



NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

#We4Resilience

2023

HARMONISED ACTIONS FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE

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CONFERENCE BOOKLET



#We4Resilience

Climate change intensifies the frequency and impacts of hydro-metrological hazards. India is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards that worsen the life situation of the people with food insecurity, losses to infrastructure, and poor human health and wellbeing. As per World Risk Report 2022, India is one of the top three countries with the highest disaster risk. While the risk continues to grow, there is also an opportunity to transform systems to make them more resilient. Nutrition and food security are marked as imperative contributors to resilience and the sectors need more attention.

Global Programme India is a community-led partnership model hosted by Caritas India with the support of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development Government of Germany and Caritas Germany. The intervention aims to benefit communities of 17 districts from 4 Indian States of Assam, Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal. Building resilience to disasters, and ensuring access to food provisions, nutritional supplements, and other welfare schemes are the prime focal theme of the Global Programme India. The Global Programme India has made sustained efforts to safeguard the interest and improve the quality of life of marginalized people living in high-risk areas. The success of the program mainly depends on the level of change and the outcome of the efforts evolved at the community level. The program also educates the community about their rights and entitlements coupled with the effective functioning of the self-governance system where they ultimately assert their rights in seeking redressal. The Program has adopted multi-layer interventions and achieved impacts at macro, meso, and micro levels. Overall, the program made access for disadvantaged groups access to social welfare programs such as Poshan Abhiyan and post-disaster reconstruction aid and disaster risk reduction support services.

While facilitating the resilience building to natural disasters, the program complemented the state government's initiatives to update the disaster management plan in target districts. To achieve this, the program partners brought interactive platforms for reflecting the findings of the participatory disaster risk analysis conducted in the multi-hazard-prone villages.

Global Program has recognized disaster risk reduction measures as a tool for good governance. As of date, 45 out of 58 local governments have implemented measures such as early warning systems, road construction, slope stabilization, and adapted construction measures such as raised foundations and sanitation facilities to reduce disaster risks. These resilient actions resulted in the reduction of damages and asset loss by 28 percent by mid-2023. Also, the percentage of vulnerable households from marginalized groups that received state reconstruction aid after disasters has increased by 11.6% as compared to the year 2020.

Global Program also becomes instrumental in activating the district level Inter-Agency Groups and under the leadership of state-level Inter-agency groups and local partners, and 36 recommendations for improving disaster management plans had been drawn up in 100% of the local panchayats and districts in which the global program is being implemented through the participation of various control bodies of state and civil society actors.

At the macro level, the Global Program catalysed 23 joint disaster risk reduction initiatives between governments and NGO networks that have taken place at national, state, and district levels. The resilient model demonstration was done during the G20 events in coordination with the government.

Also, at the meso level, the program witnessed the increased representation of marginalized groups in the planning and control bodies such as Gram Sabha and in civil protection committees such as Task Forces and DRR committees, and their participation actively contributed to disaster risk analysis and implementation of the planned project with resilient elements and with adequate resource allocation.



Also, more than 1500 households have implemented improvement measures through self-initiative and using government services. These measures include climate-adaptive agricultural cultivation practices, using the advisory services of the relevant government agencies.

Building resilient nutrition systems is another important thematic pillar of the program. The program adopts a system-strengthening approach in collaboration with local ICDS centers and local government by placing the community control bodies such as village health sanitation and nutrition committees, women's self-help groups, and mothers' groups as change makers.

The program, in close association with and guidance of the women and child development department, trained frontline health workers, and women-led community organizations for better nutrition services and balanced diet promotion. The program has also become an instrument to redesign the ICDS and school infrastructures with hand washing stations, child-friendly toilets, and Nutri-gardens. Traditional food festivals and promotion of indigenous food practices such as millet promotion brought nutrition-centred behavioural changes among the target villages. As a result of the interventions, the number of children and young mothers registering in the ICDS centers increased. It was marked that through training, campaigns, advice, and vegetable gardening, awareness of nutritional practices has improved in 61% and improved hygiene in 81% of households.

Global Program also recognized social inclusion as the integrated theme to build resilient communities. Since the disaster and food insecurity vulnerabilities mostly affected women, children, persons with disabilities, Dalits, and other economically backward sections of society, deliberate efforts to ensure informed decision-making and social participation is a mandate, and mainstreaming of such sections is crucial while building resilience. Through the Global Program, the social and

political participation of marginalized communities and their regular access to public welfare programs and schemes is closely followed up. Through intensive dialogue and active participation of the marginalized population in assemblies and committees, the use of state funding offers in the areas of education, welfare, and development has increased with 4,570 applications, of which 2,083 have already been approved, at various levels. The number of beneficiaries for claimed social benefits through MGNREGA and pensions increased by 26%

Global Program identified that multi-stakeholder engagement is another important factor contributing to resilience building. Caritas India's Global Program facilitates macro-level learning and interactive platforms in partnership with Governmental and Civil Society Networks such as Inter-agency Groups and organizations through which the best practices, models, and knowledge management materials are made accessible to a wider audience at International national, state, and local levels which influences the policy discussions and recommendations. The community-based early warning system set up and upscaled in Supaul district in Bihar won the award for the 2nd best video during the G20 event by NPDRR by Govt. of India..

We4Resilience Campaign is innovated as a Civil Society engagement and GO-NGO coordination strategy by the Global Program. The campaign which commenced in the year 2021 brought new learnings and practices on resilience building by acting as a tool to empower the community and strengthen networks and to bring harmonised actions for resilience building.

The campaign aims to foster a multidisciplinary dialogue among stakeholders to formulate effective strategies for disaster risk reduction and enhanced nutrition and food security and to explore innovative ways to integrate social protection measures and localize global concepts in disaster-affected communities.



Through its “3 days in a village” community consultations (Samvad), district and state-level consultations have not only brought the community aspirations, but also brought out the community solutions, and people-led actions towards a resilient, nutrition-sensitive, and inclusive society.

We4Resilience has emerged as an instrument to bring the local communities together and create a meaningful platform with multi-stakeholders including the Government to witness that their voices are heard, and they are included.

