



QUARTERLY UPDATE

SWAYAM SHIKSHAN PRAYOG

JANUARY-MARCH 2025

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Honoring late Ms. Prema Gopalan's Legacy by celebrating Sakhi Prerana Divas

On 1st February 2025, Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) celebrated the birth anniversary of its visionary founder, Late Ms. Prema Gopalan, who dedicated her life to rural women's empowerment and sustainable development. To honor her legacy, SSP organized the Sakhi Prerana Divas in Pune, attended by over 300 guests, including grassroots women leaders from five states. Prof. Vinod Menon, Chairperson of SSP Board, welcomed the esteemed guests and community leaders. The event featured a lamp-lighting ceremony by the distinguished guests and an inspiring keynote by Dr. Mallinath Kalshetti, Retd. IAS, reflecting on Prema Tai's profound impact.

The Prema Gopalan Sakhi Prerana Awards were presented to women leaders excelling in fields like bio-farming, water conservation, micro-entrepreneurship, clean energy, and climate action. Stories from leaders such as Kushavati Chothve and Sangita Kumari highlighted the transformative power of women-led initiatives. Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) also showcased their organic products, and the event closed with a vote of thanks from SSP Board Member Priya Patil, reaffirming SSP's commitment to resilient, empowered communities. The day was a tribute to Prema Tai's enduring influence on grassroots leadership and sustainable change.



Women at the Heart of Climate-Smart Agriculture: SSP at State-Level Gender Consultation

Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) was proud to participate in the Maharashtra State-Level Consultation on Gender in Agricultural Food Systems and Climate Change, organized by Friends of Women's World Banking (FWWB) on February 11, 2025, in Pune. The event emphasized the need for gender-inclusive policies in agriculture and climate resilience. FWWB recognized SSP's women farmers' leadership and appreciated Ms. Seema Sayyed, a grassroots leader from SSP for sharing insights on empowering women-led Farmer Producer Companies to drive sustainable, climate-smart change.

Large Scale Impact on Farming Communities of Dharashiv under Marathwada District Transformation Model

Under Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) supported programme "Marathwada District Transformation Model" in Dharashiv district, 88,390 farmers have adopted improved agricultural practices, including advanced irrigation methods such as drip and sprinkler systems, the use of bio-pesticides for pest control, and enhanced plant growth techniques like nipping in gram crops and the application of plant growth promoters in sorghum and vegetable crops. Key achievements of the program include: expansion of improved practices to 83,697 hectares; an increase of 12,000 farmers adopting the WCRF model; registration of 1,000 demo plots by 500 sakhis; and implementation of 4,890 demonstrations.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Sakhi Samvad Melava

The Sakhi Samvad Melava marked the conclusion of successful partnership between Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) and Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), driving transformative change in Dharashiv through the Marathwada District Transformation Model (MDTM) Project. It was organized on March 3, 2025, to honor Sakhis for their invaluable contributions to community development. The event saw the participation of over 700 attendees, including 500 Sakhis, as well as Sarpanches and farmers from across the region.

Esteemed guests such as the District Collector Shri Keerthi Kiran Pujar (I.A.S.), Zilla Parishad CEO Mr. Mainak Ghosh (IAS), District Superintendent Agriculture Officer Mr. Ravindra Mane, Hindustan Unilever Foundation CEO Mr. Shraman Jha, and POCRA State Officer Dr. Rajul Panth commended the Sakhis and the SSP team for their impactful and inspiring work in the district.



Gender Fair Program

SSP organized a vibrant Gender Fair Program across 200 villages in Washim and Nanded districts, reaching a total of 28,738 participants. Supported by Oracle Financial Services Software, the initiative aimed to promote gender equality, challenge traditional norms, and foster equal opportunities for all. In each district, 100 villages actively participated through a range of activities including awareness campaigns, cultural events, and educational sessions. Energetic rallies—led by school children, women, men, and local leaders—added spirit and visibility to the cause. Participants raised slogans and carried banners advocating for girls' education and the elimination of gender-based discrimination.

