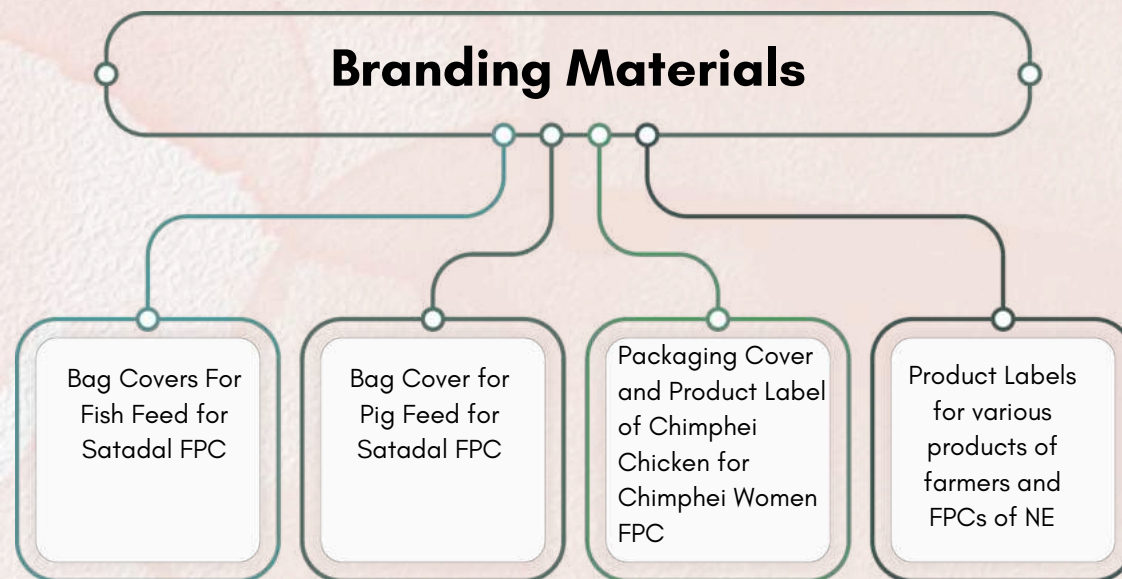
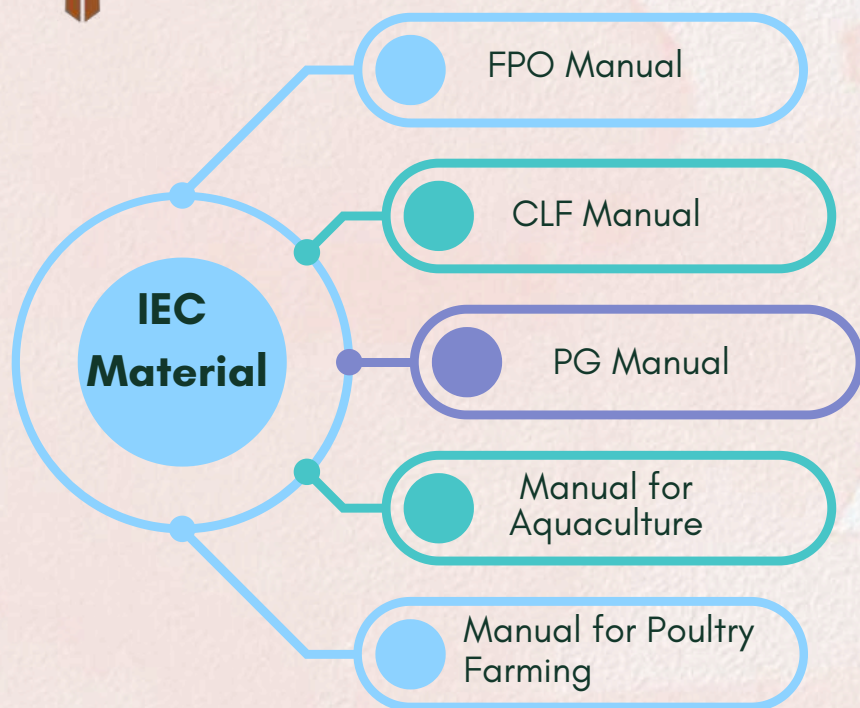
Through scientific aquaculture training, strengthened financial systems, and mobilization of Farmer Interest Groups into cooperative structures, 1,542 farmers including women have re-engaged, expanding business volumes and fortifying market linkages. For SDS, equity is praxis: revitalizing cooperatives restores livelihoods, resilience, and dignity, laying the foundation for a community-led blue revolution.

