



CONVERGENCE CHRONICLES

Experiences from

15 STATES



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Foreword

This compendium captures the diverse experiences and transformative impact of the PRI-CBO Convergence project across 15 states. It is a testament to the power of collaboration, participatory governance, and grassroots mobilization in driving inclusive and sustainable development.

The PRI-CBO Convergence project has been a pioneering initiative, bringing together Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to promote holistic village development. Its core objective has been to empower communities, enhance their capacities, and strengthen local governance structures. Through capacity building, training programs, and awareness campaigns, the project has empowered communities to address their development concerns, nurturing a sense of ownership and collective responsibility. This book highlights the impact of women's participation in local governance. It celebrates the stories of women who emerged as voices of change and brought about a paradigm shift in decision-making processes. Their journey is a testimony to the fact that when women are empowered and given equal opportunities, they become catalysts for progress, driving social and economic transformation in their communities.

I am happy to present this book which showcases the diverse contexts, challenges, and successes encountered during the implementation of the project across 15 states. They offer insights into the strategies, methodologies, and practices adopted to bridge the gap between PRIs and CBOs, ensuring convergence and collaboration within each State.



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Preface

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) first introduced the concept of PRI-CBO Convergence in 2013 and recognized Kudumbashree as a National Resource Organization. Work began in 2014 with a few pilot projects, laying down the foundation and developing a toolkit for practical implementation. The early pilot initiatives took off in states such as Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka Assam, and Jharkhand.

Over the years, the project evolved in terms of scope and content. In 2015, the addition of the Participatory Assessment of Entitlements tool, first implemented in Maharashtra, brought a new dimension to the project design. The announcement of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) in the same year provided further momentum to the pilots.

Gram Panchayat Poverty Reduction Plans were introduced, consolidating the demand plans of women's groups at the local government level and presenting them in Gram Sabhas for integration with GPDP. Subsequently, these plans were incorporated under the Village Poverty Reduction Plans and integrated with GPDP.

The year 2016 proved to be a significant milestone for the convergence idea, with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj issuing a directive emphasizing the need for PRIs to converge with the SHG network in February. Further, the Ministry of Rural Development issued an advisory to State Rural Livelihood Missions on convergence with PRIs too.

With each new state, district, or block, and every passing year, the project diversified and gained richness. Early projects in Jharkhand were carried out in PESA (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas) regions, an experience that was enhanced by later episodes in Chhattisgarh. Work in Karbi Anglong and Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District Council opened the gateways to local governments under Schedule VI, which was further repeated in Meghalaya. Local governments under State Acts joined the project in Manipur and Mizoram.

Addressing structural challenges led to the initiation of new institutional forms in several states, and some of the states took the lead in using them. Assam, for example, extended VOCC (Village Organisations Coordination Committee), the Gram Panchayat level platform of the SHG federation, to the entire state. Meanwhile, Jharkhand institutionalized GPCC (Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee), through an executive order, facilitating coordination among SHG federations, local governments, and line departments. Uttar Pradesh and several other states attempted to integrate SHG plans with GPDP before the introduction of the Village Poverty Reduction Plans at the national level.

Training on Village Poverty Reduction Plans has been a significant event, recurring annually and providing impetus to the SHG-level planning process. However, the true potential of the PRI-CBO Convergence strategy lies in SHGs developing their plans, implementing the no-cost components independently, demanding feasible support under GPDP from local governments, and working together with them to present remaining demands to appropriate departments and linking them with relevant schemes.

This compendium serves as a compilation of summaries of state experiences in PRI-CBO Convergence over almost a decade. The learnings from these states have greatly contributed to shaping the strategy and methodology for achieving universalization. These individual state experiences will continue to remain relevant in addressing future challenges, given the fact that universalisation has to address the specific contexts of different states and regions through innovative adaptations. This volume presents the experiences of all fifteen states and draws important lessons from the projects.

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Abbreviation

ALMSC	Anganwadi Level Monitoring and Support Committee
ADC	Autonomous District Council
ADS	Area Development Society
AEC	Area Employment Council
AP	Anchalik Panchayat
APY	Atal Pension Yojana
ARSRLM	Arunachal State Rural Livelihood Mission
ASRLM	Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission
ATMA	Agricultural Technology Management Agency
AWC	Anganwadi Centre
BAC	Bodo Autonomous Council
BAP	Block Anchor Person
BDO	Block Development Officer
BEC	Block Employment Council
BIRD	Basic Infrastructure and Resource Development
BMMU	BlockMission Management Unit
BoD	Board of Directors
BPIU	Block Project Implementation Unit
BPM	Block Project Manager
BPRO	Block Panchayat Raj Officer
BRLPS	Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society
BTAD	Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District
BTC	Bodoland Territorial Council
BTR	Bodoland Territorial Region
CBO	Community-Based Organisation

CCRP	Convergence Community Resource Person
CDPO	Child Development Project Officer
CDS	Community Development Society
CEM	Chief Executive Member
CF	Convergence Facilitator
CIF	Community Investment Fund
CLF	Cluster Level Federation
CM	Community Mobiliser
CMAAY	Chief Minister Arogya Arunachal Yojana
CMHT	Chief Minister-gi Hakshelgi Tengbang
CMST	Chief Minister-gi Shotharabasingi Tengbang
CSC	Customer Service Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Schemes
DAY-NRLM	Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission
DDUGKY	Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana
DEC	District Employment Council
DLSA	District Legal Service Authority
DoPR	Department of Panchayati Raj
DPC	District Planning Committee
DPDO	District Panchayat Development Officer
DPM	District Project Manager
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
EAP	Entitlement Access Plan
EC	Executive Committee
EM	Executive Member
FLA	Field Level Assessment

FY	Financial Year
GKS	Gaon Kalyan Samiti
GP	Gram Panchayat
GPPRP	Gram Panchayat Poverty Reduction Plan
GPCC	Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee
GPDP	Gram Panchayat Development Plan
GPLF	Gram Panchayat Level Federation
GPPFT	Gram Panchayat Planning Facilitation Team
GPRP	Gram Panchayat Reduction Plan
GoI	Government of India
GS-SC	Gram Sabha Standing Committee
HPSRLM	Himachal Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Service
IDP	Inclusive Development Plan
IHHL	Individual Household Latrine
IM	Internal Mentor
IPPE	Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise
JJA	Jan Jagriti Abhiyan
JPRA	Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act
JSLPS	Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society
KSRLPS	Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotion Society
KVK	Krishi Vikas Kendra
LRG	Local Resource Group
LSG	Local Self-Government
LSGI	Local Self-Government Institution
MA	Municipal Authority
MAC	Members of the Autonomous Council

MAVIM	Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal
MBK	Master Book Keeper
MCC	Mothers & Cultivation Committee
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MHIP	Mizo Hmeichhe Insuikhawm Pawl
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MoPR	Ministry of Panchayati Raj
MoRD	Ministry of Rural Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MSRLS	Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society
MTP	Mobile Trainer Pool
MUP	Mizoram Upa Pawl
MzSRLM	Mizoram State Rural Livelihood Mission
NAA	Notified Area Authority
NE	North East
NEFA	North East Frontier Agency
NHG	Neighbourhood Group
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
NRO	National Resource Organisation
NSAP	National Social Assistance Programme
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Produce
OLM	Odisha Livelihood Mission
OTELP	Odisha Tribal Empowerment & Livelihoods Programme
P & RD	Panchayat & Rural Development

PAE	Participatory Assessment of Entitlement
PAP	Panchayat Apprenticeship Programme
PCC	Panchayat Coordination Committee
PDO	Panchayat Development Officer
PESA	Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act
PGSRD	Public Goods, Services and Resource Development
PHED	Public Health Engineering Department
PIP	Participatory Identification of Poor
PLF	Primary Level Federation
PMAY	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
PMJAY	Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana
PMJJBY	Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana
PMKVY	Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
PMMVY	Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana
PMSBY	Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana
PPC	People's Plan Campaign
PR	Panchayati Raj
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PS	Panchayat Samiti
PVTG	Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group
RD	Rural Development
RDD	Rural Development Department
RGAVP	Rajasthan Grameen Aajeevika Vikas Parishad
RGB	Representative Governing Body
RGJAY	Rajiv Gaadhi Juvadayee Arogya Yojana
RSBY	Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana

RSETI	Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes
SAC	Social Action Committee
SBA	Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
SBM	Swachh Bharat Mission
SC	Scheduled Caste
SDAA	Second Division Accounts Assistant
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDP	Social Development Plan
SHG	Self-Help Groups
SIRD	State Institute of Rural Development
SMC	School Management Committee
SPIP	State Perspective and Implementation Plan
SRG	State Resource Group
SRLM	State Rural Livelihood Mission
SSA	Sarva Siksha Abhiyan
SSS	State Sponsored Scheme
SSY	Sukanya Samrudhi Yojana
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TCLCC	Territorial Constituency Level Coordination Committee
TLP	Total Literacy Programme
TRLM	Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission
TSP	Tribal Sub-Plan
TTAADC	Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council
UA	Urban Agglomeration
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPSRLM	Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission
VA	Village Authority



VC	Village Council
VCDC	Village Council Development Committee
VCF	Village Coordination Forum
VEC	Village Employment Council
VHND	Village Health and Nutrition Day
VHSNC	Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee
VLf	Village Level Federation
VO	Village Organisation
VOCC	Village Organisation Coordination Committee
VPRP	Village Poverty Reduction Plan
WCD	Women and Child Development
WCP	Women Component Plan
WIMC	Ward Implementation and Management Committee
WLF	Ward Level Federation
YBA	Yojan Banao Abhiyan
YMA	Young Mizo Association
YP	Young Professional
ZP	Zilla Parishad

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Government of India (GoI), recognising the pressing need to alleviate poverty and empower marginalised communities, launched the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) in June 2011. This mission is rooted in community-based institutions under the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). It aims to enable impoverished households to access gainful self-employment and skilled-wage employment opportunities. By building solid grassroots institutions to improve livelihoods, NRLM seeks to create sustainable and diversified options for low-income people. To ensure effective collaboration between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Self-Help Group (SHG) networks, MoRD introduced amendments to the NRLM framework. These amendments facilitate establishing a relationship between Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs) and organisations representing people experiencing poverty. The objective is to enhance poverty eradication efforts by leveraging the collective strengths of PRIs and SHGs.

In Kerala, the Kudumbashree initiative has emerged as a pioneering model for community empowerment, showcasing the pivotal role of PRIs in fostering social and economic development. Kudumbashree has successfully integrated SHG networks into Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), harnessing their collective strength and capacity for community development. This integration has empowered women and marginalised communities, enabling them to actively participate in decision-making processes and take

charge of their socio-economic well-being. The Ministry recognised Kudumbashree's impactful work by designating it a National Resource Organisation (NRO) in 2012. This designation empowered Kudumbashree to provide technical assistance and expertise to other State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs) nationwide. Building on its success, Kudumbashree initiated the PRI-CBO convergence project to foster collaboration between PRIs and CBOs for holistic community development.

The PRI-CBO convergence project, supported by technical expertise from the Kudumbashree National Resource Organisation (KS-NRO) under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), has been a transformative initiative implemented across fifteen states of India from 2012 to 2023. The project was initially piloted in Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, and Maharashtra in 2014, showcasing successful models of PRI-CBO collaboration. These pioneering states laid the groundwork for expanding the project to other regions nationwide. Following the success of the pilot phase, the project was extended to cover ten additional states, including North-East India, Central India, South India, and Eastern India. This compendium is a repository of best practices and lessons learned from the PRI-CBO Convergence Project across fifteen states. It highlights successful local governance models, innovative strategies, and impactful initiatives to foster participatory and inclusive local governance, focusing on enhancing the participation of women and marginalised communities.

This compendium provides a comprehensive overview of the PRI-CBO convergence project. By consolidating field interventions, the report offers insights into different local government models adopted in the implementing states. Additionally, it highlights strategies implemented to encourage the active involvement of women and marginalised communities in local self-governance.

This compendium employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative research is particularly suited to this study as it enables an interpretive understanding of the phenomenon, focusing on the meanings that individuals attribute to it. This multi-site research traces the evolution of the PRI-CBO convergence project through scaled-up interventions in diverse settings, from grassroots-level LSGs to SHGs in villages across the implementing states.

Information for this report was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through interactions with key stakeholders and field teams associated with KS-NRO in all partner states. These interactions helped identify key institutions in rural governance, state-specific local governments, project locations, demographics, LSG structures, phase-wise strategies, and the successes and challenges faced. Secondary sources included monthly and annual reports submitted to SRLMs and exit reports from the respective states.

With the technical support of KS-NRO, the PRI-CBO convergence project has made significant strides in empowering communities through effective collaboration between PRIs and CBOs. The project has expanded to various country regions and reached diverse communities. This compendium highlights the project's interventions, showcasing the diverse local government models implemented across different states. It also emphasises strategies designed to increase the participation of women and marginalised communities, ensuring their voices are represented and heard in the decision-making processes of

local governments.

This compendium is a valuable resource, offering insights and lessons learned from the field. As the project continues to expand and evolve, it is essential to adapt strategies and build on successful models to further enhance the participation of women and marginalised communities in local governance, ultimately contributing to sustainable poverty reduction.

CHAPTER 2

PRI-CBO CONVERGENCE PROJECT : AN OVERVIEW

Evolution of Kudumbashree

The late 1980s marked a transformative period in Kerala's history, defined by a surge in volunteer activities and movements that paved the way for participatory development. Leading this movement was the successful implementation of the Total Literacy Project (TLP), which promoted literacy and deeply ingrained the values of volunteerism and community participation across the state. Through campaigns, seminars, and workshops focused on decentralisation and democratisation, community awareness of rights, resources, and village-level planning was significantly enhanced. These grassroots experiences played a pivotal role in shaping the ideology of 'People-Centric Development', emphasising the active involvement of local communities in decision-making processes and development initiatives. This ideological shift set the stage for launching the People's Plan Campaign (PPC) in 1996, following the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution. The PPC aimed to empower LSGIs and promote participatory governance by devolving powers and resources to the grassroots level.

The People's Plan Campaign of 1996 marked a significant turning point in Kerala's history,

particularly in its approach to democratisation and decentralisation. A key aspect of this campaign was the active involvement of Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs), which initially emerged as part of urban development projects in Alappuzha and later for community-based nutrition initiatives in Malappuram.

NHGs, similar in concept to SHGs found in other parts of the country, proved to be effective platforms that complemented the traditional Gram Sabha structure. With the introduction of the Women Component Plan (WCP) in 1997, more women NHG members became actively engaged in local village planning processes. They played a vital role in designing specific interventions across various sectors such as education, drinking water, mental health, agriculture, rainwater harvesting, anti-alcohol campaigns, sanitation, and women and child health development.

The launch of the Poverty Alleviation Mission, known as Kudumbashree, in 1998 further bolstered these efforts. Kudumbashree aimed to empower women and families by promoting micro-enterprises, skill development, and community-based initiatives. By harnessing the collective strength of NHGs and promoting women's participation in decision-making

processes, Kudumbashree played a pivotal role in fostering inclusive and participatory development in Kerala.

The formation of the Kudumbashree Mission in Kerala was closely tied to the devolution of powers to the PRIs and the PPC, which sought to involve local governments in shaping the Ninth Plan. In line with this decentralised approach, Kudumbashree's community structure was carefully designed to complement the local government system.

At the grassroots level, NHGs were established as the foundational units of Kudumbashree, consisting primarily of women from local communities who operated at the primary level. Each NHG was affiliated with an Area Development Society (ADS), corresponding to the electoral ward within the Panchayat or Municipality. The ADSs, representing various wards, were further organised under a higher-level entity, the Community Development Society (CDS). This hierarchical structure ensured that all NHGs and ADSs within a particular Panchayat or Municipality were collectively represented and coordinated through the CDS. By aligning its structure with the local government framework, Kudumbashree could effectively empower communities at the grassroots level and promote inclusive development.

Institutionalisation of convergence between Kudumbashree and Gram Panchayats

The convergence between Kudumbashree and PRIs is structured through various institutional mechanisms and roles, facilitating collaboration and synergy between the entities. It has evolved through the adoption of standard bylaws and the subsequent elections to the CDS introduced in 2008. These institutional arrangements facilitate effective collaboration between Kudumbashree and PRIs, ensuring the seamless integration of community-driven development initiatives with local government

structures and functions. Presently, the connection between the Kudumbashree community network and PRIs operates through the following institutional systems:

- ◆ A ward member of the gram panchayat or the ward councillor of the Municipality or Municipal Corporation serves as the patron of the ADS. This role signifies the official link between the Kudumbashree community network and the local government
- ◆ Five women ward members of the Gram Panchayat, or five women councillors of the Municipality or Municipal Corporation, hold ex-officio positions on the CDS's general body and executive committee. This ensures local government women leaders' direct representation and participation in Kudumbashree's decision-making processes.
- ◆ The local government appoints the Member Secretary of the CDS. In gram panchayats, the Member Secretary is typically the assistant secretary of the panchayat, while in urban areas, it could be a health officer functioning as the Project Officer Of The Urban Poverty Alleviation Cell Of The Municipality Or Municipal Corporation.
- ◆ The Welfare Standing Committee of the Gram Panchayat plays a crucial role in overseeing all economic and social empowerment programs implemented by Kudumbashree, particularly those focused on poverty eradication.
- ◆ At the local government level, an Evaluation Committee is chaired by the head of the local government. The CDS chairperson acts as the Member secretary of this committee, with the Member Secretary of the CDS serving as its convenor. The committee includes representatives from various local government departments and divisions and nominated women

members and councillors from the local government to the CDS. This committee approves the CDS action plan and ensures alignment with the allocative plans of the LSG, transferred institutions, and credit plans of financial institutions.

Kudumbashree and MGNREGS - Instances of convergence

In 2005-06, the launch of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in Kerala saw Kudumbashree emerge as an indispensable partner in the Panchayat Raj system, ensuring the effective implementation of the scheme. Despite initial scepticism regarding the feasibility of MGNREGS in Kerala due to the state's relatively higher wage levels, the Kudumbashree community network leveraged its NHG - ADS - CDS structure to play a pivotal role in the scheme's success. Kudumbashree's extensive network of NHGs and ADS disseminated information about MGNREGS at the grassroots level, organised special Gram Sabhas at the ward level to focus on MGNREGS and facilitated the distribution of MGNREGS application forms and organised job card registration camps at the ward level. They collected completed forms and submitted consolidated applications to the panchayat, ensuring an efficient and streamlined registration process.

Kudumbashree played a significant role in identifying ADS members to serve as mates for various job roles under MGNREGS. These mates supervised work and ensured proper implementation at job sites. The identification of suitable work and job sites was conducted at the NHG level. These proposals were then consolidated at the ward level, ensuring that the work undertaken was necessary and beneficial to the community. ADS members also coordinated social audits conducted by MGNREGS accountants. These audits were essential for maintaining transparency

and accountability when implementing the scheme. Kudumbashree also played a crucial role in raising community awareness about the importance of social audits and encouraging community participation and oversight.

level. ADS members coordinated social audit which is conducted by MGNREGS accountant and created awareness among the community regarding its importance.

Other avenues of convergence

The Asraya project initially focused on destitute identification and rehabilitation, evolved into the comprehensive "Destitute Free Kerala" alongside initiatives like BUDS Schools, BUDS Rehabilitation Centres, Haritha Karma Sena, and Amrutham Nutrimix, exemplifies the successful convergence between Kudumbashree and local governments. These collaborations highlight how Kudumbashree's social capital has been instrumental in implementing group farming initiatives and other innovative projects, which have been supported significantly by the Panchayats initiative.

The enduring bond between Kudumbashree and local governments has been particularly evident during crises such as the Kerala floods of 2018 and 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Kudumbashree's extensive network played a crucial role in relief and rehabilitation efforts, demonstrating the value of its social capital in executing poverty eradication schemes.

Formation of Kudumbashree NRO

Recognising the importance of convergence in addressing poverty, the MoRD, in collaboration with the DAY-NRLM, sought to formalise the relationship between institutions representing the impoverished and local governments. In 2013, DAY-NRLM designated Kudumbashree as a National Resource Organisation (NRO) to support other SRLMs in implementing the PRI-CBO convergence program on a pilot

basis. The PRI-CBO convergence model, based on Kerala's decade-long collaborative efforts between Kudumbashree, its network of CBOs, and PRIs, aimed to enhance cooperation and replicate Kerala's successful model in partner states.2013,

RATIONALE OF WORKING TOGETHER

The PRI-CBO convergence project aims to establish a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship between PRIs and CBOs. This initiative's primary objective is to create an environment in which both entities can work together effectively to drive socio-economic development at the village level.

The project emphasises the importance of synergy between PRIs and CBOs. By pooling resources and expertise, these institutions can effectively address the diverse and complex challenges of poverty within their villages. Through this collaboration, PRIs can harness their local governance structure, administrative capabilities, and access to government resources, including funding and schemes, ensuring a structured and efficient approach to development efforts. On the other hand, CBOs offer a deep understanding of local contexts, foster community participation, and contribute specialised knowledge and skills to tackle poverty-related issues. Their grassroots presence of CBOs ensures that interventions are tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of the community.

Outlined below are key ways PRIs and CBOs can collaborate to enhance the effectiveness of development initiatives:

Initiatives	Role of PRIs	Role of CBOs
Awareness and Entitlement Education:	As democratically elected bodies, PRIs can create community awareness about their entitlements. They can organise informational campaigns and outreach programs to educate villagers about government schemes and benefits.	CBOs can support these awareness initiatives by leveraging their extensive networks and deep community connections. They can disseminate information through local meetings, discussions, and other participatory methods, ensuring that even the most marginalised individuals are informed.
Intermediary and Advocacy	PRIs can serve as intermediaries with line departments, advocating for the timely delivery of entitlements to the communities in need. They can facilitate communication and coordination between the government and the local population, effectively implementing policies and schemes.	

Identification of beneficiaries PRIs can effectively utilise CBOs, with their grassroots the extensive network presence and local of CBOs to identify the knowledge, can help identify rightful beneficiaries of and prioritise the community's government schemes. They needs. They can also provide can collaborate with CBOs to valuable insights and data to ensure the selection process PRIs, facilitating the accurate is transparent and inclusive, targeting of beneficiaries. reaching the most in need

Local Governance and Community Engagement: PRIs can foster a vibrant CBOs can function as platform for community generators of local needs engagement by encouraging and issues, playing a vital the participation of CBOs in role in projects like the Gram local governance processes. This includes involving CBOs Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). in decision-making forums, consultations, and planning exercises.

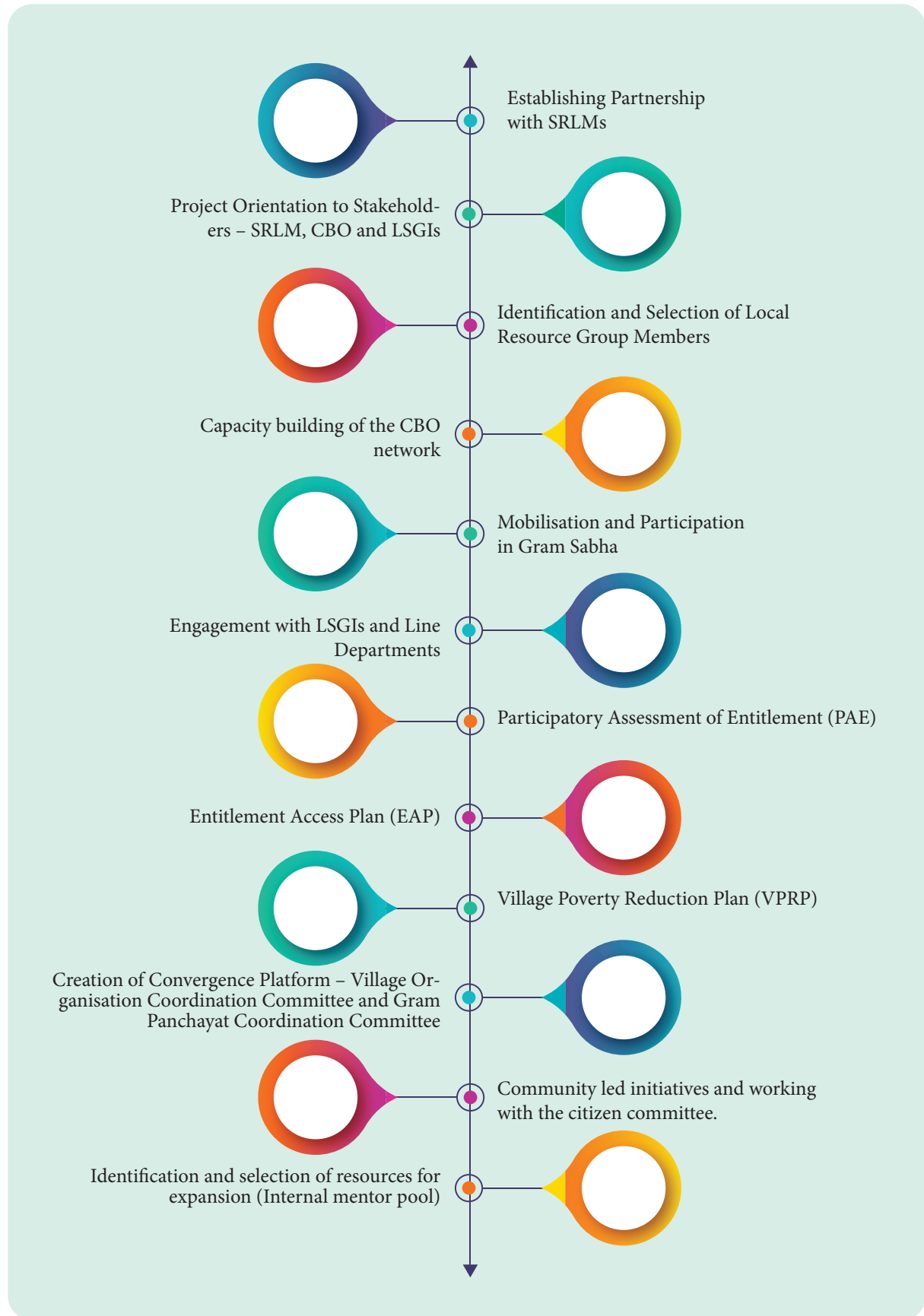
Community-Based Monitoring and Support: PRIs can facilitate the CBOs can actively participate establishment and functioning in citizen committees, such of citizen committees and as the Anganwadi Level monitoring systems. They Monitoring and Support can ensure these committees Committee and School are inclusive, representative, Management Committee, and empowered to act on bringing in community community feedback. perspectives and ensuring that monitoring and support mechanisms are effective. Their involvement can help identify issues early, propose solutions, and hold service providers accountable.

Recognising the critical role of convergence between PRIs and CBOs, the MoRD and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) initiated a collaborative effort to define and strengthen their partnership. In 2016, advisories were issued, and a workshop was jointly organised to foster a cohesive relationship between gram panchayats/LSGIs and the SHG networks of DAY-NRLM.

The collaboration focused on clearly defining the roles of PRIs and CBOs to enhance local governance and drive inclusive development. The primary objectives of this collaborative effort were to promote greater participation of SHGs and their federations in democratic processes, bolster the legitimacy of gram panchayats, and improve local-level planning.

By defining roles, raising awareness, facilitating collective decision-making, and improving local-level planning, this initiative sought to empower communities, mainly through the active participation of SHGs, and build a robust and responsive governance framework at the grassroots level. In the upcoming session, the process of facilitating convergence between PRIs and CBOs will be elaborated upon

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION



a. Establishing Partnership with SRLMs

To commence, KS-NRO conducts a reconnaissance visit to the concerned state to assess the field-level situation. The visit aims to understand the status of the Panchayati Raj system and the state CBO/SHG network. Based on the findings of the reconnaissance visit, KS-NRO formulated a strategy for project implementation. Once this is completed, KS-NRO agrees with the State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Partner states opt to implement the convergence program in a select number of panchayats, districts, or blocks as pilot areas to initiate the convergence program. They are chosen based on factors such as the prevailing poverty situation, the status and functioning of PRIs, and the presence of active CBOs/SHGs. Once the pilot areas are identified, KS-NRO, in consultation with SRLM, prepares a plan for project implementation. The plan encapsulates the program's vision, objectives, and strategy for addressing poverty and promoting inclusive development in the selected areas. After successful implementation in pilot areas, the convergence program is expanded to cover the entire state. Expansion is carried out gradually, focusing on scaling up successful interventions and replicating best practices from pilot areas.

b. Orientation to stakeholders: SRLM, CBO, and LSGIs

Introducing the PRI-CBO convergence project concept to all key stakeholders is imperative. As the implementing agency, SRLM officials at the state, district, and block levels are vital stakeholders responsible for implementing the project. They must thoroughly understand and internalise the project, including its intricate details and operational aspects. The CBO network, comprising SHGs, Village Organisations (VOs), and Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), is integral to the convergence model. They must comprehend the model and adequately prepare themselves

for the project rollout. Local governments, whether gram panchayats, village councils, or village authorities, hold a significant role within the model. Orientation sessions should be conducted to explain the project's objectives, principles, and operational modalities to members of the CBO network, empowering them to participate and contribute to its success actively.

c. Identification and Selection of Local Resource Group (LRG) Members:

To effectively implement the project within a gram panchayat, it is crucial to identify individuals who are panchayat residents with a deep understanding of the local context and culture. This necessitates forming a cadre group known as the Local Resource Group (LRG) in every gram panchayat. Each LRG comprises 5-7 SHG members, ensuring representation from various community sections during the CBO orientation process. After identification, members undergo a comprehensive selection process to ensure suitability for the role. Selected LRG members receive training and hands-on guidance from KS-NRO mentors. Training sessions cover various topics, including village development, poverty alleviation strategies, the structure and functioning of local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs), and the principles and tools of convergence.

d. Capacity Building of the CBO Network:

Developing the inherent capabilities of the CBO network is pivotal for empowering women and driving community development. The SHG network, as a central component of CBOs, not only serves as a support system for women but also positions them as crucial development agents. Consequently, throughout the project's duration, multiple training sessions are conducted to educate SHG members on effectively collaborating with local governments. This includes

understanding the roles and responsibilities of PRIs and how to participate in local decision-making processes. Detailed information is provided on navigating schemes and programs offered by different line departments. This includes understanding eligibility criteria, application processes, and the benefits available. Women are encouraged and trained to participate actively in the participatory planning process. The focus on empowering women and enhancing their participation in local governance ensures that development efforts are inclusive, reaching the most underprivileged and marginalised individuals.

e. Mobilisation and Participation in Gram Sabha:

The Gram Sabha, a constitutionally mandated platform for participatory democracy, is essential for village development. Active citizen participation in the Gram Sabha ensures that the voices and demands of the community are heard and deliberated democratically. The active involvement of SHG members and the broader CBO network is critical to invigorate the Gram Sabha and ensure its vibrancy. To facilitate this, federation members organise preparatory meetings with elected representatives and village heads before the Gram Sabha. These meetings are crucial for preparing demand plans and ensuring the community's needs are systematically presented.

To ensure maximum attendance, federation members disseminate information about the Gram Sabha agenda, venue, and timing through various channels, including door-to-door visits, community meetings, and digital platforms. SHG members are encouraged to participate actively in the Gram Sabha. Their involvement ensures that women's voices and perspectives are included in village development plans.

f. Engagement with LSGIs and Line Departments

Once the capacity of the CBO network is enhanced, LRGs play a crucial role in facilitating their engagement with elected representatives and village heads. CBO members are encouraged to hold joint stakeholder meetings with LSGIs, fostering direct communication and collaboration between the community and local self-governments. Elected representatives and village heads participate in orientations and training sessions to develop their capacities. These programs inspire and motivate them to actively engage with the community and CBOs in various activities, including planning, implementation, and monitoring. This is further reinforced through orientations, meetings, and exposure visits to Kerala. Confidence is also instilled by demonstrating the benefits of utilising CBOs as platforms for identifying beneficiaries of government schemes and programs.

The integration of line department officials into the PRI-CBO convergence project is essential for ensuring the last-mile delivery of various schemes and programs. Officials from multiple line departments receive orientations at different administrative levels—state, district, and block—familiarising them with the objectives and structure of the SRLM and the CBO network.

These sessions provide a comprehensive understanding of the CBOs' functions, their role in community development, and their capacity to support government scheme implementation. Officials are trained to recognise how CBOs can play a key role in ensuring schemes reach their intended beneficiaries. Given that line departments manage many poverty-alleviation schemes, the project emphasises fostering collaboration between CBOs and these departments to address the multifaceted challenges of poverty effectively.

g. Participatory Assessment of Entitlement (PAE)

The Participatory Assessment Exercise (PAE) is a cornerstone of the PRI-CBO convergence program, functioning as an interactive discussion module conducted at the SHG level. PAE sessions help disseminate crucial information among SHG members regarding various government entitlements and benefits available to them. PAE is instrumental in gathering baseline data for the pilot projects under the PRI-CBO convergence program. This data provides insights into the current level of access to schemes and services by SHGs and the broader community. Based on the data collected through PAE, CBOs can identify the specific needs and demands of the community. Based on the data collected through PAE, CBOs can identify the specific needs and demands of the community.

h. Entitlement Access Plan (EAP)

The Entitlement Access Plan (EAP) is a strategic initiative designed to address gaps in access to entitlements identified during the PAE. Each VO prepares a targeted EAP based on PAE data, which serves as the baseline for setting and achieving specific goals. The process is systematically structured to ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation, fostering an environment of accountability and progress.

The baseline data from PAE provides a comprehensive understanding of existing gaps in access to various government schemes and entitlements. This data forms the foundation upon which the EAP is built. The VO identifies specific areas with a lack of access to entitlements, ensuring that the plan is targeted and focused on actual community needs. Each VO sets quarterly targets aimed at bridging the identified gaps. These targets are clear, measurable, and achievable within the stipulated time frame. The VO regularly monitors progress against the set targets. This involves periodic reviews and assessments to ensure the goals are met.

The story of Roshni Didi is shared within

the VO to inspire and motivate members. This narrative highlights the challenges and successes in accessing entitlements, serving as a practical example and motivational tool.

i. Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP)

In 2015, KS-NRO introduced a participatory planning strategy called the Gram Panchayat Poverty Reduction Plan (GP2RP). This initiative was developed in response to the allocation of funds from the Fourteenth Finance Commission to gram panchayats, aiming to effectively use these resources to alleviate poverty at the village level. The GPRP was later expanded and rolled out as the VPRP, focusing on a broader, more inclusive approach to poverty reduction.

The VPRP, built on this foundation, is a community demand plan prepared by the SHG network and is designed to be integrated into the GPDP. By integrating the demands and plans of the SHG network, the VPRP ensures a cohesive and collaborative approach to village development. The active engagement of community members, capacity building of local stakeholders, and effective utilisation of resources are key to the success of the VPRP, making it a model for sustainable and inclusive poverty reduction. VPRP encompasses entitlements, livelihood, public goods, services, resource development, and social development needs of the CBO network.

j. Creation of Convergence Platforms

Recognising the need for institutional structures at the gram panchayat level for engaging directly with the panchayats, two convergence platforms were established:

i) Village Organisation Coordination Committee (VOCC)

The VOCC serves as a platform to bring together the VOs at the gram panchayat level. This committee is structured to include representatives from each VO within the gram panchayat, ensuring that all VOs have a

voice in the discussions. VOCC is designed to complement, not replace, existing institutional structures within the state. It acts as a confederation of VOs. The primary function of the VOCC is to discuss development and welfare issues raised during VO meetings. It serves as a forum for addressing these issues at the panchayat level.

(ii) Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee (GPCC)

The GPCC aims to foster convergence between CBOs and PRIs for more effective participatory governance. This platform includes members from CBOs, PRIs, and various line departments. It operates at the gram panchayat level, providing a localised platform for collaboration. The GPCC facilitates engagement between CBO members and panchayat representatives, promoting collaboration in development activities.

k. Community-led Initiatives and Citizen Committee Involvement

As a result of multiple training sessions and project activities, the CBO network in various panchayats has become significantly more knowledgeable and proactive in addressing local social issues and facilitating community access to government schemes. CBO members regularly interact with various line departments to discuss the implementation and access to schemes. These interactions lead to the initiation of convergence camps within their panchayats or villages. The project has improved the CBO network's understanding of various citizen committees, such as the Anganwadi Level Monitoring and Support Committees (ALMSCs) and the Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC). Members are encouraged and supported to participate actively in these committees.

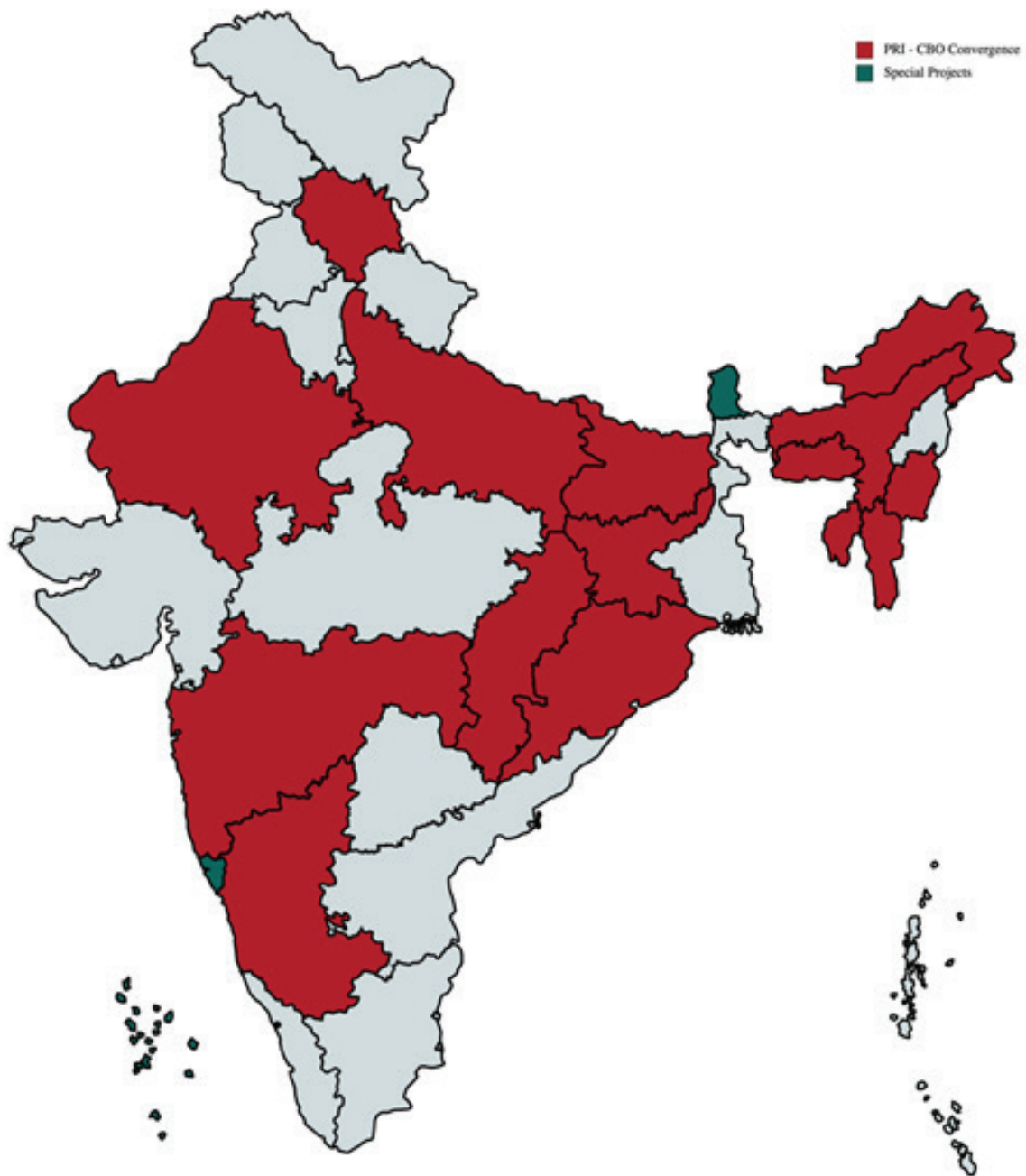
l. Identification and Selection of Resources for Expansion (Internal Mentor Pool)

The PRI-CBO convergence project in pilot locations begins with the crucial step of establishing LRGs. These groups form the project's backbone and are essential for its successful implementation and subsequent expansion. Members are chosen based on their skills, aptitude, and connection to SHGs. Most LRG members are either SHG members themselves or have strong connections to SHGs, ensuring they deeply understand community dynamics and development needs.

LRG members undergo formal training sessions that cover various aspects of local development, governance, and the specifics of the PRI-CBO convergence project. These practical sessions involve real-life scenarios and activities that help LRG members apply their classroom knowledge to actual situations in their communities. Through training, LRG members enhance their skills in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and community mobilisation. LRGs that demonstrate exceptional performance and impact can serve as models for the project.

Outstanding LRG members are identified, provided with additional training, and prepared to take on the role of Internal Mentors (IMs). During the expansion phase of the project, these IMs are deployed to new locations. Their responsibilities include guiding new LRGs, providing mentorship, and ensuring the effective implementation of the project.

II.Outreach of KS – NRO



Sl. No	State	Project Period	No. of Districts	No. of Blocks	No. of LSGs	No. of LRGs	No. of IMs
1	Arunachal Pradesh	Oct 2021 - March 2023	4	4	56	66	-
2	Assam	Aug 2014 - March 2023	16	40	324	669	52
3	Bihar	Feb 2022 - March 2023	3	6	50	464	-
4	Chhattisgarh	Apr 2017 – May 2018	5	5	71	137	20
5	Himachal Pradesh	Feb 2022 - March 2023	2	2	40	120	-
6	Jharkhand	Aug 2014 – Mar 2019	10	36	320	989	124
7	Karnataka	Aug 2014 – Jan 2017	2	4	40	173	-
8	Maharashtra	Aug 2014 – Jan 2017	3	3	58	270	-
9	Manipur	Feb 2018 - March 2023	2	6	131	242	33
10	Meghalaya	July 2021 – August 2022	3	4	80	135	-
11	Mizoram	Oct 2018 - March 2023	2	5	80	156	14
12	Odisha	Aug 2014– Jan 2017	4	4	11	109	25
13	Rajasthan	Sept 2015 – Oct 2017	3	4	67	342	-
14	Tripura	Jan 2017 – Mar 2020	3	12	272	1632	87
15	Uttar Pradesh	Sept 2018 – Mar 2021	10	10	100	251	-
Total			73	146	1548	5755	355

FOOTPRINTS

Based on NRLM-created CBOs collaborating with gram panchayats, the PRI-CBO convergence model aims to promote grassroots democracy and enable participatory planning in villages. Over the years, the model has achieved several significant milestones:

A. Developing a pool of community cadre and capacity building

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project has established a robust framework for enhancing local governance and community participation in development activities. The project has successfully established a substantial pool of LRG members and Internal-mentors (IMs) across 15 pilot states. As of April 2023, 5,755 LRG members and 355 IMs are actively engaged in facilitating the project. These individuals have been pivotal in the project's success due to their deep community connections, social capital, and negotiation skills.

B. Creation of institutional platforms of convergence

Without a panchayat-level federation of CBOs, 243 VOCCs have been formed in the project intervention areas. VOCCs ensure that development activities are inclusive and cater to the needs of all community members, including marginalised groups. By acting as a vital link between community federations and panchayats, VOCCs have successfully facilitated better coordination and access to services, contributing to the overall socio-economic development of the region.

C. Formation of Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee (GPCC):

Establishing Gram Panchayat Coordination Committees (GPCCs) at the panchayat level has been a significant milestone in promoting participatory governance and grassroots empowerment across 148 gram panchayats in Jharkhand, Assam, and Karnataka. GPCCs include elected representatives from the gram panchayats, ensuring democratic representation and decision-making. The presence of leaders from VOs or VOCCs ensures the inclusion of community perspectives and grassroots insights. This committee has ensured social and economic empowerment by making entitlements and rights accessible to vulnerable individuals within the panchayats through the collaborative efforts of all grassroots stakeholders.

D. Improved awareness of SHG members regarding schemes and access to entitlements:

The PAE has been instrumental in raising awareness among SHGs and their federations about various poverty reduction schemes implemented by central and state governments. Based on the insights gained from PAE, SHGs and their federations can prepare an Entitlement Access Plan (EAP). This plan outlines specific targets and actions to improve community members' access to government entitlements and services. Additionally, VOs can use the findings from PAE and EAP to develop a VPRP. This comprehensive plan addresses the broader development needs of the village and prioritises interventions to uplift the socio-economic status of community members.

E. Improvement in Panchayat Governance:

With a strong community pool actively working with gram panchayats to achieve the common goals of local development and poverty reduction, the governance process at gram panchayats

and other LSGIs has improved. Extensive SHG member engagement with LSGIs has increased service delivery and improved the quality of life for the community in the intervention areas.

F. Increased demand and participation in MGNREGS work:

The heightened awareness about permissible works under the MGNREGS has catalysed a surge in demand for MGNREGS works facilitated by the proactive efforts of VOs. They have played a pivotal role in organising job card registration events and identifying and prioritising works that align with local development needs and priorities. The prioritised lists of works prepared by VOs are presented and submitted during Gram Sabha meetings, where they undergo democratic deliberation and approval. As a result of heightened awareness and active engagement facilitated by VOs, there has been a notable increase in SHG members' participation in MGNREGS worksites. The surge in demand for MGNREGS works, coupled with the increased involvement of SHG members, has translated into tangible benefits for rural livelihoods and socio-economic development.

G. Active participation in local democratic platforms:

SHGs play a proactive role in planning and organising gram sabha meetings. Their active involvement in strengthening the institution of the gram sabha has indeed had a transformative impact on community participation and engagement in local governance. They serve as powerful advocates for community demands within the gram sabha, mobilising gram sabhas to negotiate with gram panchayats and authorities regarding beneficiaries' eligibility for various government schemes and programs. This has revitalised grassroots democracy, enhanced community participation, and facilitated

bottom-up development initiatives.

H. More SHG members contesting local government elections:


The emergence of politically empowered cadres and SHG members actively participating in local elections marks a significant milestone in the PRI-CBO convergence program. The participation of SHG members in local elections has led to increased representation of marginalised communities and grassroots voices in decision-making bodies such as gram panchayats, ward committees, and block and zilla panchayats. Even if they do not win elections, the experience of contesting builds their confidence, leadership skills, and political acumen.

F. The emergence of community-led initiatives:

The transformation of the SHG network into an agency for local development within gram panchayats demonstrates the effectiveness of the capacity-building approach in empowering communities. SHG federations have initiated a wide range of activities to address various community needs and challenges. These activities include establishing weekly markets to promote local economic development, re-enrolling drop-out students to ensure access to education, setting up nutri gardens in schools and Anganwadis to improve nutrition, and conducting awareness sessions on violence against women and children to promote safety and well-being. They actively participate in facilitating, monitoring, and following these initiatives, demonstrating their commitment to driving local development efforts.

J. Revival of Citizen Committees:

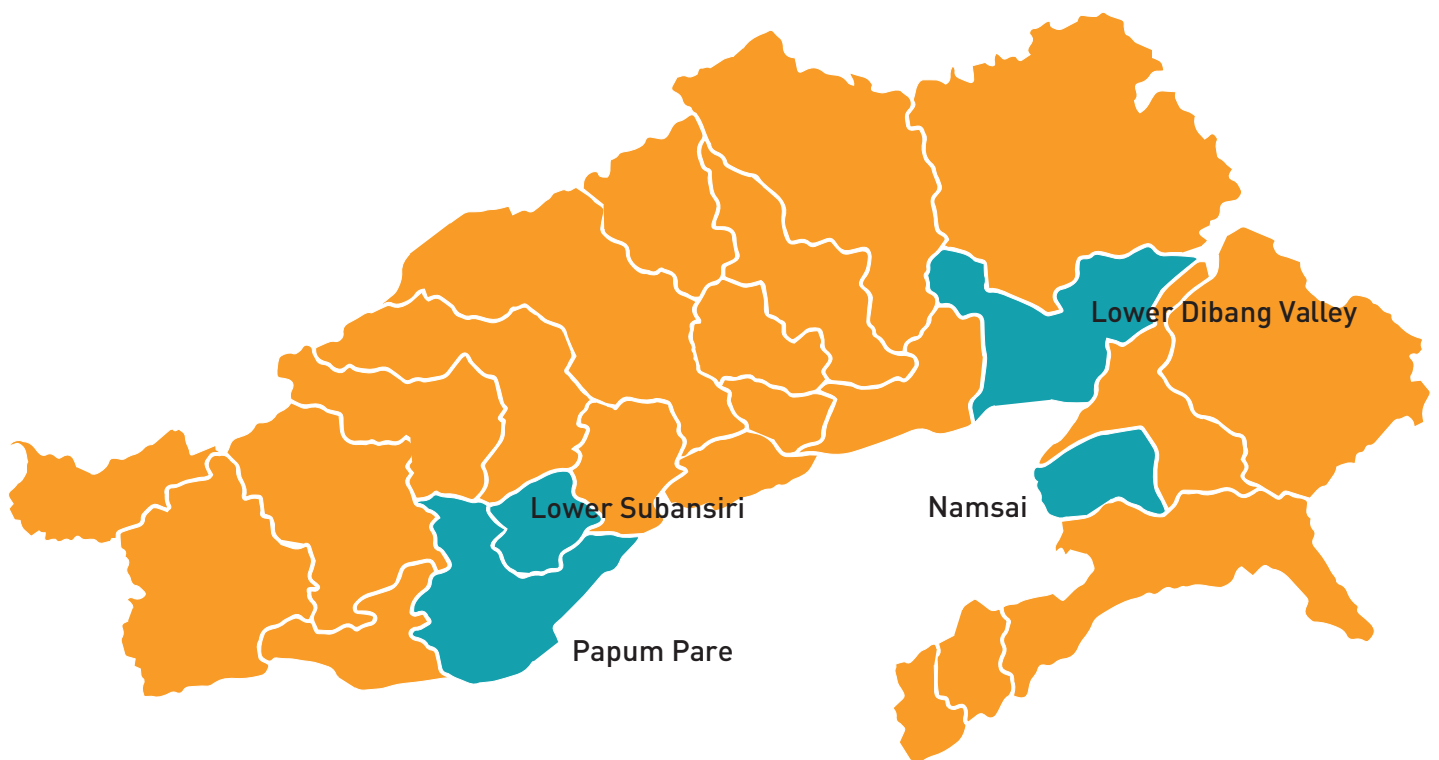
The emphasis on working with citizen-led committees at various levels within the gram panchayat structure underscores the PRI-CBO convergence program's commitment to promoting grassroots participation and



accountability. Citizen-led committees, such as Anganwadi Level Monitoring and Support Committees (ALMSCs) and School Management Committees (SMCs), bring together community members, gram panchayat representatives, and frontline workers to oversee service delivery in critical areas like education and childcare. The primary role of these committees is to monitor and supervise the functioning of Anganwadi centres and schools within their jurisdiction. Citizen-led committees promote transparency and accountability in service delivery by actively engaging in monitoring and oversight activities. Through the activities, 21 Anganwadi Level Monitoring and Support Committees (ALMSCs) and 69 School Management Committees (SMCs) have been revived across multiple states.

In addition to the broader impacts of the PRI-CBO convergence project, it is important to acknowledge that each state has gained unique experiences and insights during the rollout. These valuable lessons and impacts are shared in more detail in the subsequent chapters of this report. By delving into the specific experiences of each state, a comprehensive understanding of the project's implementation and its effects on the ground can be gained. These insights provide a deeper perspective on different states' successes, challenges, and strategies, contributing to the overall knowledge and learning in PRI-CBO convergence. Each state's context, governance structures, and community dynamics influence the program's implementation and outcomes, making it essential to analyse and document.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH



District

- Namsai
- Lower Dibang Valley
- Papum Pare
- Lower Subansiri

Background of State

Arunachal Pradesh, also known as “The Land of Rising Sun,” is a state in northeastern India. It is bordered by China to the north, Assam and Nagaland to the south, Myanmar to the southeast, and Bhutan to the west. It was formerly known as the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) and was declared a state of India on 20 February 1987. Itanagar is its capital and largest town.

With a population of 1,383,727 according to the 2011 Census of India and an area of 83,743 square kilometres (32,333 sq mi), Arunachal Pradesh is the least densely populated state in India, with only 17 inhabitants per square kilometre. It is ethnically diverse, with predominant ethnic groups including the Monpa people in the west, Tani people in the centre, Mishmi and Tai people in the east, and Naga people in the southeast. The state is home to around 26 major tribes and 100 sub-tribes, including the Nyishi, Nocte, Adi, Singpho, Galo, Tagin, and Apatani. The Nyishi constitute the largest ethnic group in the region, while the Mishmi tribe comprises three sub-tribes: Idu-Mishmi, Digaru-Mishmi, and Miju-Mishmi.

Administratively, Arunachal Pradesh is divided into 25 districts. Formerly part of Assam, it became a union territory in 1972 before attaining statehood in 1987. Culturally, Arunachal Pradesh is home to dozens of distinct ethnic groups, many of which share cultural ties with Tibet and Western Myanmar. Over two-thirds of the state’s population is officially designated Scheduled Tribes.

PRI system in the state:

The PRIs in Arunachal Pradesh are relatively new compared to those in other states. The current LSG emerged in December 2020, following a two-year transition from a three-tier

to a two-tier local governance system. During a field-level assessment, it was observed that the newly elected members at the gram panchayat level had not received any training regarding their roles, responsibilities, and functions. Developmental and administrative activities experienced a prolonged pause due to COVID-19 restrictions until August 2021. There was limited practical experience among PRIs in planning MGNREGS work and preparing the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)

Role of NRLM in the state:

The Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM) is an autonomous society registered under the Society Registration Act of 1860 under the aegis of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh. It is the Nodal agency that implements the state’s NRLM Schemes. The Mission embodies the principles and vision of NRLM while keeping in mind the State’s unique features. The intervention of NRLM is initiated in 55 blocks in 22 Districts. Structurally, ArSRLM comprises staff at the state, district, and block levels to cater to the requirements of rural areas across the state. There are 8 DMMUs; each DMMU covers more than 1 district (more than 8 BMMUs).

Role of CBOs in the state:

The SHGs and their federations were relatively mature, especially under the CLFs in the selected resource blocks. They actively held regular meetings and engaged in thrift and credit activities. Despite their maturity, these federations had limited interaction with PRI members, with interactions primarily confined to submitting VPRP demands. Since most Primary Level Federations (PLFs) included SHGs from multiple-gram panchayats, coordination with PRIs was challenging. The Block Mission Management Unit (BMMU) was

crucial in bridging this coordination gap. Although sub-committees were formed at the PLF level, members needed more clarity regarding their roles.

Consequently, these sub-committees were not actively involved in activities after their formation and initial training. Social issues were discussed during SHG-PLF meetings. However, more systematic interventions need to be planned to address these issues. A follow-up on VPRP demands by PLF members or cadres needs to be done after the submission of the plans. Furthermore, until the VPRP submissions, there was no formal platform for initiating dialogue between the SHG network and PRIs. This meant the first interaction between SHG networks and PRIs was often about demanding entitlements, which could pose challenges, particularly for newly formed PRIs.

The mission staff at the block level coordinated with line departments to arrange special projects, such as Poshan Maah with the Women & Child Development Department and livelihood training for the livelihood cadre and PLF members. However, PLF members had limited direct engagement in coordinating with these line departments. In Western Arunachal, particularly in the blocks of Sagalee and Yachuli, many Anganwadi centres and government schools were not functioning correctly. Issues included illiteracy among Anganwadi workers, centres used only for food kit distribution, and the need for elementary education opportunities. Many primary schools in remote villages were non-operational due to a lack of students, absence of staff quarters, inadequate infrastructure, and poor connectivity. Initial discussions with PRIs, Gaon Buras, and community members highlighted these issues but revealed a need for community ownership to address them.

PRI-CBO convergence project:

In October 2021, the Arunachal State Rural Livelihood Mission (ArSRLM) formally partnered with KS-NRO to implement the PRI-CBO Convergence Project. This project was implemented across 55 panchayats in four blocks of four districts in the state. KS-NRO provided technical support and assigned eight Mentor Resource Persons to facilitate the implementation.

Profile of the intervention areas:

District	Block	No. of Intervention Gram Panchayats	No. of PLFs covered	No. of SHGs covered
Namsai	Namsai	19	12	108
Lower Dibang Valley	Roing	13	8	63
Papum Pare	Sagalee	11	8	83
Lower Subansiri	Yachuli	12	8	59
TOTAL		55	36	313

The strategy adopted in the State:

The strategy adopted in the state involved fostering dialogue among various stakeholders, including officials from Arunachal Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM), SHG federations, PRI members, and traditional leaders. The following activities were initiated to achieve this:

1) Orientation and Mapping:

The initial approach involved initiating formal and informal dialogue forums to facilitate collaboration and partnership among key stakeholders. Orientation sessions were conducted for PRI members at the block level, gram panchayat members, Gaon Buras (village headmen), and frontline workers in the presence of PLF members. Additionally, gram panchayat mapping exercises were carried out by all major stakeholders within the gram panchayat.

2) Gram Sabhas:

Special gram sabhas were organised as part of the initial activities to facilitate dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders. These meetings served as inclusive platforms for all stakeholders to come together, including PRI members, SHG federations, traditional leaders, frontline workers, and community members. The meetings provided a forum for stakeholders to understand the roles, responsibilities, and functions of each institution within the local governance structure. Participants engaged in discussions to identify and address local issues and challenges prevailing in their gram panchayats. This exchange of ideas allowed stakeholders to prioritise and strategise collective actions to tackle community-level concerns effectively.

3) Involving the traditional heads:

Traditional heads, such as Gaon Buras and Bango Secretaries, were involved in all village

and panchayat-level meetings, significantly facilitating dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders. Their extensive experience, social standing, and deep-rooted connections within the community provided valuable insights into developmental and operational issues.

Compared to newly elected PRI members who may have been less familiar with local dynamics and challenges, traditional heads brought a wealth of knowledge and wisdom accumulated over years of serving their communities. Their perspectives helped PRI members gain a deeper understanding of the nuanced issues affecting the community and guided them in formulating effective strategies for addressing these challenges. Furthermore, the involvement of traditional heads in village and panchayat-level meetings served as a bridge between stakeholders, including PRI members and the SHG network.

4) Joint identification of Social Issues:

Once rapport was established among major stakeholders, the next step was to collaboratively identify locally relevant issues that required the participation of all stakeholders. After placing the priority issues, stakeholders developed a comprehensive action plan. This plan outlined specific strategies and interventions to address the problems identified effectively. Each stakeholder contributed their resources and expertise, and a mapping exercise was conducted to identify the available resources and support that each stakeholder group could extend. Activities such as gram panchayat profiling and social development planning were integral to this process.

5) Addressing Social Issues:

Identifying social issues such as school dropouts, adult illiteracy, substance abuse, and the non-functioning of public institutions as priorities reflects a comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing the

community. To address these challenges, stakeholders engaged in consultative meetings to develop plans and interventions tailored to the specific needs of each issue.

Joint efforts and collaboration among stakeholders characterised the implementation of interventions. PRI members, line departments, and PLFs collaborated to execute the plans developed during the consultative process. This collaborative approach positioned the SHG network as a support institution, highlighting its role as a beneficiary of welfare schemes and an active contributor to local development.

6) Coordination with District Administration:

Establishing frequent coordination with the district administration, particularly with critical officials such as the Deputy Commissioner and District Panchayat Development Officer (DPDO), was a strategic approach to ensure alignment, support, and effective project implementation. By keeping these officials updated on the project’s progress and discussing upcoming plans, the project team could ensure that their activities aligned with broader development objectives and priorities at the district level.

Furthermore, seeking support from the district administration for specific activities was instrumental in overcoming challenges and mobilising resources. In districts like Lower Dibang Valley and Namsai, the administration and line departments received significant support for various convergence projects. This support extended to implementing VPRP demands and legitimising community-driven initiatives.

