■ WORK IN PROGRESS

2024 - 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

25 years of bringing prosperity with ecological security to rainfed landscapes

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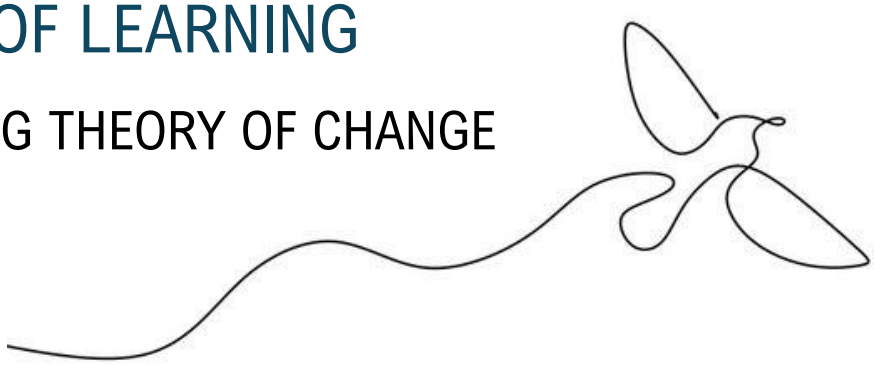
25 YEARS OF LEARNING

OUR EVOLVING THEORY OF CHANGE



25 YEARS OF LEARNING

Our Evolving Theory of Change

This year, WASSAN celebrated its 25th anniversary. Our organization's "networking DNA" was inherited from the very context of its creation and the institutional ecosystem of the Centre for World Solidarity. The visionary founders—B.N. Yugandhar, M.V. Sastri, N.K. Sanghi, Malla Reddy, and Vijay Bhai Kochhar—instilled in us a profound commitment to improving the lives of the poor, women, and marginalized communities in India's vast drought-prone, rainfed, and tribal regions.

They believed deeply in the power of civil society to drive change and the necessity of collaborating with the government to achieve large-scale impact. We have built WASSAN on the principles they taught us: staying humble, strengthening and networking grassroots organizations, learning from their innovations and synthesizing to impact at scale, keeping the community and its institutions at the very center of everything we do.

While the world often emphasizes competition, our founders showed us the value of bringing diverse groups, community leaders, civil society, researchers, government, market players and others —together. We have consistently created platforms and networks for shared learning and dialogue. WASSAN has remained a learning organization, with our growth and vision tied directly to the positive impact we have on the communities we serve.

FROM WATERSHEDS TO AGROECOSYSTEMS

Our work began with a focus on Natural Resource Management (NRM) through a participatory watershed approach. We quickly learned that traditional agriculture systems in risk-prone regions integrate NRM and production, ensuring the health of natural resources. Over time, we realized that modern practices driven by public policy and markets had created a disastrous disconnect, leading to land and soil degradation. This understanding fueled the creation of the **Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture (RRA)** network, emphasizing the need to integrate crops, livestock, and other systems with natural resource management.

Our deep dive into **agroecology** further evolved our perspective. We began to see landscapes not just as resources to be exploited, but as interconnected **agroecosystems**. This led to initiatives like removing chemical loads from production systems and developing participatory tools like e-PRA and Fasal Chakra to better understand spatial and climatic dynamics.

Having its roots in the NRM centered Participatory Watershed Development approach, WASSAN is wedded to a landscape/ area/ place-based approach where the natural resources, production systems and livelihoods are deeply intertwined in the place's social and cultural ethos. We learnt over years of our work in watershed development that the *production systems* need to be aligned with natural resources management; traditional systems have a strong integration where care for the health of natural resources is an integral part of the production systems.

Perverse incentives driven by public policies and market drivers created a disconnect between the NRM and production systems, seeing the NRM as a way to 'exploit resources for economic benefit'; land degradation and deterioration in soil health are typical examples. We have learnt over time that this disconnect will be a disaster for rainfed areas and the communities. Work around this has led to evolution of the national Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture (RRA) network along with several other organisations. The need is to move towards crop, livestock, fisheries, commons, forest production systems integral to the management of natural resources. Much of the work of WASSAN and its contributions to national / state policies are in line with this evolving understanding.

DEALING WITH CLIMATE VULNERABILITY & RISKS

Learning from our engagement with ***'agroecology'*** has further deepened our understanding – seeing the landscape as an '*ecosystem*' rather than as mere '*natural resources'* to be used as a factor of production. The interlinkages are obvious. Reducing the chemical load from the production systems is an obvious entry point into the regenerative ecosystem; this has led us to work on NPM - removing pesticides from the production systems as an entry point to agroecology. We started seeing '***landscapes as an agroecosystem***' and developing our understanding of it. Many participatory tools like **ePRA** bringing spatial visualisation with community and ***Fasal Chakra*** to understand crop systems in its spatial diversity and climate evolved in this process.

In rainfed areas, we've always dealt with the inherent risks of ***climate variability***. Our strategies—from using multi-crops and diverse seed systems to improving soil health, providing access to protective irrigation—have long helped communities manage these vulnerabilities. However, the increasing scale and changing nature of these risks due to **climate change** present a new challenge that we are now working to understand and address.

EMBRACING A LOCAL CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Our recent work has added a new core dimension to our approach: the **local circular economy**. This concept reconnects us to Gandhi's vision of **'Gram Swaraj'** (village self-governance) and decentralization. We've realized that a shift to **agroecology** creates significant economic opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

For instance, adopting traditional seeds, locally adapted varieties, and bio-inputs not only reduces dependence on external chemicals but also plugs a major economic "leak" in the local community. This shift opens up new avenues for local enterprises to produce and supply inputs using locally available resources. With rising rural consumption and accessible technology, it's now easier than ever for local entrepreneurs to thrive.

Throughout this journey, our work has been centered on the people—smallholder farmers, women, and the poor—and their institutions - *women SHGs, FPOs, Gram Panchayats* and other resource governance Institutions. They have been our greatest teachers.

THE PATH AHEAD

Moving forward, our work will be built on four foundational pillars: **Landscapes, Agroecology, Local Economy, and Community Institutions**. These pillars will guide us in achieving ecological security and prosperity for the people of rainfed India.

WASSAN is deeply grateful to the communities, civil society organizations, researchers, government officials, and donors who have supported us in this impactful 25-year journey of learning.

Our learning informs us! Moving ahead, *Landscapes & Agroecology & Local Economy & Community Institutions* will be the foundational pillars of our work in ***realising ecological security with prosperity*** for rainfed areas and the people there in, in India.

WASSAN team wishes to express our gratitude to all those communities, the CSOs, the researchers, government officials, several individual supporters, philanthropic organizations and other donors who have enabled us to learn in this impactful journey of 25 years!

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1 | National Mission on Natural Farming

The Government of India approved and launched the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) in its Cabinet meeting held on 25th November 2024 as a standalone centrally sponsored scheme of Rs. 2481 crore for 15,000 clusters, 7.5 Lakh ha area, 10,000 Bio-input Resource Centres (BRCs) to reach 1 crore farmers and initiate natural farming with 18.75 Lakh farmers

HIGHLIGHTS

- Established the foundation for knowledge and extension of Natural Farming (NF) across the country
    - Mass level training, capacity building and exposure to natural farming provided, reaching 4000+ officials from State, District and Block levels and 2000+ Scientists from ICAR, KVKs and Agricultural Universities
    - 30,000+ Community cadre being developed
    - 1000+ Farmer Master Trainers (FMTs) enabling farmer to farmer extension processes
    - 2000+ model NF farms for demonstration, training, documentation and research
    - Research and documentation of location specific NF practices
    - 10,000 BRCs
    - 18.75 Lakh farmers to initiate NF and thereby generate awareness to 1 crore farmers
- Farmers knowledge of traditional and indigenous natural farming and agroecological principles recognised as a central mandate for scaling of natural farming and agroecology based farming practices
    - Practicing NF farmers identified and appointed as FMTs
    - FMTs engaged at all training institutions to guide and work with Scientists to develop model farms
    - FMTs mandated to train farmers and support farmers & Community Resource Persons (CRPs) in implementation and scaling at NF clusters
- Community based extension system designed in NMNF
    - Model farms to be set up for training of farmers from the clusters as model farms set up in farmers fields - “seeing is believing” concept.
    - Members from the local Gram panchayat employed as CRP
    - Krishi Sakhis, FPO members encouraged to participate as CRPs
    - Existing practicing NF farmers and institutions with prior expertise given platform as training institutions as Local NF Institutions
    - FMTs and Scientists together to impart knowledge of natural farming thus offering scientifically and experientially backed know how to farmers

- Through NMNF, natural farming is a mandate for the ICAR and Scientific institutions
    - Commitment for research in natural farming initiated through allocation of budgets for dedicated research and documentation work
    - Application for research grants is open for not only ICAR institutions but also to FPOs, farmers, experienced NGOs, Agricultural Universities, other allied Universities etc.
    - 600+ KVKs and Agricultural Universities to develop +2000 model farms across the country - 1 farm on station and 3 farms in farmers fields
    - Natural Farming course introduced in B.Sc. (Agriculture), Diploma and dedicated B.Sc. (Natural Farming) course started by 4 Agricultural Universities
- 10,000 BRCs being set up across States and UTs
    - Formulated a local level enterprise set up as practicing NF farmers, SHGs, FPOs, etc.
    - One time support of Rs. 1 Lakh allocated for each BRC
    - Local practices and inputs suitable for the region encouraged

KEY ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN 2024-25

- Guidelines of NMNF shared
- Detailed Operational Manual with annexures shared as development model
- Competitive Research Grant guidelines
- Technical manual on Natural Farming
- Established monitoring framework for scheme implementation
- Annual Action Plan have been approved for 33 States/UTs for 15,560 clusters covering 7.78 lakh Ha area and 8,183 BRCs
- BRC guidelines, training modules and materials shared
- On field capacity building materials like posters, modules, calendar of activities, etc.
- 14 Centers of Natural Farming (CoNF) onboarded
- 2000+ Scientists, FMTs, State & District officials trained
- Onboarding of 500+ KVKs, 80+ Agricultural Universities/ Research Stations and 198 Local NF institutions as training institutions under NMNF
- Frequently Asked Questions on Natural Farming
- Guidelines for NF Model Demonstration Farms prepared
- Released Rs. 9.8 crore in F.Y. 2024-25 to various States/ Central Agencies

2 | The Green Evolution – A Pathway for Food System Transformation (IND-1403)

Implemented in Nepal, India (lead country), and Bangladesh with technical support from Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and financial support from BMZ (German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development), the project aims to transform food systems through agroecological principles.

- **Location:** Koraput, Odisha and Deoghar, Jharkhand
- **Partners:** NGOs - PRAVAH, Abhivyakti Foundation, PRAGATI
- **Research & Academic institutions**: OUAT, SOA, KIIT, MITS, RKM Ranchi, BAU, Central University Koraput

OUTREACH ACHIEVED (2024–25)

Particulars	Jharkhand	Odisha	Total
Number of FFS formed	82	51	133
Number of families covered	1898	1326	3224
Total area covered (in acres)	1200	3878	5078
Panchayats covered	14	7	21
Villages covered	85	41	126
Blocks covered	2	3	5
Districts covered	1	1	2

ACTIVITIES:

- Establish farmers' field schools for continuous rounds of training
- Prepared Kharif 2025 action plan in coordination with district administrations & line departments (Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, MGNREGS, NRLM)
- Engagement with Organic Farming Association of Jharkhand (OFAJ) for training & certification.
- Workshop on Natural Farming in Koraput
- Training programs on e-PRA and Fasal Chakra for CSO partners.
- Food festivals, food walks, nutrition events.
- Platforms for indigenous food, biodiversity, and landraces.
- State-level Indigenous Food Festival "ANKADIRI" in Ranchi.
- Training for agriculture extension workers on agroecology.
- 4 block-level consultation workshops in Odisha & Jharkhand.
- Process underway to integrate agroecology curriculum in OUAT.