District Dialogue Workshop on Convergence Scheme

On 23rd January 2025, a District Dialogue Workshop at DPDC Hall, Dharashiv, brought together 400 Sakhis, 300 women farmers, and key officials to bridge the communication gap between grassroots leaders with government departments. Officials including District Superintendent Agriculture Officer, Mr. Ravindra Mane and Dy. Director-Horticulture at Department of Agriculture, Government of Maharashtra, Mr. Khanderao Saraf shared schemes including Padhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PMFME) and the National Mission on Natural Farming. Mr. Saraf introduced "Krushi Tai" to support women-led farming, while Mr. Mane promoted food processing entrepreneurship. Women voiced their challenges, and officials promised support. The workshop enabled direct engagement, access to schemes, and greater clarity on services. Follow-up actions will ensure implementation, fostering inclusion and progress for rural women in agriculture.





KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

18000 women received Entrepreneurship Training Swabhimam Project supported by CitiBank N.A.

Swabhimam Project" has successfully supported 18,000 women in 6 Blocks of Latur, Solapur, and Pune districts in Maharashtra by providing them with a 10-day entrepreneurship and business training program in their own villages. The success of these women were celebrated through "Sakhi Melava" events, where they showcase their achievements.

During these gatherings, the trained women were also awarded certificates. A network of 600 Sakhis and 600 mentors ensures that the necessary guidance reaches the women during this project. To support them, a dedicated team of 280 expert trainers is actively involved. Until March 25, 7,500 women entrepreneurs had received essential equipment and tools required for their businesses under this initiative.

This initiative, is supported by CitiBank N.A. and led by Swayam Shikshan Prayog, is empowering women to drive economic and social transformation in their communities!



Swachhata Abhiyan: Community in Action

Swayam Shikshan Prayog, with support from Oracle Software Private Limited, launched the Swachhata Abhiyan across 200 villages in Washim and Nanded. The campaign inspired collective action to promote hygiene and environmental cleanliness. Villagers actively cleaned roads and public spaces, while students led morning processions to raise awareness. A mass oath-taking ceremony brought the community together, reinforcing their commitment to cleanliness.



SSP Featured in Krushi Vivek Magazine: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs



We are grateful to Krushi Vivek magazine for featuring Swayam Shikshan Prayog. The article, written by Mr. Laxmikant Malvadkar, highlighted the stories of four remarkable women leaders driving change: Ms. Godavari Dange, an agro-entrepreneur and Asia Regional Representative of Huairou Commission; Ms. Kamal Kumbhar, a social entrepreneur and award recipient; Ms. Archana Mane, an entrepreneurial success; and Ms. Anjali Masalkar, CEO of Swayam Sakhi Shetmal Farmer Producer Company. [Link for the article](#) is transforming rural communities.



WOMEN-LED CLIMATE RESILIENT FARMING



SBIF LEAP: Income Enhancement of Women Small Farmers by Strengthening 4 Farmer Producer Companies

Under the SBIF LEAP initiative, supported by the State Bank of India Foundation, 513 women farmers across four FPOs received training in organic farming. Skilled women trainers led two-day sessions combining theory, hands-on learning, and farm visits. Participants learned to prepare natural inputs like Jeevamrut and Dashparni Ark, gaining practical skills to adopt sustainable practices and lead climate-resilient agriculture in their communities..

Women-Led Climate Resilient Farming in Wayanad, Kerala and Bidar, Karnataka

In Wayanad district of Kerala, farmer awareness sessions on the Women-Led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF) model reached 360 women across 10 villages, with 334 trained and 564 attending refresher courses. Over 60% adopted WCRF practices in the Rabi season. A demo plot featured multi-storied cropping and water-saving techniques. Fifteen women began mushroom cultivation, turning their first harvest into pickles. Mrs. Madhavi set up a goatery, while Mrs. Janaki harvested 532 kg of rice, procured by the Keravriksha Farmer Producer Organization (FPO). Alongside 131 soil health cards, apiary and vermicompost units were harvested. A new partnership with Kerala Veterinary University will train women in sustainable livestock practices.

In Bidar district of Karnataka, 450 women farmers across 10 villages were trained in sustainable and climate-resilient farming practices (WCRF). This led to a 25% increase in crop yields and a 20% rise in the adoption of eco-friendly techniques, boosting food security and household incomes. These women are adapting to local challenges using agroecology, drought-resistant crops, water-saving methods, and collective action. This project is supported by the Oak Foundation.





