

2020-2021

# Annual Progress Report



*"Transforming Lives"*

Church of North India,  
Synodical Board of Social  
Services



**The Synodical Board of Social Services (CNI SBSS)** is the development and justice board of the Church of North India (CNI). CNI SBSS was formed as a response of the Church to the whole question of poverty and related social justice for the poor and exploited. It works with marginalized communities throughout the geography of CNI, following the Gospel of Christ to liberate the poor and the oppressed from all forms of enslavement.

### **Vision**

*CNI SBSS aims to establish a society based on equality, justice and peace in harmony with nature.*

### **Mission**

*“In the spirit of service and sacrifice as demonstrated by Jesus Christ, CNI SBSS aspires to restore the dignity of the marginalized communities through a collective struggle.”*

CNI SBSS through its programme has been working primarily with dalits (SC Schedule Caste), adivasis (ST Schedule Tribe) and women who have been socially and economically excluded for past several centuries and continued to live in poverty. Poverty for them is not only limited to fiscal but also in relation to other basic necessities of life like education, health, sanitation, water, asset ownerships and income, validated by scientific indicators like Human Development Index and Multidimensional Poverty Index. To end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity, the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 set out 17 *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) to achieve by 2030. CNI SBSS programs are designed in line with SDGs.

### **1. Income generation & Asset Creation (SDG-1 No Poverty and SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth)**

CNI SBSS works with marginalized communities to identify their economic issues and facilitate solutions to their livelihood problems through various income generation activities. Women Self-Help groups are trained in different alternative livelihoods and small and marginal farmers are engaged in natural integrated farming for increased incomes. The youth in the community are empowered and equipped with different skill building workshops for employment and career development.

### **2. Ensuring Good Nutrition (SDG 2- Zero Hunger)**

CNI SBSS works to improve the nutritional status of young children and women of reproductive age; by ensuring access to benefits under Government schemes like ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme), by helping communities develop kitchen gardens to provide nutritious food to families. And also, through other social security schemes.

### **3. Facilitating Quality Education (SDG4-Quality Education)**

CNI SBSS creates awareness in the community on importance of education to lower the dropout rate especially among girl children, effective functioning of schools in the village. Remedial Centers,

Children Clubs and Children's Library have been formed to provide value education and to enhance creative and communication skills of the community children.

#### **4. Working on SDG 5- Gender Equality**

CNI SBSS efforts are channeled to ensure that all women and girl children live with dignity and respect without facing any exploitation based on gender discrimination. They should gain equal access to education, health, sanitation and sustainable livelihood opportunities, and continually work towards change in gender roles.

#### **5. Access to safe drinking water & sanitation (SDG 6- Clean water and sanitation)**

CNI SBSS works to ensure that communities gain access to safe drinking water and toilet facilities under Government's Jal Shakti Mission and Swachha Bharat Abhiyan. Regular local level campaigns are held to create awareness in the community on open defecation, sanitation, good menstrual hygiene for women and girls, water conservation and preservation.

## **Major Activities during the reporting period**

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

COVID-19 Pandemic hit India in 2019 and the country faced multiple instances of lock down, spike in positive cases, inflation and unemployment which led to loss of life and livelihood. These challenges coincided with our initiation of a new project on nutrition and organic farming. We responded quickly by developing a strong system of web-based planning (Zoom), monitoring, capacity building along with over 100 training/discussion and several planning/review/information dissemination meetings that were conducted online.

We planned our finances methodically with our donors during this period. As a result, while most of the organizations (including reputed companies, business houses and large NGOs) reduced salaries of their employees, CNI SBSS under the leadership of our Chairperson The Rt. Revd. M.U. Kasab and CNI SBSS Board were able to retain our employees and their salaries.

By the grace of God, CNI SBSS responded to this challenging period by reaching out to all the dioceses through different relief programmes. These relief programs were undertaken in some of the most difficult areas like Attari (Indo-Pak border), commercial sex workers colonies in Sangli, Maharashtra, persons with disability, students who needed extensive education support, medical support; various campaigns and vaccination drives were also initiated.

### ***CNI SBSS Response to Help Communities during COVID-19***

The lockdown, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, affected the lives of some of the most vulnerable communities across the country, such as the dalits and tribal communities, migrant labourers, slum dwellers, waste pickers, widows and elderly, both in rural and urban areas. It is to cushion the impact of the crisis on these sections, and to ensure their access to essentials, CNI SBSS along with DBSS provided relief materials like cooked food, ration kits and hygiene kits to the



people in need, as the first emergency response along with creating awareness and assisting in conducting medical check-ups for the people.