Agroecology and food system transformation were new concepts for administration, leading to delayed convergence and slow traction. Systemic and multi-sectoral approaches require time, rapport-building, and continuous engagement with the stakeholders.

3 | Ecological Intensification of Tribal Economy

Implemented across 18 remotely located tribal Gram Panchayats in the hilly terrains of the Parvathipuram Manyam district, Andhra Pradesh. Despite the region's rich natural resources and favorable rainfall, its communities remain economically marginalized due to insufficient investments in water infrastructure, low levels of agronomic innovation, and limited institutional capacity.

The aim is to foster ecological transformation through community-led water resource development, sustainable agriculture, and value chain creation—thereby enhancing food security, nutrition, and bringing income stability to the tribal gram panchayats.

The initiated is implemented in close coordination with the District Administration and Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), availing services such as livestock vaccinations, Animal Health Care, plantations and crop diversifications

PARTNERS

- **FPOs -** Manyan Sahaja and Advithali FPCL
- District Administration of Parvathipuram Manyam and Seethampeta
- Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) of Seethampeta
- 4000 households, 108 habitations, 3 Mandals (Bhamini, Seethampeta, Veeraghattam)

ACTIVITIES

- 83 farm ponds constructed and enhanced indigenous fish production in rainfed water bodies
- Bunds intensified with cashew orchards, vegetables, and pulses.
- Over 400 acres of previously unirrigated land irrigated via solar lift and gravity systems
- 8 solar-powered mobile irrigation units introduced
- Four Bio-Input Resource Centers (BRCs) established
- 800 desi-backyard poultry shelters developed and backed up by Intensive integrated Desi Poultry farms
- 134 rainfed water bodies used for grow-out fish culture
- Diversified cropping with millets, pineapples, broom, turmeric, and cashew through natural farming
- 12 Agriculture Service Centers set up for access to affordable equipments
- 130 Cluster-level processing hubs set up for local consumption and for value added markets
- Technical skill development to local skilled youths on mechanical, repair and maintenance of different processing machineries

- 3 Millet-based Ready-to-Eat (RTE) units established across 15 intensive villages, run by women led SHGs

LEARNINGS

- Farmers contribution to the various infrastructures being set up is rising up to 40% due to the rising material costs
- Weak market integration and limited price realization
- Adoption of new ecological practices requires more demonstrations and visible short-term benefits to build farmer confidence.
- Infrastructure creation (irrigation, processing hubs) has strong multiplier effects on income and resilience.

WAY FORWARD

- Establish cluster-based processing hubs to promote circular economy and nutrition security.
- Build Annual Maintenance Centres (AMCs) run by trained tribal youth for machinery services.
- Strengthen market linkages for turmeric, cashew, and poultry products to ensure better price realization.
- Expand access to finance and institutional credit through stronger FPO engagement
- Scale community-based irrigation systems and ecological intensification practices to reach more households.

4 | Shree Anna Abhiyan

The Shree Anna Abhiyan (SAA), is a flagship program of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, State Government of Odisha. With the aim to make Odisha the "Millet Hub of India", it has a statewide outreach across all 30 districts and 177 blocks, directly engaging 263,268 farmers and bringing over 144,732.94 hectares under millet cultivation.

SAA integrates millet promotion into production, processing, marketing, and consumption systems, while also conserving agro-biodiversity and traditional food cultures. With the key focus being on increasing the household consumption of millets, SAA has the objective of increasing production and productivity of millets, conserving & promoting millet landraces, promoting primary processing and post-harvest enterprises, promoting millet-based value addition enterprises, integrating millets into PDS, ICDS, MDM, and welfare hostels and facilitate markets and exports of millet-based products.

Strong collaboration with various state and central government departments, NGOs, FPOs, WSHGs, academic and research institutes (IIMR, OUAT, CFTRI, IIP) and engagement with the private sector (hotels, restaurants, startups) ensure technical support, enterprise promotion, and wider market penetration. A significant emphasis is placed on women's empowerment, with WSHGs leading millet enterprises and a pilot initiative specifically designed for single women entrepreneurs.

The program directly engaged 263,268 farmers in FY 2024-25

PARTNERS

- Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, State Government of Odisha
- Mission Shakti, State Government of Odisha
- Department of Health, State Government of Odisha
- Department of Education, State Government of Odisha
- Department of Tourism, State Government of Odisha
- NITI Aayog
- Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare
- 110 NGOs as facilitating agencies
- 156 FPOs
- 1800 Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs)
- Indian Institute of Millet Research
- Odisha University of Agricultural Technology
- Central Food Technological Research Institution
- Indian Institute of Packaging
- Hotels, restaurants, and startups, also contributed to market promotion and value chain strengthening.

ACTIVITIES

- Engaged 263,268 farmers across 144,732.94 hectares in all 30 districts, promoting non-chemical and improved farming practices.
- Conducted Participatory Varietal Trials (PVT) for Ragi and non-Ragi millets,
- Produced quality seeds of 92 ha of Ragi and 82 ha of non-Ragi
- Implemented a Seed Village Programme across 170.92 ha.
- Established Bio-Input Centres in all 177 blocks
- Organic certification for 451 ha
- Established Crop Diversity Blocks (CDBs) in 152 blocks, conserving 134 millet landraces
- Procured 757,826.09 quintals of Ragi from 62,007 farmers at Rs 4,500/quintal.
- Strengthened 156 FPOs, with 130 involved in Ragi procurement and over 100 in processing/value addition.
- Established 115 new millet-based women-led enterprises, totaling 3,830, generating Rs 452.45 lakhs turnover in FY 2024-25.
- Millet Shakti brand expanded to online platforms.
- Ragi Ladoo Programme expanded to over 152,000 children
- Integrated millets into ST & SC Development Hostels
- Introduced millet snacks in AIIMS Bhubaneswar
- Trained 5,890 participants in various agricultural and entrepreneurial skills, including 905 single women farmers and 61 new single-woman entrepreneurs.
- Pursued PPV&FRA registration for 33 Ragi landraces and documented traditional knowledge in 50 villages through the "Village History and Food Culture" initiative.
- Hosted the International Symposium on Shree Anna and Forgotten Foods (ISSFF) in November 2024, involving national and international experts.

5 | Innovation Guild

The innovation guild focuses on building an ecosystem of support services to enable last mile adoption of technological innovations in rural communities. Most of the technological innovations and solutions see limited adoption at community level primarily due to limited solutions that are suitable to the local requirements, most solutions operates on a one size fits all design, limited support from suppliers on AMC, SOPs etc., lack of local technical support and infrastructure – skilled service providers offering repair, maintenance, customization etc.

So, through the innovation guild, local mechanics, electricians and other skilled makers from the community are trained as Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) to offer the necessary technological support services required. Thus bridge the gap between the technological requirements of the community by the VLEs and the solutions offered by innovators.

The Guild operates through a multi-stakeholder participatory approach wherein the needs of the community are identified and village level enterprises business plans prepared by the ground partners, VLEs and community members. The VLEs are further trained and enabled with technological & financial solutions to in turn offer services at the community level. The solutions and services are derived from the network of innovators of the Innovation Guild.

COVERAGE

- 23 regions from 10 districts across 6 States of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh

PARTNERS

- CSOs - Gramya Ventures, Well Labs, WINS, Gowthamapuri FPC, Maa Kamala FPC, Koraput Farmers' Association, Lipok
- Training institutions - Southern Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institute (SRFMT&TI) and SSV ITI Anantapur

ACTIVITIES

- Over 200 VLEs listed on the Innovation Guild Program
- 14 innovators onboarded and 24 innovations made available
- Requests for 34 specific technologies raised in agriculture, dairy, and allied sectors
- Financial and Technical Support Fellowships provided to 22 Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) to deploy 20 new technologies with a coverage to 200 farm families
- Enabled market connect and visibility to innovators at the FPO Conclave, JEM, Swaraj Samvad, and the CRIDA International Conference and Samunnati FPO Conclave to help them reach a wider audience

- 50 VLEs trained on both basic and advanced skills. These sessions were done in partnership with ITIs, SRFMT&TI, and expert technicians.
- Participatory trial for ginger harvester, where feedback from VLEs directly influenced a redesign of the machine
- Facilitated numerous on-field and online demonstrations of new innovations to provide hands-on experience for VLEs

LEARNINGS

- Limited understanding of our concept among field staff of affiliated organizations is leading to irrelevant onboarding
- Anchor organizations that can easily engage with multiple local training centers to be identified
- Robust monitoring mechanism to be developed consisting of parameters for each model
- Limitations on Understanding VLE Growth
- Procurement and financial processes become operationally complex and administratively lengthy specially when the machines vary in type, source and regions

While not explicitly gender-focused, the Innovation Guild has significant potential to include women VLEs and women-led FPOs in its innovation adoption framework.

6 | Rayalseema Water Initiative

In the drought prone districts of Satya Sai, Anantapur and Annamayya, Andhra Pradesh; 8 partner CSOs working in the region have come together to build climate resilience for small and marginal farmers. The initiative has collectively intervened in developing community water management and improved water conservation infrastructures and natural farming in the Rayalseema Regions. The Rayalaseema Water initiative (RWI) leverages a collaborative model where each partner brings specialized expertise for instance, WASSAN leads the overall project management and thematic of water security. A core objective of the initiative is to build capacities of each partner organisation, their staff, and local Community Resource Persons. Participatory planning methods like ePRA and household surveys are used to set baselines and inform thematic action plans. The initiative aims to pilot action plans in the early stages of the program before scaling them up over the next three years. Resilience to withstand dry spells, secure kharif crops, enable stable irrigation systems and conversion of fallow land for natural farming based cultivation are some of the core components. This is combined with saturation of natural farming practices across all households and institutionalisation of community based governance mechanisms.

COVERAGE:

57 Gram Panchayats, 299 habitations, 24,137 small & marginal farmers, 129 community resource persons

PARTNERS

- CSOs - APMAS, CSA, FES, REDS, RIDS, Jana Jagriti, TIMBAKTU, WASSAN
- Government - MGNREGS, Agriculture, Horticulture, ANGRAU (ARS-Kadiri), CGWB

ACTIVITIES

- Inception workshop with partners to derive the working modalities
- Training and exposure visits to staff, CRPs and Farmers on Objectives, Key Activities, Approach and Methodology for achieving the final effects using Participatory tools.
- Baseline reports for 57 Gram Panchayat generated using ePRA & Household Surveys
- Development of M&E framework along with creation of robust MIS for the Program
- Creation of basic thematic layers for all the GPs and later development of layers on various themes
- Development and Operationalization of Website for the Program (www.rayalaseemawaterinitiative.in)
- Continuous rounds of learning and review workshops and meetings

LEARNINGS

- Fluctuations in retention of staff in the partner organisations slows down the saturation processes on the field

- Communication gaps observed between field teams, senior leadership and the intended theme action plan

7 | Promoting Sustainable Integrated Farming System through Multi-Actor Partnership (SIFS MAP)

The SIFS MAP project, implemented in Rayagada and Malkangiri districts across 22 Gram Panchayats, aims to promote sustainable, integrated farming systems through a multi-actor partnership approach.