WOMEN-LED CLIMATE RESILIENT FARMING

Agricultural Group Meeting held at various locations

Location: Washim and Nanded



In Washim and Nanded districts, with support from Oracle Financial Services Software, women's agricultural groups meet monthly to build skills in organic farming and the WCRF model. Over 17,200 women have been reached, and 10,000 trained in natural farming practices like Jeevamrut, mixed cropping, and land optimization. The program also supports livelihoods such as poultry, goat rearing, and beekeeping, along with training in seed selection, soil testing, and SHG-based financial planning. This has led to increased adoption of organic methods, a 40% rise in village collectives, and stronger food security and leadership among women farmers.

Location: Sambhaji Nagar

Supported by Kadoorie Charitable Foundation, 100 villages in Sillod and Palam blocks of Maharashtra were selected for the project. SSP's field team led 100 mobilization sessions. A two-day training on 11th & 12th January 2025 built team capacity and deepened understanding of the project components: women-led climate resilient farming, entrepreneurship, and water management. The second day featured a field exposure visit, offering hands-on learning about sustainable farming practices.

Location: Dharashiv

Under the Hindustan Unilever Foundation supported project, a total of 2,000 women were trained on the use of pheromone traps and how to make natural pesticides like Dashparni and Neem Astra. Additionally, the Agriculture Department distributed bio-pesticides to 6,000 women farmers across six blocks of the program. In Kallam Block, 70 Sakhi's submitted 2,100 spray pump applications, however only 100 farmers received them through a lucky draw. During the District Dialogue Workshop, the Agriculture Officer assured that all pending applications would be fulfilled in the coming financial year.





WOMEN-LED CLIMATE RESILIENT FARMING

CRP Training on Sustainable Integrated Farming Systems (SIFS) – Nutrition Garden

Under the Fair For All project which aims at improving value chains at scale, supported by Huairou Commission, Sarayi Sakhi FPO in Bhoom block, Maharashtra has established a 5-acre demonstration plot in Bhawanwadi village in Dharashiv District. This farm showcases improved agricultural practices with diverse crops like flaxseeds, jowar, wheat, and gram. The FPO has leased this land specifically to highlight sustainable soil management and climate-smart techniques. Women farmers have been trained in organic composting, water conservation, and mixed-cropping, equipping them with skills to enhance soil fertility and productivity.



Participatory Learning on Agri & Resource Management

During January and February 2025, a series of meetings were held in 10 villages across Wardha and Kutch, focusing on the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). Active participation came from villagers, especially women farmers. Through village transect walks, participants formed groups to map, observe, and record village conditions. A collaborative ground map was created, followed by a Focus Group Discussion to analyze findings, challenges & local resources. This participatory process led to the development of comprehensive village plans, later submitted to respective Gram Panchayats. A total of 359 women from 19 Gram Panchayats actively contributed to this inclusive planning initiative.



Improvement of the socio-economic conditions of women across five districts in Maharashtra

A district-level interaction workshop was held in Solapur on 20th March 2025, with 180 women participants. Government officials from various departments provided guidance on accessing schemes and discussed value chain-based enterprises and market linkages for organic farming. On 26th January 2025, Village Action Group (VAG) leaders from 500 villages presented their Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) in Gram Sabhas, engaging over 11,000 women farmers and leaders. The program also included digital finance literacy training for 2,421 women and self-assessments by 5,893 VAG leaders, promoting women's empowerment, informed decision-making, and inclusive governance across the villages. This project is supported by Misereor.

Participatory Learning on Agri & Resource Management

A series of consultation workshops were held with women farmers, government officials, and key stakeholders at district and block levels to create awareness about the project and align it with existing schemes. The sessions introduced the project's goals—focusing on farm sustainability, water conservation, and management—while encouraging stakeholder collaboration. Discussions highlighted leveraging government support for women farmers. The workshops also enabled partnerships with departments for technical guidance, KVK-led exposure visits, and credit linkages with financial institutions. As a result, 200 women farmers from 30 villages actively participated, marking a significant step toward building a supportive ecosystem for sustainable, women-led agriculture. This project is supported by The Manjri Stud Farm Private Limited.





WOMEN-LED CLIMATE RESILIENT FARMING

Baseline Survey of 10000 women farmers

The baseline survey of 10,000 women farmers is completed under the Women-Led Climate Resilient Farming project across Sambhaji Nagar and Parbhani districts in Maharashtra. Project teams visited 100 Gram Panchayats to introduce the initiative, engage local leaders, and begin Sakhi selection. Two training sessions were conducted for 100 Sakhis from Aurangabad and Parbhani, focusing on project orientation, climate-resilient farming, entrepreneurship, and use of the MGrant app for data collection. Mobilization drives by Sakhis, mentors, and coordinators ensured the identification and enrolment of women farmers. These initial steps have laid a strong foundation for the next phase—capacity-building on climate-smart agriculture and sustainable, women-led livelihood practices. The project is supported by the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation.