**The relief work was conducted in five states of India- Maharashtra, Punjab, Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand, reaching people in 8 districts and covering 40 villages and 2 urban slums. CNI SBSS along with DBSS have been able to provide assistance to around 5700 beneficiaries till now. DBSS teams are also providing indirect support through volunteering in Govt. relief and in generating local resources and funds to help communities.**



***DBSS Calcutta:*** The Mahila Adhikar Manch (MAM), which is a community-based Women's local body helped in creating awareness and distribution of sanitation materials, masks etc. Around 3500 masks were stitched by the SHGs and distributed in the communities till no. Ration and essential medicine distribution in the community was done with support of The Rt. Revd. Paritosh Canning, Bishop of Calcutta Diocese



***DBSS Kolhapur:*** Community kitchens were run for the migrant sugarcane cutters living in temporary shelters and provided with hygiene kits. Masks are being produced by SHGs to distribute in the community



***DBSS Chotanagpur: Ration and other essentials distributed at Torpa block***



***SEDP Amritsar: Distribution of dry ration and Mask distribution to workers at Grain market in Attari area***



***DBSS Nasik: Around 39 migrant sugar cane cutters of native Buldhana district of Maharashtra have taken shelter at a school near Ahmednagar. They are being provided cooked food and other essentials. Health check-ups are also being conducted for them***



***DBSS Cuttack: Distribution of hygiene kits by Municipality to 700 families at Kathojori Vihar slum along with support of Diocese of Cuttack***

CNI SBSS along with DBSS began focusing on reviving the rural economy, along with providing relief materials to communities still in need. Farming and kitchen gardening have resumed, along with few alternative livelihood initiatives in collaboration with other NGOs, and linking with Govt. schemes to initiate income generation for the communities. Relief materials like ration kits and hygiene kits (soap, sanitizer, sanitary pads) and masks were distributed along with creating awareness and assisting in conducting medical check-ups for the people. DBSS teams also provided indirect support through volunteering in Govt. relief and in generating local resources and funds to help communities.



A Livelihood Centre- NARI DANA (giving wings to women) was established by **DBSS Calcutta** at Kulberia village in collaboration with CRS (Cathedral Relief Services), a Kolkata based Christian NGO. 34 community women participated in the launch event. Initially 15 women would be selected to undergo training in stitching and tailoring at this unit. DBSS also distributed ration to 100 families at Kulberia village by The Rt. Revd.

Paritosh Canning, Bishop of Calcutta Diocese. Masks were produced with support of SHGs and distributed to children at Hatgachia village. A separate awareness session, only catering to children was conducted on COVID-19 safety measures.

For COVID-19 prevention at workplaces, **DBSS Kolhapur** distributed face masks to brick kiln workers at Kerle village. Facemasks were also distributed at Malgaon and Vijayanagar field areas along with ration to 50 beneficiaries at Malgaon. **DBSS Nagpur** distributed masks and sanitizers to community involved in MGNREGA work along with educating people on safe at work protocols at Sonegaon village.



Vegetable farming has resumed at Nasik field area by SHG women farmers of **DBSS Nasik**. DBSS distributed dry ration and hygiene kits to 30 beneficiaries of Jamgaon, Bhandgaon & Dhotre villages supported by CNI SBSS. Diocesan leaders, Diocesan Women's Fellowship members and youth group helped in purchase and distribution of the materials. Dry ration and soaps distributed to 20 beneficiaries at Karegaon, Bherdpur & Khiridi villages of Nasik DBSS.

**DBSS Marathwada** distributed dry ration at Bidkin (Kalyan Nagar, Sadat Nagar), Dhorkin, Ozar,





Pandharohal villages with support of The Rt. Revd. M. U. Kasab, Bishop of Marathwada Diocese and Chairperson, CNI SBSS, along with diocese office bearers and representatives from local administration.

**DBSS Chotanagpur** distributed ration and hygiene kits with sanitary pads at Bano and Kamdara field area by DBSS along with support of local church leaders. A small awareness session was also conducted for women and girls by DBSS team on Menstrual Hygiene Day (28th May 2020).