The project aims to improve farm productivity, enhance dietary diversity & nutrition and aid in doubling farmers income through integrating components such as fisheries, livestock, crop diversification, natural resource management practices etc. Through the multi-actor partnership approach, the models have been integrated into the Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) and provided capacity building to farmers, frontline workers, and PRI members. Demonstrations of the SIFS concept using participatory tools such as Fashal Chakra and e-PRA during exposure visits, food festivals, seminars etc. have helped in showcasing and promoting sustainable farming practices.

COVERAGE

- 1620 households, 22 Gram Panchayats, 7 Blocks, 2 District

PARTNERS

- Research network - Keystone Foundation
- Government - Department of Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Forest, ITDA, Zilla Parishad, district/block-level administration
- Community institutions - PRIs, CBOs, FPOs, Frontline workers

ACTIVITIES

- Participatory workshops at District levels with Zilla Parishad members, block levels with FPOs, SHGs and local NGOs, Gram panchayat levels with PRI members
- Comprehensive crop planning with 340 households for Kharif
- 52 village level microplanning exercises including stress mapping with farmers
- 40 sessions of farmer field schools
- 24 vermi-bed installation
- 25 Eco farm ponds set up
- Exposure visit to the Turmeric process and value chain KASAM

Over 900 women farmers participated in the initiative with 18 women farmers receiving customised farm plans, 103 women converted fallow land into kitchen gardens and 9 women adopted ponds integrating fish rearing, fruit trees, and vegetables, enhancing nutrition and supplementary income.

LEARNINGS

- Engagement of PRIs and local institutions builds sustainability and local ownership
- Resistance to adopting agro-ecological farming practices is observed in regions that are dominated by eucalyptus and cotton farming
- GPDP approval processes are long nd cumbersome

8 | JIVA – Climate Resilient Agro-ecological Transformation of Landscape through Natural Farming

On the completed or near completed sites of the watershed and WADI program of NABARD, JIVA is implemented to bring about a landscape based transformation. Crop, livestock, forest and water systems are integrated towards climate resilient natural farming practices through the strengthened community institutions, women's collectives and local economies. As the resource support agency for the JIVA program WASSAN is providing technical support to 41 program facilitating agencies across 20 states. A strong emphasis of the program is on knowledge building, farmer to farmer extension and capacity building of program facilitating agencies.

COVERAGE

- 41 Program facilitating agencies trained across 20 States

PARTNERS

- NABARD
- 41 program facilitating agencies

ACTIVITIES

- Training and capacity building of farmers as resource persons
- Training on following thematics:
    - Crop diversification & intensification
    - Regeneration of soil and water/ moisture conservation (integrating vegetation, grass seeding, trees and farm ponds for critical irrigation/mulching, etc.)
    - Integrating livestock systems (fodder development, desi poultry, vaccination & health care of animals, cattle sheds, etc.)

  - Support Systems: bio-inputs, seeds, custom hiring of equipment etc. through community institutions & strengthening of community institutions and gender inclusive governance of commons
  - Nutrition sensitive agriculture & homesteads
  - Stimulating local economies through strengthening local circular economies - Value addition, PGS certification and marketing
  - Encouraging Local innovations
- Continuous rounds of online ad workshop based trainings to agencies

LEARNINGS

- Online training limitations: Difficult to ensure depth of understanding and experiential learning.
- Shifting mindframe of program facilitating agencies from a beneficiary support frame to facilitator mindframe
- Program facilitating agencies often focus on household / farm level, requiring sustained orientation towards landscape and ecosystem level of functioning

9 | Special Programme for Promotion of Integrated Farming (SPPIF)

The SPPIF is a comprehensive and integrated farming programme of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, Government of Odisha. SPPIF, focused in the tribal districts of Odisha, has a primary objective to optimise the utilisation of available natural resources by adhering to the principles of Reduce, Recycle, Reuse & Recovery.

The SPPIF aims to address challenges in Odisha's agrarian sector, such as reliance on rainfed agriculture, declining soil fertility, limited irrigation, and inadequate crop diversification, by promoting an Integrated Farming System (IFS). This holistic approach integrates crops, livestock, fisheries, horticulture, and other allied activities to enhance resource utilisation, reduce agricultural risks, and ensure sustainability, with the goal of increasing farmers' income and promoting rural development. Site-specific and landscape-based farming systems are promoted to improve the livelihoods and income of farmers through various enterprises, marketing, and value chain interventions supported by Women SHGs and FPOs.

COVERAGE

- The program is directly engaged in 8 districts of Odisha, 600 farmer families, and coverage of 250 Ha area

PARTNERS

- Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, State Government of Odisha

- Mission Shakti, State Government of Odisha
- Department of Education, State Government of Odisha
- Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare
- 110 NGOs as facilitating agencies
- 156 FPOs
- 104 Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs)
- Department of Animal Husbandry
- Odisha Livestock Resources Development Society (OLRDS)
- OUAT (Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology)
- NBAGR (National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources)
- CHES (Central Horticulture Experiment Station)
- SSTL (State Seed Testing Laboratory)
- IHM (Institute of Hotel Management)

ACTIVITIES

- 15 intercropping models were implemented across 8 districts.
- 256 Ha and 308 farmers covered through the seed production programme, significantly increasing earnings for participants like greengram seed producers (from Rs. 18,000 to Rs. 36,000 per hectare).
- Seed Purification Trials (PVT) were conducted in 26 clusters to identify superior region-specific varieties.
- 104 Women SHGs involved in liquid manure production and sale, marketing 47,451 liters and generating over Rs 16 lakh in business turnover.
- 5,918 trellis units installed across 189 Gram Panchayats as support vegetable cultivation
- Model Vegetable Cultivation patches of 3 acres were developed within clusters, with beneficiaries trained in cultivation, post-harvest management, and vendor linkages.
- Indigenous Chicks Production Units (ICPU) were established, creating "Backyard Desi Poultry Entrepreneurs" and linking them with Poultry Night Shelters.
- Elevated Goat Shelters and Poultry Night Shelters were supported to reduce animal mortality and improve hygiene.
- Applications for Native Breed Registration were submitted for Malkangiri Pony (NBAGR) and Maraguda & Narayanpatna goat breeds (OUAT), with 15 hoardings installed to promote native breeds.
- Fisheries activities included providing fingerling/advance fingerling support and conducting training/exposure visits across all 8 districts.
- Nano Fish Feed Mills were supported to reduce feed costs using local ingredients.
- Documentation of forgotten foods carried out in 10 villages of Malkangiri and 10 villages of Nuapada, including 30 village-level focused group discussions.

- Awareness Programs included social media campaigns (75 reels, 198 posts) and school-level programs in 10 schools in Malkangiri (approx. 1500 students) and 6 schools in Nuapada (600-750 students). Awareness campaigns also took place at Care Hospital and KIMS Hospital.
- Conservation Trials involved on-farm seed production in Darlabedha, Doliamba (Malkangiri), and Michhapali (Nuapada), and in-situ conservation in Chitrakonda (75 varieties), Jantapai (Malkangiri) (21 varieties), and Pethiapali (Nuapada) (21 varieties).
- 130 farmers were trained in Nuapada on sustainable cultivation practices, particularly for neglected tuber species.
- Collaborated with IHM institutes to standardize 42 traditional food recipes and provide training to chefs.
- Partnered with the Central Horticulture Experiment Station (CHES) for nutritional profiling of forgotten foods.
- Collaborated with the State Seed Testing Laboratory (SSTL) for germplasm testing and registration of forgotten foods.

10 | Sustainbale Integrated Farming Systems (SIFS)

SIFS project is focused on enhancing livelihoods, food security, and resilience of small and marginalized farmers in Odisha's Malkangiri and Rayagada districts. It combines capacity building, participatory planning, and agroecological practices to improve income, nutrition, and ecological sustainability. The project engages diverse stakeholders including farmers, extension workers, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), FPOs, and retail actors, while ensuring alignment with government schemes like GPDP and MGNREGA. Partnerships with Keystone Foundation and active collaboration with state and district authorities strengthen its systemic approach. By integrating farming systems, capacity building, and value chain development, the project demonstrates scalable models of farmer-centric agroecology with strong emphasis on the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS).

LOCATION

- Malkangiri & Rayagada, Odisha

COVERAGE

- 33 Gram Panchayats, 250+ villages,

- 153 farmers & 282.83 acres PGS certified, 155 farmers supported in land development, 100 farmers managing SIFS Model Farms, 95 households with Nutri Gardens.

PARTNERS

- PGS certification body : Keystone Foundation
- WHH

ACTIVITIES

- Conducted 72 Concept Seeding meetings, 60 Farmer Field Schools (FFS), and 28 Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions on Sustainable Integrated Farming Systems (SIFS).
- 150 trainers equipped for Micro Planning and Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)
- Trained ~2000 mainstream extension workers.
- 100 SIFS Model Farms set up for comprehensive household planning and demonstration.
- 25 participatory micro-planning exercises using e-PRA and Fasal Chakra completed
- Supported 153 farmers managing 282.83 acres under the PGS,
- Constructed 7 farm ponds
- Supported 155 farmers in land development,
- Completed 23 cattle shed flooring in Malkangiri
- Initiated 31 goat sheds in Rayagada.
- 5 mushroom units, 4 duck shelters, and 95 Nutri Gardens established, a
- 42 beneficiaries received fingerling distribution

Organized Agroecological Consumer Awareness Programmes such as the “Chaiti Festival” in Rayagada and “ZillaStariya Khadya o Pradarshani Mela” in Malkangiri to promote ecological food and PGS certification.

11 | Open Drone Project

The Open Drone Project demonstrates how affordable drone technology can fill the critical gap left by outdated satellite data for rural planning, water management, and agriculture monitoring. The approach is designed to overcome limitations of traditional mapping methods, such as reliance on outdated Google Earth satellite imagery, which hinders accurate land use planning and agricultural monitoring in rural Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states. By adopting affordable drone technology, the project ensures timely, high-resolution data collection that captures seasonal dynamics, enabling better optimization of water resources during dry seasons and reducing unproductive fallow lands. Training local youth fosters sustainable capacity building and community involvement, while the open data initiative promotes collaborative innovation, allowing

external researchers to develop AI/ML models for broader ecological applications. This integrated strategy aligns with the need for precise, cost effective tools in resource constrained settings, ultimately enhancing development outcomes through data driven insights and global partnerships. By combining local youth training, community involvement, and global academic partnerships, the project strengthens rural development through data-driven insights while fostering innovation.