Activity timeline:

Following is the timeline of the project activities:

Project Activity	Oct-Dec 2021			Jan-March 2022			April-June 2022			July-Sep 2022			Oct-Dec 2022			Jan-March 2023		
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Entry Activities																		
State-level roll-out workshop	N																	
CBO Orientations	N	D					D											
Local Resource Group (LRG) selection			D	J			D											
Block-level PRI orientations			D	J			D			J								
LRG training				J						J								
GP-level PRI orientations				J	F	M				J								
District-level orientation					F	M				J			F				M	
GP profile preparation and mapping						M	A						F				M	
Special gram sabha						M	A											M
Concept seeding training on social development plans for PLFs																		M
PLF strengthening training																		
Training to LRGs on PAE and mock PAE																		
Participatory Assessment of Entitlements at the SHG level										J	A							

Project Activity	Oct-Dec 2021	Jan-March 2022	April-June 2022	July-Sep 2022	Oct-Dec 2022	Jan-March 2023
VPRP Plan Preparations						
State-level training to DMMU & BMMU on VPRP				A		
Training to cadres on VPRP and VPRP mobile application				A		
CLF concept seeding				A	S	
PLF concept seeding					S	
Block-level orientation to PRI members on VPRP					S	
VPRP demand collection, prioritisation, and entry in mobile application						O
Participation of SHGs on 2nd October gram sabha						O
Presentation & submission of VPRP demands in GPDP gram sabha					O	N D
VPRP Follow-up (Steps for demand actualisation)						
Entitlement Access Plan preparation at the PLF level						N D
District level line department meetings						D J F
Block-level joint stakeholder meetings						D J F
Exit Activities						
Block-level exit workshop						M
State-level performance appraisal of LRGs						M
State-level exit cum orientation workshop						M

Key outcomes of the project:

1. Entry Level Activity-Gram Panchayat Profiling:

Conducting gram panchayat profiling was a crucial initial activity in Arunachal Pradesh, serving as a foundational step towards understanding the socio-economic landscape and development needs of each gram panchayat. The profiling exercise aimed to gather the following comprehensive information across various domains:

1. Basic Information about the gram panchayat
2. Demography

3. Major Institutions

4. Various community assets

5. Information related to education and Women & Child Development (WCD)

6. Access to basic facilities

7. Source of livelihood

8. SHG network profile

Since no updated database or recent surveys were available for the pilot areas, the gram panchayat profiles filled this gap by providing baseline data for further planning and intervention. Annual surveys like Mission Antyodaya had not been conducted in the pilot

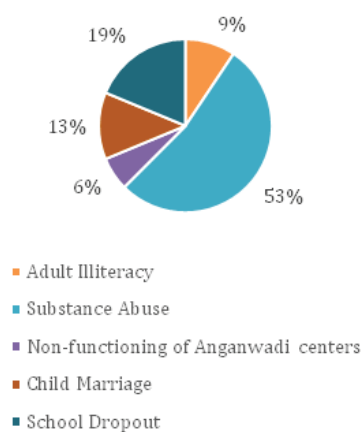
areas. These profiles served as valuable reference documents for identifying priority areas, formulating development strategies, and tracking progress over time.

Moreover, conducting gram panchayat profiles also served as a capacity-building exercise for LRGs. LRG members gained firsthand knowledge about the local context, challenges, and opportunities by engaging with stakeholders within the gram panchayats. Furthermore, presenting gram panchayat profile booklets during special gram sabhas across the four blocks facilitated broader community engagement and participation. These profiles served as discussion points, enabling stakeholders to collectively identify priorities, strategise action plans, and mobilise resources for addressing local needs.

2.Planning and Implementation of Intervention around Social Issues:

The activity that fostered collaboration among the different stakeholders was centred on addressing prevailing social issues. As a part of this initiative, introducing the concept of developing Social Development Plans at the PLF level marked a crucial step towards addressing prevailing social issues in the communities. The initiative laid the foundation for identifying and prioritising specific social challenges within their respective panchayats by raising awareness among PLF members about the distinction between social and developmental issues. This activity was implemented across all four blocks.

Issues identified by the PLFs



Social Issues Identified	No. of PLFs identified the issue
Adult Illiteracy	3
Substance Abuse	17
Non-functioning of Anganwadi centers	2
Child Marriage	4
School Dropout	6

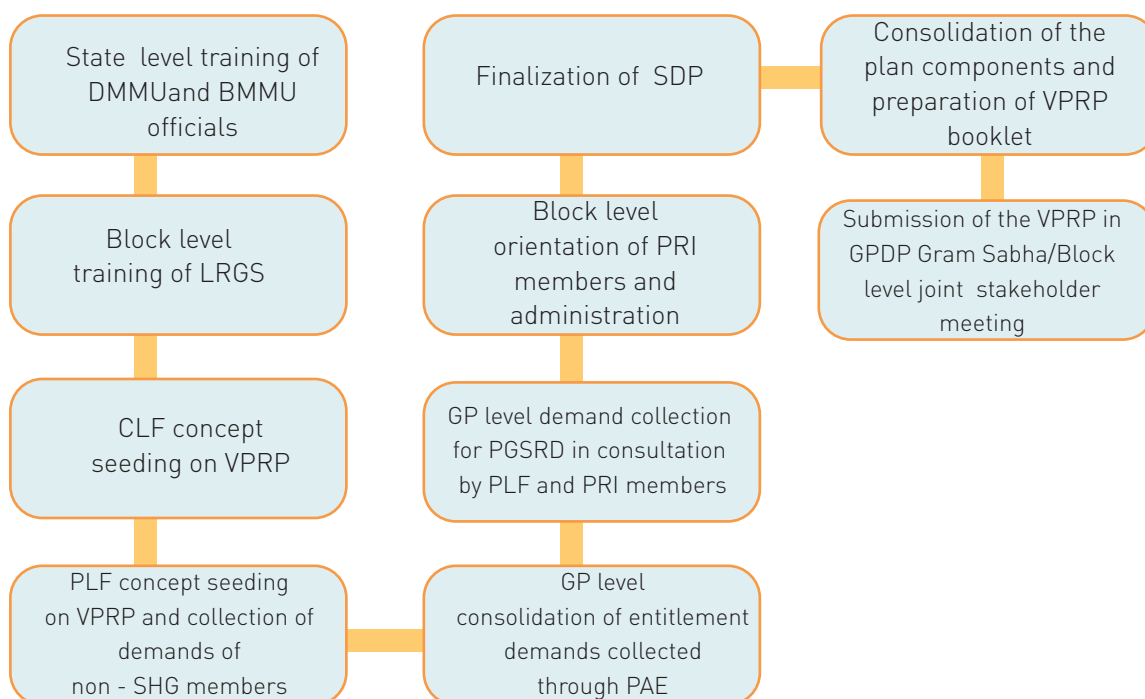
Following the identification of social issues, the next step was the preparation of the Social Development Plans (SDPs). The PLFs, empowered by their training and sensitisation sessions, drafted the initial versions of the SDPs during a dedicated two-day training session for executive members. During this training, participants were equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the intricacies of SDP formulation and the roles of various sub-committees. Special emphasis was placed on the vital role of the PLF-OB members in overseeing and monitoring the activities of the sub-committees and cadres, highlighting their accountability in the process. Of particular importance was the focus on the social-action sub-committee, which played a pivotal role in the preparation and execution of the SDP. Based on the social issues identified during the concept seeding phase, the Executive Committee (EC) members collaborated to draft the initial version of the SDP.

3.Participatory Assessment of Entitlements:

During the PLF concept seeding for SDP, a significant issue surfaced across all four blocks: the inadequate coverage of medical expenses for members. This issue stemmed from various factors, such as the absence of health cards, expired program cards, or a need to know how to access benefits from schemes like PMJAY and CMAAY. Additionally, misinformation about specific schemes exacerbated the problem. PAE was conducted across all 313 SHGs in the four blocks to tackle these challenges effectively. The PAE's primary objective was to raise awareness among SHG members about their rights and entitlements and to gather data about their access to them. During the PAE, SHG members and households were identified, and their access to entitlements was assessed. Simultaneously, those who were eligible but lacked access were also identified. This data collection process provided crucial insights into the entitlement landscape within the communities. It served as the foundation for identifying entitlement demands, which became an integral component of the VPRP.

4.Village Poverty Reduction Plan Preparation:

Following were the steps adopted for the VPRP preparations in the state:



5. Village Poverty Reduction Plan Demand Follow-up:

Mechanisms were established within the PLFs and CLFs to ensure the effective integration and realisation of VPRP demands and address the limited financial resources available to PRIs. These mechanisms involved a series of strategic steps to align the VPRP demands with available resources and enhance their execution. Some of the critical steps include:

i. Consolidation of demands:

Following the PAE at the SHG level, demands were consolidated at the PLF for further action. Each PLF developed an EAP to set quarterly targets for various government schemes based on the information collected during PAE. This approach allowed the PLF to take responsibility for the entitlement plans prepared collectively and ensured their successful implementation.

ii. Entitlement access plan:

Recognising that many entitlements could be fulfilled directly by relevant line departments, the PLF, with the support of LRGs, categorised the demands according to the specific departments responsible. These demands were then presented and submitted in forums like district-level line department meetings and block-level joint stakeholder meetings.

iii. Leveraging government projects:

Existing state government programs, such as “Seva Aapke Dwar” (Service at Your Doorstep), were utilised in all blocks to fulfil certain demands. This included issuing birth certificates, Aadhaar cards, pension benefits, and more.

iv. Enrolment camps:

Enrolment camps were organised across the four blocks in collaboration with various line departments. These camps facilitated processes such as CMAAY/PMJAY health card registration, E-shram card enrolment, Aadhaar

card issuance, participation in schemes like PMSBY and PMJJBY, and enrolment in Atal Pension Yojana (APY) and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana.

6. Block-Level Exit Workshop:

The block-level exit workshop marked a critical step in ensuring the sustainability of the project activities following the departure of the Kudumbashree-NRO team. This workshop was designed to unite key stakeholders, including PLF social action sub-committee members, Cluster Level Federation Executive Committee (CLF-EC) members, and LRG cadres, to devise a comprehensive plan for continuing convergence activities from April 2023 onwards.

During the workshop, each LRG presented the activities carried out in their respective gram panchayats, highlighting their impact. They also shared their plans for the next six months, focusing on maintaining and expanding convergence-related activities for village development. After the presentations, CLF-EC members and LRG cadres collaboratively prepared a detailed plan. This plan emphasised coordination with line departments and PRI members to ensure the seamless continuation of activities.

PRI members participated in the workshop in some blocks, providing valuable insights on how LRGs had supported gram panchayats during gram sabha mobilisation and information collection. The collaborative approach adopted during the workshop aimed to ensure that the positive momentum generated by the project would continue, even after the project had existed, fostering sustainable development in the communities.

7. State-level LRG Appraisal:

On March 21 and 22, 2022, a comprehensive state-level appraisal of LRGs was conducted in Itanagar. This significant event brought together all LRGs from the four intervention

blocks to evaluate their work over the previous fifteen months. The appraisal aimed to assess multiple facets of their performance to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the PRI-CBO convergence project. The evaluation process focused on various aspects, including their field performance, technical knowledge, planning capabilities, and communication skills.

Out of the 66 currently active LRGs, 54 actively participated in the two-day appraisal event. Following the assessment, LRGs were ranked based on their performance and scores. This ranking was organised block-wise, providing a clear picture of each LRG's strengths and areas for improvement. Once the engagement policy is finalised, the rank sheets from the appraisal can serve as a valuable resource for selecting internal mentors as part of the universalisation process. The ranking system helps identify those LRGs with exemplary performance and capabilities, which can then be leveraged to support and mentor others in achieving their goals.

Activities	Major issues	Interventions	Stakeholders	Outcome
Entry Level Activity-Gram Panchayat Profiling	Absence of an updated database, Annual surveys like Mission Antyodaya had not been conducted in the pilot areas	GP profiling, LRGs capacity building	Various stakeholders	GP profile booklets submitted to gram sabha, Capacity-building exercise for the LRGs
Planning and Implementation of Intervention around Social Issues	Addressing prevailing social issues	Introducing the concept of developing Social Development Plans,	PLF members	Building awareness about the nature of social issues, differentiating them from developmental issues and subsequently identifying specific social issues within their respective panchayats.
Participatory Assessment of Entitlements	Lack of proper medical expense coverage for members due to the absence of health cards, expired program cards, or a lack of knowledge on how to access benefits from PMJAY and CMAAY cards, misinformation regarding certain schemes	PAE was conducted in all 313 SHGs across the four blocks to	SHG members and households with existing access, as well as those eligible but currently lacking access	Raise awareness and gather data on rights and entitlement access.
VPRP Preparation	Mere submission of plans in the gram sabha was insufficient because the PRIs had lined more to fulfil all the demands.	Ensure the integration and realisation of VPRP demands, Mechanisms to ensure the achievement of VPRP demands	PLF and CLF	Consolidation of demands, Entitlement access plan, Leveraging government projects, Enrolment camps

and supplementary nutritional services were resumed. Following ALMSC formation, awareness Classes on menstrual hygiene, good touch and bad touch, and mobile addiction were conducted for adolescent girls. Anaemia check-ups were also conducted.

A.Community-led initiatives

1.Day care centre:

8. The initiative taken by the community in Samaguri, Namsai, to address the challenge of distant Anganwadi centres demonstrates their proactive approach to meeting Qualitative Outcomes

B.Creation of internal resource pool- Local Resource Group

Over the course of 15 months, a dedicated training and capacity-building program was implemented to enhance the knowledge and capabilities of 69 LRGs across the four intervention blocks in Arunachal Pradesh. Out of the initially selected LRGs, 66 remained actively engaged until the exit of the Kudumbashree NRO team.

The training areas included:

- a) Panchayati Raj Institutions in Arunachal Pradesh
- b) Importance of working with PRIs and line departments and scope of convergence
- c) ICDS project and citizens' committees like Anganwadi Level Monitoring and Support Committees (ALMSCs) and Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs)
- d) Training on Participatory Assessment of Entitlements and Entitlement Access Plan; government schemes, eligibility criteria and process of accessing the schemes.
- e) Social Development Plan preparations.
- f) Gram Sabha as a democratic platform and the importance of SHGs' active participation
- g) CMAAY card registration training by the Health Department
- h) Health impacts on drug abuse by the Health Department
- i) Enrolment process for Sukanya Samridhi Yojana by Postal Services Department
- j) Fire safety measures and victim compensation
- k) Nutri-garden and floriculture for beautification purposes by KVK
- l) Mushroom cultivation training by KVK and ArSRLM livelihood official

C.Capacity building of PRIs and CBOs

Over 17 months, comprehensive orientation and training sessions were conducted for PRI and CBO members. The primary goal of these sessions was to enhance their understanding and capacity to contribute to local development initiatives effectively. Some of the key aspects covered include:

- a) Participatory demand identification
- b) Working on social issues by preparing SDP
- c) Reactivating citizen committee's (ALMSC, VHSNC, SMC)
- d) Joint planning for conducting health insurance registration camps.

e) Joint implementation of an adult literacy class

D. Collaboration and coordination between PRI and CBO

1. Coordination with Stakeholders:

During the initial phase of the project, a strategic and focused effort was made to orient PRI members. This was achieved through a series of preparatory meetings and continuous follow-up sessions to ensure PRI members were well-informed and actively engaged in project activities. This orientation was achieved through preparatory meetings and continuous follow-up. The objective was to ensure that PRI members were well-informed and actively engaged in the project activities. This helped the PRI members conduct regular meetings with stakeholders at the village level, including frontline workers and SRLM cadres. The active involvement of PRI members contributed to the successful implementation and monitoring of various government schemes, benefiting the local community.

2. Adult Literacy Classes:

The Padhna Likhna Abhiyan initiative of the Central Government successfully initiated adult literacy classes in selected government schools in the Sagalee block. This initiative inspired the elderly residents of Lower Gai village in the Humd gram panchayat, Sagalee, to seek similar educational opportunities in their village. After discussions involving gram panchayat members, Gaon Bura, and SHG members, it was decided that the community would take the initiative using local resources. As a result, the first adult literacy class commenced in Lower Gai village with 11 learners, including a Gram Panchayat member, Gaon Bura, an Anganwadi helper, and a voluntary teacher from the SHG.

Despite the phasing out of the Padhna Likhna Abhiyan in March 2022, community-led adult

literacy classes continued to be established across all blocks. LRGs, supported by PLF- EC members, played a crucial role in sustaining and expanding adult literacy efforts. Activities included compiling lists of illiterate individuals, identifying suitable infrastructure for adult education centers, and enlisting volunteers from LRGs, youth clubs, and the community to serve as teachers. The collective efforts of PLF and PRI members were instrumental in successfully continuing adult literacy classes. The education department provided necessary learning materials such as books, notebooks, pencils, and other supplies. In some gram panchayats, honorariums were offered to volunteer teachers. As a result of these efforts, adult literacy classes are currently being conducted in 29 Gram Panchayats across the four blocks. A total of 682 adult learners are benefiting from these classes.

E. Impact on Local Governance

1. Gram Panchayat Office Inauguration

During PRI orientations, discussions revealed that several gram panchayat offices were non-functional due to a lack of information on their effective utilisation. With support from LRGs and KS-NRO mentors, efforts were made to identify and revitalise unused panchayat offices. During the orientations, the existing infrastructure within the panchayats was assessed. It was revealed that three-gram panchayats had non-functional offices primarily due to a need for more information on how to utilise them effectively.

Subsequently, the LRGs met with the panchayat department and identified 10 gram panchayats with unused offices. New Jengthu Gram Panchayat was chosen for the pilot intervention. A consultative meeting involving PRI members, PLF members, LRGs, and non-SHG members was organised to sensitise the community about the importance of the GP Office.

As these offices had not been utilised for a

considerable time, the community members, first conducted a cleanliness drive in the GP office premises. Subsequently, in the consultative meeting, discussions were held on the opening days, services to be provided, and the inauguration project. The inauguration took place on November 29, with the presence of the honourable MLA. Currently, the GP office is open three days per week, and PRI members are committed to being available to facilitate document signatures and provide access to various entitlements and schemes. Three GP offices (New Jengthu, Nanamkhamyang, and Pathergaon GP) are functional. Similar projects were implemented in other gram panchayats in Namsai. The community plans to introduce computer classes for youth in the panchayat offices to enhance digital literacy.

2.Reactivation of Anganwadi Level Monitoring and Support Committees (ALMSCs)

During initial interactions with PLF members, it was discovered that several Anganwadi centres were either nonfunctional or defunct. To address this issue, joint meetings were organised with PRI and PLF members, forming ALMSCs based on guidelines from the Women and Child Development Department (WCD) in some blocks. Before forming ALMSC, a meeting was organised with PRI members and the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) to orient stakeholders about the importance of Anganwadi centres and the role of ALMSC. The ALMSC included Anganwadi workers, Asha workers, PRI members, PLF members, mothers, and LRGs.

During ALMSC meetings, stakeholders monitored attendance registers and discussed activities, challenges, and resource shortages at Anganwadi centres. These discussions led to developing plans to overcome challenges using available resources within the panchayat. This fostered a sense of ownership among community members in monitoring the functioning of Anganwadi centres.

The District Administration and CDPO played a crucial role in reopening Anganwadi centres. They issued multiple letters to PRI members for ALMSC formation and replaced illiterate workers with literate ones to monitor daily operations. Gram Sevikas, ICDS supervisors, and LRGs supported community orientation about the importance of the ICDS scheme, services provided at Anganwadi centres, and the significance of ALMSC in monitoring functionality. In total, 15 Anganwadi centres were reopened, and elementary learning the needs of parents and children in the area. In response, the LRG conducted a consultative meeting with PLF EC members, and a letter was issued through the PLF to demand a new centre, which was then submitted to the WCD Department. Unfortunately, due to the lack of a specific target, an Anganwadi centre could not be provided.

Despite the initial setback of not being able to establish a new Anganwadi centre due to the lack of a specific target, the community did not give up on finding a solution.

The involvement of the PLF secretary in overseeing the Day Care Centre and providing teaching aids underscores the importance of local leadership and community ownership in addressing community needs. Additionally, the support from the Women and Child Development (WCD) department in supplying food for the centre highlights the collaborative effort between the community and government agencies in meeting the needs of children in the area. The centre has been operational for five days a week ever since.

2.Adult literacy learners:

Successful community-led efforts to run adult literacy classes in villages have garnered support from the district education department's Adult Education division, indicating a collaborative approach to promoting literacy and education. The department's support includes providing

essential resources such as books, notebooks, umbrellas, and whiteboards, which are crucial for enhancing the learning environment and facilitating effective teaching and learning experiences.

Moreover, staff from the Adult Education division visited several literacy centres to assess the progress made by learners over the past year. Furthermore, the education department conducted an assessment test for the New India literacy program, underscoring its efforts to gauge adult literacy learners' learning outcomes and proficiency levels. Collaboration between Adult Education officers and LRG cadres was instrumental in administering the assessment test to 137 adult literacy learners across six centres established under the PRI-CBO convergence program. Following is the table presenting the adult learners across 4 blocks:

Name of Scheme	Namsai	Roing	Sagalee	Yachuli	TOTAL
New Job Card					
Demand	4	11	1	12	28
Old Age Pension	1	1	0	0	2
Widow Pension	0	2	0	2	4
Disability Pension	0	0	0	2	2
CMAAY	39	37	237	140	453

F.CLF members coordinating with administration:

The convening of block-level joint stakeholder meetings to present social development plans prepared by PLF-Social Action Committee (SAC) and CLF members, alongside LRGs, to the district administration is crucial to addressing social issues and promoting community development. During these meetings, the PLFs presented the social issues identified through community consultations and the corresponding plans to address them. In collaboration with line departments, the district administration extended support to the PLFs in implementing these plans. Some examples of the support provided include:

I. Conducting counselling sessions for school-going students on substance abuse

(School-wise).

II. Formation of vigilance committee at village level in coordination with PRI and Police department.

III. Including awareness sessions related to substance abuse and its health impacts during VHND.

IV. Initiating paper bags and folder-making by the PLF to substitute for polythene and plastic items to be procured by the district administration.

V. Certification of learners in ongoing adult literacy classes.

VI. Providing electricity connections in the adult literacy centres.

VII. Conducting awareness campaigns

against drug abuse in schools.

VIII. Increased patrolling and refraining from issuing liquor licenses to shops near schools.

IX. Conducting legal awareness classes in every gram panchayat in collaboration with the District Legal Service Authority (DLSA).

X. Initiating nutri gardens in Anganwadi centres to supplement the food provided by the department.

XI. Converting a day-care centre started in one of the GPs by the community into an Anganwadi centre.

XII. Selecting one gram panchayat as a model GP to showcase all the best practices in the block in convergence with all the major stakeholders.

G. Improved Service Delivery:

Discussing social issues during PLF sessions is crucial in identifying and addressing community needs. In Arunachal Pradesh, the lack of access to entitlements emerged as a significant concern, underscoring the need for inclusive development.

To address this challenge, LRG cadres adopted a proactive approach, collaborating with stakeholders, such as PRI members, the health department, youth clubs, CBO members, and traditional leaders. A key strategy involved organising medical camps to meet healthcare needs while facilitating community members' access to entitlements.

The following data presents the Entitlement Demands of VPRP filled across the four intervention blocks in Arunachal.

Name of Scheme	Namsai	Roing	Sagalee	Yachuli	TOTAL
New Job Card					
Demand	4	11	1	12	28
Old Age Pension	1	1	0	0	2
Widow Pension	0	2	0	2	4
Disability Pension	0	0	0	2	2
CMAAY	39	37	237	140	453
Ayushman Bharat – PMJAY	35	0	0	0	35
PMSBY	4	52	2	0	58
PMJJBY	3	68	0	0	71

SBM	2	0	0	4	6
Sukanya Samriddhi	33	23	26	0	82
Dulari Kanya Yojana	6	0	6	0	12
Atal Pension Yojana	44	37	17	0	98
Ration Card	0	0	7	31	38
E-shram card	0	153	0	0	153
Aadhar card	0	30	0	0	30
Birth certificates	0	74	0	0	74

Conclusion

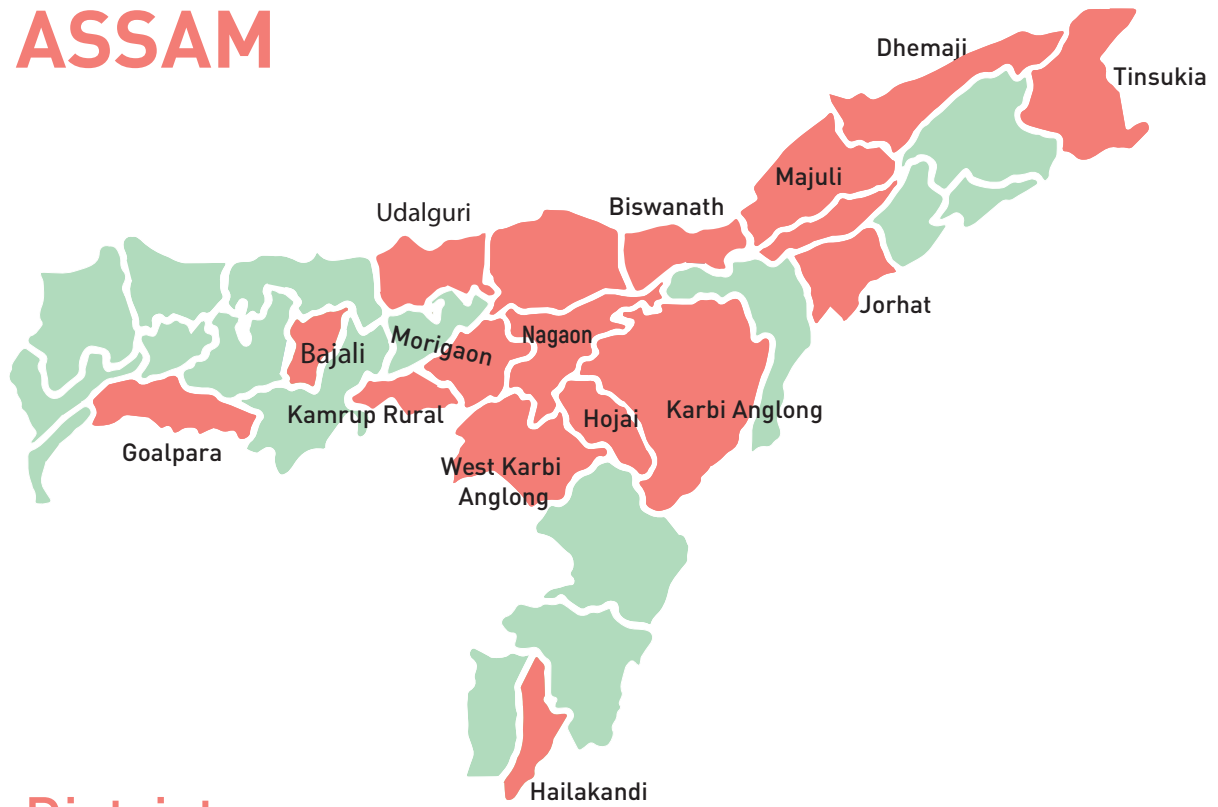
Implementing the PRI-CBO convergence project in the four intervention blocks of Arunachal Pradesh has indeed led to significant positive outcomes and impacts. One of the notable achievements of the project is the establishment and capacity-building of LRGs. These groups have played a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability and scalability of the project by mobilising community participation, facilitating dialogue between different stakeholders, and providing grassroots insights for decision-making processes. The project has also spurred numerous community-led initiatives that address critical development challenges in the intervention blocks. For example, establishing adult literacy classes highlights efforts to enhance human capital and promote lifelong learning opportunities. Additionally, the reopening of Anganwadi centres, facilitated by forming ALMSCs, underscores the importance of community engagement in improving early childhood education and nutrition services.

Moreover, initiatives such as the initiation of daycare centres demonstrate a proactive approach to addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, such as working parents and caregivers. Community members have developed a heightened sense of ownership and empowerment, improving service delivery and social cohesion by actively engaging in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of these initiatives. By harnessing various stakeholders' collective efforts and resources, the project has contributed to sustainable development outcomes, fostering inclusive growth and empowerment at the local level. The PRI-CBO convergence project has proven an effective model for promoting grassroots partnerships and participatory planning in Arunachal Pradesh.





ASSAM



District

- Morigaon
- Nagaon
- Sonitpur
- Hojai
- Goalpara
- Karbi Anglong
- West Karbi Anglong
- Jorhat
- Majuli
- Tinsukia
- Dhemaji
- Biswanath
- Udalguri
- Hailakandi
- Bajali
- Kamrup Rural

Background of the state

Assam, the easternmost state of the Indian subcontinent, is the largest state in the Northeast. Popularly known as the land of the Red River and Blue Hills, Assam is the gateway to Northeast India. Situated in northeastern India, it is the largest state in this region in terms of population and the second largest in terms of area. Assam covers an area of 78,438 km² (30,285 sq miles).

Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh border the state to the north; Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur to the east; Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, and Bangladesh to the south; and West Bengal to the west. A significant geographical aspect of Assam is that it contains three of the six physiographic divisions of India: the Northern Himalayas (Eastern Hills), the Northern Plains (Brahmaputra Plain), and the Deccan Plateau (Karbi Anglong). The state has 35 districts organised into five divisions. Guwahati, which includes the state capital, Dispur, is the largest city in northeastern India. According to the 2011 Census of India, Assam has a population of 31.17 million, a population density of 396.8 people per km², and a literacy rate of 73.18 per cent.

PRI system in the state

The Assam Local Self-Government Act of 1915 marked the formal establishment of Gaon Panchayats in the state. Subsequently, due to the shortcomings of the Panchayat scheme under the 1915 Act, the Panchayat Act of 1926 was enacted. After India gained independence in 1948, a new Panchayat Act was introduced in Assam. This Act underwent further modifications with the enactment of the Assam Panchayat Act of 1959, which introduced a three-tier system comprising Gaon Panchayats at the village level and Mohkuma Parishads at the sub-divisional level. However, the two-tier structure proved to be limited in scope, prompting the revision of the system with the Assam Panchayati Raj

Act of 1986. This legislation reinstated the three-tier local government structure: Up-Gaon Panchayats, Anchalik Panchayats, and Mohkuma Parishads. In Assam, there are two types of legal frameworks for Local Self Government (LSG):

- 1) Panchayati Raj Institutions (Covered under Parts IX & IX A of the Constitution) in the valley areas.
- 2) Sixth Schedule - Areas with a significant population of Scheduled Tribes, governed by the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The Assam Panchayat Act of 1994 marked another significant evolution in the state's Panchayat system, aligning it with the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Under this amendment, a three-tier Panchayat structure was established in Assam, comprising Zilla Panchayats (ZP) at the district level, Anchalik Panchayats (AP) at the intermediate level, and Gaon Panchayats (GP) at the village level. The first Panchayat elections under the Conformity Act, which covered all three tiers following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, took place in Assam in December 2001, with a decade gap from the previous election in 1992. The first State Finance Commission was constituted on 23rd June 1995, and the report was submitted to the Governor on 29 February 1996.

The Assam Panchayat (Amendment) Act 2011 substituted "not less than one-third" with "fifty per cent" reserved seats for women. The rotation of offices at all three tiers is done every five years. Also, there is the provision of reservation for women belonging to the SC and ST categories from among the seats reserved for the persons belonging to the SC and ST, which shall not be less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved for the persons belonging to SC and ST.

In 2021, the government of Assam amended the Assam Municipal Act 1956 to provide

women with 10 years of reservation. It was also decided to amend the Guwahati Municipal Corporation Act, 1969, to extend the tenure of women's reservation up to 10 years in direct elections to the posts of Councillors of the Corporation.

A considerable number of women entered PRIs as elected representatives. Although reservation has enhanced women's representation, their participation remains an important question due to the prevailing patriarchy both within and outside the household.

Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) in BTC-

In the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) areas, local governance is managed through Village Council Development Committees (VCDCs) at the village level. These committees oversee development schemes under the P & RD Department of the Council, facilitated by the Block Development Office (BDO) at the block level. The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) is responsible for the administration of local governance, and the BDO serves as the administrative and implementation liaison between the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), Territorial Council Level Coordination Committee (TCLCC), and VCDCs.

The Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC) is a higher-level administrative body in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), providing autonomy to the Bodo people, the predominant ethnic group in the region. Created by an act of the Indian Parliament in 1993, the BAC has a three-tier structure consisting of the Executive Committee, the General Council, and the Village Councils. It is responsible for the overall governance and development of the BTR, including implementing various government schemes and programs aimed at the region's development. The BAC possesses

legislative powers, enabling it to make laws and regulations for the region, and it has the authority to levy and collect taxes and fees.

VCDCs are grassroots-level administrative bodies responsible for rural development. At the village level, VCDCs implement various government schemes and programs for rural development, such as MGNREGS, PMAY, and NSAP. VCDCs are led by a chairperson, assisted by a vice chairperson, and VCDC members are nominated by the ruling party members of BTC. Their functions include maintaining village infrastructure, providing basic amenities such as water supply and sanitation, promoting education and health, and resolving disputes at the village level.

Territorial Constituency Level Coordination Committees (TCLCCs) operate similarly to Anchalik Panchayats but at the constituency level under BTC. Like VCDCs, TCLCCs are also headed by a chairperson nominated by the ruling party. Their functions include maintaining town infrastructure, providing basic amenities like water supply and sanitation, and promoting education and health in rural and urban areas.

Village Development Committee (VDC) in Karbi Anglong:

The Village Development Committee (VDC) serves as the local administration for villages in Karbi Anglong and consists of four members, including a chairperson, a secretary, and two other members. Additionally, there are ten general members, and the VDC collaborates with Gaon Buras, who oversee 5-6 villages within their assigned area.

The VDC President and Secretary are selected by Members of Autonomous Councils (MACs), elected from the Autonomous Councils. The VDC President and Chairperson play crucial roles in addressing the problems of their VDC and working towards the overall development of their village. Unlike some structures, the

members of the VDC are not elected; instead, they are selected by the MACs of the respective area. The Chief Executive Member (CEM), Executive Member (EM), and VDC members are primarily chosen by the VDC Chairperson and EM. The tenure of a VDC is five years.

Role of NRLM in the state

The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) is being implemented in Assam by the Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission Society (ASRLMS) to enhance the social and economic empowerment of the rural poor. ASRLMS is an independent and autonomous body established under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1860 by the Panchayat & Rural Development Department, Government of Assam, on November 11, 2011.

ASRLMS is led by its Governing Body (GB), which provides overall policy guidance to the Society. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam serves as the Chairperson, and the Principal Secretary to the Government of Assam, Panchayat & Rural Development Department, acts as the Member Convenor. The Executive functions of the Society are carried out by the Executive Committee (EC), with the Chief Secretary of the Government of Assam as Chairperson and the State Mission Director as the Member Convenor.

The day-to-day functions of the Society are managed by the State Mission Director and his functional teams at the State level, known as the State Mission Management Unit (SMMU). At the District level, the District Mission Management Units (DMMU) are headed by the District Project Manager under the overall guidance and supervision of the Project Director, DRDA. At the block level, the Block Mission Management Units (BMMU) are headed by the Block Project Manager under the overall guidance and supervision of the Block Development Officer.

Role of CBOs in the state

The ASRLM supports CBOs by following the NRLM guidelines. This is a three-tier structure, with SHGs federating into VOs and VOs further federating into cluster-level federations.

The SHG serves as the basic unit of the CBO setup. It consists of 10 to 20 women from economically low-income families who adhere to specific rules and regulations. At least one member from each poor household is brought under the SHG network.

The community identifies the poor and most vulnerable households through the Participatory Identification of the Poor (PIP) process. The list of individuals experiencing poverty is vetted by the Gaon Sabha and approved by the Gaon Panchayat. These identified poor households become eligible for benefits under NRLM. PIP is crucial for community participation and ownership of NRLM projects. Special efforts are made to identify vulnerable and marginalised households, including Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), single women and women-headed households, disabled individuals, landless families, migrant labourers, isolated communities, and those living in remote, hilly, and disturbed areas.

The middle tier of the three-tier CBO set up at the village level is called the VO, and it aims to strengthen the capacity of poor women in socio-economic development. The apex body of the ASRLM's three-tier CBO setup is the cluster-level federation, where groups of VOs from different Panchayats come together at the cluster level.

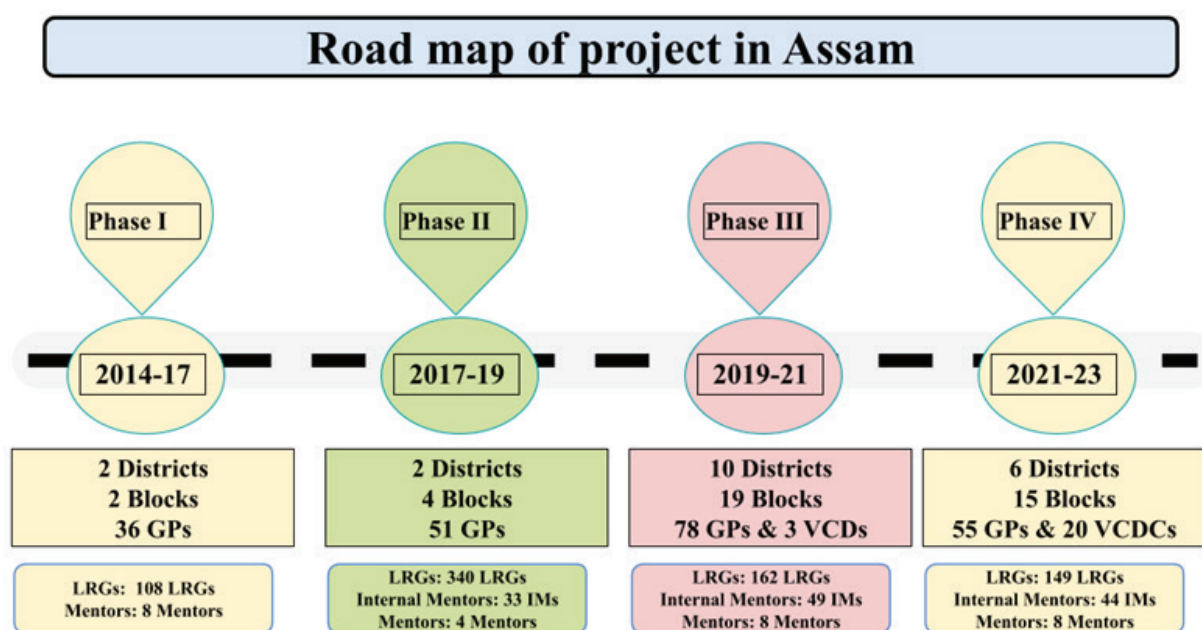
PRI-CBO convergence project

The PRI-CBO convergence project was initiated in Assam in 2014, with SHGs as the grassroots CBO structure. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between ASRLM and KS-NRO in January 2014. Assam was the first state in the Northeast region to

implement the PRI-CBO convergence project, providing an opportunity to work with GPs in the plains. Bajiagaon block in Nagaon district and Laharighat block in Morigaon district, consisting of 36 GPs in total, were selected for the pilot phase of the convergence project. A team of eight mentors from KS-NRO went to Assam in January 2014 to train SHGs in these two blocks.

Profile of the intervention areas

The project covered 220 GPs across 40 blocks in 20 districts. 759 LRGs, 126 internal mentors and eight mentor RPs worked on this project.



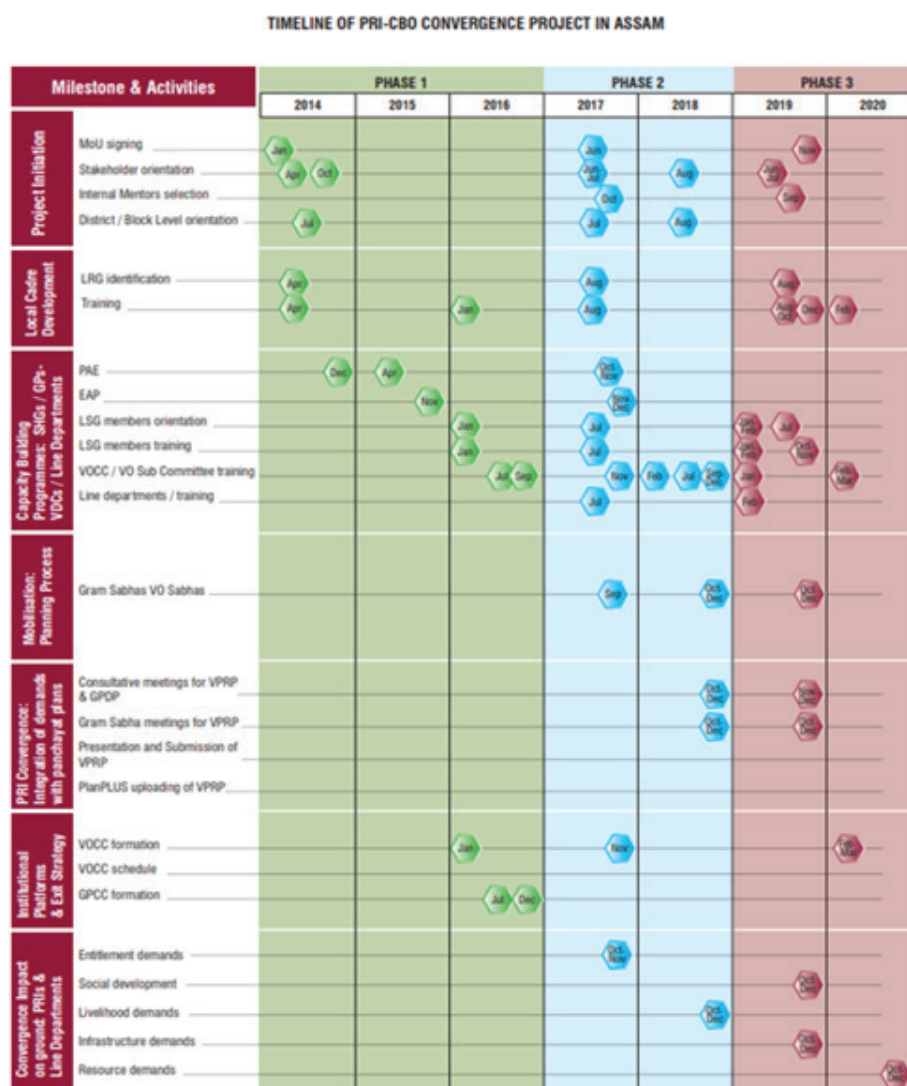
Strategy adopted for implementation in each Phase:

Phase - I	Phase - II	Phase - III	Phase - IV
Context-based learnings.	Developed the first set of 19 Internal Mentors	Developed a fresh set of 31 new Internal Mentors	Expanded to 15 new blocks across six districts, saturated the existing 19 blocks of Phase III.
Developed the first set of LRGs.	Engaged with GPs frequently for entitlement achievement and innovative activity	Developed their capacity to work at the block level	Development of Internal Mentors as a capacitated resource pool for the state
MGNREGS and Gram Sabha acted as the entry activity	Established VOCC as an institution of convergence	Developed strategies to work with the Sixth Schedule Area	Activation of citizen committees

Association with SIRD established	Innovative activities with Line Departments initiated	Supported the state in doing VPRP	Development of Model Anganwadis
Worked with Panchayats on entitlement achievement	Conducted PAE, EAP, GP2RP	Departmental convergence initiated for VPRP achievement	Roll out of PAE and EAP
Conducted PAE, EAP, GP2RP	Conducted PAE, EAP, GP2RP	Focus on Social Development Plans	Roll out of PAE and EAP Focus on Social Development Plans

Activity timeline

The general project activities undertaken as part of the convergence project are as follows:



**A graphical representation like this can be added (taken from experiential study of north east states), including the below mentioned activities of phase IV -

S. No.	Timeline	Project Activity
1	December 2021	SMMU orientation on PRI-CBO Convergence Project
2	December 2021	DMMU orientation on PRI-CBO Convergence Project
3	December 2021	BMMU orientation on PRI-CBO Convergence Project
4	December 2021	Jeevika Sakhi orientation on PRI-CBO Convergence Project
5	December 2021 - January 2022	Field level assessment
6	January - March 2022	CLF orientation on PRI-CBO Convergence Project
7	January - March 2022	VO orientation on PRI-CBO Convergence Project
8	January - March 2022	PRI/VCDC orientation on PRI-CBO Convergence Project
9	April 2022	Sanjog Sakhi Selection
10	May 2022	Sanjog Sakhi Training
11	May - June 2022	Anganwadi Analysis
12	June 2022	CLF capacity building on social issues
13	June - July 2022	VO capacity building on social issues
14	July 2022	PAE training of cadres
15	July - September 2022	SHG level PAE
16	August 2022	EAP training for cadres
17	August - September 2022	VO level EAP
18	August - September 2022	VPRP training
19	August - September 2022	SHG level Entitlement plan (PAE)
20	September - October 2022	VO level PGSRD and SDP plan prepared
21	November 2022	GP level consolidation
22	December 2022	VPRP submission
23	January - February 2022	VOCC orientation
24	February - March 2022	VOCC formation
25	March 2022	VOCC training
26	January - March 2022	ALMSC reformation and activation

Key outcomes of the project

A. Development and Placement of internal cadre Sanjog Sakhis as Local Resource Groups for ensuring grassroots governance

Sanjog Sakhis play a crucial role as facilitators in grassroots program activities, providing essential support to the SHG network and PRI representatives. Identified from the local community, they undergo training on various aspects of the project and receive continuous mentorship from Internal Mentors. In the program's initial phase, 108 Sanjog Sakhis were developed as LRGs, with 33 of them progressing to become Internal Mentors in the second phase. These Internal Mentors, in turn, provided direct support to the Sanjog Sakhis in the third phase. In the fourth phase of the program, 150 Sanjog Sakhis and 44 Internal Mentors have been developed. The details are as follows:

Phases	Timeline	No.						Sanjog Sakhis (No.)	
		Districts	Blocks	GPs	LRGs	IMs	Mentor RPs	Selected during the project phases	Working as of April 2023
1	2014-2017	2	2	36	108	-	8	108	71
2	2017-2019	2	4	51	340	33	4	304	158
3	2019-2021	10	19	78 GP, 3 VDC	162	49	8	162	155
4	2021-2023	6	15	55 GP, 20 VDC	149	44	8	150	149
		20	40	220 GP, 23	759	126	8	720	533

Internal Mentors as a developed Internal Resource Pool for enhancing participatory governance

In the project's initial phase, Internal Mentors who transitioned to work as Sanjog Sakhis played a crucial role in ensuring convergence between the PRI/VDC body and community-based institutions. In Phase II and Phase III of the project, 33 and 49 Internal Mentors were developed, respectively. Currently, a well-developed pool of 44 Internal Mentors is actively working in Assam. Their roles in capacity building, monitoring Sanjog Sakhis, rolling out project activities, expanding the project to different districts, and institution building have been immense.

B) Placement of CBO as an agency delivering institutional services:

The VOCC in each panchayat has become active following training for all members and VOCC coordinators. In several Panchayats, it has been observed that both Panchayats and line departments have delegated specific responsibilities to the CBO for delivering services. VO and VOCCs serve as primary agents through which Panchayats disseminate information about Gaon Sabhas, relying on them for the ideal preparation of priority lists. Similarly, line departments depend on the CBO network to understand community demands and provide appropriate training. In many Panchayats, CBOs have succeeded in establishing close ties with line departments, leading to the gradual handover of several responsibilities to the VOCC.

The establishment of an office for the VOCC in the panchayat premises itself signifies the changing role of the CBO as an institution representing the poor with a voice.

VO leaders are also finding space and identity within their community now. With the rollout of the GPDP in Assam, active VO leaders and Sanjog Sakhis have been invited by the Panchayats to be part of the working group of GPDP. While CBOs have started to engage and pressure their local leaders into working for them, Panchayats have also recognised the importance and potential of working with the SHG network. This is reflected in the CBO's annual demand plan, which has been incorporated into the Panchayat plan, with the infrastructure and resource maps prepared by the CBO taken up by the Panchayats.

C) Establishment of robust institutional structure – VOCC and GPCC

1) Village Organisation Coordination Committee (VOCC):

In addition to the three-tier federative structure, VOCC were formed in all 15 blocks to align the existing community structure with the Panchayat/VCDC body. The formation of VOCC ensures a consistent interface linking the community federation to the panchayat, its various institutions, and developmental agencies. After their training, the VOCC coordinators and conveners in each of the Panchayats actively assumed their responsibilities and started engaging with the Panchayats on an equal footing. Women are more confident and interested in participating within the SHG network and in the public space.

The three sub-committees for Health and Education, Livelihood, and Social Welfare have been implemented, and the VOCC is now streamlining its functioning with the existing SHG and VO network. The CBO has gradually evolved from a scattered unit to a collectivised and robust entity. With allocated office space

within the Panchayat/VCDC premises, VOCC members regularly sit in their office, accept applications, and assist the local community in accessing the benefits of the panchayat and line departments

2) Gaon Panchayat Coordination Committee (GPCC):

To enhance and institutionalise the interaction between PRI and CBO, the project aims to establish GPCC in pilot GPs, comprising members from VOCC, PRI, and line departments. The GPCC is expected to convene regularly and strengthen the coordination between PRI and CBO in planning and service delivery matters. In the first phase of the project, GPCCs were established in 35 Panchayats - 11 in Bajiagaon block and 24 in Laharighat block. Recognition of the potential of working with SHGs by Panchayats occurred only through the consistent interface between the SHG network and LRGs. Following the formation of GPCC, the three standing committees of the Panchayat were also activated, and Panchayats started convening committee meetings more regularly. It is also significant to note that, with the formation of GPCC and pressure from the community, Panchayat offices have started opening periodically. However, there needs to be constant follow-up to ensure the effective implementation of GPCC and adherence to policy guidelines, preventing these institutions from becoming dysfunctional.

D) Convergence of Departments:

Convergence across departments is essential for optimal resource utilisation and effective implementation of development initiatives. To facilitate this, establishing contact points at different levels ensures better stakeholder coordination and collaboration. Throughout the project timeline, various innovative activities have been undertaken in the intervention GPs under the PRI-CBO convergence project. These activities involve collaboration with the line departments, PRI, and the CBO. Examples

of such activities include adult literacy campaigns, re-enrolment of school dropouts, health camps, mahila markets, and awareness programs for adolescent girls and pregnant women. The other major activities conducted in convergence with line departments are as mentioned below:

Departments	Activity conducted for convergence
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Seed distribution ◆ Vermi compost material distribution ◆ Fertiliser distribution ◆ PM Kisan enrolment (Document & application submission) ◆ Mushroom cultivation awareness
Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Soil conservation campaign ◆ Saplings distribution ◆ Environment day celebration
Handloom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Yarn card enrolment (Document & application submission)
Veterinary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ FMD vaccination camp ◆ Chick distribution ◆ Artificial insemination camp ◆ Goat distribution
Postal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sukanya Samridhhi scheme campaign (Awareness and enrolment)
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Covid-19 vaccination campaign ◆ Cancer Awareness ◆ Women's health and hygiene awareness ◆ Alcoholism awareness program ◆ Ayushman card enrolment mela ◆ Child marriage awareness
ICDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Adolescent girls and pregnant women's health and hygiene awareness
PHED & JJM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Swachh Bharat Abhiyan awareness program ◆ Plastic awareness program ◆ Water test camp and kit distribution ◆ SBM toilet (Document collection and submission)

E) Impact on local governance:

Establishing and strengthening the working relationship between SHG networks and PRI/VDC/

VCDC bodies has been a key focus throughout the project’s duration. The efforts to orient PRI/VDC/VDCs about the project’s objectives and activities have been instrumental in bridging the initial knowledge gap. Conducting one-on-one meetings with PRIs helped clarify the project’s goals and highlighted the importance of their role in successful implementation. It was observed that many PRI/VDC/VDCs lacked comprehensive knowledge about the SHG network within their jurisdictions.

To bridge this gap, PRIs/VDCs/VDCs were invited to VO meetings to familiarise them with the SHG network’s functioning and structure within the panchayat. A shift in attitude was observed among PRIs, from initial hesitation to active participation in VO meetings and gram sabhas. PRIs’ attitudes shifted from hesitance to active involvement through numerous meetings and persistent efforts. PRIs gradually started understanding the project’s objectives and demonstrated cooperation by participating in VO meetings and conducting gram sabhas.

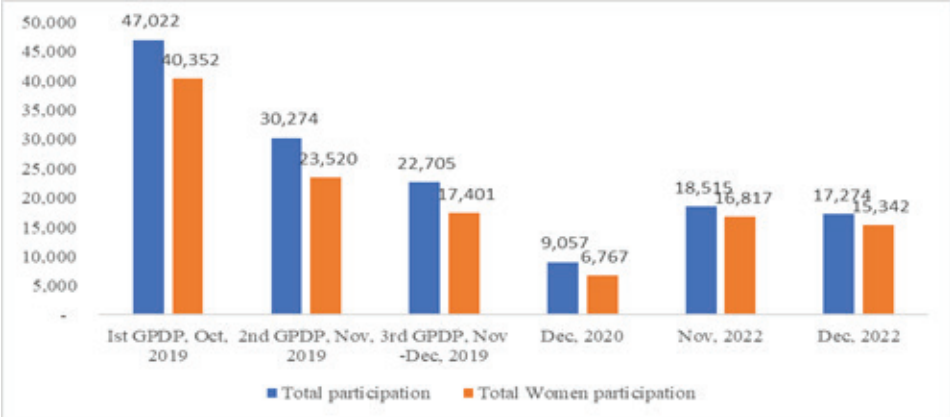
Following the PAE activities with the SHG network, PRIs were invited to EAP meetings at the VO level. VOs shared the number of demands to be fulfilled within their areas, facilitating a clear understanding of community needs. PRI/VDC/VDCs discussed and explained the eligibility criteria for various schemes, helping SHGs understand the opportunities and limitations of available resources.

During the GPDP gram sabhas, women presented the VPRP, detailing the community’s needs and proposed solutions. These presentations led to discussions where PRIs shared the constraints they faced in fulfilling specific demands, fostering transparency and mutual understanding. These interactions provided a platform for SHGs and PRIs to express their opinions, discuss issues, and collaborate effectively on community development initiatives.

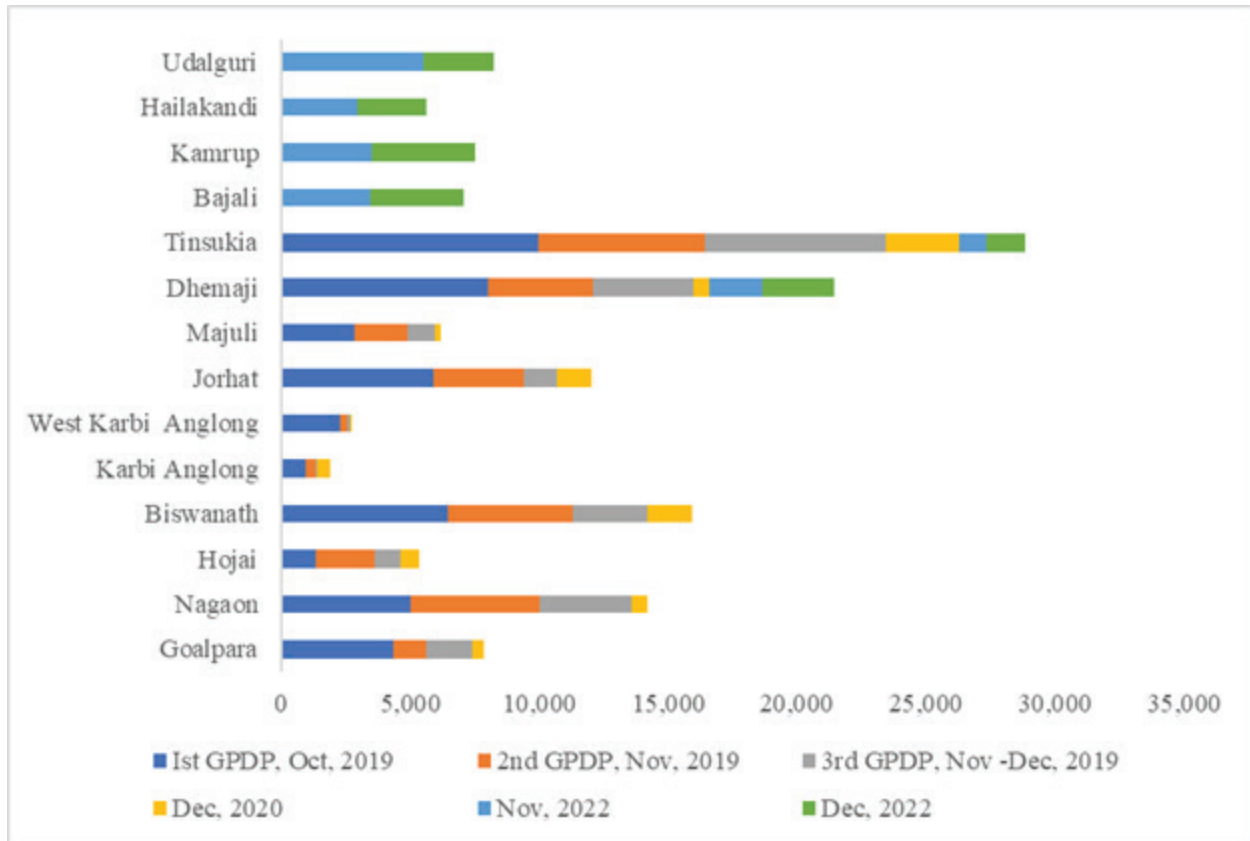
F) Strengthening of institutional platforms - Gram Sabha

The gram sabha, a constitutionally mandated forum at the panchayat level, plays a pivotal role in ensuring the participation and representation of all community members in the planning and decision-making processes related to the development and implementation of schemes and services. To ensure increased participation of women in the gram sabha, a range of activities have been conducted in the GPs, including rallies, poster campaigns, and more. The adoption of these mobilisation and sensitisation strategies has significantly contributed to increasing women’s participation in gram sabhas. Following are the details about the GPDP gram sabha:

Total participation in GPDP gram sabha (Oct 2019 to Dec 2022)



District wise total participation in GPDP gram sabha (Oct 2019 to Dec 2022)



Participation in GPDP Gram Sabha

District	Date	Total participation in Gram Sabha				
		Total participation	Women participation	SHG Members participated	SHG member's participation (%)	VOs represented (%)
Goalpara	1st -October 2, 2019	4,322	3,403	3,403	78.74	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	1,311	1,092	1,092	83.30	100
	3rd -November 22 - December 12, 2019	1,769	1,474	1,474	83.32	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	447	267	267	59.73	100
Nagaon	1st -October 2, 2019	4,984	4,249	4,249	85.25	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	5,017	3,726	3,618	72.11	100
	3rd -November 22 - December 12, 2019	3,586	2,794	2,666	74.34	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	636	430	417	65.57	100

Hojai	1st -October 2, 2019	1,314	1,174	980	74.58	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	2,288	1,905	1,905	83.26	100
	3rd -November 22 -December 12, 2019	1,031	806	786	76.24	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	720	598	598	83.06	100
Biswanath	1st -October 2, 2019	6,439	6,000	5928	92.06	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	4,889	3,994	3,861	78.97	100
	3rd -November 22 -December 12, 2019	2,878	2,237	2,057	71.47	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	1,701	1,223	1,221	71.78	100
Karbi Anglong	1st -October 2, 2019	965	949	949	98.34	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	353	269	265	75.07	100
	3rd -November 22 -December 12, 2019	67	40	40	59.70	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	488	469	464	95.08	100
West Karbi Anglong	1st -October 2, 2019	2,283	2,102	2,102	92.07	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	272	200	200	73.53	100
	3rd -November 22 -December 12, 2019	123	71	71	57.72	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	47	21	21	44.68	100
Jorhat	1st -October 2, 2019	5,901	5,066	4,527	76.72	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	3,532	3,080	3,016	85.39	100
	3rd -November 22 -December 12, 2019	1,274	972	936	73.47	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	1,328	1,013	965	72.67	100
Majuli	1st -October 2, 2019	2,825	2,229	2,090	73.98	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	2,082	1,632	1,482	71.18	100
	3rd -November 22 -December 12, 2019	1,053	687	687	65.24	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	218	145	136	62.39	100

Dhemaji	1st -October 2, 2019	8,017	6,908	6,908	86.17	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	4,091	2,847	2,847	69.59	100
	3rd -November 22 -December 12, 2019	3,876	2,617	2,617	67.52	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	634	474	472	74.45	100
	November 2022	2,069		2,046	98.88	
	December 2022	2,765		2,398	86.72	
	1st -October 2, 2019	9,972	8,272	8,272	82.95	100
	2nd - November 1-19, 2019	6,439	4,775	4,453	69.15	100
Tinsukia	3rd -November 22 -December 12, 2019	7,048	5,703	5,330	75.62	100
	Gram Sabha / Panchayat Sabha -December 2020	2,838	2,127	1,921	67.69	100
	November 2022	1,023		839	82.01	
	December 2022	1,498		1,213	80.97	
Bajali	November 2022	3,446		3,096	89.84	
	December 2022	3,645		3,342	91.69	
Kamrup	November 2022	3,524		3,227	91.57	
	December 2022	3,967		3,683	92.84	
Hailakandi	November 2022	2,954		2,480	83.95	
	December 2022	2,653		2,144	80.81	
Udalguri	November 2022	5,522		5,129	92.88	
	December 2022	2,746		2,562	93.30	

Infrastructure development

Consolidated data for total demands generated, incorporation, and achievements under VPRP 2022-23 for PGSRD.