The We4Resilience campaign 2023 aimed at creating a favorable environment for the representatives of civil society and partner organizations to actively engage in policy dialogue on scalable models and practices. The important activities organized under the campaigns are community awareness with IEC materials, poster exhibitions in schools and villages, growth monitoring drives, poshan melas, mock drills and village-level consultations called Samvad. The findings and recommendations of the Samvads were shared in the district and state level consultation for better service access and policy influence.

Some of the We4Resilience Campaign highlights are-

- 35 We4Resilience master trainers at the district level
- 3000 trained community volunteers in 260 villages
- 3 days in the village reached out to over 3 Lakhs populations with resilience-building messages.
- 260 community consultations (Samvads)
- 16 District Consultations
- 5 state-level consultations
- Community voices and recommendations

Post-campaign activity assessment revealed that 97.2% of the local communities have increased knowledge of the local disasters and 74% of the targeted households are ready with family-level preparedness and contingency plans. Also, 71% of the target households got better awareness of early warning measures and other civil protection infrastructures. Also, 80% of the program participants have better knowledge of nutritional diets and ICDS services.

We are proud to report that We4Resilience dialogues have not only strengthened our understanding of the challenges the communities face but have also provided us with valuable insights into crafting sustainable solutions. This collaborative approach, bridging gaps between community members, government entities, and civil society organizations, has become the driving force behind the "We4Resilience" campaign. **#We4Resilience Conference.**

In our shared commitment to fostering development in disaster and malnutrition-prone regions, while reinforcing the pivotal role of civil society, we extend a warm invitation to participate in the #We4Resilience Conference on Development Solutions. This transformative event is designed to facilitate meaningful discussions and collaborations among experts, practitioners, government representatives, civil society organizations, and stakeholders.

OBJECTIVES

- **Foster a multidisciplinary dialogue to formulate effective strategies.**
- **Explore innovative ways to integrate social protection measures and localize global concepts in disaster-affected communities.**
- **Create the knowledge hub, to exchange ideas and scale up good practices of resilience building.**
- **Discuss and derive possible joint initiatives for GO-NGO coordination.**
- **Giving a platform to community leaders, members, or role models, to share their impact stories and models.**



CONTENT

MESSAGES	01-05
Archbishop Sebastian Kallupura, Caritas India Chairman	
Fr. (Dr.) Paul Moonjely, Executive Director	
Fr. (Dr.) Jolly Puthenpura, Assistant Executive Director	
Ms. Martina, Appuhn, Network Facilitator, Caritas Germany	
Mr. Abanikant Sahoo, Chairperson, Odisha State Food Commission	
Technical Session 1:	06-16
Harmonised Actions for Building Resilience	
Sub Session 1.1: Local to Global - SDGs Progress and Resilience Commitment	
Sub Session 1.2: Social Protection -Key to Resilience Building	
Sub Session 1.3: Caritas India's Approach to Resilience Building	
Sub Session 1.4: Community Voice – Learning and experience sharing by community members on the resilience-building process.	
Open discussion, conclusion, way forward, and felicitation	
Technical Session 2:	07-36
Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Building – Future of Disaster Risk Reduction	
Sub Session 2.1: India's Climate Change – Challenge & New Paradigms in DRR	
Sub Session 2.2: Combating climate-Induced Migration: The Sunderban Story	
Sub Session 2.3: Climate Change Adaptation: Localized Solution	
Sub Session 2.4: Resilience Building through Risk Transfer	
Sub Session 2.5: Climate Resilient Infrastructure	
Sub Session 2.6: Community Voice - Scalable Community Models on Resilience Building	
- Low-Cost Lightning Arresters	
- Integrated Farming Systems	
- Building Resilient Women-Led Business	
Open discussion, conclusion, and way forward	
Technical Session 3:	37-55

Defining the Scope and Strategies of Addressing Nutrition and Food Security and Sovereignty - Challenges and Opportunities to Build Resilience

Sub Session 3.1: Ecosystem-Based Adaptation Planning for Climate Resilient Livelihood & Food Security in India

Sub Session 3.2: Community-Based Nutrition Management: Public-Private Partnership

Sub Session 3.3: Food Sovereignty and Resilience Building: India's Approach and Strategies

Sub Session 3.4: Food Systems and Resilient Building; Caritas India's Experiences

Sub Session 3.5: Community Voice- Resilience Building: Community Models

- Nutrition Resilient Building Approach in Global Program
- Building Resilient Health and Food Systems through Community Governance Ownership
- FARM Northeast Program

Open discussion, conclusion, the way forward, and felicitation

Technical Session 4:

56-72

Resilience Building: Collaboration for Impact – The Civil Society Engagement

Sub Session 4.1: Civil Society Learning -Possibilities for Collaborative Actions

Sub Session 4.2: Lightning Resilience Framework for Community

Sub Session 4.3: Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination: Caritas India's Strategies and Approaches

Sub Session 4.4: Role of Civil Society in addressing Nutrition and Food Security challenges

Sub Session 4.5: Responses

Sub Session 4.6: Concluding, way forward, and felicitation

Session 5:

73-75

Conference Way Forward Discussion for Joint Initiatives

Responses from Government

Responses from UN

Responses from Civil Society Networks and Organizations

Response from CSR

Responses from Communities

Sub Session 5.1: Road Map of GO – NGO coordination

Concluding, way forward, and felicitation

Vote of Thanks



**ARCHBISHOP
SEBASTIAN
KALLUPURA**

***CHAIRMAN
CARITAS INDIA***

I am extremely happy to welcome you to the National Conference on #We4Resilience -Harmonized Actions for Resilience Building. Some of you may know that the year 2022-23 is a very significant year for the entire Caritas India family as we celebrate her Diamond Jubilee. The Jubilee year was fully packed with various events reflecting the saga of the humanitarian and developmental interventions of the Catholic Church in India.