LOCATION

- Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

COVERAGE

- Drone imagery covering 6500 acres of rainfed regions and 50-60 acres of water collective patches

PARTNERS

- 15 rural youths
- Deadtrees.earth
- University of Freiburg
- University of Leipzig

ACTIVITIES

- 15 rural youths trained in drone flying, image (pre-)processing and data annotation
- Gathered aerial imagery covering a total of approximately 6,500 acres in five locations: Sitampet and Araku (North Coastal region, Andhra Pradesh), Parigi and Tiryani (Telangana), and Kadiri (Rayalaseema region, Andhra Pradesh)
- Conducted drone surveys of ___ water collective patches, with each patch spanning approximately 50-60 acres, to support temporal analysis of water resource management
- Orthomosaic maps of 4 locations produced by processing drone imagery, enabling detailed geospatial analysis for planning and monitoring.
- Provided raw drone imagery and orthomosaic datasets to external collaborators, research teams for AI hackathons, research, and prototyping and contributed to the Deadtrees.earth platform for AI-driven tree mortality analysis

LEARNINGS

High risk of drone crashes in hilly terrain and GPs connectivity issues.

12 | Sustainable Community Institutions and Market Ecosystem for supporting transition to Natural Farming and

increase in real incomes of small and marginal farmers

The project focuses on developing a local market system through community-led enterprises such as FPOs and farmer groups from natural farming practices. The enterprises provide services including access to diverse indigenous seeds, suitable farm equipment, bio-inputs, and support for post-harvest management. The project also offers assistance with organic certification and comprehensive training in natural farming practices. Overall, the goal is to establish a robust ecosystem that enables farmers to transition to natural farming more effectively.

The project follows a community led implementation process wherein the beneficiaries are shortlisted by the community through participatory selection processes. Additionally the produce is assessed for quality, and prices are fixed accordingly, ensuring farmers receive fair rates through Village Trading Centre (VTC) initiatives. Awareness creation and implementation of multiple crop model initiatives encourage diversified and climate-resilient farming followed through natural farming practices. All approaches are rooted in local needs, enhancing community ownership, transparency, and are designed keeping the long-term sustainability of interventions.

LOCATION

- Sri Sathya Sai and Annamayya, Andhra Pradesh.

COVERAGE

- 17 Gram Panchayats, 6000 households

PARTNERS

- Janajeevana FPO (Vayalpadu Block),
- Adharsha FPO (Amadagur Block),
- Prakruthi FPO (Nallacheruvu Block)
- Department of Agriculture &Farmers Welfare, Andhra Pradesh
- Department of Animal Husbandry, Andhra Pradesh
- APSEEDS – Andhra Pradesh State Seeds Development Corporation
- Bhumi Farms
- Farmizen
- Chandul Reddy – Organic Crop Promoter
- ICAR – ARS
- MCRC – Shri A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre
- Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA)

ACTIVITIES

- Showcased 85 varieties of local seeds by organizing seed melas
- Community workshops conducted to engaged farmers in selecting tools for Agricultural Service Centres (ASCs), with the aim to boost productivity and support local entrepreneurs.
- Organized a Kisan Mela showcasing natural farming practices and equipment demonstrations, emphasizing crop diversity and supporting local entrepreneurship.
- Exposure visit fr 44 farmers to Krishna Sudha Academy in Nuziveedu to introduce farmers to best practices in organic farming and certification processes.
- Training to FPOs on business planning, financial planning, market linkages, and strategies for scaling FPOs.
- Millet seeds distributed from the District Agricultural Advisory and Transfer of Technology Centers (DAATTCs) to boost millet cultivation to address erratic rainfalls
- Cultivation of 150 acres of fallow land by 43 farmers revitalizing the land and improving their livelihoods.
- Field Day on Participatory Variety Selection (PVS) for paddy, cowpea conducted focusing on evaluating and selecting high-performing paddy varieties.
- Crop Cutting Experiment (CCE) conducted in paddy showcased the high-yielding potential of the Malapur variety, which achieved a yield of 115 kg in a 5 sqm area, demonstrating the impact of improved seed selection on productivity.
- Under the Enterprises theme, three events were conducted to train 44 Women SHGs on establishing women-led enterprises.
- 99 Crop-Diversity Blocks set up across three clusters to introduce and test diverse crop varieties under varying agro-climatic conditions.
- Training program on farm machinery service and repairs was conducted at SRFM Training Institute for 8 Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs).
- WASSAN, in collaboration with partner NGOs, government departments, and NABARD, successfully organized a three-day mega event on millets and sustainable farming to promote millet consumption, revive traditional food habits, and strengthen sustainable farming practices.

13 | Engagement with Pastoralists in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh

The initiative is building recognition of pastoralism's role in climate-resilient agriculture, while fostering stronger linkages between communities, institutions, and government systems. The project assesses the extent of pastoral production systems in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Through scoping studies, youth network formation, CBO strengthening, and cultural documentation, it has laid the groundwork for deeper community engagement. The scoping study covered sheep & goat, ducks and native cattle across geographies to understand the extent and relevance of pastoral production system in Andhra Pradesh & Telangana. The census exercise supported in building trust and active mobilisation at the State & District Level, particularly with the Animal Husbandry Department & District Collectorate

COVERAGE

- Scoping study covered 5 hotspots (12 villages) across 6 blocks in Nagarkurnool District

LOCATION

Andhra Pradesh, Telangana

PARTNERS

- CoNARE
- Centre for Pastoralism
- RRA Network
- National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA)
- CBO - Amrabad Poda Lakshmi Govu Sangam
- Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department, Government of Telangana
- AHS division, Department of Animal Husbandry, Government of Andhra Pradesh

ACTIVITIES

- Youth pastoral network formed to deepen engagement with pastoralists in 6 mandals
- Extensive surveys conducted to identify the health concerns, mapping pastoral routes etc.
- Facilitated engagement between Gram panchayats, breeders associations, sanghams, etc. and district veterinary department to thereby highlight their need for veterinary services
- Scoping study on pastoral production systems in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana
- Strengthening capacities of Amrabad Poda Lakshmi Govu Sangham (Elections, Audit, Veterinary care, record keeping, CFR

- Kharif fodder framework for agro pastoralists piloted with 10 farmers
- Cultural documentation, Coordination and facilitation support for Living Lightly exhibition
- Coordination for pastoral livestock census support cell

14 | SETU – Community Centered Integrated Farming System

The SETU Project promotes a community-centered integrated farming system through focus on utilising natural resources, adopting principles like reduce, reuse, and recycle, and converting waste into resources. The programme aims to reduce risks associated with climate variability for rainfed farmers by encouraging them to adopt practices across all production systems. It also seeks to provide beneficiaries, with an emphasis on women farmers, a variety of opportunities to secure a diversified income portfolio through activities in agriculture and allied sectors, focusing on landscape-based cluster-level interventions. The project integrates technological advancements and scientifically proven agricultural methods with indigenous technical knowledge to ensure long-term sustainability and enhance the income of farmers. SETU stands out for its women-focused enterprises, organic soil health management, and integrated farm pond model, contributing to sustainable, climate-smart agriculture in rainfed regions.

LOCATION

- Swabhiman Anchal region, Malkangiri district, Odisha

COVERAGE

- 9 Gram Panchayats, 151 villages

PARTNERS

- Directorate of Agriculture & Food Production, Government of Odisha
- Department of Planning & Convergence, Government of Odisha,
- Chief District Agriculture Officer-cum-PD ATMA, Malkangiri,
- CSO - PARIVARTTAN,
- FPO - Swabhiman FPC
- Research partners - Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies, Bhubaneswar,
- Odisha State Seed Corporation (OSSC),
- Department of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services (DAH&VS), Government of Odisha
- Department of Fisheries, Government of Odisha

ACTIVITIES

- 780 Crop diversification plots, transitioning farmers from paddy to non-paddy crops like pulses and oilseeds.
- 133 Protective irrigation projects implemented to safeguard crops from dry spells, using perennial springs and solar-powered systems
- 4 Seed production units set up for quality seed production by farmers, with foundation seeds distributed and harvested seeds procured by OSSC.
- Community seed centres were established to ensure timely access to quality seeds and integrate storage techniques.
- 123 vegetable cultivation beds and 100 Single-line trellis systems adopted to improve creeper vegetable cultivation, maximise land use, and enhance yields
- 600 Poultry night shelters and 256 low-cost goat and 162 cow sheds introduced to improve animal health, productivity, and protection from predators.
- Structured vaccination systems implemented for poultry and livestock, with CRPs leading vaccination drives
- 6 Indigenous chick production units were established under an entrepreneurship model to enhance chick supply
- ___ Quality fingerlings and yearlings were distributed to inland fish farmers to boost productivity
- __ Nano fish feed mills established and managed by entrepreneurs.
- A community-centered integrated farming system was promoted, focusing on natural resource utilisation and the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- __ Liquid manure enterprises established, engaging Women SHGs in production and local sale
- __ Custom hiring centers established to provide affordable access to small-scale farming equipment.
- __ Decentralised meat and egg outlets established and operated by entrepreneurs to strengthen the supply chain.
- Integrated farm ponds introduced, incorporating fish, duck, horticulture, and agricultural activities for diversified income and resource recycling.

15 | Common Ground (CG) Initiative

Common Ground (CG) initiative is a large collaboration of people and organisations aiming to strengthen the capabilities of civil society, governments, communities, and businesses for leveraging each other's strengths. Since agricultural challenges are multi-dimensional, interconnected, and require collaboration among multiple stakeholders whose interests need to be aligned, Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs) provide a structured yet flexible mechanism at the landscape level (i.e. Block) where community institutions, government departments, civil society organisations, value chain actors, and others deliberate on shared priorities. As a key partner, WASSAN is building MAPs and robust systems for creating rural livelihoods, strengthening local economies, and restoring landscape ecologies. Within MAPs, thematic 'Action Groups develop strategic thematic action plans based on participatory exercises, geo-spatial mapping, and technical inputs. Further to resource these plans, a Landscape Finance (LF) mechanism is set up that moves beyond fixed, time-bound projects by mobilising and leveraging larger investments, mitigating risks, and aligning funding with locally generated proposals. A critical enabler of the MAP is the Landscape Resource Centre (LRC) tracking all initiatives (e.g. through a real-time dashboard) and also a repository of MAP-related documents (e.g. discussion notes, LF applications), maps, datasets, and planning tools. Enabling transparency, easy access to information for all, and evidence-based decision-making.

LOCATION

- Boipariguda block, Koraput district, Odisha
- 20 Gram Panchayats

PARTNERS

- District Administration, Koraput
- CSOs - CYSD, Gramya Vikas Sangathan, Harsha Trust, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, Pragati, SPREAD, Vrutti, IIT-Delhi's Gram Vaani, Collaborating for Resilience (CoRe)
- Block Level Federation of Women SHGs - Mahalaxmi Mahasangha

ACTIVITIES

- Multi-Actor Landscape Platform (MAP) for Agroecology in Boipariguda block, Koraput district, Odisha, formalized through a non-financial, tripartite MoU between the District Administration (ATMA, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment), Mahalaxmi Mahasangha (Block-level Federation of Women SHG), and CSOs.
- Along with Vrutti convened a district-level workshop on landscape finance, as an outcome, the district administration agreed to pilot the blended finance approach in 100 farms
- Co-created 'Climate Resilient, Eco-Intensive Farm Plans' with farmers via GIS-based planning, to diversify farmers' income and create ecological sustainability
- Webinars, workshops, and discussions conducted to share specific insights on the concept and role of landscape partnerships/ MAP for wider learning and adoption of the approach

16 | Promotion of Nutritional Security and Millet-based Livelihoods through Women SHGs

The project aims to create sustainable livelihoods and improve nutritional security through Women's Self-Help Group (WSHG)-led millet enterprises. As part of a broader collaboration with Mission Shakti, Government of Odisha, it aims to enhance millet production and consumption in Odisha's tribal areas so as to revive millet as a staple crop while simultaneously addressing issues related to livelihood, agriculture, and nutrition.