Participatory Learning on Agri & Resource Management

During January and February 2025, a series of meetings were held in 10 villages across Wardha and Kutch, focusing on the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GDP). Active participation came from villagers, especially women farmers. Through village transect walks, participants formed groups to map, observe, and record village conditions. A collaborative ground map was created, followed by a Focus Group Discussion to analyze findings, challenges, and local resources. This participatory process led to the development of comprehensive village plans, later submitted to respective Gram Panchayats. A total of 359 women from 19 Gram Panchayats actively contributed to this inclusive planning initiative.



Empowering Women through Sustainable Farming

Under the Misereor-supported project in Maharashtra, 740 women were trained in vermicomposting, with 42 successfully implementing it on their farms. Training sessions included practical demos and guidance from agricultural and livestock officers, who shared information on relevant government schemes. Women were encouraged to apply, promoting sustainable farming and improving their socio-economic status.





WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT



Entrepreneurship Development and Financial Support Initiative

Under SIDBI supported project on “Implementation of the Micro Enterprise Promotion Programme (MEPP) in Dharashiv district”, SSP played a key role in providing both guidance and funding support to emerging entrepreneurs. Under the Chief Minister Loan Scheme and the Prime Minister Loan Scheme, structured loan programs and training initiatives were implemented to facilitate the establishment of small-scale industries and businesses. These efforts aimed not only at fostering entrepreneurship but also at enhancing community employability, particularly in the area of small business operations.

Thanks to the dedicated collaboration between bank officers and women entrepreneurs, the training programs were conducted in a systematic and effective manner. In Dharashiv district, outreach efforts connected with 800 women entrepreneurs, providing them with valuable information on small business opportunities.

As a result, 450 women enrolled in the Micro Enterprise Promotion Programme. Additionally, 100 women received support for credit linkage through the District Industries Centre. Among them, 50 women successfully had their loan proposals sanctioned, amounting to a total of ₹65 lakhs.

Digital Financial Literacy

In this quarter, 2421 women farmers, and Village Action Group (VAG) leaders were trained in digital financial literacy. This training showed 100% results. In this, each trainee understood how to reduce unnecessary expenses in various places such as personal, family and agriculture and business. They became aware of safe savings, appropriate loans, financial credit etc. Each trainee made the right decisions to save. This initiative is supported by Misereor.





WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

Community Resource Persons Drive Grassroots Change

In the final phase of the Avendus-supported project, Repositioning Rural Women as Advanced Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders in Latur District, a dynamic Cluster Resource Person (CRP) meeting was organized for grassroots leaders in Udgir block. A total of 71 grassroots leaders participated in the event, which highlighted the impact of the Entrepreneurial Development Program (EDP). CRPs shared success stories of new businesses, expansions, and income diversification. Notably, 93 new enterprises were launched, and over 500 CRPs embraced new business activities. Many adopted record-keeping and business boards, while several made investments and opened bank accounts, advancing their financial independence. The project concludes with a solid foundation for rural entrepreneurship and community-driven development in Udgir.

Empowering Women and Strengthening Livelihoods

During January to March 2025, more than 2,000 individuals were trained in agriculture, allied sectors, entrepreneurship, and vocational trades. Among them, 371 women acquired skills in tailoring, beauty services, para-vet care, and accounting. Platforms like Samvad Melawa and Sakhi Melawa brought together over 1,300 women to discuss business, finance, and leadership, fostering confidence and peer support. Vocational training led to the rise of local service providers, while eco-friendly practices were promoted through biogas use and 12 organic demo plots. Over 3,000 participants joined Krishi Vigyan Kendra exposure visits, with targeted outreach ensuring that marginalized women were actively included. The project is supported by Axis Bank Foundation.





WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Training

To enhance the entrepreneurial skills of women, 307 women participated in Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) training this quarter, with nearly 50% gaining a clear understanding of business planning, customer engagement, and market dynamics, shifting their mindset from job-seeking to job-creation in Nanded and Washim Districts. Additionally, 371 women were trained in vocational skills such as beauty parlour services, para-veterinary services, and tailoring, boosting their confidence and workplace readiness. In skill development, 200 women learned agri-processing, jewellery making, and bakery product preparation, receiving hands-on training and kits to support sustained practice and skill retention, empowering them for future employment and business opportunities. This project is supported by Oracle Financial Services & Software.