### Church During COVID-19 Relief Work

As part of the **\*Church Mission Engagement (CME) Program of CNI SBSS**, the church members from both rural and urban congregations volunteered to help in relief initiatives. At **DBSS Barrackpore**, relief work was initiated by St. Thomas Church at Sabnamaskar village and Raghampur Pastorate at Bishnupur-I block. Relief kits were distributed to 73 and 53 individuals by church members. The **Women's Fellowship Committee (WFC) of CNI** at Rajarampur village at DBSS Barrackpore distributed relief kits to 152 families. Most of the beneficiaries are part of local Capacity Building Organisation (CBO) in the village. Distribution of masks and packaged food was also done by **Diocese of Amritsar** along with **SEDP** team.



**CNI Synod Block Grant Scheme:** Honorable Moderator Most Revd. Dr. P.C Singh, 18 CNI Dioceses opted for CNI Synod Block Grant Scheme from CNI SBSS and were given INR 50,000 each as COVID-19 Relief and support.

This amount was utilized to provide relief in form of ration kits containing essential food items, distribution of cooked food and sanitation kits, in each of the 18 dioceses who were in distress due to loss of livelihood and deaths in family due to COVID-19. The beneficiaries included people from our community, laymen from local churches, priests and evangelist families who are affected by pandemic.



**Emergency Relief in Jharkhand:** CNI SBSS with support of Christian Aid provided hygiene materials and livelihood support to 300 beneficiaries at 20 villages, in blocks Bano and Torpa of districts Khunti and Simdega in Chotanagpur intervention area.



Out of the 300 beneficiaries, 50 of the beneficiaries were presbyters, preachers and evangelists from Chotanagpur Diocese. Safety kits for staff and volunteers were also provided. Awareness on COVID-19 protocol and importance of getting vaccinated was also conducted. The beneficiaries were selected on the basis of specific criteria like- COVID-19 affected families, widows, old-age, Person with Disability (PWD), youth/ bread earners those whose livelihood has-been affected by lockdown and bread earners death due to COVID-19.

### **Launch of “Corona Ke Sang Jeena” Campaign by CNI SBSS and DBSS**



CNI SBSS with DBSS launched the Campaign- “*Corona ke Sang Jeena*” (Living in times of Corona), to create awareness and equip people on how to live safely during COVID-19 and engage in day-to-day activities at home and at the workplace. As the rural economy is slowly reviving and people are going back to work, it is imperative to prepare and inform people about the necessary precautions and preventive measures they can undertake.

The Rt. Revd. M. U. Kasab, Bishop of Marathwada Diocese and Chairperson, CNI SBSS launched the campaign at DBSS Marathwada in July 2020.

The campaign activities have been initiated at DBSS – Marathwada, Chotanagpur, Nasik, Phulbani and Durgapur. These include: community meetings and discussions, awareness through wall writing, distribution of educational materials among children to assist them in their studies and livelihood support to communities through MGNREGA, farm activities and SHG activities.

For an effective reach, DBSSs used an Information Dissemination Vehicle, which takes multiple rounds of various villages and Panchayats and creates awareness on safety measures against COVID-19. This comprises of personal, home and environmental hygiene measures, protocols for workplaces and public places and different Govt. schemes which the community can avail during this time and get benefitted. Handwashing with soap, maintaining social & physical distance and use of facemasks is being emphasized.



Ideas were also shared with the community on how they can use locally available natural resources in developing disinfectants, hand-washes, soaps, community hand-washing points and other traditional methods related to health, hygiene and cooking food. Reviving kitchen gardens is also given preference in comparison to total dependence on local market to buy vegetables for daily use. The Remedial Centres have also been re-opened for the children to come and study in small groups.

The Child Clubs have initiated safe activities like outdoor games, PT exercises, poetry recitation, role-plays etc. to keep the community children engaged.



**Creating Awareness:** DBSSs used different IEC materials like banners, posters and leaflets along with making announcements through loudspeakers to create awareness in the community. The Information Dissemination Vehicles took rounds of the villages and providing all necessary information to the community. Other information mediums like local songs, street plays and videos in regional languages on the theme of COVID-19 were used in awareness generation. Farmer groups, SHGs, widows and elderly are being informed about different Govt. schemes by the DBSS, which they can avail during this time and get benefitted.





Wall Writing was done on COVID-19 depicting dos and don'ts with attractive slogans and taglines at DBSS Nasik, Chotanagpur, Barrackpore and Nagpur. Child Clubs and local youth are involved in the activity. With support of Gram Sabha members, 30 youths from the community at DBSS Chotanagpur were oriented and asked to Join, Participate, Learn and Win through Wall Writing competition. They wrote slogans on health and hygiene to create awareness in the community.