As Caritas India networks with the dioceses and other NGOs, we have a wide outreach to poor and marginalized communities. Hence, Caritas is in a unique position to bridge efforts and resources worldwide to support grass-roots development interventions. Caritas India is effectively facilitating partnerships between funding partners and grassroots development organizations, as well as an ongoing dialogue on current development issues among partners to support strategic action.

Resilience-building initiatives have been the key strength of Caritas India. Promoting Community-led actions toward linking relief and rehabilitation to development (LRRD) and focusing on nutrition-sensitive initiatives are the two key thrust areas of Caritas India. Besides, dialogue is one of the strategic pillars of Caritas India which emphasizes dialogue with the poor, with nature, and with duty bearers. The art of dialogue is an important aspect that Caritas India has built in her programs and bringing multi-stakeholders into a single platform to reflect the learnings is identified as a significant strategy.

In this connection, Global Program India, one of the cluster programs at Caritas India acts as an instrument to interconnect the human-centered designs and community learnings toward redesigning the empowering community strategies with GO-NGO coordination.

The National Conference is an event to jointly reflect the Civil Society Learning process in partnership with the Government, Civil Societies and UN organizations. The yearlong innovative We4Resilience campaign approach could bring significant impacts such as proactive engagement of volunteers in Disaster Risk Reduction, nutrition, and food security-focused system strengthening, effective multi-stakeholder dialogues leading to development, reactivated civil society networks and enhanced GO-NGO coordination and collaboration.



**FR. (DR.) PAUL
MOONJELY**

***EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
CARITAS INDIA***

With immense pleasure, we welcome you all to the National Conference on We4Resilience-Harmonised Actions for Resilience Building. We are proud to say that the we4resilience conference has become a networking fest at the national level to learn and reflect on Impacts and models and to plan out joint initiatives for upscaling and replication.

Being the second largest humanitarian organization in the world, Caritas promotes people-driven solutions and human-centered approaches in all its programs and activities. The concept of resilience building is emerging as a significant approach among developmental actors. While resilience has ecological, social, political, and institutional dimensions, the concept has been conceived as a localization indicator and as an approach to defining and reflecting the level of impact and adaptive capacity of the people and their social survival.

The marginalized sections of society continue to be hit by a range of shocks such as climate change, natural disasters, food, and nutrition insecurity, and diseases due to various socio-politico-cultural and ecological factors. Such groups of people are excluded from social protection programs, asset ownership, governance, and other activities that contribute to building resilience. For this, the inbuilt capacities, local resources, and traditional wisdom must be brought to enhance the well-being of the marginalized communities. In this context, multi-sectoral engagement is the key, and development actors including policymakers, civil society organizations, and community-based organizations need to come up with appropriate strategies and approaches to build individual, household, and community resilience.

We4Resilience has emerged as an instrument to bring the local communities together and create a meaningful platform with multi-stakeholders including the Government to witness that their voices are heard, and they are included. The we4resilience campaign 2023 creates a favorable environment for the representatives of civil society and partner organizations to actively engage in policy dialogue on scalable models and practices with the Government, UN and other networking partners having expertise in the relevant sectors.

I happily invite you all to join hands and share these findings and recommendations with policymakers to bring lasting change. Also, I take this opportunity to congratulate and appreciate the partners for their hard work and proactive engagement with the people adopting innovative strategies for impact-making.



**FR. (DR.) JOLLY
PUTHENPURA**

***ASSISTANT
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
CARITAS INDIA***

The Global Programme operates through a multi-sectoral lens, weaving a tapestry of initiatives at micro, meso, and macro levels. This interconnected approach is dedicated to fostering resilience both at the community and institutional echelons, creating a ripple effect that reverberates across the developmental spectrum. Across the vibrant landscapes of 17 districts spanning Assam, Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal, the program's expansive reach extends its benefits to over 3 Lakhs individuals residing in 260 villages.

While traveling towards building resilience, Caritas India's Global Program adopts an inclusive approach targeting the international agenda: leaving no one behind. The last 3 years of program interventions aimed at maximizing the impacts of Governmental actions and welfare programs in the areas of resilient building to natural disasters, nutrition, and food security management, and inclusion of women and other marginalized sections through a complementarity approach.

Caritas India, the organization looking at community learning and people-led impacts, has thought of how a compact and synergized approach can be integrated through the Global Program and how civil society engagement can be strengthened through a systematic people-led approach that brings learning flow from village to district, state, and national levels and then it flows back to the village with validated ideas and policy recommendations. In this context, the #We4Resilience campaign has emerged.

A significant stride in the direction of resilience-building was marked by the commencement of the #We4Resilience campaign in October 2021. Over the course of a year, this impactful campaign has not only spurred proactive engagement of volunteers but has also facilitated effective multi-stakeholder dialogues, fostering development.

This conference will help to enhance collaborations within networks focused on building resilience to natural disasters, improving nutritional and food security, and fostering social inclusion. This effort aims to reinforce the learning within civil society. It also establishes a knowledge hub to facilitate the exchange of ideas and the amplification of successful practices in resilience building.

We are optimistic that the 2nd We4Resilience conference will meet the envisaged objectives and the event will act as an interactive learning and reflection platform for Civil Society Learning so that the voice of people at last miles is respected.



**MS. MARTINA
APPUHN**

***NETWORK
FACILITATOR
CARITAS
GERMANY***

We4Resilience Campaign acts as a tool to empower the community and strengthen networks. Since the inception of the Global Program in the year 2021, civil society learning, and multi-stakeholder engagement have been considered as key contributory aspects towards resilience building.

Global Program India placed institutionalized platforms for collective dialogue, learning, and knowledge sharing to supplement the government programs and systems for food security and disaster resilience. Also, the program encouraged joint initiatives and public-private partnerships towards building the capacity of the program participants and upscaling the models that emerged throughout the program period. Global Program India promotes Community-led actions towards linking relief and rehabilitation to development (LRRD) and focuses on nutrition-sensitive initiatives as thrust areas.