Entrepreneurial Support and Financial Linkages

With the project supported by SIDBI in Dharashiv district, a total of 150 loan proposals were submitted to various banks, with 50 successfully approved. Additionally, 24 professional women were issued food licenses, 36 completed Udyam Aadhaar registrations, and 20 received Shop Act licenses. Outreach initiatives mobilized around 1,200 individuals, and awareness meetings were conducted across talukas, benefiting small-scale industries. Field visits with bankers in Osmanabad, Tuljapur, Washi, Kalam, and Bhoon facilitated financial linkages, while monthly meetings provided valuable guidance to entrepreneurs, impacting over 1,200 people in the district.





WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening and Expanding Support for Existing Enterprises

During this period, significant efforts were made to support rural entrepreneurs under the Startup Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP), supported by MSRLM, Government of Maharashtra across Bhokardan and Jalna blocks of Jalna district. In Bhokardan block, 5 Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) trainings were conducted for 137 aspiring entrepreneurs, leading to 272 new enterprises, bringing the total to 1,270. In the Jalna block, 2 EDP trainings supported 49 participants, resulting in 534 new enterprises, totaling 1,252. Additionally, 35 enterprises in Bhokardan and 135 in Jalna received support, including business counselling, financial linkage facilitation, and market assistance. This program helped strengthen local businesses, enhancing sustainability and growth opportunities.

In terms of financial support, 262 loan proposals worth ₹159.20 lakhs were submitted in Bhokardan, with 160 approved, totaling ₹107.95 lakh. In Jalna, 232 proposals worth ₹157.78 lakhs were submitted, and 134 were approved, totaling ₹74.06 lakhs. This credit facilitation has been vital for helping entrepreneurs access formal financial resources, thereby supporting their business expansion and growth.





WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Building Skills for Governance and Community Impact

A capacity-building training program was organized on 15th January 2025 at Venniyode in Wayanad district in Kerala, aimed at empowering women leaders and Ward Sakhis. The training focused on enhancing skills in leadership, advocacy, communication, and conflict resolution. It was designed to boost participants' confidence in local governance, promote community mobilization, and increase awareness of policies and rights—particularly those related to gender equality. The program also emphasized sustainable practices in health, education, and economic empowerment, encouraging collective growth and collaboration within communities. This initiative was conducted under the Fair for All project, with support from the Huairou Commission.



VAG Leaders Present Village Plans

Under the Misereor-supported project in Dharashiv, Solapur, Latur, Nanded and Pune districts of Maharashtra, Village Action Group (VAG) leaders from 500 villages actively presented Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) findings and Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) during the Gram Sabha meetings held on 26th January. This milestone event witnessed the participation of over 11,000 women farmers and VAG leaders, highlighting the collective strength and leadership of grassroots women. By facilitating their direct involvement in local governance and planning, the initiative empowered women to voice their priorities and shape village development agendas—marking a significant step toward inclusive, gender-responsive rural development and governance.

Women Leadership and Capacity Building

The program, supported by Axis Bank Foundation, focused on empowering women by enhancing their leadership capabilities and fostering a strong sense of agency—moving beyond mere skill acquisition. Through structured platforms like Samvad Melawa (Dialogue Gatherings) and Sakhi Melawa, over 1,370 women actively engaged in discussions on business opportunities, market strategies, financial management, and collective problem-solving. These interactive sessions not only built confidence but also improved decision-making abilities, enabling women to take on more influential roles within their households, communities, and entrepreneurial ventures.



FARMER PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS

Strengthening Women-Led FPOs for Sustainable Livelihoods

In 2025, 400 farmers across four Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) were mobilized, forming 12 producer groups focused on products like chilli powder, hand mill dal, eggs, and pulses. Advocacy workshops with 16 producer groups strengthened their networks, connecting them to government schemes such as PMEGP, CMEGP, and PMFME. These initiatives empower women farmers by improving their production, processing, and marketing capacities. Active in Latur and Dharashiv districts, the groups produce papad, pickles, and agro-inputs while promoting sustainable practices. A new contract farming initiative for groundnut was launched with Manjiri Sakhi FPO, Orgonatural Organics, and Swayam Shikshan Prayog under the SBIF-LEAP project, aiming to provide stable incomes, market access, and improved agricultural practices.