**Supporting Education:** Educational materials like stationery, colours, paints, drawing and colouring books, notebooks are being distributed to the community children at LDTs (Leadership and Development Centre) at SEDP Amritsar and to the Child Clubs of different DBSSs. Children are being informed on preventive measures for COVID-19 through group activities. The Remedial Centres have been re-opened for the children to come and study in small groups. The Child Clubs have initiated safe activities like outdoor games, PT exercises, poetry recitation, role-plays etc. to keep the community children engaged.

**Reviving Livelihoods:** SHGs at DBSS Chotanagpur and SEDP Amritsar are being provided seed money for vegetable farming and to support their small businesses like stitching and tailoring, phenyl making, pickle making etc. SEDP Amritsar is promoting the use of recyclable and bio-degradable products like cloth and paper bags in the community. The thought behind this came forth because of the mass generation of non-recyclable waste due to COVID-19 preventive products like masks, gloves etc. The SHGs have been provided sewing machines to stitch bags and masks.

At DBSS Nagpur, 20 farmer families at two villages have been supported by CNI SBSS to buy organic manure and use it for organic farming. This is a revolving fund which will be re-invested in the community. DBSS Nasik and Marathwada are supporting families by providing equipment like sowing machines & mixing machines to use in farming and allied activities. DBSS Kolhapur is training 30 women at the new Garment Making Unit at Kodoli in stitching masks, gowns etc.



### Outcome of CNI SBSS 'Corona Ke Sang Jeena' Campaign

The use of Information Dissemination Vehicles (small trucks, autos, vans) helped in spreading awareness using loudspeakers, posters and pamphlet distributions in the community covering more than **81 villages** across five states of India. People were encouraged to wash hands frequently with soap and water, wear face masks in public places, avoid meeting people with cold and cough, observe physical distance, avoid crowded places, and stay home as much as possible. Wall Writings were also effective in disseminating information through catchy slogans and messages related to COVID-19, health and hygiene. At few places community meetings were held maintaining physical distancing which was effective in community dialogue to take out suppressed fears among the people and also gave them a platform to take guidance and suggestions from DBSS teams and from invited local health professionals. Other information mediums like local songs, street plays and videos in regional languages on the theme of COVID-19 were used for generating awareness. Farmer groups, SHGs, widows and elderly were informed about different Govt. schemes which they can avail during this time by the DBSS. **DBSS partners reached more than 27,772 individuals through the awareness activities.**