The program aims to improve the lives of the marginalized population by focusing on resilience to natural disasters, enhanced nutritional and food security, social inclusion, and strengthening civil society learning. Through a multi-sectoral approach, the Global Program facilitates the initiatives at micro, meso, and macro levels, interconnecting these developmental themes towards resilience building at community and institutional levels. Go-NGO coordination is adopted as a key tool for building resilience in the areas of Inclusive disaster risk reduction (DRR) and food system strengthening.

The concept of We4Resilience has emerged as an instrument to bring the local communities together and create a meaningful platform with multi-stakeholders including the Government to witness that their voices are heard, and they are included. The we4resilience campaign 2023 aimed at creating a favorable environment for the representatives of civil society and partner organizations to actively engage in policy dialogue on scalable models and practices. The National Conference being organized as part of the campaign will discuss the community aspirations and will look at the possibilities of joint actions at various levels.

I wish everyone all the best at this National Conference as this is an interactive platform for sharing, collective learning, and reflections on resilience building.



**MR. ABNIKANTA
SAHOO**

*Chairperson
Odisha State Food
Commission*

I am happy to note that the Caritas India is Organizing “2nd National Conference #We4Resilience: Harmonized Actions for Building Resilience” on 29-30th November, 2023 in New Delhi. The main goal of this conference is to bring together practitioners, leading experts, social scientists, researchers, government representatives, civil society organizations and stakeholders to exchange and share their experiences and research outcomes on different aspects of public health nutrition, public policy and human development. In addition, the conference themes cover global, national, regional and even local issues that are of wider policy significance and of interest to international agencies, national and regional governments, public and private sector entities, local communities and non-governmental organizations. The themes have been carefully crafted to include all aspects that affect nutritional status at the community level and can affect national and regional policy.

I earnestly hope that the event will have research oriented and experience based discussions and result in valuable recommendations for sustained improvement in nutritional status of women and children of India.

As our mother planet embraced 8 billionth baby on November 15, 2022, we as government representatives, practitioners, leading experts, social scientists, researchers, civil society organizations and stakeholders have an even bigger role in developing newer strategies to help governments in achieving accessible, affordable, equitable health care with quality content to elevate health and wellbeing of one and all.

I, congratulate, the ‘Caritas India’ for taking such an initiative towards organizing this conference and the hard work put in by all board and staff members of the organization as well as others involved in the organization of this event.

On behalf of Odisha State Food Commission and Caritas India, I extend a very warm welcome to all the distinguished guests, stakeholders and wish the conference a great success.

#We4Resilience

TECHNICAL
SESSION 1

HARMONISED ACTIONS FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE





Social Protection – A key to Resilience Building for the marginalised, disadvantaged communities in India

MR. SAMANJIT SENGUPTA

*Sr Personnel Manager
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Additional Secretary
to the Government of
West Bengal,
Environment Department*

Before we go into the details of how Social Protection can help in increase resilience and disaster risk reduction for the vulnerable sections of India, we need to be very clear on what we mean by Social Protection.

When last year I did a couple of field workshops with august NGOs like Caritas India, Baruipur Unnayan Samity and SPADE in the field I realised that's "Social Inclusion" as is defined by World Bank and Asian Development Bank now, is not what is understood by field administrators and development workers in India.

So I had to first explain "Social Inclusion" not as about distributing doles or giving some facilities to the disadvantaged and left out excluded sections, but as giving them the rights, control and abilities and recognition in the three domains where people thrive. Markets, Spaces, and Power. The common notion of social inclusion does not emphasize the modern concept of social inclusion which is about actually improving the terms in which the disadvantaged individuals will take part in society. By improving the enabling channels of their abilities opportunities and the dignity.

This year we shall be discussing Social Protection and how it can help in enhancing the resilience and disaster risk management capabilities of the disadvantaged section and vulnerable section a specially. But before we proceed, we need to have a common understanding of what social protection means. And how it is being defined now by international development organisations like World Bank, UN, ADB, IDS. And so now we need to update our concepts on social protection first.

If you talk of social protection to the common Indian or the common field administrator and development worker, you will see that old age pensions, social benefits, cash transfer and even individual beneficiary schemes and also rural housing schemes, health schemes are what come to the mind primarily. What will not come in the common discourse is that skill development, labour markets improvement, and migration management are also important concepts of social protection that are more significant these days. Especially for climate change affected marginal areas like Sundarbans.

Social Protection is a concept that includes the policies and programs that will reduce poverty and vulnerability. How? By promoting labour markets, and reducing risk exposure, and building capacity. Along with social assistance and welfare to the targeted disadvantage sections.

Whenever we start discussing social protections, we must understand the “SOCIAL RISKS” that are involved that need to be protected in that particular community or area. These risks will vary based on the region and the community involved. And will include natural disasters, civil conflicts, economic downturns. And also include crop failures, unemployment, illnesses, accidents, disabilities, and old age related issues, which threaten the community and households and increase their susceptibility to poverty. And increase their vulnerability to disasters.

Asian Development Bank has proposed a social risk assessment metrics on the four basic pillars being- 1. Life cycle risks - example hunger, old age; AND 2. Economic Risks- e.g unemployment , low income; AND 3. Environmental Risks- e.g climate change, floods; AND lastly 4. Social and Governance Risks - being Social exclusion , violence. Law & order problems.

There are basically six dimensions of Social Protection as has been clearly identified by World Bank. These dimensions are core the focus areas of Social Protection.

These dimensions of Social Protection are- 1. Migration, being one of the most important dimensions where Social Protection should cover the management of migration drivers and that adverse impacts of migration on the community. 2. The next dimension are the Safety Nets and cash transfers which are the most effective Social Protection tools for poverty. 3. Another equally important dimension are the Pensions, which bring economics stability and security of aged sections of the community.

But today I would like to emphasize the last 3 dimensions of Social Protection, which according to me are the most important dimension of Social Protection in view of Climate Change Disaster risks. And which is most neglected in our development works. Being 4. Skills Development, for access to qualitative education and training and job development as a sure way out of poverty. And the next dimension of 5. Labour Markets, as an important tool of Social Protection whereby designing and implementing proper and updated labor regulations, income protection schemes. And creating active labour markets and making the same accessible with the Next dimension of Social Protection. 6. Job

Development, with Training, job search assistance, and self-employment platform creation and microfinance help for career transitions.