Interaction meeting with RARS Ambalavayal

A one-day interaction workshop was conducted at the Regional Agricultural Research Station (RARS), Ambalavayal in Wayanad district with 15 women participants. During the training, members of Keravriksha FPO shared their activities, while other Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs/FPCs) also presented their work and shared their perspectives. The faculty members of RARS coordinated the session. Participants gained valuable insights and practical knowledge on the smooth functioning of FPCs. This program was supported by Huairou Commission under the 'Fair For All: Improving Value Chains at Scale'.

Interaction meeting with RARS Ambalavayal

Under the Fair For All project, a training session on branding, standardization, and export was held at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Ambalavayal, with 10 women participants. Experts from Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) and RARS led discussions on coffee-based product development and market potential. Keravriksha shared their journey of securing the Keralagro brand, offering insights into product preparation, packaging, and marketing. The session encouraged active interaction between participants of various FPOs and FPCs. It created a valuable space for knowledge exchange and inspired women entrepreneurs to explore branding and export opportunities for their agri-based products.





HEALTH AND NUTRITION



Nurturing Health and Nutrition through Community Efforts

Under the WHH-supported project, SSP, with support from the Health Department, conducted haemoglobin (HB) testing across villages in Wardha district in Maharashtra to improve women's health. The initiative aimed to assess the nutritional status of women and promote the inclusion of diverse food groups in daily diets. A total of 98 women farmers were tested across four villages. In Kutch district of Gujarat, a hands-on training and demonstration on bio-nutrition gardens was held for 63 Community Resource Persons (CRPs). They learned about the importance of 10 food groups and how to grow at least five of them through farm-based and homestead cultivation.

CRP Training on Gram Panchayat Development Plan

A two-day training on the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) was held in Bhuj, Gujarat, from 10–11 January 2025 for 63 Community Resource Persons (CRPs). The training combined classroom sessions with field learning. Day one focused on GPDP concepts, village and resource mapping, and data collection methods. On day two, participants conducted a transect walk, created a village map using collected data, and discussed access issues and community needs. A Focus Group Discussion followed to identify and prioritize problems, categorizing them by levels—individual, village, panchayat, or government. This initiative is part of a project on nutritional behaviour change among cotton growers in Kutch in Gujarat and Wardha in Maharashtra, supported by Welthungerhilfe (WHH).

Seed Kit Distribution for Nutrition and Homestead Farming

As part of efforts to improve household nutrition and promote the habit of growing vegetables at the farm and household level, seed kits were distributed to project farmers in both Wardha and Kutch. The aim was to encourage families to cultivate a variety of vegetables for their own consumption, supporting better dietary diversity and food security. These seed kits included a mix of nutritious, easy-to-grow vegetables suited to local conditions. By promoting home-based food production, the initiative also helped reduce dependency on market purchases and encouraged sustainable farming practices. A total of 1,100 seed kits were distributed across regions, reaching and benefiting a large number of farming households.





CLEAN ENERGY



Powering Change: Women's Leadership in Clean Energy

This quarter, eight cluster-level meetings were held in Nalanda and Gaya districts of Bihar, engaging 180 Sakhis and local stakeholders to discuss occupational health and awareness. Additionally, 82 village-level awareness events reached around 1,800 people. The three-day Clean Energy Women Entrepreneurship Fair sensitized approximately 45,000 people. Outreach through weekly market stalls, school engagements, household visits, and learning exchanges reached over 5,000 more individuals. In January 2025, six online refresher training sessions for 140 energy sakhis focused on entrepreneurship development, leading to 30 sakhis launching clean energy businesses. A network meeting on 16th January, 2025 with 45 sakhis and two product partners generated ₹35,000 in purchases. The fair raised ₹32,000 in sales, reaching 45,000 people. This project is supported by Misereor





Capacity building for students

Under the UNICEF supported Gender Transformation Program, three capacity-building sessions were held for Student Champion Groups to enhance leadership, confidence, and advocacy skills. The goal was to empower students to drive awareness on education, gender equality, and social issues within their schools and communities. From 18-20th February, 2025, a three-day training for 20 Community Facilitators took place in Dharashiv. Additionally, a two-day Gram Panchayat module Training of Trainers (TOT) was conducted by SSP and CORO India. Looking ahead, the student groups are preparing to conduct a gender-focused social audit in their villages, supported by partner organizations including CORO India and MAVA.