WSHGs receive extensive training and capacity-building programmes, including skills in modern packaging, food safety, and hospitality best practices, alongside the development of diverse millet-based recipes. Collaborations with institutions like the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), and Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP) provide specialised expertise, industry-aligned skills, and quality assurance to the WSHGs. The project actively expands the reach of WSHG products by utilizing online platforms (such as Milk Moo, Amazon, Zomato, and Swiggy) and organising festivals, while also focusing on developing and fortifying millet products.

LOCATION

- 30 Districts, Odisha
- 117 blocks

PARTNERS

- Department of Mission Shakti, Government of Odisha

- Directorate of Agriculture & Food Production, Government of Odisha
- Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies
- E-Commerce platforms - Milk Moo, Amazon, Zomato, and Swiggy
- Institute of Hotel Management (IHM)
- Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI)
- Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP)

ACTIVITIES

- 115 new millet-based enterprises set up
- Turnover generated by millet-based enterprises in 2024-25:
    - Millet Tiffin Centres - INR 193.09 lakhs
    - Millet Shakti Cafes - INR 188.56 lakhs,
    - Millet Shakti Outlets - INR 70.8 lakhs,
    - Processing enterprises like Threshers - INR 3.29 lakhs, Pulverizers - INR 28.24 lakhs), Dehullers - INR 0.044 lakhs), and Ragi Deck Cleaner grader destoners - INR 2.24 lakhs
- 34 melas were organised, featuring 61 WSHGs and generating transactions of Rs. 19.82 Lakhs
- Expanded presence to online platforms like Milk Moo, Amazon, Zomato, and Swiggy
- Continuous handholding and monitoring activities were conducted throughout the year to support existing WSHGs and encourage new ones, focusing on quality assurance, hygiene, and adherence to hospitality best practices.
- Recipe training on millets conducted every fortnight by Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), Bhubaneswar
- Exposure training programmes for WSHGs were organised at the Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysuru
- Hands-on training provided in modern packaging, food safety, and market readiness, covering aspects like branding, labelling, shelf-life extension, FSSAI compliance, and hygienic food handling by Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP)
- 37 millet-based products developed under the Millet Shakti brand, which were labelled, tested, and fortified.

17 | Village History and Food Culture Project

With the intent of preserving the cultural heritage and traditional food diversities of the villages, the village history and food culture project documents their rich history and traditional food practices. Local youths and students of the villages are engaged in the documentation processes, thereby educating them on their local traditions, agricultural & food practices and motivating them to choose agriculture as an alternative to distress migration. The focus is on recording both existing and lost food practices to raise awareness among villagers about their food security. It also seeks to highlight the importance of Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK) held by village elders, which is often undervalued by the younger generation. Further, the village-specific agricultural practices documented provides valuable insights for policymakers on the available crops, their nutritional values, rural communities' food-consuming habits, the history and processes of food production.

LOCATION

- Koraput, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj, Khandhamal – Odisha

- 5 districts, 50 villages, 50 schools, 150 students

PARTNERS

- Odisha School Education Programme Authority - OSEPA

ACTIVITIES

- 10 Block Resource Persons (BRPs) and 50 schools across 5 districts identified.
- An orientation workshop to 150 students on Village History and Food Culture.
- 50 village-level meetings conducted amongst students, PRI members, Resource persons, Women SHG members, teachers, villagers
- 50 books on Village History & Food Culture drafted with the validation process through secondary sources underway.
- Script for 1 consolidated video on the project's learning and impact developed

18 | Catalysing Delivery of Ten Critical Transitions (NICFI)

The NICFI-supported initiative led by RRAN focused on catalyzing systemic change in rainfed agriculture by promoting multi-stakeholder convergence, piloting integrated livelihood models, and mainstreaming agroecology in Odisha through the Odisha Rainfed Agriculture Mission (ORAM). By combining government partnerships, CSO capacity building, and tribal knowledge systems, the project successfully established landscape-level planning platforms and proposed large-scale investments (₹15.5 crore proposal and convergence plan worth ₹270.6 lakh).

LOCATION

- PAN India

PARTNERS

- District level Government Departments in ___
- CSOs partner across Odisha, Maharashtra and Jharkhand

ACTIVITIES

- Developed five integrated livelihood proposals (cropping, poultry, goat rearing, fisheries, water conservation)
- Initiated a convergence plan with a budget of ₹270.60 lakh and gap-filling of ₹152.24 lakh.
- Launched the Multi-Stakeholder Landscape Platform for Agroecology in Boipariguda to drive landscape-level planning and collaboration across livestock, natural farming, and fisheries sectors.

Conducted village-level surveys, E-PRAs, thematic workshops, and developed planning tools (e.g., Fasal Chakra) to align interventions with local food systems and strengthen stakeholder participation.

19 | Evolving Ecosystem Capacities for supporting viable WSHG millet entrepreneurs at scale

PARTNERS

- Women entrepreneurs- Main actors
- Community institutions- FPOs and WSHGs- Field partners
- Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship
- Aspire for Her - Training and linkages partner
- Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Bhubaneswar,
- IHM Hyderabad
- Indian Culinary Institute (ICI) Tirupati

- ALEAP,
- NIMSME,
- CFTRI
- Individual and institutional experts- chefs, consultants, Mera Bills etc

ACTIVITIES

- **Interactive session** conducted to introduce participants to innovative millet-based product concepts, showcasing how traditional recipes can be transformed into appealing, value-added products for modern consumers. Guidance on improving packaging and labelling to meet market standards, enhance shelf appeal, and actionable tips to address common marketing challenges faced by small-scale food businesses were also shared.
- Properties & Challenges of Millets
    - - Forgotten grains, perceived taste issues, high cost
    - - Competition with rice and wheat
    - - Lack of experimentation
    - - Marketing challenges: quality, branding & packaging, logistics
- Types of Value Addition
    - - Method-based: baking, frying, etc.
    - - Machinery-based: extruders, fryers, baking & heating equipment
    - - Traditional: ready-to-cook, ready-to-eat
    - - Nutrition-based: gluten-free, fortified products
- Industry-Specific Business Opportunities
    - - B2B (Business-to-Business)
    - - B2C (Business-to-Consumer)
    - - B2G (Business-to-Government)
- Characteristics of Good Packaging & Standard Labelling
- Innovations & Machinery for Millet Processing
- Good Practices for Sustainable and Scalable Millet Enterprises
- **FPO Workshop -** full-day Business Model Canvas and Food Quality Standards workshop, bringing together the team members working closely with FPOs and WSHG enterprises, program partners, industry experts, millet based start-ups . The session aimed to help participants visualize, analyze, and refine their business models to better position their millet-based enterprises for growth. Using the Business Model Canvas framework, they explored key components such as customer segments, value propositions, revenue streams, cost structures, and distribution channels.
- Led interactive sessions on business planning and market discovery, enabling participants to identify opportunities and address gaps in their current strategies, product innovation, operational standardization, and expanding market access for Ready-to-Eat (RTE) millet products.

- By the end of the workshop, each participant had developed an actionable growth roadmap tailored to their enterprise, outlining clear steps and timelines for improving operations, enhancing product offerings, and expanding into new markets.
- **Standardizing Millet-Based Snacks -** A two-day training conducted for 20 women from Parvatipuram Manyam, Sathya Sai & Annamayya districts of Andhra Pradesh, focused on improving product consistency and operational efficiency for millet-based enterprises. Participants learned about Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and took part in hands-on recipe standardization for two products — Ragi Laddus (one with jaggery and another with dates) and Ragi Cake, introducing participants to digital tools for better business record-keeping and compliance. The program concluded with an exposure visit to Ahobilam Foods – Millet Cafe, where participants observed real-world examples of product presentation, customer engagement, and marketing strategies.

20 | Coalition for Food System Transformation in India (CoFTI)

There have been many initiatives in India recently, which address concerns of the food system. However, the focus of these initiatives remained on the production domain with the idea of promotion of regenerative/ecological/natural farming with small holder farmers. There is a felt need of greater synergies with mainstream production systems,

integration with the consumption side and engaging the various actors in the agri-food systems including mainstream. In this context, the objective of COFTI is a collective action of various actors working towards food systems transformation, which is strengthened through knowledge sharing, co-creation and innovation.

The aim is to create and operationalise a multi-stakeholder platform, guided by a shared vision and a strategic communication framework. This platform will facilitate both intra- and inter-country knowledge exchange, with a focus on advancing food systems transformation in India. The initiative engages a diverse range of stakeholders, including government bodies, academic institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), international organizations, national and international networks, and the private sector.

PARTNERS

- GIZ,
- Welthungerhilfe (WHH),
- Food Future Foundation (FFF)
- In addition, CoFTI collaborates with various organisations and individuals from development sector, think tanks, and academia in its seven action labs and other engagements, including organising workshops, implementing action lab pilot projects, etc.

ACTIVITIES

- Onboarding of CoFTI Secretariat in December 2025
- CoFTI Storytelling workshop and Visioning exercise in February 2025
- UN - Voluntary National Review Consultations in February and March 2025
- Multi-Stakeholder Nutrition Conclave in March 2025
- Workshop on Gender in Agroecology in March 2025

21 | Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network (RRA Network)

The RRA Network has emerged as a vital coalition for revitalizing rainfed agriculture in India. Through its networked approach, it has facilitated convergence across sectors, influenced state and national policy, and promoted grassroots innovations. Thematic

working groups on millets, seed systems, and pastoralism have demonstrated tangible progress, with pilots and policy engagements in multiple states. Despite challenges around fragmented action and sustaining ownership, the network continues to strengthen its role as a platform for collective action in rainfed landscapes.

COVERAGE:

- State Chapters: Maharashtra (7 blocks across 3 districts), Himachal Pradesh (60 GPs – 12 blocks – 7 districts, ~180 villages), Bundelkhand (6 districts).

PARTNERS

- 130 partner organisations, 24 research institutions, 18 CBOs, 12 networks, 10 independent agencies, government institutions.
- National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA)
- ICRISAT
- ICAR-NBPGR
- ICAR-CTCRI
- Animal Husbandry Statistics (AHS), DAHD
- Indian Institute of Rice Research (IIRR)
- BCKV
- University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad (UAS-D)
- Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Agriculture University, Parbani
- CIAE, Bhopal
- Government of Himachal Pradesh

ACTIVITIES

- RRA Network in collaboration with National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA), MoA&FW set up RRA Cell to strengthen the interface between research, practice, bottom-up policy processes & technology development suitable for rainfed areas
- Working Group of Seed Systems – capacity building programmes on Traditional seed quality standards were conducted across 12 states engaging over 60 partner organisations, passport data collection of traditional seed varieties was taken up.
- Formed an SoP Committee with NRAA, BCKV, and the West Bengal Agriculture Department to develop standardized protocols for mainstreaming traditional seed varieties into formal seed systems and public programs;
- Developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for traditional landraces in collaboration with the Odisha Government.
- In collaboration with NRAA, organized a National Consultation on Forest Fringe Landscapes in Rainfed Areas to develop an integrated approach for farm, forest and livestock through a multi-actor platform.