S l . No.	Types of various Infrastructure plans demanded	Total Demands	Total incorporation	Total achievement
1	Anganwadi Centres	344	141	33
2	Panchayat bhavan	13	6	3
3	SHG/ federation building	294	87	1
4	Boundary wall	633	253	3
5	Community Hall	174	44	2

6	Community Toilet	333	126	22
7	Public Library	54	20	1
8	Waiting shed	163	61	2
9	Grain storage building./ facilities / Warehouse	5	1	0
10	Baby feeding rooms in public spaces	29	8	1
11	Cultural centers and clubs	62	9	4
12	Playground	24	11	0
13	Crematorium	30	6	2
14	Drinking water facilities	247	121	18
15	Hand Wash facilities	103	28	6
16	Roads	1570	548	75
17	Drainage	145	115	6
18	Culvert	543	224	12
19	Street light	3173	2051	52
20	Dustbins	1070	557	102
21	Mosquito nets	13801	9807	1007
22	Market/ haat bazaar	25	5	1
23	Weaving center	33	9	1
24	Sanitary pad vending machines	27	4	1
25	Health Sub-Centre	31	11	2
26	Anganwadi Multi-Unit Toilets construction	5	2	2
27	Ponds	46	15	1
28	Land Development	326	74	1
29	River bunds	35	8	2

30	Plantation	10043	5827	870
31	Forest Fencing	7	6	1
32	Compost pit structure for groups	15	15	3
33	Fisheries Ponds	526	169	2
34	Vermicompost structure for groups	15	15	3
35	Teachers in School	54	24	5
36	Staff nurses in Health centers	31	22	4
37	Bridge	26	1	1
38	Temple	47	47	9

1. Access to entitlements

Phase I Achievement (PAE - EAP)

SI No.	Name of the Scheme and its detail	Lawkhowa		Barhampur		Nagaon Total	
		Families without access as per PAE 2017-18	Total actual achievement (till June 30, 2018)	Families without access as per PAE 2017-18	Total actual achievement (till June 30, 2018)	Families without access as per PAE 2017-18	Total actual achievement (till June 30, 2018)
1	MGNREGA						
1.1	Job Card	7720	1237	4096	851	11816	2088
1.2	Identified Job(Nos. of SHG)	1275	1198	958	625	2233	1823
1.3	Demanded Job	5253	7374	5277	5140	10530	12514
1.4	Obtained Job	5220	2529	3824	1333	9044	3862
2	SBM						
2.1	IHHL	11621	925	5157	2086	16778	3011
3	Atal Amrit Abhiyan						
3.1	Families with Health Card	12892	10671	9791	7215	22683	17886
4	NSAP						
4.1	Old Age Pension	2368	603	1475	529	3843	1132
4.2	Widow Pension	731	97	594	23	1325	120
4.3	Disability Pension	606	18	156	72	762	90
5	ICDS						
5.1	Pregnant women	423	841	44	165	467	1006
5.2	0-3Yrs	1562	2634	109	148	1671	2782
5.3	3-6Yrs	2143	3501	239	231	2382	3732

Phase II Achievement

ENTITLEMENTS	ACHIEVEMENTS
New Job cards	9332
Work Obtained under MGNREGS	21647
Individual Household Latrine (SBM)	12361
AAA Card	28432
Old age pension	3835
PMAY	3326
UJJWALA	14427
Electricity connection	3349

Phase III Achievement

Sl No.	Sector	Demands	Total AAP Integration *	Total 5 Year Action Plan Integration**	Achievement
1	Adult and Non-Formal Education	7	0	1	0
2	Drinking Water	1039	7	418	84
3	Education	180	11	85	2
4	Health and Sanitation	2692	274	1265	123
5	Khadi, Village and Cottage Industries	109	7	46	4
6	Land Improvement and Soil Conservation	627	23	160	80
7	Libraries	151	21	57	9
8	Maintenance of Community Assets	3137	304	1356	264
9	Markets and Fairs	38	1	10	13
10	Minor Irrigation, water management and watershed Development	2639	138	1117	131
11	Non- Conventional Sources of energy	484	43	235	138
12	Other services	13	0	1	0
13	Poverty Alleviation Program	274	15	88	6
14	Public Distribution System	4	0	1	0
15	Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication	3988	532	1785	654
16	Rural Electrification	3780	573	1391	584
17	Small Scale Industries	10	1	8	0
18	Social Forestry	294	93	125	135
19	Social Welfare including Welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded	2	0	1	1
20	Women and Child Development	1237	86	491	83
	Grand Total	20705	2129	8641	2311

Phase IV Achievement

Scheme	Total achievements
MGNREGA	1541
Old age pension	296
Widow pension	364
Disability pension	123
SBM	196
Health care / Ayushman	17158
Ration Card	293
Ujjwala	0
Saubhagya	0
PMSBY	3925
PMJJBY	2333
PMAY-G	3138
Other schemes (Orunodoi Scheme)	2938

Improvement in Service delivery by strengthening ALMSC

Sl.no	Activity	Remarks
1	Baseline Survey	1482 AWC Surveyed.
2	Training to Cadres on AWC and ALMSC.	44 Internal Mentors and 149 LRGs trained.
3	Identification of Model Anganwadi	A total of 15 AWCs were identified.
4	Consultative meetings PRIs	55 PRI and 20 VCDC oriented
5	Joint stakeholder meetings at AWC level.	Meeting with CDPO, Anganwadi worker, helper, and SHG members
6	Activation/formation of ALMSC.	29 ALMSC

Conclusion

The PRI-CBO convergence project is designed so that partner states eventually take over the implementation of the project from KS-NRO. As part of the exit strategy, KS-NRO focuses on implementing sustainable mechanisms for convergence activities in pilot and scale-up locations. Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission has decided to universalize the PRI-CBO convergence model across the state, scaling it to all the intensive blocks after witnessing the project's success in the pilot phase. This scaling-up approach signifies a firm commitment to inclusive and participatory development, where marginalized communities across the state will have enhanced access to livelihood opportunities, services, and decision-making processes. As the coverage expands, it will continue to foster strong partnerships and build the capacity of local institutions, enabling them to sustainably carry forward the transformative work initiated by the PRI-CBO convergence project.

BIHAR



District

Patna

Nalanda

Muzaffarpur

Background of State

Bihar, with its rich history and diverse cultural heritage, is characterised by a complex caste-based social structure and predominantly rural landscape. Administratively, Bihar is divided into 9 divisions comprising 38 districts, 101 subdivisions, and 534 blocks. As of the 2011 Census, Bihar ranked as the third most populous state in India, with a total population of approximately 10.41 crores. The population distribution between males and females was roughly balanced, with 5.42 crores males and 4.98 crores females. Despite urbanisation trends observed in cities like Patna, the majority of Bihar's population resides in rural areas, constituting nearly 89 per cent of the total population.

Bihar stands as India's most densely populated state, with 1,106 persons per square kilometre, indicating the high population density experienced across its regions. The state's population accounted for about 8.60 per cent of India's total population in 2011. The sex ratio in Bihar, reflecting the number of females per 1000 males, was recorded at 918, which was below the national average of 940 at the time of the census. This ratio provides insights into gender demographics within the state.

While Bihar has witnessed an upward trend in literacy rates over the years, the overall literacy rate stood at 61.80 per cent as per the latest population census. There remains a significant gap between male and female literacy rates, with male literacy at 71.20 per cent and female literacy at 51.50 per cent, highlighting disparities in access to education and literacy attainment between genders.

PRI system in the state

During the colonial period, Bihar was a part of the Bengal Presidency until 1921 and was brought within the purview of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act. Under colonial

rule, certain parts of the state were subject to the Bengal Local Self-Government Act, which provided for local governance structures within those areas. The Bihar and Orissa Village Administrative Act of 1922 played a significant role in this regard by enabling the creation of elected Union Boards and some elected Panchayats. These local bodies were primarily responsible for dealing with minor civil and criminal matters at the grassroots level.

Following India's independence, Bihar underwent administrative reforms to establish local self-government institutions. The Bihar Local Self-Government Act was enacted to further streamline administrative divisions. One significant provision of this act was the restructuring of district board areas to make them smaller than the revenue boards. This restructuring aimed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of local governance by ensuring that administrative units were appropriately sized and managed.

The Bihar Panchayati Raj Act, which was passed in 1947 immediately after India gained independence, marked a significant step towards decentralisation and local self-governance in the state. The act officially commenced its functioning in 1949. An important amendment to the act was made in 1950, which introduced provisions for the election of representatives in Local Boards. This move aimed to democratise the governance process at the grassroots level by allowing citizens to elect their representatives. The launch of the community development program in 1952 further fuelled the establishment of panchayats across Bihar. This program emphasised local participation and decision-making in development initiatives, leading to the accelerated formation of panchayats throughout the state.

In 1959, the Bihar Panchayati Raj Act underwent another significant amendment in line with the

recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. These recommendations likely focused on strengthening the democratic functioning and effectiveness of the Panchayati Raj system in Bihar. Subsequently, in 1961, the Bihar Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act was enacted to establish block and district-level panchayats. This act came into force on 2nd October 1963, further formalising the three-tier Panchayati Raj System in Bihar. Under this system, governance was organised into Gram Panchayats at the village level, Panchayat Samitis at the block level, and Zila Parishads at the district level.

The Bihar Panchayati Raj Act of 1993 was enacted in alignment with the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India, which aimed to strengthen decentralised governance at the grassroots level. This act established a three-tier system of local governance in Bihar, comprising Gram Panchayats at the village level, Panchayat Samitis at the Block level, and Zila Parishads at the District level. In 2006, this system underwent a comprehensive revision and repeal, leading to the enactment of a new Bihar Panchayati Raj Act. This revised act continued to uphold the three-tier structure of local governance established in 1993.

As of now, Bihar has a total of 8,053 Gram Panchayats, 533 Panchayat Samitis, and 38 Zila Parishads operating across the state. Gram Panchayats, which serve as the primary units of local administration, are further divided into wards, totalling approximately 1.15 lakhs in number. One notable feature of the Bihar Panchayati Raj Act of 2006 is the establishment of Nyaya Panchayats, also known as Gram Kuchaharies, for the delivery of justice at affordable costs directly to the rural populace. This initiative aimed to ensure access to justice for rural communities by establishing localised judicial mechanisms.

The Act of 2006 mandates that 50 percent of seats at all three tiers of the Panchayat are

reserved for women. This reservation aims to address gender disparities in political participation and decision-making processes. Additionally, seats for SC, ST, and Other Backward Classes (OBC) are reserved in proportion to their population in the state. These reservations are rotated at the time of Panchayat elections every five years under the supervision of the State Election Commission in the manner prescribed by it.

Gram Panchayats represent the lowest tier of the Panchayati Raj system in Bihar, entrusted with the governance of villages. Each Gram Panchayat is led by a Mukhiya (President) and ward members, elected by Gram Sabha members through direct elections for a five-year term. The Gram Panchayat bears the responsibility of developing and maintaining essential civic amenities, including water supply, sanitation, primary education, and health facilities.

According to the Bihar Panchayati Raj Act of 2006, each Gram Panchayat committee is mandated to have six standing committees. These standing committees should comprise 3-5 members, ensuring at least one woman representative in each committee. An amendment to the Bihar Panchayati Raj Act, 2006, introduced the Ward Implementation and Management Committee (WIMC), responsible for overseeing public works at the ward level. The WIMC organises the Ward Sabhas and maintains all records related to the ward.

In Bihar, Gram Panchayats oversee developmental and welfare activities, while Gram Kachahari is established to handle quasi-judicial matters in the panchayat area. Gram Kachahari plays a crucial role in resolving local disputes within the panchayat. All levels of Panchayats in Bihar receive funds from the 15th Central Finance Commission and the State Finance Commission, in addition to their own source funds.

Role of NRLM in the state

The Government of Bihar (GoB), through the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS), an autonomous body under the Department of Rural Development, is spearheading the World Bank aided Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project (BRLP), locally known as JEEViKA with the objective of social & economic empowerment of the rural poor. Subsequently, the Livelihoods Restoration and Enhancement component of the Bihar Kosi Flood Recovery Project (BKFRP) was also taken into the fold of JEEViKA.

As a first step in the implementation of NRLM in the state, GoB has designated BRLPS as the State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM) for implementation of NRLM in the state. This has been done given the successful experience of BRLPS in implementing a similar approach in the state over the last few years under the project – JEEViKA. The next important step undertaken has been the preparation of the State Perspective and Implementation Plan (SPIP), a long-term strategic plan that would guide the implementation of NRLM in the state.

Role of CBOs in the state

The CBO structure of JEEViKA aligns with the proposed NRLM structure in Bihar. The CBOs in Bihar follow a hierarchical structure comprising CLF, VO, and SHGs. Each SHG consists of 10-12 women from different families within a village. A VO is formed by ten to twelve SHGs collectively. The Representative Governing Body (RGB) of a VO is made up of the three office-bearers from each SHG. For administrative efficiency, 12 active members from the RGB are selected as the Board of Directors (BoD). At the CLF level, the RGB is composed of two representatives from each VO.

Similarly, from this RGB, 12 active members are selected to form the BoD. At both the VO and CLF levels, the BoD plays a crucial role in various operational and managerial tasks. Responsibilities include selecting cadre honorariums, monitoring repayment status, and overseeing the operations of the CLF/VO.

The CLFs of the JEEViKA Federation are registered under the Bihar Self Supporting Cooperative Societies Act, 1996. Primarily, CLFs are involved in internal lending and livelihood activities, which predominantly operate at the individual level, with only a few group enterprises established. CLFs undergo regular training provided by the Block Project Implementation Unit (BPIU) and other relevant departments. The CLF holds the sole responsibility for managing its VOs, supported by the Cluster Facilitator (CF) and Master Book Keeper (MBK).

PRI-CBO convergence project

In February 2022, JEEViKA - Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society (BRLPS) formally partnered with KS-NRO to implement the PRI-CBO convergence project. KS-NRO provided technical support and deployed nine Mentor Resource Persons to support the implementation in Bihar. The PRI-CBO convergence project was executed across 50 panchayats in six blocks spanning three districts in Bihar, covering the period from February 2022 to March 2023.

Profile of the intervention areas

Name of District	Name of Block	Number of intervention Gram Panchayats	Number of intervention CLFs	Number of intervention VOs	Number of intervention SHGs
Muzaffarpur	Musahari	11	2	108	1372
	Marwan	10	2	97	1481
Nalanda	Rajgir	6	2	61	754
	Silao	9	2	68	951
Patna	Dhanarua	7	1	73	1002
	Masaurhi	7	1	65	867
Total		50	10	472	6427

Strategy adopted in the state

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project envisions a systematic and institutional correlation of convergence between the PRI and CBO which are the SHG Federations promoted by BRLPS, to ensure participatory, transparent, and holistic governance at the community level.

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project in Bihar was initiated with a comprehensive Field Level Assessment (FLA) to understand the local context and identify intervention opportunities. This was followed by extensive orientation and sensitization on the concept of PRI-CBO convergence to all stakeholders including state nodal persons, district nodal persons, block nodal persons, Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), and Village Organizations (VOs), were aligned on the convergence framework.

The project focused on capacity-building through training and workshops to develop a local resource pool (convergence facilitators) who led field-level activities at the grassroots. One of the critical components was participatory planning, utilising the PAE-EAP tool, which helped generate community demands by leveraging state and central government schemes. This process aimed to spread awareness among the community about their rights and entitlements. The generated demands were submitted in the Gram Sabha, promoting enhanced participatory planning and governance in the gram panchayats. Innovative initiatives like awareness programs, cleanliness drives, and adult literacy campaigns were introduced to address specific local challenges, encouraging community-led solutions.

This approach led to strong communication, collaboration, and convergence between local governance institutions and women's federations. As a result, communities were empowered to become active agents of their development. The convergence of PRIs and CBOs ensured sustainable community participation and enabled public action, equipping local bodies with the capacity to drive inclusive and integrated development.

Activity timeline

Project Activity	Jan-March 2022			April-June 2022			July-Sep 2022			Oct-Dec 2022			Jan-March 2023			
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
Field level assessment		F														
Mentors training			M													
State Workshop			M													
Staff Orientation				A												
Community Mobiliser Orientation				A												
CLF orientation							J									
VO orientation							J	A	S							
Block Level PRI Orientation											O					
Convergence Facilitator (CF) Screening and Selection Process											O	N				
CFs Training on Project and Field Immersion												N	D			
Mentors Training on PAE-EAP														D		
GP-level PRI orientation													D	J		
CFs training on PAE-EAP													D	J		
Panchayat Coordination Committee Formation and Gram Panchayat Coordination Meetings														J	F	M
PAE-EAP drive														J	F	M
Innovative activities																M
Exit																M

Key outcomes of the project:

1. Developing the local cadre

The selection and training of a group of Community Resource Persons (CRPs), referred to as Convergence Facilitators (CFs) from the intervention VO were crucial steps in the PRI-CBO convergence project.

This process aimed to equip a dedicated group of community members with the necessary skills and knowledge to foster effective collaboration between SHGs, VOs, and PRIs. A rigorous screening process was conducted to identify suitable candidates for the role of Convergence Facilitators. Out of the screened individuals, 464 CFs were

selected based on their potential to contribute effectively to the convergence efforts. The selected CFs underwent comprehensive training to enhance their understanding of the convergence model. The training covered community mobilisation, effective communication, collaboration techniques, and the functioning of PRIs. Post-training, CFs were evaluated on several critical aspects such as understanding, communication, discipline, confidence, and participation. The CFs who demonstrated excellent performance in the evaluations were retained for their roles. For CFs who ranked moderately, further training sessions were organised to address their skills and knowledge gaps. This iterative training approach ensured that all CFs were adequately prepared to support the project's objectives.

2. Capacity building of CBOs

Orientation sessions for the CLFs and VOs played a pivotal role in fostering understanding and engagement in local governance and development. These sessions aimed to introduce the concept of convergence and elucidate the roles of various stakeholders in driving local development. The sessions began with an introduction to the idea of convergence, emphasising the importance of collaborative efforts between CBOs and PRIs. Key governance concepts, including the functioning of gram sabha, were discussed. The roles of the Sarpanch (village head) and Mukhiya (chief) were highlighted to provide a clear understanding of local governance structures. The discussions underscored the critical role of CLFs in monitoring and supporting VOs. Emphasis was placed on how CLFs can facilitate effective interaction between VOs and PRIs, enhancing accountability and service delivery. The sessions stressed the importance of collaboration with PRIs and various government departments.

Similarly, VO members were educated on the

importance of PRIs in local governance and development, the significance of Gram Sabha, and the role of VOs in Panchayat development. The concept of CF was introduced to VO members, and they were encouraged to discuss it within their respective groups. These orientation sessions significantly enhanced the knowledge and engagement of CLF and VO members in local governance and development initiatives.

3. Engagement with Panchayats

Block-level PRI orientations were conducted as part of the PRI-CBO convergence programme to introduce and emphasise collaboration between PRIs and CBOs for holistic panchayat development. These orientations aimed to enhance understanding of participatory processes and ensure the effective incorporation of community demands into the development plan. Further, at the GP-level, orientations underscored the significance of the Panchayat Coordination Committee in facilitating regular dialogue and coordination between PRIs and CBOs. Orientations highlighted the importance of CBO involvement in various standing committees of the Gram Panchayat. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the importance of collaboration and participatory processes in panchayat development. By ensuring the incorporation of community demands into the development plan, orientations contributed to more inclusive and representative planning processes. Orientations played a crucial role in fostering collaboration between PRIs and CBOs at both the block and GP levels, laying the foundation for joint efforts towards development.

4. Creating institutional platforms

i) Formation and strengthening of the Panchayat Coordination Committee (PCC):

A Panchayat Coordination Committee (PCC)

was established within each Community-Level Federation (CLF), comprising one representative from each Gram Panchayat. The formation of these PCCs was implemented across all ten intervention CLFs to achieve several objectives:

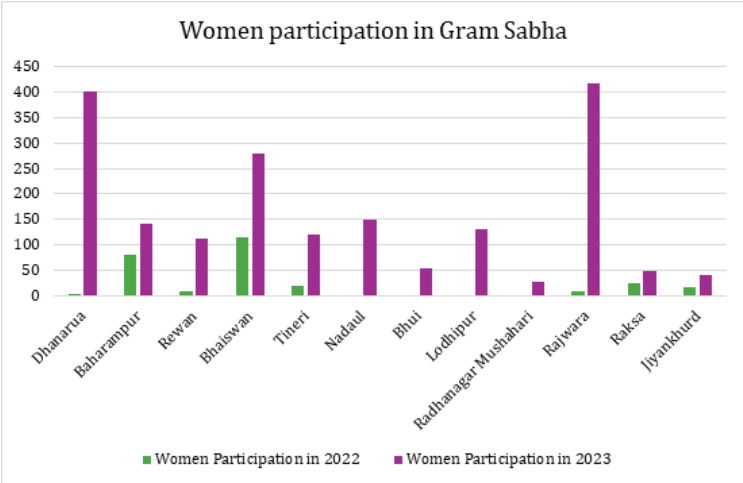
- Drive convergence efforts at the CLF level.
- Establish the CLF as an equal negotiating entity alongside the Panchayat Committee and the block panchayat.
- Empower the CLF to serve as a grievance redressal agency, addressing convergence-related grievances of SHG women.
- Enable the PCC to advocate for and address community needs within the federation to the panchayat and relevant departments.

ii) Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee (GPCC) meetings

To foster collaboration and coordination between CBOs and PRIs, Joint Consultative Meetings were organised as GPCC meetings. GPCC meetings were held twice a month or as required, depending on the urgency of issues and the need for coordination. The agenda of GPCC meetings included addressing grievances raised by the CBO network, strategising approaches to address community issues, devising solutions, and planning convergence activities effectively. The discussions focused on planning joint activities and initiatives that leveraged the strengths of both CBOs and PRIs to achieve common development goals. By bringing together representatives from CBOs and PRIs, GPCC meetings promoted convergence, ensuring that both entities worked together seamlessly to address community concerns and implement development initiatives.

5. Increased participation of women in gram sabha:

The collaborative efforts between CBOs and PRIs have significantly increased women’s participation in Gram Sabhas, marking a significant step towards gender inclusivity in local governance. This increase reflects women’s growing understanding of their rights and their active involvement in local governance. The dates for Gram Sabha meetings were decided during the Gram Panchayat Coordination meetings, which included PRI and Panchayat Coordination Committee (PCC) members. VOs and SHGs played a crucial role in encouraging community members, especially women, to participate in Gram Sabhas. VO members presented their demand plans during the Gram Sabhas. VO members presented their demand plans during the Gram Sabhas. This initiative fostered community discussion and ensured transparency in planning and decision-making processes. A notable increase in women’s participation was observed in the Gram Sabhas held on 26th January 2023, across 12 Gram Panchayats.



6. Increased engagement with Panchayats

Initially, convincing the PRIs to engage with women federations and involving them in community development activities posed a significant challenge. They initially perceived the involvement of women's federations in community development activities as a threat to their authority. They did not recognise these federations as equal stakeholders, viewing their potential as limited to thrift and credit activities. There was a noticeable reluctance among panchayats to hold joint meetings with SHGs. To address these challenges, block-level orientations were conducted in the presence of the Block Development Officer (BDO) and Block Panchayat Raj Officer (BPRO). These sessions aimed to bridge the gap between PRIs and women's federations, emphasising the importance of collaboration for community development.

The establishment of the PCC and conducting regular Gram Panchayat Coordination meetings played a crucial role in changing the PRIs' attitudes towards the federations. Women prepared and presented their PAE data, which served as a comprehensive database of beneficiary demands and identifications. This robust data collection captured the PRIs' attention, showcasing the federations' capability beyond thrift and credit activities. The SHGs took the initiative to organise activities such as adult literacy campaigns and weekly markets. These initiatives demonstrated their commitment to community development and received support from PRIs in the form of materials, stationery, funds, etc. As the women's federations demonstrated their potential, PRIs began to offer more support. For instance, in Rajwada, Musahari Block, the panchayat provided a VO Office within the panchayat building, signifying a significant step towards convergence.

PRI members independently approached VOs to conduct various activities, such as Human Rights Day awareness programs, distribution of dustbins, sanitation drives, and gram sabhas. This proactive approach indicated a shift in the PRI's perspective, recognising the value of collaboration with women's federations.

7. Involvement in the participatory planning process

The development and implementation of PAE and EAP as participatory assessment and planning tools significantly enhanced public service delivery in the intervention areas. While PAE aimed to generate awareness among SHG households about entitlements and local self-governance systems, EAP focused on preparing targeted plans for each VO to address the gaps in entitlement access identified during the PAE. CFs, designated community cadres, facilitated these tools. PAE was conducted across 6,370 SHGs and 472 VOs, covering more than 63,000 households. It concentrated on nine key schemes, including MGNREGS and various pension schemes.

Furthermore, 129 VOs completed their EAPs, subsequently integrated into the GP Annual Action Plans through Gram Sabha submissions. These tools aimed to improve public service delivery's reach and quality by addressing gaps in entitlement access through community-driven planning and engagement. The consolidated state data is presented below:

Area	Details	No.
MGNREGS	SHG members/ families who have job cards	9,360
	SHG members/ families who have job cards with themselves in their own hands	7,098
	SHG members/ families who are interested in applying for a Job card now	29,573
	SHG members or Family members whose name is to be added to the existing Job Card	3,212
Other Schemes	Lakshmibai Samajik Suraksha Pension Yojana	9,360
	Chief Minister Kanya Suraksha Yojana	7,098
	Bihar Viklang Pension Yojana	29,573
	Mukhyamantri Vriddhajan Pension Yojana	3,212
	Kissan Credit card PMFBY	
Adult Literacy	SHG members interested in learning to read and write	

8. Community-led initiatives

The participatory planning exercises, the PAE and EAP, revealed various community grievances and issues. PRIs and CBOs collaborated to address these concerns.

Several activities were planned and implemented to tackle these issues. Adult literacy camps were organised in 89 VOs across 19 Gram Panchayats, benefiting 2,086 participants, and enhancing their reading and writing skills and overall educational attainment. To equip adolescents with essential life skills, adolescent groups, comprising children aged 12-17, received training in life skills such as yoga, self-defence, health, sanitation, and nutrition. 709 adolescents from 35 VOs in 16 GPs were mobilised for this initiative. To improve sanitation and hygiene in the community, sanitation drives involving 3,796 women participants were carried out in 32 VOs across 21 GPs, with PRIs providing dustbins to 1,200 households, significantly improving waste management and cleanliness in the communities. A weekly market was also established in Tineri Panchayat, Masaurhi block, where local farmers could sell their products. The market, consisting of 21 stalls, operates twice a week and is monitored by the CBO and the PCC Member of the respective GP, promoting local agriculture and boosting the local economy. Through these collaborative actions between PRIs and CBOs, significant progress was made in improving literacy, adolescent skills, sanitation, and local economic activities.

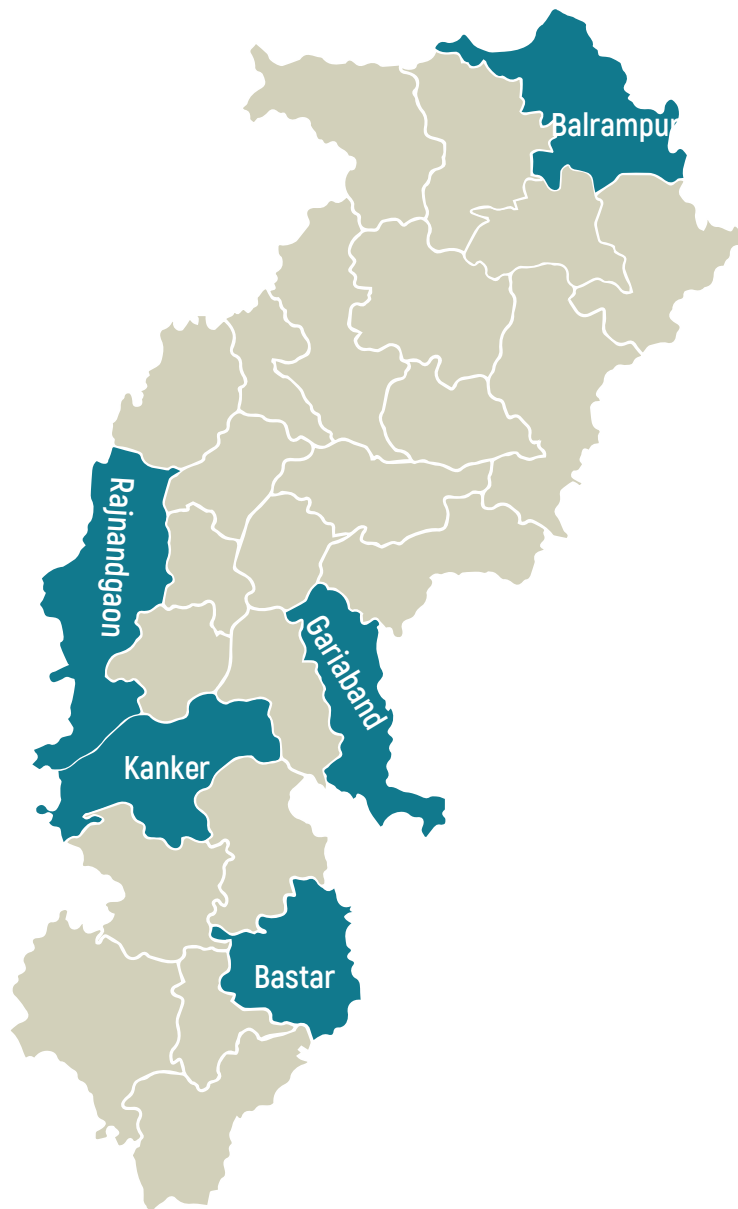
Conclusion

The PRI-CBO convergence project in Bihar has made remarkable progress in several key areas, significantly contributing to the strengthening of local governance, the empowerment of women collectives, and the enhancement of public service delivery.

Establishing the PCC and the regular conduct of Gram Panchayat Coordination Meetings have created robust platforms for collaboration between PRIs and CBOs. These platforms have enabled joint planning and decision-making processes, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing community issues and developmental needs. CFs have played a crucial role in facilitating the convergence model, mobilising communities, and bridging the gap between PRIs and CBOs. Implementing tools like the PAE and the EAP has helped to identify gaps in entitlement access and develop targeted plans for improvement. The project has raised awareness among SHG households and VOs about their entitlements, resulting in better access to schemes and services and contributing to poverty eradication at the village level.

Building on the successful outcomes and learnings from the pilot intervention, the project is set to expand to 34 blocks in the intervention districts. The expansion will be guided by the valuable insights gained during the pilot phase, ensuring that the project leverages its achievements and maximises its impact. The insights and lessons from the pilot phase will inform the implementation framework for the scale-up phase, ensuring that best practices are adopted, and challenges are addressed. Expanding the project to additional blocks demonstrates its effectiveness and capacity to catalyse positive change on a larger scale. The project's success showcases the importance of participatory governance and community-driven initiatives in fostering inclusive development and improving the quality of life for marginalised communities. As the project scales up, it is poised to catalyse positive change and serve as a model for similar initiatives in other regions.

CHHATTISGARH



District

- Balrampur
- Bastar
- Chhurria
- Rajnandgaon
- Narharpur

Background of the State

Chhattisgarh, meaning “thirty-six forts,” is a state rich in resources located in the central-eastern part of India. With an area spanning 135,194 square kilometres, it ranks as the tenth-largest state in the country. Known for its significant forest cover, Chhattisgarh is also celebrated for its temples and picturesque waterfalls.

Chhattisgarh, established as the 26th state of the Indian Union on November 1, 2000, occupies the ninth position in terms of area and the seventeenth position in terms of population. With a total population of 2.56 crores as per the Census of 2011, 32 per cent of the population comprises tribal communities and 11.60 per cent comprises scheduled castes. The sex ratio in Chhattisgarh is 991 females for every 1000 males, which is higher than the national average of 940. The literacy rate in Chhattisgarh has shown improvement, reaching 70.28 per cent according to the latest population census. Male literacy stands at 80.27 per cent, while female literacy is at 60.24 per cent. The state is organised into 27 district panchayats, 146 janapad panchayats, and 11,664 gram panchayats, which form the three-tier Panchayat raj institutions in the state.

PRI system in the state

Panchayati Raj in Chhattisgarh has inherited the practices and structures of local self-governance initiatives from the former undivided Madhya Pradesh state. Consequently, the Panchayati Raj legislation enforced in Madhya Pradesh at its reorganisation continues to apply to Chhattisgarh. This law was re-designated as the Chhattisgarh Panchayat Raj Adhiniyam in 1993, which forms the basis for the current

Panchayat Raj system in Chhattisgarh. The panchayat elections in the reorganised state of Chhattisgarh were held in 2005 for all three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system.

Under the Chhattisgarh Panchayat Raj Adhiniyam, 1993, one-third of the seats are reserved for women. This reservation policy also applies to SC, ST, and OBC. Initially, the allocation of reserved seats is determined by lottery in the first election. Subsequently, it is done by rotation, ensuring women leaders occupy all reserved seats over three elections. The two-child norm was also established as a disqualification criterion for occupying Panchayat seats. A literacy qualification was also introduced in the law, as per the Act amended in 2004, for candidates below 30 years of age for election to Panchayats (Section 36(1)). However, in a cabinet meeting held on February 26, 2008, three significant decisions were made regarding reservation in the state Panchayat elections. They are :

- Increase of women reservation to 50 per cent from 33 per cent;
- Rotation of reserved seats every two terms in place of one term and
- Removal of two child women candidates.

Role of NRLM in the state

Chhattisgarh State Rural Livelihood Mission “BIHAN” is an autonomous society registered under the Society Registration Act 1860 to implement Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna—National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM). BIHAN, under the aegis of the Department of Panchayat and Rural Development, Government of Chhattisgarh, came into effect on 1 April 2014 to roll out the programme through an established support structure and designated professionals.

¹ Institute of Rural Management, The State of Panchayats 2007-08 - An independent assessment Vol 2, state /Ut Reports, Sponsored by Ministry of Panchayati Raj, New Delhi

To align with the objective of NRLM the state undertook several activities through social mobilisation and building community institutions, upscaling the potentials of the federated institution. The NRLM approach for the enhancement of the poor also brought in an involvement of several departments for inclusive development. The guidelines for establishing the administration and management units to execute, implement and monitor the activities of poverty alleviation were ensured in imparting the support services. The dedicated professionals and the Administration have supported the state in transforming rural livelihoods, promoting inclusive growth and reducing the risk of poverty.

Role of CBOs in the state:

For the development of the cadres, the Chhattisgarh State Rural Livelihood Mission strengthened its community institution in the Resource Blocks of Raipur, Rajnandgaon, Baster and Surguja district in the state of Chhattisgarh. Further upscaling the cadres pool to the non-intensive blocks which were identified for initiating the activities of the community mobilisation and institutional building.

The CBO structure aligns with the proposed NRLM structure in Chhattisgarh. The State Mission has promoted a three-tier institutional architecture of the women’s collectives i.e., Self Help Group the primary level federation at the hamlet level, Village organisation the secondary level federation at the village level and the community level federation, the apex level body at the Gram Panchayat. For effective functioning of the institution the cadres have been deployed for implementation of domain specific activities. Besides, the executive committee members of the village organisation and the cluster level federation and the community cadres have ensured the maintenance of registers and dissemination of information.

PRI-CBO convergence project:

The PRI-CBO convergence project in Chhattisgarh was initiated in May 2017 following a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Chhattisgarh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (BIHAN) and KS-NRO. This collaborative effort aimed to enhance the convergence between PRIs and CBOs. During the 2017-18 period, KS provided technical support to BIHAN to execute the PRI-CBO convergence project across 87 Gram Panchayats situated in five blocks within five districts of Chhattisgarh. The primary goals of the project was to strengthen grassroots governance, promote community participation, and facilitate the effective delivery of services and programs at the local level by fostering synergy between PRIs and CBOs.

Profile of the Intervention Area

Items	Coverage
No. of District	5
No. of Block	5
No. of GPs	87
No. of SHG in GP	1928

No. of VO in GP	112
No. of convergence – CRP	137
No External Resource Person	5
No. of SHG completed PAE	1787
No. of VO-prepared EAP	112

Strategy adopted in the state:

In Chhattisgarh, the PRI-CBO convergence initiative transformed and was renamed the Model Convergence project. This transformation aimed to broaden the scope and enhance the impact by integrating various sectors of line departments for convergence activities. Under this initiative, various sectors of line departments such as MGNREGs, PMAY, ICDS, NRHM, Agriculture, and allied activities were included for convergence activities. To facilitate the convergence process, thematic coordinators and cadres were appointed at both block and Gram Panchayat levels. Committees formed under various departments, such as the Forest Right Committee, were actively involved in the convergence process. The government mandated a shift from the initial BIHAN approach, which emphasised PRI-CBO convergence, to a more departmental convergence strategy. This shift led to reduced direct involvement as greater focus was placed on aligning the activities and resources of different government departments for cohesive development efforts. To implement activities like Participatory Assessment and Evaluation (PAE-EAP) and the GP2RP, community mobilisation played a crucial role. Key activities included SHGs, VOs and CLFs in organising, mobilising and facilitating community participation in convergence camps. Intensive sensitization efforts were conducted to educate SHG members and the broader community about rural development schemes, both centrally and state-sponsored in the intervention blocks.

Activity timeline

Project Activity	April-June 2017			July-Sep 2017			Oct-Dec 2017			Jan-March 2018			April-June 2018		
	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Signing of MoU		M													
Orientation at State, District, and Block level		M	J												

Capacity building of CRPs and Cluster convergence coordinator on PAE	J				
Orientation to VOs and PRI members on project rollout of PAE on field	J	A	S		
Capacity building of CRPs and Cluster convergence coordinator on EAP				O	N
PAE-EAP-GP2RP			S	O	N
Preparation of special Gram Sabha/ Gram Sabha mobilisation and Conduct of Gram Sabha				O	N D
Capacity building of CBO, Cadres on ETR					J
Convergence camps				J	F M A
Ration card, Labor card, Job Card, and Pension					
Development of ETR and Capacity building of CRPs on ETR					M A M
Capacity building of VO members on ETR					J
Closure of MoU					J

Key outcomes of the project:

1. Income Generation Activities

The PRI-CBO Convergence project in Chhattisgarh undertook a comprehensive range of income-generating activities aimed at empowering marginalised communities and reducing poverty. These activities spanned multiple sectors, including wage employment, agriculture, livestock, and self-employment, with a strong emphasis on sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic improvement in the project areas. MGNREGS played a pivotal role in the PRI-CBO Convergence project by providing wage employment opportunities to rural households. Through this scheme, SHGs undertook various activities to create productive assets such as NADEP, vermicompost pits, and livestock sheds. These activities not only generated immediate income for the communities but also promoted environmental sustainability and improved agricultural practices.

Agriculture-related schemes were central to improving productivity and promoting sustainable

farming practices. Key initiatives included providing access to high-quality seeds and fertilisers to enhance crop yields, issuing soil health cards to farmers to guide proper nutrient management and improve soil fertility and establishing centres equipped with agricultural equipment to support farming activities and improve efficiency.

Livestock-related schemes aimed to enhance the income and livelihoods of communities through better livestock management by providing training on advanced livestock-rearing techniques to increase productivity, providing veterinary care promoting efficient feed management to maintain livestock health and offering insurance to protect livestock owners from potential losses, ensuring economic stability.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) and Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSSETIs) were integrated into the project framework to enhance vocational skills and employment opportunities, thereby generating sustainable income. The project's emphasis on departmental convergence was critical for pooling resources and expertise from various departments, ensuring a holistic approach to livelihood enhancement. This collaboration with schemes such as MGNREGS and departments like Horticulture, Agriculture, and Animal Husbandry allows for a holistic approach to livelihood enhancement, maximizing the impact of interventions and ensuring the efficient utilisation of resources. Thus, the achievement of income-generating activities through departmental convergence signifies a significant milestone in the PRI-CBO Convergence project, highlighting its effectiveness in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable development in rural communities. The details of these schemes and department-related activities are as follows:

Scheme/ department	Activity	Target	Unit cost	Total expected value of money leveraged
MGNREGS	Wage employment	20,000	16,000	32,00,00,000
	NADEP	2,000	7,786	1,55,72,000
	Vermicompost	2,000	9,260	1,85,20,000
	Azolla Pit	2,000	1,660	33,20,000
	Cow Shed	250	85,000	2,12,50,000
	Goat/sheep Shed	250	95,000	2,37,50,000
	Poultry shed	1,000	85,000	2,12,50,000
	Individual land development	250	15,000	1,50,00,000
	Open well	125	15,000	3,75,00,000
Agriculture	Agriculture equipment's / tools	Lumpsum	45,000	56,25,000
	Training & capacity building	5,000	1,00,000	1,00,000
	Seed & biofertilizer	2,000	1,000	50,00,000
	Soil health card	5,000	50	1,00,000

Horticulture	Vegetable seed/ biofertilizer	Lumpsum	1,000	50,00,000
	Plantations	Lumpsum	10,00,000	10,00,000
	Training & capacity building	Lumpsum	1,00,000	1,00,000
Animal Husbandry	Training & capacity building	50	1,00,000	1,00,000
	Poultry unit	50	85,000	42,50,000
	Goatry		95,000	47,50,000
	Piggery	50	85,000	42,50,000
			Total	50,64,37,000

2. Health Nutrition & Education Activities

The PRI-CBO Convergence project in Chhattisgarh demonstrated a commendable commitment to improving the overall well-being of communities by prioritising health, nutrition, and education activities. Through strategic collaboration with various government schemes and initiatives, the project implemented comprehensive interventions to address key health and development challenges at the grassroots level.

The project partnered with the ICDS scheme to promote maternal and child well-being through several key initiatives. Financial assistance under the Janani Suraksha Yojana supported maternal health, ensuring safe deliveries and postpartum care. Immunisation drives and supplementary food programs targeted child health and nutrition, aiming to reduce child mortality and malnutrition rates. Initiatives focused on raising awareness about reproductive health and hygiene practices among adolescents. This included menstrual hygiene management and reproductive health education, contributing to the overall well-being of young girls and boys.

Collaboration with the SSA enhanced access to education and promoted the implementation of the Right to Education Act. The provision of mid-day meals in schools incentivised attendance, improved health, and nutrition

among children, and supported cognitive development.

The convergence project worked with the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) to promote cleanliness and sanitation practices. The initiative facilitated the construction of household and public toilets, addressing the issue of open defecation and improving hygiene. Campaigns were conducted to raise awareness about the importance of sanitation, proper waste management, and hygiene practices. Communities were provided with guidance on effective waste management practices, contributing to a cleaner environment.

By integrating various schemes and collaborating with PRIs and CBO, the project adopted a holistic approach to healthcare, education, and sanitation. Key outcomes of these interventions include improved health outcomes, reduced malnutrition, increased immunisation coverage, enhanced access to education, and better sanitation practices within communities, thereby contributing to overall community well-being and development.

3. Community-Based Monitoring Mechanism

The implementation of a robust tracking mechanism was a pivotal aspect of the PRI-CBO Convergence project. This mechanism was designed to enhance accountability,

ensure transparency, and monitor the progress and outcomes of the project across different levels, thereby strengthening community monitoring of village development activities. The project established an entitlement tracking mechanism at multiple levels—Village, Panchayat, Cluster, and Block. This system allowed for monitoring the distribution and utilisation of entitlements under various schemes ensuring that beneficiaries received their rightful benefits. By identifying and rectifying discrepancies in the delivery process, the mechanism enhanced the efficiency and fairness of entitlement distribution.

A comprehensive framework was developed at the village level to establish a community-based tracking and monitoring system. This framework involved active community participation by engaging community members in monitoring development activities fostering a sense of ownership and accountability, and ensuring that the project was responsive to their needs and aspirations.

A need-based thematic behaviour change communication plan was devised to facilitate effective communication and information dissemination. This plan aimed to promote awareness, knowledge, and positive behaviour change among community members. Through targeted communication campaigns addressing specific themes related to health, education, sanitation, and other project components, the program encouraged informed decision-making and sustainable behavioural changes.

To facilitate coordination and collaboration among different stakeholders, a community-level convergence desk (CLCD) was established at the cluster level. This desk served as a platform for representatives from PRIs, CBOs, line departments, and community members to share information, plan jointly, and solve problems collectively. By promoting effective convergence and synergy among various

entities involved in the project contributed to its overall success.

4. Inclusion of marginalised communities

To address the needs of marginalised communities, especially tribes relying on Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and Forest Rights (FR) beneficiaries, the PRI-CBO Convergence project implemented several special initiatives. The overarching goal of these initiatives was to empower these communities, enhance their income-generating opportunities, and promote sustainable livelihood practices.

The formation of producer groups or collectives among tribal communities reliant on NTFPs has been a significant initiative to enhance their income generation capabilities. These groups serve as platforms for individuals involved in NTFP collection and processing to pool resources, knowledge, and skills and collectively address challenges related to NTFP value chains.

Through these collectives, tribal communities can access larger markets, negotiate better prices for their products, and reach broader consumer bases. Also, training on sustainable harvesting and processing practices ensures long-term viability and implements sustainable practices in NTFP harvesting and processing. Moreover, the collectives foster social cohesion, knowledge exchange, and mutual support among community members, thereby strengthening their resilience and collective bargaining power.

To support the sustainability of NTFP-based livelihoods, training and capacity-building programs are often provided to members of these producer groups. These programs focus on sustainable harvesting practices to ensure environmentally friendly methods, value-addition techniques to improve the quality and market value of NTFPs, market linkages for connecting producers with broader markets

and entrepreneurship skills for enhancing business acumen and self-reliance.

Organising individuals dependent on NTFPs and marginal farmers into thematic collectives, such as Agriculture and NTFP-based enterprises, strategically enhanced their economic opportunities and promoted sustainable livelihoods. By bringing together members with similar livelihood interests, these collectives facilitate knowledge sharing, resource pooling for greater efficiency, and collective action, thereby strengthening economic resilience through united efforts.

Linking these collectives to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the Divisional Forest Department further enhanced their market access and business opportunities. Through these linkages, collectives can establish outlets for selling processed goods in supermarkets, thereby tapping into broader consumer markets and increasing their income potential. This integration into formal market channels enables marginalised communities to leverage their products and services for better economic returns and sustainable livelihoods.

In addition to strengthening market linkages, efforts are made to connect marginalised communities with relevant government schemes and initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation and livelihood enhancement. Schemes like the MGNREGS, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), and other livelihood-related programs offer crucial support in terms of providing wage employment opportunities, offering financial assistance for housing, skill development and financial support for asset productive creation.

Providing information, guidance, and support in navigating the application processes for government schemes ensured that marginalised communities could fully avail themselves of the benefits entitled to them. This involves raising awareness by educating

community members about available schemes helping them understand eligibility criteria and application procedures and ensuring community involvement in scheme implementation. By facilitating access to these schemes, the project aims to empower marginalised communities to improve their economic prospects and enhance their overall well-being.

5.Social Security Schemes

The PAE and EAP have emerged as transformative tools for community mobilisation and empowerment within SHGs and the broader village community. These tools have facilitated participatory planning, strengthened local democracy, and empowered communities and local leaders with knowledge about their rights, entitlements, and the responsibilities of public institutions.

PAE and EAP exercises involve the active participation of all SHG members and their households. This inclusive approach provides a platform for community members to collectively assess their entitlements so as to evaluate their rights and access to various government schemes and benefits and develop plans to access them effectively. By engaging in this process, community members gain a comprehensive understanding of their entitlements and the mechanisms available to access them, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment.

One of the key outcomes of the PAE and EAP exercises is the empowerment of women within SHGs and the wider community. Through active participation in the planning process, community members gain a comprehensive understanding of their rights and the benefits available under different schemes and the empowerment of women within SHGs and the wider community. When women are empowered, they are better equipped to assert their rights and advocate for their needs and

interests.

Moreover, the PAE and EAP exercises create an enabling environment for effective local governance and decision-making. By equipping communities and local leaders with the necessary knowledge and tools the PAE and EAP exercises promote transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in governance processes, ensuring that the voices of marginalised communities are heard, and their needs addressed. Community members are better able to engage with public institutions, hold them accountable for service delivery, and advocate for their rights and entitlements. The details regarding the outreach of social security schemes are given below.

Entitlement	Accomplished (No.)
Job Card	1,933
IHHL/SBM	1,578
RSBY/MSBY	1,412
Old age pension	143
Widow pension	136
Disability pension	30
PDS Ration Card	689
Ujwala Yojna/ Gas connection	2,884
Aadhar card	1,034


Conclusion

Over the past three years, the PRI-CBO Convergence program in Chhattisgarh has achieved significant milestones, contributing to the empowerment of local communities and the enhancement of local governance. The program has implemented extensive training sessions for key stakeholders, including members of PRIs, CBOs, and SHGs. These training sessions have equipped stakeholders with an understanding of local governance, entitlements, and planning processes and practical skills for engaging in participatory planning, decision-making, and governance. Through these training programs, there has been a notable increase in participation in democratic platforms, particularly among women.

The mobilisation efforts and capacity-building measures have empowered communities to take charge of their development initiatives. The transformation of CBOs into federations has further strengthened their advocacy for women's issues and their role in driving local development. By amplifying the voices of women and marginalised groups, these federations have become powerful agents of change, advocating for policies and programs that address the needs of the community.

Furthermore, the project has facilitated improved internal governance within panchayats, promoting collaboration and joint initiatives between SHGs and PRIs. This collaboration has led to enhanced transparency, accountability, and service delivery, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively based on the actual needs of the community.

Thus, the PRI-CBO Convergence program in Chhattisgarh has made significant strides in empowering local communities, enhancing governance, and promoting sustainable development.



The transformation of CBOs into federations and the resultant advocacy and policy influence underscore the program's positive impact on local communities. By equipping stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills, increasing participation in democratic processes, and fostering collaboration between SHGs and PRIs, the program has laid a strong foundation for continued progress. These achievements highlight the program's role in driving inclusive and holistic development in the region, paving the way for sustained progress in the years to come.

Himachal Pradesh



District

Shimla
Sirmour

Background of State

Himachal Pradesh, located in the northern part of India, stands as a testament to India's northern beauty. It is characterised by its picturesque landscapes, diverse cultural tapestry, and rich historical legacy. Nestled amidst the majestic Himalayas, this mountainous state boasts a predominantly rural populace engaged in agricultural, horticultural, and tourism activities.

According to the Census of 2011, Himachal Pradesh was home to a total population of 6,864,602 individuals. Among them, 3,481,873 were male, while 3,382,729 were female. Over the years, the state has made significant strides in literacy, with rates witnessing a remarkable increase from a mere 7.98 per cent in 1951 (with male literacy at 11.94 per cent and female literacy at 4.02 per cent) to an impressive 82.80% in 2011 (with male literacy at 89.53 per cent and female literacy at 75.93 per cent). This upward trajectory reflects the state's unwavering dedication to enhancing education and fostering socio-economic empowerment among its populace.

Before 1947, Himachal Pradesh was comprised of 30 small princely states under British rule, lacking a unified Panchayat law. However, in areas where rulers were enlightened, they adopted the Punjab Village Panchayat Act of 1939. The formal establishment of the state of Himachal Pradesh occurred on April 15, 1948, through the amalgamation of these 30 princely states. Over time, the region underwent various administrative changes until it achieved statehood as the eighteenth state of the Indian Union on January 25, 1971. This journey from fragmented princely states to a cohesive state within the Indian Republic marked a significant milestone in the region's history and governance structure.

Local governance system in the state

The roots of PRIs in Himachal Pradesh trace back to 1908 when Raja Bijai Chand of Kehloor (Bilaspur) established quomi (caste) Panchayats in his state. Most other princely states in the region also had traditional Panchayats that played significant roles in local governance.

Following independence, the state legislature took significant steps to modernise and formalise the Panchayat system to align with local conditions and increasing demands for democratisation. In 1952, the Himachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act was enacted, aiming to regulate and improve the functioning of Panchayats in the state. This legislative measure was a crucial step towards democratising governance and empowering local communities in Himachal Pradesh. The 1952 Act was repealed in 1968 when the state legislature passed a new Panchayati Raj Act to incorporate the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee's major recommendations and provide a uniform system for the entire state, including Bilaspur and other areas transferred to it. Later, the Himachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act of 1994 came into effect in conformity with the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution. Again the 1994 Act was amended in 1997 to extend the Panchayat Raj system to the Fifth Schedule areas in the state in conformity with the central law of 1996 on the subject.

The state is organised into PRIs operating at the village, intermediate (block), and district levels. These institutions, comprising elected representatives, play a pivotal role in local governance and development initiatives, encompassing areas such as rural infrastructure, education, healthcare, and social welfare programs. With the latest amendment in 2008, 50 per cent reservation

was mandated for women in the PRIs, both in rural and urban local bodies. These reservations are rotated every five years to ensure equitable representation. This legislative measure aimed to enhance the political participation of women and promote gender equality in local governance. Despite these efforts, women's political engagement in Himachal Pradesh has primarily remained limited to voting behaviour. However, there has been a noticeable increase in women's participation in electoral processes, particularly evident in the higher voter turnout among women compared to men in assembly elections held in 1998, 2003, 2007, and 2012. This trend reflects a positive shift towards greater inclusivity and representation of women in the state's democratic processes.

Himachal Pradesh's PRIs form the backbone of local governance and developmental activities in the state. The system is structured into three tiers: Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, and Zila Parishads, each with distinct roles and responsibilities. Together, these institutions work towards addressing the needs of rural communities and promoting inclusive development. Gram Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh serve as the primary units of local self-government at the village level. They are crucial in addressing the immediate needs and concerns of villagers and play an instrumental role in implementing various government schemes and initiatives. They play a vital role in the holistic development of rural areas by focusing on infrastructure development, healthcare, education, agriculture, social welfare, environmental management, economic development, and local governance.

Panchayat Samitis, functioning at the block level in Himachal Pradesh, has a broader and more strategic role than Gram Panchayats. They coordinate and oversee developmental activities across multiple villages within their

respective blocks. This coordination ensures cohesive development planning and effective implementation of government programs and infrastructure projects. Zila Parishads serve as the highest tier of the Panchayati Raj system in Himachal Pradesh, operating at the district level. They play a pivotal role in supervising, coordinating, and overseeing the activities of Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis within their respective districts. Zila Parishads are responsible for higher-level planning, resource allocation, and monitoring of development initiatives across the district, ensuring effective implementation of government policies and programs.

Extension officers indeed play a pivotal role in supporting Panchayat Samitis in fulfilling their responsibilities and implementing developmental projects and programs at the block level in Himachal Pradesh. They provide guidance and assistance to Panchayat Samitis in formulating development plans, identifying priorities, and selecting appropriate projects based on local needs and available resources. Their involvement facilitates the smooth implementation of various government initiatives and enhances Panchayat Samitis's capacity to address local communities' needs.

The recent Gram Panchayat elections in 2021 have ushered in a new cohort of members, bringing fresh perspectives and energy to the Panchayat body. Still, they may require guidance to navigate their duties effectively. This highlights the importance of providing comprehensive training on their roles and responsibilities. While the positive response from all PRI members reflects their commitment to participate in on-field activities actively, certain challenges need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of Gram Panchayats. Discussions with Panchayat members have revealed specific areas requiring attention, including limited experience working with Mahila Mandals

and underutilisation of allocated funds due to the absence of VPRP in GDPD. Despite these challenges, the positive response from all PRI members during the orientation program reflects their commitment to participate in on-field activities actively.

SRLM in the state

Since April 2013, the NRLM has been implemented in Himachal Pradesh, focusing on an intensive approach strategy in five blocks: Basantpur, Kandaghat, Haroli, Mandi Sadar, and Nurpur. Basantpur and Haroli are designated as resource blocks where social capital is actively being created. The Himachal Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (HPSRLM) spearheads these efforts, providing comprehensive support and training to SHG members. HPSRLM is providing proper training to SHG members for managing their institutions, linking up with markets, managing their existing livelihoods, enhancing their credit absorption capacity and credit worthiness, etc. In addition, the poor would be facilitated to achieve increased access to rights, entitlements and public services, diversified risk and better social indicators of empowerment.

CBOs in the state

In Himachal Pradesh, particularly in Theog, the restructuring and federation of SHGs under the HPSRLM initiative have led to substantial changes in their organisational structure and operational dynamics. Initially established as Water Authority SHGs over two decades ago, these groups have transitioned into VOs and CLFs. This transition has provided a robust framework for collective action and development among SHG members.

Despite the active participation of SHG members in village and block development activities, challenges such as the lack of a collective identity and geographical distance between SHGs have hindered coordination and collaboration. Monthly meetings held in Himachal Pradesh, unlike other states, have provided a platform for discussions on various activities and initiatives, lasting for two to three hours. However, despite these challenges, the pilot initiative has shown promising signs of progress, with SHGs beginning to undertake collective activities and follow-ups by VOs and CLFs contributing to strengthening coordination among members. This progress indicates the potential for further development and collaboration among SHGs in Himachal Pradesh to achieve their collective goals and contribute to community development effectively.

PRI-CBO convergence project

The MoU for the pilot project in Himachal Pradesh was signed for a period of 18 months, spanning from February 2022 to March 2023. The project was piloted using both intensive and non-intensive approaches across selected GPs and blocks.

Profile of the intervention areas

Approach	District	Block	Number of Gram Panchayats	No. of VOs covered	No. of SHGs covered
Intensive	Shimla	Theog	20	29	315
	Sirmaur	Rajgarh	20	29	231
Non Intensive	Shimla	Mashobra	20	24	390
	Una	Haroli	20	27	396
	Hamirpur	Bhoranj	20	30	402
	Mandi	Sadar	20	32	560
TOTAL			120	171	2,294

Strategy adopted in the state

1) Stakeholder Engagement Activities:

Effective stakeholder engagement has been a cornerstone of the pilot project in Himachal Pradesh, ensuring inclusive communication, collaboration, and participation. The engagement activities have been designed to create platforms for dialogue, coordination, and knowledge sharing among diverse stakeholders. These activities include consultative meetings, line department meetings, and stakeholders' workshops, each playing a critical role in the project's success.

Consultative meetings have been a key element of stakeholder engagement, providing forums for discussion on various aspects of the project. These meetings have facilitated bringing together diverse stakeholders, including SHG members, local leaders, government officials, and community representatives to discuss key project objectives, priorities, and challenges.