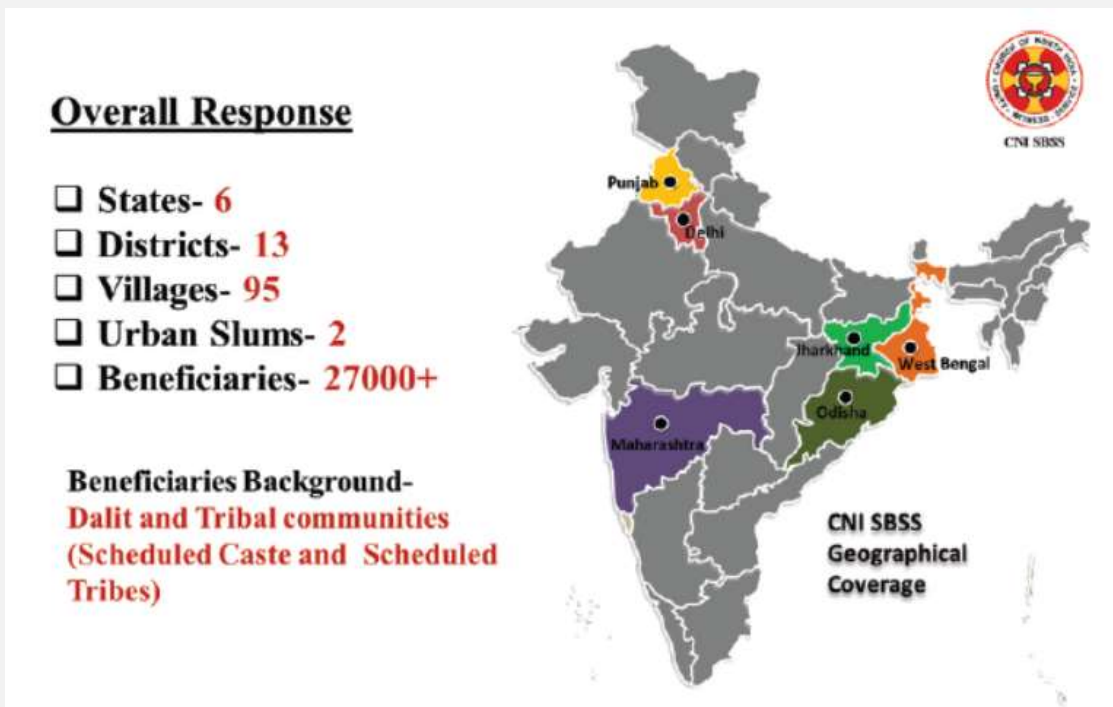
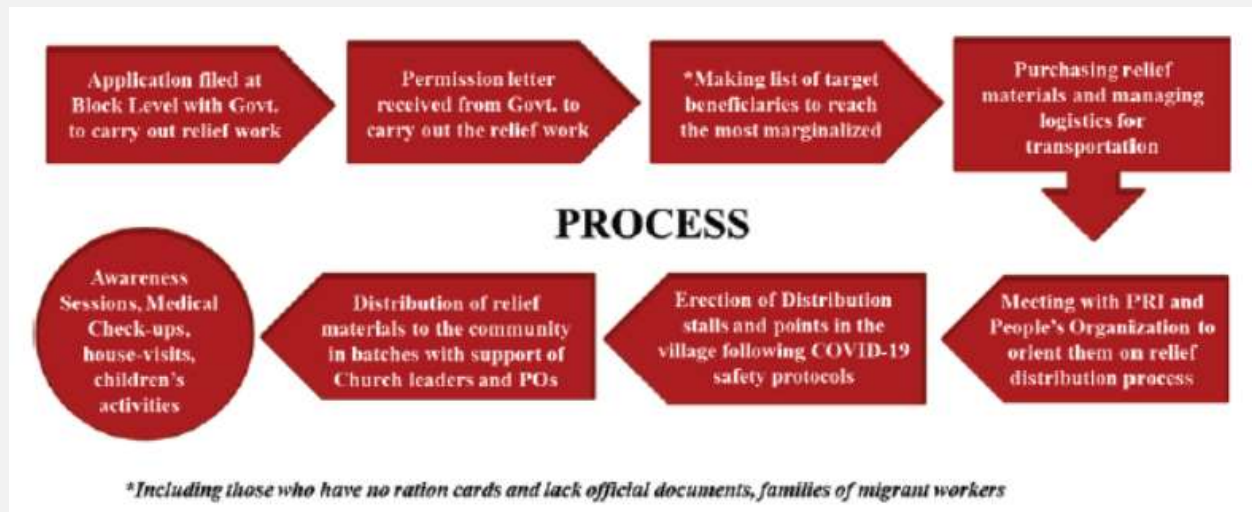
While teachers and students in urban areas resorted to distance learning, children in rural areas have missed out on education as they don't have the means of attending online classes. To encourage children to not lose interest in studies and keep on honing their creative and artistic skills, educational materials like notebooks, stationery, colour pencils and painting sets were distributed among the community children through the various Child Clubs at 10 DBSSs. **2266 children between ages 3-18 years got benefitted under it. 1994 children were reached** under the age bracket of **6-14 years**. Apart from this, children were informed on preventive measures for COVID-19 through group activities. The Remedial Centre teachers kept in touch with the parents in the community and took initiative to provide home-to-home tuitions wherever children needed help.





**204 women from more than 33 SHGs and 13 men** were supported with seed money to engage in livelihood activities like organic farming and allied activities like goatery, poultry, piggery etc., for buying agricultural equipment, NTFP (Non-timber Forest Produce) collection, leaf-plate making, for making jute products, pickle making, cloth-bag making, washing powder and phenyl making. DBSS Kolhapur is training **30 women** at the new Garment Making Unit in stitching masks, gowns etc.

CNI SBSS along with Diocesan Boards of Social Services will continue to support and guide the communities through this crisis to build informed citizens who will be able to adapt to this new change and environment with good immunity and resilience.







## CASE STORIES

### 'Braving a New Small Venture through Integrated Farming Technique'

#### Story of a Small Farmer with a Big Dream



**Tirtha Bar** (62 yrs) is a small farmer from Khanberia, Thakurpukur Mahestolla Block, South 24 Parganas. They are a family of four adult members and two small children subsisting through farming on a small piece of land. By engaging in seasonal farming, they were able to grow few vegetables. Yield was very less due to reduction in fertility of soil over the years.