- A scoping study initiated in 5 agro-ecological zones (Nagarkurnool - Telangana, Manyam – Andhra Pradesh, Wardha – Maharashtra, Chamba – Himachal Pradesh, Panna – Madhya Pradesh)
- The Working Group of Millets in collaboration with partner organisations & millet mentor supported in establishing 173 millet clusters involving 8,752 farmers and covering 2,548 acres (986 hectares). The clusters were distributed as follows: Jharkhand (24), Maharashtra (16), Himachal Pradesh (57), West Bengal (35), and Rajasthan (43). Implementation was carried out by 11 partner organizations, in which WGoM provided technical expertise on millet cultivation, processing, and ecosystem sustainability.
- The Network during this period also supported in building grassroot leadership to champion rainfed agenda. These include millet fellows, seed saviours and youth pastoralists.
- Collaboration between WASSAN-RRA Network, Sahjeevan – Centre for Pastoralism and Animal Husbandry Statistics (AHS) division, Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD) – to form Pastoral Census Support Cell supporting the first enumeration of pastoral livestock in 21st Livestock Census.
- Facilitated the registration of National Pastoral Youth Association at Haridwar, Uttarakhand
- A proposal was submitted to SPM WBSRLM in July 2024 for scaling millet cultivation in West Bengal in collaboration with Switch-On Foundation.
- Government of Uttarakhand, Directorate of Agriculture invited the Working Group of Millets of RRA Network to support in designing of the Uttarakhand Millet Mission.
- Submission and finalization of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for pilot projects in Boipariguda and Malkangiri blocks in Odisha
- Collaborated with FOLU India to mainstream rainfed priorities in food systems transformation across two landscapes.
- Hosted a National Consultative Summit on rainfed agriculture as part of the 2024 Food Systems Summit agenda.
- Co-organized a National Workshop on Agrobiodiversity Revival with the Ministry of Agriculture and NRAA, focusing on the role of agrobiodiversity in enhancing climate resilience and informing strategies for conservation and sustainable use in rainfed regions.
- Signed an MoU with UHF-HP, Solan District Administration, and HIM-RRAN to jointly implement farmer training programs, promote resilient agroecological models, and support the revival and distribution of indigenous seed varieties in Himachal Pradesh.

22 | Collaboration with WASSAN on Deccan Living Lightly

The collaboration with WASSAN on Deccan Living Lightly focused on documenting and showcasing the cultural richness of pastoral communities. An exhibition focused on bringing pastoral journeys forwards, through their voices. It is curated into a moving exhibition as a tool for participatory advocacy on the vibrancy of pastoral production systems.

PARTNERS

- Pastoralists and local CSOs primarily. Participation of Karnataka State Animal Husbandry Department officials

ACTIVITIES

- Ogu katha documentation - Sangareddy district
- Film - Relationship between tiger & poda thrupu cattle
- Oral story telling audio recordings
- Collection of sticks, bells, shoes, textiles and other material that carry the heritage of pastoral lifestyle
- Photographs (ecology, festivals, gods/goddesses, landscapes, etc.)
- Loom installation (Deccani story)
- Dung exhibit (samples and installation)

23 | Can Community Forest Governance Improve Rural Prosperity and Well-being from Forest Restoration

This research project in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, is exploring how community forest governance influences rural prosperity and well-being through forest restoration. The aim is to use existing participatory research methods such as Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), transect walks, and maps along with exploring some newer methods which would facilitate ethnographic fieldwork in the selected villages.

The research participants will include local village leaders, Panchayat officials, representatives of government bodies such as the Forest Department with whom semi-structured interviews will be conducted

ACTIVITIES

- Literature review related to forest governance in Himachal Pradesh
- Data collection and preliminary analysis of government documents highlighting the history of restoration in Himachal Pradesh with a particular focus on Kangra District
- Conducted preliminary exploratory fieldwork to build networks and identify potential villages for the in-depth study

24 | Communication and Narrative Building for Agroecology in India

As part of the NCNF secretariat, the initiative focused on connecting with media and broadcast agencies and journalists at the national level and in each active state for regular coverage of agro ecology efforts going on in the state and narrative pieces on mainstream media platforms

The aim is to create and curate appealing, comprehensive and comprehensible narratives that could reach a larger audience and build evidence to influence further action that enables the transition towards and scaling up of agroecology and sustainable food systems. This was done through a Media Fellowship, wherein 8 journalists were selected for the fellowship, who produced compelling stories during the fellowship period.

COVERAGE

- Journalists: 8
- Publications: 3
- Editors: 2
- Resource persons: 4

ACTIVITIES

- Compilation of a compendium of natural farming case studies in Odisha
- Publication of 13 well researched stories by media fellows in 101 Reporters and few other publications
- Comprehensive documentation of some best practices, models and farmers' experiences- can be used as key learning tools for replication and for narrative building
- Establishment of strong network of journalists and media agencies

25 | Participatory Action Research for Strengthening and Scaling Agroecological Transitions

As part of NCNF, this project applies participatory action research to study and strengthen agroecological transitions in India, with a focus on farmer-to-farmer extension models. The focus is on learning about the content and the ways of learning involved in agroecology extension. It does not assume that agroecology learning is a one-way, top-down process, but assumes that extension workers can and do learn from farmers, and that farmers learn from one another. Aim is to document how this takes place, and in the process to also empower farmers from the grassroots as co-producers of knowledge.

The research is focused on two regions for in-depth field research:

1. Trijunction area of Rajasthan, MP and Gujarat, where we are co-researching with 6 CSOs (Vaagdhara, Seva Mandir, Utthan, Cohesion Foundation, Sampark and SPS);
2. Vidarbha, where we are co-researching with representatives of 20 agroecology initiatives, including CSOs such as Prakruthi, Bajaj Foundation, Salaiban, Krushi Vikas, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Yuva Rural Association, PGVS and Dharamitra, networks such as MAKAAM, RRA and Beejotsav, and farmer-trainers such as Vasant Futane and Mandar Deshpande.

ACTIVITIES

- Research methodology finalized, with allowances for evolution to take place as part of the participatory process at ground level.
- Field visits were carried out to Gujarat, Odisha, UP, Haryana, and Maharashtra for the purpose of scoping, involving farmers, academics and partners, and including documentation of caste, class, and inter-generational heterogeneity.
- A set of participatory research tools have been identified by the group of co-researchers. This takes into account all three summary principles of agroecology, highlighting the second and third summary principles
- Data collection pilots initiated.

26 | Transforming Livelihoods of Poor in Agriculture through Innovative Technologies and Collective Approaches

COVERAGE

- **10 mandals** across Srikakulam, Bapatla, Nagarkurnool, and Bhongir districts
- Reached **1252 farmers** (791 men, 461 women):
    - **551 farmers** benefited from physical interventions
    - **701 farmers** received capacity-building inputs on improved practices and technologies

LOCATION-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS:

- **Achampet:** groundwater recharge techniques, propagation of *Billudu* tree species.
- **Sompeta:** trellis cultivation for vegetables; revival of *Beela-Batti* irrigation system with channel renovation and silt application.
- **Bapatla:** repairs and revival of lift irrigation systems.
- **Bhongir:** partnered with local Nelathalli FPO.

- Farmers collectivized into groups of 15–20 to access equipment and training.
- Piloted innovative techniques with farmer participation.
- Emphasis placed on both **knowledge transfer and material transfer**.

PARTNERS

- **Local FPO:** Nelathalli FPO (Bhongir)
- **Government collaboration:** District and mandal officials, NREGS, Gram Panchayats
- **Line departments:** Forest Department (Achampet species propagation), Irrigation Department (lift irrigation revival)

ACTIVITIES

- Capacity building on solar fencing, borewell recharge, and pipe irrigation systems
- Support for trellis farming, sprinkler/pipe irrigation, fencing systems
- Revival of irrigation channels and traditional *Beela-Batti* practice in Sompeta
- Construction of seepage ponds, revival of open wells, farm ponds, lift irrigation systems

- Propagation of *Billudu* tree species in Achampet for agricultural tool making

GOVERNMENT / INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- Collaborated with **district & mandal officials, NREGS, Gram Panchayats**
- Forest Department supported species propagation
- Irrigation Department assisted with lift irrigation system revival

27 | Demonstration of Climate Resilient Crop Cultivation and Livestock Rearing for Sustainable Livelihood of Primitive Tribal Groups

- **36 PVTG (Konda Reddy) households** benefited.
- Interventions included:
    - **Tamarind deseeding unit** established as a village-level enterprise.
    - **Poultry activity** and **backyard kitchen gardens** for all 36 households.
    - **Goat-rearing** introduced for 4 households.
    - **Pulveriser machine** set up at a household level for processing cereals (Jowar, Ragi, wheat, Bengal gram, rice).
    - Households began selling flour in Temple outlets allocated to PTG members.
    - **Vegetable seed kits (9 varieties)** distributed → led to fresh, pesticide-free vegetables grown at household level (Ladyfinger, beans, gourds, tomato, leafy vegetables, mirchi, etc.).
    - Households reported **saving ₹150–200 per week** on vegetable expenses, with availability of produce from **August to February**.
- **Millet Food Festival** organized to raise awareness about cultivation and consumption.
- Trainings conducted on **poultry feed management, disease prevention, and vaccination**.
- **Health check-up camp** conducted with support of Health Department.

STAKEHOLDERS / PARTNERS

- **Funding Agency:** NABARD
- **PIA:** WASSAN
- **Government support:** Health Department, ITDA
- **Market linkage:** NABARD-supported Rural Mart (buying tamarind and forest produce from PTG families)

ACTIVITIES

- Establishment of tamarind deseeding unit and pulveriser machine.
- Promotion of poultry rearing, goatery, and backyard kitchen gardens.
- Distribution of seed kits for vegetable cultivation
- Awareness programs (millet festival, financial literacy, Vikas Bharat meetings with SBI)
- Engagement with SHG women for enterprise participation.
- Conducted PRA using Google Earth imagery to map and delineate lands.
- Focused on low-cost, household-level enterprises that address immediate nutrition and income needs.
- Built on revival of traditional millet cultivation and kitchen gardens for food security.
- Linked enterprises with local markets (Rural Mart, Temple outlets) for sustainability.

28 | WDF Watersheds and CPP (Kumrambheem, Salpalguda and Wavudam)

- To evolve systems of watershed management and efficient use of natural resources for mitigating the risks of climate change
- To improve productivity through soil and water conservation and water efficiency management for enhanced net incomes and livelihoods

- **Kumram Bheem Watershed:** Total no of Household: 298. Total of haters 1213 Routasankapalli Gram Panchayat, Asifabad Mandal, Kumram Bheem Asifabad, Telangana.
- Salpalguda Watershed; Total no of Household 253. Total no of Haters 1173. Edulawada gram panchayat, Bruguda Grampanchyat , Routasankapalli . Asifabad Mandal, Kumram bheem Asifabad Mandal. Telangana.
- Wavudham Watershed CPP; Total No of households 209, Total No of Haters 1488.45. Ada Dasnapur and Buruguda Grampanchyats . Asifabad mandal. Kumram bheem Asifabad District. Telangana

NABARD funded project, Convergence with Department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry for Livestock vaccination, Medical and Health Department for Health camp and Nutrition and KVKs for demonstrations and trainings and DCCB banks for Finance Literacy

GIS based watershed planning process. VWC has been formed with 11 to 13 members including Small and Marginal farmers, Land less and representation from women. The VWC get project funds from NABARD in phase wise. PFA- NGO will provide technical guidance and necessary support, capacity building to the village community and VWCs and monitor the progress and ensure the quality and quantity of works and activities.

