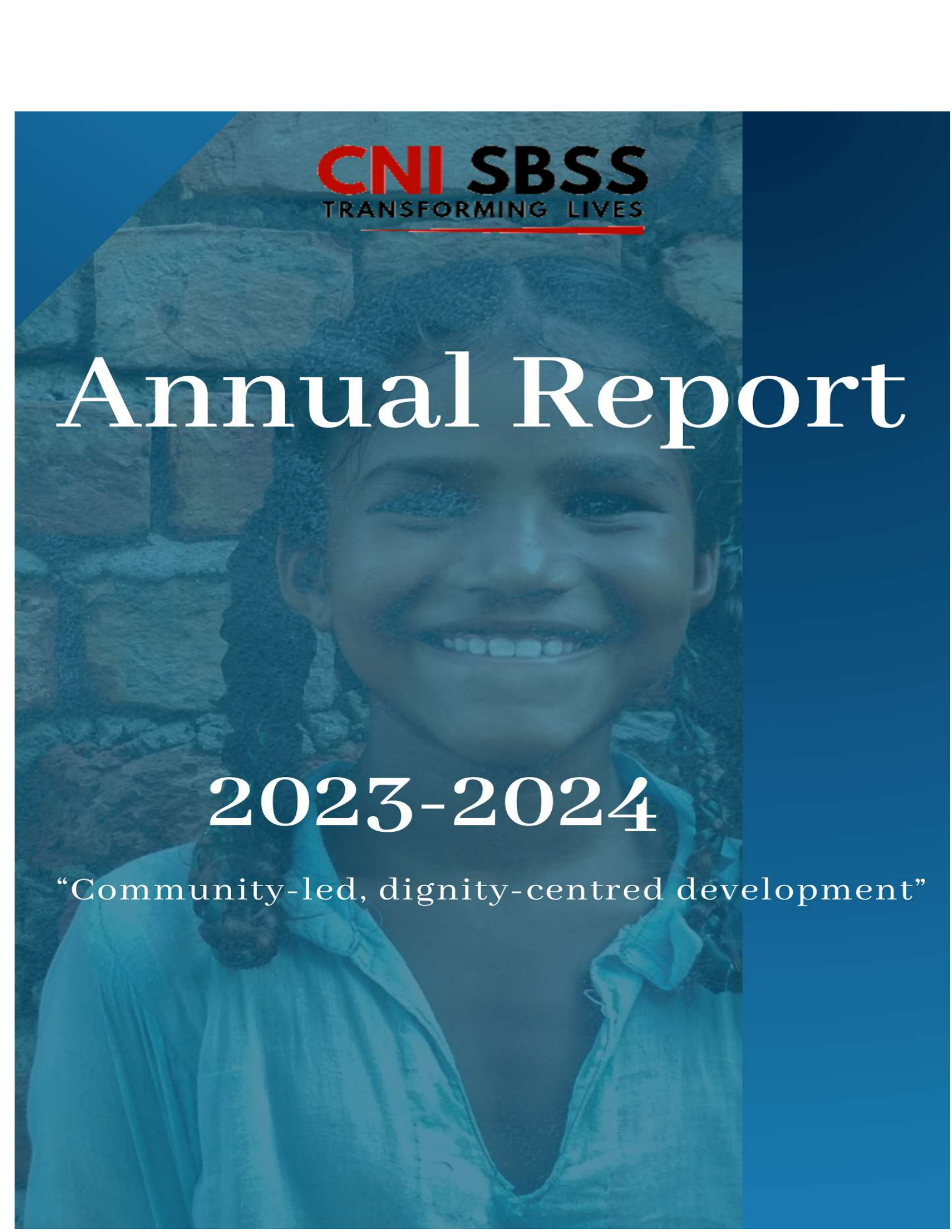


The background of the cover is a photograph of a young girl with dark skin and braided hair, smiling broadly. She is wearing a light blue shirt. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. In the top left corner, there is a solid blue triangle. The text 'CNI SBSS' is in red and black, with 'TRANSFORMING LIVES' in black below it, separated by a red line.

CNI SBSS
TRANSFORMING LIVES

Annual Report

2023-2024

“Community-led, dignity-centred development”

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Introduction & Context

The Synodical Board of Social Services (SBSS) has been a beacon of hope and service since its inception in 1984. Committed towards promoting socio-economic development, SBSS plays a pivotal role in uplifting the most marginalized communities across India. Our work is driven by a deep-rooted belief in people-led change, ensuring that every individual, regardless of religion, caste, creed, colour, or community, has the opportunity to lead a life of dignity and purpose. With nearly four decades of experience, SBSS has become a trusted partner in addressing some of the most pressing challenges faced by the poorest communities. We focus on critical areas such as livelihood enhancement, employment, food security, education, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), nutrition, and overall well-being. Presently our initiatives are spread across five states—Punjab, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Maharashtra—where we work in coordination with local populations, different government departments, and other likeminded organizations to create sustainable, long-lasting development.