Line department meetings have provided an opportunity for project implementers to engage with relevant government departments and agencies. These meetings have enabled the coordination and alignment of project activities with existing government initiatives

and programs, maximising synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts and ensuring the effective use of resources. Stakeholders' workshops have played an instrumental role in fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange. These workshops have provided a platform for stakeholders to share best practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches to addressing project challenges, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the project.

2) Engagement with CBOs:

The pilot project in Himachal Pradesh has prioritised the engagement of CBOs to empower them as representatives of local communities. The focus has been on equipping VOs and SHGs with the necessary skills and knowledge to actively participate in decision-making processes and contribute effectively to the local development agenda.

Capacity-building sessions aimed to familiarise CBO members with the project's objectives and the process of identifying LRGs. These sessions equipped CBO members, particularly women from SHGs, with the skills to engage effectively in project activities and initiatives.

Activities such as "hindrance walks" and "dream village" exercises were conducted to

facilitate the identification of developmental issues and challenges within the GP. During these activities, community members, especially women from SHGs, participated in walks through the village, noting obstacles to development such as poor infrastructure, inadequate healthcare, or lack of educational facilities.

Their insights were invaluable in identifying priority areas for intervention and developing a vision for an ideal village. Throughout the project, SHGs and VOs have maintained active participation in planning and implementing activities aligned with their vision of a “dream village”. These engagements serve as platforms for collaboration, consensus-building, and collective action, ensuring that community-driven development initiatives are effectively implemented and sustained over the long term.

3) Collaboration with Line Departments:

Collaboration with line departments has been integral to the project’s success in Himachal Pradesh. By converging with various departments responsible for healthcare, education, environment, social inclusion, and women and child development, the project has leveraged expertise, resources, and technical support to ensure the effective implementation of its initiatives.

Through collaboration with line departments, the project has been able to access specialised knowledge and resources related to specific sectors. For example, collaboration with the healthcare department has facilitated access to medical expertise and resources for healthcare initiatives, while partnership with the education department has enabled the implementation of educational programs and initiatives. Furthermore, cooperation with line departments has helped to ensure alignment with existing government policies, programs, and initiatives. By working closely with relevant

departments, the project has been able to integrate its activities into broader government strategies and plans, maximising impact and sustainability. This multifaceted collaboration has facilitated access to specialised knowledge and resources, alignment with government policies, and enhanced sustainability.

4) Strengthening Gram Panchayats:

Recognising the pivotal role of Gram Panchayats as primary local self-governance institutions, the project places significant emphasis on empowering these bodies to effectively fulfil their responsibilities. This strategy is anchored in strengthening Gram Sabhas, which are essential platforms for participatory planning and inclusive decision-making at the grassroots level. By empowering Gram Sabhas, the project aims to ensure that local communities have a voice in determining their development priorities and initiatives. As part of this effort, the project conducted a comprehensive orientation program for members of PRI involved in the Convergence Project. The program was designed to highlight the importance of their roles in the project and familiarise them with its developmental activities within their respective areas. Participants in the orientation program included PRI members at the Gram Panchayat and block levels, as well as secretaries. Through this program, participants gained a clear understanding of their responsibilities towards their villages and their contributions to achieving the project’s objectives. Moreover, the orientation session emphasised the importance of collaboration between various stakeholders, including LRGs, local institutions, and CBOs.

5) Engagement with Local Resource Group Members and Internal Mentors:

Engaging with LRG members has been a cornerstone of the project’s success. LRG members, with their valuable knowledge

and expertise, play a crucial role in guiding and supporting community members throughout the project’s implementation. LRG members bring a deep understanding of local community dynamics, traditions, and needs, allowing for more effective and contextually relevant interventions. Their expertise ensures that project activities are well-tailored to meet the specific needs and priorities of the target population.

In addition to LRG members, internal mentors have been selected to provide support and guidance in four blocks supported by KS-NRO. Internal mentors offer continuous mentorship to project participants, helping them navigate challenges and leverage opportunities. They provide hands-on support, ensuring that participants can apply new skills and knowledge effectively. Also conduct training sessions, workshops, and follow-up meetings to reinforce learning and encourage best practices. The collaboration between LRG members and internal mentors fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment within the community and has been instrumental in the project’s implementation and success.

Activity timeline

Project Activity	Jan-March 2022			April-June 2022			July-Sep 2022			Oct-Dec 2022			Jan-March 2023		
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Development of convergence strategy and State Level Workshop		F													
Orientations and planning of activities with		F	M												
PRI Orientation		F	M												
VO Orientation			M	A											
LRG identification & selection					M										
First, capacity building and training of LRGs							J								
Orientation & training for PAE & EAP							J	A							
Participatory Assessment of Entitlement (PAE) and Entitlement Access Plan (EAP)								S							
Orientation to line departments										O					
Grama sabha (MGNREGS)													D		

Capacity building of VO members on ETR	D
Grama sabha (GPDP)	
LRG training- Livelihood training	J
Livelihood Plan Preparation and Submission	F
VO strengthening training and VO Empowerment Festivals	M

Key outcomes of the project:

Activities	Outcome
Development of convergence strategy and State Level Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies for convergence, rollout plans, and significant challenges were discussed and planned.
Orientations and planning of activities with DMMUs and BMMUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing on the project and its components Planning for the upcoming activities in the field Finalisation of the role of VOs in the project planning with the cadres of HPSRLM on rolling out the project activities
PRI Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefed on the project activities Orientation on necessary support required from PRI
VO Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared the roles and responsibilities of VO in the project Nominations of potential LRGs
LRG identification & selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 119 LRG Cadres were selected from both the blocks
First, capacity building and training of LRGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orientation on the roles and responsibilities of LRGs Assigned responsibilities for LRGs and division of responsibilities
Orientation & training for PAE & EAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training on provisions of government schemes and accessing various benefits Training on the Follow-up activities
Participatory Assessment of Entitlement (PAE) and Entitlement Access Plan (EAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entitlement demand generation Awareness of schemes and services Identification of Poor beneficiaries
Orientation to line departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion on the scope of convergence of the CBO network with departments and Schemes Knowledge generation on the schemes and services of each department
Grama sabha (MGNREGS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation & submission of MGNREGA community demand

Grama sabha (GPDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation & submission of the VPRP plan
LRG training- Livelihood training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on Livelihood plan preparation on mobile application of VPRP.
Livelihood Plan Preparation and Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHG level Livelihood plan preparation and consolidation of plans at VO level
VO strengthening training and VO Empowerment Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VO capacity building training. • VO subcommittee training • Celebration of Women Empowerment Festivals

1)PRI and CBO's Orientations on the Convergence Project:

The orientation program for PRI members participating in the Convergence Project was a pivotal initiative aimed at equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to drive developmental activities in their respective areas. This comprehensive program targeted PRI members at both the Gram Panchayat and block levels, as well as secretaries, ensuring that all key stakeholders in local governance were well-informed about the project's objectives and their roles.

The orientation sessions clarified the responsibilities of PRI members towards their villages and highlighted the importance of collaboration with Local Resource Groups (LRGs), local institutions, and CBOs to enhance service delivery and community development. By emphasising collaboration and partnership, the program aimed to foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility among PRI members for the success of the Convergence Project.

In addition to the orientation for PRI members, a separate session was conducted for SHG women to introduce them to the project and the process of identifying LRGs. Mentor Resource Persons shared their experiences, providing valuable insights and guidance to the participants. The hindrance walk-dream village activity undertaken during the orientation enabled participants to identify key developmental issues within the Gram Panchayat, paving the way for targeted interventions and solutions.

The active participation of SHG women in the orientation process demonstrated their commitment to contributing to community development initiatives. By volunteering to work as LRGs in the PRI-CBO convergence project, these women showcased their dedication to driving positive change and improving the quality of life in their villages. The selection process and subsequent training for LRG volunteers further equipped them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively fulfil their roles within the project. These volunteers underwent a selection process and received training in mid-April.

2)Capacity building of Local Resource Group

The training sessions for LRGs are crucial for enhancing their capabilities and ensuring successful project implementation. These sessions are designed to foster unity, collectivism, and harmony among LRG members, emphasising the importance of collaboration between PRI and CBOs in achieving their shared goal of village development.

The focus of the training is on equipping LRG members with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively contribute to the project's objectives. This includes training in areas such as project management, community mobilisation, leadership development, conflict resolution, and communication skills. Practical fieldwork exercises are incorporated into the training curriculum to provide hands-on experience and reinforce learning.

Throughout the project duration, ongoing capacity building initiatives are implemented to ensure that LRG members continue to enhance their capabilities and adapt to evolving project needs. These initiatives may include refresher training sessions, workshops, peer learning exchanges, mentoring programs, and exposure visits to successful project sites.

By investing in the capacity building of LRG members, the project aims to empower local communities to take ownership of their development initiatives, drive positive change, and build sustainable, resilient communities. Effective collaboration between PRI and CBO, facilitated by well-trained and empowered LRGs, is essential for achieving long-term impact and creating lasting improvements in the target areas. LRG trainings conducted during the project timeline are mentioned below:

Project Activity	April-June 2022			July-Sep 2022			Oct-Dec 2022			Jan-March 2023		
	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Training on GP profile preparation	M											
Training on Roles and Responsibilities of LRG	M											
Training on Participatory Assessment of Entitlements				J								
Training on Entitlement Access Plan					A							
Training on Public Goods and Services, Resource Development Plan, and Social Development plan preparation. Plan preparation for VPRP application							S					
Training on MGNREGS and Gram Sabha mobilisation							S					
Livelihood Plan Preparation Training									D			
VO strengthening training												M

3) Gram Panchayat Profile Preparation

The objective of the GP profile preparation activity was to enhance the knowledge and communication skills of LRGs regarding their respective GPs. This involved gathering baseline data to assess the developmental status of the GPs and promoting citizen participation through PRI members. Prior information sharing with the block administration and PRIs facilitated a smooth data collection process. However, LRGs faced challenges in obtaining certain information from community members and PRIs.

Despite these obstacles, the activity laid the groundwork for future work in the GPs. The Gram Panchayat Profile serves as a comprehensive document containing essential information about the Panchayat. It includes demographic data, key institutions, community assets, indicators for women and child development, education statistics, access to basic facilities, and livelihood-related data. Additionally, the profile incorporates a CBO profile, offering insights into the CBOs operating in the area. These profiles contribute to a comprehensive understanding of

the GPs and support informed decision-making for the PRI-CBO convergence project. They serve as valuable resources for stakeholders involved in community development initiatives, enabling them to identify priority areas, allocate resources effectively, and implement targeted interventions to address the needs of the local population.

4) Participatory Assessment of Entitlements

In July, the NRO team organised a training session for LRGs focused on the PAE activity. The PAE initiative involved LRGs leading interactive discussions during SHG meetings to raise awareness about various entitlements. The primary objective was to sensitise SHG members about their entitlements and to gather baseline data on the access to entitlements in each GP.

During the training session, LRGs received instruction on centrally sponsored schemes, including details about eligibility criteria, required documentation, and the processes for accessing entitlements. Additionally, the training addressed the importance of women’s participation in democratic platforms, emphasising the role of SHGs in empowering women and promoting their active engagement in community decision-making processes. By equipping LRGs with the necessary knowledge and skills, the training aimed to empower them to effectively facilitate discussions within SHGs, raise awareness about entitlements, and collect valuable data to inform future interventions and initiatives aimed at enhancing access to entitlements for community members.

Following the block-level LRG training, the LRGs initiated the PAE activity at the SHG level, employing ribbon exercises to facilitate discussions among SHG members and gather information on entitlement access. These exercises served as a participatory approach to engage SHG members and collect valuable data on their access to entitlements.

The collected data from the ribbon exercises was then consolidated at the VO level to prepare an EAP. The EAP was developed based on the assessment of entitlements within each SHG, identifying areas of need and outlining strategies to improve access to entitlements for community members. Additionally, the SHG network at the VO level extended its reach beyond SHG members by collecting entitlement demands from families outside the SHG network. This inclusive approach ensured that the EAP accounted for the needs of the broader community, not just those directly affiliated with SHGs.

LRGs were trained to consolidate the PAE data and collaborate with VO members to set targets for accessing these entitlements. Discussions held in VO meetings facilitated decision-making processes and prioritisation of actions to address identified gaps in entitlement access. Through these coordinated efforts, the PAE activity aimed to empower communities to advocate for their entitlements and improve overall access to essential resources and services.

PAE and EAP	Theog Block	Rajgarh Block
No. of VOs completed PAE and EAP	28	29
No. of VO members participated in the process	534	490
Total no. of SHGs covered	267	249
Total no. of SHG members participated	1,489	2,146

A scheme-wise breakdown of the total number of demands gathered through the PAE activity and the total number of demands achieved in the intervention GPs is mentioned below:

Demands	Demands	Theog (No.)		Rajgarh (No.)		
		Non-SHG demand	Total Achievements	Demands	Non SHG demand	Total Achievements
Job Card	56	75	67	157	64	221
Individual Work	1,242	-	1	1,342	212	-
Old age Pension	52	23	40	81	6	87
Widow Pension	10	3	12	7	2	9
Disability Pension	17	1	3	23	11	25
Ration Card	8	29	21	4	9	13
Health Card	308	8	246	431	77	293
SBM Toilet	219	-	18	655	140	458
Ujjwala Gas	24	16	5	226	53	-
PM Awas	152	-	1	438	111	-
PMSBY	368	77	388	170	81	251
PMJJBY	289	20	337	128	42	170

5)PRI and Line Department Orientation on Village Poverty Reduction Plan

The orientation session for PRIs members focused on familiarising them with the PRI-CBO Convergence Project and the preparation of VPRP. Attended by PRIs from intervention GPs, including GP Presidents, Secretaries, and Ward Members, the session aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the project's objectives and processes.

Officials from various line departments were invited to discuss the schemes and services offered by their respective departments, fostering an understanding of available resources and support mechanisms for project implementation.

During the orientation session, the forum deliberated on the crucial role of line departments in supporting the achievement of community demand targets within the context of the VPRP. The emphasis was placed on the need for close collaboration between PRIs, line departments, and other stakeholders to ensure the effective delivery of services and resources to meet the identified needs of the community.

The orientation underscored the bottom-up approach of VPRP, highlighting its foundational principles of transparency and inclusivity. By engaging community members in the planning process and soliciting their input, VPRP aims to empower residents and ensure that development initiatives are tailored to their specific needs and priorities.

Moreover, the session delineated the roles and responsibilities of PRIs in facilitating the integration of VPRP into the broader framework of GPDP. PRIs were encouraged to actively engage with CBOs, involve them in planning teams, and conduct consultative meetings to gather input from community members. The primary goal of the orientation was to establish a framework for collaboration between PRIs and SHGs, thereby facilitating the seamless integration of VPRP into the overall development agenda of the Gram Panchayats. By providing PRI members with the necessary guidance and resources, the aim was to ensure the effective planning and

implementation of VPRP activities, ultimately contributing to the holistic development of the community.

6) Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP) Preparation

The VPRP serves as a crucial component of the GPDP, contributing to the overall development agenda of the community. As part of the PRI-CBO Convergence Project, training sessions on VPRP were conducted for LRGs in Theog and Rajgarh blocks. These training sessions were designed to equip LRGs with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in the VPRP preparation process effectively. The training comprised both block-level sessions and practical guidance on using the VPRP mobile application, facilitating hands-on learning and application of concepts.

During the training, LRG members were introduced to the objectives, components, and planning process of VPRP. They gained insights into the significance of VPRP in addressing poverty and fostering sustainable development at the village level. Following consultative meetings with Line Departments, the awareness program on Livelihood schemes organised for LRGs from 20 GPs was a significant step towards empowering communities and improving their economic well-being. By providing LRGs with information about schemes offered by the Agriculture, Horticulture, and Veterinary departments, the program enabled them to serve as effective intermediaries between beneficiaries and government departments.

During the program, LRGs acquired comprehensive knowledge about various livelihood schemes, including eligibility criteria, application procedures, and benefits. Informative posters distributed within the community further disseminated crucial information and raised awareness among potential beneficiaries.

Following the program, LRGs played a

pivotal role in sharing scheme details with beneficiaries in VOs and assisting them in the application process. By collecting necessary documents and facilitating applications on behalf of beneficiaries, LRGs streamlined the process and ensured greater accessibility to livelihood opportunities. This initiative is expected to have a positive impact on the community by increasing participation in livelihood schemes and enhancing economic prosperity. By leveraging the knowledge and resources of LRGs, the program has paved the way for the successful implementation of livelihood initiatives, ultimately contributing to the overall development and well-being of the community.

Block	Department	Beneficiaries of services
Rajgarh	Veterinary Department	Pashu Bima- 36 Pashu Loan- 10 (Amount: 1 lakh 40k)
	Agriculture Department	General Orientation Training- 42 Bajra seeds distribution- 1Kg/42 beneficiaries Power tiller- 27 Applications submitted and five received
	Horticulture Department	General Orientation Training- 42 Trainings (Achaar, Jam, juice making)- 72 Honeybee training- 10 Food Processing training- 20
	Welfare Department	Application for Stitching Machine- 45
Theog	Agriculture, Horticulture, and Veterinary Department	General Orientation Training- 60 Application submitted for Mutter Seeds- 14

7) Social Development Plan Achievements

The concept seeding process initiated in VO meetings in June aimed to catalyse discussions on prevalent social issues and develop strategic plans to address them. VO members received an orientation on identifying social issues and understanding their significance, setting the stage for constructive dialogue.

Narrated stories highlighting examples of social issues such as domestic violence, child marriage, and drug abuse were presented to stimulate discussion and raise awareness among VO members. These stories served as catalysts for identifying and acknowledging social issues within the village context. Key social issues identified during the concept seeding process included drug and alcohol addiction, adult illiteracy, mobile phone addiction among students, domestic violence and abuse, gender inequality, and superstitions. These issues reflect the multifaceted challenges faced by the community and underscore the need for targeted interventions to promote social development.

The objective was to foster discussions on prevalent social issues within the village and develop a strategic plan, called the SDP, to tackle them. The LRGs emphasised the importance of recognising and questioning normalised situations, conditions, or practices to bring about a change in mindset. The 'No cost, Low cost' component of the GPDP presents an opportunity to address these social issues through cost-effective strategies and community-driven initiatives. VO members were encouraged to compile a list of identified social issues for further discussion and the development of the SDP in upcoming meetings.

The concept seeding process actively involves VO members in the identification and prioritisation of social issues, empowering communities to take ownership of their development agenda. Through collaborative efforts and strategic planning, VO members can work towards creating positive social change and fostering inclusive and resilient communities.

Social Issues Identified in the 2 Pilot Blocks

Issues identified under SDP	Block	
	Theog	Rajgarh
Drug and alcohol addiction	14	20
Women and Child Health issues	3	
Waste Management	3	

Activities Initiated under the Social Development Plan

Areas of Identified Issues	Activities undertaken
Health	Health awareness sessions,
	Health Camps,
	Awareness Rallies against alcohol addiction and drug abuse
	Distribution of medicines.
Education	Yoga Classes
	Formation of Bal Sabha
	ALMSC strengthening
Environment	Plantation and Afforestation
	Nutri Garden
	Awareness of household waste management
Social Inclusion	Cleaning Drives
	VO empowerment festival
	Legal Literacy Awareness classes
	Awareness of Sakhi's One-stop centre
Women and Child	Women's Day Celebrations
	Menstrual Hygiene Awareness sessions Sukanya Samriddhi Enrolment camps

8) Gram Sabhas

During the 2nd October Grama Sabha, a significant milestone was achieved as the MGNREGS shelf was prepared and discussed across all GPs. GPs collaborated to compile a comprehensive list of demands to be included in the MGNREGS shelf as community demands. Notably, the demands generated during the preparation of the Participatory Gram Sabha Resolutions and Development (PGSRD) plan were fulfilled through the MGNREGS.

To ensure the active participation of women in the Grama Sabha, LRGs mobilised women through various avenues such as CBO meetings, ward sabhas, and rallies. This concerted effort led to substantial involvement from women during the Grama Sabha proceedings. During the

Grama Sabha, LRGs presented the demand list, and the response from most GPs was positive. As a result, the demands were consolidated into the MGNREGS shelf, paving the way for their inclusion in future developmental activities. Following the October Grama Sabha, the process of plan preparation commenced at the SHG and VO levels using the VPRP application. Previous meetings, such as the PAE, EAP, and SDP concept seeding meetings, laid the groundwork for this phase of planning.

The completion of various components of the plan, including the PAE, EAP, PGSRD/SDP plans, and the livelihood plan, set the stage for the GPDP Grama Sabha in December. This collaborative and systematic approach to plan preparation underscores stakeholders' commitment to participatory and inclusive development processes.

Gram Sabha Participation Details

Block	No. of Gram Sabhas held in GPS	Total Participants	Total SHG participants	SHG member participation in Gram Sabha (%)	SHG representation in GS (%)
Theog	20	2,208	1,269	57.4	100
Rajgarh	20	1,717	1,106	64.4	100
Total	40	3,935	2,375		

9) Community Led Initiatives

1) Women's Day Celebrations

The celebration of International Women's Day was marked by two impactful events organised at the gram panchayat level, reflecting the commitment to recognising and empowering women in the community. In Basatheog GP, Theog block, Shimla district, an event was meticulously planned and executed by CBO members under the guidance of a mentor resource person. The occasion served as a platform to honour and appreciate the significant contributions of SHG women in various capacities. Notable highlights included the recognition of elderly women, the acknowledgement of outstanding entrepreneurs and SHGs, and the celebration of the best-performing VO. The health awareness class provided by the lady doctor gave invaluable insights into women's health issues, complemented by a health check-up camp aimed at ensuring the well-being of women in the community.

Similarly, at Kothia Jajer GP in Rajgarh block, Sirmaur district, Vikas VO orchestrated an event brimming with activities and informative sessions under the guidance of a mentor resource person. The presence of Gram Panchayat Pradhan and other elected representatives underscored the significance of the occasion. A diverse range of activities, including yoga, traditional dance, drama, and musical chairs, added vibrancy to the celebration. Elderly women in the SHGs were honoured during the event. The event also featured speeches by esteemed guests, including District Civil Court Judge, Mr. Ravi Sharma, who enlightened the attendees on their constitutional rights and legal protections available to women seeking justice. Such events not only commemorate the achievements of women but also serve as catalysts for empowering them with knowledge and resources to lead fulfilling lives.

2) Anganwadi Level Monitoring and Support Committee

The field-level assessment revealed the existence of the ALMSC, yet highlighted a need for regular meetings and discussions regarding the upkeep of the Anganwadi Center (AWC). In response, concerted efforts were made to address this issue through consistent follow-up and capacity-building initiatives. Committee members underwent orientation and training sessions aimed at clarifying their roles and responsibilities within the ALMSC framework. They were encouraged to hold regular meetings to monitor and maintain the AWC effectively.

Additionally, the importance of the ALMSC was emphasised during interactions with mothers of enrolled children, who were informed about the crucial role played by the committee in ensuring the efficient functioning of the AWC. These awareness-raising efforts aimed to garner mothers' active participation in the committee's activities, thereby strengthening the ALMSC and enhancing Anganwadi services in the area.

To address the lack of discussions regarding the maintenance of AWCs, the ALMSC undertook several proactive measures. Continuous follow-up was implemented, and committee members received orientation and training to clarify their roles and responsibilities, emphasising the importance of conducting regular meetings for effective monitoring and upkeep of the AWCs.

One specific issue identified in various Anganwadis in Theog block was the inability to provide vegetables to children due to irregular and limited funds. To overcome this challenge, the establishment of dedicated nutri gardens for Anganwadi centres was proposed. The maintenance of these gardens would be undertaken collaboratively by VO members, mothers of the children, and Anganwadi staff.

However, the initial concern was the availability of land for establishing these nutri gardens. In cases where no community land was available nearby, community meetings were convened, involving VO members, Anganwadi beneficiaries, Village Heads, and Anganwadi Representatives. It was decided that the nutri gardens could be established in the homes of the nearest VO members to the Anganwadi centres.

The concerned VO members and mothers of the children enrolled in the Anganwadi centres took responsibility for cultivating and supplying produce to the centres. This collaborative effort led to the successful establishment of Anganwadi Nutri Gardens in several Panchayats of Theog block, including Dharech, Dharkandru, Tiyali, Devrighat, Kathog, Ghodna, and Bharana.

This initiative aims to benefit the community by providing fresh and nutritious produce to the beneficiaries of Anganwadi centres in these areas. The completion of preparatory activities and the inauguration of the Nutri Gardens represent significant milestones in the overall development and well-being of the community, demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborative efforts in addressing local challenges.

3) Awareness camps on 'Sakhi One Stop Centre

Awareness camps organised in collaboration with the WCD department in Kelvin, Kathog, Devimod, Bharada, and Chikkad Gram Panchayats of Theog block aimed to educate adolescent girls and SHG women on various important topics such as adolescent health, gender-based violence, and discrimination. During these camps, a resource person from the WCD department provided valuable information about the Sakhi One Stop Centre scheme. This initiative is designed to provide comprehensive support and assistance to women and children affected by different

forms of violence. Services offered at these One Stop Centres include shelter, psychological support and counselling, as well as free legal aid provided by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to help women who have experienced violence.

The organisation of these camps was a collaborative effort involving the VO, the Gram Panchayat, and the local school. The VO played a crucial role in mobilising SHG members and ensuring the successful organisation of the camp. Resource persons, including the Centre Administrator and Case Worker from the Sakhi One Stop Centre, were present during the camp to provide information and guidance. The camp witnessed the active participation of 96 individuals, including SHG members and school students.

4) Medical Camps in Convergence with the Health Department

To address the demand for the VPRP and promote social development, medical camps were organised across various Panchayats in Theog and Rajgarh Block. These camps began with an inaugural ceremony, where the Panchayat President warmly welcomed participants and took responsibility for organising the camp in their village.

During these camps, a gynaecologist conducted women’s health awareness sessions. These sessions covered a wide range of topics related to women’s health, including menstruation, pregnancy, and cancer. The goal was to educate participants about various health issues and emphasise the importance of maintaining good health practices.

The medical camps attracted a significant turnout, with many individuals benefiting from the medical services provided. The success of these camps can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of the Health Department, Panchayat, and the SHG network highlighting the positive outcomes achievable through such convergence programs. These efforts demonstrate the positive outcomes that can be achieved through convergence programs that bring together various stakeholders to address community needs. Moving forward, similar initiatives will be undertaken to continue addressing the healthcare needs of rural communities effectively, ensuring that residents have access to essential medical services and health education.

Health camp details

Block-wise health camp details	Theog	Rajgarh
Total Beneficiaries	1,218	994
Health awareness class for women and Adolescent girls	✓	
Menstrual hygiene awareness class for adolescent girls and women		✓
Health awareness class against drug abuse and nutrition food		✓
Health Check-ups	✓	✓
Eye check-ups	✓	
Gynaecology-related service	✓	

5) Cleanliness Drives

Collaborative efforts were undertaken to clean public areas in Gwahi Devimod, Dharampur, and Dharech Panchayats of Theog Block, guided by the VO. The LRG led the initiative, with active participation from VO members. The cleaning drive aimed to enhance the area's appearance, foster community unity, and promote cleanliness. Furthermore, the VOs have advocated for the installation of dustbins in the village as part of the Village Poverty Reduction Plan. This request is significant as it enables them to address their concerns during the GPDP Gram Sabhas. The VO aspires to have their voices heard in the highest decision-making forums and initiate positive community changes. This effort is expected to inspire similar initiatives in the future and contribute to the overall cleanliness of the area.

6) Village Organisation (VO) Office inauguration

Obtaining a dedicated room for VO meetings in Basatheog Panchayat posed initial challenges due to the unavailability of suitable space. Consequently, meetings were conducted in the schoolyard. To address this issue, the VO took the initiative to apply for the Panchayat, requesting a dedicated room for their meetings. After several consultations and deliberations, the Panchayat authorities approved the application and allocated a room for the VO. The efforts of the LRGs and the two VO committees in Basatheog Panchayat were instrumental in securing this space. Throughout the process, the mentor from Kudumbashree NRO provided guidance, offering ideas and support to the VO in their pursuit of a dedicated VO office. The inauguration of the new VO office was attended by the Panchayat Pradhan, the Block Office Assistant Commissioner, and members from both VOs, signifying a significant milestone in establishing a dedicated space for VO meetings.

7) Village Organisation (VO) empowerment festival

The VO Empowerment Festival, organised through collaborative efforts between the VO and SHGs, with support from the Panchayat and coordination by the LRGs, aimed to promote women's participation in community activities and enhance their confidence and self-esteem. This one-day event sought to foster a sense of collectivism among SHG network members and inspire them to showcase their skills. The VO took ownership of organising the festival, guided by the expectation that it would motivate CBO members to host similar events for their SHG members in the future. Held in various Gram Panchayats of Rajgarh block, the festival featured the local MLA as the chief guest, enhancing its significance. Women actively participated in games and activities, contributing to the event's success. The festival garnered significant interest, prompting non-intervention Panchayats to express their desire to organise similar events. Mentors and LRGs were invited to these Panchayats to assist in planning and executing such programs. Ultimately, the festival celebrated women's empowerment, facilitated community building, and promoted gender equality. The MLA's involvement in developmental activities further elevated the event's impact and success.

Conclusion

The PRI-CBO Convergence project in Himachal Pradesh has significantly advanced the role of LRGs as community cadres. These groups have become instrumental in promoting participatory governance by ensuring that community voices are effectively heard and integrated into decision-making processes. LRGs act as a bridge between the community and local governance institutions, fostering a collaborative environment where community needs and concerns are prioritised. A notable achievement of the project has been the transition of scattered SHGs into cohesive federations. This transformation has empowered the community, providing a unified platform to address collective needs and exert greater influence in local governance. The cohesive structure of CBOs has strengthened community ownership and engagement, enhancing their ability to advocate for their rights and participate meaningfully in governance processes.

The project has successfully increased awareness among SHG members regarding their rights and responsibilities. This awareness has translated into active participation in local governance activities, where community members now hold their representatives and institutions to higher standards of accountability and transparency. The Gram Sabha has emerged as a critical platform for community participation in decision-making. The project has underscored the importance of the Gram Sabha in fostering community ownership and empowerment. Through active participation in Gram Sabha meetings, community members can voice their concerns, prioritise their needs, and shape local development agendas.

One of the project's key successes has been facilitating improved service delivery through enhanced collaboration between community members and line departments. By bridging the gap between these stakeholders, the project has promoted more effective and responsive governance. This collaborative approach has led to better alignment of resources and efforts, resulting in tangible improvements in the quality of life for residents in Himachal Pradesh.



कार्यालय ग्राम पंचायत कोट - शिलारू
171213



JHARKHAND



District

Ranchi
Pakuria
West Singhbhum
Giridih
East Singhbhum
Khunti
Simdega
Gumla
Dumka
Lohardaga

Background of the State

Jharkhand, known as “The land of forest,” situated in the eastern part of India was established as the 28th state of India on 15 November 2000, carved out from the southern half of Bihar. It shares borders with Bihar to the north, Uttar Pradesh to the northwest, Chhattisgarh to the west, Odisha to the south, and West Bengal to the east. With an area of 79,714 square kilometres (30,778 square miles), it ranks as the 15th largest state by area and the 14th largest by population. Most of its territory lies within the Chota Nagpur Plateau region, and its population is predominantly tribal. The capital city of the state is Ranchi. Sone, North Koel, Damodar, Baraker, Swarnarekha & Kharkai are the main rivers of Jharkhand.

As per details from Census 2011, Jharkhand has a population of 3.30 crores, with males comprising 1.69 crores and females 1.61 crores. Out of the total population, tribal communities make up 26.20 per cent and scheduled castes comprise 12.08 per cent. The population witnessed a growth rate of 22.42 per cent in the preceding decade. Jharkhand’s population constitutes 2.72 per cent of India’s total population. The state’s sex ratio stands at 948 females for every 1000 males, slightly below the national average of 940. The literacy rate in Jharkhand has shown improvement, reaching 66.41 per cent as per the latest census data. Male literacy stands at 76.84 per cent, while female literacy is at 55.42 per cent, indicating a gender disparity in educational attainment. The 24 districts, 260 blocks, and 32,620 villages in Jharkhand are divided into five divisions:

1. Kohlan – 3 districts
2. Palamu – 3 districts
3. Santhal Pargana – 6 districts
4. North Chotanagpur – 7 districts
5. South Chotanagpur – 5 districts

The state faces infrastructural challenges, with only 45 per cent of its villages having access to electricity and 8,484 villages connected by roads. However, the state is renowned as a leading producer of various minerals, including iron ore, coal, copper ore, mica, bauxite, graphite, limestone, and uranium. It has abundant dense forests and sprawling woodlands. Given its tribal demographics, Jharkhand significantly emphasises preserving nature and integrating it into all aspects of life and culture.

In Jharkhand, thirteen out of twenty-four districts are located wholly within the Fifth Schedule Areas, which historically have had more than 50 per cent of tribal populations and are afforded special protection under the Indian Constitution. Approximately 45 per cent of the state’s geographical area, spread across sixteen districts, falls under the Fifth Schedule. Adivasi Traditional Self-Governance (TSG) Systems in these areas incorporate a strong concept of democratic participation.

PRI system in the state

There are four major types of panchayat systems prevalent in tribal regions of Jharkhand:

1. Munda-Manki system of the Ho tribe
2. Parha system in Oraon villages
3. Munda-Manki system (Mundari)
4. Santhal Manjhi-Paragnaiti system

Following independence, the first generation of PRIs was established across the country to promote democratic decentralisation. These institutions, unlike the Traditional Self-Governance (TSG) systems had provisions for the direct election of mukhiyas (village heads) and panches (village council members). By 1970, the three tiers of Local Self-Government were operational throughout Bihar, including the Jharkhand area.

After each major tribal revolt in the Jharkhand area, special legislation was enacted to address tribal grievances and prevent the alienation of tribal lands. Examples of such legislation include the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act (CNTA) and the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act (SPTA). These Acts recognised the traditional local self-government systems of the tribes. For instance, under the SPTA of 1908, the term “village headman” referred to “the person appointed or recognised, whether before or after the commencement of this Act, by the Deputy Commissioner or other duly authorised officer to hold the village headman, whether known as Pradhan, Mastajuir, or otherwise.” However, according to the rules enacted under the Act, the appointment of the headman was to be per village customs. While these colonial Acts recognised the Traditional Self-Governance (TSG) systems, they also had the potential to create conflicts between traditional leaders and elected panchayat heads.

Following the formation of Jharkhand, the Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act (JPRA) was passed in March 2001. This act aimed to provide for the constitution of PRIs by the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and the Central Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA Act). The JPRA included provisions for reservations, ensuring that at least one-third of all seats in the panchayats were reserved for women at each level. Additionally, in the Scheduled Areas, all posts of gram panchayat chairpersons and vice-chairpersons were reserved for STs.

Furthermore, the State Election Commission (SEC) was constituted in 2004 under Section 66 of the Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act 2001 and the provisions contained in Article 243 K(1) of the Constitution. Moreover, the first State Finance Commission (SFC) was constituted on 28th January 2004, even when no elected PRIs were on the ground, and the SEC successfully conducted the first Panchayat elections in

November and December 2010.

In 2010, the state implemented a three-tier Panchayati Raj system, enhancing local governance. The Panchayati Raj Institution in Jharkhand is a three-tier system with a Zila Parishad at the District level, a Panchayat Samiti at the block level and a Gram Panchayat at the village level. Gram Panchayats are related to a Panchayat Samiti and the Panchayat Samitis with a Zila Parishad. The name of the revenue village with the highest population specifies the Gram Panchayat. The area of the Gram Panchayats is divided into territorial constituencies called wards in such a manner that the population of each ward is around 500 people.

The composition of the Gram Panchayats in Jharkhand: every Gram Panchayat consists of directly elected members, and Mukhia has seven Standing Committees. Panchayat Samiti is the intermediate Panchayat at the Block level and Zila Parishad at the District level. Zila Parishad has jurisdiction over the entire district, excluding portions of the district that are included in a municipality or are under the authority of a municipal corporation, cantonment board, or a notified area committee. By and large, the relationship between the three PRI tiers is still dominant, and the principle of subsidiarity is not being followed in letter and spirit. The Zila Parishad and the Panchayat Samiti seem more potent than the lowest and the Gram Panchayat. Also, the communication and interface between the Zila Parishad and Gram Panchayat and between the Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayats is generally weak.

Role of NRLM in the state

Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) is an autonomous society formed to serve as a special-purpose vehicle for successfully implementing poverty reduction strategies, pro-poor schemes, and projects,

especially for disadvantaged groups. It was formed in 2009 under the aegis of the Rural Development Department, Government of Jharkhand. Society is the pivotal agency for livelihood promotion strategies and interventions in the state, and it collaborates with various government departments, NGOs/CBOs, technical institutions, and private sector partners. In September 2011, the state government designated JSLPS to anchor and implement the NRLM in Jharkhand, and the state chapter of the project was entrusted to the SRLM. The JSLPS has initiated the SRLM's activity from the financial year 2012-13.

Role of CBOs in the state

SHG network of JSLPS is a three-tiered structure, and its apex tier is the Cluster Level Federation. The household members under DAY-NRLM are mobilised into Universal Institutional Architecture –SHGs, and their federations at the Village level (Village Organisation, VO), at the Cluster level (Cluster Level Federation, CLF), and Block level (Block Level Federation, BLF)

The Primary Level Federation (PrLF) of SHGs is at the village/ hamlet or Panchayat level (depending on the number of SHGs). This federation is also known by different names: Village Organisation (VO), Panchayat Level Federation (PLF), Hamlet Level Forum (HLF), etc. Usually, the PrLF consists of 5-20 SHGs limited to one habitation/village.

Cluster Level Federation (CLF) is a registered Society of the Federation of Village Organisations, covering 2-5 Gram Panchayats. It has three office bearers: president, Secretary, and Treasurer, and 3- 4 subcommittees. Generally, the federation of SHGs is within a revenue village. Two members from each SHG within the revenue village form the Executive Committee of the Village Organisation. A Village Organisation has three office bearers and five subcommittees.

Sakhi Mandals, under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), has slowly and steadily emerged as significant change-makers in empowering rural women and transforming their lives across the state. Groups of 10-20 women from the same locality form the foundation of the structure of Sakhi Mandal (SHGs). Each Sakhi Mandal has three office bearers: President, Secretary and Treasure. Women 18 years of age and above from economically weaker families from the hamlet and village covered by the group. All members of the SHG form the General Body. Primary SHGs engage in thrift, credit and livelihood activities.

PRI-CBO convergence project in the state

The project commenced its journey in 2014 following the signing of a MoU between JSLPS and KS-NRO. Initially launched as a pilot project, it gradually expanded its scope. The project was in pilot mode till 2016.

By 2016-17, the project had extended its reach to include more districts. KS-NRO provided crucial technical support to JSLPS in implementing the PRI-CBO convergence project across 550 Gram Panchayats spanning 47 Blocks in 10 districts of Jharkhand. Additionally, KS-NRO directly assisted 180 Gram Panchayats in 36 blocks across the same ten districts. As part of its efforts, KS-NRO established 20 immersion sites to serve as models for the PRI-CBO convergence approach. Professionals and community cadres from KS-NRO were actively involved in supporting the project's technical aspects and community engagement. A diverse group of community cadres has been developed over the project's duration, including LRGs, internal mentors, and Block Anchor Persons (BAPs), all contributing to the project's success and sustainability.

Profile of the intervention areas

The pilot project was initially implemented in four districts: Ranchi, Pakur, East Singhbhum, and West Singhbhum. Later, during the scale-up phase, three more districts were included: Simdega, Gumla, and Lohardaga. The selection of blocks within these districts was based on several criteria, including the existing structures of SHGs and CBOs established by JSLPS, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), and other relevant departments. The interest and readiness of Gram Panchayats in the blocks were also considered.

While selecting locations for the pilot project, geographical, demographical and socio-economic characteristics have been taken into consideration, the project commenced its operations in 2014-15, initially covering 9 Gram Panchayats across 3 Blocks in 3 Districts. These blocks included Khuntpani (West Singhbhum district) as the resource block, Bundu (Ranchi district) as the intensive block, and Ghatshila (East Singhbhum district) as the non-intensive block. By the following year, the project expanded its coverage to include three more blocks and 20 additional Gram Panchayats.

The six pilot blocks selected for the project are Bundu, Ghatshila, Khuntpani, Manoharpur, Angara, and Pakuriya. Among these, Khuntpani, Angara, Pakuriya, and Manoharpur are identified as resource blocks under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), while Bundu and Ghatshila are classified as intensive blocks. Notably, all these pilot blocks are in Scheduled Areas, governed by the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA), and are predominantly inhabited by tribal (adivasi) communities. They operate under a traditional village-head governance system, with elected PRIs. In total, 29 Gram Panchayats have been selected as pilot Gram Panchayats from these six blocks to implement the project initiatives.

In subsequent years, the project experienced significant growth. In 2016, the number of Gram Panchayats and blocks increased to 79 and 26, respectively, spanning ten districts. By 2017-18, the project extended its reach to 1100 villages, covering 179 Gram Panchayats across 36 blocks and ten districts. The expansion plan for 2018-19 aimed to add 177 Gram Panchayats from Antyodaya Mission blocks, bringing the total coverage to 370 Gram Panchayats and 36 blocks.

Scale-up Implementation Areas

Phase	Year	No. of GPs	No. of Blocks	No. of District
Phase 1	2014-2015	9	3	4
Phase 2	2015-2016	20	3	6
Phase 3	2016-2017	50	20	
Phase 4	2017-2018	100	-	
Phase 5	2018-2019	177	10	
Total		370	6	10

District	Block	Phase	Phase	Phase	Phase	Phase	Human Resource			
		1	2	3	4	5	LRG	BAP	Mentor	Internal Mentor
Ranchi	Bundu	6					#	#		
	Angada		3				#		#	
	Namkom			1	1	3	#	#		#
	Bero			1	1	3	#	#		#
	Silli			1	2	3	#	#		#
	Nagari					4				
	Tamar					4				
	Kanke					4				
	Ormanjhi					4				
West Singhbhum	Khutpani	6					#	#		
	Manoharpur		3				#		#	
	Jagganathpur			1	2	3	#	#		#
	Tantnagar			1	2	3	#	#		#
	Hatgamarua			1	2	3	#	#		#
	Manjhari			1	1	3	#	#		#
	Noamundi			1	1	3	#	#		#
	Jhinkpani			1	1	3	#	#		#
	Goelkera					4				
East Singhbhum	Ghatsila		8				#			
	Dhalbhugarh					4				
	Potka					4				
	Patamada					4				
Pakur	Pakuria		3				#		#	
Khunti	Rania			1	2	3	#	#		#
Giridih	Bengabad			1	1	3	#	#		#
	Dumri			1	2	3	#	#		#
	Jamua			1	1	3	#	#		#
	Birni			1	1	3	#	#		#
Dumka	Masalia			1	2	3	#	#		#
Simdega	Kolebera			1	2	3	#	#		#
	Thethaitanagar			1	1	3	#	#		#
	Bano			1	1	3	#	#		#
Gumla	Bharno			1	2	3	#	#		#
	Bishunpur					4				
	Sisai					4				
Lohardaga	Bhandra			1	2	3	#	#		#
Total		9	20	20	30	100				

GPDP & YBA
training to LRGs,
Mentors, PRs

N D J F

Gram Panchayat
Poverty
Reduction Plan
(GP2RP)

M A M J

Formation of
Balsamuh, Bal
Samitte, Bal
Panchayat

J F M A J

Selection,
Orientation
cum Induction
training to
Internal mentors
and Mobile
Trainer Pool-
Batch- 1

M J

Entitlement
Access Plan
(EAP), Phase-2

J A S O N D

Selection,
Orientation
cum Induction
training to
Internal mentors
and Mobile
Trainer Pool-
Batch- 1

J

Training to
I-mentors and
Mobile Trainer
Pool (MTP) on
LRG Orientation

S O

Finalisation of Gram Panchayat Profile to support GPs PAE formats	29 GPs	A	
	50 GPs	A	
	100 GPs	A	
GPCC Guideline	29 GPs	A	
	50 GPs	A	
	100 GPs	A	
Training Module on Gram Sabha	29 GPs	A	M
	50 GPs	A	M
	100 GPs	A	M
Training Module on Gram Panchayat	29 GPs	A	M
	50 GPs	A	M
	100 GPs	A	M
Training Module on Schemes	29 GPs	A	M
	50 GPs	A	M
	100 GPs	A	M
Developed New PAE Format	29 GPs	A	M
	50 GPs	A	M
	100 GPs	A	M
Training Module on PAE and Civic Rights	29 GPs	A	M
	50 GPs	A	M
	100 GPs	A	M
One-Day Training Module for SHG-VO on Gram Sabha	29 GPs	A	M
	50 GPs	A	M
	100 GPs	A	M
Training Module for SHG-VO "How to begin work."	29 GPs		M
	50 GPs		M
	100 GPs		M
10 Days Training Schedule on NRLM & PRI-CBO Convergence Project, Gram Sabha, Panchayat Profile, PAE, EAP, MGNREGS, Schemes, GPCC	29 GPs		M J
	50 GPs		M J
	100 GPs		M J

The policy of Block Anchor Person revised Policy of LRG	29 GPs	J
	50 GPs	J
	100 GPs	J
Format for Monthly Progress Report for LRG, I mentor and Block Anchor Person.	29 GPs	J
	50 GPs	J
	100 GPs	J
Format for follow-up due wage payment in MGNREGS	29 GPs	J
	50 GPs	J
	100 GPs	J
Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee (GPCC) guideline finalisation	29 GPs	A
	50 GPs	A
	100 GPs	A
Training on Gram Panchayat (GP) Profile	29 GPs	A
	50 GPs	A
	100 GPs	A
Training on Participatory Assessment of Entitlement (PAE)	29 GPs	A
	50 GPs	A
	100 GPs	A
Training on VO Concepts and Management	29 GPs	M
	50 GPs	M
	100 GPs	M
Training PRI & Govt Schemes	29 GPs	M
	50 GPs	M
	100 GPs	M
ToT on Participatory Training Management	29 GPs	M
	50 GPs	M
	100 GPs	M
Cadres' selection and capacitation	29 GPs	J
	50 GPs	J
	100 GPs	J

Training on Gram Sabha	29 GPs	J			
	50 GPs	J			
	100 GPs	J			
Training on NRLM, Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat Profile, PAE- EAP, MGNREGS, Other Govt Schemes, GPCC	29 GPs	J			
	50 GPs	J			
	100 GPs	J			
PAE exercise with SHG and VO	50 GPs	J	A		
Entitlement Access Plan (Sensitisation, Target Setting, Action Plan)	50 GPs		A		
Orientation cum induction on PRI-CBO Project	29 GPs	J			
	100 GPs	J			
Orientation to the BAPs	29 GPs	J			
	100 GPs	J			
Gram Sabha Campaign	29 GPs		A		
LRG identification and orientation	100 GPs	J	A		
PAE exercise and civic literacy with SHG and VO (Office Orders/Circulation/ Rights needs to be discussed)	100 GPs			S	0
Entitlement Access Plan (Sensitisation, Target Setting, Action Plan)	100 GPs			S	0
Facilitate VO and Gram Sabha for the formation and training of Standing Committees	100 GPs				N
Formation and Workshop on establishment of GPCC	100 GPs				N D
Training and handholding support to Standing Committees, TVH, and Ward Members on GS and schemes	100 GPs				N

Training on Gram Panchayat Poverty Reduction Plan (GP2RP)	100 GPs									N	D											
	29 GPs									A												
	100 GPs									N	D											
Orientation meeting with DPM/BPM/	20 Model GPs										A	S										
	160 GPs										A	S										
	370 New GPs										A	S										
Meeting with internal mentors and BAP	20 Model GPs										A	S										
	160 GPs										A	S										
	370 New GPs										A	S										
Consultative workshop for identification of Model Gram Panchayats and CLFs	20 Model GPs										A	S										
Mission Vision Building workshop for model GP	20 Model GPs										M											
MoU between CLF and GPs	20 Model GPs																					
Workshop for Mentor, BAP, and I-Mentor developing Model GP	20 Model GPs										M	J	J	A								
Orientation to office bearers of VO, VO-SAC, ward members and TVH	20 Model GPs																					
Setting up GP Development Council																						
I-mentor Selection and Training	370 New GPs													A	M	J	J	A	S	O		
I-mentor Deployment	370 New GPs																J	A	S	O	N	
Sensitisation of the VO on the Project activities	370 New GPs																					
LRG orientation and selection	370 New GPs																	J	A	S	O	N

LRG Training	370 New GPs			J	A	S	O	N	
PAE	370 New GPs			J	A	S	O	N	
EAP	370 New GPs			J	A	S	O	N	
Refresher Training on PAE-EAP	20 Model GPs				A	S			
	160 GPs				A	S			
Training on revised PAE-EAP at Block level	20 Model GPs				A	S			
	160 GPs			J	A	S			
Review and Regular follow-up of PAE-EAP	20 Model GPs				A	S			
	160 GPs			J	A	S			
	370 New GPs		M	J	J	A	S	O	N
Strengthening of Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee (GPCC)	20 Model GPs		M	J	J	A	S	O	N
	160 GPs		M	J	J	A	S	O	
	370 New GPs		M	J	J	A	S	O	N
Strengthening of Executive and Standing Committees of GP	20 Model GPs								
	160 GPs								
Conducting Gram Sabha Jan Jagriti Abhiyaan	20 Model GPs					A	S	O	
	160 GPs			J	A	S	O		
	370 New GPs			J	A	S	O	N	
Conducting Mahila Gram Sabha	20 Model GPs					A	S	O	
	160 GPs			J	A	S	O		

Facilitation for the formation and strengthening of Standing Committees of Gram Sabha	370 New GPs											
Capacity Building of VO-SASC	20 Model GPs											
	160 GPs											
Capacity Building of Standing Committees and THV of Gram Sabha	20 Model GPs											
	160 GPs											
Orientation of the Executive and Standing Committees of GP	370 New GPs											
Bal Samuh	20 Model GPs				A	M	J	J	A	S	O	
	160 GPs				A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
	370 New GPs				A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N

Strategy adopted for the state

Core Project Activities	Intervention Strategies
Intensive participatory planning exercise (IPPE) and village planning	The State Resource Group was set up at the secretariat, GoJ. For initiating the project support from the NREGA cell, RDD was given to the PRI-CBO convergence project. The training was conducted for the Panchayat representatives, community cadre, and SHG members, particularly on the MGNREG scheme.
Cadre Selection Process: Identification, Orientation, and Capacity Building of LRGs	IEC material preparation: Pamphlets were designed and printed. Identification and orientation with the support of External RP, Block YPs, BMMs, active women, and professionals
Development of Cadres: Internal Mentor and Master Trainer Pool (MTP)	Preference was given to elected representatives (ward member, mukhiya, ex-panchayat member) for Master Trainer pools. For mobilising and motivating the panchayat representatives for visioning and support for PRI-CBO convergence
Capacity building of cadres on Convergence Tool: PAE-EAP-GP2RP	Prepared scheme mapping booklet Phase-wise training on project activities for pilot and scale-up blocks State level Training programs for cadres on CSS/SSS
Capacity building of External RPs, PRs, and LRGs	Orientation to PRI members and SHG members State-level Training programs for Panchayat representatives on Gram Panchayat and its standing committee. Training on GPDP and Yojan Banao Abhiyan (YBA)
Roll out PAE-EAP-GPDP	PAE verification with SHGs
Convergence Tool: PAE-EAP-GP2RP	YBA campaign for GP2RP
Formation of Bal samuh, Bal samiti, Bal Panchayat	NA (The groups were formed, however, do not have major outcomes)
Setting up of Institutional mechanism	Issued a letter for DoPR and GoJ to establish an institution.
Formation of GPCC	Capacity building of the GPCC members

Special interventions

Gram Panchayat Profiling (GPP):

The GPP was to gather essential details about the Gram Panchayat. This activity was proposed during the 3rd phase for the scale-up blocks and was carried out by Internal Mentors. The GPP included information about the available infrastructure, the status of the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC), details of Gram Panchayat representatives/officials, information about transferred institutions at the Panchayat level, works undertaken by the Panchayat, a list of centrally and state-sponsored schemes implemented in the respective Panchayat, GP funds, funds received for the schemes during the fiscal year, committees formed at Gram Sabha (GS) and GP levels, frequency of meetings conducted by the standing committee, and administrative structure of the GP. The outcome and impact of profiling were that each GP had a basic report of their villages, which proved helpful in Panchayat and block-level meetings. There was an increase in support from the Gram Panchayat for the PRI-CBO convergence project.

Modules Developed for the State:

- Training module for the panchayat elected representatives and frontline workers of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat, During the project year a training manual was prepared for the state to strengthen the Panchayati Raj institutions.
- A training module was developed for the standing committee members of the Gram Panchayat.
- A training manual was developed for the core project activity, specifically for local resource groups, internal mentors, and block resource persons, for the community cadres.

Gram Sabha Campaign/Gram Sabha Mobilisation/Jan Jagriti Abhiyan (JJA):

To regularise Gram Sabha meetings and emphasise the significance of the GS, the JJA activity was conducted in a drive mode across the GPs in intervention blocks. For this purpose, a strategy and GS-JJA concept note were prepared. The activity was proposed to occur each year during August-October of the fiscal year, preceding the VPRP, Youth Brigade Activities (YBA), and GPDP. Groups consisting of LRG members, active women, and Internal Mentors were formed for the JJA drive.

Key outcomes of the project

A.Capacity building

One of the major focuses of the project is to take up capacitation activities at regular intervals for various stakeholders (PRIs, traditional village heads CBOs, and Community Cadre etc.). One different approach taken for effective training is process-based capacitation where all the SHGs are covered to access entitlements and to support Gram Panchayats for proper function.

A letter was issued from the Department of Panchayati Raj (DoPR) to conduct a drive for the formation and training of the Standing Committee at the Panchayat level. The team ensured the establishment of a standing committee for each GP. This team comprised members of the LRG, Internal Mentors (IMs), and Block Anchor Persons (BAPs). Training sessions were conducted for GP-Executive Committee members and Standing Committee members at both the District and State levels, in collaboration with the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD). The following activities were undertaken for capacitation of the concerned stakeholders.

Sl. No.	Trainings Given	Target Group	Level at which training was given	No of Participants		
				20 Model GPs	160 Old GPS	78 Upscaled GPs
1	Refresher training for revision of PAE-EAP	LRGs, Internal mentors, Mentors, BAP,	State & Block	52	176	
2	Sensitisation of VO-CLF to regular follow-up and review of revised EAP by VO-CLF	VO & CLF office bearers	Block & Panchayat	166	2560	2136
	Sensitisation of the VO on the Project activities	VO & CLF office bearers	Block & Panchayat	52		2136
3	Consultative workshop for identification of Model Gram Panchayats and CLFs	Mentors, BAPs, CLF & GP President	State	67		
4	Organising Orientation with GP and CBO for creating Model GP	VO office bearers, Ward members, traditional Village Heads	Panchayat	457		
5	Orientation on Schemes, Gram Sabhas, Panchayat	office bearers of VO, VO-SAC members, ward members, and TVHs	Panchayat	523		
6	Training on review and regular follow-up of revised PAE-EAP by VO-CLF	VO office bearers	Panchayat	67	1238	
7	Orientation and meetings of GPCC	GPCC members	Panchayat	324		
8	Training to VO-SASC on PRI, Schemes (CSS&SSC), Tools (PAE&EAP), GPCC, GS	VO -SASC member	GP & Village	167	1176	
	LRG Selection and Orientation	VO members	Block & Panchayat		127	356

	LRG Training on PRI, Schemes (CSS&SSC), Tools (PAE&EAP), Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat	LRGs	Panchayat		187	356
	I-mentor Selection and Training	LRGs	State			178
9	Orientation of Executive and Standing Committees of GP	GPSC members	Panchayat	187	831	672
10	Training to Chairperson of Standing Committees and THV of Gram Sabha	Chairpersons	Panchayat	678		
11	Training to conduct Gram Sabha Jan Jagriti Abhiyaan	LRGs, VO-SASC members	Village & GP	183		
	Conducting Gram Sabha Jan Jagriti Abhiyaan	LRGs , VO-SASC members	Village & GP		1923	712
12	Training to Bal Samuh Volunteers	Bal Samuh Volunteers	Village & GP	111		
	Orientation to Bal Samuh Volunteers	Volunteers/VO members	Panchayat		640	640
13	Training on Gram Swaraj Abhiyan	Internal	State	23	65	
	mentors, BAPs, Mentors	Volunteers/VO members	Panchayat			
14	Training on Gram Swaraj Abhiyan	Elected PG members	Panchayat	124	961	734
15	Training on GPDP	Internal mentors, BAPs, Mentors,	State	37	366	
16	Training on GPDP	Facilitators (Aws), LRGs	District & Block	320	320	356
Total Trained				3,486	10,570	6,140

B.Enhanced Collaboration and coordination between PRI and CBO

• The Yojna Banao Abhiyan (YBA) was initiated during the initial Phases I & II. The

primary focus was on the Centrally Sponsored Scheme - Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (CSS-MGNREGS). An intensive participatory planning

exercise was conducted for the selected cadres in the pilot blocks. The objective of the training was to prepare village-level plans by identifying work under MGNREGS. This effort was coordinated jointly by PR members, SHGs, and Cadres.

- A formal letter was issued by the Department of Panchayati Raj (DoPR) and the Government of Jharkhand (GoJ) to establish GPCC across the intervention blocks. The GPCC facilitated joint planning on VPRP integration and GPDP preparation.

C. Impact on local governance

The project commenced to educate, organise, and raise awareness within the community. It has empowered community members to advocate for their rights and needs, enabling them to voice their concerns effectively. The project has strengthened SHGs and has also engaged non-SHG members in project activities, allowing them to contribute to advocating for both individual and community rights.

Individuals belonging to vulnerable groups have responded positively to the project. From LRGs to SHG federations, GP representatives, and frontline workers, they have actively facilitated the delivery of rights through consistent follow-up at both the GP and block levels. Providing door-to-door services to those in need within the village, such as assisting with applications for widow and old age pensions, correcting Aadhar card information, and disseminating information about available schemes, has proven impactful. Additionally, motivating individuals in need to participate in programs organised by the Gram Panchayat, such as Rozgar Diwas (Employment Day) and Poshan Diwas (Nutrition Day), has further strengthened community engagement and empowerment within the village.

The project has significantly contributed to cadre development through its technical

support initiatives. Continuous input, exposure, and interactions across various platforms have empowered our cadres (LRGs, Internal Mentors, and BAPs) to participate in broader decision-making processes actively. The primary change resulting from the development of these cadres has been the establishment of a platform for individuals to express their views and opinions regarding their fundamental rights. Additionally, by cultivating an additional pool of social capital, the project has strengthened community institutions' capacity to deliver available services effectively.

Unfortunately, PRI has experienced neglect since the inception of the new state. Despite the special provision for tribal areas under the Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act (JPRA), known as PESA, district and block functionaries predominantly govern the administration in these areas. There is minimal or no devolution of power to the traditional village head and elected bodies of the Panchayat in PESA blocks. However, the formation and strengthening of committees have provided basic knowledge of the power and functioning of the Gram Sabha/ Gram Panchayat. This has positively impacted the decision-making process within the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat.

D. Strengthening of institutional mechanisms

Continuous capacity-building activities conducted at the panchayat, block, and state levels have empowered traditional heads to understand their powers and responsibilities for village development. The executive members and the standing committee underwent training sessions. Following the training, meetings were held where CBOs in weak GPs assisted panchayat representatives in the committee's functioning, making it functional and active. In strong GPs, the standing committee/GP representatives took ownership in preparing village plans (Yojana

Banao, Special Gram Sabha) and supported CBOs in facilitating activities.