Promoting Gender Equality in Schools

To promote gender equality in schools, supported by UNICEF, nine Meena Manju Raju (MRM) sessions were held from January to March 2025 in 10 schools in Dharashiv district of Maharashtra, with 532 out of 705 registered students attending, resulting in a 75.46% attendance rate. Community facilitators conducted home visits to educate parents on the importance of regular school attendance, boosting student turnout. Gender Fair events saw the participation of 610 community members, reflecting strong support for gender equality. Additionally, 26 Gram Panchayat members and 34 School Management Committee (SMC) members were oriented and sensitized to advocate for gender equality in governance and create inclusive, gender-transformative school environments.

Promoting Gender Equality through Community Action

Six villages of Dharashiv Taluka, engaging 610 villagers to challenge social norms and promote gender equality. Through rallies, creative activities, and film screenings, awareness was raised on issues like child marriage and gender discrimination. Gram Panchayat Orientation Meetings in ten villages aimed to integrate gender concerns into the 2025–2026 Development Plans. Training for Gram Panchayat and School Management Committee members deepened understanding of gender roles and rights. These efforts fostered gender-sensitive governance and inclusive development, with SSP planning to expand safe, equitable spaces for women and girls. This project is supported by UNICEF.

Building Healthy Schools through WASH and Gender Education

As part of the WASH & Gender Transformation Project, supported by Oracle Financial Services and Software, training sessions were held in 131 schools across Washim and Nanded districts for students in Classes 5 to 10. Focused on WASH, health, nutrition, and gender equality, the sessions saw active participation from 6,050 students, supported by teachers and Sakhis. Topics included hygiene, safe drinking water, hand washing, sanitation, and balanced diets. A baseline survey highlighted inadequate sanitation, leading to the construction of 30 new toilets and the repair of 47 others. These improvements enhanced hygiene, health, and the learning environment, particularly for girls.



MAJOR EVENTS



Block Level Advocacy Workshops

From January 3rd to 13th 2025, SSP organized three block-level advocacy workshops in Gaya and Nalanda districts in Bihar, attended by 165 participants and 27 guests, including Block officials, PRI members, and stakeholders. The workshops provided women entrepreneurs with knowledge of key government schemes, especially in agriculture and animal husbandry. It established partnerships with block-level officials, fostering a sense of connection between women entrepreneurs and the local government, and boosting their confidence in engaging with officials and participating in joint programs.

Clean Energy Women Entrepreneurship Fair 2025

The Clean Energy Women Entrepreneurship Fair 2025 was held from January 14 to 16 at Tapovan Tourist Palace in Gaya district of Bihar. Organized by Swayam Shikshan Prayog, 100 Sakhis from Gaya district participated, setting up various stalls to raise awareness about clean energy, climate change, and solutions. The fair saw sales of ₹32,000 and reached around 45,000 people. It was inaugurated by local officials, who praised the fair's impact and significance in promoting sustainable practices and empowering women entrepreneurs. This project is supported by Misereor.

World Water Day Celebration

In partnership with Hindustan Unilever Foundation, SSP organized several events to raise awareness and promote water conservation in Marathwada for World Water Day. On March 20, a Round Table Discussion on the Future of Water-Secure Marathwada was held at SSP office in Dharashiv district, bringing together key stakeholders to explore sustainable water management. That same day, 250 village Sakhis were recognized at a World Water Day celebration at the Collector's Office, with the District Collector and Zilla Parishad CEO emphasizing grassroots leadership. On March 22, SSP launched the Jaltara water harvesting structures in Bhikar Sarola, benefiting 125 farmers. A Panlot Rath Yatra across five villages further spread awareness about watershed management. In January 2025, 300 Sakhis were trained in watershed development in Dharashiv district, covering water conservation, management, and government schemes. The training empowered Sakhis to lead local water management, resulting in 221 water conservation structures and 100 Jal Tara's completed.