At SBSS, we understand that true progress is not just about economic growth but also about fostering a sense of community ownership, and self-reliance. Our programs are designed to equip individuals, giving them the skills and knowledge to improve their own lives and contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities. Through a collaborative approach, we ensure that people are served and that their needs are at the forefront of our efforts.

Our Priorities

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. India is signatory to it for addressing the country's development

challenges and guiding policies and programs towards achieving sustainable development.

SBSS programs are also designed in line with SDGs.

Out of the 17 goals, SBSS is working on 5 goals in the following manner:

1. Income Generation & Asset Creation (SDG 1- No Poverty and SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth)

SBSS works with Poorest 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
- Agriculture: small and marginal farmers are engaged in organic farming for increased incomes.

- The youth in the community are trained with different skill building workshops for employment and career development.

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

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 nutrition gardens to provide nutritious food to families as well as through other social security schemes.

3. Facilitating Quality Education (SDG 4-Quality Education)

- Creating awareness in the community on the importance of education to lower the dropout rate, especially among girl children, and
- ensure effective functioning of schools in the village as per the Right to Education (RTE) Act.
- 12 Children's clubs and children's libraries are formed to enhance their creativity, personality, and communication skills.

4. Working on SDG 5- Gender Equality

- Ensuring women and girl children live with dignity and respect without facing any gender discrimination.
- They should gain equal access to education, health, sanitation and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

5. Access To Safe Drinking Water & Sanitation (SDG 6- Clean Water and Sanitation)

SBSS works to ensure that communities

- To access to safe drinking water and toilet facilities under the Government's Jal Shakti Mission and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
- Awareness building programs are conducted to create awareness in the community on open defecation, sanitation, good menstrual hygiene for women and girls, water conservation, and preservation.

Area of Operations

70+ employees and specialists working at 10 project offices, 2 program support offices, and a Head office.

The team comprises of staff from Program, Finance, Communication and Administration. Along with these 300 volunteers assist SBSS teams in village development work.

Beneficiaries	Female	Male
Children in the 0 - 6 years age group	11,643	12,858
Children in the 6 - 18 years age group	33,266	37,512
Adult Population	51,338	54,829
Total	96,247	1,05,199

SBSS has its registered office (head-office) at New Delhi and two Program Support offices at Pune (West) and Bhubaneswar (East). 10 project offices are at different locations with teams comprising of 5-10 members each.

The Programs team comprises of field staff, referred to as CEs (Community Enablers), responsible for regular community engagement and facilitate change processes at the grass root level. The coordinators provide guidance to the field team in daily operations and consolidate all data and information, reporting to the Program Officers at the regional level. The Programs team, alongside the Finance and Communications team, reports to the Chief Coordinator of SBSS.

Programmes

In 2023-2024 (1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024), SBSS continued its development work for poverty alleviation, building on the foundations laid in the first year. The year was about deepening what had been started: strengthening sustainable farming systems, improving household nutrition, supporting women's livelihoods, and widening access to education, clean drinking water and sanitation for marginalised communities. Most of the year's work on nutrition gardens, drinking water sources and household toilets was completed in the first eight months. In April 2024, our FCRA registration was denied, which slowed the growth of our field activities until the end of the reporting period. Teams and communities kept the work going regardless.

At the centre of this work was organic farming. Most of the farmers we work with are small and marginal, with only 1-2 acres of land, so a low-cost farming system that protects the soil, reduces dependence on expensive chemical inputs and raises incomes is the base for everything else, including household nutrition, women's enterprises and better schooling for children. Building on the demonstration farms and techniques introduced in the first year, SBSS spent 2023-2024 helping more farmers adopt integrated organic farming with allied activities.

Organic farming and allied activities Organic farming and allied activities remained the core of our work on sustainable livelihoods. Farmers were trained to develop demonstration farms that combine organic farming with allied activities. Practices such as bacterial soil fertilization, NPK-based organic fertilizer and homemade organic insecticides and pesticides were used, along with soil testing, water testing and bacterial treatment. Workshops built an entrepreneurial mindset among farmers, with special attention to crop multiplication and 3G pruning to raise production.

120+ farmers were supported in organic farming and allied activities such as poultry, goatery, piggery and fisheries, with annual earnings of more than INR 70,000, across Nagpur, Kolhapur, Chotanagpur, Kolkata, Barrackpore, Durgapur and Phulbani. 20 demonstration plots were maintained for live demonstrations and for building the capacity of other small and marginal farmers in the villages.