In 20 panchayats, the Yes in 20 GPs it was active/well functioning, however the proposed GPCC formation was for 180, covering all the Model GPs. GPCC was actively functioning. In initial meetings, the GPCC formally conducted several sessions and received positive responses from committee members. GPCC members have shown interest in and supported initiatives taken under the convergence domain. They have actively participated in discussions regarding village development.

E. Inclusion of marginalised communities

The Government of Jharkhand introduced a program named Dakiya Yojna, with a specific focus on the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). This initiative aimed to assist the most impoverished individuals and beneficiaries within the PVTG communities. Through Participatory Assessment and Evaluation (PAE) processes in the intervention areas, individuals who were deemed most in need and eligible were identified to benefit from the Dakiya Yojna scheme. By concentrating on the PVTGs and employing the PAE methodology, the program aimed to ensure that they receive the necessary support and assistance for their upliftment and well-being through the scheme.

F. Cadre Development (MT P, LRG, IMs, and BAP)

Understanding the grassroots scenario of Jharkhand, the project has cultivated a cadre pool at each level of the governance system, including Master Trainer Pool (MTP), Local Resource Groups (LRG), Internal Mentors (IM), and Block Anchor Persons (BAP). The objective behind developing these layers of cadre was to engage a maximum number of community members who could not only help themselves but also uplift the needy within their neighbouring families and actively

participate in decision-making processes.

Given the extensive expansion of the project, there arose a pressing need for cadre development to oversee activities in the Gram Panchayats comprehensively. Consequently, in the fiscal year 2018-2019, opportunities were created for cadre promotion. A screening process for LRGs cum selection of Internal Mentors was conducted at the state level, facilitated by the SRLM with support from the NRO team. Following the completion of the LRG screening process, LRGs were shortlisted and promoted to the role of Internal Mentors.

Block Anchor Persons are individuals who have been promoted from the role of Internal Mentors. They began their journey as LRGs under the convergence project. Through intensive training and orientation sessions on the convergence project at the state level, they have gained extensive knowledge and information. Consequently, they are now capable of creating awareness, delivering orientations, and confidently assuming responsibilities within their respective roles.

In pursuit of sustainability, the cadres selected under the PRI-CBO project have been integrated into a broader pool of cadres. They have become integral to the social mobilisation and institutional building initiatives of the NRLM. Recognised by the SRLM as community cadres, Block Anchor Persons (BAPs) are now entrusted with additional responsibilities to implement the core objectives of the DAY-NRLM. This platform has not only facilitated the development of skills among BAPs but has also provided them with better opportunities to bring about meaningful change within their communities.

G. Strengthening institutions (GPs: Standing Committee, Executive Committee)

In the implementation of schemes such as toilet construction under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and the preparation of beneficiary lists, Gram Panchayat members

and CBOs have developed strong collaborative relationships. They have also effectively mobilised the community for formal meetings like the Gram Sabha. An essential component of this convergence initiative is the Gram Sabha Jan Jagriti Abhiyan (GSJJA), aimed at raising awareness about the Gram Sabha's importance through rallies. These rallies involve CBO members and non-SHG members for mass mobilisation.

Another significant activity is the formation and strengthening of the Gram Sabha Standing Committee (GS-SC). Through a Community Resource Person (CRP) drive conducted by SHG members, LRGs, and village institution representatives, Gram Panchayat members and village institution representatives were provided with three days of orientation on the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA). As a result, the project successfully formed standing committees at the village level. In the field, several key observations were made regarding the PRI-CBO convergence:

- Involvement of CBOs in preparing beneficiary lists has streamlined the flow of government schemes.
- Women collectives exhibit decision-making abilities in formal platforms like Gram Sabha, SHG-VO meetings, and special meetings convened by the Panchayat.
- CBOs confidently voice their concerns in front of Panchayat representatives.
- Panchayat Presidents demonstrate readiness to address issues presented by CBOs, fostering village development.
- Effective dissemination of scheme information and government circulars is facilitated by CBOs and Panchayat Representatives (PRs).
- Panchayat Presidents, Secretaries, and Ward Members provide support to VO leaders and LRGs in executing activities such as GSJJA, GS-SC formation, EAP demand plan presentations, and attending special meetings

H.Enhanced Access to Rights and Entitlements

The utilisation of the PAE and EAP emerged as a successful method for mobilisation, benefiting not only SHGs but also the village community. These tools have played a crucial role in fostering an environment conducive to participatory planning and effective local governance. Through this process, communities and local leaders have gained knowledge about their rights, entitlements, and the responsibilities of public institutions. The PAE and EAP exercises have involved all members of SHGs and their households, empowering women to take ownership of the plans and the data generated. This empowerment has boosted the confidence of women, enabling them to voice their opinions after gaining a comprehensive understanding of their situation. The information regarding the reach of social security schemes during the intervention period is presented below:

Entitlement	Accomplished No.
Jan Dhan Yojana	25,991
Old age Pension	4,879
Widow Pension	2,834
Disability Pension	998

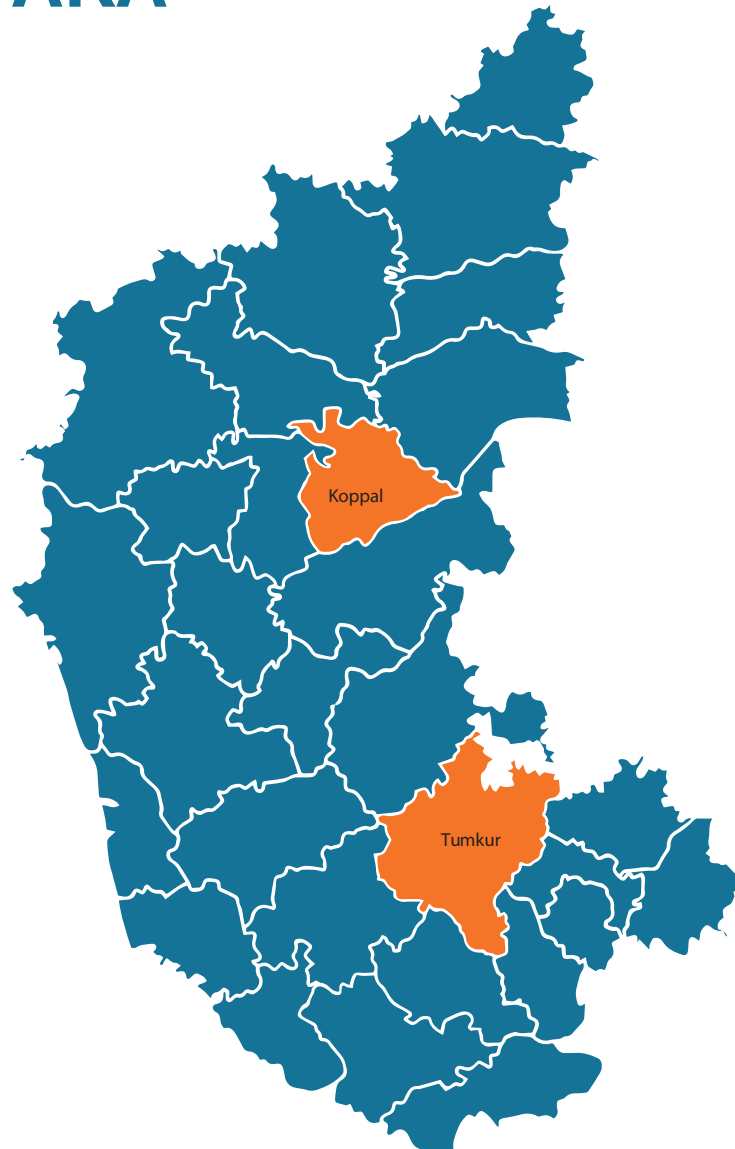
New Job Card	18,738
Work demanded under MGNREGS	15,951
A new entry in the Job card	3,667
Renewal of Job Card	14,077
PMSBY	26,697
PMJJY	8,576
IHHL/SBM	25,881
Ujjwala/Gas connection	13,642
PMAY-G	10,666
No. of Ration Card issued	2,240

Conclusion

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project in Jharkhand has been instrumental in fostering collaboration and synergy between PRI and CBO. The project's primary objective has been to improve the access of the poor to entitlements and development schemes while enhancing their participation in local governance processes. A key aspect of the project has been the establishment and strengthening of local resource pools, empowering communities to actively contribute to the development of their localities actively. Through capacity-building initiatives targeting the elected representatives from Panchayats and SHGs, as well as through the creation of platforms for convergence between these institutions, the project has successfully promoted inclusive and participatory local governance. The lessons learned and outcomes from the project have served as valuable resources for all stakeholders in Jharkhand. They provide insights and guidance for future initiatives aimed at empowering communities and promoting effective convergence between PRI and CBO for sustainable development.



KARNATAKA



District

Tumkur
Koppal

Background of the State

Karnataka state in the southern part of India was created on November 1, 1956, with the passing of the State Reorganisation Act. As a result, the state had four different sets of legislation. Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed as Karnataka in 1973. The state covers an area of 191,791 km².

As per details from Census 2011, Karnataka has a population of 6.11 crores of which males and females are 30,966,657 and 30,128,640 respectively. The total population growth in this decade was 15.60 per cent. The population of Karnataka formed 5.05 per cent of India in 2011. The sex ratio in Karnataka is 973 i.e. for every 1000 males, which is below the national average of 940. The literacy rate has seen an upward trend and is 75.36 per cent. Of that, male literacy stands at 82.47 per cent while female literacy is at 68.08 per cent.

PRI system in the state

The princely state of Mysore also had a long and somewhat chequered history of decentralisation. Commencing as far back as 1881 it went through several phases up to independence. Shortly after independence three committees (Venkatappa Committee (1949), Chandrashekaraiah Committee (1954) and Kondajji Basappa Committee (1962) examined and reported on measures to strengthen local government.

Following the report of the Balwantrai Mehta committee (1957) the Mysore (Karnataka) Villages Panchayat and District Board Act 1959 was enacted and continued to be in force till 1983. Later the Ashok Mehta committee (1978) recommended the two-tier structure with Zila Panchayat (ZP) at the district and Mandal Panchayat at the lower level on the lines of the Mysore (Karnataka) Act 1959.

Karnataka's journey with decentralisation dates to 1983, with subsequent developments culminating in the Karnataka Panchayat Raj

Act of 1993. This act aligned Karnataka's decentralisation system with the three-tier local government structure mandated by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. At the heart of this structure lies the GP, responsible for local policymaking and rural service provision. Ward members are directly elected, while the President and Vice President are elected by these ward members.

In Karnataka, the Panchayat Raj system, established in 1959, has undergone multiple reforms to enhance local self-governance. Consequent to the 73rd Constitutional amendment, the State Government enacted the Karnataka Panchayat Raj (KPR) Act, 1993, to establish three-tier PRIs at the village (Gama Panchayat -GP), taluk (Taluk Panchayat -TP) and district (Zilla Panchayat -ZP) levels and framed rules to enable PRIs to function as institutions of LSG. The Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act, 1993 was amended and now it is known as the Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Act, 2020.

The Panchayat Raj system in Karnataka stands as a successful model, empowering local communities and promoting participatory democracy. It has enabled greater participation of women and marginalised communities in decision-making processes, leading to notable improvements in the delivery of basic services such as healthcare, education, and sanitation in rural areas. Women's participation in local governance has been a topic of growing interest, particularly in India where policies like the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992) mandate 33 per cent reservation for women in PRIs. The matrix of reservation of seats and leadership positions is changed once in 5 years in compliance with the principle of rotation. This exercise is undertaken based on a roster for reservation prepared by the Deputy Commissioner. In 1997, on the suggestions of an official committee set up to reform

Panchayat Raj, the state government adopted an accelerated rotation of reservation by cutting down the leadership terms of Presidents and Vice Presidents 20, 20 and 30 months for ZPs, TPs, and GPs respectively. Reservations concerning leadership posts are also rotated 20, 20 and 30 months for ZPs, TPs, and GPs respectively. Thus, there are three reservation rotations in every five-year term for the ZP and the TP and two rotations for GP. The sequences in which the reservations are made are as per the Act. The significant development was the decision of the Government of Karnataka to enhance the reservation of seats for women to 50 per cent at the GP/P/ZP levels, by amending a section of the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act with effect from 23rd July 2010.

The study by B.PAC (2019) acknowledges the historical increase in women's representation in Karnataka, exceeding the national average in PRIs. It highlights achievements like 43.7 per cent of women in Gram Panchayats (2005) and 51 per cent in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) council (2015) due to reservation hikes. The Karnataka State Panchayati Raj Amendment Act (2015) aims to further increase women's participation through measures like capacity building and infrastructure development like separate toilets in panchayats.

The report by Development Alternatives (2021) identifies various barriers to women's active participation, including social norms, lack of training, and pressure from male members. It emphasises the need for measures like skill development and addressing power dynamics within families. Another study by Shah (2006) titled "Engineering Elections: The Experiences of Women in "Panchayati Raj" in Karnataka, India" argues that solely focusing on numbers doesn't capture the full picture. It emphasises the need to consider factors like caste, class, and ethnicity that intersect with gender, impacting women's experiences and effectiveness in PRIs.

While Karnataka has witnessed significant strides in women's participation in local governance due to reservation policies, studies highlight the need to address social barriers, empower women through training, and ensure their voices are truly heard within the system. Further research can delve deeper into the impact of women's leadership on local development and explore strategies for overcoming the remaining challenges.

An important feature of Karnataka's Gram Panchayats is the reservation of half the seats for women, including the posts of President and Vice President. In 2020, an amendment to the Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act reduced the tenure of the President and Vice president of the Gram Panchayat from five years to 30 months.

² B.PAC. (2019). Participation of Women in Politics: A Case Study of Karnataka State <<https://bpac.in/bengaluru-commuter-study/>>

³ Karnataka State Panchayati Raj Amendment Act, 2015

⁴ Development Alternatives. (2021). Removing Barriers to Women's Participation in Local Governance <<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-12/UNDP-RoK-UNU-Participatory-Planning-and-Paying-for-Local-Action-Plans-to-Address-Gender-Based-Violence.pdf>>

⁵ Shah, A. (2006). Engineering Elections: The Experiences of Women in "Panchayati Raj" in Karnataka, India. *Journal of Asian Studies*, 65(1), 127-154.

Each Gram Panchayat has a Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) and Panchayat Secretary, with Grade I GPs (those with a population of over 8000) also having a Sub-Divisional Assistant (SDA) to manage additional responsibilities. Additionally, there are designated roles for tax collectors, watermen, and sweepers in every Gram Panchayat. Furthermore, Gram Panchayats serve as the primary implementation agency for the MGNREGS.

Role of NRLM in the state:

Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Mission was inaugurated formally on 2nd December 2011 to implement DAY-NRLM, a flagship program of the Ministry of Rural Development in Karnataka. Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotion Society has been formed and registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960. It is an autonomous implementing agency of NRLM at the State Level.

Presently, the organisation is functioning under the purview of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihoods Department of Government of Karnataka. It has made significant achievements in the state over the past decade by creating community based institutions like Self Help Groups, Grama Panchayath and Taluka level federations, various producer groups, Entrepreneurs clusters for the rural poor and vulnerable women.

It has covered more than 28 lakh rural women under National Rural Livelihood Mission and is working towards their comprehensive development. More than 50000 poor women in the state have started micro and small enterprises, thereby engaging in different types of products and services, encouraging diversified agricultural activities for agriculture-based rural poor women and forming producer groups for their empowerment.

As an implementation partner in the PRI-CBO Convergence Project, Sanjeevini played a key role in the identification and development of a cadre pool at the Gram Panchayat level. To establish rapport with the Gram Panchayat and relevant line departments, project orientations were conducted during the early stages. This initiative resulted in better coordination among stakeholders at each phase of the project.

The Gram Panchayat Poverty Reduction Plan (GP2RP) was developed for all 40 intervention Gram Panchayats and integrated into the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). A state-level advisory was issued for the formation of Gram Panchayat Coordination Committees (GPCC), resulting in the establishment of 14 GPCCs across two taluks.

Role of CBOs in the state

Sanjeevini follows a three-tier federative structure, consisting of SHGs at the grassroots level, Ward Level Federations (WLFs) at the ward level, and Gram Panchayat Level Federations (GPLFs) at the Gram Panchayat Level. Before the intervention, field-level assessments revealed that members often belonged to multiple groups, including SHGs promoted under Sanjeevini, Sthreesakthi under Women and Child Development, and other state-sponsored microfinance institutions.

Meetings of SHGs, WLFs, and GPLFs were held monthly, focusing primarily on thrift and credit-related activities. Discussions at the SHG level typically revolved around savings and lending. At the ward level, discussions centred on recommending and prioritising SHGs for Community Investment Fund (CIF) disbursement, as there were no financial transactions conducted at this level. In some talukas, the formation of WLFs was still underway at the time of the intervention. Discussions at the GPLF level mainly pertained to CIF-related matters.

PRI-CBO convergence project

Against this backdrop, the PRI-CBO Convergence project was initiated in Karnataka, aiming to enhance collaboration between PRIs and CBOs to drive inclusive and sustainable development at the grassroots level. Sanjeevani, under the auspices of the Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotion Society (KSRLPS), formally partnered with the KS-NRO to launch the PRI-CBO Convergence Project on January 20th, 2014. This partnership involved KS-NRO providing technical expertise and support, facilitated by the deployment of 15 KS-NRO mentors to aid in project implementation.

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project was rolled out across 40 panchayats spanning four talukas (Blocks) in two districts of Karnataka. Ten panchayats were selected from each taluk to be part of the project implementation, forming the grassroots level of intervention for this collaborative endeavour.

Profile of the intervention areas

The field-level operations commenced with a strategy-setting workshop held in April 2015. Following this workshop, the activities were tailored and contextualised based on the specific circumstances and needs of each state.

Process Followed In Karnataka Under PRI - CBO Convergence Project



Profile of PRI-CBO Convergence Project in Karnataka

District	Block	Number of					Number of LRGs Identified and involved in			
		Pilot GPs	SHGs	Wards / WLFs	PAE completed	EAP completed	LRGs	PAE	EAP	GP2RP
Koppal	Koppal	10	368	41	368	41	112	60	55	39
	Gangavathi	10	265	51	262	51	98	48	37	21
Tumkur	Pavagada	10	470	56	465	56	109	74	64	57
	Gubbi	10	379	65	345	65	140	100	125	56
TOTAL		40	1,482	213	1,440	213	459	282	281	173

Activity timeline

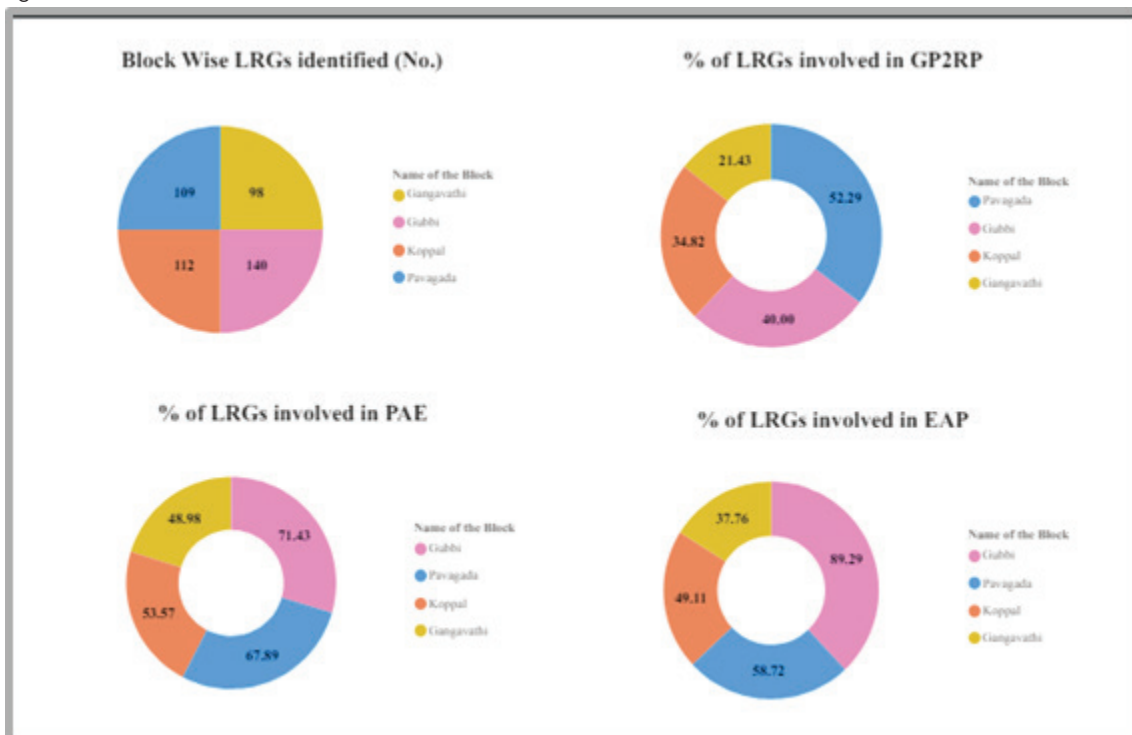
A brief look at the activities with the timeline

Project Activity	April-June 2015			July-Sep 2015			Oct-Dec 2015			Jan-March 2016			April-June 2016			July-Sep 2016			Oct-Dec 2016			Jan-March 2017		
	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Strategy setting workshop	A																							
Scheme mapping			J																					
Field Level Assessment				J																				
Formation of capacitated LRGs in all panchayats								N	D															
Mobilisation for Gram Sabha																				O				
Formation of the federation in Talukas													A	M										
MGNREGS and SBM 'mela'														M	J	J								
Revival of defunct SHGs and formation of new SHGs													A	M	J	J								
Hakkigagi Dappugalu (PAE)									D	J	F	M												
Balsabha formation and activities for children of Bal Sabha																		A	S	O	N	D	J	
Entitlement Access Plan													A	M										
GP2RP																		A	S	O	N	D		
Formation of Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee																						D	J	F
CBO Capacitation and Skill Training	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	
Training for PR members	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	

Key outcomes of the project

1. LRG as a community cadre for enhancing participatory governance

The LRG played a vital role in facilitating project activities at the grassroots level, providing essential support and guidance to both the SHG network and the representatives of the PRI. Comprised of individuals selected from the local community, the LRG members underwent specialised training to enhance their knowledge and skills across various project-related areas. Mentorship from Kudumbashree Mentor Resource Persons was a key aspect of the LRG members' development, ensuring they received continuous support and guidance. Typically, 3-5 LRGs were identified per panchayat, and they underwent comprehensive training covering topics such as poverty alleviation, the structure of panchayats, the significance of convergence, and strategies for facilitating effective collaboration between PRIs and CBOs. Through their dedicated efforts and training, the LRGs played a crucial role in bridging the gap between SHGs, PRIs, and other stakeholders, thereby contributing significantly to the success of the project at the grassroots level.



2. Strengthening of the CBO Federation

The capacity building of CBOs in Karnataka has been a continuous process aimed at empowering women collectives and enhancing their active participation in local governance alongside panchayats. The project began with the basic functional capacitation of CBOs, focusing on raising awareness and building their capacity through participatory tools.

Efforts were made to strengthen sub-committees within the collectives, empowering them in their daily functions and interactions with Panchayats. Capacitation initiatives aimed to enhance the CBOs' understanding of their roles and responsibilities, equipping them with the necessary skills to effectively engage with stakeholders and contribute to local governance processes.

As part of the capacity-building efforts, the CBOs were established as service delivery agencies, further enhancing their role in community development. Additionally, the project emphasised the formation of new SHGs and the reactivation of defunct ones, expanding the reach and impact of the CBOs. Furthermore, efforts were made to transition microfinance SHGs into the Sanjeevini program, providing them with greater autonomy and support, thereby strengthening their capacity to address the needs of their members and communities effectively.

3.Improved Internal Governance

In Karnataka, the PRI-CBO convergence project has brought about notable improvements in the governance of CBOs. One area of significant transformation has been in financial management practices. Training sessions were conducted to enhance bookkeeping skills and improve capabilities in handling cash transactions. By strengthening financial management practices, CBOs became better equipped to manage their resources effectively and ensure transparency and accountability in their operations. Capacity development efforts also focused on functional training for CBO members. This included training sessions on conducting effective meetings, facilitating discussions, and maintaining proper records. By enhancing these skills, CBO members were better prepared to fulfil their roles and responsibilities within the organisation and contribute effectively to decision-making processes.

Moreover, mentor resource persons played a crucial role in providing tailored support to CBOs at the ward and gram panchayat levels. Through one-to-one training sessions, mentor resource persons addressed specific needs and challenges faced by CBOs, helping them overcome obstacles and improve their overall functioning.

4.Improved participation in local

governance

The PRI-CBO convergence project has had a significant impact on women's participation in Gram Sabha meetings in Karnataka, leading to positive changes in how these meetings are conducted and perceived by the community. Over three years, there has been a notable increase in women's involvement in Gram Sabha meetings, indicating a growing awareness and interest among community members in how it is conducted.

One significant change brought about by the project is the role of CBOs in facilitating communication between the PRIs and the community regarding Gram Sabha meetings. Previously, the panchayat solely recorded the minutes of the Gram Sabha meetings, with community members merely signing the minutes book if they were present. However, the project has empowered CBOs to serve as intermediaries, with the panchayat now sending letters to the GPLF office to provide details about Gram Sabha meetings. This shift signifies the growing recognition of the CBO's influence within the community by the panchayat.

Moreover, the collective strength among CBO members has increased, fostering a sense of unity and collaboration. They now actively discuss Gram Sabha agendas in their SHGs and federations, leading to the submission of group applications. This collective approach has strengthened the CBO's bargaining power during Gram Sabha meetings, enabling the community to demand better quantity, quality, and access to public services.

Furthermore, as the CBO has become more transparent and accountable, the panchayat has also experienced increased accountability in governance matters. This mutual accountability between the CBO and the panchayat has contributed to improved governance processes and outcomes at the grassroots level.

5.CBO as active service delivery agent

The role of CBOs in public service delivery has been instrumental, with SHGs and federations actively participating in intervention panchayats. Through awareness and capacity-building training provided to LRGs and SHGs on various government schemes and services, the CBO structure has become an effective mechanism for delivering rural public services and ensuring that community members are aware of their entitlements.

The CBOs have taken on the responsibility of serving the community and providing essential services, particularly concerning government schemes and entitlements. In pilot panchayats, SHGs have contributed significantly to poverty reduction by organising mass campaigns for initiatives like the MGNREGS and the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), thereby contributing to overall panchayat development.

Panchayats have begun recognising the CBO as an alternative channel for service delivery, leading to a sharing of responsibilities between the CBO and the panchayat in terms of delivering services. Many panchayats have delegated tasks such as conducting SBM camps and achieving open defecation-free status to the CBO. Additionally, CBO federations play a role in identifying beneficiaries for various services within the panchayats.

Efforts to improve access to entitlements have been made through the implementation of the EAP, which involves setting targets and discussing them within the Women's Livelihood Federation (WLF) to ensure effective implementation. MGNREGS fairs/melas have been organised in all the blocks to disseminate information and facilitate access to employment opportunities, while labour collectives have been established to collectively address issues related to entitlements and enhance the community's bargaining power.

The CBO's emphasis on collectivism has

fostered a sense of unity and purpose among its members, enabling them to work together to navigate bureaucratic processes, overcome challenges, and advocate for their rights. This collective effort has played a crucial role in improving access to various entitlements and ensuring that community members can benefit from government schemes and services they are entitled to.

6.Panchayat as active service delivery agent

During the Field Level Assessment period, it was observed that panchayats were not actively fulfilling their role as service delivery agencies, and there was a lack of community demand for their rights. However, the project's intervention, particularly the PRI orientation, played a crucial role in changing this scenario.

The PRI orientation sessions provided an overview to Panchayat Raj representatives, introducing them to the LRG members and CBO representatives. This facilitated the LRGs and CBO representatives in asserting their entitlements within the panchayat structure. Following the EAP, CBO representatives became more proactive in demanding their rights.

In terms of service delivery, there was a noticeable improvement, with most panchayats displaying high levels of cooperation. When the CBO demanded support for initiatives like the MGNREGS and the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) after mass mobilisation efforts, many panchayats actively assisted them in meeting their demands. The successful implementation of initiatives such as achieving open defecation-free status in five panchayats highlighted the panchayats' ability and willingness to cooperate in service delivery efforts. Additionally, several panchayats provided employment opportunities through MGNREGS for SHG women.

Moreover, during the preparation of the GP2RP, the panchayats demonstrated a high level of cooperation, indicating an improvement in their service delivery systems. Regular meetings were held at the taluk level with the Panchayat Development Officers (PDOs) to update them on the progress of the work and address the community's needs. This collaborative approach between CBOs and panchayats has led to tangible improvements in service delivery and community empowerment.

7. Evolution of CBO as an institution (from scattered SHGs to a collectivised Federation)

The initiation of the project in Karnataka marked a significant turning point for SHGs and CBOs in the region. Previously, SHGs operated in a fragmented manner without a unified umbrella organisation, and microfinance groups were prevalent, with low meeting attendance and a focus mainly on thrift and credit activities. However, the project brought about a remarkable transformation.

The initial training provided to CBOs focused on essential aspects such as meeting procedures and bookkeeping, laying the foundation for effective organisational functioning. Ongoing mentoring ensured that federation representatives understood their roles and responsibilities, further enhancing their capacity to lead and manage the federation effectively.

During the GP2RP process, significant strides were made in integrating SHGs into the active SHG list of Sanjeevini, a key umbrella organisation. Notably, four microfinance groups successfully transitioned to register under Sanjeevini, aligning with its objectives and initiatives. Moreover, 66 defunct SHGs were identified and reactivated, demonstrating a concerted effort to strengthen the SHG network and promote social inclusion.

The project also emphasised the formation of

new SHGs alongside the GP2RP, underscoring the commitment to expanding the reach and impact of the SHG movement. In Pavagada and Koppal talukas, the establishment of ward-level federations played a pivotal role in fostering collectivism among SHG members and empowering them to contribute to the development of their respective panchayats.

8. Participatory Assessment of Entitlements (PAE)

The Hakkigagi Dappugalu initiative played a crucial role in empowering women-elected representatives within the panchayats. Before they participated in this initiative, these representatives often remained invisible and lacked awareness of their roles and responsibilities. However, through their involvement in Hakkigagi Dappugalu, they gained firsthand knowledge about their entitlements and rights, particularly regarding governance and participation in gram sabha meetings. Participating in activities such as infrastructure mapping during the GP2RP further solidified their sense of empowerment. By actively engaging with CBOs and raising awareness about the resources available within the panchayat, these women-elected representatives began to recognise the importance of utilising these resources for the community's benefit.

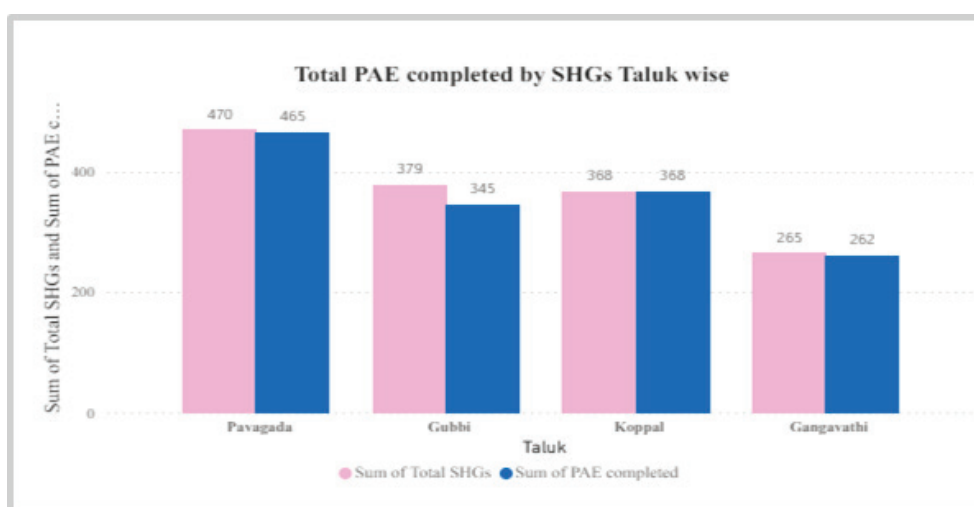
9. Developing the capacity of women elected representatives

The PAE in Karnataka was named "Hakkigagi Dappugalu," which translates to "Stride for rights and entitlements." Alongside the PAE tool, a module was prepared specifically for Hakkigagi Dappugalu to guide the process. Additionally, Karnataka developed a "handbook on entitlements" intended for circulation among the LRGs. This handbook contained comprehensive information about various government schemes, including MGNREGS, SBM, NSAP, ICDS, and other state-specific

schemes.

The pilot PAE was conducted in the Koppal district, specifically in Koppal and Gangavathi Taluka, in November 2015. Following the successful pilot phase, PAE activities were expanded to all four talukas. LRGs from all panchayats underwent training at the taluk level on Hakkigagi Dappugalu to prepare them for their roles in the PAE process.

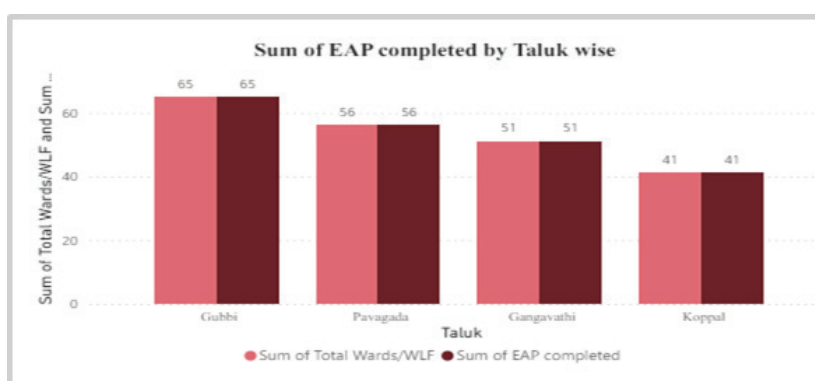
PAE was subsequently conducted in all SHGs within the pilot panchayats. The data collected through PAE was then consolidated at the ward level, with representation from CBOs, Panchayats, and other relevant line departments. In some instances, the PAE data was further consolidated and presented at the panchayat level, with the involvement of both CBO and panchayat representatives. This approach ensured comprehensive coverage and representation in the PAE process, facilitating the identification of key entitlements and priorities for action.



10. Entitlement Access Plan (EAP)

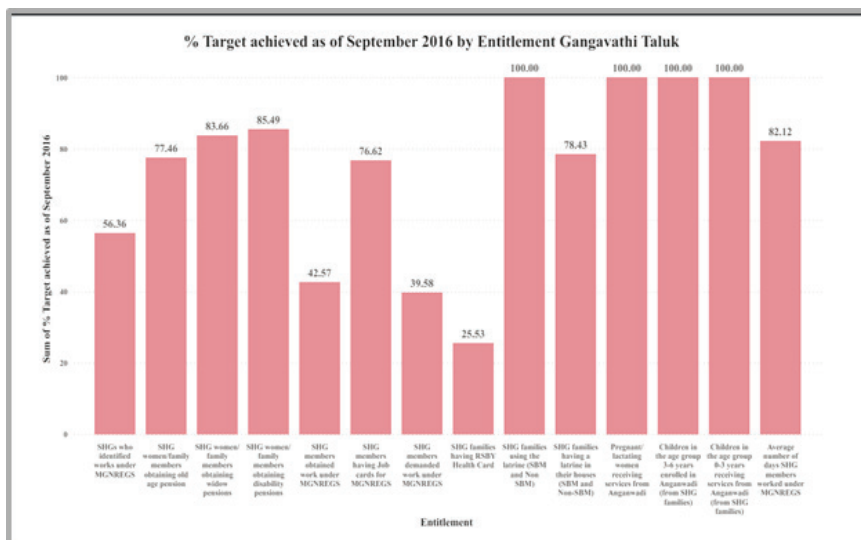
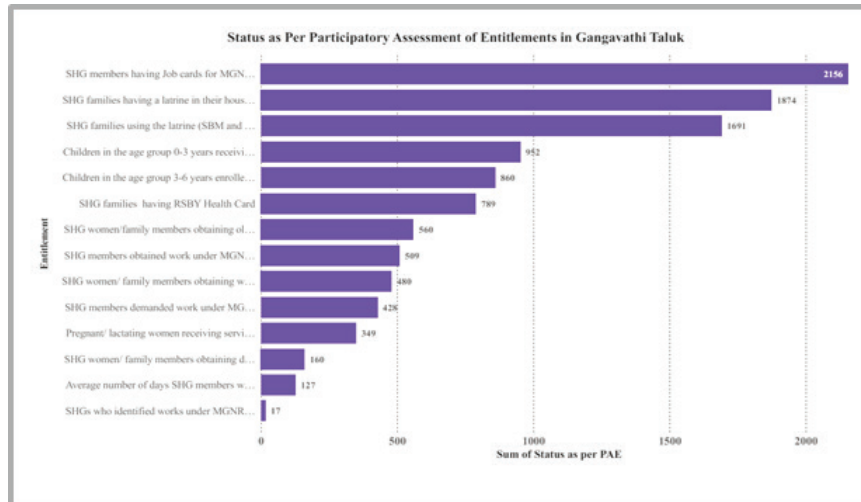
The PAE was followed by the preparation of the EAP, wherein targets were set by September 2016 for various entitlements by the representatives of the Women's Livelihood Federation (WLF) for their respective wards. This process began with the preparation of family budgets by the WLF representatives.

As a result of the EAP, WLF representatives and mentors devised the idea of organising MGNREGS camps in their villages to facilitate job card applications and job demands. Similarly, camps were organised for Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and applications for pensions were submitted as part of this initiative. Additionally, to achieve the targets of the EAP, federations took on the responsibility of ensuring pensions for eligible individuals.



The demands and targets set under the PAE and EAP in Gangavathi Taluk are detailed below:

Entitlement	Status as per PAE	Target for	Achieved target as of September 2016
SHG members having Job cards for MGNREGS	2,156	3,371	2,583
SHGs who identified works under MGNREGS	17	275	155
SHG members demanded work under MGNREGS	428	2,365	936
SHG members obtained work under MGNREGS	509	2,417	1,029
Average number of days SHG members worked under MGNREGS	127	520	427
SHG families having a latrine in their houses (SBM and Non-SBM)	1,874	3,130	2,455
SHG families using the latrine (SBM and Non SBM)	1,691	2,174	2,174
SHG families having RSBY Health Card	789	3,090	789
SHG women/family members obtaining old age pension	560	772	598
SHG women/ family members obtaining widow pensions	480	606	507
SHG women/ family members obtaining disability pensions	160	193	165
Pregnant/ lactating women receiving services from Anganwadi	349	363	363
Children in the age group 0-3 years receiving services from Anganwadi (from SHG families)	952	1,009	1,009
Children in the age group 3-6 years enrolled in Anganwadi (from SHG families)	860	955	955



11. Gram Panchayat Poverty Reduction Plan (GP2RP)

The orientation sessions conducted at the taluka level provided crucial guidance to the members of the LRGs in Koppal and Gangavathi Taluka. Following this, the LRGs, with the support of mentors, extended orientation sessions to representatives of SHGs in each panchayat. These sessions marked the beginning of the SHG plan preparation process at the grassroots level. The SHG plans aimed to capture the demands of households related to livelihood, entitlements, and social inclusion. Notably, all 40 panchayats in the talukas initiated the preparation of SHG plans, demonstrating widespread participation and engagement.

Following the completion of the SHG plan preparation, the subsequent phase involved consolidating ward-level plans and conducting dream mapping exercises across all panchayats. During these exercises, the community actively contributed by creating infrastructure and resource maps. These maps served as valuable inputs for the development of infrastructure and resource plans tailored to each ward's specific needs and aspirations.

12. Establishment of robust institutional structure – GPCC

The project aims to strengthen and institutionalise the interaction between PRI CBO by establishing Gram Panchayat Coordination Committees (GPCC) in pilot GPs. Initiatives to form GPCC have been undertaken in all 10 panchayats in Pavagada Taluk and 4 panchayats in Koppal Taluk, demonstrating a commitment to fostering collaboration and coordination between PRI and CBO at the grassroots level.

Conclusion

The PRI-CBO convergence project in Karnataka has yielded significant positive outcomes, driven by the development and deployment of the internal cadre, the LRG. This cadre has played a pivotal role in enhancing participatory governance at the grassroots level. Additionally, the project has bolstered the capacity of CBOs through capacity-building initiatives, awareness campaigns, and the formation of new SHGs. As a result, CBOs have become proactive service providers, facilitating the delivery of public services and government schemes within their communities.

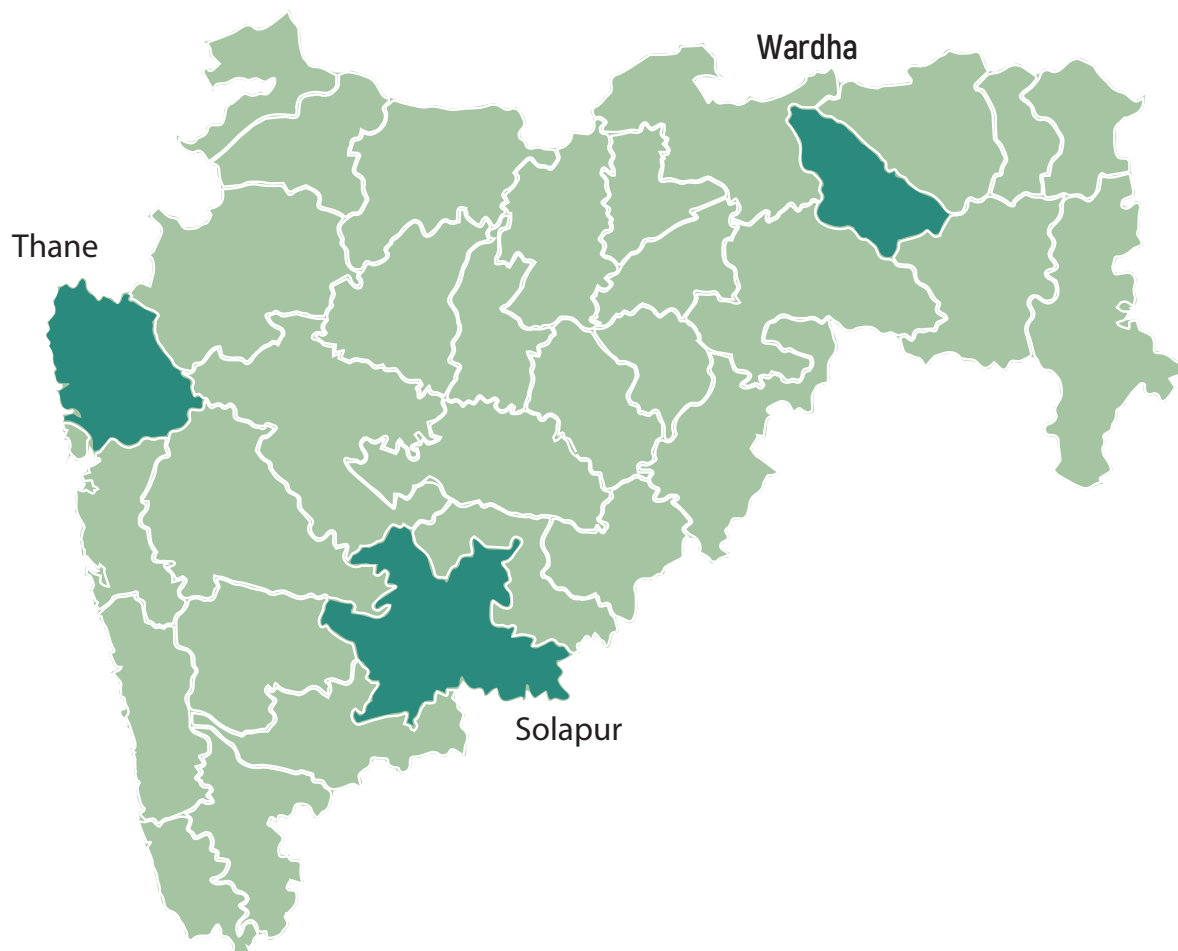
The project's focus on improving internal governance within CBOs has led to better financial management, functional training, and increased accountability. This has translated into enhanced participation in local governance processes, particularly in Gram Sabha meetings, where women's involvement has seen a significant uptick. CBOs have emerged as champions of collective action, empowering women to voice their concerns and actively participate in decision-making.

The heightened participation has brought about greater transparency and accountability in panchayat decision-making, with panchayats and CBOs collaborating on initiatives such as open defecation-free

campaigns and employment generation programs. The successful implementation of these projects underscores the mutually beneficial relationship between panchayats and SHGs. Overall, the project has reshaped governance dynamics in the Gram Panchayats of Karnataka, promoting participatory planning, strengthening institutions, and empowering local communities. Its emphasis on capacity building, transparency, and accountability has laid a solid foundation for the region's sustainable development and inclusive growth. These positive changes are expected to have a lasting impact on local governance and community empowerment in the years ahead.



MAHARASHTRA



District

Wardha
Thane
Solapur

Background of State

Maharashtra, situated in the western and central part of India, features a lengthy coastline stretching approximately 720 kilometres along the Arabian Sea. The state comprises 36 districts, further divided into six revenue divisions, 358 Talukas, and 44,664 villages for administrative purposes. It also ranks second in population, with approximately 11.24 crore inhabitants, accounting for 9.29 per cent of the country's total population. Despite the national urban population average standing at 31 per cent, a significant 45 per cent of Maharashtra's population resides in urban areas. However, the state's sex ratio, at 925 females per 1000 males, is lower than the national average of 940, as per the Census of 2011. The literacy rate of Maharashtra is 82.34 per cent as per the 2011 population census.

Covering a vast geographical area of 3.08 lakh square kilometres, Maharashtra ranks as the third-largest state by area. It is bordered by the Arabian Sea to the west and the Indian states of Karnataka, Telangana, Goa, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and the Union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. With approximately 11.24 crore inhabitants, accounting for 9.29 per cent of the country's total population, Maharashtra ranks second in population. However, the state's sex ratio, at 925 females per 1000 males, is lower than the national average of 940, as per the 2011 Census. The literacy rate of Maharashtra stands at 82.34 per cent as per the same Census.

Maharashtra ranks as the third most urbanised state among major states in India. Notably, despite the national urban population average standing at 31 per cent, a significant 45 per cent of Maharashtra's population resides in urban areas. Remarkably, two districts, Mumbai, and Mumbai (suburban), have 100 per cent of their population living in urban areas. Conversely, two other districts, Gadchiroli and Sindhudurg,

have less than 15 per cent of their population living in urban areas. The population of Greater Mumbai Urban Agglomeration (UA) stands at 18.41 million, making it the largest Urban Agglomeration in the country in terms of population. Additionally, Maharashtra boasts six Urban Agglomerations (UAs) or cities with a population of one million and above within the state.

PRI system in the state

Maharashtra has a longstanding tradition of robust Panchayats, predating the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1992. The state's efforts to strengthen local self-governance can be traced back to the late 19th century. In 1869, the first step towards enhancing the administrative structure of villages was taken with the establishment of village sanitary committees. The journey of local self-government in the Bombay province began in 1869 with the establishment of district local fund committees under the Bombay Local Fund Act. However, these early institutions lacked true democratic representation as they were predominantly controlled by officials and nominated members.

The momentum towards genuine local self-government gained traction with the advocacy of Lord Ripon, whose government resolution of 1882 emphasised the principle of local self-government. In response, the Bombay Local Boards Act of 1884 was passed, introducing district and Taluka local boards. These boards were headed by district collectors, prant (Sub-divisional) officers, or mamlatdars (tehsildars). However, it wasn't until 1920 that further attention was given to the village as a unit of administration.

The Bombay Village Panchayat Act of 1920 was a significant milestone, establishing statutory village Panchayats as fully elected bodies for the first time. However, it's noteworthy that voting rights under this act were limited to

adult male members. Additionally, this legislation formalised the control of district local boards over Panchayats. Subsequently, significant progress was made towards democratisation under the Bombay Local Boards Act of 1923. This legislation facilitated direct elections for members of district local boards, as well as for the positions of Presidents and Vice Presidents.

Following recommendations from the Hatch Committee in 1925, a new law called the Bombay Panchayat Act 1933 was enacted. This legislation aimed to streamline and enhance the functioning of Village Panchayats.

After the reorganisation of states in 1956, Maharashtra saw the passage of the comprehensive Bombay Village Panchayat Act 1958. This legislation provided a framework defining the duties, responsibilities, and powers of village Panchayats, further strengthening the local self-governance system in the state. Maharashtra played a pioneering role in implementing the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, which advocated for the establishment of a three-tier Panchayat Raj structure. Following the formation of the state of Maharashtra on May 1, 1960, the newly established government took proactive steps towards strengthening Panchayats. On June 27, 1960, a committee on Democratic Decentralisation was formed under the leadership of Shri Vasant Rao Naik. This committee was tasked with formulating strategies to enhance the functioning of Panchayats in the state. Based on the recommendations of this committee, Maharashtra enacted the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act in 1961. Subsequently, the three-tier Panchayat Raj system was officially established and became operational in Maharashtra on May 1, 1962.

In subsequent years, the government formed committees such as the LN Bongirwar Committee, which emphasised the financial strengthening and autonomy of PRIs, leading to the constitution of District Planning and Development Boards in 1972. The Maharashtra District Planning Committee Act 1998 further consolidated the plans prepared by Panchayats and municipalities and guided district-level development. In terms of rural local self-governance, Maharashtra has 34 Zilla Parishads, 355 Panchayat Samitis (Block Panchayats), and 28,813 Gram Panchayats. The state oversees 29 Municipal Corporations, 241 Municipal Councils, 131 Town/Nagar Parishads, and 7 Cantonment Boards for urban governance.

Twelve districts in Maharashtra are governed by the Panchayats Extension to the Scheduled Areas Act, also known as PESA. To facilitate the implementation of this legislation, the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis (Extension to the Scheduled Areas and Amendments) Ordinance was promulgated on January 3, 1997. However, on April 12, 1997, this ordinance was replaced by the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis (Extension to the Scheduled Areas and Amendments) Act, 1997. These measures were taken to extend the provisions of Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis to the scheduled areas of Maharashtra and to introduce necessary amendments for effective governance in these regions.

In Maharashtra, one-third of the seats in village panchayats, block panchayats, and district panchayats are reserved for women, including reserved seats for SC and ST women. Additionally, reservation of seats and offices of the presidents of Zilla Parishads and chairpersons of Panchayat Samitis are provided for SCs and STs in proportion to their population and by rotation. Moreover, 27 per cent of the posts of Zilla Parishad presidents and Panchayat Samiti chairpersons are reserved for backward castes, and one-third of these positions are reserved for women. The chairperson of the Women and Child Welfare Committee must be a woman counsellor of the Zilla Parishad. Furthermore, the post of chairperson of the Panchayat Samiti is reserved for SC/STs

dedicated to women’s economic empowerment through micro-credit finance institutions. These organisations collaborate closely with SRLM to form SHGs and offer them microfinance assistance.

Some SHGs formed by MAVIM and Chaitanya have been gradually integrated into the NRLM framework as part of this collaboration. This integration entails these SHGs becoming part of the broader network of SHGs supported by NRLM. By joining the NRLM fold, these SHGs gain access to a more extensive array of resources and support services provided by NRLM, enhancing their capacity for economic empowerment and sustainable development.

PRI-CBO convergence project

Umed – Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission (MSRLM) formally partnered with KS-NRO to initiate the PRI-CBO Convergence Project in January 2014. KS-NRO provided essential technical support and deployed six Mentor RPs to facilitate the implementation process in Maharashtra. Initially, the project targeted three blocks: Deoli, Shahpur, and Mohol, selected from Wardha, Thane, and Solapur districts, respectively, for piloting the Convergence project.

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project was executed during the pilot phase across 58 panchayats spanning the three selected blocks. The project’s major objectives included strengthening the SHG network, enhancing awareness and access to various rights and entitlements, empowering the Gram Sabha to facilitate increased participation of SHG women, fostering synergy in developmental initiatives between Gram Panchayats and CBOs, and establishing convergence platforms for institutional collaboration.

Maharashtra has historically served as fertile ground for piloting initiatives by KS-NRO. The concept of LRG trainers emerged from experiences gained in Maharashtra. Additionally, various tools aimed at facilitating convergence, notably the PAE and EAP, were first trailed in Maharashtra before being implemented in other partner states of KS-NRO.

Profile of the intervention areas

	Name of Districts			Total
	Solapur	Thane	Wardha	
Name of Block	Mohol	Shahpur	Deoli	3
Number of interventions Gram Panchayats	20	18	20	58
Number of SHGs	427	383	327	1,137
Number of Mentor Resource Persons	2	2	2	6

Strategy adopted for the state

Maharashtra's approach to promoting convergence between PRIs and CBOs in driving inclusive and sustainable development is comprehensive and multifaceted. Key components of this strategy include comprehensive capacity-building efforts, establishing a cadre resource pool known as LRGs, forming institutional platforms, and identifying and training internal mentors.

The state of Maharashtra has taken significant steps to ensure the active involvement of CBOs and PRIs in convergence efforts. Orientations have been conducted to familiarise CBO members with their roles and responsibilities and equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills. Similarly, PRI orientations have been organised to acquaint PRI members with the concept of convergence and their roles in promoting inclusive development through collaboration with CBOs. These orientations emphasise the importance of convergence and aim to foster collaboration between CBOs and gram panchayats for poverty alleviation initiatives. Moreover, Maharashtra has prioritised the development of a cadre resource pool by selecting and training LRGs. These LRGs serve as facilitators for project activities at the field level and have undergone rigorous assessments and interviews to ensure their suitability and competence. Additionally, internal mentors have been identified from within the LRG pool to provide guidance and support to both PRI members and CBOs in their convergence efforts.

In Maharashtra, participatory planning tools such as PAE and EAP have been introduced to empower SHGs to identify gaps in entitlement access and develop plans for addressing them. These tools and the GP2RP serve as valuable instruments for demand generation and Inclusive development planning at the gram panchayat level. The GP2RP has facilitated grassroots participation and collaboration between CBOs and PRIs to address marginalised communities' diverse needs and aspirations. By promoting dialogue and cooperation between CBOs and PRIs, Maharashtra aimed to strengthen the convergence model in the pilot Gram Panchayats, enhance community participation, and drive inclusive development at the grassroots level.

Achievements

Number of LRGs Trained	270
Number of Internal Mentors Trained	107
Number of VOCCs formed	58
Number of GPCCs formed	58
% of SHG completed PAE	95.41
% of VO completed EAP	100
% of SHG completed GP2RP	100

Key outcomes of the project

a) Developing the capacity of stakeholders

The project commenced with foundational functional training, emphasising the importance of awareness-raising and capacity-building through participatory tools. The primary goal was to actively engage women collectives in local governance processes and strengthen their collaboration with Panchayats. Special attention was given to enhancing the effectiveness

of sub-committees within the collectives, empowering them to fulfil their roles and engage meaningfully with Panchayats. Additionally, orientations were conducted for Panchayat members to bridge communication gaps and facilitate effective interaction.

As part of capacity-building efforts, the PAP organised a learning visit to Kerala, offering practical experience to participants. These comprehensive initiatives were designed to empower stakeholders and equip them with the necessary skills to contribute effectively to the project's success. By fostering collaboration, enhancing knowledge, and providing practical exposure, the project aimed to strengthen grassroots governance and promote inclusive development.

b)LRG as a community cadre for enhancing participatory governance.

The LRGs were instrumental in driving project activities at the grassroots level, offering crucial support and guidance to both the SHG network and PRI representatives. Comprised of carefully selected individuals from the local community, LRG members underwent specialised training to enhance their knowledge and skills relevant to the project's objectives. Continuous mentorship and guidance from Kudumbashree Mentor Resource Persons further supported their growth and development. In each panchayat, 3-5 LRGs were designated, and equipped with training on various topics including poverty alleviation, the structure and functioning of the panchayat, the significance of convergence, and effective facilitation of collaboration between PRIs and CBOs.

c)Increased participation in MGNREGS work

The PRI-CBO Convergence project in Mohol block, Solapur district, Maharashtra, has effectively mobilised women's participation in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural

Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). Since the project's inception in 2013, with MGNREGS as the primary entry point activity, there has been a notable increase in the average MGNREGS workdays for women in the pilot GPs. This increase has surpassed the performance of non-pilot GPs within the intervention block.

The success of this initiative can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the active involvement of PRIs played a crucial role in driving participation. Additionally, comprehensive planning at the VO level and ambitious targets set by LRGs contributed significantly to the growth rate in MGNREGS workdays in the pilot GPs. By focusing on MGNREGS as a key intervention, the convergence project has not only increased women's participation in the scheme but has also empowered them economically and socially.

d)Improved participation in local governance

During the initial phase of the Convergence Project, field assessments revealed limited and passive participation of SHGs and women in local governance processes. However, the project increased participation levels over two years of continuous support and capacity-building efforts. The project's key focus was enhancing awareness about entitlements, government schemes, and the importance of engaging in local governance among SHG members. Capacitation emerged as a primary strategy, targeting all SHG women in the pilot GPs. The Project adopted a process-based approach rather than relying solely on traditional classroom training. Regular orientation sessions and extensive mobilisation efforts were conducted to empower SHG women and enhance their understanding of democratic platforms such as Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha. These initiatives resulted in a significant improvement in both the quantity and quality of women's participation in local

governance processes.

e)Capacity building

The CBO orientations conducted across 81 VOs have played a pivotal role in equipping members with a comprehensive understanding of convergence and their respective roles and responsibilities. These orientations serve as a platform to familiarise CBOs with the concept of convergence and its application at different levels. Providing knowledge and skills has enabled them to effectively engage with stakeholders and collaborate with Panchayats to alleviate poverty in their communities.

f)Development and Placement of internal cadre

The establishment of LRGs has been a crucial step in supporting project activities in the field. Through two years of intensive capacity building, these dedicated individuals actively engaged in on-ground activities, becoming key drivers of change within their communities. Notably, several LRG members successfully transitioned from their roles in the pilot GPs to become Internal Mentors, underscoring the effectiveness of the capacity-building efforts.

The selection process for LRGs was conducted rigorously, involving written assessments and interviews to evaluate their qualifications, skills, and competencies. The written assessments focused on assessing the candidates' academic and professional backgrounds, while the interviews provided further insight into their suitability for the role. Based on their performance in these assessments and interviews, the final selection of LRGs was made. These LRGs are individuals who have undergone capacity-building programs conducted by Mentor Resource Persons, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to support project activities effectively. A total of 270 LRGs have been trained across the three piloting blocks, ensuring a robust cadre of field

facilitators to drive the project's objectives forward.

Aligned with the exit strategy of the NRO, a rigorous selection process was conducted in three blocks, resulting in the grading of 170 LRGs. Subsequently, 100 LRGs were strategically placed in projects under MSRLM to facilitate seamless coordination and collaboration between PRIs and CBOs. Similarly, the scale-up of the project involved a rigorous process for identifying, selecting, and capacity-building internal mentors, who play a crucial role in providing guidance and support to the LRGs. Under the guidance of Mentor RPs, the selection and training of internal mentors were conducted comprehensively to ensure their effectiveness in facilitating project activities.

A total of 107 internal mentors were identified and capacitated in various aspects of governance and convergence at the gram panchayat level. These mentors underwent thorough training to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively mentor LRGs and facilitate convergence efforts within their respective areas of operation. Ongoing mentoring and support from Mentor Resource Persons were provided to internal mentors to ensure their continuous growth and effectiveness in their roles.

g)Participatory Assessment of Entitlement (PAE) & Participatory Access Plan (EAP)

The PAE was piloted and subsequently rolled out, accompanied by one-to-one interactions with PRIs in pilot GPs. From November to December 2015, SHGs prepared EAP based on baselines generated from PAE. During this process, a specially convened meeting of CLF or VO specified achievable targets for various entitlements within a stipulated timeframe. Strategies such as designating scheme-specific LRGs and forming various institutional

mechanisms were finalised to implement the plan effectively.