Major works taken up under watersheds and CPPs were: soil conservation works such as TCB and WAT ; water harvesting structures like Farm ponds, Mini Percolation tanks and Drainage line treatment activities i.e. RFDs, Sunken Ponds, Dugout ponds, Subsurface dykes, SGPs etc.; Crop diversity activities - promotion of Millet crops, Hy density cotton, Pendal vegetable cultivation, Backyard kitchen gardens, Backyard poultry, capacity building related (trainings and exposure visits to build the capacities of VWC members and exposure for farmers on new technology/best practices in other locations. Biochar field trials and Livelihood enhancement activities in two watersheds and CPP.

30 | Jharkhand High Impact Mega Watershed Project, Jharkhand

1. Restoration of catchments in upper ridges through area treatment and soil erosion control
   Approx. 28,000 ha in Anandpur and Gudri blocks
2. Improve cropping intensity on approx. 12,500 ha land
3. Capacity enhancement of PRI members, community, and CSOs on ridge-to-valley watershed principles

OUTREACH OF THE PROJECT

- Districts : West Singhbhum
- Blocks Covered: 2 blocks (Anandpur as intensive block and Gudri as non-intensive)
- Panchayats Covered: 6 Gram Panchayats in Anandpur & 3 Gram Panchayats in Gudri
- Villages Covered: 48 villages (Anandpur) & 28 village (Gudri)
- Total Schemes Approved: 12,606
- Total Budget Approved: ₹83.85 crore
- Work Codes Generated: 1,090 schemes (₹19.85 crore)
- Ongoing Schemes: 373
- Completed Assets: 354
- Expenditure till FY 2024-25 : ₹7.29 crore

The Jiwi Daah Hasa (JDH) Project brought together multiple stakeholders at different levels to ensure effective planning, implementation, and monitoring.

1. Government Stakeholders
   - State MGNREGA Cell, Government of Jharkhand
   - District and Block Administration
2. Funding & Nodal Agency
   - SBI Foundation – Funding support
   - Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation (BRLF) – strategic support.

3. Community Institutions & Local Stakeholders
    - Gram Panchayats – All Panchayat Representative of 6 GPs.
    - Munda, Manki, VO's and SHG's – for planning, implementation, and monitoring at village level.
    - Farmers – acted in field-level.
4. Implementing Agency
    - WASSAN

The Jiwi Daah Hasa (JDH) Project followed a community-owned, convergence-driven and technologically enabled approach. The key elements were:

1. Participatory Planning through e-PRA & ODK Surveys
    - Every household and land parcel was mapped using digital tools (ODK, GIS, Google Earth).
    - Contextual Reasoning: Ensured scientific planning + community validation, overcoming issues of ad-hoc scheme selection.
2. Ridge-to-Valley Watershed Model
    - Land was classified into five categories (Tanr-1, Tanr-2, Don-1, Don-2, Don-3) with appropriate soil and water conservation works.
    - Contextual Reasoning: Addressed soil erosion, water scarcity and low productivity in rainfed tribal areas.
3. Convergence with MGNREGA & Line Departments
    - MGNREGA was the backbone for asset creation and other departments supported inputs/livelihood.
    - Contextual Reasoning: Tackled fund constraints and leveraged government schemes for scale.
4. Inclusive Community Engagement
    - Involved SHGs, CRPs, PRI members and traditional leaders (Munda-Manki) in every stage.
    - Contextual Reasoning: Built ownership and accountability, reducing exclusion of marginalised households.
5. Livelihood Layering on NRM Assets
    - Integrated Farming Systems (IFS), fisheries, poultry, goatery, and millets were promoted on treated land and water bodies.
    - Contextual Reasoning: Ensured that created assets generate income, not just physical structures.
6. Capacity Building & Local Institution Strengthening
    - CRPs, mates, PRI members, SHG leaders trained on watershed, plantation, and digital tools.
    - Contextual Reasoning: Addressed low technical capacity in remote villages and ensured sustainability beyond project.

WATERSHED & INRM WORKS

- 696 NRM structures created/renovated (Farm ponds, field bunds, plantation, etc.)
- 578 hectares of land treated under ridge-to-valley watershed approach.
- 5.46 lakh persondays generated through MGNREGA convergence.

AGRICULTURE & CROP DIVERSIFICATION

- 376 farmers promoted high-value agriculture (vegetables, pulses, oilseeds).
- 230 farmers adopted millet cultivation across uplands.
- 49 households demonstrated Integrated Farming Systems (IFS).
- 454 farmers supported under maize, pulses, and oilseeds promotion.

FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT

- 110 ponds stocked with fingerlings.

CAPACITY BUILDING & EXPOSURE

- 8 trainings for staff (NREGA, BHGY, IFS, etc).
- 4 trainings for Mates & Bagwani sakhi.
- 7 trainings for farmers on livelihoods.

CONVERGENCE & RESOURCE MOBILISATION

- ₹4.08 Cr leveraged from MGNREGA and other sources for asset creation.
- Inputs and technical support mobilised from Agriculture, Horticulture, ATMA, and Fisheries departments (123 farmers benefited)

31 | Millet Mentor

The overall purpose of Millet Mentor is to cultivate a support ecosystem spread across different states in the country. This ecosystem should have the necessary capacities to backstop decentralized millet (and other rainfed food produce) processing facilities, thus strengthening local value chains for millets and other nutrition rich products. Backstopping includes technical and enterprise related support. A prominent design aspect includes -building a local cadre of technicians who ensure processing machines are maintained well and face minimum down time, owing to their prompt repair services.

Over the last few years, Millet Mentor has emerged as an important 'platform' or support group owned by multiple partners in the network - prominent amongst them being Selco Foundation, Working group on Millets-RRAN, The Millet Foundation, Transfarm Tech, Sahaja Samrudha and many others.

DETAILED OBJECTIVES

Developing and building capacities on clear operational protocols and business management guidelines for small-scale millet enterprises to enhance efficiency, achieve benchmarked productivity, implement quality control, and consistency in production.

- **Building Local Ecosystem Support –** Strengthening essential service providers such as resource centers (RCs) for practical hands-on training and local

technicians to ensure consistent technical assistance, maintenance, and operational support for millet processing units.
- **Improving Economic Viability –** Addressing operational bottlenecks and optimizing resource utilization to enhance financial sustainability, making small-scale millet enterprises profitable and scalable.
- **Enhancing Accessibility & Affordability –** Supporting decentralized enterprises to ensure millets are competitively priced, widely available, and integrated into mainstream diets and commercial markets.
- Total- Training & workshop - 256 participants from 33 partner organisations & enterprises across 7 states.

CAPACITY BUILDING - MILLET PROCESSING

- Training of trainers for millet processing
- Operations Training
- Millet Mixie (desktop dehuller) Operations & repair training
- Exposure visits

MILLET ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

- Millet seed production training
- Millet recipe workshop

ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

- Consultation and advisory to 5 partner organizations & 1 entrepreneur to design and establish 10 millet processing units

- Co Anchor - Selco Foundation
- Network partner - Revitalizing rainfed agriculture network, WGoM
- Training partners - Sahaja Samrudhha, Devdhanya FPO, Bibi Fatima SHG, NIWCYD, SRDC, Transfarm Technology, Vishwa Agritech, Agrozee, the Millet Foundation, Manyam Grains, Odisha Millet Mission

Millet Mentor has been designed in tune with the overall 'systems design' approach with respect to revival of millets that has evolved in the WASSAN-RRAN ecosystem over the years. A sustainable revival of millets where in millets are not just grown but also consumed by rural communities requires a multi-pronged focus on seed systems, integration in cropping systems, package of practices adhering to sustainable agriculture to ensure better yields, local processing which is efficient and economical, local consumption at HH and institutional/commercial level, integration with external markets for surplus production, local enterprises in each stage of the value chain etc.

Millet Mentor together with other ecosystem partners is a services platform focusing on a critical bottleneck -local processing of millets. In order to overcome this, the initiatives has adopted the following approach:

1. Evolve knowledge systems - develop products -guides, manual, videos which capture all aspects of operations including quality management, unit maintenance, budiness documentation and reporting etc at a millet processing unit.
2. Develop training capacities with partners in different states - Resource centres (FPOs, SHGs, Individuals backstopped by NGO partners) with millet processing facilities capable of training upcoming entrepreneurs in their region.
3. Develop a technical cadre - Small enterprises with machines are often end up defunct due to issues concerning machine installation, frequent break down, improper settings, lack of vendor support and lack of access to technically competent and skilled persons locally. Therefore the initiative aims at building a technical cadre spread across different locations , attached to respective enterprises.
4. Stakeholder coordination- Engaging with different stakeholders including machine vendors, entrepreneurs, credit agencies etc to achieve the desired objectives.

CAPACITY BUILDING & TRAINING

- Training of trainers: 13 participants from 7 organizations across 4 states. 5 5-day residential training program followed by 3 months of weekly webinar.
- Operations training: for Gandeed Women FPO supported by NABARD FSDD. Collaboration with Selco to organise trainings at Selco Foundation's implementation sites.
- Exposure visit: for WSHG members of Shree Anna Abhiyan (formerly Odisha Millet Mission) to AgroZee
- Millet seed production training: for farmers and CRPs of Multi Art Association and Vikas Sahyog Kendra in Barwadih (Latehar) and Kanda (Palamu), Jharkhand
- Millet Mixie and recipe demonstration: for WSH members of Multi Art Association (MAA), in Latehar, Jharkhand
- Millet Mixie demonstration & Repair workshop: For WSHG members of Him RRA member organisations in Tunhag and Karsog, Himachal Pradesh

ENTERPRISE SUPPORT & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Switch on Foundation, Pragati Abhiyan, Phia Foundation, Nirman Foundation, Maharashtra Seva Prabodhan Mandal, Bimala Devi - Millet entrepreneur

32 | Regenerative Landscape Project (RLP), Dumaria

PROJECT PERIOD

- May 2024 - March 2025

TECHNICAL/ RESOURCE PARTNER

- WASSAN

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER

- Kalamandir, Jamshedpur

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The program focuses on the revival of natural resources through the proper utilization of local resources to improve farmer livelihoods, ensure food security, increase water use efficiency, conserve biodiversity, and restore the ecological landscape. The project is being implemented in all 14 villages of Kantasole Panchayat, Dumaria Block, East Singhbhum, Jharkhand.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

- **Introduce PMDS** : to improve crop growth in uncertain monsoon conditions.
  Implementation: Village meetings conducted under the leadership of village heads. 32 farmers successfully adopted PMDS and started sowing before the rainy season.

- **Rabi irrigation through Protective irrigation:** Solar based irrigation system was introduced where farmers purchased 3 0.5 HP mobile solar cart at subsidised rate. The irrigation system now has brought 10 plus acres of land under cultivation in Rabi.