Food security and nutrition

SBSS worked on food security and nutrition disparities among marginalised communities through knowledge building and behaviour change on dietary habits, such as what to eat and how to eat, and through monitoring the nutrition levels of children below 6 years and women of reproductive age. We engaged men, women, children and adolescents, people's organisations and government-run ICDS centres to raise awareness of inter-generational malnutrition and its long-term effects on family health. Healthy feeding practices, good pre- and postnatal care and diverse local diets were promoted through nutrition gardens, especially for women and children.

Nutrition interventions continued to reach 1,000 children (0 to 6 years) and 700 women. Nutrition gardens improve household nutrition and increase income by saving on vegetable expenses. 1,000 additional nutrition gardens were developed during the year, taking the total to 2,500, to promote dietary diversity and a balanced diet.

Nutrition awareness campaigns continued in 20 villages under the Integrated Child Development Scheme of the Government of India, covering the importance of using ICDS services, monitoring children's health through the Anganwadi Worker, healthy local foods, and the involvement of family and community. Creative mediums were used to promote handwashing with soap at key times, ending open defecation and responsible management of solid and liquid waste.

Women's economic empowerment

SBSS continued to support women in accessing government schemes such as MGNREGA and its guarantee of the "Right to Work". Entrepreneurship development, linkages between women-run SHGs and banks, markets, government institutions and schemes, and technical support helped improve lives in disadvantaged communities. Women's income generation activities included poultry, goatery, piggery, dairy, stitching and tailoring, sari embroidery, making pickles, papad, sauce and phenyl, handicrafts, tea stalls and grocery shops.

600+ women continued to be engaged in alternative livelihoods and small businesses through 120 SHGs and direct livelihood support, and 1,292 households were engaged in MGNREGA work. The Socio Economic Development of Women project (from December 2023) and the Jharkhand Food Security Project (from January 2024) added to this work.

Education

2,263 children continued to attend government schools regularly and receive benefits under the Right to Education. Our work aims to reduce dropout rates and improve the quality of education by implementing the RTE Act effectively in government schools, through activation of school management committees (SMCs), village-level meetings, and Child Clubs and Child Cabinets that focus on children's language, communication, creativity and physical health.

Water and sanitation

SBSS worked to ensure that communities have access to clean drinking water within 500 metres of households, and that all households can access and use toilet facilities with water available. This involved constructing and repairing water infrastructure such as hand-pumps, tube-wells and taps, and conducting water quality tests. Community meetings and campaigns promoted personal hygiene, sanitation, menstrual hygiene for women and girls, and water conservation.

1,000 households gained access to drinking water sources within 500 metres, through new connections and restoration of old ones, and 407 households gained toilets in their homes, through new construction and restoration. Together with 2022-2023, this takes the total to 2,500 households with drinking water sources and 1,018 households with toilets.

Church Mission Engagement (CME) integrates the mission agenda within the Dioceses and their congregations while standing in solidarity with marginalized communities in their local context. 25+ workshops were conducted across the Dioceses to create awareness on social development issues, including the three-day awareness building workshop on social development at Gopalpur-on-Sea, Odisha, on 24th to 26th October 2023, organised by CNI SBSS in collaboration with the Diocese of Phulbani, Church of North India. 500+ pastors, lay leaders and congregation members were trained.

Youth engagement and Youth Resource Persons

Young people were an important part of SBSS's work in 2023-2024. The Youth Resource Persons (YRPs) are youth volunteers who take part in development activities at village level and assist SBSS teams while growing as local resource persons themselves. During the year, SBSS continued to build the capacity of 60 YRPs, who went from village to village spreading awareness on nutrition, healthy feeding practices, hygiene and the use of ICDS services. They supported ICDS programmes by mobilising mothers and families, helping with child health monitoring, and following up with households. As people from

the same communities, they were trusted and could reach families that outside teams often struggle to reach.

The YRPs also supported organic farming and other activities in their villages, linking farmers, women's groups and SBSS teams. To help young people find livelihoods, 20 youth were trained in vocational skills as drivers, mechanics, beauticians, tailors, electricians and mobile repairers, according to their choice. This has also helped build a new generation of youth who are employable and active in their communities.

The FCRA setback

In April 2024, SBSS's FCRA registration was denied. Without access to foreign contributions, financial and technical support to communities was limited, and there was little visible growth in the numbers of our activities between April and July 2024. Even so, our teams, volunteers and community partners stayed committed. They continued existing work, kept community groups and farmer networks active, and carried out many non-monetary activities, with YRPs playing a key role at village level. SBSS worked to have the registration reinstated, and this process continued as the reporting year closed.

Future Plan

As CNI SBSS looks ahead to the coming year, our focus is on consolidating the gains of this year while preparing the ground for a wider expansion of our community development work. We plan to extend our food and nutrition security efforts to more villages across our existing project geographies, alongside a more focused push on the socio-economic empowerment of women in our tribal and dalit communities. We also want to deepen our engagement with youth, moving more intentionally into skill development and vocational training so that young people in our project areas are better equipped for employment and community leadership.