Despite best interests of the government still about 1/5 people lack social safety nets. We need to make our social safety net programs more flexible and broaden the catchment area and ensure steady flow of the safety net benefits to the catchment area. With aged population becoming a more and more important chunk of the society we have to work on supportive productive inclusion of the older workers, and long-term proactive care of the old by proper nutrition and geriatric healthcare needs, both physical and psychological.

In the field of pensions as a tool for Social Protection we have to work to increase sustainability, transparency, wider coverage, regularity of fund flow. The government needs to explore cheaper social insurance on broader basis to cover the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections.

On the issue of skill development as a tool for Social Protection there is much to be done and there is a great scope for civil society to complement and supplement the government in this sector. We need to work on all levels of skill gaps, and identify them. By all levels of skills I mean not just foundational and higher skills, but also socio emotional skills and functional literacy and digital skills too. Which are the modern critical needs of the hour. Also standardization of the quality of skill training and skill learning by the disadvantaged sections, the relevance of the skill training to the market and social needs, and efficiency of the training programs need to be carefully designed and monitored.

The area of job development is another emerging field in Social Protection where better job diagnostics to highlight the market needs, and assessing the government and social policy gaps has an important role to play. The civil society can take a very important step for job transformation assistance, and mobilizing microfinance and lending to disadvantaged individuals and communities for job development and enhancing transformation towards new jobs.

A lot can be done for designing and implementing better labour markets for Social Protection by the way of better and appropriate employment assistance

services, better information flows to connect the disadvantaged sections with the markets. Easier credit flows to support transitions of the disadvantaged individual to enter the job market. And above all revamping the underperforming and relevant labour regulations. Great scope exists for civil societies to team up of the government to improve access to earning opportunities for the disadvantaged communities.

Now coming to the last dimension of Social Protection which is very important in areas which have become very vulnerable due to climate change like Sundarbans. Migration is the most relevant Social Protection pillar in these areas. Even the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 10 covers the area migration and of reducing recruitment costs for migrant labours, reducing remittance cost for migrant labours, and increasing their potential remittance volume. Civil society can step in with better advisory services, and helping the government create infrastructure to reduce remittance costs and wastage of remittances, and minimise middlemanship related irritants in that area. We need to increase supportive global partnership and inter regional networks to ensure welfare of migrant labour. And ensure enforcement of safe work environments. The regulation of labour mobility needs to be stepped into. And dominance of labour contractors, who abuse disadvantaged community labours, should be minimized.

Asian Development Bank in its published report on Social Protection has emphasized the role of civil society to help the public sector interventions for both Risk reduction and Social Protection jointly and effectively. The areas where civil society can intervene are agricultural and livestock insurance and reinsurance; and securing fair employment opportunities on an equitable basis. And also ensuring that the provision of health services and old age pensions to reach the last mile where the socially excluded live.

Recently a concept of Adaptive Social Protection is in vogue. And World Bank has also experimented on it successfully in Africa. So it would be wise to keep it in our mind as future strategy. Mooted by by Davies, Guenther, Leavy, Mitchell, and Tanner of Institute of Development Studies, it explores the opportunities for linking social protection, adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The framework of Adaptive Social Protection is based on three principles: (a) "climate-aware planning," (b)

understanding how assets and livelihood strategies are affected by climate change, and (c) enhancing local collaborative efforts among actors. World Bank has crystallized the approach around two areas of focus: (a) building households' long-term resilience before shocks occur, and (b) increasing the capability of social protection systems to respond after they do.

Before ending this brief discourse I would like to emphasize that Social Protection effectivity is not only about the schemes designed but also about plugging the systemic gaps that India faces in Social Protection delivery architecture. We must remember that sometimes overuse of technology can result in violation of rights for the disadvantage section who have minimum digital literacy and access to internet and digital devices. These disadvantaged socially excluded community at the fag end of the last mile should be directly attended to. Also transparency and accountability are very vital for ensuring that the last mile is actually reached and the disadvantage socially excluded segments get the Social Protection properly and funds are not diverted or siphoned off. Public opinion needs to be developed to increase the watchdog nature of the people so that government services can be effectively implemented. True private public partnerships, frequent social audits coupled with more women self help group involvements will help lessen these systemic gaps.

We have no scope for being complacent on the achievements that India has made in Social Protection. We have a very good government policy of Social Protection, but we need to continuously work jointly in a public private collaboration mode to improve on it and see to it that it does not leave out the socially excluded this advantage. Especially with rising Climate Change related disasters. Social Protection and Social Inclusion are the key to building resilience for marginalised, vulnerable communities.

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(PS- The writer is a career civil servant and rural development professional and disaster management professional. The views and opinions expressed above are the personal ones of the writer and has nothing to do with Government views.)



Caritas India's Approach to Resilience Building

DR. JAISON

VARGHESE

*Senior Program Lead,
Global Program*

Introduction

The concept of resilience building is emerging as a significant approach among developmental actors. As a sustainable framework and core development objective in the theory of change in multi-sectoral programs, resilience offers systems and process-oriented coping strategies with shocks which amplifies the vulnerabilities of the people especially the marginalized sections such as indigenous communities, dalits, fisherfolk, smallholder farmers, displaced, women and the person with disabilities. While resilience has ecological, social, political, and institutional dimensions, the concept has been conceived as a localization indicator and as an approach to defining and reflecting the level of impact and adaptive capacity of the people and their social survival.

The marginalized sections of society continue to be hit by a range of shocks such as climate change, natural disasters, food, and nutrition insecurity, and diseases due to various socio-politico-cultural and ecological factors. Such groups of people are excluded from social protection programs, asset ownership, governance, and other activities that contribute to building resilience. For this, the inbuilt capacities, local resources, and traditional wisdom must be brought to enhance the well-being of the marginalized communities. In this context, multi-sectoral engagement is the key, and development actors including policymakers, civil society organizations, and community-based organizations need to come up with appropriate strategies and approaches to build individual, household, and community resilience.