"There were more mouths to feed and less food and money to go around." said Tirtha Bar. His

family members had to regularly spend money on medicines for various ailments affecting them, resulting in a further decrease in his meagre income. His son, a daily wage labourer was not gainfully employed and his work was not regular. Additionally, the family would be in the clutches of the local money lender on a very regular basis.

Tirtha's village falls under the reference area of **DBSS Calcutta**. DBSS organised a workshop for small farmers of the village who owned a plot of land or had a kitchen garden of their own. A special international trainer was asked to facilitate the training. Tirtha was one of the first to sign up and was in fact the oldest of the participants. The training focussed on helping small farmers with small plots of land to grow crops using integrated farming techniques. Topics like vermi-composting, how to develop organic manure, insecticides and pesticides, how to integrate animal husbandry with farming were discussed.

After the workshop, Tirtha Bar got motivated and decided to improve his farming technique and thereby began working on increasing the productivity of his small land. He dug a vermin-compost pit and filled it with hay, leaves, cow droppings etc. He prepared the small patch in front of his house and began working on it. Thin bamboo scaffoldings were made for the creeper vegetable plants and saplings and seeds were planted. As the plants began to grow, Tirtha made organic pesticides out of various leaves to keep away the destructive insects but not kill insects beneficial for the plants. "People in my village were quite surprised and apprehensive on how a couple of leaves-soaked over-night could ward off insects that they had been trying to annihilate for so many years and by using expensive methods", says Tirtha.

While at the workshop, Tirtha and the others participants were told how the droppings of poultry could be used as the manure quotient in the making of the organic manure and the leaves of the vegetables could be used as food for the chickens. After few weeks, DBSS team facilitated in purchasing chicks for few farmer families in the village. Tirtha bought 30 chicks. He reared them and applied the technique taught at the workshop. Over time, the quality and productivity of the vegetables he had grown increased. After some time DBSS arranged for a government veterinarian and a medical camp was set-up for the families who had bought the chicks which had now grown and needed to be checked for infections and to be inoculated. Tirtha's chicks were also checked at the camp and all were found to be in good condition.

The fowls started laying eggs, which are consumed by the family and the excess is sold in the local market. Tirtha does not buy vegetables from the market anymore; in fact, because of good productivity he is able to sell more out of the excess yield. His family's health condition has improved and his medical bills have greatly decreased. His son also assists him as he sees the multiple benefits of his father's small venture of bravery.



*During the lockdown period due to COVID-19 pandemic, when other families were greatly affected due to the loss of income and employment, small farmers like Tirtha Bar and his family managed to sail through this storm of their lives. Tirtha Bar's kitchen garden is an inspiration to others in the area, who ask him for guidance as they venture into uncharted waters guided by a Captain who has weathered the storm himself.*

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### **Encouraging a multi-approach for better income- Story of Swati**



Swati Kerketta is a resident of Raitoli, Barkuli in Torpa, Jharkhand. From working as a daily wage labourer, today she is a proud small entrepreneur in her village. Swati comes from a small farmer family, but due to less income they could not invest much to produce enough crops to consume or sell. She and her husband had to always work as a daily wage labourer and be dependent on job work. The meager income was not sufficient to run their house and she was not able to save enough for her two children. Gradually she realized that this was not working out and discussed her problems with ladies from the local SHG. Further DBSS Chotanagpur intervened and helped her join the group and she learnt about additional income activities and how to save and



invest. This was a life changing moment for her.

After consultation with the women's group, the couple bought a milking cow was able to collect 6–8-liter milk per day to sell in Torpa. Slowly their family income began to increase and they were in a better position to run their household. In 2020, a gardening program began under MGNREGA and DBSS encouraged the community women to also apply under it. Swati also applied in it. However, she got refused as officials said she won't be able to take care of garden as her land was far from her village and too small in size. DBSS facilitated and requested Panchayat representatives to accept her application. Eventually she got the approval for gardening and planted 60 mango trees in ½ acre (approx.) of land. In future this will help her in getting a good price and earn a substantial amount in the future.

Swati's story is a story of change and growth. With her sincere efforts and support of DBSS, she was able to revive her land and hopes for much better financial standing in future. Investing in more than one source of income proved beneficial for a sustainable livelihood.

*CNI SBSS along with DBSS has been working with women in Jharkhand to disseminate information about different Government schemes in a focused manner to the deprived while simultaneously giving voice to people through collectivization (with specific focus on women beneficiaries). This access to different schemes will ensure sustained income for the deprived communities. Local church congregations are involved in the process as support system and to include them in development of their communities.*

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