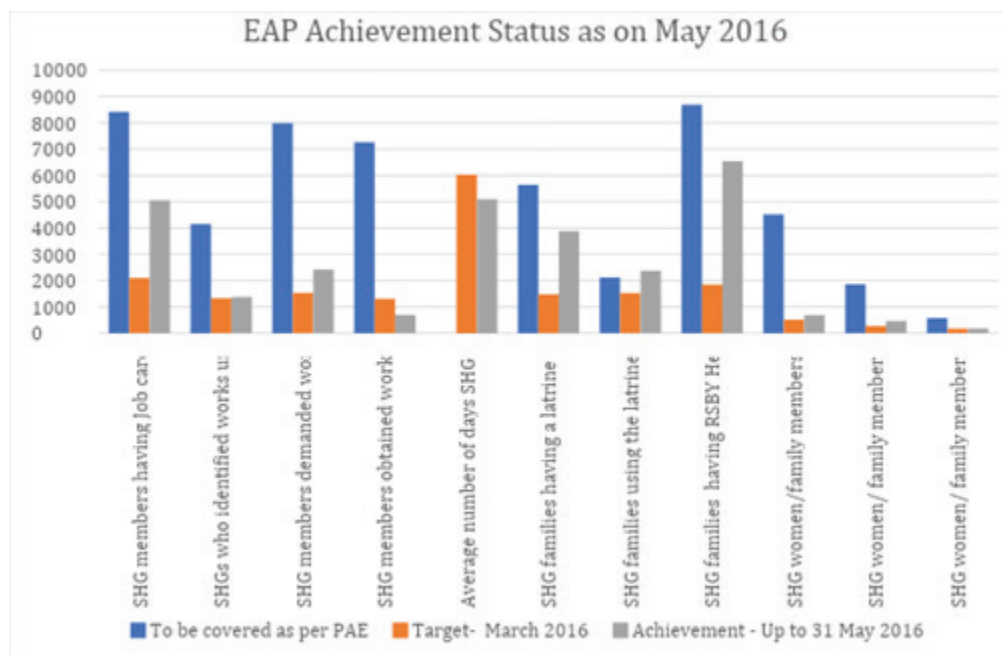
Furthermore, an Inclusive Development Plan (IDP), mirroring the GPDP but driven by CBOs, was initiated in July 2016. The submission of these plans in Gram Sabha meetings was completed by October 2016, marking a significant step towards inclusive and participatory development at the grassroots level.

h) Access to entitlements

During the EAP orientation sessions, activities such as the “Web of Health” and “MGNREGS - One Stop Solution” facilitated discussions on various topics including health hazards, agriculture, employment patterns, and village infrastructure. These discussions allowed participants to explore the potential of schemes like MGNREGS in addressing these issues comprehensively.

Moreover, the target-setting process implemented for schemes such as MGNREGS, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Rajiv Gandhi Jeevandayee Arogya Yojana (RGJAY), and ICDS has enabled the VO to establish reliable targets and plan activities accordingly. This holistic approach has empowered the VO to make informed decisions, set realistic goals, and formulate action plans for the successful implementation of various schemes.

In terms of quantifiable achievements, women have made significant progress towards their targets, particularly in areas such as increasing MGNREGS workdays, promoting sanitation through the SBM, availing benefits under the National Social Assistance Project (NSAP), and accessing health services through health cards.



EAP Achievement based on the PAE Baseline

q) Gram Panchayat Poverty Reduction Plan (GP2RP)

The GP2RP played a crucial role in addressing the diverse needs and aspirations of marginalised communities, fostering inclusive and sustainable development at the gram panchayat level. As part of this initiative, the GP2RP plan was meticulously prepared and presented in the gram sabha across all gram panchayats. By engaging the entire community through the gram sabha,

the GP2RP ensured transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making in the development process. Through this platform, marginalised sections of society were empowered to voice their concerns, contribute to the planning process, and prioritise interventions that directly addressed their needs.

r)Exit Strategy

In December 2016, the completion of the MoU marked a significant milestone, signalling the formalisation of partnerships and commitments. Over the subsequent months, the NRO actively collaborated with UMED's district-level staff, forging strong partnerships with the LRGs. As part of this collaborative effort, the establishment of GPCC was achieved, providing an institutional framework for convergence within the intervention of Gram Panchayats. To institutionalise convergence efforts, VOCC and GPCC were formed in each panchayat, creating platforms for collaboration between PRIs and CBOs. Moreover, comprehensive capacity-building initiatives and governance manuals for UMED were completed by September 2016, enhancing the program's effectiveness, and ensuring long-term sustainability, the continuity and success of the program beyond the NRO's involvement. In addition, Trainers and Internal Mentors were identified and selected from the cadre resource pool of LRGs. They underwent extensive training on convergence to strengthen their capabilities before the NRO's withdrawal from the state. This initiative aimed to empower these individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to continue driving convergence efforts independently, ensuring the continuity and success of the program beyond the NRO's involvement.



MANIPUR



District

Imphal east
Tengnoupal

Background of the State

Nestled in the northeastern region of India, Manipur shares its borders with Mizoram, Nagaland, and Assam within the country and Myanmar internationally. Renowned as the 'Jewelled Land', Manipur derives its name from its distinctive geography, featuring an oval-shaped valley surrounded by nine hills. This area holds significant ecological and cultural value, boasting a diverse array of plant and animal species, along with a vibrant mix of cultural traditions. Bamboo farming is a prominent industry in Manipur, with over 3,000 square kilometres of land dedicated to its cultivation, making it one of India's largest bamboo-producing regions.

Politically, Manipur became a part of the Indian Union in 1949 and attained full statehood in 1972. Over the years, the state has undergone administrative changes, including the addition of seven new districts to the existing nine districts, to better address the needs of its diverse population. The state's geographical layout can be categorised into two main regions: the hill area and the valley area. The division between hill and valley areas reflects not only geographical disparities but also distinct cultural and ethnic compositions. The hill area encompasses five districts, namely Senapati, Tamenglong, Churachandapur, Chandel, and Ukhrul, while the valley area comprises four districts, including Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal, and Bishnupur. The hill districts cover approximately 90 per cent (20,089 sq. km) of the state's total area, leaving the valleys to make up the remaining 10 per cent (2,238 sq. km).

Manipur is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups, broadly classified into three main categories: the Meiteis, Kukis, and Nagas. While the Meiteis and Meitei Pangals (Muslims) constitute the majority population in the valley area, the hill areas are predominantly inhabited by Kukis and Nagas. This cultural diversity

adds depth and richness to Manipur's heritage, reflected in its traditions, festivals, and art forms. With its breathtaking landscapes, abundant biodiversity, and a tapestry of distinct ethnic communities, Manipur stands as an enchanting state offering a harmonious blend of natural wonders and cultural marvels.

The elevated economic role of women in Manipur finds its roots in the historical "Lallup system". Under this system, men were obligated to serve the king during times of need, leaving women to manage households and economic endeavours in their absence. Women assumed significant responsibilities, such as farming, cattle tending, weaving, blacksmithing, fishing, and kitchen gardening, to sustain their families. Despite the implicit burdens imposed by the lallup system, women in Manipur not only equalled but often surpassed men in fulfilling their economic and social duties. The settlement of various subgroups constituting the Meiteis in Manipur brought with them a complex religious system. Patriarchal values were introduced alongside the establishment of clan settlements, particularly as masculine labour became crucial in production, including taming wild animals and engaging in warfare.

The empowerment of women crucially hinges on their participation in decision-making processes, whether within households, communities, or governmental bodies. However, statistics from the 16th Lok Sabha Election in India reveal a stark gender disparity, with only 11 per cent of Members of Parliament (MPs) being women out of a total of 543 seats. Manipur has seen minimal representation, with only one-woman MP, belonging to the ST community, elected to date.

PRI system in the state

In Manipur, village-level administration has a long history dating back to early periods. In the villages of Manipur Valley, there were clubs named singlups or wood clubs, resembling

the panchayats of Bengal, under the sirdar or head of the village. Besides generally controlling village affairs, these singlups used to adjudicate petty disputes in the villages. In December 1896, the singlups were replaced by five-member panchayats.

The tribal villages in the hills as well as in the valley were administered by the village councils consisting of khunbu, luplakpa, and other village elders headed by Khullakpa. Each Loi which means “village” had its administrative structure, led by a village Chief known as the Khullakpa, who was supported by other village officials. These councils settled all the disputes of a civil, criminal, religious and social nature. These structures were under the authority of the King of Manipur, reflecting a decentralised system of governance. Notably, the composition and responsibilities of village officials varied from one village to another, depending on factors such as the village’s origin and occupation. Under the Manipur State Courts Act 1947 and the Manipur Hill Peoples Regulation of 1947, the village panchayats and the village authorities in the hill areas were confirmed with the powers of the laws Court for the administration of justice in criminal and civil cases .

The present Panchayat system in Manipur was introduced in 1960 under the provisions of the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh) Panchayati Raj Act of 1947, which was extended to this state. This initiative established a two-tier system of Panchayats in the Manipur Valley and Jiribam areas. The necessary rules were framed in 1962 to make applicable the various provisions of the Act. In January 1964, the first elections for constituting grama panchayats were held. In September 1964 a total of 227 gram panchayats and 43 Nyaya panchayats came into existence and started functioning.

In addition to the Panchayat system in the Valley and Jiribam areas, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act of 1971 was passed for the establishment of District Councils in the Hill Areas of the Union territory of Manipur. This Act mandated the division of the Hill Areas into autonomous districts, with each District Council functioning as a body corporate.

Following Manipur’s attainment of statehood in 1972, the state government enacted the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act of 1975. This Act provided for a three-tier structure of PRIs, consisting of Gram Panchayats at the village level, Panchayat Samitis at the block level, and Zilla Parishads at the district level, in addition to Nyaya Panchayats for judicial purposes. These legislative measures aimed to decentralise governance and promote local self-government in Manipur.

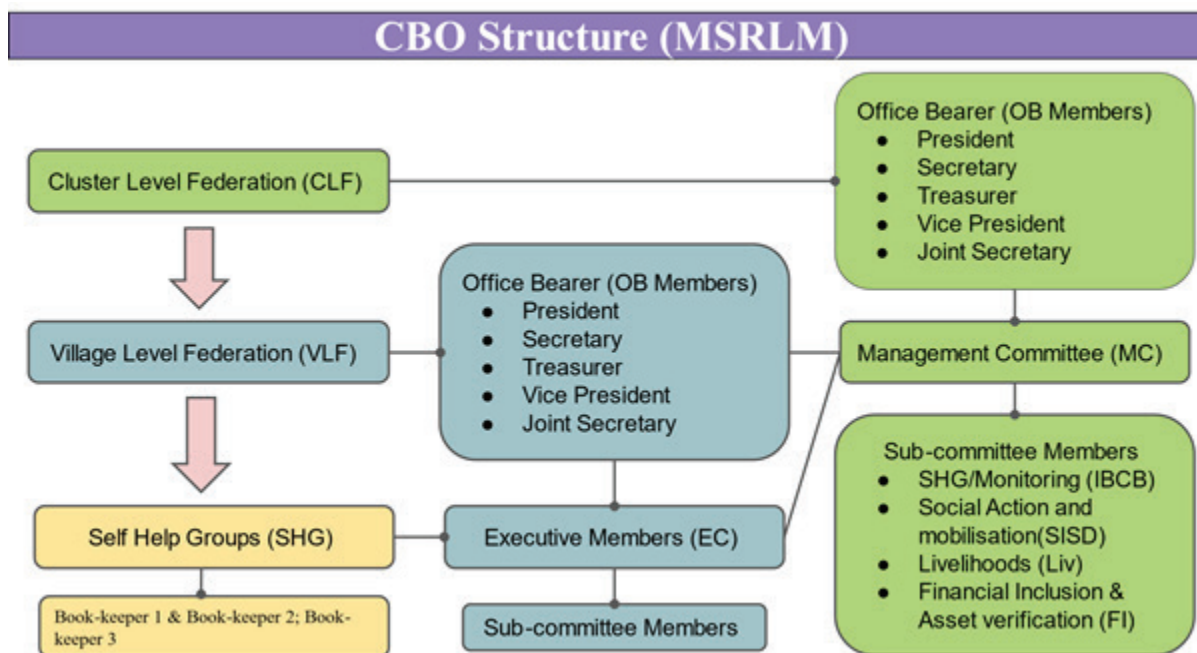
Aligning with constitutional amendments, particularly the 73rd Amendment Act to the Constitution of India, Manipur passed the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act in 1994. This legislation reinstated a two-tier system of Panchayati Raj, with Gram Panchayats at the village level and Zilla Parishads at the district level. These legislative developments underscored the ongoing evolution of local governance structures, emphasising the importance of grassroots democracy in shaping India’s political landscape and empowering communities at the grassroots level. The state election commission constituted under the new Act framed the Manipur Panchayati Raj (Election) Rules, 1995. The first elections to the Zilla Parishads (ZPs) at the district level and GPs at the village level were held in 1997. As provided in the Act, the State Finance Commission was constituted for both the panchayats and Nagar panchayats. The Act of 1994 was amended substantially in 1996.

⁴Village Authority (VA) areas are with a significant population of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the hilly regions, which are governed either by traditional inheritance or by the provisions of the Manipur (Village Authorities in Hill Areas) Act, 1956. It extends to the whole of the hill areas of the Union territory of Manipur. Every Village Authority shall be a body corporate by the name of the village for which it is constituted and shall have perpetual succession and a common seal and shall by the said name sue and be sued, with power to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and to contract and do all other things necessary for the purposes of this Act

Role of NRLM in the state

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project in Manipur, implemented by the Manipur State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM) in partnership with KS-NRO, began with the formalisation of collaboration through a MoU signed in December 2017. Before the commencement of field activities, a scoping study was conducted in August 2017 to assess the local context and needs.

Role of CBOs in the state



PRI-CBO convergence project

Field-level activities commenced in February 2018, starting with orientation sessions for VLF and SHG members. These sessions aimed to familiarise participants with the project objectives and their roles and responsibilities within the project framework. Following the VLF and SHG level orientations, interested candidates were provided with detailed information about the roles and responsibilities of LRG members in the project.

A comprehensive selection process was undertaken at the block level to identify suitable candidates for the LRGs. This process involved extensive discussions and interactions to gauge the candidates' understanding of community needs and their willingness to contribute to project activities. During these initial interactions, it became apparent that there was a strong demand from the community for the strengthening and enhancement of existing livelihood activities. This feedback from the community underscored the importance of tailoring project interventions to address local priorities and build on existing resources and capacities. By aligning project activities with community needs and aspirations, the PRI-CBO Convergence Project in Manipur aimed to foster sustainable livelihoods and empower local communities to drive their development processes.

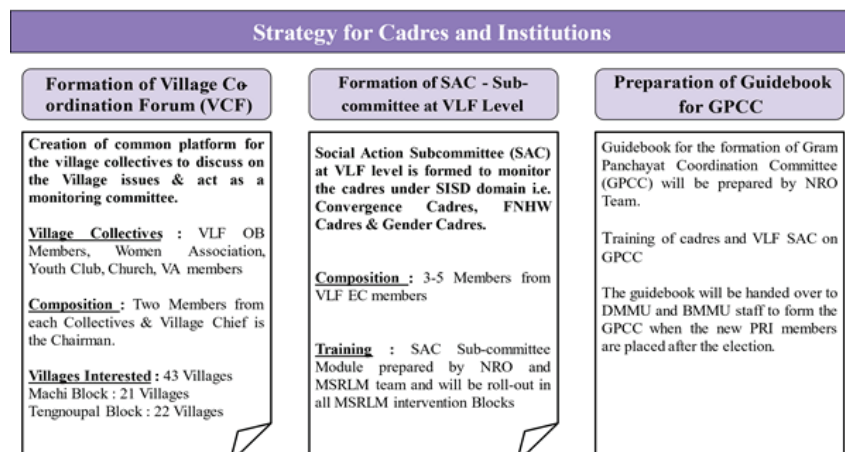
Strategy adopted in the state

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project in Manipur saw a structured and phased implementation across two main phases, initially targeting 12 pilot GPs in the Imphal East district and 33 pilot villages in the Tengnoupal district during Phase I. Buoyed by the positive outcomes of Phase I, the project expanded in Phase II to encompass 38 pilot GPs across four blocks in the Imphal East district and 67 pilot villages across two blocks in the Tengnoupal district. The project spanned over five years and three months, from February 2018 to March 2023.

A key focus of the PRI-CBO Convergence Project in Manipur was capacity building for various stakeholders, including PRIs, SHGs, and the community cadre. Local Resource Group/Convergence cadres and Internal Mentors, consisting of grassroots community members, were developed to lead project implementation at the Gram Panchayat and village levels. A total of 242 cadres and 33 Internal Mentors were trained and deployed in Manipur, equipped with the necessary skills to effectively carry out their roles.

The LRGs/Convergence cadres were evaluated and promoted as Internal Mentors, supporting new cadres in Phase II interventions. They played a crucial role in expanding the project and strengthening Village Level Federations (VLFs). The community cadres facilitated various activities such as adult education programs, awareness classes, health camps, and initiatives against drug addiction, alcoholism, and plastic pollution. They also facilitated collaboration between panchayat functionaries and SHG federations, bridging relationships and building ownership. Over five years, community cadres played a pivotal role in achieving the project's deliverables. They collaborated closely with various line departments and PRI members to enhance entitlements, improve livelihood access, and create new opportunities for the community. They also cultivated a positive mindset among villagers by promoting women's participation in Gram Sabhas, coordinating with PRIs for resource assessment, and encouraging the federations to take ownership in collaborating with PRIs for planning and monitoring community-led initiatives.

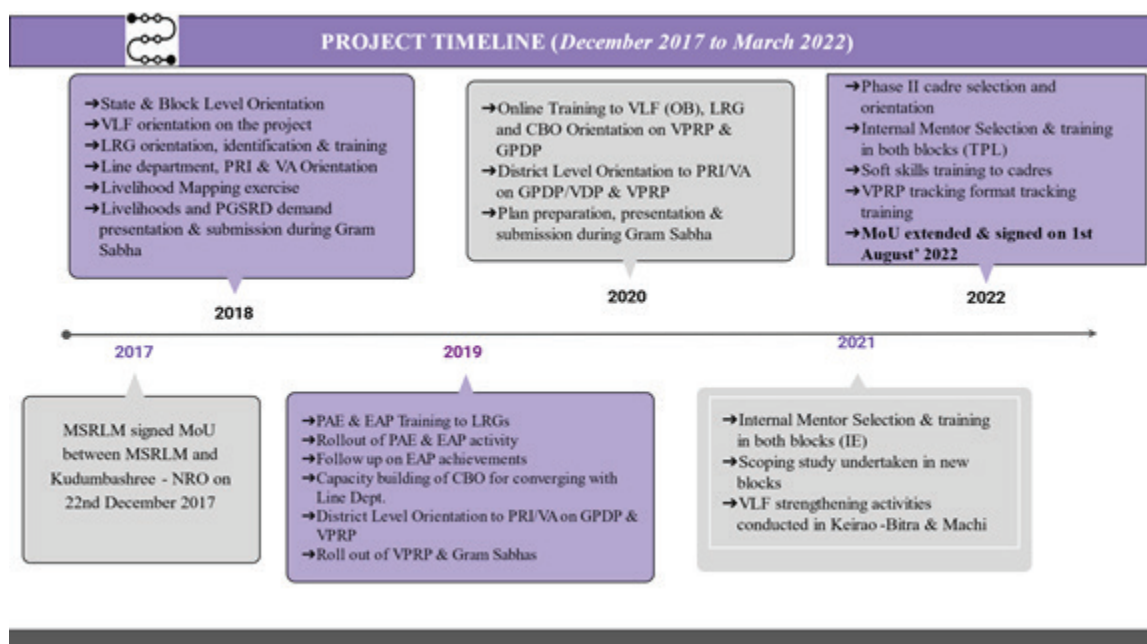
Institutional platforms, such as the Village Coordination Forum (VCF), were established in hill areas to improve coordination among active CBOs and Village Authorities (VAs). Additionally, the Social Action Sub-Committee (SAC) was strengthened and equipped in all VLFs across both districts, enabling effective planning, monitoring, and implementation of project activities. These efforts contributed to the long-term success of the project and enhanced collaboration between the community and PRIs/VAs, facilitating better decision-making and implementation of initiatives.



Profile of the intervention areas

	Phase I		Phase II	
	Imphal East	Tengnoupal	Imphal East	Tengnoupal
Total No of Blocks	1	1	4	2
Total No of GP/VA	12	33	37	111
Total No of CLF	NA	NA	8	4
Total No of VLF	35	23	108	51
Total No of SHG	367	165	1,451	212
Total No Cadres / LRG	102	124	66	75
Total No. of Internal Mentors			15	14

Activity timeline



VPRP 2022-23 roll-out (Phase 1)

Project Activity	April-June 2022			July-Sep 2022			Oct-Dec 2022			Jan-March 2023
	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J
Training of I Mentors on Project orientation module for PRIs/VAs of Phase II	A									
Orientation to PRI / VA members on Project	A									
Orientation to CLF managers on Project by NRO/ DMMU team	A									

Orientation and Training on ALMSC and VHSNC to Convergence Cadres and I-Mentors	M		
Survey on ALMSC and VHSNC at village level	M		
Training to IMs and Cadres on VLF strengthening module	M		
VLF Strengthening Activity for VPRP Follow-up (VLF consolidation → GP consolidation of demands)	M		
VPRP achievement / Convergence Mela		J	J
Orientation to CLF MC members on the Project by NRO/ DMMU team		J	J
Scheme training to convergence cadres		J	J
VPRP training at the State level			A
VPRP training at the district level (DMMU & BMMU Staff)			S
VPRP training at the district level (I-Mentor)			S
CLF Concept seeding on VPRP to MC Members - CLF Level			S
VPRP training on VLF level Concept seeding, PGSRD and SDP to convergence cadres			S
VLF Concept Seeding - VLF Level			S
District Level Line Department Orientation on VPRP			S
Preparation of PGSRD & SDP at VLF Level (Paper Format)			S
Preparation of PGSRD & SDP at GP Level (Paper Format)			S
2nd October Gram Sabha (Submission of PGSRD & SDP)			0
District staff training on the VPRP demo app			0
Consultative meetings Post Gram Sabha for integration of demands into GPDP			0

Convergence Cadres' training on VPRP demo APP	O
SHG level entitlement Plan preparation (Roll-out in app)	N
VLF level Entitlement plan consolidation and entry of PGSRD and SDP demands in app	N
GP level Entitlement plan consolidation and entry of PGSRD and SDP demands in the app	D
Training to DEOs on VPRP booklet printing	J

Key outcomes of the project

The PRI-CBO Convergence project in Manipur has significantly impacted women's participation and empowerment in the state. Before the project, women's involvement in Gram Sabha, the village-level governance body, was limited. Although social activist groups like Meira Paibi and Youth Clubs existed, they did not extensively collaborate with LSGs due to their activist focus. However, with the implementation of the PRI-CBO Convergence project and its capacity-building activities, awareness about governance increased, and women's interest in participating in village development issues grew. Meira Paibi, a social activist women's group, transformed its approach, starting to conduct rallies and actively engage in village development matters. A remarkable outcome of the project was that nearly 90 per cent of Meira Paibi members became SHG members, gaining awareness of their rights and entitlements through project activities.

The project facilitated collective action by leveraging the strengths of the LSG structure and conducting participatory exercises involving all stakeholders. This approach helped streamline and organise demands for

improved village development planning and implementation. Through enhanced collective participation and the utilisation of platforms like Gram Sabha and line departments, women empowered themselves and actively engaged in political action.

The project also transformed the perspective of Meira Paibis, as they began working more closely with the government. This shift in community stewardship was encouraging, as community women and other local representatives actively participated in the governance process. The GPs became more vibrant entities, thanks to the dynamic and enthusiastic community of women who actively collaborated with the PRIs.

The PRI-CBO Convergence project in Manipur witnessed significant success, largely due to its robust capacity-building exercises and effective communication strategies. The capacity-building exercises implemented as part of the PRI-CBO Convergence project were crucial in empowering PRIs to collaborate more effectively with the community. The project facilitated closer engagement between grassroots institutions and residents by equipping PRI members with the necessary skills and knowledge. This strengthened

communication flow facilitated the efficient dissemination of information and the collaborative planning of developmental activities.

The positive response received from stakeholders during the initial pilot phase of the project served as a strong motivator for further engagement and expansion. Witnessing the tangible benefits and impacts of the project, stakeholders were inspired to actively participate and support its objectives. This momentum propelled the project forward, leading to its extension and expansion into additional areas. Through its multifaceted approach to rural development, the PRI-CBO Convergence project addressed various challenges and needs within the villages. By fostering collaboration and partnership between different community groups, the project encouraged the formation of SHGs and federations at the grassroots level. These community-driven initiatives further empowered residents to take ownership of their development and work towards common goals.

The project's expansion and positive outcomes across both valley and hill regions underscore its multifaceted contributions to rural development. In the hill regions, Village Authorities were able to actively engage with local communities, leading to the establishment of creative partnerships and a notable shift in development approaches. This collaboration between Village Authorities and communities facilitated the identification of local needs and the implementation of tailored solutions to address them. Additionally, there was an observed increase in the participation of women in village assemblies in certain areas, indicating greater inclusivity and representation in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the project facilitated closer collaboration between State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs) and communities, particularly through programs like the MGNREGS. By reaching out to communities, initiating discussions, and prioritising their demands, SRLMs recognised the value of such partnerships in effectively addressing rural development challenges. This proactive engagement enabled SRLMs to better understand the needs and priorities of residents, leading to more targeted and impactful interventions.

Plan of Action: VPRP 2022-23 roll-out (Phase 1)

Activity	Imphal East		Tengnoupal	
	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
Training of I Mentors on Project orientation module for PRIs/ VAs of Phase II	15	15	15	15
Orientation to PRI / VA members on Project	37 GPs	37 GPs	63 VAs	63 VAs
Orientation to CLF managers on Project by NRO/ DMMU team	8 CLFs	8 CLFs	4 CLFs	4 CLFs
Orientation and Training on ALMSC and VHSNC to Convergence Cadres and I-Mentors	-	-	83	83
Survey on ALMSC and VHSNC at village level	-	-	97 Villages	74 Villages
Training to IMs and Cadres on VLF strengthening module	15 IMs and 174 cadres	15 IMs and 165 cadres	-	-

VLF Strengthening Activity for VPRP Follow-up				
(VLF consolidation → GP consolidation of demands)	Phase 1- 38			
Phase 2- 105	143 VLFs	-	-	
VPRP achievement /Convergence Mela	49 GPs	48 GPs	-	-
Orientation to CLF MC members on the Project by NRO/ DMMU team	8 CLFs	8 CLFs	4 CLFs	4 CLFs
Scheme training to convergence cadres	174	171	68	68
VPRP training at the State level	24	16	24	16
VPRP training at the district level (DMMU & BMMU Staff)	10	10	5	5
VPRP training at the district level (I-Mentor)	15	15	14	13
CLF Concept seeding on VPRP to MC Members - CLF Level	8 CLFs	8 CLFs	4 CLFs	4 CLFs
VPRP training on VLF level Concept seeding, PGSRD and SDP to convergence cadres	174	163	68	68
VLF Concept Seeding - VLF Level	145	143	60	60
District Level Line Department Orientation on VPRP	122	52	-	-
Preparation of PGSRD & SDP at VLF Level (Paper Format)	145 (VLFs)	143(VLFs)	97 (Village)	88 (Village)
Preparation of PGSRD & SDP at GP Level (Paper Format)	50 (VLFs)	48 (VLFs)	97 (Village)	88 (Village)
2nd October Gram Sabha (Submission of PGSRD & SDP)	50	47	-	-
District staff training on the VPRP demo app	10	10	15	13
Consultative meetings Post Gram Sabha for integration of demands into GPDP	50	46	-	-
Convergence Cadres' training on VPRP demo APP	174	169	68	68
SHG level entitlement Plan preparation (Roll-out in app)	1824	1459	404	374
VLF level Entitlement plan consolidation and entry of PGSRD and SDP demands in app	145	142	60	60
GP level Entitlement plan consolidation and entry of PGSRD and SDP demands in the app	50	47	109 (Village)	96 (Village)
Training to DEOs on VPRP booklet printing	2	2	2	2

PAE Achievement August 2019- December 2020

Sl. No	Entitlement	Without access	Eligible	Achievement	Achievement in %
1.	Job Card	165	143	136	95
2.	MGNREGS existing card	1,393	1,105	923	83.5
3.	SBM	532	407	122	30
4.	CMHT	1,384	1,212	802	66.2
5.	CMST	125	95	9	9.5
6.	PMMVY	56	56	56	100
7.	Ration Card	775	618	482	78
8.	Old Age Pension	1,189	833	478	57.4
9.	PMSBY	2,522	2,522	1,946	77.2
10.	PMJJBY	1,237	1,237	807	65.3

Livelihood Mapping Achievements Phase I

Sl. No	Activities	Particular	Convergence	Beneficiaries
1.	Training for enhancing livelihood activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Honey production -Fish processing training -Mushroom cultivation training -Livestock rearing training -Training on High-Value Floriculture -crop rotation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KVK • Veterinary • PMKVY Horticulture • Fishery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of GPs- 9 • Beneficiaries- 514
2.	Material and technical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Distribution of seeds- 2395 kg -solar dryer- 1 & water pump- 1 - Fertiliser, sprayer -Mushroom: cutting machine, plastic bags - Honey box- 17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KVK • Horticulture • Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of GPs- 12 • Beneficiaries- 24 VLFs

		-Honey bees	• KVK	• No of GPs- 5
3.	Livestock	-Poultry	• Veterinary	• Beneficiaries- 59
			• Horticulture	

		-Prevention of Dengue Fever	• PHC	• No of GPs- 6
		-Eye check-up camp	• JNIMS	• Beneficiaries- 732
4.	Health Camps	-Prevention of skin diseases		
		-General Health camp		
		-Gynaecology camp		

		VLFs organised enrolment camps for
5.	Enrolment camps	Old Age pension- 17, CMHT- 122, Widow pension- 4, Ujjwala- 28, CMST- 2, PMJJBY-10, PMSBY- 43

Enrolment camps in convergence with Departments - Phase I

Sr. No	Activities	Beneficiaries
1.	Claiming back their MGNREGS Job card	No of GPs- 6 1701 Job cards were returned
2.	Yarn card and weaving card enrolment	No of GPs- 3 Enrolment of- 200
3.	SSY saving account	No of GPs- 3 Enrolment of- 48
4.	Framer card PM Kisan card enrolment	No of GPs- 2 Enrolment of- 229
5.	CMHT enrolment camps	No of GPs- 10 Enrolment of- 1031
6.	Bima enrolment camps	No of GPs- 5 Enrolment of-578

VPRP: Achievements– (2019-20)

Achievements	No.
VLF office	2
StreetLights	446 across 5 GPs
Ponds	53 across 5 GPs
Drainage	66 across 7 GPs
Livestock shed (Poultry and cattle)	63 across 3 GPs
Water tank	52 across 3 GPs
Community hall	2 in 2 GPs
Crematorium	9 across 3 GPs
Culvert	3 in 1 GP

VPRP: Entitlement Demand Achievements

VPRP: Entitlement Plan (2021-22)

Schemes	Tengnoupal District			Imphal East District		
	Demands	Achievement	Achievement %	Demands	Achievement	Achievement %
Job Card	192	49	25.6	249	185	75
Pensions under NSAP	511	53	10.3	1608	910	57
SBM	1017	40	4.0	945	183	19.3
Health Card	1044	568	54.4	2283	1836	80.4
Ration Card	348	317	91	473	420	89
Ujjwala	609	249	41	1178	1169	99
PMAY-G	814	174	22	1198	150	13
PMMVY	36	34	95	84	51	61

VPRP: Entitlement Plan - 2022-2023

Schemes (Demand)	Tengnoupal	Imphal East	Schemes (Demand)	Tengnoupal	Imphal East
MGNREGS	213	696	Ujjwala	1207	2507
Old Age Pension	443	1301	Saubhagya	251	457
Manipur Old Age Pension	59	205	PMSBY	1344	4692
Disability Pension	42	171	PMJJBY	1332	4298
Widow Pension	146	682	PMAY -G	421	4115
Health Card	1783	2127	SBM	1284	4122
Ration Card	296	1001	CMHT	815	3076
			CMST	41	61

VPRP: Livelihoods Demand Achievements

VPRP: Livelihood Plan (2020-21)

Types of Demands	Imphal East		
	Demands	Achievement	Achievement %
Seeds	520	204	39.23
Fertilizers	455	30	6.59
Trainings (Farming)	265	122	46.04
Motor pumps	21	6	28.57
Livestock	1627	23	1.41
Livestock Sheds	1522	63	4.14
Training (Animal Husbandry)	1339	57	4.26

VPRP: Livelihood Plan (2020-21)

Types of Demands	Imphal East		
	Demands	Achievement	Achievement %
Seeds	707	658	93.06
Livestock (Chicks+Piglets)	1522	796	52.2
Weaving Machine	16	14	87.5
Micro Nutri Fertilizers	1355	1342	99
Spray Machines	142	125	88
Trainings (Mushroom, silk rearing, dying colour, candle making)	1043	1043	100

VPRP: Public Goods, Services and Resource Development Plan

VPRP: PGSRD Plan - 2020-21

Type of Demands	Demands	Achievement	Type of Demands	Demands	Achievement
Roads	49	49	Plantations	6056	1101
Drainage	297	98	Handpumps	57	11
Streetlights	1712	437	Dustbins	374	54
Community Hall	12	8	Community Toilet	36	15
Borewell	30	4	Land development	31	12
Culvert	38	7	Retaining wall	21	18
Agri bund	1	1	Irrigation canal	22	19
Plantation	6056	1101	Market	10	9
River Bunds	26	2	VO Office	18	7
Waiting Sheds	11	8			

VPRP: PGSRD Plan - 2022-2023

Public Goods Demands	Tengnoupal	Imphal East
Anganwadi Centers	43	18
Community Toilet	213	112
Roads	103	168
VLF Office	25	51
Market Shed/Bazaar	17	32
Drainage	131	511
Street Lights	1624	2003
Dustbins	691	309
Waiting Shed	81	52
Water Tank	120	28
Culvert	231	76

Services & Resource Development Demands	Tengnoupal	Imphal East
Staff Nurse	-	7
Teachers	3	22
Mosquito nets	-	302
Mid day meal provisions	-	2
Health Sub-centre	-	5
Plantation	2	5406
Fencing	-	19
Piggery and poultry Shelters	-	32
Ponds	-	78
River Bunds	2	18
Pond stairs	-	9

VPRP: Social Development Plan demands achievements

VPRP: Social Development Plan (2021-22)				
Social Issues Identified	Tengnoupal District		Imphal East District	
	No. of plans from GPs	Plans initiated	No. of plans from GPs	Plans initiated
Drug Abuse	1	1	24	17
Typhoid Awareness	1	1	29	10
Alcoholism	1	1	30	11
Plastic Pollution	-	-	24	24
Adult Literacy	1	-	3	2
Mobile Misuse	1	1	11	3
School Dropouts	-	-	3	3

VPRP: Social Development Plan – (2022-23)

Social Issues Identified	Tengnoupal District	Imphal East District
Drug Abuse	23	58
Alcoholism	8	23
Plastic Pollution	2	29
Adult Literacy	10	6
Mobile Misuse	18	4
School Dropouts	1	2



Glimpse of the rollout

- 

1 Staff training on VPRP and application
- 

2 Training of cadres on VPRP & App use
- 

3 Plan Preparations Roll-out (App)
- 

4 2nd October Gram Sabha
- 

5 Booklet submissions and follow up

Conclusion

The Convergence initiative in Manipur, driven by the collaborative efforts of the SRLM and Kudumbashree, has achieved substantial progress and notable outcomes, aligning effectively with its objectives. It has exemplified the successful amalgamation of modern and traditional governance systems, promoting inclusivity and sustainable development. Adapted to fit Manipur's unique governance structure, the project successfully engaged a diverse array of stakeholders, including women federations, traditional governance institutions, civil society organisations, and various line departments.

Intensive training programs and capacity-building initiatives empowered stakeholders, fostering enhanced collaboration and a comprehensive approach to community development. The project significantly encouraged the active participation of women in local governance, promoting inclusivity and empowerment. This increased participation has led to more gender-sensitive decision-making processes.

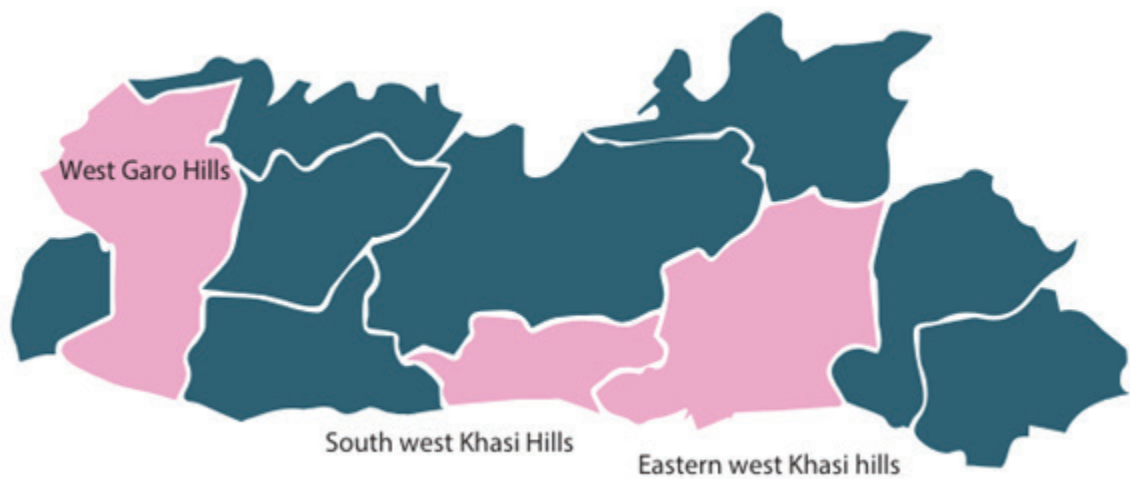
Exposure visits to Kerala provided valuable experiential learning opportunities, inspiring stakeholders in Manipur to implement effective strategies observed in Kerala. This cross-learning experience has been instrumental in adopting best practices tailored to the local context. The organisation of convergence camps and the bridging of gaps between line departments and the community ensured improved access to various entitlements and services. This facilitated the community's ability to avail themselves of government schemes and benefits more effectively. The initiative focused on enhancing livelihood opportunities through targeted agricultural support and training programs. These efforts have helped improve income levels and economic stability within the community. Through targeted awareness campaigns and community interventions, the project effectively addressed critical social issues, promoting a healthier and more informed community. Partnerships with citizen committees such as the Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committees (VHSNC) led to significant improvements in Anganwadi Centres and broader community health and welfare. These collaborations fostered a holistic approach to community development. By integrating modern governance practices with traditional systems, the project fostered inclusive and sustainable development across Manipur. This integration ensured that development initiatives were culturally relevant and widely accepted by the community.

The project's accomplishments in empowering stakeholders, enhancing livelihood opportunities, and improving access to services underscore its impact on community development in Manipur. The initiative serves as a model for other regions aiming to achieve holistic and inclusive rural development.





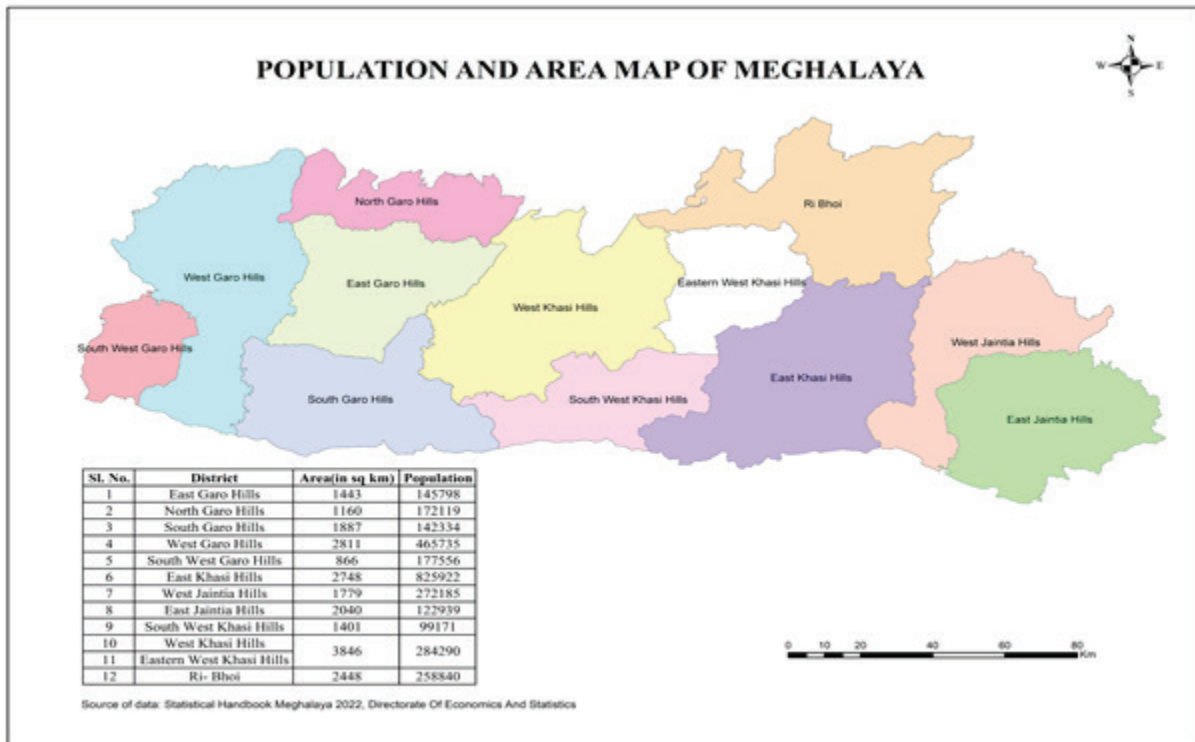
MEGHALAYA



District

West garo hills
South west khasi hills
Eastern west khasi hills

Attaching State map for referral:



Background of the state

Meghalaya's governance structure is deeply intertwined with its commitment to preserving the interests and cultural identity of its diverse tribal communities. The special provisions within the Indian constitution reflect this dedication to safeguarding their rights. The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution applied to the Garo Hills, United Khasi Hills, and Jaintia Hills in 1950, paved the way for the establishment of three autonomous district councils: the Khasi Autonomous District Council, Jaintia Autonomous District Council, and Garo Autonomous District Council. These councils serve as local self-government bodies entrusted with the administration and development of their respective regions, playing a crucial role in upholding the unique identities, customs, and traditions of the tribal communities.

In addition to the autonomous district councils, Meghalaya also embraces traditional governance systems deeply rooted

in the cultural heritage of its Indigenous communities. The state is home to four major tribes – Khasi, Garo, Jaintia, and Pnar – each with its distinct governance structure. These traditional systems contribute significantly to maintaining social order, resolving disputes, and preserving the rich cultural heritage of the tribes. Together, the autonomous district councils and traditional governance systems form the backbone of Meghalaya's governance framework, reflecting the state's commitment to inclusive and culturally sensitive governance.

Within the Khasi tribe, traditional governance is structured around the Syiemship institution. The Syiem, acting as the paramount chief, holds considerable authority and handles the welfare of the people. This position is hereditary and follows the matrilineal line. Each Syiem governs a specific territory called the Hima. Within this framework, a hierarchical system exists, which includes the Dorbar Hima (State Council), Dorbar Raid (Regional Council), and

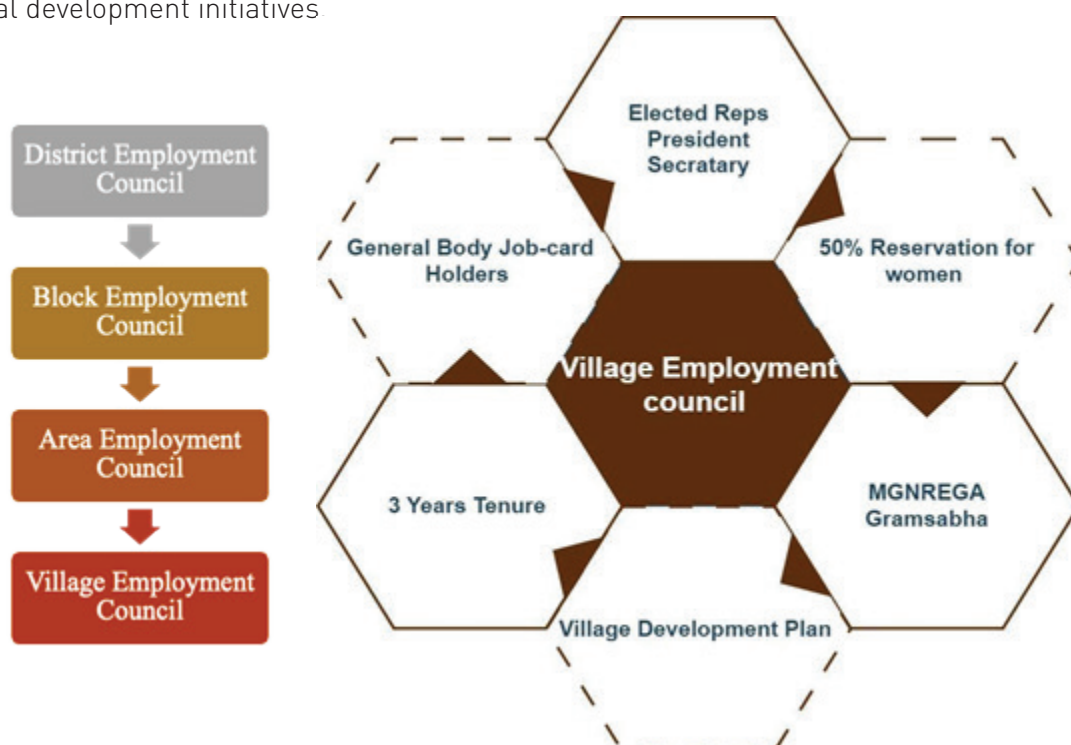
Dorbar Shnong (Village Council). These councils, composed of local elders and representatives, play vital roles in decision-making, conflict resolution, and community welfare at their respective levels.

In the Garo region, traditional governance runs under a single-tier hereditary system. The Nokma, selected from the matrilineal clan, serves as the village head and holds significant authority in local affairs. The Nokma's responsibilities include keeping peace, settling disputes, and overseeing community well-being. This position is passed down hereditarily and symbolises the authority vested in the lineage of the youngest daughter within the family.

Local Governance in the State

In terms of rural development, Meghalaya faces unique challenges due to its exclusion from Part IX of the Indian Constitution, which pertains to PRIs. Meghalaya's approach to rural development involves the establishment of Village Employment Councils (VECs) at the village level, Area Employment Councils (AECs) at the cluster of villages level, Block Employment Councils (BECs) at the block level, and District Employment Councils (DECs) at the district level. The state has established its institutional arrangements to effectively implement programs such as MGNREGS, aimed at providing employment opportunities in rural areas. These councils are empowered to implement programs within their respective jurisdictions.

The VECs play a crucial role in grassroots governance. They include both male and female heads of households and run through a democratic process for the election of their president. This is a departure from past practices where the headman of the traditional local governance structure automatically assumed leadership roles. By promoting democratic decision-making and inclusivity, these councils empower local communities to actively take part in and shape the implementation of MGNREGS programs, thereby fostering greater ownership and accountability in rural development initiatives.



Indeed, Meghalaya's governance structure, with its autonomous district councils, traditional governance institutions, and institutional arrangements for MGNREGS implementation, is unique and multifaceted. These institutions serve crucial roles in preserving cultural identities, promoting development, and ensuring effective local governance in the state. Meghalaya's approach, which blends the strengths of both modern governance structures and traditional institutions, reflects its commitment to safeguarding community interests, fostering sustainable growth, and preserving its rich cultural heritage. It was within this dynamic context that the VC-VEC-VO Convergence project was initiated in Meghalaya to drive inclusive and sustainable development across the state.

SRLM in the State

The establishment of the Meghalaya State Rural Livelihood Society (MSRLS) in 2011 marked a significant step towards implementing the NRLM in the state. As the nodal agency for NRLM, MSRLS plays a crucial role in promoting SHGs and fostering their development across Meghalaya.

CBO in the State

The SHGs in Meghalaya operate within a three-tier federated structure, consisting of 10-15 members and hold weekly meetings, emphasising savings and financial management. While initially, savings per member were low, there has been a gradual increase over time. However, the COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges to livelihoods and affected SHG loan repayment rates, highlighting the need for resilience-building measures.

Despite some SHGs actively engaging in income-generating activities and keeping records, overall participation stays limited. There is ample scope to strengthen SHGs' involvement in income generation and

convergence activities, as well as improve their financial management practices.

Through capacity-building initiatives and support, MSRLS aims to enhance the socio-economic well-being of communities in Meghalaya, empowering SHGs and promoting inclusive development across the state.

The formation of VOs represents a crucial step in the CBO structure in Meghalaya. VOs are established with 10-20 SHGs coming together, with two representatives from each SHG forming part of the VO. Due to the sparsely populated nature of Meghalaya's villages, VOs may encompass SHGs from multiple villages, particularly in blocks like Mawkyrwat, Rongram, and Dalu. This means that SHGs from multiple villages unite to form a single VO. However, in Mairang, VOs are formed regardless of the number of SHGs, incorporating those from the same hamlet.

While the formation of CLFs is still ongoing in the state, most CLFs are newly established. Each CLF comprises six office bearers, including the President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and Bookkeeper. Training sessions conducted by the Block Mission Management Unit (BMMU) have equipped CLF members with the necessary knowledge and skills about their functions, roles, responsibilities, and vision.

PRI-CBO convergence project

The Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS), in collaboration with the KS-NRO, implemented the PRI-CBO Convergence Project in a pilot phase from August 2021 to August 2022. The initiative was renamed the VC-VEC-CBO Convergence Project (Village Council- Village Employment Council- Community-Based Organisation) to align with Meghalaya's unique governance structure under Schedule VI of the Constitution of India. This adaptation was crucial for tailoring the project's objectives and strategies to the

specific context of Meghalaya.

The primary objective was to establish a strong connection between community institutions and local governance structures, fostering inclusive and participatory local development. The project involved a diverse range of stakeholders, including women's federations, traditional governance institutions like the Village Councils (VC) and Nokma, Village Employment Councils (VECs), and various line departments. The project was piloted in 80 villages across 4 blocks in 3 districts.

Profile of the intervention areas

District	Block Name	Total Villages	Total VOs	No. of LRGs developed	No. of SHGs	Name of Intervention Cluster
Eastern West Khasi Hills	Mairang	16	16	25	237	Saindurlang CLF
South West Khasi Hills	Mawkyrwat	18	14	29	133	Tehsonglang CLF
West Garo Hills	Dalu	32	25	59	262	Krimkro CLF
	Rongram	19	09	20	89	Bilcham CLF

Strategy of the state

The strategy in Meghalaya aimed to adapt to the state's unique governance systems and tailor the project accordingly. The KS-NRO team conducted a reconnaissance visit and engaged in discussions with the Meghalaya State Rural Livelihood Society to develop a customised strategy for the state. The project, aimed to bring LSGs (Rangbah Shnong / Nokma and VEC) and CBOs together to achieve comprehensive village development.

One major entry point was tapping into the MGNREGS plan preparation by VECs. NRO focused on developing the abilities of SHG members to systematically find MGNREGS work and present them before the Gram Sabha. The project also emphasised the importance of Gram Sabhas as inclusive participatory planning platforms, although resistance from traditional village heads (Nokmas) in West Garo hills posed a challenge. Overall, the strategy aimed to ensure community participation, sustainability, and successful implementation of the project in Meghalaya.

Activity timeline

Project Activity	Sep-Dec 2021				Jan-March 2022			April-June 2022			July-Sep 2022		
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
SRLM Staff orientation at DMMU and BMMU level	S												
CLF orientation	S												
Orientation to VC / Nokma and VECs	S												
VO familiarisation orientation	S												
LRG selection and capacity building		O											
MGNREGS Plan preparation			N										
Gram Sabhas				D									
VPRP Preparation and Submission				D									
Panchayat Apprenticeship Program				D									
Departmental Convergence				D									S
Social Development Initiatives						F	M	A	M	J	J	A	
Exit workshops							M	A	M	J	J	A	

Key outcomes of the project

1. Developing capacity of stakeholders

The project placed a strong emphasis on capacity building to ensure active participation and meaningful contributions from various stakeholders. Orientation sessions were designed for CBO members, including the LRG and VO members, to familiarise them with the project's objectives and processes. These sessions employed ice-breaking activities and experience-sharing to create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, fostering rapport and trust among participants.

Activities were organised to introduce the concept of the convergence project, engaging participants in problem-solving scenarios and helping them identify relevant stakeholders and approaches. This exercise enhanced their understanding of collaborative efforts and the importance of engaging with line departments. Similarly, representatives of Village Employment Councils (VECs) and traditional governance institutions were provided with project orientations, which highlighted their roles and responsibilities in contributing to inclusive development. These sessions encouraged discussions, addressed concerns,

and facilitated mutual understanding between the project team and stakeholders.

A special focus was placed on strengthening the VOs to ensure project sustainability as it neared its end. The VO strengthening activity aimed to reinforce subcommittees, connect CBO members with the project's objectives and emphasise the monitoring and evaluation of the VPRP.

Interactive activities, such as "Haq ka Dabba," helped participants understand the importance of collective action in addressing poverty. This activity laid a foundation for VOs and subcommittees to continue their efforts independently, fostering collaboration and a sense of ownership for long-term success.

2. Local Resource Groups as community cadre for enhancing participatory governance

Capacity building of the LRGs was a fundamental aspect of the project's implementation, recognising them as the foot soldiers crucial for success. Mentors played a vital role in providing continuous handholding support and guidance to the LRGs, enabling them to effectively conduct project activities and evolve as competent leaders within their communities. The capacity-building process included interactive training sessions and engaging activities.

During the first training, LRGs were introduced to the KS-NRO and the goals of the VC/VEC-VO Convergence initiative. They gained an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, including the SHG network, Village Council, Village Employment Council, and Line departments. Emphasis was placed on harmony, collectivism, and unity among LRGs, stressing the need for collaboration between VO and VC-VEC for holistic village development.

Over one year, LRGs received comprehensive training on topics such as MGNREGS

mapping, planning, and plan submission, VPRP plan preparation, follow-up activities, and strengthening of VOs. These efforts aimed to equip LRGs with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to contribute effectively to project goals and ensure the long-term sustainability of the VC/VEC-VO Convergence initiative.

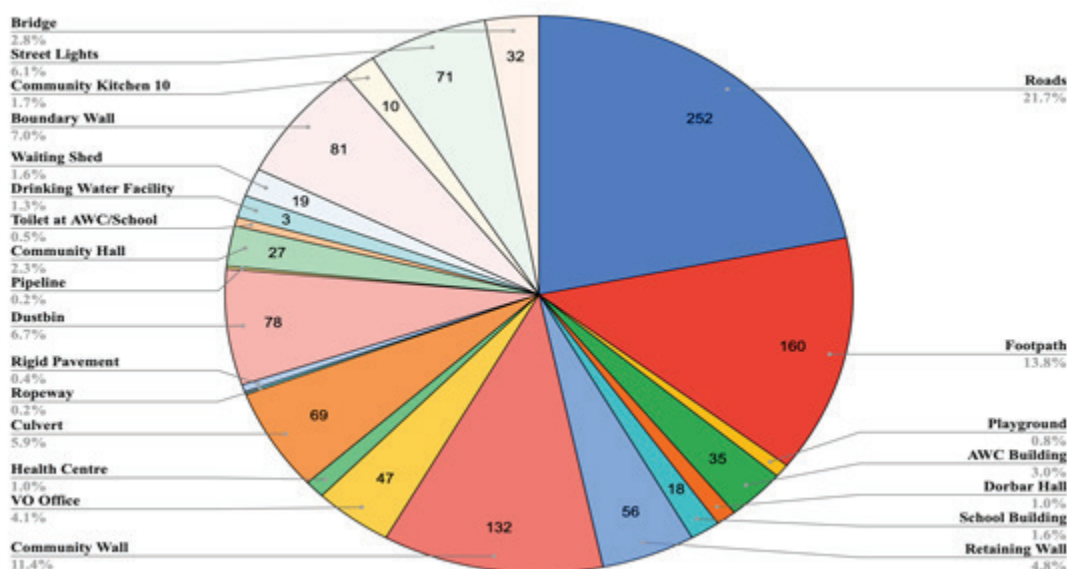
3. Enhanced participation of CBO in local governance

The project has significantly contributed to enhancing women's participation in local governance, particularly in Gram Sabhas, which marks a notable shift towards gender inclusivity and empowerment. Previously, women's representation and involvement in decision-making processes were minimal. Their presence in Gram Sabhas was primarily as job card holders, with limited opportunities to influence decisions. With the project's strategic interventions, Women's Federations and VO Members have taken on active roles in presenting MGNREGS plans during Gram Sabhas. This active participation has enabled women to make their voices heard and exert their influence in local decision-making processes. This transformation has been facilitated by collaborative efforts between the LRGs, VO members, and VECs. Through collaborative efforts, the project has successfully mobilised the community, fostering a supportive environment for women's participation, and a more inclusive and empowered community. This increase in women's participation not only enhances the effectiveness of local governance but also ensures that the voices and needs of women are adequately represented and addressed.

Extensive awareness campaigns, rallies, and digital initiatives have encouraged and celebrated women's participation in Gram Sabhas, fostering empowerment and a sense of pride, unity, and ownership among village members. Experiences of LRG members, VO

members, residents, and local governance representatives underscore the positive impact of increased women’s participation in local governance, emphasising their crucial role in shaping community development and progress.

Composition of demands placed by the community



4. Visit to Kerala – A pathway for learning!

The PAP has been instrumental in the project’s success, providing valuable learning experiences and inspiring participants to implement effective strategies in their communities. Visits to Kerala allowed representatives from Meghalaya to see the collaboration between LSGIs, line departments, and the CBO network firsthand. Interactions with officials and visits to Gram Panchayat offices and CBOs provided insights into low-cost initiatives and project implementation. Real-life case studies enriched their understanding and provided practical knowledge for adaptation in Meghalaya. Following the visits a workshop was conducted for sharing of experiences and learning, fostering idea exchange and issue identification. Participants developed action plans, igniting their determination to address challenges and drive positive change in their villages. The workshop’s success lies in the commitment to follow through with action plans, turning visions into tangible actions for community betterment. Exposure visits and workshops have built stakeholder ability and promoted collaborative efforts toward inclusive and sustainable development.

5. Departmental convergence

The implementation of departmental convergence has been pivotal to the success of the project, addressing geographical challenges and raising awareness about available schemes and programs. This has bridged the gap between line departments and the community, fostering effective collaboration. Orientation sessions and meetings with departments have enhanced understanding of their services, facilitating collaboration. The VPRP has categorised demands and presented them to relevant departments, ensuring targeted action. Stakeholder workshops

have promoted dialogue and follow-up actions, enhancing communication and coordination. Convergence Camps have been instrumental, providing doorstep service delivery and integrating the supply and demand sides of projects. These camps have not only fulfilled VPRP demands but also fostered knowledge exchange and awareness. Mobilisation efforts and community ownership have led to significant participation and enrolment in schemes. The initiative has proven effective collaboration between line departments and the community, improving access to services and community well-being.