As a national organization dedicated to nation-building, Caritas India adopts comprehensive approaches to building resilience through its various cluster programs focused on humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction, nutrition and food security, children and development, and arresting migration.

Reflective

The people-centered programs implemented for over 20 years by Caritas India have brought significant and consistent perspective changes among the community leads who are facilitating the social animation process at the last mile. Along with looking at the extent of access to the services and the socio-economic coexistence of the well-being parameters, the impacts of the animation process are also started measuring through an in-depth sustainability lens and through understanding the competency of the local community to be adaptive, responsive, and co-learned.

The recently occurred flash floods in the Dhemaji district of Assam and the Supaul district of Bihar shared the pragmatic lessons that reflected on how the loss of life reached zero and the destruction or damages of assets reported minimal as compared to the previous years. Would it happen because of dedicated social animation actions initiated in Caritas India's Global Program? Were the strengthened localized early warning systems, and increased response capacity of the community there as contributory attributes, and or any other untold most significant change stories were there to be shared by the community? How did the community contingency plan really work out? Moreover, what made the community feel proud to say about their self-driven response mechanism?

What are the contributory factors of Caritas India's Sabal Program that led to the emergence of zero malnutrition cases reported villages in the Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh? How did the interconnectedness of family-level food systems strengthening and institutional system building at the Anganwadi level really intersect for better outcomes in Rayagada district, Odisha through Caritas India's Global Program? Is there any sustainable mechanism with community control bodies for auditing the services for better deliveries? How did the local food systems play a pivotal role? What went well and what are the key learnings for joint reflections on systemic transformations?



Building Resilience is at the Heart of Caritas India
Being an incremental change towards better responsive, adaptive, localized, and sustainable community-driven solutions, building resilience is at the heart of Caritas India's core interventions and the programs are designed with localized strategies and actions that overall contribute to building resilience. For Climate Resilience, Caritas India's commitment is evident through its impact on vulnerable communities.

Over the past decade, it reached 500,000 individuals in climate-sensitive areas like the Sundarbans, Koshi, and Brahmaputra regions providing financial and technical support for initiatives like rainwater harvesting, community-based early warning, and climate-resilient agriculture. For six decades, Caritas India has consistently pursued its mission to empower marginalized communities facing disasters, climate change vulnerabilities, and conflicts. Caritas India's 55 years of humanitarian response and 22 years in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) have impacted over 100 million lives in India. The organization has developed 22 replicable disaster risk reduction models since its work began in 2001, expanding to states like Assam, Odisha, Bihar, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh, enhancing the resilience of over 1 million individuals.

Caritas India's Global Recognition and Partnerships include gaining "Special Consultative Status" from the UN ECOSOC in December 2022 and receiving awards such as the Asian Local Leaders for Disaster Resilience (ALL4DR) and WCDM-DRR Excellence Awards in 2022. The organization's innovative early warning systems and community-based disaster preparedness models have received global acclaim, recognized by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Caritas India also won awards for its short film on community-based early warning during the G20 National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Resilience Building to Natural Disasters -Key Approaches

The Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework (2015) mandate a coherent approach to climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR). Caritas India's strategy aligns with these frameworks, focusing on:

- **Governance and Institutional Capability:** Recognizing governance's pivotal role, Caritas India establishes clear roles, responsibilities, and communication channels for effective coordination among stakeholders, fostering collaboration and innovation.
- **Risk Assessment:** Emphasizing comprehensive risk assessment, Caritas India conducts a holistic analysis of climate-related hazards, conflicts, and protection risks, addressing root causes to prioritize interventions effectively.
- **Nature-Based Solutions:** Advocating for nature-based solutions, Caritas India harnesses

ecosystems for cost-effective disaster and climate risk reduction, integrating sustainable initiatives like reforestation and mangrove restoration.

- **Climate and Conflict Finance:** Embedding climate and conflict finance in comprehensive financial protection strategies, Caritas India focuses on diverse financing sources, including insurance and partnerships, ensuring resources for effective response and long-term adaptation.
- **Upscaling Resilient infrastructures and local solutions:** In partnership with academia, technical agencies, and local governments, Caritas India encourages the innovations and upscaling of proven models that impact resilience-building.
- **Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation, and Learning (MREL):** Integral to resilience-building, MREL processes track activities, communicate outcomes transparently, and assess impact, fostering continuous learning for strategic adaptation based on feedback.



Nutrition and Food Systems Resilience

Nutrition and food security is marked as imperative contributors to resilience and the sectors need more attention. Though India is home to diverse food cultures and deliberate efforts are being taken to improve the food and nutrition system, the scope for joint actions is much more.

Caritas India believes that a decisive, vigorous, and sustained campaign for Agriculture Sovereignty and Climate Resilience is imperative because of three prevailing disturbing conditions. First, climate change has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the poor and the vulnerable who have been grappling with livelihood and food crises; second, small farmers who meet over 70% of the food needs of the country are themselves starving and finally, even those who get food are being

denied their right to healthy and nourishing food. Caritas India respects the integrity of creation and is committed to ensuring that agriculture and food production do not violate the ecological integrity of nature. The principal objective of Caritas India's strategy of resilient agriculture and democratized food systems is insulating the livelihood and food security of agrarian and farm-dependent communities. For building nutrition resilience, Caritas India adopts strategies for supplementing the governmental interventions under the Nutrition Mission and strengthening the local community organizations and actors to be effective responders to address the health and nutrition vulnerabilities.

Nutrition and Food Systems Resilience -Key Approaches

Localization of Agriculture; Identify, promote, and propagate local and localizable solutions that will lead to a 'localised' farming system, which will empower communities, organise campaigns for ensuring people's need for food is kept at the center of policies, and increase representation of farmers in policy formulation processes by forming farmers' organizations and federating them at appropriate levels.