STORIES FROM THE FIELD

A Rising Champion of Climate Resilient Farming

Raihanath, a farmer from Kottathara, Wayanad district of Kerala, embraced sustainable farming through SSP's Women-Led Climate-Resilient Farming (WCRF) model. Shifting from conventional methods, she diversified her one-acre plot with vegetables, spices, fruits, tubers, and beekeeping. Exposure visits and peer learning helped her adopt natural farming techniques like vermin composting and fish amino acid for pest control. Today, Raihanath produces over 60 kg of vegetables and multiple organic inputs, earning income while ensuring year-round food security. Her journey reflects resilience and the impact of women-led climate action. "WCRF has become the backbone of our life," she says, inspiring many across her community.

A Model Leader in Sustainable Farming

Sangita Kumari from Kairi Noorsarai village, Nalanda district of Bihar, is transforming farming through climate-resilient practices. Trained in Women-Led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF) by Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), she introduced the zero-tillage potato cultivation method, reducing labour by 80%, costs by 90%, and irrigation by 70%. By using organic manure and straw mulch, she has improved soil fertility and reduced pollution. Her innovations increased her seasonal income from ₹40,000 to ₹60,000, benefiting over 100 farmers and 500 people. Sangita's leadership proves that women farmers are essential to sustainable agricultural development. She was honored with the Prema Gopalan Sakhi Prerana Award in Pune on February 1st for her contribution to empowering women in climate resilient farming practices.



Jyoti Shinde's Profitable Carrot Harvest

In Bavi village, Latur district of Maharashtra, women like Jyoti Shinde are keeping traditions alive through chemical-free, profitable farming. Jyoti cultivated carrots on 2 acres, spending ₹60,000. With an interest-free loan of ₹10,000 from her FPO—Prema Gopalan Producer Company—and access to a tractor through the SBI Foundation project, she reduced costs and extended harvesting over 15 days. This allowed her to sell fresh carrots every two days in weekly markets, securing better prices. Thanks to training from Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Jyoti practiced low-cost farming and earned a net profit of ₹2,80,000—proving sustainability can also mean prosperity.

Leading Water Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture

Dipali Jadhav, a Sakhi from Umara Village, Dharashiv district of Maharashtra, has been recognized for her outstanding efforts in water conservation and sustainable agriculture. Appointed Secretary of the Village Development Committee, she was honored at the Jal Surakshit Gaav program, where she spoke in front of district officials. Trained by Swayam Shikshan Prayog in watershed management, Dipali has worked with 200 farmers to promote water-saving practices and supported organic farming through 30 vermicompost beds and biogas units. Her leadership is a powerful example of women driving rural transformation, contributing to a sustainable future.





STORIES FROM THE FIELD

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IN THE MEDIA

The inspiring stories of Archana Waghmare and Shamal Pawar highlight the vital role of organic farming in ensuring food security. Through the Women Led Climate Resilience Farming (WCRF) model, these women have transformed their farms into reliable sources of sustenance, cultivating a diverse range of crops that reduce their dependence on unpredictable environmental conditions. Their journey has been featured in FoodTechBiz magazine. This project is being implemented in the Latur and Dharashiv districts by Swayam Shikshan Prayog, with support from ADM Care.

[Read the full article here>>](#)

We are proud to be featured in Hindustan Unilever Limited's special World Water Day spotlight. Our work in Marathwada, Maharashtra, focuses on women-led water conservation, sustainable farming, and climate resilience—transforming communities through grassroots action.

[Read the full article here>>](#)

We thank India Development Review (IDR), a leading digital channel, for amplifying the voices of our farmers and their efforts toward water conservation and climate resilience. At Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), we have witnessed firsthand how women-led farming initiatives are driving sustainable water management and transforming rural communities. Ensuring water security is key to strengthening livelihoods, food security, and resilience against climate change. We look forward to these inspiring stories that showcase the power of grassroots innovation.

[Watch the full video>>](#)





IN THE MEDIA

Mr. Shraman Jha, CEO, Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) wrote an article about Dharashiv, a drought-prone district in Maharashtra, which faces irregular rainfall and groundwater depletion and work of Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in supporting women farmers in practising one-acre farming, growing food crops with bio-inputs and water-efficient techniques such as drip irrigation and sprinklers. The success of this approach has led to its adoption by thousands of women, who demonstrated the model's benefits to their families and started practising it on larger plots of land. Eventually, helping women farmers widen their market by setting up a farmer producer organisation.

[Read the full article>>](#)

Ceratac Group, recognised the women leaders of SSP on the occasion of Women's Day. This initiative was published on a leading news channel.

[Read the full article>>](#)





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