6. Access to entitlements

Accessing entitlements is crucial for the success of the VPRP project, but several challenges hindered communities' ability to do so. Geographical constraints and limited awareness about available schemes were major obstacles. To overcome these challenges, convergence camps were organised, bringing multiple departments together in one location to enhance accessibility and enrolment in various programs. These camps yielded significant achievements, including the issuance of job cards, Aadhaar cards, health cards, and applications for pensions, gas connections, and sanitation facilities. By strengthening the connection between line departments and the community, these initiatives ensured effective service delivery and increased access to entitlements for the beneficiaries. Achievements of the convergence camp initiatives conducted across four intervention Blocks are presented below:

Entitlements	Achievements (No.)
Job cards issued under MGNREGS	427
Aadhaar Cards	1,258
Health Cards (Ayushman Bharat)	734
Old-age pension	175
Widow pension	21
Disability pension	18
Ujjwala Gas Connection (Applications Submitted)	154
PMSBY	426
PMJJBY	262
SBM (IHHL) (Applications Submitted)	391

7. Better livelihood opportunities

In Meghalaya, addressing livelihood demands in the agricultural sector has been a key focus of the project. Specific requests for agricultural support were channelled through the VPRP to the relevant department. In response, aid in the form of seeds, manure, soil testing, equipment, and training programs has been provided. However, the extent of support may vary between different blocks based on their unique characteristics and requirements.

For instance, in the intervention block of Rongram, the absence of a block-level agriculture office has resulted in the coordination of agricultural activities through the District Headquarters in Tura. The primary crops cultivated in this block are tea and areca nut, which may have different needs compared to other blocks. As a result, the demand for seeds and farm machinery may be relatively lower in this block compared to others.

The Bilcham Community Livelihood Federation (CLF), in collaboration with the Agriculture Department and Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA), organised a training program on mushroom cultivation in Dalu Block. The aim was to create livelihood opportunities for beneficiaries by imparting them with the necessary knowledge and skills for successful mushroom cultivation. Through comprehensive training sessions and the distribution of mushroom seeds, 139 beneficiaries received training, with 23 of them already initiating their mushroom cultivation enterprises. Additionally, the Bilcham CLF organised the UDYAM Registration Mela in partnership with the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises Department. This event facilitated the registration of over 30 entrepreneurs, granting them official recognition and access to various support programs.

8. Working towards addressing social issues

The process of concept seeding and discussions within VO meetings catalysed identifying and understanding various social issues affecting the community. Through guided discussions, VO members were able to recognise the significance of issues such as drug and alcohol addiction, adult illiteracy, child marriage, domestic violence, mobile phone addiction among children, and adolescent unawareness. By acknowledging these issues, VO members transitioned from passive observation to active intervention, paving the way for community-driven solutions.

Social Development Plans were formulated at the VO level, delineating specific activities and timelines to address the identified issues comprehensively. These plans were executed with the collective effort of VO members, line departments, and other stakeholders, emphasising awareness creation, empowerment, behavioural changes, and inclusivity. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were put in place to ensure the

effective implementation of activities, leading to tangible progress in social development.

Various initiatives were undertaken as part of the Social Development Plans, including health awareness sessions, health camps, educational programs, environmental conservation efforts, social inclusion initiatives, and welfare programs for women and children. Through these activities, the community actively engaged in addressing pressing social concerns, fostering a culture of proactive participation and collective action for positive change.

The Adult Literacy Campaign initiated in Dalu Block aimed to address the need for literacy and education among community members. The campaign's focus on providing reading and writing classes, promoting community participation, and raising awareness about literacy underscores its comprehensive approach to addressing the issue. With the support of a volunteer teacher, the training program spanned five weeks, during which beneficiaries received instruction and practised fundamental skills such as alphabets and numbers.

The campaign's success, monitored by Local Resource Group Cadres, was evident in its expansion to two additional villages, highlighting its positive impact and the potential for further growth through literacy. This expansion reflects the community's recognition of the importance of literacy and its commitment to promoting education within its ranks. Through collective efforts, the community has played a pivotal role in advancing social development in Dalu Block and beyond, laying the groundwork for continued progress and empowerment through education.

9. Working with committees

The establishment of citizen committees such as the ALMSC and the Mothers & Cultivation Committee (MCC) in Mawkyrwat Block has

heralded positive transformations in both the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and the broader community. Drawing inspiration from successful AWC models observed during an exposure visit to Kerala, community members took proactive ownership of their AWCs, catalysing initiatives to address longstanding challenges.

Comprising community representatives, village leaders, Anganwadi teachers, and VO members, these committees embarked on a collaborative journey to tackle issues such as inadequate infrastructure, nutritional deficiencies, and non-functional medical equipment. Through collective efforts, they undertook refurbishment projects, painting AWC premises, and setting up nutrigardens to promote access to nutritious food.

Moreover, the formation of monitoring and support committees, coupled with targeted training sessions, equipped community members with essential skills and knowledge to sustainably manage and enhance AWC operations. This grassroots-led approach underscores the pivotal role of community engagement and collaboration in fostering sustainable development and efficient service delivery within AWCs. By fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility, these citizen committees are instrumental in driving positive change and fostering inclusive growth within their communities.

Conclusion

The VC-VEC-VO Convergence project in Meghalaya, a collaborative effort between MSRLS and Kudumbashree, has achieved remarkable progress and significant outcomes, aligning with its core goals. Tailored to suit Meghalaya's distinctive governance structure, the project effectively engaged a diverse array of stakeholders, including women federations, traditional governance institutions, and various line departments. Through targeted capacity-

building initiatives, stakeholders have been empowered, fostering enhanced collaboration and a comprehensive approach to community development.

A notable achievement of the project is the promotion of women's active participation in local governance, thereby fostering inclusivity and empowerment within communities. Exposure visits to Kerala have provided invaluable learning experiences, inspiring the adoption of effective strategies in Meghalaya. Departmental convergence and convergence camps have played a crucial role in bridging the gap between line departments and the community, resulting in improved access to entitlements and services.

Moreover, the project has successfully enhanced livelihood opportunities through agricultural support and training programs, contributing to economic empowerment at the grassroots level. Social issues have been effectively addressed through targeted awareness campaigns and community interventions, further bolstering the overall well-being of communities. One of the project's key successes lies in its collaboration with citizen committees, leading to positive transformations in the Anganwadi Centres and the broader community. These achievements underscore the successful integration of modern and traditional governance systems, paving the way for inclusive and sustainable development across Meghalaya.

Mizoram



District

Mamit
Serchhip

Background of the State

Mizoram, located in the northeastern part of India, is characterised by hilly terrain and abundant forest cover, contributing to its rich biodiversity. Until 1972, Mizoram was part of Assam; however, it attained statehood in February 1987, as granted by the Government of India. The state shares international boundaries with Myanmar and Bangladesh and is bordered by Tripura, Manipur, and Assam. Despite its relatively small size, Mizoram comprises eight administrative districts and 26 blocks. The Village Councils in Mizoram, serving as local governance bodies, collaborate closely with various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in their efforts to address community needs and promote socio-economic development. Local development initiatives within villages are primarily overseen by VCs.

Mizoram is home to several ethnic groups, with dominant tribes including the Lushai, Ralte, Hmar, Paithe, and Pawi. As per the 2011 census, the state's population stood at 11.2 lakh. Education is a significant focus in Mizo society, with a literacy rate of 91.58 per cent, ranking among the highest in the northeastern states and second only to Kerala at the national level.

Local Governance in the State

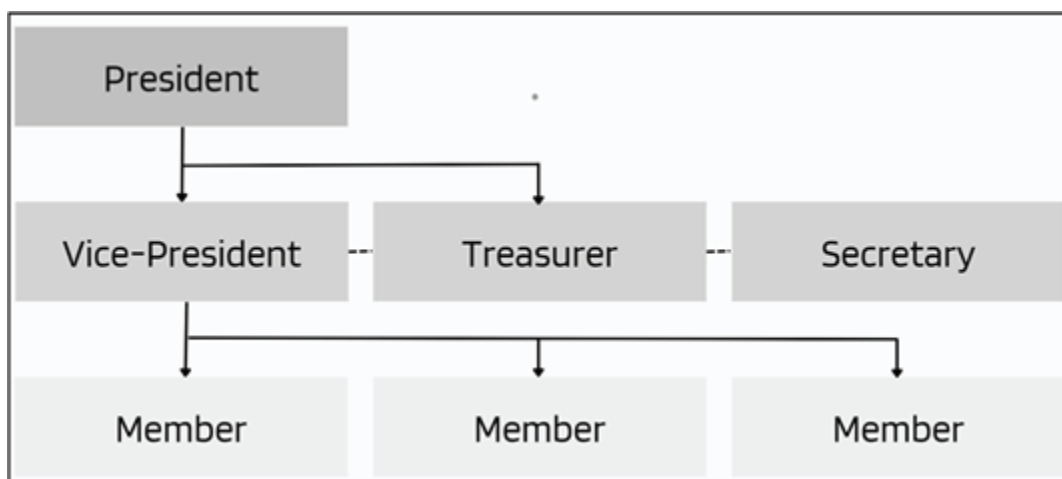
The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Acts, 1953 was enacted to set up Village Councils as an institution of village administration. A village council can be established for one or more villages as notified by the State Government, with the provision to dissolve or merge any village council as per the strength of the village population or as seems necessary for administrative purposes. In case of mass migration from any village, the village council in the village can be dissolved and administered under the nearest village council. The following table contains the composition details of Village Councils based on the number of households.

The following table contains the composition details of Village Councils based on the number of households.

Sl No	Number of Household	Village Council Members	Seats reserved for women
1	Up to 200	3	1
2	More than 200 but less than 500	5	1
3	More than 500 but less than 1000	7	2
4	More than 1000	9	3

be a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer and a Secretary in each Village Council forming the executive body. If there are only 3 members in any Village Council, the Vice President shall also act as Treasurer (As amended in 2014).

The President and Vice President are elected through indirect election from among the members of the village council itself whereas the Secretary is appointed by the State Government.



A village council has the authority to allot and distribute land within its village boundaries for 'Jhum' in accordance with the State Government. ('Jhum' cultivation or Jhumming; more commonly known as "Slash and Burn" or shifting cultivation, is a practice of cultivation where a plot of land is cultivated for a season and left fallow for some years. In this type of cultivation, the land is used on a rotational basis. Thus, the need for allocating land for cultivation among the villagers arises.)

The council can enforce 'Hnatlang' as deemed necessary in the interest of the public. 'Hnatlang' is defined as "a common service for the common good of the villagers which the residents of the village are to render."

Furthermore, being the local administrative body, the council is also responsible for conducting and taking decisions in the Gram Sabha. A minimum of 3 (three) Gram Sabhas, with a quorum of 10% of the registered works, government schemes and planning for village development are the functions of the council. The Village Council President presides over the Gram Sabha, supervising development from helping the government in implementing development programs, and it is also responsible for the regular social audit. The council has the power to raise funds for public utility, collect property tax as prescribed by the State Government and realise registration fees for each litigation within its jurisdiction. Further, it can assist during any epidemic or administer relief and rehabilitation for people during calamities as well as assist the State Government in the public distribution system.

Additionally, a 'Village Council Fund' is created where any collection made for public utility authorised by law other than District revenue and taxes. The President shall be the treasurer of this fund and records of collection shall be kept by the Secretary. This account remains open for inspection by any subscriber to the collection.

SRLM in the State' rather than 'Role of NRLM in the state'

Mizoram State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MzSRLM) was launched on 22nd April 2013 to initiate the implementation of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). Currently, MzSRLM is operating in 11 districts. The PRI-CBO Convergence Project was implemented in partnership with Kudumbashree NRO, starting in the Serchhip district in the year 2018 and scaled up in the Mamit district in the year 2021, the Pilot Project lasted till March 2023.

CBO in the State

Several NGOs operate in the state. Civil society organisations, such as The Young Mizo Association (YMA), The Mizo Hmeichhe Insuikhawm Pawl (MHIP), and The Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP), play a pivotal role in village administration and socio-economic development. The YMA represents the youth, MHIP focuses on women's issues, and MUP caters to the elderly. These organisations operate across villages, collaborating with Village Councils to address poverty and community concerns, making them indispensable stakeholders in project implementation across the state.

PRI-CBO convergence project

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project was initiated in Mizoram, with technical and implementation support provided by KS-NRO. In October 2018, the Mizoram State Rural Livelihood Mission (MzSRLM) and the KS-NRO signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The project commenced as a pilot in the two Rural Development (RD) Blocks of Serchhip and East Lungdar within the Serchhip District.

From 2021 to 2023, the project was expanded to the Mamit district, specifically in 41 Village Councils across three Blocks: Reiek, West Phaileng, and Zawlnuam. To facilitate the effective implementation of project activities, a pool of Internal Mentors was deployed from the resource blocks of East Lungdar and Serchhip.

Profile of the intervention areas

The project commenced with a scoping study conducted in August 2018, followed by the engagement of mentors and professionals in the field to carry out various activities. Stakeholder meetings and several orientations were undertaken to ensure effective project initiation. By January 2019, the selection and training of LRGs were completed at the Block level.

Year	District	RD Blocks covered	VC(2018-19)	VC (2020-21)	TOTAL VCs
2018-2023	Serchhip (Phase 1)	East Lungdar	12	0	12
		Serchhip	25	02	27
		Reiek	0	08	08
2021-2023	Mamit (Phase 2)	West Phaileng	0	11	11
		Zawlnuam	0	22	22
		Total	05	37	43

Strategy adopted by the state

1.Capacity building of PRIs and CBOs

Given the unique administrative setup in Mizoram, the project adopted a different strategy to achieve its goals. The VCs represent a distinctive administrative structure rooted in the traditional practices of the Mizos, resulting in governance at the village level differing from the PRI system.

Due to the direct control of Line Departments by the District/State, VCs require more authority in implementing developmental projects. Recognising this, the project deemed it essential to

provide additional support to VCs in executing various developmental activities.

As part of the PRI-CBO Convergence initiative, VCs received regular training on the project's activities. They were integrated into every community initiative alongside the CBOs. Additionally, VCs were trained in the preparation of the GPDP and the functioning of the Gram Panchayat Planning Facilitation Team (GPPFT). Moreover, they received orientation on the significance of the VPRP and the role played by CBOs.

2. Collaboration and coordination between PRI and CBO

As a result of the initiatives taken by the cadres and CBOs, there was improved collaboration between the VCs and CBOs in carrying out many community-led initiatives and implementing public works. CBOs received training and handholding support for approaching the VCs and presenting their initiatives. Simultaneously, VCs were regularly engaged by the Mentor RP and the cadres. This consistent effort by the Mentor RP and the cadres eventually yielded positive results, ensuring effective collaboration between the CBOs and the VCs in many intervention villages.

Various programs and camps were organised in the villages with the help of CSOs, and the VCs responded positively during the preparation of the VPRP by the CBOs. This collaborative model was used extensively throughout the project stages. It served as a powerful tool for bringing together various stakeholders and engaging Local Governments. Social issues identified by SHGs during their weekly meetings were brought up to the VOs, which then presented these issues to the VCs for action.

3. Engagement with local governance

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project aims to strengthen local governance by enhancing

community participation in the decision-making process and ensuring transparency and accountability of Local Governments.


In Mizoram, this goal was pursued by using the Gram Sabha as a tool for active community participation. Initially, people did not realise the importance of the Gram Sabha, and female participation was minimal. The project specifically focused on increasing women's participation in the Gram Sabha. CBOs were encouraged to attend the Gram Sabha and regularly obtain information from the VC. The special Gram Sabha sessions on the VPRP and the GPDP provided powerful platforms where CBOs could voice their demands to the local government.

After submitting VPRP demands, CBOs were trained to use a tool for tracking achievements. This was done through the EAP, which helped CBOs monitor the progress of VPRP accomplishments. This tracking mechanism served as a motivational factor and enhanced their role in ensuring active citizen participation in local governance.

CBOs also engaged with the VC through regular stakeholder meetings, inviting participants to discuss the status of VPRP achievements. These sessions included participation from the Village Council, Line Department staff, Civil Society Organisations, and prominent citizens. The CBOs took an active role in organising these meetings and facilitating dialogue among stakeholders about the challenges of implementing various government schemes. By using simple tools, CBOs improved their engagement with the local government and ensured a transparent service delivery mechanism.

4. Strengthening institutional mechanisms

In Mizoram, the PRI-CBO Convergence initiative aimed to strengthen various institutional platforms and ensure the active participation of CBOs. As part of this initiative, the concept of



the Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee (GPCC) was developed and envisioned as the GPPFT under the GPDP. This project focused on enhancing the institution by building the capacity of its members.

Additionally, other institutions such as the ALMSC were formed or revived in collaboration with the ICDS. Members of these committees received training on their roles and responsibilities and were provided with ongoing support to initiate various community-led interventions.

Project Activity	Jan-March 2021			April-June 2021			July-Sep 2021			Oct-Dec 2021			Jan-March 2022			April-June 2022			July-Sep 2022			Oct-Dec 2022			Jan-March 2023		
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Refresher training cum orientation for the cadres and CBO federation	[Orange shaded area]												[Light blue shaded area]														
Innovative Initiatives such as awareness programs on issues identified by the Village Organisation (VO), Health-related camps, Free clinic services, and a COVID vaccination drive.	[Orange shaded area]												[Light blue shaded area]														
Thematic integration of VPRP demands with MzSRLM and Convergence with concerned departments' Health and livelihood-related activities	[Orange shaded area]												[Light blue shaded area]														
Innovative activities such as legal awareness among the community, insurance camps, financial literacy programs, etc	[Orange shaded area]												[Light blue shaded area]														

Developing cadres, known as Internal Mentors, for the scale-up blocks

Capacity building and Training for Internal Mentors

Facilitation and preparation of the Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP) and integration of plans into the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) in both the pilot and scale-up blocks

Learning service through exposure visit to Kerala

Roll out of Project activities using tools such as Participatory Assessment of Entitlements (PAE), Entitlement Access Plan (EAP), and preparation of Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP)

Strengthening of Gram Panchayat Planning Facilitation Team (GPPFT) and utilisation of the democratic platform, such as Gram Sabhas, by the women collectives

Roll out of VPRP across all pilot blocks

Innovative activities such as adult literacy classes, free health check-ups, and plastic-free village sessions were arranged.

Formation/Activation of ALMSC and VHSNC on a pilot basis

LRG Training was conducted in all the blocks of Mamit

Training of the VPRP CRP and Livelihood CRP across all the pilot blocks

Nutrigarden was developed in Anganwadi across all blocks

Training for Nutrigarden and Soap making conducted by KVK

Meeting with the Project Officer, State Planning Board regarding the localisation of SDGs

Key outcomes of the project

a. Developed pool of community resource persons:

A total of 142 LRGs and 14 Internal Mentors were developed under the project. These Internal Mentors were selected from among the LRGs in Serchhip District and subsequently deployed in Mamit District. Currently, the Internal Mentors possess a thorough understanding of the project activities and the overarching objectives, enabling them to provide handholding support to the cadres in implementing the project at the grassroots level. The LRGs in Serchhip District have been capacitated on the project's activities and objectives. They are equipped to facilitate the project at the community level, while the LRGs in Mamit have been trained in preparation for VPRP. The details of the development of the community resource pool are as follows:

Development of Local Resource Groups (LRG)

Name of the Block	Number of LRGs developed
East Lungdar	50
Reiek	27
Serchhip	12
West Phaileng	13
Zawlnuam	40
Total	142

b. Establishment of a platform for convergence

In the intervention districts, the CBO engages with the VC by voicing community concerns and supporting the council in addressing various village issues. This engagement strengthens institutions like the Gram Panchayat Planning Facilitation Team (GPPFT). Concurrently, various citizen committees, such as the Anganwadi Level Monitoring and Support Committee (ALMSC) and the Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC), have been formed or maintained to ensure active citizen participation in the local governance system.

c. CBO as an institution for service delivery

The CBO network has effectively engaged with Line Departments, serving as the critical interface between the community and these departments. This engagement is facilitated using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools to gather ground-level data and present it to the Line Departments. Consequently, these departments leverage the collected data to distribute Central and State-sponsored schemes to the community. By utilising simple yet effective tools such as PAE and EAP, or VPRP, the CBO ensures that service delivery reaches the poorest of the poor. The details of VPRP-related activities and outreach to the schemes through the project are mentioned below in the table:

Overall achievement through VPRP

Particular	Target	Achievement
Number of Job Cards	160	100
Work identified under MGNREGS	1,592	1,028
Access to Entitlement	5,446	1,747
Access to Public Goods, Services, and Resource Development	1,639	377
Livelihood intervention	6,504	2,049

Preparation of VPRP

#	Serchhip	East Lungdar	Reiek	West Phaileng	Zawlnuam
VO, where Concept seeding was conducted	27	15	8	10	22
VC oriented on VPRP	27	12	8	10	22
SHG prepared the Entitlement and Livelihood Plan	435	243	104	136	380
VO prepared the PGSRD plan and Social Development Plan	27	15	8	10	22

Preparation of PAE and EAP

#	Serchhip	East Lungdar
VO oriented on PAE	27	15
SHG Completed PAE	273	201
VO consolidation	25	15
VO completed EAP	25	12
VC members oriented on convergence tools	62	30
VO shared EAP with VC	25	12
VO presented the EAP demand list in Gram Sabha	22	12
Sharing of PAE and EAP data with BMMU	1	1

Conclusion

The progress of the PRI-CBO Convergence project in the state of Mizoram reflects a remarkable journey of transformation and empowerment. Over the years, the community has gradually taken ownership of the project-led activities, marking a significant milestone in the sustainability of the project impact. The project's success can be attributed to the active participation and commitment of the VCs, CBOs, departments, and members of other civil society organisations. Through comprehensive training programs, all stakeholders have developed the necessary skills and knowledge to drive local governance and decision-making processes. As a result, there has been a notable increase in the community's ownership of the project activities, with a stronger emphasis on local priorities and needs.

This shift towards ownership signifies a more sustainable and community-led approach to development. With continued dedication and collaboration, the PRI-CBO Convergence project in Mizoram will continue to make a lasting impact, fostering inclusive development and empowering communities to shape their future. The continued success of the PRI-CBO Convergence project in Mizoram will depend on maintaining this collaborative spirit and adapting to evolving community needs. By reinforcing the foundations laid through training and capacity building, and by nurturing the sense of ownership within the community, the project can ensure long-term sustainability and positive outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Odisha



District

Sundergarh
Nuapada
Kalahandi
Gajapati
Koraput
Malkangiri

Background of the state

Odisha, a state on the eastern coast of India, is bordered by Jharkhand and West Bengal to the north and northeast, the Bay of Bengal to the east, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to the south, and Chhattisgarh to the west. Historically, the region that corresponds to present-day Odisha has been known by various names, including Utkala (or Okkala), Kalinga, and Odra Desha (or Oddaka). These names, which appeared in ancient literature as designations for tribes, were known to the ancient Greeks as Kalingai and Oretes and eventually became associated with specific territories.

Before India gained independence in 1947, Odisha's capital was Cuttack. The present capital, Bhubaneswar, was subsequently built near the city's historic temples in the east-central coastal plains. In late 2011, the state's name was officially changed from Orissa to Odisha. The state covers an area of 60,119 square miles (155,707 square km) and has a population of 41,947,358 according to the 2011 census.

Odisha is divided into 30 administrative units called districts, which are organised under three different revenue divisions to streamline governance. The Collector & District Magistrate is responsible for collecting revenue and maintaining law and order in each district. Each district is further divided into sub-divisions, governed by a Sub-Collector & Sub-Divisional Magistrate. These sub-divisions are further divided into tahasils, headed by a Tahasildar. Odisha comprises 3 divisions, 30 districts, 58 sub-divisions, 317 tahasils, and 314 blocks.

PRI system in the state

Odisha Gram Panchayat Act was enacted in the year 1964. Subsequently, the 3 tier system

institutions were introduced. The Panchayat Raj system in Odisha operates as a three-tier structure, comprising the Zila Parishad at the district level, the Panchayat Samiti at the block level, and the Gram Panchayat at the village level. The primary objective of devolving the structure is to eradicate poverty and uplift the standard of living of people in the rural area and transform the socio-economic of the rural populace. The Odisha State Finance commission was constituted in 2018 for identifying the financial needs of the local bodies, Allocation/ Distribution of grant in aid and ensuring the distribution of resources between urban and rural local bodies. Moreover, the special provision for schedule areas (PESA) is also enacted as per the 73rd constitutional amendment act 1993.

At the hamlet or the village level, Government of Odisha in the PRI Act mandates the conduct of Palli Sabha and the Gram Sabha at the Gram Panchayat. It also gives special provision to women for contesting the election at all three levels. There is 50% reservation for women. Moreover, a reservation is for the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. The Panchayati Raj system provides equal opportunity to people belonging to different strata. Emphasising into the composition of the Gram Panchayat, It is headed by the Panchayat president called Sarpanch, Vice president, Naib and the Ward members. The functionaries of the Gram Panchayat are Executive officer, Rozgar Sewak and Night watcher. Similarly, at the panchayat samiti the representatives consist of chairperson who are the elected members from the gram panchayat, vice chairperson, panchayat samiti members, are the representation from each revenue village and the standing committee. The administrative officials to the Panchayat samiti are Block development officer, Assistant Engineers, Panchayat Executive officers. Similarly at the District level, The head of the

district is Chief development officer (CEO) and Executive officer, the project director to the District Rural Development Agency (DRDAs) and line department representatives for planning the development works.

The Odisha government has taken significant steps in decentralising the Panchayat Raj System through its departmental establishment. However there are several challenges to be addressed such as increase of awareness among the political representatives, increase the financial resources and implementing measures to improve accountability and transparency.

Role of NRLM in the state

The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in the State of Odisha was restructured in 2013. It was designed to be a highly intensive programme with a key focus on an intensive approach of human capital and material resources in order to mobilise the poor into community owned institutions, promote financial inclusion and strengthen their livelihood. In this spectrum, the Government of Odisha launched the Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM). The OLM aligned with the objective of NRLM, to reach out to all the poor families, link them to sustainable livelihood opportunities and nurture to come out of poverty. Through dedicated support structure and establishment of institutions at various levels, OLM aimed at empowering women and reducing poverty.

Odisha Government has been taking steps to improve the implementation of NRLM in the states by providing training to NRLM officials, increasing the outreach of the NRLM programmes, strengthening partnership with government departments.

Role of CBOs in the state

Odisha has a long history of SHG network with its initiative of Mission Shakti, and efforts taken by various government departments (WCD, Watershed etc.) and Non-governmental organisations to promote women collectives. TRIPTI was another such project which was implemented by the Government of Odisha with the support of world bank to promote SHGs and their federations.

PRI-CBO convergence project

In February 2014, the Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) entered into a formal partnership with KS-NRO to implement the PRI-CBO Convergence Project. KS-NRO provided technical support and deployed nine Mentor Resource Persons to assist with the project's implementation in Odisha. The PRI-CBO Convergence Project was piloted across 11 panchayats in four blocks of four districts in Odisha.

During the project period, it was observed that Mission Shakti, the Odisha Tribal Empowerment & Livelihoods Project (OTELP), TRIPTI, the Watershed Department and various other agencies promoted SHGs and federated them into CLFs at the village

level and GPLFs at the Gram Panchayat level. OLM adopted the same structure as promoted by Mission Shakti. While Mission Shakti aimed to federate SHGs up to the district level (District Level Federation), OLM focused on federating SHGs up to the Gram Panchayat level (Gram Panchayat Level Federation). It was in this context that the PR –CBO Convergence project was initiated in Odisha.

⁷TRIPTI, a project supported by the World Bank, aimed to further promote SHGs and their federations (CLFs and GPLFs) in 10 districts of Odisha.

Profile of the intervention areas

The selection of districts for the convergence pilot project considered the geographical, demographic, and socio-economic characteristics. The selection of blocks within these districts was based on the status of existing SHGs, CBOs, and PRIs, including those developed by Mission Shakti, TRIPTI, OLM, and other departments.

Among the pilot blocks, Balisankara is the designated resource block, while the other three blocks—Gumma, Malkangiri, and Dharmasala—are considered intensive blocks. Dharmasala is a TRIPTI block where significant work has already been done on SHG formation and federation at the village and Gram Panchayat levels. Three of the pilot blocks—Gumma, Malkangiri, and Balisankara—are in the Fifth Schedule Area and are primarily inhabited by tribal populations.

Profile of the intervention areas

Name of District	Name of Block	Gram Panchayats (No.)
Jajpur	Dharamsala	4
Sundargarh	Balisankara	2
Malkangiri	Malkangiri	2
Gajapati	Gumma	3

Strategy adopted in the state

The strategy implemented for the PRI-CBO Convergence Project in Odisha included several key elements.

- ◆ Firstly, the state encouraged and facilitated regular interactions between SHGs and PRIs. This was achieved by organising meetings, workshops, and joint planning sessions to enhance collaboration and information sharing.
- ◆ Secondly, the strategy focused on increasing women's participation in governance through awareness campaigns, training programs, and capacity-building initiatives. These efforts specifically targeted women within SHGs and PRIs to empower them and encourage active involvement in local governance.
- ◆ Thirdly, another crucial aspect of the strategy was the development of a local community cadre to support PRIs and CBOs. This cadre was trained and equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement convergence projects, mobilise communities, and monitor progress.
- ◆ Lastly, comprehensive capacity-building programs, workshops, and training sessions were conducted to empower stakeholders at various levels, including PRIs, SHGs, and the community cadre. These programs aimed to enhance their understanding of convergence initiatives and strengthen their skills.

Key outcomes of the project

1. Developing the capacity of stakeholders

Capacity building of stakeholders was a major focus of the project, with a range of training activities conducted to enhance their knowledge and skills. The project began with a Training of Trainers on the scoping study to equip trainers with the necessary expertise. Subsequently, training sessions were conducted for LRGs, providing them with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively carry out their roles.

Elected representatives of Panchayats also underwent training to enhance their understanding of their responsibilities. CBOs and PRIs were oriented on PAE to ensure they were equipped to support the implementation of entitlement schemes. LRGs and PRIs received specific training on various schemes to enable them to effectively implement and monitor them. CBOs underwent orientation sessions to align them with project objectives and strategies. Additionally, a (Panchayat Apprenticeship Project) PAP was conducted in Kerala to provide hands-on experience and skill development opportunities. The details of these are provided in the table given below:

Sl. No	Activity	Target Group (No.)	Level/ Location
1	Training of Trainers on the scoping study	20	State
2	Training of LRGs	128	Block
3	Training of Elected Representatives of Panchayats	132	Block
4	Orientation of CBOs	8,176	Panchayat
5	Training of LRGs on PAE	106	Block
6	Orientation of CBOs and PRIs on PAE	8,356	Panchayat
7	PRI one-to-one capacitation	122	Panchayat
7	Training of LRGs and PRIs on schemes	103	Block
8	Orientation of CBOs	8,900	Panchayat
9	Panchayat Apprenticeship Project in Kerala	115	Kerala

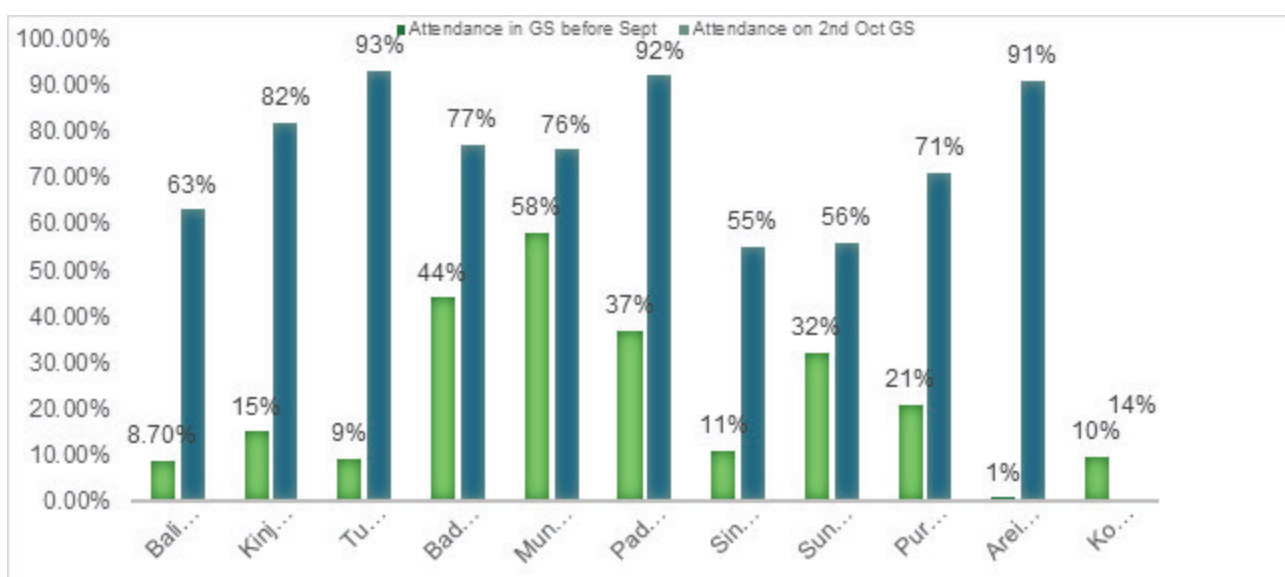
2. LRG as community cadre for enhancing participatory governance

The LRG comprised individuals who acted as facilitators for project activities at the grassroots level, offering support and guidance to both the SHG network and the representatives of the PRI. These LRG members were selected from the local community and underwent training to enhance their knowledge and skills in various project-related areas. They received continuous mentorship from Kudumbashree Mentor Resource Persons to ensure their continuous development. 3-5 LRGs were identified per panchayat. These LRGs were given training on poverty, the structure of panchayat, the importance of convergence and how to facilitate convergence between PRIs and CBOs. The detail of the local resource group members at various stages of the project is given below:

Sl. No	Name of the Block	Pilot GPs	identified at the start of the Project	LRG members			active as of Dec. 2016	Attended the selection process for Internal Mentors/Trainers	Selected as Internal Mentors/Trainers
				involved in PAE	involved in EAP	involved in GP2RP			
1	Dharamsala	4	42	34	34	34	34	NA	NA
2	Balisankara	2	28	23	23	23	23	21	10
3	Malkangiri	2	25	17	17	17	17	16	7
4	Gumma	3	41	35	35	35	35	29	8
Total		11	136	109	109	109	109	56	25

3.Improved participation of women in local governance

In the initial phase of the Convergence project, the participation of SHGs and women in local governance was limited and passive, as indicated by field-level assessments. However, there has been a notable increase in participation after three years of continuous support and capacitation, focusing on entitlements, government schemes, and the importance of participation in local governance. Capacitation was a major focus throughout the project, targeting all SHG women in pilot GPs, and it went beyond classroom training to incorporate a process-based approach. Through regular orientation and extensive mobilisation efforts, there has been a manifold increase in women’s participation in democratic platforms such as Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha, both in terms of quantity and quality. The graph below illustrates the trend of women’s participation in Gram Sabhas over the past three years.



The graph depicts the increment of women’s participation in Gram Sabha for the last two years. Data before September was taken from the scoping study. (September 2014 and October 2016)

The Convergence project placed a significant emphasis on capacitating CBOs, the local community cadre, and Gram Panchayat institutions to foster democratic values and participatory planning. This capacitation is not achieved solely through classroom training but by utilising community-driven tools such as PAE, EAP, and GP2RP to enhance knowledge and build capacity within the community. The increased participation of women and the improved quality of Gram Sabha proceedings are direct outcomes of this process-oriented capacitation.

4. Improved Internal Governance

Odisha has a strong foundation in promoting women collectives through its Mission Shakti initiative and efforts by government departments such as WCD and Watershed, along with non-governmental organisations. TRIPTI, a project supported by the World Bank, aimed to further promote SHGs and their federations (CLFs and GPLFs) in 10 districts of Odisha. Regular capacitation of SHG members, ongoing support from local cadre and mentor RPs from Kerala, helped build community confidence and enabled them to work more effectively, taking on wider responsibilities. SHGs and federations began meeting regularly, providing support to SHGs, and engaging in livelihood initiatives. Another focus area was capacitating sub-committees of CLFs and GPLFs. To revive these sub-committees, volunteers were identified for each scheme (five volunteers per CLF) to carry out the work. This strategy emphasised the importance of having sub-committees and enabled volunteers to facilitate entitlements for various beneficiaries successfully.

5. Evolution of CBO as an institution

In all eleven Gram Panchayats, SHGs and federations actively participated in various social activities for village development. These activities included distributing Public Distribution System (PDS) items, addressing

drinking water issues, organising anti-liquor rallies, aiding pregnant women, and addressing women-related concerns. They also served as members of different committees at the village level. In Balisankara block, SHG women played a vital role in mobilising women for immunisation campaigns, supporting and monitoring Anganwadi centres, protesting harmful practices like gambling and alcoholism, and organising annual block-level anti-liquor rallies.

Although SHG members were part of committees such as Jaanch Committee, Gaon Kalyan Samiti (GKS), and Matru Committee in the pilot Gram Panchayats, their role was minimal. However, through extensive mobilisation, process-based capacitation, and ongoing support from the local community cadre, the collectives were able to initiate local development initiatives. SHG federations emerged as stronger collectives, actively advocating for women's issues and ensuring that public institutions acted. In a significant development, the concerns raised by SHGs regarding women's issues were discussed in the Gram Sabha meetings of the pilot Gram Panchayats, with the GPLF president allocated time to speak. This collective effort led to GPLFs being given office spaces within the panchayat premises, providing them with a platform for their activities.

6. Internal governance of Panchayat

In Odisha, Panchayat elections are held regularly every five years, resulting in a significant number of elected representatives becoming Sarpanchs and ward members. However, it has been observed and shared by villagers during Field Level Assessment (FLA) that many ward members do not actively participate in Panchayat meetings. Some ward members expressed frustration, as they felt their concerns and issues were not given proper attention, with certain individuals or government officials dominating the meetings.

This demotivated many ward members from attending Panchayat meetings.

Over the three years of the project, there has been a notable shift towards more fruitful and qualitative Panchayat meetings. Several factors have contributed to this positive change. Firstly, there began a regular interface between CLFs and ward members. CLFs consult ward members before initiating any action, considering their inputs and addressing their issues. This increased accountability creates a positive pressure to discuss these matters in Panchayat meetings. Additionally, women have been actively submitting their plans and demands, which are followed up on regularly. This proactive engagement has made Panchayats more responsive and active.

As a result of these efforts, Panchayats are experiencing a sense of fulfilment in their work and gaining confidence through the strong support base they have established. These developments have contributed to a positive transformation in the dynamics of Panchayat meetings, fostering greater inclusivity and effectiveness.

7. Panchayat's engagement with CBO

Field-level assessments in Odisha revealed that instances of collaboration between Panchayats and CBOs were rare. These institutions tend to operate separately, with little knowledge about the presence and functioning of SHGs within many Gram Panchayat GPs.

However, the PRI-CBO Convergence project has been implemented in 11 pilot GPs, and positive indicators have emerged from these areas. Both SHGs and PRIs are now coming together regularly and taking joint initiatives. In most GPs, there has been a positive response from both sides, facilitating regular interface and collaboration between SHGs and PRIs.

8. Improvement in transparency and accountability

The regular interface between SHGs and Panchayats had brought about notable changes. Firstly, Panchayat offices started having regular operating hours, with at least two days a week dedicated to serving the community. Secondly, monthly meetings of Panchayat committees have become more consistent and of higher quality. SHGs and the community now receive information about Panchayat decisions and can follow up on previous decisions. This information dissemination occurs through various channels, including elected representatives' interface with federations and community cadre, as well as the interaction between ward members and CLFs. Public institutions, in general, have become more accountable due to regular community follow-up activities, such as visits by SHG members to schools, Anganwadis, and Panchayat offices. However, to ensure sustainability, these changes need to be institutionalised. In Areikana Gram Panchayat, in response to women's demands, it was decided to have a dedicated day every Thursday for grievance redressal and follow-up at the Panchayat level.

9. Improved Service delivery

Panchayats have experienced significant improvement in their performance with extensive support from the SHG network and community cadre. Previously, there were instances where panchayats desired to work but faced limitations, including a lack of human resources. However, by collaborating with the SHG network and local resource groups, panchayats have been able to fulfil their mandates more effectively.

The support from GPLFs has played a crucial role in enhancing panchayat performance. Several activities have been undertaken in a campaign mode, such as bank account opening campaigns, initiatives for open defecation-free panchayats, job card melas, pension adalats, and health camps. These

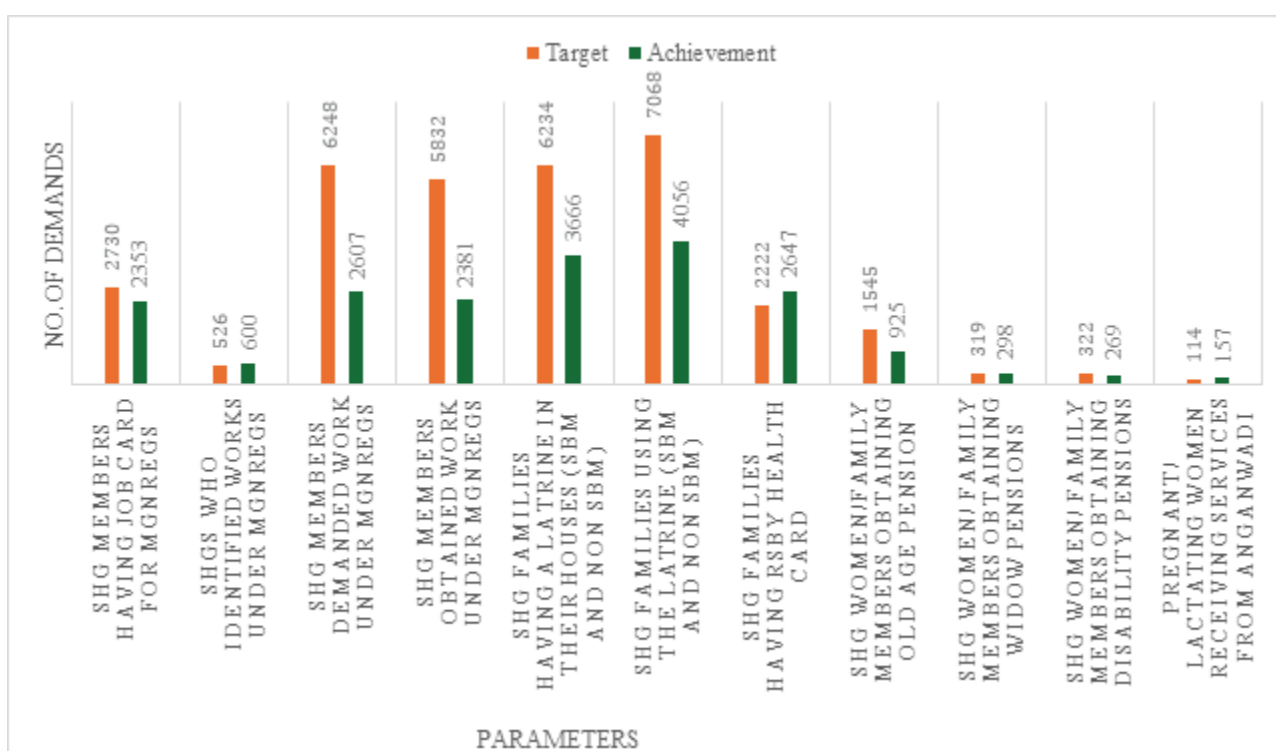
events were organised jointly by the Gram Panchayat (GP) and GPLF at the panchayat level. This collaborative approach resulted in a win-win situation for both panchayats and SHGs, with improved outcomes and mutual benefits.

10. Access to entitlements

The PAE and EAP have proven to be powerful mobilisation tools, benefiting not only the SHGs but also the broader village community. These tools have played a significant role in fostering an environment conducive to participatory planning and effective local democracy. Through this process, communities and local cadres have been capacitated, gaining knowledge about their rights, entitlements, and the responsibilities of public institutions.

The PAE and EAP exercises covered all SHG members and their households, allowing women to take ownership of plans and the data generated. This empowerment has given women the confidence to raise their voices after gaining a comprehensive understanding of their status.

In terms of quantifiable achievements, women have made notable progress towards their targets, particularly in areas such as the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), National Social Assistance Project (NSAP), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and social inclusion initiatives.



EAP Achievement based on PAE Baseline

11. Development and Placement of internal cadre

As part of the project, a strong emphasis was placed on the development and placement of an internal cadre known as the LRG members. Over three years, these LRG members underwent process-based capacitation and served as dedicated foot soldiers in the field. Many of them successfully graduated from the pilot GPs and were selected to become Internal Mentors.

From the existing pilot GPs, 25 internal mentors were identified to extend their work to the scale-up GPs across the state. The rationale behind selecting internal mentors was to foster the development of local resources and reduce dependence on external resources. This strategic approach aimed to leverage the knowledge and expertise of individuals who were already embedded within the community, ensuring sustainability and localised support for the project's implementation.

Conclusion

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project in Odisha, over a period of three years, has made significant improvements in various aspects. Comprehensive training programs have developed the capacity of stakeholders, empowering them with the knowledge and skills to actively participate in local governance and planning. Mobilisation efforts, process-based capacitation, and ongoing support have led to a remarkable increase in women's participation in democratic platforms, resulting in more inclusive and effective decision-making.

The evolution of CBOs into collectivised federations has further enhanced their role in advocating for women's issues and driving local development initiatives. Additionally, the project has fostered improved internal governance within panchayats through regular interfaces and joint initiatives between SHGs and PRIs.

Transparency and accountability have been enhanced, leading to improved service delivery that benefits both panchayats and SHGs. These achievements highlight the success of the project and the positive transformation it has brought to local communities in Odisha.

Rajasthan



District

Bhilwara
Kota
Udaipur

Background of the state

The present form of the state of Rajasthan came into existence in 1956. As per details from Census 2011, Rajasthan has a population of 6.86 crores, with 3.55 crores being male and 3.29 crores female. The population of Rajasthan formed 5.66 per cent of India's total population in 2011. The Sex Ratio in Rajasthan is 928 females per 1000 males, which is below the national average of 940. The literacy rate in Rajasthan has seen an upward trend and is recorded at 66.11 per cent as per the latest population census. Male literacy stands at 79.19 per cent, while female literacy is at 52.12 per cent. Approximately 75.13 per cent of the total population of Rajasthan resides in rural areas.

PRI system in the state

The first major Act for Panchayat Raj in the state was the Rajasthan Panchayat Act 1953, which governed the functioning of village panchayats and nyaya panchayats. This Act was based on the existing Panchayat Acts of the princely states. Subsequently, the Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishad Act were passed in 1959, and the Rajasthan Panchayat Act 1953 was amended to conform with it. Panchayat Raj was introduced in the state in October 1959 following the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta committee. Additionally, the Rajasthan PESA Act was passed in September 1999.

The Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act of 1994, following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, established a three-tier structure of Panchayats in the state. This structure comprises Zila Parishads (ZP) at the district level, Panchayat Samitis (PS) at the intermediate level, and GPs at the village level. Panchayat elections in the state are conducted regularly, with elections at the Gram Panchayat level being non-partisan, while elections at the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad levels are held on party lines.

The lowest governing body in the state is the Gram Panchayat, headed by an elected representative called the Sarpanch. The PRIs have reserved offices for SC, ST and OBC, and at least fifty per cent of seats are reserved for women, as per the State Panchayati Raj Act. The elected representatives hold office for a five-year term. A Panchayat is formed by "Panchas" based on the number of wards in the Panchayat. The Panchayat office comprises a Sarpanch, Up-Sarpanch, Ward Panchas, and a secretary. Panchayat representatives are elected through direct elections, and Panchayat meetings are held at least fortnightly.

Each Panchayat must form five standing committees focusing on administration, finance and taxation, development and production programs, education and social services, and social justice. The Sarpanch serves as an ex-officio member and chairperson of these committees. The functions of the Gram Panchayat include conducting regular meetings, organising Gram Sabhas, creating annual budgets and development plans, ensuring the benefits of government programs, and maintaining essential statistics of the village.

Role of CBOs in the state

The CBO structure of the Rajasthan Grameen Aajeevika Vikas Parishad (RGAVP) aligns with the structure proposed by the NRLM. Rajasthan's CBOs follow a CLF - VO - SHG structure. During the program period, it was noted that CLFs were not present across all blocks, as RGAVP had just started forming them. CLFs were being registered under the Cooperative Societies Act.

Role of NRLM in the state

Rajasthan Gramin Aajeevika Vikas Parishad, established in 2010 under the administrative control of the Department of Rural Development by the Government of Rajasthan,

serves as an autonomous society mandated with the implementation of rural livelihood programs. The society's primary objective is to empower the rural poor, particularly women and marginalised groups, by creating financially sustainable institutional platforms and enhancing their access to livelihood opportunities, financial services, and public amenities.

The society adopts a community-driven approach, focusing on the formation and strengthening of SHGs as the cornerstone of its interventions. By building the capacities of these community institutions, Rajeevika aims to enable rural households to increase their income through sustainable livelihood enhancements. Additionally, the society works towards improving access to financial services and selected public services, thereby enhancing the overall socio-economic well-being of the rural poor.

Since its establishment, Rajeevika has made significant strides in its intervention areas. It has extended its reach to 131 blocks, covering a total of 8,339 villages and benefiting 738,625 households. The formation of 63,120 SHGs reflects the society's commitment to grassroots empowerment and community mobilisation. Through its multifaceted approach, Rajasthan Gramin Aajeevika Vikas Parishad continues to play a pivotal role in transforming the lives of the rural poor in Rajasthan, contributing to poverty reduction, livelihood enhancement, and inclusive development across the state.

PRI-CBO convergence project

Rajasthan Gramin Aajeevika Vikas Parishad (RGAVP) partnered with KS-NRO for the implementation of the PRI-CBO Convergence project in Rajasthan by signing the MoU in August 2015. KS-NRO provided technical support and placed 15 Mentor Resource Persons to support the implementation in Rajasthan.

In the pilot locations, the social landscape was characterised by diverse religious, caste, and tribal communities, where traditional customs such as purdah and early marriage were prevalent. This cultural context significantly influenced the participation of women in local governance and development processes. Prior to the program's initiation, women's participation in Gram Sabha meetings was notably low. Their roles were primarily confined to household chores, agricultural activities, or membership in SHGs that focused mainly on financial activities within their groups. However, their involvement in broader development issues and participation in village development meetings was limited.

Despite the existence of SHGs, which provided an opportunity for women to gather and conduct their weekly meetings few women engaged directly with Panchayats or took part in broader village development discussions. Women rarely participated in Gram Sabha meetings, which are crucial platforms for local decision-making and governance. Their connection with the Panchayats as a collective of women was lacking. Women were not often seen as active participants in the planning process for local development, and Panchayat leaders primarily held decision-making power. They had minimal knowledge about government schemes and entitlements, with awareness largely confined to well-known central social schemes like NREGS and pension programs.

While some Panchayats in the pilot locations had responsive PRI members, there was generally a gap between PRI members and the community across the pilot locations. The Convergence Project was implemented during its pilot phase, encompassing 67 Panchayats across four blocks in three districts in Rajasthan. In this context, the PRI-CBO Convergence Project was initiated in Rajasthan.

Profile of the intervention areas

The selected blocks for piloting the convergence project in Rajasthan represent diverse geographical and demographic characteristics, each with its unique socio-economic profile.

Asind Block, Bhilwara District: Located in the south-eastern part of Rajasthan, Bhilwara district is known for its textile industry. Asind block falls under Bhilwara district and is one of the 16 tehsils in the district. According to the 2011 census, Bhilwara district has a population of 2,410,459, with the majority being Hindu. The district has a significant agricultural workforce, with a large portion engaged in cultivation and agricultural labour.

Sangod Block, Kota District: Kota district is renowned for its educational institutions and is a hub for competitive exam preparation. Sangod block is one of the blocks selected for the convergence project in Kota district. According to the 2011 census, Kota district has a population of 1,951,014, with a notable proportion engaged in various economic activities, including agriculture and marginal work.

Rishabhdev and Kherwara Blocks, Udaipur District: Udaipur district, located in the Mewar region, is characterised by its diverse geography, including plateaus, fertile plains, hills, and forests. Rishabhdev and Kherwara blocks, situated in Udaipur district, are part of the convergence project. The district has a significant forest cover and is rich in minerals like copper, zinc, and marble. According to the 2011 census, Udaipur district has a population of 3,068,420.

These blocks were selected strategically to pilot the convergence project, considering factors such as geographical diversity, population density, and socio-economic indicators.

Name of District	Name of Block	Number of Intervention Gram Panchayat
Udaipur	Kherwara	17
Bhilwara	Rishabhdev	10
	Asind	23
Kota	Sangod	17

Strategy Adopted by the State

The state of Rajasthan adopted a comprehensive strategy to enhance the implementation of the PRI-CBO Convergence Project, ensuring better execution and fostering inclusive development. The approach involved establishing resource groups at multiple levels, focusing on participatory governance, and strengthening SHGs and their federations.

A state-level resource group was established to oversee the implementation of the program, providing strategic direction and ensuring coherence across different regions. In each of the 67 Panchayats, LRGs consisting of 7-10 members were formed. These groups played a critical role in guiding convergence interventions and facilitating the pilot program.

The Gram Sabha was leveraged as the primary platform for participatory identification of the poor, social mobilisation, and the implementation of centrally and state-sponsored schemes, especially MGNREGS. Significant focus was placed on developing and strengthening SHGs and their federations to ensure effective PRI convergence at the local body level. Training modules,

materials, Information Education and Communication (IEC) tools, and capacity-building modules were developed and disseminated to establish functional platforms and institutional mechanisms for PRI-CBO convergence.

Extensive efforts were made to train PRI leaders on integrating local development plans, schemes, and programs such as MGNREGS and Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan with community demands expressed through CBOs of the poor. The comprehensive strategy aimed to create an environment conducive to effective PRI-CBO stakeholders. By integrating the needs and demands of the community into local development plans, the strategy promoted inclusive development and ensured that the benefits of various schemes reached the poorest and most marginalised groups.

Activity timeline

Activity / Timeline	Sep-Dec 2015	Jan- March 2016	April- June 2016	July-Sep 2016	Oct-Dec 2016
Mentor RP Immersion	Sep				
Block Familiarisation Workshop	Oct				
LRG Orientation	Nov				
PR Orientation		Jan			
LRG Capacitation on PAE			April		
PAE				May to July	
LRG Capacitation on EAP				July	
EAP at VO				June to August	
EAP target achievement				Sep to Nov	
LRG Capacitation on GP2RP					Dec

Key Outcomes of the project

1. Role in public service delivery

With the process of 'Adhikaar Niyojan,' village organisations took significant ownership in providing benefits to SHG beneficiaries. This shifted their role from merely being confined to financial inclusion to actively participating in local development. The constant engagement with Panchayats also enabled them to assist PRIs in delivering various schemes. VOs mobilised to participate in Panchayat and block-level meetings, covering schemes like MGNREGS and SBM. As a service delivery mechanism in partnership with Panchayats, CBOs organised rallies on SBM, became members of sanitation committees in Panchayats, and organised camps with the help of Panchayats.

2. LRG as community cadre for enhancing participatory governance

LRG members acted as key facilitators, ensuring the smooth implementation of program activities at the village level. They provided the necessary guidance to SHG members and PRI representatives, helping them understand and fulfil their roles in the program. LRGs were chosen from within the local community, ensuring they had a deep understanding of local issues and dynamics. They underwent extensive training on various program aspects, including participatory planning, scheme implementation, and community mobilisation. To enhance their effectiveness, LRG members received continuous mentoring from Kudumbashree Mentor Resource Persons, who provided them with ongoing support and capacity building. This mentorship aimed to continuously improve the LRG members' skills and knowledge, enabling them to better support program activities and community engagement.

District	Pilot	identified at the start of the project	LRG members			
			involved in PAE	involved in EAP	involved in GP2RP	active as of April 2017
Bhilwara	23	159	110	126	113	113
Udaipur	27	236	132	132	138	138
Kota	17	112	82	97	114	114
TOTAL	67	251	324	355	365	365

3. Developing the capacity of stakeholders

The Convergence Project adopted a comprehensive, process-oriented methodology to capacitate LRGs and CBOs. This approach emphasised the development of knowledge and skills through a combination of formal training and practical field exposure. The capacitation process was designed to ensure a valuable learning experience, equipping LRGs to act as catalysts for community transformation. LRG members and CBO representatives participated in structured classroom sessions where they received detailed knowledge about various activities, schemes, and roles within the program. LRGs used various participatory planning tools to facilitate the planning process, engage the community, and ensure the effective implementation of schemes. Through a combination of formal training, field exposure, participatory planning tools, and continuous mentoring, the program ensured that LRGs and CBOs were well-equipped to drive community-led development and achieve sustainable outcomes.

4. Improved participation in local governance

The activities like PAE and EAP have played a pivotal role in increasing CBO participation in local governance. Activities like Participatory Assessment Exercises (PAE) and Enhanced Awareness Programs (EAP) have significantly increased CBO participation in local governance. These activities have played a crucial role in raising awareness among CBO members about various government schemes and their entitlements. By understanding these schemes, CBOs have been able to access resources and benefits that were previously underutilised. These activities have sensitised women to their rights and entitlements. Women are now more aware of their roles in local governance and their ability to influence decision-making. They have started

actively using platforms like Gram Sabha to voice their demands and concerns. This has led to a notable increase in their participation in Gram Sabha, attending panchayat quorum meetings, active participation in camps organised by Panchayats, and governance processes.

5. Improved Internal Governance

Before the project's initiation, CBOs in the intervention areas were primarily focused on their operational activities, such as conducting regular meetings, engaging in thrift and credit activities, and managing savings and loans. However, broader discussions on government schemes and local development issues were often neglected. The project served as a catalyst for change, enabling SHGs and VOs to recognise their collective identity and purpose, leading to a transformative impact on their functioning and effectiveness. SHGs began to see beyond their immediate financial activities, understanding their role in broader community development and governance.

6. Evolution of CBO as an institution

CBOs have played a pivotal role in fostering the empowerment of women from diverse backgrounds. Through an ongoing process of capacitation, CBO members have been equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to take on various roles and responsibilities within their communities. This process has led to the emergence of community leaders from within the CBO structure, who have been instrumental in mobilising women and advancing village development initiatives. Through capacitation, these organisations have not only enhanced financial literacy but have also become instrumental in advocating for government schemes and rights, particularly MGNREGS and SBM. Beyond these schemes, CBOs became strong advocates for the rights and welfare of their constituents, addressing issues such as healthcare, education, and social security. Their collaboration with Panchayats has created effective platforms for addressing poverty reduction, leading to substantial improvements in village development.

7. Enhanced Internal Governance of Panchayat

In the pilot locations, PRIs have demonstrated a notable improvement in conducting their regular meetings consistently. Although sub-committees are still in the process of becoming fully functional, there have been significant changes in the visibility and transparency of these meetings. Increased community participation has been a driving force behind these changes, compelling Panchayats to maintain open and accessible governance practices.

8. Improved Engagement with CBOs

The improved relationship between PRIs and CBOs is a major achievement of the PRI-CBO Convergence Project. These two entities operated independently, often leading to fragmented efforts in addressing community needs. However, this collaboration has led to more responsive and inclusive local governance, better resource utilisation, and holistic development. The strengthened partnership between these two institutions serves as a model for effective local development, demonstrating the power of collective action and community involvement in driving positive change.

9. Empowering Gram Sabha as a Forum for Direct Democracy

The Gram Sabha, a crucial platform at the Panchayat level, has seen a gradual increase in participation, particularly among women. This enhanced engagement is largely attributed to

the efforts of CBOs, especially VOs, which have successfully mobilised women and encouraged their active involvement in Gram Sabha meetings. This increased participation has empowered women to voice their demands related to office space for VOs, work opportunities under MGNREGS, and discussions on the Swachh Bharat Mission. Women have effectively used this platform to advocate for their needs and contribute to the development of their communities. This shift not only empowers women but also enhances the overall effectiveness and sustainability of local governance and development initiatives.

10. Enhancing Transparency, Accountability, and Service Delivery

The increased engagement of people with the Panchayat has led to significant improvements in transparency, accountability, and service delivery within local governance. With more individuals approaching the Panchayats to address grievances, there is a noticeable improvement in the responsiveness of Panchayat officials. The formation of LRGs has been instrumental in bridging the gap between beneficiaries and their entitlements. As people become more aware of their rights through awareness campaigns and training sessions, their expectations from the Panchayats have grown. This heightened awareness has empowered community members to demand better services and accountability from their elected representatives.