“**Reviving cooperatives is not just about strengthening institutions, it is about restoring dignity, resilience, and the collective agency of rural communities.**”





## Strategic Designs for Social Change







## BEYOND WORDS

### Strategic Communication for Social Change

Tirtharaj Gohain,  
Upasana Goswami



Many believe communication to be a catalyst of change; however, I believe it is the very heart of it, a core element in the process of social change, growth and development. The right communication, at the right time and place is essential and inevitable, as flaws in any of it may lead to something unprecedented, potentially becoming an obstacle for the designated change. The social development sector comes with its own set of vision of an ideal society, this vision often aligns with the SDGs and the national interest, but above all the greater good of the people. To accomplish the very vision, they deploy strategic and innovative activities and at the heart of it is communication.

Strategic communication is essential for a desired change, as it informs, aware, educates, appeals and advocates for change. It is of importance to understand that the entire means and process of communication determines the ROI; which is an equitable society, with justice for all at all fronts – economic, poverty, education, nutrition and health.

Recognizing this, at SDS we have prioritised communication for the change we desire in the communities we work with. We plan and strategies communication to reach those at the peripheries, at the best of all is the Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials that we design, these IEC materials are prepared in visual, audio-visual and audio format and are disseminated among the communities through various channels both in hard and soft copies. It is of paramount importance for SDS to design these materials in the way the communities understand and therefore are translated in local dialects through experts in linguistics.

SDS has invested substantial effort on research and analysis to understand the communities, the gaps in communication, their needs, aspirations and came up with targeted communication plans for all the various communities in the various states it is working in. As per the needs of various projects of TRLM, TRESP, Centre Sector Scheme of formation and Promotion of FPOs and others we have designed manuals, informative pamphlets, short videos, branding materials for the FPO products, and also focused on on-ground communication to achieve the goal.

“ **Communication is not just a bridge for development it is the very heartbeat of the process, channelling inputs that ultimately shape tangible results.** ”





**UJWAL ABHA**

**Stories From the Ground**





## The Quiet Force Behind a Fishery Revolution: Paromita's Story from Tripura



The agents of change are not always in the front, sometimes they are in the shadows, one such agent is a Community Coordinator Paromita Debbarma, deployed under the TRLM Fishery Project by Sesta Development Services (SDS). You may not find her name in the forefront, she is in the shadows, among the women she works with, she is the first name that comes to mind when a pond needs cleaning, when records need updating, or when dreams need a little push. She is a breath to the women in Tripura's Ramchandra village of Sepahijala district, where change is rippling through the ponds gently, but surely.

Paromita's days begin early. She walks to the "Mother Teresa Producer Group" 22 spirited women fish farmers—where she checks in on pond conditions, talks fish feed recipes, and reviews the group's books. But her real work? It's quieter. She listens. She guides. She teaches.

Recently, the group, encouraged by Paromita, started a lime business a simple idea that grew from observation. Lime is essential in pond management, and often overpriced in local shops. "Why not sell it ourselves?" they thought. With Paromita's help, they gathered demand during VO meetings and door-to-door inquiries. Then they procured 700 kgs in seven packets at ₹280/packet amounting to ₹310 on adding the vehicle charge and sold them at a ₹320 small margin lower than the market. It worked. Villagers bought from them, and for the first time, the PG tasted profit. Not much, but enough to spark ambition.

Now, they're planning bigger. Paromita is helping them connect with a nearby Farmer Producer Company (Salkuchang FPC) for bulk lime procurement cutting costs, increasing margins. This small business, born from collective grit and quiet support, is becoming a model for others.