The denial of our FCRA registration in April 2024 has reminded us how much our programmes depend on international funding. Field activities slowed in the last months of the year, and we were able to carry on largely through non-monetary work and the dedication of our teams, volunteers and YRPs. We have submitted a fresh application, trusting in God's leading, and we recognise that sustaining our work will increasingly depend on our ability to diversify how it is resourced.

Alongside this expansion, we remain committed to strengthening what already works. Our nutrition garden and organic farming models, which have shown strong results in several project areas, will be extended further, and our Self-Help Group approach to women's livelihoods will continue to grow, with closer linkages to government schemes, banks and markets. We will also invest further in our Youth Resource Persons, building a stronger base of young people who can carry awareness on nutrition, ICDS services and organic farming within their own villages.

Looking further ahead, CNI SBSS recognises that the development landscape in India is shifting, and that long-term impact will depend on how we resource and sustain our work. We are beginning to explore avenues beyond traditional international partnerships, including domestic funding, corporate collaboration, and closer engagement with government departments. In time, we hope this thinking can grow into a genuine push toward greater self-reliance. We also see potential to extend our work into new regions in the years to come, carrying our model of community-led, dignity-centred development further. Through all of this, transparency and accountability will continue to anchor how we work, not as an external requirement, but as a value we hold for our own sake and for the trust of the communities and partners who walk this journey with us.

Conclusion

In 2023-2024, SBSS carried forward its work to improve the nutritional situation of young children and women of reproductive age, to increase the income of small farmers through natural integrated farming, and to extend access to safe drinking water and household toilets. Building on the first year, more farmers adopted organic practices, more households set up nutrition gardens, and women's groups and SHGs strengthened their linkages with schemes, banks and markets.

With approaches like integrated organic farming and innovations like multi-layer farming, mixed cropping, livestock management and home-grown organic inputs, we continued to work with farmers to make their livelihoods sustainable, with increased incomes, cost-effectiveness and profitability. Youth were central to this work. Our Youth Resource Persons went from village to village spreading awareness on nutrition and supporting ICDS programmes, and helped build a new generation of farmers engaged in climate-resilient agriculture.

The year closed with the denial of our FCRA registration in April 2024, a moment of deep uncertainty for an organisation whose projects are primarily supported by international partners. Even so, our staff, volunteers and communities continued their work through non-monetary activities, and SBSS promptly submitted a fresh application, trusting in God's leading. We express our gratitude to the Lord Almighty, to the Honourable Bishops, to the office bearers of the CNI Synod and the members of the Board of CNI SBSS, to our partners (Bread for the World, USPG, Change Alliance, Kerk in Actie, Presbyterian World Service & Development, FMSF, ACT Alliance, CASA, CPA, and all others), and to the staff and volunteers of CNI SBSS.

S.No	Benefits Received	Number of Beneficiaries
1.	Organic Farming Technical/Financial Support	120 Farmers
2.	Demonstration Plots showcasing Organic farming and allied activities	20 Households
3.	Supplementary Nutrition through ICDS	1000 children (0 to 6 yrs) and 700 women
4.	Nutrition Garden – Technical and Financial Support	1000 Households (total 2500)
5.	Alternative Livelihood Support and training	600+ women engaged in alternative livelihood and small businesses. 1292 HH engaged in MGNREGA work
6.	Training and Awareness on importance Education	2263 children regularly attending schools
7.	Training and Awareness on importance of Clean Drinking Water	1000 Households gained access to clean drinking water
8.	Training and Awareness on importance of using toilets to prevent open defecation	407 Households gained access to toilets
9.	Vocational Training for Youth	20 youth trained
10.	Church Mission Engagement (CME)	7+ workshops; 140+ pastors, lay leaders and congregation members trained

Governing Body

Mr. B.B. Baskey, Chairperson

Mr. Surendra Nanda, Vice Chairperson

Mr. Soumya Ranjan Mohanty, Chief Coordinator & Secretary

Mr. Manjur Halder, Treasurer

Mr. Sumit Gupta, Member

Mr. Subrata Gorai, Member

Mr. Srinivas Chopade, Member

Ms. Lopamudra Mistry, Member

Dr. Vinita Eusebius, Member

Mr. Joshua Rathnam Chinthala, Member

Mrs. Sushma Kumar, Member

Ms. Shona Thangavel, Member

Ms. Prita Samantroy, Member

Mr. Lal Bahadur Kamble, Member

Mr. Matthew CP, Member

Ms. Parvesh Mattu, Member

Ms. Anima Ekka, Member

Dr. D.J Ajith Kumar, Member

Mr. Pradeep Kawah, Member