11. Strengthening Women-Elected Representatives

The emergence of women elected as ward panchs and their active participation in Panchayat discussions represent a significant shift towards gender inclusivity and empowerment in local governance. Women elected as ward panchs are uniquely positioned to represent both the Panchayat and women's collectives. By taking on the additional role of LRGs, they effectively bridge the gap between CBOs and Panchayats, ensuring that women's voices are heard in local governance. The presence of women in leadership roles has led to more constructive discussions within Panchayats. Women sarpanches and ward panchs have begun to express their opinions more freely and lead discussions on various development issues. Their active participation has brought a new perspective to Panchayat deliberations, promoting more inclusive decision-making processes. Despite their active participation, there is still a need to strengthen the identity of women leaders within Panchayats.

12. Access to entitlements

The EAP was implemented as a critical follow-up to the PAE, reinforcing the commitment to community-driven development and effective resource utilisation. The plan aimed to benefit 20,772 families, demonstrating a wide-reaching impact on the community. A total of 151 VOs across 67 Panchayats were actively involved in preparing and executing the EAP.

Block	GPs Covered	VO/CLFs Covered	SHG	Families
Asind	23	44	595	6,047
Kherwara and Rishabhdev	27	70	960	10,057
Sangod	17	43	474	4,618
Total	67	151	2,029	20,722

(Coverage of EAP, 2016)

13. Assessment of EAP target in four blocks

Sl. No.	Compliaton of four blocks Scheme – Entitlement	# to be covered	Applicatons Submitted	Achievement	# to be covered)
1	Members with Job card	2896	2777	2663	112
2	Include names in Existing job card	980	725	705	258
3	Members with Labour card	3991	3444	2960	263
4	SHG families having a latrine	18008	17330	12676	5630
5	SHG members obtaining old age pension	748	665	601	11
6	SHG members obtaining widow pensions	341	331	322	5
7	SHG members obtaining disability pensions	157	122	109	3
8	Pregnant/ lactating women in the SHG/ families receiving services from anganwadis	1042	1042	1012	30
9	Children of SHG members in age group 0-3 years receiving services from anganwadis	2253	2204	2160	109
10	Children of SHG members in age group 3-6 years receiving services from anganwadis	2584	2575	2276	109
11	Members with Bhamsha card	4570	4529	4482	88
12	Members with Adhaar Card	828	828	828	0
13	Members with Ration card	88	88	88	0

The VO's regularly monitored and revised the targets with the help of LRGs.

14. Other Initiatives

Mahila Aam Sabha, Sangod Block, Kota

- 29 Mahila Aam Sabhas were conducted at the village level across 17 GPs
- 1,169 SHG women participated in Mahila Aam Sabhas
- Discussions were held among SHG women on individual household issues and overall village welfare issues, moderated by LRG
- 115 petitions were submitted to the 24 April Gram Sabha demanding drinking water facility, pensions, housing entitlements, delay in SBM payment, office space of VO

Gram Kisan Sabha

- 6 Kisan Sabha was organised at Cluster Level across Kherwara Block in Udaipur. 458 SHG women participated in the Sabha
- Kisan Sabha was also organised in 4 Panchayats in Rishabdev Cluster. 190 women participated in the Panchayat-level Sabha

Conclusion

Since its inception in August 2015, the PRI-CBO Convergence project has successfully empowered CBOs and enhanced the responsiveness of PRIs to community needs. Participatory tools such as PAE and EAP played a crucial role in transforming the community's understanding of citizenship and boosting CBO participation in local governance. Women actively utilised platforms like Gram Sabha to advocate for their rights, with SHG networks organising "Mahila Aam Sabhas" to address their issues.

The project also focused on awareness-building activities such as Prabhat Pheris, Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations, Mahila Kisan Sabha, and special VO meetings to mobilise women for Gram Sabha participation. Through "Adhikaar Niyojan - Entitlement Access Plan," VOs took ownership in delivering benefits to SHG beneficiaries. Panchayats acknowledged the effectiveness of CBOs as a service delivery mechanism and collaborated with them to enhance outreach and identify beneficiaries for various schemes. Furthermore, the project aimed to strengthen the ecosystem of local community innovations by promoting initiatives like Balsabhas and creating spaces for discussing social issues at the SHG level.

Tripura



District

South tripura
Dhalai
Gomati

Background of the state

Tripura, a small but socially diverse state in the Eastern region of India, is uniquely positioned with its geographical borders and demographic composition. It is bordered by Bangladesh to the north, south, and west, and by the Indian states of Mizoram and Assam to the east. According to the 2011 census, Tripura is home to approximately one-third of its population belonging to Scheduled Tribes, making up 31.05 per cent of the total population. The state boasts a rich cultural tapestry with 19 recognised indigenous tribes, each contributing to the vibrant social fabric of Tripura.

Agriculture is the backbone of Tripura's economy, with a significant portion of the population engaged in this sector. Given the state's hilly terrain, many tribal communities practice Jhum cultivation, a traditional method of slash-and-burn agriculture. This method, although integral to the tribal lifestyle, poses challenges such as soil degradation and reduced agricultural productivity over time. Tripura's industrial development remains modest, with limited industrial activities primarily concentrated in sectors like tourism, handicrafts, and handloom.

PRI system in the state

In Tripura, the local self-government operates under two distinct legal frameworks, each catering to different demographic sections and ensuring tailored governance and administrative mechanisms. PRIs in Tripura function under the constitutional provisions outlined in Parts IX and IX A of the Indian Constitution. These institutions are responsible for the governance and administration of rural areas, ensuring local self-governance through a structured system of elected bodies. In areas with a significant population of Scheduled Tribes, Tripura follows the legal framework outlined in the Sixth

Schedule of the Constitution. This framework provides these areas with specific rights and a degree of autonomy in local self-government, recognising their unique cultural and social practices. The dual governance framework in Tripura ensures that the diverse needs of its population are met effectively.

The establishment of PRIs in Tripura was a significant step towards decentralised governance, facilitated by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. This amendment introduced the 11th Schedule into the Indian Constitution, outlining the framework for rural local self-governance and listing 29 subjects under the purview of PRIs. To align with the objectives and provisions of this landmark amendment, the Tripura Legislative Assembly enacted the Tripura Panchayats Act of 1993, which came into effect on April 24, 1993. The Tripura Panchayats Act of 1993 established a three-tiered system of local governance, like PRI laws in other Indian states consisting of Gram Panchayats at the village level, Panchayat Samitis at the intermediary (Block) level, and Zilla Parishads at the District level.

Gram Panchayats (GPs) are the foundational level of grassroots local self-governance in Tripura, playing a crucial role in rural development and administration. They are entrusted with 12 obligatory duties, 26 other duties, and 25 discretionary duties. Each GP is headed by a Pradhan and an Up-Pradhan, who are responsible for the general administration and financial management of the GP. These leaders are selected during the first meeting of the GP from among the elected ward members. The GP can have up to 15 elected ward members. Gram Sabha comprises all eligible voters within the GP area. The Pradhan convenes Gram Sabha meetings, which require a quorum of one-fifth of the voters. In the Pradhan's absence, the Up-Pradhan can preside over the meeting with prior approval

from the GP.

Below the Gram Sabha is the Gram Sansad (Ward Sabha), which primarily functions in beneficiary selection and determining work sites for various schemes and projects. The GP develops village plans based on active participation from the people through the Gram Sansad and Gram Sabha. At least one Gram Sabha meeting must be held annually by every GP to discuss and review ongoing projects and plans.

Panchayat Samiti (PS) consists of directly elected members from territorial constituencies, Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs), and the Pradhans of GPs within the block. The PS has a minimum of nine members and a maximum of 15 members. The members elect the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson during the first meeting. The PS conducts meetings at least once every two months and performs functions such as preparing an annual plan and budget and submitting the consolidated plan and budget to the Zilla Parishad.

Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC)

The TTAADC, also referred to as ADC or Autonomous District Council, has undergone significant changes since its inception to better cater to the needs and aspirations of the indigenous tribal communities of Tripura. The TTAADC was initially established under the provisions of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Tripura Legislative Assembly passed the TTAADC Bill on March 23, 1979. The ADC was constituted through a secret ballot vote on January 15, 1982.

To grant more autonomy and empower the TTAADC, the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution were extended to Tripura. This extension was effectuated on April 1, 1985, through the 49th Amendment of the Constitution of India. The TTAADC -

Administration Rules, 1988, were formulated with the approval of the Governor of Tripura. These rules were established within the powers conferred by the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, providing a comprehensive framework for the administration of the TTAADC. The TTAADC can legislate on matters related to land, forest management, water resources, agriculture, village administration, and other areas critical to tribal welfare and development. Laws enacted by the TTAADC require the assent of the Governor of Tripura. The TTAADC has the authority to set up village courts to adjudicate disputes among tribal communities. These courts follow customary laws and practices recognised by the tribal communities. The TTAADC covers approximately one-third of Tripura's total population, two-thirds of Tripura's total geographical area and about 85 per cent of the TSP areas. The villages under TTAADC are not geographically contiguous, reflecting the dispersed nature of tribal settlements across the state. Under the Sixth Schedule, TTAADC possesses legislative, judicial, executive, and financial powers, which include matters related to administration, education, healthcare, land, forests, infrastructure, and cultural customs. The Council can levy and collect taxes from residents and businesses within its jurisdiction, receive a share of royalties from forest and mineral extraction activities and regulate money lending and trade within its areas to protect tribal interests.

Two-thirds of Tripura's geographical area and one-third of its population fall under the Sixth Schedule areas, administered by the single-tier VCs of TTAADC. The TTAADC comprises 28 elected members and two nominated members, headed by a chairperson, who is chosen by the elected members. The Chief Executive Member manages the executive functions of the council and is supported by nine executive members. There are five zonal offices to oversee the administration in

different regions, 40 Sub-Zonal offices, also known as Block Advisory Committees, and 527 elected VCs that operate within the TTAADC, administering local governance at the village level.

The power and responsibilities of the VCs are derived from the TTAADC (Establishment of Village Committee) Act, 1994. Each VC comprises 7 to 11 elected members, depending on the village population. Reservations for ST and SCs are reserved in proportion to their population within the village. One-third of the VC members are reserved for women on a rotational basis to ensure gender representation. VCs hold monthly meetings to discuss and manage local governance issues such as healthcare, water, sanitation, infrastructure development, social development activities, education, agriculture, animal husbandry, and forestry.

Like the Gram Sabha in PRIs, the VC identifies and constitutes Village Sansads. These are local assemblies responsible for participatory governance and decision-making at the grassroots level. The VC is required to hold at least one Village Sabha meeting within the village's limits every year to discuss and address local issues.

The TTAADC plays a critical role in the governance and development of Tripura's tribal areas, ensuring that the unique needs and rights of tribal communities are met through legislative, judicial, executive, and financial autonomy. By incorporating local participation through Village Sansads and Village Sabha meetings, the TTAADC promotes inclusive governance and empowers tribal communities. The combination of district-level administration and village-level committees enables comprehensive coverage and effective management of resources, fostering socio-economic development in Tripura's tribal regions.

Role of NRLM in the state

Initially, on a pilot basis, three districts were taken under the mission i.e. Dhalai, Gomati, and South Tripura district. In 2018 remaining 5 districts were also covered under the mission i.e. West, North, Khowai, Unakoti, and Sepahjala districts.

In the 1st phase during FY 2014-15, to create resources within the state 2 nos. of blocks namely Ambassa R.D Block (Dhalai), Dumburnagar R.D Block (Dhalai), Matabari R.D Block (Gomati), Killa R.D Block (Gomati), Jolaibari R.D Block (South Tripura), Satchand R.D Block (South Tripura), under each three districts were selected. To form Self Help Groups initially help was taken from Orvakal Mandal Podupu Lakshmi (OMPLIS) NRO, Andhra Pradesh. External Resource Persons were invited from Andhra Pradesh to form ideal SHGs and also to create resources within the state in resource blocks.

In 2nd phase during FY 2016-17, more 2 blocks were implemented as intensive block-I namely Hrishyamukh R.D Block (South Tripura), Rajnagar R.D Block (South Tripura), Tepania R.D Block (Gomati), Karbook R.D Block (Gomati), Salema R.D Block (Dhalai), Durga Chowmuhani R.D Block. The remaining other blocks were covered gradually under the mission. As of 31.03.2023 TRLM has spread into all 58 blocks of the state and formed 46011 SHGs, 1948 Village Organisations (VO), and 88 Cluster Level Federations (CLF).

Role of CBOs in the state

TRLM has established a three tier CBO structure comprising SHG, VO and CLF. TRLM is working in 8 nos. districts and 58 nos. of Blocks. As of March 2023, the mission has promoted 46011 nos. Self Help Groups, 1948 nos. Village Level Organizations & 88 Nos. of CLFs throughout the state. From table no. 1.2 the status of SHG and their federation can be analysed. Almost 59 percent SHGs are 2 years

or more than 2 years old. Whereas, almost 67 percent Village Level Organisations are 2 years or more than 2 years old. It is seen that a good number of Self-Help Groups and their federations are mature.

The CBO network established in the State of Tripura currently focuses on implementing various programs and initiatives of NRLM to address the multifaceted issues of poverty.

1. IBCB

- a. Social Mobilization
- b. Promotion of Institutions for the poor
- c. Training and Capacity building on leadership
- d. Strengthening CBO governance

2. Financial inclusion

- a. Revolving Fund
- b. Community Investment Fund
- c. Financial Literacy
- d. Insurance (PMJJBY, PMSBY, APY)

3. Livelihood

- a. Farm Livelihood
- b. Non-Farm Livelihood
- c. Livestock
- d. Skill building and training
- e. Small Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)
- f. Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY)

4. Social Inclusion and Social Development (SISD)

- a. Gender
- b. PRI-CBO Convergence
- c. Promotion of special SHGs for Elderly, Ultra Poor, PVTGs, Transgender etc.
- d. Food, Nutrition, Health and WASH

(FNHW)

PRI-CBO convergence project

In December 2016, the Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM) formally partnered with KS-NRO to implement the PRI-CBO Convergence project. KS-NRO provided technical support and deployed 12 Mentor Resource Persons to assist with the project's implementation in Tripura. The project was rolled out across 272 panchayats in 12 blocks of 3 districts in Tripura.

Profile of the intervention areas

In the pilot phase KS-NRO had the opportunity to expand its scope beyond working solely in Gram Panchayat (GP) areas and extend its involvement to both VCs and GPs in Tripura. Matabari and Killa blocks in the Gomati district were selected for the pilot intervention. A total of 50 GPs and VCs were chosen for the project, including 16 VCs in the Killa block and 10 VCs along with 24 PRIs in the Matabari block. In January 2017, 12 Mentors from KS-NRO were sent to Tripura to provide training and collaborate with the community network and local government entities in these two blocks.

Buoyed by the encouraging community response to its initial collaboration with local self-governments, the TRLM embarked on an ambitious plan to extend the PRI-CBO Convergence project to additional districts. This expansion phase focused on both the geographic enlargement of project areas and the fortification of local institutions. The expansion included a careful selection process covering ten blocks spanning the Dhalai, Gomati, and South Tripura districts.

Sl. No.	Particulars	Pilot Phase		Scale up Phase		Total
		Gomati	Gomati	Dhalai	South Tripura	
1	Number of Blocks	2	4	4	4	12
2	Number of GPs/VCs	50	88	82	100	270
3	Number of VOs	59	143	143	157	443
4	Number of SHGs	842	2450	2495	3075	8020
5	Number of LRGs	228	380	370	520	1270
6	Number of Mentors (KS-NRO)	12				12
7	No: of I-Mentors		17	33	32	82
8	No: of Mentors		4	4	4	12
9	No: of Professionals		1	2	1	4

Strategy adopted in the state

PRI orientation and LRG identification are two stepping stones of the project in Tripura. Panchayat members received orientation on the project's objectives at the district, block, and GP/VC levels. This step ensured that local government officials understood the importance of the project and their roles within it. Concurrently, potential CBO members were identified to become LRGs. These individuals underwent a three-day training to equip them with the skills necessary to function as community experts for the project. The selected LRGs were trained on how to disseminate project-related information and facilitate community participation. They were tasked with interacting with each SHG within their VO to share their newfound knowledge.

The next activity in the project's timeline was the PAE. LRGs organised meetings with every SHG to discuss entitlements using a ribbon exercise facilitated by mentors. This process helped SHG members understand their rights and entitlements under various schemes. After conducting the PAE in every SHG, the VOs prepared EAPs outlining their demands for each centrally sponsored scheme. This step ensured that the CBOs were well-informed and had a concrete plan to access their entitlements.

LRGs mobilised CBO members to participate in Gram Sabhas through door-to-door campaigns, rallies, and meetings. This mobilisation led to increased attendance, with many women participating in Gram Sabhas for the first time, a significant milestone for community involvement. The Entitlement Access Plans were submitted to the panchayats during these Gram Sabhas. The panchayats, in turn, promised to support the actualisation of these plans. All VOs in the two blocks received a two-day, activity-driven training aimed at strengthening their subcommittees. This training further empowered the VOs to effectively participate in local

governance and development activities.

Activity timeline

Project Activity	Oct-Dec 2016	Jan-March 2017	April-June 2017	July-Sep 2017	Oct-Dec 2017	Jan-March 2018
Signing of MoU	Dec	Jan				
Field Level Assessment			May			
Capacity Building of CBOs				Continuous Process		
Capacity Building of PRIs						
LRGs Selection and Training			June			
Roll out of PAE				August		
EAP					Nov	
GP2RP				August		
Closure of MoU						Jan

Key outcomes of the project:

1) Development of Cadre Pool

The PRI-CBO Convergence project in Tripura achieved a significant milestone by fostering a remarkable sense of volunteerism among women dedicated to the progress of their villages. The project provided a platform for women to actively participate in activities that contributed to the development of the entire village community.

The project's success was significantly bolstered by direct collaboration with Panchayats. PRI officials showed a willingness to involve LRG members in decision-making processes, which nurtured a deep sense of satisfaction and commitment among these women. This inclusive approach served as a powerful motivator for their continued dedication to community service. The success of instilling volunteerism among these women showcases the transformative potential of community-driven initiatives. The project highlighted the importance of empowering local institutions and fostering active participation in decision-making processes.

Block		Killa		Matabari		
Name of Schemes	Demand	Achievement	%	Demand	Achievement	%
Job Card	547	261	47.71	394	199	50.51
SBM	1.593	613	38.48	1379	788	57.14
R a t i o n Card	113	28	17.70	124	55	44.35
Old Age Pension	321	115	35.82	585	195	33.33
W i d o w Pension	69	37	53.62	184	93	50.54
Disability Pension	81	20	24.69	93	19	20.43
RSBY	1103	440	39.90	1236	464	37.54

*PAE & EAP Data 2018-2020

2) Strengthening Development Plans through Community Participation

Incorporating the Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP) within the PRI-CBO Convergence project has significantly improved the effectiveness of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). By involving the SHG community network in a participatory manner, the demand plans prepared by the SHGs have facilitated substantial enhancements in the GPDPs formulated by the Panchayats. The VPRP process ensured that essential requirements such as streetlights and playgrounds in remote villages like Shibbari, Dhanachandra, and Shyamraicherra in the Durga Chowmuhani block were no longer overlooked by the Gram Panchayats. This inclusive approach ensured that the needs of even the most remote and underserved communities were addressed.

Identifying and linking eligible women from the communities to work on MGNREGS projects was a critical aspect of the VPRP process. This connection was instrumental in persuading PRI officials to integrate VPRPs with GPDPs, resulting in a more comprehensive and holistic planning process that included community-driven development initiatives. The guidance provided by Mentors, Internal Mentors, and LRG members was crucial in empowering SHGs to formulate their plans as part of the VPRP process. This empowerment enabled SHGs to take ownership of their plans and actively follow up with the Panchayat and line departments for implementation, ensuring that their voices were heard in the decision-making process.

The comprehensive demand lists developed by SHGs in GPs/VCs as part of the VPRP showcased the growth of women's participation across diverse domains. These lists included demands related to livelihood, entitlements, resource management, essential infrastructure development, and social development issues, reflecting the multifaceted needs and priorities of the communities. Continuous capacity building was a cornerstone of the VPRP integration within the PRI-CBO Convergence project. Through ongoing training and development, women were equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively in local governance and planning processes.

Incorporating the VPRP within the PRI-CBO Convergence project proved to be a successful approach to improving GPDPs. By involving the SHG community network and empowering

women to take ownership, the project facilitated a participatory and comprehensive planning process that addressed the diverse needs and priorities of the villages.

Sl. No.	Name of block	No. of GP/VC	No. of VO's	Gram Sabha conducted	Total No. of			
					SHG in GP/VC	SHG members	Participants in GS	Women participated
1	Ambassa	21	35	27	551	4,456	2,730	1,863
2	Durga Chowmuhani	21	42	24	650	5,486	2,672	2,113
3	Salema	21	34	21	476	3,713	2,512	1,937
4	Dumburnagar	19	32	19	505	3,953	1,453	920
5	Jolaibari	24	54	24	938	9,173	5,807	4,948
6	Hrishyamukh	23	43	23	650	6,209	2,926	2,085
7	Rajnagar	15	25	15	423	4,322	2,873	2,535
8	Satchand	38	41	37	908	8,720	4,177	2,846
9	Matabari	34	47	18	866	8,764	2,106	1,235
10	Killa	16	36	16	346	1,942	868	586
11	Tepania	19	39	19	592	5,919	2,791	2,360
12	Amarpur	21	27	21	482	3,969	2,098	1,610
	Total	272	455	264	7,387	66,626	33,013	25,038

Data of VPRP Gram Sabha 2019-20

3) Convergence with Line Department

The 2018 implementation of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) in the Bampur Gram Panchayat, located in the Amarpur block of the Gomati district, stands as a noteworthy example of the positive impacts of effective convergence between line departments and CBOs. During the GPDP process, specific needs were identified within the Bampur community. One of the key priorities was the renovation of Anganwadi centres to improve hygiene, sanitation, and the overall environment for children and staff. The successful execution of these projects was a result of the seamless collaboration between various stakeholders. Line departments provided technical expertise, resources, and oversight to ensure that the construction met the required standards. CBOs played a crucial role in mobilising the community, gathering input, and ensuring that the planned projects aligned with local needs.

The alignment of resources and efforts through the GPDP process led to several tangible benefits for the community. The renovation of Anganwadi centres in Bampur Gram Panchayat is a testament to the positive outcomes achievable through the GPDP framework. This case study highlights how effective convergence and collaboration between various stakeholders can bridge gaps, meet community expectations, and deliver tangible benefits. The success of this initiative not only improved local infrastructure but also demonstrated the potential of participatory planning and execution in addressing community-specific demands. Through such projects, the GPDP framework proves its capability to facilitate sustainable development and empower local communities.

4) Recognition of CBO

At the inception of the PRI-CBO Convergence project, Panchayats primarily viewed VO's and SHGs as financial entities focused on lending and recovery. However, through the project's

Sl. No.	Name of block	No. of GP/VC	No. of VO's	Entitlement- Schemes										
				Old Age Pension	Widow Pension	Unmarried Pension	Disability Pension	IHHL	AJM	Health card	Gas connection under Ujjwala	Adhar Card	Ration Card	PLAY
1	Ambassa	21	35	144	68	2	22	650	686	914	306	0	11	0
2	Durga Chowmuhani	21	42	498	62	12	79	595	2796	1535	776	356	27	288
3	Salema	21	34	209	54	13	54	253	7	114	392	27	0	175
4	Dumburnagar	19	32	202	58	5	41	908	860	1537	694	11	40	13
5	Jolaibari	24	54	0	0	0	2	0	105	0	0	0	7	17
6	Hrishyamukh	23	43	149	23	11	15	462	592	569	284	0	1	17
7	Rajnagar	15	25	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Satchand	38	41	32	2	1	1	1103	49	2	196	0	157	959
9	Matabari	34	47	10	1	0	0	55	11	22	3	0	9	13
10	Killa	16	36	34	4	0	2	170	58	183	48	0	66	4
11	Tepania	19	39	219	29	2	25	250	678	407	114	3	5	9
12	Amarpur	21	27	124	23	7	31	201	1164	409	183	20	1	0
	Total	272	455	1621	324	53	272	4650	7,006	5692	2996	417	324	1495

*VPRP Data 2019-20

initiatives and collaborative efforts, Panchayats gradually recognised the broader value that these CBOs brought to village development. The project highlighted that VOs and SHGs were actively engaged in a range of developmental activities, extending beyond their financial roles.

This shift from viewing these groups as mere financial entities to recognising them as vital partners in village development highlights the importance of collaborative efforts. With at least one member from each household being part of an SHG, Panchayats realised that collaborating with these networks could enhance their outreach to all families within the community. The project showcased the synergistic potential of leveraging the strengths of both Panchayats and SHG networks to achieve shared objectives and promote holistic community progress. This collaborative model serves as a powerful example of how community-driven initiatives can drive sustainable development and empower local communities.

Furthermore, SHG networks facilitated the identification and mobilisation of beneficiaries for various government schemes and programs, ensuring more comprehensive and inclusive participation. The collaboration between Panchayats and SHG networks led to the organisation of impactful community events and campaigns such as health camps, education awareness programs, Bal Sabhas (children’s assemblies), and literacy campaigns. These initiatives played a crucial role in raising awareness and addressing key social issues within the community. The partnership between Panchayats and SHG networks demonstrated the power of collaboration in achieving community development goals.

Sl. No.	Name of block	No. of GP/VC	No. of VOs	VPRP 2019-20		
				VPRP Plan Prepared by VO	VPRP Plan Submitted by VO	VPRP Plan Accepted by GP/VC
1	Ambassa	21	35	21	21	21
2	Durga Chowmuhani	21	42	21	21	21
3	Salema	21	34	21	21	21
4	Dumburnagar	19	32	19	19	19
5	Jolaibari	24	54	20	20	20
6	Hrishyamukh	23	43	23	23	23
7	Rajnagar	15	25	15	15	15
8	Satchand	38	41	38	38	38
9	Matabari	34	47	24	24	23
10	Killa	16	36	15	15	12
11	Tepania	19	39	19	19	19
12	Amarpur	21	27	19	19	19
	Total	272	455	255	255	251

Other impacts of the project

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project has significantly impacted SHG members, catalysing positive changes in their attitudes and behaviours. Key observations highlighting these transformations

include:

a) Increased Awareness and Importance:

SHG members now recognise the importance of gram sabha meetings and the value of effective SHG/VO planning. This increased awareness has led to more proactive engagement in community activities and governance.

b) Organising Rallies & Camps:

SHG members have taken the initiative to organise rallies and conduct miking campaigns before gram sabha meetings. This proactive approach was non-existent before the project, indicating a substantial shift in mindset and community engagement.

c) Empowered Voice:

SHG members have gained confidence in expressing their opinions and raising their voices during gram sabha meetings. This empowerment has enabled them to access entitlement benefits and participate more actively in decision-making processes.

d) Sense of Community Ownership:

SHG members have developed a strong sense of ownership and responsibility towards their communities. They are now actively involved in decision-making processes, contributing to the overall development of their villages.

e) Identifying Infrastructure Development:

SHG members have successfully identified areas needing development, such as roads, culverts, drainage systems, and water supply connections. This involvement in identifying infrastructure needs has led to more targeted and effective development efforts.

f) Improved Interaction:

SHG/VO members now engage more readily with officials from the Panchayat, line departments, banks, and other institutions.

Their willingness to interact and collaborate has improved significantly, fostering better relationships and more effective collaboration.

g) Strengthening Village Organisations:

The introduction of LRG and Internal Mentors (IM) has provided valuable opportunities to strengthen Village Organisations and SHGs. These structures have enhanced the capabilities and capacities of SHG members, enabling them to contribute more effectively to community development.

The PRI-CBO Convergence Project has sparked a transformative change among SHG members. By addressing their awareness and understanding of gram sabha and SHG/VO planning, the project has empowered them to raise their voices and access entitlement benefits actively. The project has instilled a sense of community ownership and facilitated the identification of development priorities. Improved interaction with officials, enhanced performance in project blocks, and the establishment of LRG and IM structures have further bolstered the strength of VO and SHGs.

Challenges Faced

The current situation regarding SHGs and VOs in Tripura highlights several critical challenges and areas of concern that need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of these community-based structures. Below are the detailed observations and recommendations for each identified issue:

a) Persistence of Demands:

SHG members' demands remain unaddressed at the panchayat level, indicating the need for more effective communication channels between SHGs and panchayats. Regular, structured meetings where SHG demands can be presented and addressed should be institutionalised. Setting up grievance redressal mechanisms can also ensure that demands are tracked and resolved promptly.

b) Lack of Awareness:

In tribal-dominated blocks, there is a significant lack of awareness and understanding among SHG and VO members regarding their activities, indicating a need for targeted awareness campaigns and capacity-building programs specifically designed for tribal communities. Utilise local languages and culturally appropriate methods to ensure better comprehension and engagement.

c) Delayed in Honorarium:

LRGs and IMs face issues due to delayed payments from the block level, adversely affecting their ability to function effectively.

d) Pending Engagement of Internal Mentors:

Some blocks are yet to engage Internal Mentors, which hampers the smooth functioning of SHG activities and support systems. Therefore, accelerate the recruitment and engagement process for Internal Mentors in all blocks.

e) Low Group/SHG Activity:

Limited engagement and activity among SHGs in certain blocks and villages highlight the need to strengthen and promote active participation.

f) Improper Maintenance of Registers:

Some Village Organisations do not maintain their registers properly, which can lead to data inaccuracies and administrative challenges.

g) The gap between the Annual Action Plan and Gram Panchayat:

There is a discrepancy between the SHGs' Annual Action Plans and the Gram Panchayat's plans, leading to dissatisfaction among SHG members, emphasising better coordination and alignment.

h) Sustainability of SHGs:

Some SHGs become defunct after a few months, and loan recovery is a significant issue. There is a requirement to ensure the sustainability of

SHGs, as some of them become defunct after a few months of formation.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes improving communication channels, enhancing awareness and capacity-building efforts, streamlining administrative processes, and ensuring better coordination between SHGs and local governance structures. By tackling these issues, the PRI-CBO Convergence project can further strengthen the functioning and impact of SHGs and VOs, promote effective demand fulfilment, and ensure sustainable grassroots development in Tripura.

Conclusion

The PRI-CBO Convergence project in Tripura has achieved significant progress and notable outcomes over the past three years. Extensive training programs have equipped stakeholders with the knowledge and skills necessary for active engagement in local governance and planning processes. Mobilisation efforts and capacity-building measures have led to a remarkable increase in women's participation in democratic platforms. This inclusivity has resulted in more representative and effective decision-making, ensuring that women's voices and concerns are adequately addressed in local governance. The project has facilitated the transformation of CBOs into federations. These federations have become powerful advocates for women's issues, driving local development initiatives and contributing to the socio-economic advancement of their communities. The project has significantly improved internal governance within panchayats. Regular collaboration and joint initiatives between SHGs and PRIs have been established, leading to better coordination and alignment of efforts. The regular interactions and joint initiatives between SHGs and PRIs have enhanced transparency, accountability, and service delivery. This improvement has benefited both panchayats and SHGs, resulting in more efficient and responsive governance. The combined efforts of training, capacity building, and improved governance have yielded tangible benefits for the local communities in Tripura. The project's accomplishments have showcased its positive impact on various aspects of community life, including infrastructure development, social services, and women's empowerment.

Uttar Pradesh



District

Bahraich
Basti
Gorakhpur
Sultanpur
Varanasi
Fatehpur
Banda
Mirzapur
Chandauli
Sonbhadra

Background of the state

Uttar Pradesh, the most populous and fourth largest state in India, is in the north-central part of the country. It is bordered by the state of Uttarakhand and the country of Nepal to the north, Bihar to the east, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh to the southeast, Madhya Pradesh to the south, Rajasthan, Haryana, and the national capital territory of Delhi to the west. The capital of Uttar Pradesh is Lucknow, situated in the west-central part of the state. Covering an area of 93,933 square miles (243,286 square kilometres), Uttar Pradesh holds a significant position in India's geographical and cultural landscape. On January 26, 1950, when India became a republic, the state was renamed Uttar Pradesh, meaning "Northern State." Its capital is Lucknow, in the west-central part of the state.

According to the 2011 Census, Uttar Pradesh has a population of approximately 19.98 crores, with 10.44 Crores males and 9.53 crores females. This population accounts for 16.50 per cent of India's total population, making it the most populous state in the country. Uttar Pradesh has the largest Scheduled Caste population among the states of India. However, the state faces several social challenges, including a relatively low literacy rate and an unfavourable sex ratio. The sex ratio in Uttar Pradesh is 912 females for every 1000 males, falling below the national average of 940. Despite this, the literacy rate in Uttar Pradesh has shown an upward trend, currently standing at 67.68 per cent. The male literacy rate is higher at 77.28 per cent compared to the female literacy rate of 57.18 per cent.

PRI system in the state

With the attainment of independence, the state government of Uttar Pradesh enacted the Uttar Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act of 1947. This act provided for the Panchayat president's

election and expanded these institutions' powers and functions. Under the 1947 act, three bodies were created: the Gram Sabha, the Gram Panchayat, and the Panchayat Adalat (to settle disputes).

In addition to the village panchayats, the Kshetra Samitis and Zilla Parishads were constituted under the Kshetra Samiti and Zilla Parishad Adhiniyam of 1961. Uttar Pradesh did not enact a new Panchayati Raj legislation in conformity with the 73rd Constitution Amendment. Instead, it amended the two existing acts, namely the United Provinces Panchayati Raj Act, 1947, and the Uttar Pradesh Kshetra Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat Adhiniyam 1961, incorporating provisions to conform to the 73rd constitutional amendment. These amended acts came into force on 22nd April 1994.

Until 1983, Uttar Pradesh had Nyaya Panchayats. The state finance commission was constituted on 23rd April 1994. Following Article 243D in the state Panchayati Raj Acts, reservation has been given for women of not less than one-third of the total seats and offices, as mandated by the Constitution. This reservation is applicable for each term of 5 years. Furthermore, the one-third reservation for women was increased to 50 per cent.

The Panchayati Raj System in Uttar Pradesh is a three-tier structure designed to decentralise governance and bring decision-making closer to the grassroots level. This system includes - Gram Panchayat at the village level, Kshetra Panchayat at the block level, and Zila Panchayat at the district level. The Gram Panchayat is led by a Sarpanch and composed of Ward Members or Panches. The number of Panches varies based on the population of the Panchayat area. The Kshetra Panchayat represents various blocks within a district. It includes elected members, with a Pramukh as the Chairperson and an Up-Pramukh. The Zila Panchayat is formed at the district

level with elected members. It is chaired by an Adhyaksha, with an Upadhyaksha as the deputy.

One of the challenges with many Gram Panchayat members are unaware of their roles and responsibilities, which hinders their effectiveness in representing the community and executing their duties. This lack of understanding leads to ineffective governance, poor implementation of schemes, and an inability to address local issues adequately. Furthermore, there are significant issues related to transparency and accountability within the functioning of Gram Panchayats.

Role of NRLM in the state

The Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (UPSRLM) has actively sought to enhance its institutional capacity and support the development of SHGs and their federations through strategic partnerships with various agencies and organisations. Notable collaborations include partnerships with the Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Manch, Bihar Jeevika, and the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) under the Andhra Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM). These partnerships aim to provide technical assistance and expertise in institution building for the SRLM and in nurturing SHGs and their federations.

Role of CBOs in the state

The formation and operation of SHGs in Uttar Pradesh face several challenges due to a lack of uniform objectives, operational inconsistencies, and logistical difficulties. These issues hinder the effectiveness of SHGs in achieving their goals and participating in local development. Different agencies in UP formed SHGs with varying objectives, leading to a lack of coherence in their purpose and activities. Some members are unaware of their office bearers, the names of their SHG/VOs, and the reasons for joining the network. Many SHGs are inactive and do not follow

the mandated panchasutra (five principles) of the NRLM. The subcommittees formed within VOs are often unaware of their roles and responsibilities, leading to their defunct status. The participation of VO members in General Body and executive body meetings varies based on member availability, with little distinction between the two. Weekly and bi-monthly meetings are irregular, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is limited rotation of leadership within the SHG network, and elections of office bearers are often unfair. There is a lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of office bearers. Logistical challenges including meetings are often dependent on the availability of bookkeepers. And since VOs are formed with SHGs from different panchayats, make data consolidation at the GP level difficult. The members from different panchayats complicate planning and coordination while the plan pertains to a specific GP. However, in pilot locations, while many SHGs are registered on the Management Information System (MIS), there is insufficient information about their operations.

PRI-CBO convergence project

The MoU for the pilot project in Uttar Pradesh was signed for a period of two years from 2018 to 2021, covering 10 blocks across 10 districts. The PRI-CBO Convergence Project aimed to enhance the overall capabilities of SHGs and VOs through regular engagement and capacity-building training. This initiative has led to significant changes in the functioning and objectives of women in the pilot locations.

The primary objective of the partnership between the UPSRLM and KS-NRO was to develop a model for supporting both PRI and CBO networks. This convergence was aimed at achieving effective implementation of the NRLM, leading to sustainable development and better integration of local governance with community development initiatives. The long-term goal is to establish a robust institutional

framework that links the poorest sections of society with local governance mechanisms and fosters an environment where PRIs and CBOs collaborate seamlessly to enhance local development.

Profile of the intervention areas


District	Block	No. of GPs covered	No. of VOs covered	No. of SHGs covered	No. of SHG members
Bahraich	Mihinpurwa	10	42	388	4,708
Banda	B. Khurd	10	16	138	1,380
Basti	Kudraha	10	18	168	1,712
Chandauli	Chakia	10	13	125	1,189
Fatehpur	Malwan	10	16	121	1,210
Gorakhpur	Sardarnagar	10	25	300	3,620
Mirzapur	Nagarcity	10	18	191	2,539
Sonbhadra	Chopan	10	33	374	4,730
Sultanpur	Lambhua	10	11	110	1,200
Varanasi	Arajiline	10	10	118	1,371
TOTAL		100	202	2,033	23,659

Strategy adopted for the state

a. The capacity-building approach adopted in the project aimed to empower and enhance the capabilities of Convergence CRPs and CBOs. This process-oriented capacitation involved comprehensive training sessions covering various activities and schemes, followed by field exposure to provide practical understanding. The project emphasised developing knowledge and skill sets, ensuring that the capacity-building process was a robust learning experience. Additionally, the tools developed for participatory planning also served as effective means for capacity-building, facilitating practical application and reinforcing learning.

b. The project emphasised significant capacity-building activities for various stakeholders, particularly Convergence CCRP and VOs in all 100 panchayats. The CCRP training focused on strengthening CBOs by sharing Kerala's development experience and highlighting the importance and role of the CBO network. This training also aimed to equip CCRPs with the knowledge and skills necessary to support and strengthen CBOs, emphasising the value of community networks in development. 188 VOs received training to raise awareness about the rights, responsibilities, and power of VO members and office bearers. These sessions included orientation, participatory assessments, and training on the VPRP. Various initiatives, such as the Jeetenge Hum campaign, VO Empowerment Festival, and VO office bearer training, were designed to motivate and empower VO members to take ownership and responsibility for their work. These capacity-building activities were carefully crafted to equip CCRPs and VOs with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively contribute to the development process. They fostered a sense of ownership, collective responsibility, and motivation among the stakeholders, ensuring their active involvement in shaping the progress of their communities.

c. A major focus was on establishing strong and reliable institutional structures to promote



participatory governance at the Gram Panchayat level. Efforts were made to engage local communities and stakeholders to create effective mechanisms that facilitate community participation in decision-making processes related to the project. These structures aimed to ensure that community voices were heard and considered, enhancing transparency and accountability in governance.

d. An important aspect of the project was implementing a mechanism to track and monitor entitlements associated with the project. Systems were put in place to ensure that the intended beneficiaries received their entitled benefits and services on time. This mechanism enabled effective monitoring and evaluation of the project's impact, ensuring transparency and accountability.

e. Extensive support was provided to CBOs to help them emerge as effective service delivery agencies. This support included capacity-building initiatives, training sessions, and ongoing mentorship, enabling CBOs to enhance their operational efficiency and service delivery capabilities.

f. The project created an environment that encouraged and nurtured innovative actions by local communities. Support and facilitation were provided for local initiatives aimed at addressing specific challenges and opportunities within the project. This approach was designed to ensure community ownership and active contribution to the project's success. By fostering a culture of innovation and empowering communities to take initiative, the project aimed to develop sustainable and locally relevant solutions, enhancing overall impact and effectiveness.

Key outcomes of the project

1. Cleanliness drives were organised in Panchayats to create a hygienic space:

To address the issues of illness among children and create a hygienic environment, several cleanliness drives were organised across various Panchayats. These initiatives were primarily driven by VOs who recognised the importance of maintaining clean communal spaces. The main aim was to create a hygienic space within the Panchayats to prevent illness, especially among children. VOs mobilised women and other community members to participate actively in cleaning the Panchayat and other common areas. The cleanliness drives were conducted once or twice a month to ensure regular maintenance and cleanliness. These drives have been organised in Bilari Panchayat in Gorakhpur, Bhaskarpur, and Inderpurwa Gram Panchayat in Chandauli.

2. Developing and executing community-based sensitisation campaigns:

A series of community-based sensitisation campaigns were conducted, focusing on various aspects of individual and community social development. These campaigns were instrumental in raising awareness and providing essential health services to the community members. Over 33 health awareness sessions and medical camps were held across 33 panchayats benefitting over 4,569 people. The camps were organised in collaboration with Health Sub-Centres, Primary Health Centres, and Community Health Centres. These events were facilitated with the help of the Chief Medical Officer, the Medical Officer in charge, and Community Health Officers. Pregnant women, children, adolescent girls, men, and others benefitted in these health camps, where they were provided with iron and calcium tablets, free basic health checkups, eye drops, menstrual

hygiene awareness, and nutrition checks for malnourished children.

3. Health Camps and awareness sessions

In response to the health challenges faced by communities in eastern Uttar Pradesh, a series of health camps and awareness sessions have been organised across several districts. These initiatives aim to raise awareness about various diseases and encourage community members to seek medical assistance at the nearest Primary Health Centers (PHCs). A total of 33 health camps have been organised across Chandauli, Mirzapur, Varanasi, and Fatehpur districts. These camps serve as platforms for providing basic health check-ups, screenings, and consultations.

4. Camps for Disability Pension

While preparing the Village Poverty Reduction Plan in 2020, many beneficiaries were identified under disability pension. However, many of these beneficiaries faced challenges in accessing disability pensions due to a lack of disability certificates. In response to this issue, the district-level Disability Officer was approached with the proposal to organise block camps for the beneficiaries. Two such camps were conducted in Basti and Sultanpur respectively, at the block level, to issue disability certificates and assist beneficiaries in submitting applications for various types of disability equipment and appliances. Seventy-three applications were submitted, and the beneficiaries received 46 prosthetic limbs and tricycles.

5. Adult literacy classes

While drafting the social development plan within the Village Poverty Reduction Plan, women expressed their desire to learn to read and write. In response to this request, plans were submitted to the Panchayats, seeking their support in providing necessary resource materials. Following this initiative, community-led literacy campaigns were launched across

Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Banda, Basti, Sultanpur, and Bahraich. A total of 29 adult literacy classes have been initiated, benefiting 471 women.

6. Labor Card Camps and Ayushman Bharat camps:

The Labor Department conducts registrations for individuals engaged in manual labour work. Upon the formation of a labour card, beneficiaries become entitled to various services, including healthcare support, child support, and others. Awareness sessions and labour card registration camps were organised in Fatehpur and Varanasi. Through these efforts, a total of 1,617 beneficiaries have obtained their cards. Additionally, Ayushman Bharat camps were conducted in Banda, Basti, Sultanpur, and Mirzapur, benefiting a total of 1,911 people.

7. Job Card Melas

This community-based event serves as a unique platform designed to bridge the gap between Panchayat and SHG members by providing and disseminating reliable information. Specifically addressing concerns within the MGNREGS, many SHG members express doubts regarding the payment process, delays, and work demands. To address these issues effectively, Rozgar Sevaks and Panchayat Pradhans are invited to distribute job cards directly to women, providing clarity and motivation to empower them. Fourteen job card melas have happened across Basti, Banda, Gorakhpur, and Fatehpur, and 1,529 beneficiaries.

Details of Classes, camps and mela's


District Name	Adult literacy		Health camps		Camps for Ayushman Bharat		Camps for Labour Card		Job Card Mela's	
	Classes initiated at the GP level	Total women participation	Total camps	Total Participation	Total Camps	Total beneficiary	Total Camps	Total beneficiary	Total Mela's	Total cards received
Bahraich	1	23	9	1,188			3	248	7	1021
Banda	5	64			10	162	2	100	2	85
Basti	10	62			9	837			1	50
Chandauli	1	37	6	944			1	70		
Fatehpur			2	140			1	26	1	16
Gorakhpur	7	123	3	427			4	108	1	289
Mirzapur	1	50	6	1,247	10	592	3	387	1	52
Sonbhadra	1	23	5	316						
Sultanpur	1	15			10	320				
Varanasi	2	74	2	307			8	678	1	16
Total	29	471	33	4,569	39	1,911	22	1,617	14	1,529

8. Capacity building for enabling effective functioning of CBO through necessary governance processes and practices (VPRP GPDP Gram sabha, MGNREGS work)

Several capacity-building training and orientations have been given to VO and SHG members. These initiatives are described below:

i. Village Poverty Reduction Plan:

The VPRP is a comprehensive demand plan for local development, collaboratively prepared by



SHGs and their federations in partnership with Gram Panchayats. It forms an integral part of the convergence efforts of the NRLM. The VPRP consolidates demands across various sectors including livelihoods, health and sanitation, social security, natural resource development, and basic infrastructure. These demands are compiled by poor families who are members of SHGs established under the NRLM.

KS-NRO developed the module and rollout strategy for the VPRP after consultation with its field team. Subsequently, it was translated into Hindi for wider dissemination. As a demand plan, it was prepared by CBOs with facilitation from Mentor RPs and Cluster Coordinator Resource Persons (CCRPs). Block-level orientation and training sessions were conducted for CCRPs from all pilot panchayats in batches, incorporating mock SHG-level VPRP exercises and VO level infrastructure and resource mapping during the training. Following this training, planning sessions were held with the VPRP to schedule capacity-building activities for VO leaders.

After the SHG plans were prepared, they were consolidated at the VO level, where mapping of infrastructure and resources was carried out. This consolidation was then extended to the panchayat level, where mapping of infrastructure and resources specific to the panchayat was conducted. Subsequently, a consultative meeting between PRI and CBOs was organised, where VO members, panchayat officials, and representatives from line departments discussed and deliberated on the plan's components. The plan was further presented and discussed in the Gram Sabha and subsequently integrated into the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). Furthermore, a stakeholder workshop was planned at the block level to invite all major stakeholders and plan for GPDP and the integration of VPRP

Activity Coverage– VPRP

Name of the District	VPRP 2019							VPRP 2020					
	No. of GPs	No. of SHGs	No. of SHG members	No. of VO	No. of GPs prepared VPRP	No. of SHG completed PAE	No. of SHG members attended PAE	No. of VOs prepared EAP	No. of GPs	No. of SHGs	No. of SHG members	No. of VO	No. of GPs prepared VPRP
Bahraich	5*	256	3,161	29	5	256	3,019	29	10	388	4,708	42	10
Banda	10	110	1,049	14	10	104	914	14	10	138	1,380	16	10
Basti	10	175	1,994	172	10	172	1,994	19	10	168	1,712	18	10
Chandauli	10	118	1,078	13	10	118	817	13	10	125	1,189	13	10
Fatehpur	7*	78	804	11	7	77	698	11	10	121	1,210	16	10
Gorakhpur	10	225	2,396	25	10	225	2,379	25	10	300	3,620	25	10
Mirzapur	10	150	1,739	16	10	150	1,518	16	10	191	2,539	18	10
Sonbhadra	5*	197	2,446	18	5	197	2,236	18	10	374	4,730	33	10
Sultanpur	10	88	940	9	10	88	940	9	10	110	1,200	11	10
Varanasi	10	100	1,174	10	10	105	1110	10	10	118	1,371	10	10
TOTAL	87	1,497	16,781	317	87	1492	15,625	164	100	2,033	23,659	202	100

Data on GPDP Gram Sabha

Sl.	Name of the District	No of GPs	2019				2020				Phase 2- 2020							
			No. of GPs where GS took place	Total Attendance in Gram Sabha	Total Women Participation	Total SHG Participation	% SHG Participation	No. of GPs where GS took place	Total Attendance in Gram Sabha	Total Women Participation	Total SHG Participation	% SHG Participation	No of GPs	No. of GPs where GS took place	Total Attendance in Gram Sabha	Total Women Participation	Total SHG Participation	Total SHG
1.	Banda	10	08	406	366	366	90.1	08	844	680	680	80.5	10	06	360	330	330	100
2.	Bahraich	05	05	543	481	409	75.3	05	1513	1363	1219	80.5	10	10	2189	2046	1998	97.65
3.	Basti	10	10	1276	1162	1077	84.4	10	1412	1264	1241	87.8	10	10	1142	982	926	94.29
4.	Chandauli	10	09	1217	1073	833	68.4	04	215	183	183	85.1	10	08	715	618	618	100

5.	Fatehpur	07	00	Gram Sabhas did not take place. A consultative meeting was undertaken									10	10	802	679	679	100
6.	Gorakhpur	10	05	1123	846	786	69.9	05	1704	1123	1073	62.9	10	10	1127	1011	997	98.61
7.	Mirzapur	10	00	196	182	182	96.8	07	670	649	649	96.8	10	06	542	499	499	100
8.	Sonbhadra	05	00	0	0	0	0	05	1235	1103	1103	89.3	10	08	1020	925	920	99.45
9.	Sultanpur	10	10	738	461	430	58.2	02	129	77	60	46.5	10	08	488	369	323	87.53
10.	Varanasi	10	05	682	565	565	82.8	08	859	721	721	83.9	10	08	689	651	651	100

9. Enabling Panchayati Raj Institution's convergence with CBOs for livelihood and service delivery through different centrally sponsored/State sponsored schemes: (Weekly market, livelihood camps, mothers committee)

Several initiatives have been undertaken to enhance the service delivery of Central Sector Schemes (CSS) and State Sector Schemes (SSS), as well as to foster local economic development. Sixteen weekly markets have been established across 16 GPs in seven districts. These weekly markets aim to augment the income of SHG women by providing them with a platform to sell their products. Additionally, various camps have been organised to promote livelihood enhancement and to disseminate information about opportunities in farming, animal husbandry, and micro-enterprises sectors. These camps aim to empower individuals and communities by providing them with resources and knowledge to improve their economic prospects.

i. Weekly Markets:

Interactions with SHG members revealed a gap in having weekly markets (haats) in the panchayats. To address this gap, Mentor RPs and CCRPs initiated the planning process with the VO to identify vendors, select locations, and set inauguration dates for the markets. Additionally, these plans were shared with the Panchayat to seek their support in conducting awareness campaigns and making logistical arrangements.

As a result, the weekly markets became a convergence platform where the Panchayat and VO collaborated for the economic development of the village. A total of 16 markets have been established across seven districts, namely Sultanpur, Bhabraich, Gorakhpur, Basti, Chandauli, Sonbhadra, and Fatehpur.

Farm, Non-Farm, Markets

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Total No. of markets opened	Farm & Off Farm		Non-Farm		Krishi Melas		Pashu Melas	
			Total General Training	Total Participation	Total General Training	Total Participation	Total Krishi Melas	Total Participation	Total Pashu Melas	Number of Beneficiaries
1.	Banda						1	45		
2.	Bhabraich	3							1	112
3.	Basti	3							1	130
4.	Chandauli	1							4	213
5.	Fatehpur	1	1	60						
6.	Gorakhpur	4							2	89
7.	Mirzapur		1	267	1	168			2	227
8.	Sonbhadra	2							1	23
9.	Sultanpur	2								
10.	Varanasi				1	136				
Total		16	2	327	2	304	1	45	11	794

⁸ 112 (Vaccination) 18 (Cattle insurance)

ii. Livelihood Improvement & Generation Activities:

In Sultanpur, women from Vaini Gram Panchayat expressed their desire to learn tailoring. A decision was made within the Village Organisation to establish a tailoring centre within the panchayat itself. This decision was communicated to the Pradhan and the Block Mission Management Unit (BMMU), seeking their assistance setting up the centre. Encouraged by the women's enthusiasm, the Pradhan contributed raw materials such as thread and scissors. Additionally, the BMMU agreed to assist the women in acquiring a sewing machine. In Banda, 33 women expressed interest in learning mushroom farming. With support from the District Mission Management Unit (DMMU), the Krishi Vigyan Kendra was approached to conduct a 2-day training course in Triveni Gram Panchayat. In districts like Mirzapur, Varanasi, and Fatehpur, general orientation trainings were organised for aspiring entrepreneurs. These sessions aimed to familiarise participants with the support available from the district and various other line departments.

iii. Krishi & Pashu camps

Most households in our intervention areas are engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. To support these livelihoods, Krishi (agriculture) and Pashu (animal husbandry) melas were organised in Banda, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Sonbhadra, Bahraich, Gorakhpur, and Sultanpur districts. These events aimed to connect the SHG network with various schemes offered by line departments. By participating in these melas, women could enhance their existing livelihoods through access to loans, subsidies, and other services provided by the agriculture and animal husbandry departments.

10. Qualitative Outcomes

a. CCRP as community cadre for enhancing participatory governance

Convergence Community Resource Persons (CCRPs) serve as facilitators for grassroots project activities, offering support to the SHG network and PRI representatives. These individuals were identified from the local community and trained on various aspects of the project. Throughout the project, they received continuous mentorship from Kudumbashree Mentor RPs. By the end of the project, a total of 242 CCRPs had been selected and trained.

b. Changes in the functioning of CBO

Strengthening CBOs through various activities has been a major focus of the project. One of the initial activities conducted in the Gram Panchayats was raising awareness among VO members about their roles and responsibilities. Women from the SHG network were identified to take up the project in these Panchayats as CCRPs. Through initial interactions and orientations, it was observed that CBO members were often unaware of their positions within the group, their roles as office bearers, their responsibilities in developing their Panchayat, and the monetary transactions in SHGs and VOs. This lack of awareness was largely due to irregular SHG and VO meetings and a heavy reliance on cadres.

c. VO Capacity Building

Various activities were implemented to enhance the capacity of VO executive committees. In several Gram Panchayats, innovative initiatives were organised to foster healthy competition among VOs and recognise them as pillars of support during challenges. These activities brought about the following changes in the CBO network:

- After VO strengthening training, some VO subcommittees began maintaining registers to track specific demands outlined in the VPRP. For example, the Samaajik Vikaas subcommittees ensured that VO meetings were held in the designated VO office provided by the PRI as per VPRP requirements. In certain VOs, executive body meetings were conducted in compliance with established norms. Discussions on 'Dasasutra' took place in some VOs, encouraging members to address issues related to education, healthcare, sustainable livelihoods, entitlement access, and PRI accountability. Previously unaware of the CBO system's foundational structure and objectives, CBO members became more vocal about their rights and entitlements. Women who were previously hesitant to engage with officials started raising questions about various funds and schemes during the khuli baithak (Gram Sabha). VOs began preparing VPRPs, prioritising beneficiaries, and presenting these plans to PRI members before the Gram Sabha for integration into the GPDP.

- In many Panchayats, it was observed that influential women often dominated the VO meetings. Two important aspects were discussed during the VO strengthening training to address this issue: seating arrangements during meetings and ensuring the correct members attended these meetings. These sessions proved effective in building the capacity of the office bearers, who gained a clearer understanding of their responsibilities through various activities and games. As a result, office bearers began taking up their duties with the support of other active members, responsibilities that were previously left solely to the latter. For instance, in Gorakhpur, one VO had lost track of expenditure amounting to over INR 50,000/-, with the office bearers unaware of the account's status despite facing questioning and reprimands. In the last week of February, they visited the bank for the first

time to update their passbooks, ascertain the status of the missing amount, and decide how to handle such issues in the VO meeting if the amount could not be tracked. These steps have improved accountability and transparency within the VOs and empowered the office bearers to take proactive measures in managing their finances and responsibilities.

The SHG network is now actively participating in local governance in collaboration with the respective Panchayats and line departments. During the verification of job cards mandated by the Deputy Commissioner, LRGs and VO leaders assisted the Gram Rozgar Sewak (GRS) and Panchayat secretary in verifying and issuing new job cards. Additionally, many Panchayats have initiated efforts to help the community access essential services, such as Aadhar cards, ration cards, and subsidised or free LPG connections. Prioritised beneficiary lists have been regularly submitted to various stakeholders to facilitate access to benefits and to request various trainings from line departments. These activities significantly strengthened the CBO network, leading to better governance, enhanced participation, and more effective advocacy for community needs and rights.

d.Changes in the functioning of PRI

During the project, numerous activities were carried out to establish and strengthen a working relationship with the PRIs. In the initial stages, PRIs across all districts were oriented on the project and its activities. Individual meetings were conducted to help them understand the project's objectives. In many GPs, PRIs had limited knowledge and understanding of the SHG network in their areas. To address this, PRIs were invited to VO meetings to familiarise them with the functioning of the SHG network within the panchayat.

These efforts, including multiple meetings

and continuous engagement, resulted in a significant shift in the attitude of PRIs. Initially hesitant to participate in VO meetings or conduct Gram Sabhas, PRIs gradually understood the project's objectives and began to cooperate actively. In many GPs, they showcased significant support for the project.

After the PAE with the SHG network, PRIs were invited to the EAP meetings organised at the VO level. During these meetings, VOs shared their demands, and PRIs discussed and explained the eligibility criteria for various schemes. During the GPDP Gram Sabhas, women presented the VPRP and discussed the plan and related issues in the GP. PRIs also shared the limitations they faced in fulfilling the demands of certain schemes. Through these discussions and platforms, SHGs and PRIs were brought together on a common platform to share their opinions and work collaboratively.

e. Elected Women Representatives

In various Gram Panchayats across different districts, Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) have emerged as key participants through different means and activities. Cadres engaged with EWRs throughout the project, resulting in their active involvement in several community events and governance processes. Their participation was notable in the GPDP Gram Sabhas, inaugurations of weekly markets, adult literacy classes, and Women's Day celebrations. In districts like Basti, EWRs also took part in consultative meetings held before the GPDP Gram Sabha, where they discussed the VPRP with the cadres. For many EWRs, this project provided their first opportunity to engage directly with the community and discuss the various needs and demands of SHG women.

11. Exposure visits: Impact

Exposure visits to Kerala were incorporated into the project as a tool for capacity building of the PRIs. These visits were intended

to help PRIs understand their roles and responsibilities by exposing them to Kerala's model of development and demonstrating the role and importance of the CBO network in development. In January 2020, 20 PRI members from 10 districts visited Kerala for an exposure visit.

The impact of this visit was reflected in the actions taken by PRIs from various districts:

- In Niyatipur Gram Panchayat, Varanasi, the GP President refurbished the Panchayat Bhavan to make it more accessible to the people, inspired by the way Panchayat offices function in Kerala.
- In Gorakhpur, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the GP President from Belvababu GP, with support from the SHG network, set up a quarantine centre for returning migrants. This Panchayat also achieved 100 per cent entitlement coverage and complete integration of BIRD plans.
- In Kudraha GP, the President approached SHG members to produce masks for the entire village at his own expense, reflecting proactive crisis management.
- In Fatehpur's Barora GP, the GP President participated in VO meetings, motivating women to maintain their SHGs and explaining the benefits and power of the collective.
- In Sultanpur's Parsurampur GP, the GP President not only motivated SHG women in his own Panchayat but also visited VO meetings in other Panchayats to help them understand their role in local development.



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