Paromita also arranges training for the women—sometimes she teaches, sometimes she learns alongside them. Thanks to SDS's vision of building local capacity, CCs like her are anchoring change where it's needed most on the ground.

In a state where women rarely led fishery businesses, Paromita is helping rewrite the script not as a leader in the limelight, but as the force behind it. The ponds are clearer now, the records tidier, and the women braver. Change, after all, doesn't always shout. Sometimes, it moves with the quiet steps of a woman on her way to a village meeting.





## **From Pashu Sakhi to Matsya Sakhi - An Evolution in Service Empowering Rural Women through Scientific Livelihood Interventions**



Pinki Devi, a spirited and dedicated woman from Jolaibari village in Tripura, stands as a shining example of how knowledge, training, and grassroots engagement can transform ordinary lives into powerful agents of change. As a Community Service Provider (CSP), trained and mentored under the initiatives of Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM) and Sesta Development Services (SDS), Pinki is now leading the charge in revolutionizing both livestock and fishery-based livelihoods in her community.

Initially inducted as a Pashu Sakhi, Pinki Devi was trained to support over 300 women Self-Help Group (SHG) members in diagnosing animal diseases, suggesting preventive care, and guiding them on improved livestock practices. Her role soon expanded, owing to her capability and enthusiasm, as she became a Matsya Sakhi a key community-level service provider in the fisheries sector.

TRLM, in collaboration with SDS, facilitated intensive training programs for Pinki and other CSPs from the project blocks, that covered various scientific aspects of fish farming from pond cleaning and feed preparation to fish health monitoring and water quality management. Notably, Pinki is now well-versed with scientific terminologies such as pH value testing and understands the importance of maintaining a balanced water environment (neither too acidic nor too basic) for healthy fish cultivation.

What makes Pinki's journey particularly inspiring is her grasp over scientific concepts and her ability to demystify them for other women. She now confidently explains how the pH scale, ranging from 0 to 14, determines the acidic or basic nature of pond water. She educates SHG women on maintaining an ideal pH level of 6.5 to 8.5 for optimal fish growth an insight that was previously inaccessible to the rural community.

Through regular awareness sessions and hands-on trainings, Pinki ensures that these scientific tools are now within the reach of ordinary women, enabling them to make informed decisions and increase productivity.

Pinki's intervention has led to visible transformation in livelihood outcomes. Prior to her involvement, most families in Jolaibari sold fish only once a year. With her guidance and consistent training, four members of the Sivsakti Producer Group (PG) have now adopted a biannual fish-selling cycle, doubling their income opportunities. Her efforts have not only improved economic conditions but also fostered self-confidence and motivation among rural women. She actively promotes PGs under the TRLM initiative and works closely with SDS's Community Coordinators to ensure field-level execution.

Pinki Devi is no longer just a CSP she is a scientific mentor, motivator, and change-maker. Her journey from a livestock worker to a dual-domain expert symbolizes the power of grassroots women when given access to knowledge and platforms for leadership. Through her story, we witness how science, when translated through relatable and localized training, can bring about a silent revolution in rural livelihoods.

At the heart of Jolaibari's growing prosperity lies the determined spirit of Pinki Devi a woman who tested the waters, quite literally, and proved that empowered women empower communities.





## Reviving the Spirit of Collectivization – The Journey of Sebri EPFC in Tripura



In the heart of Khowai district, nestled among green landscapes and ponds rich with promise, lies the Sebri Matchyajibi Somobai Samiti, an EPFC (Existing Primary Fishery Cooperative) that carries within it not just the ambition of collective enterprise, but also the legacy of a people displaced and determined.

Formed in 1980, Sebri EPFC was set up by a Bengali fishing community, whose families had migrated from present-day Bangladesh following partition and border unrest. They arrived in Tripura with little but the skills of their ancestors and a strong sense of community. Over the years, the cooperative flourished for a time providing support to fish farmers, coordinating activities, and building a small but stable economy through collective fish farming.