Increasing Farm Productivity in Dialogue with Nature; Replacing energy-intensive monocultures with sustainable and rehabilitating and biodiversity-promoting crop systems like mixed-farming, crop rotation etc, promoting chemical-free farming, and replacing toxic pest and nutrient management systems with organic and eco-friendly farming practices including natural farming, promoting integrated farming systems with livestock, poultry, fishery and apiary and identifying and popularizing alternative community-based solutions to industrialized production methods.

Strengthening Local Food Systems: Reviving and strengthening forest-based food systems or uncultivated food, Adivasi food systems, and millet-based food systems, popularize micro-food production systems, in urban areas as well, and reduce 'food miles', resist 'mainstreaming' of food culture and seeking recognition of food sub-systems, facilitate dialogues for inclusion of local food and food grain in government systems like Public Distribution Systems (PDS) and ICDS schemes including Mid-Day Meal scheme.



System strengthening for better services: Provide policy inputs, and technical assistance aimed at enhancing efficiency, targeting, service delivery, and improving access to food, and nutritional schemes at Anganwadi's.

Upscaling local innovations and models: In partnership with local government and line departments create and upscale model Anganwadi centres, schools, and community-based nutrition solutions, and facilitate convergence in line with the nutrition-centric action plans at the village level.

Social Inclusion and Resilience Building

The international agendas: Hyogo Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 highly emphasized the importance of inclusion for building resilient communities. Since the disaster and food insecurity vulnerabilities mostly affected women, children, persons with disabilities, Dalits, and other economically

backward sections of society, deliberate efforts to ensure informed decision-making and social participation is a mandate, and mainstreaming of such sections is crucial while building resilience. Caritas India identified social inclusion as a cross-cutting theme in all its resilient building interventions and mainstreaming as the key element. Through its various cluster programs, the social and political participation of the marginalized communities and their regular access to public welfare programs and schemes is closely followed up.

Inclusion approaches:

- **Exchanges and cooperation:** Caritas India facilitates the dialogues and joint initiatives between governmental organizations, commissions, and dialogue groups.
- **Local policies and mainstreaming:** Local civil society organizations are built with mainstreaming policies, organized interfaces, and consultations

with expert organizations and local communities.

- **Access to better education and economic well-being:** Caritas India facilitates the linkage and networking building with education, health, disability, and emergency response service organizations.
- **Participatory planning, monitoring, and evaluation:** Caritas India adopts a people-led development approach for ensuring community ownership and local participation and promoting informed inclusive development plans at local government levels.

Civil Society Learning and Engagement

Caritas India believes that multi-stakeholder engagement is another important factor contributing to resilience building. Through its various programs, especially through Global Program, the interventions of various stakeholders in the areas of disaster preparedness and food security, as well as social inclusion, have been improved through systematic and regular exchanges, workshops, studies, and further education from specialist and higher education institutions, and channels for knowledge transfer are institutionalized. Caritas India facilitates macro-level learning and interactive platforms in partnership with Governmental and civil Society Networks such as Inter-agency Groups and organizations through which the best practices, models, and knowledge management materials are made accessible to a wider audience at International national, state, and local levels which influences the policy discussions and recommendations.

We4Resilience Campaign- A Civil Society Engagement Approach

#We4Resilience Campaign brings harmonized actions for building resilience. The campaign which commenced in the year 2021 brought new learnings and practices on resilience building by acting as a tool to empower the community and strengthen networks. The campaign aims to foster a multidisciplinary dialogue among stakeholders to formulate effective strategies for disaster risk reduction and enhanced nutrition and food security and to explore innovative ways to integrate social protection measures and localize global concepts in disaster-affected communities. The campaign placed institutionalized

platforms for collective dialogue, learning, and knowledge sharing to supplement the government programs and systems for food security and disaster resilience. Through its “3 days in a village” community consultations (Samvad), district and state-level consultations have not only brought the community aspirations, but also brought out the people's aspirations, community solutions, and people-led actions towards a resilient, nutrition-sensitive, and inclusive society.

#We4Resilience has emerged as an instrument to bring the local communities together and create a meaningful platform with multi-stakeholders including the Government to witness that their voices are heard, and they are included. The we4resilience campaign 2023 aimed at creating a favorable environment for the representatives of civil society and partner organizations to actively engage in policy dialogue on scalable models and practices.

We4Resilience Campaign Outcomes

- 30 #We4Resilience master trainers at the district level
- 3000 trained community volunteers in 260 villages
- 3 days in the village reached out to over 3 Lakhs populations with resilience-building messages.
- 260 community consultations (Samvads)
- 16 District Consultations
- 4 state-level consultations
- Community voices and recommendations

Conclusion

The determinants of disaster risk reduction, food, and nutrition security, and social inclusion are interconnected and are recognized as key essential variables for resilience building through multi-layer intervention at micro, meso and macro levels. While reflecting on the approaches and strategies for building resilience, the role of Civil Societies to reach to last mile and to supplement the governmental interventions is essential. Through joint initiatives, long-term development activities need to work out to compact climate change impacts, disaster risk reduction and to ensure food and nutrition security.



Rampur's Renaissance: A Community's Journey Towards Progress

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URANW

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In the eastern block of Purnea, Bihar, there lies a village named Rampur. Not so long ago, this village was grappling with challenges in education, nutrition, and social inclusion. However, the year 2021 marked the beginning of a remarkable transformation, led by the Global Program India (GPI) and the village's Mukhiya, Niranjjan Urawan. This narrative unfolds the inspiring journey of Rampur, rising from its struggles to become a model of community empowerment and development.

In the beginning, Rampur's Belwa Middle School was a picture of educational distress. With only 150 students enrolled, high dropout rates, and low community engagement, the future seemed bleak. However, Mukhiya Niranjjan Urawan, alongside Global Program India, envisioned a different future. They initiated a series of parent-teacher meetings, emphasizing the importance of education and addressing dropout issues. The Mukhiya's presence and dialogue initiatives were pivotal in increasing awareness and participation. Gradually, the school's atmosphere changed, enrollment doubled to 300, and the Community Education Centers, especially for backward class students, became a cornerstone of Rampur's educational renaissance.