- **Seed Production** :Ensure availability of indigenous seeds through local SHGs.
  Implementation: Three SHGs selected and provided with indigenous seeds. Organic cultivation methods were emphasized. Desi seed production of Khesari, Sanai, Arhar, Madua, Urad, Maize, Gram, Jowar, and Moong crops was undertaken. Heavy rainfall impacted seed yield, but some crops were successfully produced, multiplied for next year.

- **Promoting Natural farming:** Conducted training in all 14 villages. Focused on Beejamrit, Jeevamrit, and Nimastra application & adoption. 186 farmers cultivated paddy using NF on 49.41 acres. Crop cutting recorded an average paddy yield of 1962.4 kg/acre.

- **Increased Biomass around Pond for diversified purpose:** Improve pond ecosystems for fisheries. Implementation: 10 farmers selected for pond plantation. Provided mango and banana saplings. Farmers are maintaining saplings for healthy growth.

- **Agroforestry Farm with Backyard Poultry:** Enhance biodiversity and productivity through agroforestry. Implementation: Established agroforestry farm with 5 poultry breed farms. Farmers developed multi-layer farms having various fruit and timber trees (banana, guava, papaya, lemon, teak, mahogany, orange, jamun, etc.). Farmers prepared land through bed preparation and mulching.

- **Increased Rabi Cultivation through NF:** Training provided on field preparation, seed treatment, and organic formulations. 80 farmers cultivated gram, lentil, and mustard seeds. Crops cultivated using NF methods.

- **Strengthening Livestock Production:** Improve livestock health through vaccination and deworming. Implementation: 4 Pashu Sakhis trained at Goat Trust, Lucknow. 515 chickens vaccinated in 5 BYP centers. 812 goats dewormed and vaccinated @Rs.2/- per vaccine. The mortality rate of animals reduced significantly, improving farmers' income.

- For more information: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZWsLUGDerk5lCWqE6J6sy3w5Ghyu1LhN?usp=drive_link

33 | REWARD (Rejuvenating Watershed for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development)

REWARD is a Government of India initiative designed as a science-based watershed development project implemented across the states of Odisha and Karnataka. Supported by the World Bank, the project is being executed from 2021 to 2026, covering 21 districts in Karnataka and 7 districts in Odisha, with a total budget outlay of USD 167.71 million.

PARTNERS

- Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Ministry of Rural Development
- National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA)
- World Bank
- ICRISAT,
- NRSC,
- MANAGE

ACTIVITIES

- Conducted a comprehensive literature review of documents received from the technical agency to examine existing approaches, methodologies, tools, and criteria related to data collection, analysis, community participation and interpretation in watershed development projects.
- A team of experts from WASSAN undertook in-depth studies in both the REWARD States and developed a “Technical Assessment Report” to document ground realities related to Community Engagement and Institutional Development in Karnataka and Odisha. It was submitted to NRAA in 2024, serving as a foundational document for refining the National Technical Guidelines (NTG).
- WASSAN team actively participated in both virtual and in-person brainstorming sessions and National-Level Technical Committee (NLTC) meetings organized by the consortium and technical partners at the State and Central levels.
- WASSAN joined a field visit organized by the NRAA to Boipariguda, Odisha, to assess progress under the watershed initiative. The team interacted with farmers, youth, and SHGs, gaining insights into community ownership, social dynamics, and grassroots innovations. Key observations included active community involvement in earthwork activities and robust local monitoring systems led by SHGs and village institutions. The visit highlighted the importance of participatory planning, implementation, and monitoring, offering valuable lessons for future programs and policy development.
- WASSAN partnered with MANAGE to strengthen the project's technical foundation through workshops and discussions focused on hydrology, land resources, training curricula, and climate resilience. WASSAN also facilitated sessions with partners to refine the NTG, highlighting community engagement across all project phases.
- Reviewed behavioral change strategies from Karnataka COE and conducted a literature review of watershed projects across India, focusing on community engagement and participatory approaches. Key insights were integrated into the "Lessons Learnt" section of the NTG Zero Draft, in coordination with NRAA. The

analysis also identified successful models of behavioral change and governance for potential adaptation and inclusion as case studies in future drafts.

- Visit to Karnataka (TERI, COE- Bengaluru-Karnataka) - WASSAN team joined an NRAA-led visit to the Centre of Excellence at U.A.S, Bengaluru, and engaged with MANAGE and TERI to gather insights from REWARD Karnataka's monitoring and evaluation efforts. Through interactions with project staff, partners, and communities, the team explored training strategies, implementation of earthworks, community participation, awareness of LRI and water studies, and feedback mechanisms.
- WASSAN conducted a detailed study of FPCs in Koraput, Deogarh, and Nayagarh districts of Odisha to understand their operational models, challenges, and impact. It highlighted the need for strong support systems to scale impact and reaffirmed the transformative potential of community-owned FPCs in rainfed and tribal areas.
- NRAA conducted a field visit to Bhubaneswar, Odisha, to review the REWARD Project in Dhenkanal district, engaging with SHGs, FPCs, and local farmers in Baghdhoria village. The visit highlighted challenges faced by landless women in income generation, operational issues within FPCs, and varying levels of community awareness about scientific interventions like LRI. It emphasized the need for continued technical support, institutional strengthening, and inclusive planning for sustainable outcomes in rainfed areas.
- WASSAN conducted a process study in Boipariguda (Koraput) and Barkote (Deogarh), Odisha, to document implementation practices at high-performing REWARD watershed sites. The study focused on intervention processes across project phases and data management systems. Key learnings and successful practices from the field will inform the National Technical Guidelines to enhance the quality and impact of watershed development under the REWARD program

34 | SABAL Project (Strengthening Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity across Landscapes)

The Strengthening Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity across Landscapes (SABAL) project is being implemented in the Eastern Ghats region of Andhra Pradesh since 2022. Rainforest Alliance has partnered with WASSAN, RYSS, and FES to facilitate the program across 8 micro-landscapes in the state.

The project's approach involves establishing a Multistakeholder Landscape Management Body (MSLMB) in each landscape area to develop action plans for sustainable land management. The goal is to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), biodiversity conservation, and improved rural livelihoods. A total of 12,135 hectares has been delineated across the micro-landscapes, comprising 32% forest land, 42% agricultural land, 8% common land, and the remainder categorized as built-up areas. Village Organizations (VOs) will lead multi-stakeholder platforms at the village level, while Mandal Mahila Samakhya will facilitate stakeholder platforms at the Mandal level.

PROJECT AREAS

ASR, Vizianagaram, Kadapa, Nandhyal districts, Andhra Pradesh

District	Name of the GP	No of Habitations	Total Hh	Total landscape area in Ha	Total forest land in ha	Total common land in ha	Total Agriculture land in Ha
ASR	D.Gonduru	16	595	1435	917	23.08	306.8
ASR	Singharba	18	812	1550	600	41.28	750
ASR	Pinakota	7	444	1600	519	109.1	1523.26
ASR	Jaderu	4	621	1480	210.2	103.8	578.86
Vizianagaram	KG Pudi	9	676	1700	807	331	561
Parvathipuram	Uridi	13	404	1450	45.5	258.69	431.54
Kadapa	Rekulakunta	9	537	1670	182	88.6	576
Nandhyala	Bairluty	3	443	1250	540	83.2	307.8
		79	4532	12135	3821	1039	5035

ACTIVITIES

- Micro-landscape plans developed through consultations with VO leaders and finalized with the consent of various stakeholders, including FPOs, PRI, VSS, VDVKs, NGOs, and line department staff at Sachivalayams. In 2024-25, convergence efforts yielded works worth ₹45.96 lakhs, including community contributions.
- A total of 2085 farmers and 1903 acres have practiced PMDS under the SABAL Project in Andhra Pradesh. As per the CC Experiments done in the D Gonduru Landscape area and Pinakota Landscape area, the biomass estimated 5 tones an average production within the 30days period from the date of sowing.
- 191 farmers across 8 micro-landscapes and 46 villages (20 Grampanchayats) implemented the A3 VANAM model (poly-crop vegetable model) on 48 acres. Training programs conducted to support farmers. Each farmer cultivated 9-12 crop varieties on plots ranging from 20-30 cents, generating ₹15,000 to ₹25,000.
- 793 kitchen gardens established across 8 micro-landscapes, featuring perennial species like banana, curry leaf, drumstick, and papaya. Partnerships were formed with BRC units to supply non-farm inputs for these gardens.
- 41 farmers intensified coffee orchards by ensuring 900 coffee and 100 pepper plants per acre, and adding 100 horticulture species like avocado, banana, and jackfruit.
- 90 farmers rejuvenated their cashew orchards through pruning, lime application, and stone bunding, and integrated species like pineapple and custard apple.
- In 6 landscape regions across ASR, Manyam, and Vizianagaram districts, 139 ponds covering 68 acres were identified and stocked with 2.04 lakh fingerlings (Katla, Rohu, and Grass carp) through a 50% community contribution.
- 14 Desi Poultry clusters established, excluding Bairluty and Rekalakunta.
- Encouraged 10 young women in startups to sustain their livelihoods. Notably, women managing Desi Poultry breeding farms are well-positioned to serve local farmers, utilizing by-products like bran as feed for poultry, cattle, sheep, goats, and fisheries.
- Village Organization (VO) leaders selected as entrepreneurs, 2,460 families have accessed services from these entrepreneurs.
- 6 Bio-Resource Centres (BRCs) established in 6 landscapes, providing easy access to Jeevamrutham, raw urine, and other concoctions for 1,700 farmers.
- 80 cono weeders and 80 cycle weeders distributed to reduce women's drudgery,
- 30 coffee farmers modified baby pulpers with local technicians' assistance.
- Project dashboard developed to track progress, provide evidence, and showcase prototyping models demonstrated in the micro-landscape areas.

34 | IINF NC – Institutionalisation of Integrated Natural Farming in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh

Alluri Sitharama Raju District is a key area for WASSAN, with over 10 years of experience in promoting agroecology and regenerative landscape transformation. For 2024-25, WASSAN's objective was to institutionalise the ecosystem services that were established in pilot villages and spread the best practices in collaboration with the district administration and local partner CSOs.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Develop cadre of tribal youths as JALAMITRAs to champion water as a common's agenda
- Upscale rainfed fisheries through Ecofarm ponds
- Saturate sustainable integrated farming systems in 25 villages

OUTPUTS / DATASETS

- ___ tribal youths as JALAMITRAs
- ___ Ecofarm ponds set up
- ___ water collectives
- ___ fish master farmers
- ___ coffee and pepper farm models
- ___ BRCs
- __ Agri service centers
- __ water harvesting structures

STAKEHOLDERS

- District Administration of ASR, Andhra Pradesh
- Local CSO partner groups namely

ACTIVITIES

- Training and capacity building of JALAMITRA - preparation of modules and manuals suitable to tribal youths

- Development of Fish Master Farmers and district-wide saturation of fisheries saturation.
- Establishment of coffee land models.
- Institutional development for water and agri service centres.
- Promotion of backyard poultry (BYP) as a bankable model.
- Implementation of *Poshana Vanitha* pilot.

LEARNINGS

- Delayed loan repayment process is emerging as a serious concern to develop micro enterprises as bankable models
- Transportation of natural farming inputs in the tribal areas is a logistical challenge

The cadre of JALAMITRAs have emerged as effective champions to lead the agenda of water as a common in the villages. Expanding this cadre to thereby strengthen water collective and scale the fisheries saturation model will be the way forward.