But like many other EPFCs, Sebri began to decline over the decades. Member participation dropped. Farmers began operating independently, and transactions were done entirely in cash, leading to poor accounting practices, lack of transparency, and trust issues among members. The very spirit of collectivization was fading.

Then came the intervention under the PMMSY (Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana), where Implementing Agency (IAs) NAFED and Cluster-Based Business Organization (CBBOs) SDS stepped in with a mission to revive defunct or inactive fisheries cooperatives across the state.

Sebri EPFC became one of the key focus areas for SDS. With continuous mobilization efforts, SDS began engaging both members and the Board of Directors (BoDs). Capacity-building sessions focused on governance, record-keeping, and business planning. Slowly, the change began to take shape. Monthly BoD meetings were reintroduced, and with it, came accountability. Monitoring of books, accounts, and the manager's performance instilled a culture of responsibility and transparency. The transformation was visible, 142 new shareholders joined the cooperative, breathing fresh life into the organization.

The cooperative has since moved to digital transactions, helping streamline audits and regain trust. Training on account management and record-keeping is now a regular feature. They have leased a 25 hectare public pond and a 6-acre private pond, cultivating fish collectively. Despite suffering a loss of over ₹13 lakhs due to the devastating floods of 2024, the spirit of the members remains unbroken.

Dulal Das (Vice President), who along with Mona Das (now the President), has been part of the cooperative since 1996, says: "We've seen this cooperative from its strong days to its worst phase. But today, I see hope. The young fish farmers are coming forward. What we built with our bare hands years ago, they will now take forward. We may be old, but our dreams for this cooperative are very much alive."

Sebri EPFC's journey is more than a revival, it is a story of resilience, identity, and collective ambition. The members, once marginalized and disconnected, are now aspiring to become a model cooperative in Tripura, not just for fishery, but to inspire farmers from other sectors to embrace collectivization. For them, it's not just about income, it's about earning respect in society as established farmers, rooted in community, history, and shared purpose.





## From SHG Members to Rural Entrepreneurs – The Transformation of Women in Jampuijala, Tripura



In the tribal villages of Jampuijala district, Tripura, women have long been active in Self-Help Groups (SHGs), gaining access to credit, savings, and awareness of rights. However, these institutions offered limited pathways for sustainable livelihoods or entrepreneurship. The Tripura Rural Economic Growth and Service Delivery Project (TRESP), a World Bank-funded initiative implemented by the Tribal Welfare Department, partnered with SDS to form Producer Groups (PGs), enabling women to transition from basic financial inclusion to enterprise development. Two such PGs, Hamjora (focused on fishery) in Pekuar Jala village and Yakhli (focused on piggy) in Doiram Para village, were formed by mobilizing women from different SHGs based on their interest in specific livelihood activities. Each PG received an establishment cost of ₹50,000 to set up infrastructure and start operations. The transformation began with technical training, exposure to business planning, and sector specific support. In Hamjora PG, three members received financial assistance of ₹15,000 each to develop hatchery ponds, stepping into fish seed production alongside fish rearing. Meanwhile, Yakhli PG received ₹6 lakh as working capital, allowing them to scale piggy activities, purchase inputs in bulk, and support operational needs. These PGs have also begun collective procurement, buying essential inputs like lime and moc (fish feed) at wholesale rates and selling them to members at a lower-than-market price, while earning a minimal margin to sustain group activities. This model has built business acumen and strengthened internal value chains. Pinki Debbarma, a member of Hamjora PG, reflects this change: "I always wanted to do better than others in whatever livelihood work I took up. I was curious and eager to try new things, but we didn't have anyone to guide us in the right direction. Now, with the support from the SDS team, we are learning better and more innovative ways of working. Earlier, I was just doing regular fish farming, but now I'm expanding, one pond will be used as a nursery and the other as a grow-out unit." The shift from SHG to PG has been a journey of self-realization, ambition, and enterprise. The PG model not only fosters entrepreneurship but also lays the foundation for sustainability, people-powered business in rural Tripura.









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