Parallely, the challenge of nutrition and food security loomed large. Initially, the community was hesitant to engage with the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers (NRC), but Mukhiya Niranjjan's dedication changed this. He personally visited families with Global Program India staff, educating them on the benefits of the NRC and nutrition benefits. His efforts were not in vain. Soon, community members began consulting him before visiting the NRC, leading to better service access.

Social inclusion, another pillar of program's mission, saw remarkable strides under Mukhiya Niranjjan's leadership. He closely worked program animators, facilitating various applications and initiatives for community welfare. This inclusive approach fostered a sense of belonging and empowerment among the villagers.

The story of Rampur is not just about the interventions of a program or the efforts of a leader. It's a testament to the power of community involvement and collective will. Mukhiya Niranjjan Urawan and GPI catalyzed a transformation, but it was the people of Rampur who embraced these changes, rewriting their destiny. Today, Rampur stands as a beacon of hope, showcasing what can be achieved when communities and dedicated organizations come together for a common cause.



Economic Resilience- Livelihood Sustainability of a weaver

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RAJKONWAR

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Considering the economic set back of the project location, it was crucial to identify the skills that have been acquired traditionally. One such skill is the weaving; it is the common activity for the Mishing women, and it is one of the best alternative options they can opt to. With this thought, Women Development Centre (WDC) supported 100 weavers with 6.5 kgs of yarn along with a training on Business and entrepreneurship development in the month of June 2022.

Nandita Doley is a 35-year-old is one of the active TFG member whose family is fully depended on agriculture. She has a keen interest for weaving and so she attended the training program on business development organized by Women Development Centre (WDC) and facilitated by Assam State Livelihood Rural Mission (ASLRM). She is also an SHG member and from her group she was supported with 6kg of yarn from WDC. With the yarn in a span of 3 months she was able to produce 18 pairs (3 pairs form 1 kg) of fabric for traditional dress (Ribi Gaseng). One of the remarkable features of a Mishing traditional loom is that it is movable, but during the flood the people hardly move their weaving frames on top of the Chaang to continue weaving activity. Hence Global program team had initiated in mobilizing the weavers to shift their weaving frames on top of the chaang ghar so that they could continue their weaving activities throughout the years. Nandita Doley is one of the many weavers who could adopt and practice the initiative taken by the Global Program during 2023 floods in Dhemaji. During the flood she continues to carry on her weaving activity.

With 6.5 kgs of yarn received through the Global Program India, she was able to produce clothes and sell all those pieces in a good price of Rs.2500-2600 per piece. Most significantly she could continue her weaving activities even during the flood.

This gave her the motivation to continue the cycle and she purchased more yarn from the money she earned. In an interview with her she acclaims, “I am happy that I was able to buy a new school uniform for my daughter. I also bought more amount of yarn” and added, “Every year during flood when the paddy fields are destroyed, and we suffer from huge economic losses. We do not have enough capital to opt for other livelihood alternatives and do not have any idea But this time a little help from WDC has helped me to pave the way for income generation.” I am thankful to the team for the motivation and for providing me with some yarn”. With the money earned she is now continuing the weaving practices.

Nandita has become an inspiration for her group of SHG and she even motivated other women to adopt alternative livelihood options.

#We4Resilience

TECHNICAL
SESSION 2

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE BUILDING - FUTURE OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION





ECO-DRR Programme- Complexity to Clarity

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It is an accepted fact that frequency, intensity, and impact of climate disasters is on the rise. 'The degradation of ecosystems – such as forests, wetlands, drylands, and coastal and marine systems – is a major driver of disaster risk and a key component of communities' vulnerability to disasters' (UNEP). ECO-DRR, in combination with other DRR strategies can be transformative. Nature-based solutions (NbS) and ECO-DRR (Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction) are intertwined approaches that leverage the inherent resilience of ecosystems to mitigate the impact of disasters. Nature-based solutions involve utilizing natural processes and biodiversity to address environmental challenges. ECO-DRR specifically integrates ecological principles into disaster risk reduction strategies. Together, they emphasize the importance of preserving and restoring ecosystems to enhance community resilience. NbS and ECO-DRR initiatives encompass actions such as reforestation, wetland restoration, regenerative agriculture, and sustainable land management. By promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, these approaches contribute to disaster resilience, biodiversity conservation, and the overall well-being of communities and the environment. Operationalizing ECO-DRR programme aimed to tackling complex issues such as resilience and transformation, sustainable development, DRR, climate change adaptation etc. is challenging to say the least. The complexity of institutionalizing and delivering at-scale ECO-DRR programme can be partly comprehended by introducing an incentive regime.

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), is often used as a key incentive, rewarding communities for preserving and restoring ecosystems that enhance resilience. PES provides financial recognition for maintaining vital services like clean water, biodiversity, water management, carbon sequestration etc. This approach fosters a sense of environmental stewardship, encouraging communities to actively participate in disaster reduction efforts and get played well. By aligning economic incentives with ecological preservation, ECO-DRR with PES not only reduces vulnerability but also promotes a harmonious relationship between human communities and the ecosystems on which they depend. Eco-DRR is not a definitive and an individual strategy, it always responds to the local needs, vulnerabilities and aspirations and policies and works best along with other DRR strategies.

Driving results during various phases of an ECO-DRR (Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction) programme involves a combination of strategic actions, community engagement, incentives (PES) and adaptive management. Here's how

results can be achieved in each phase of ECO-DRR programme:

1. Participatory Assessment and Planning:

Action: Conduct a thorough participatory assessment of ecosystem vulnerabilities, risks, and potential of regenerating ecosystem services to reduce disaster risk and other outcomes.

Result Driver:

- Ecological assets and associated socio-cultural values (including faith) are mapped and their significance recognized and linked to identity, wellbeing, livelihoods and for reducing hazard exposure of social, economic environmental assets.
- Develop a risk-resilience perspective and outcome orientation amongst the at-risk communities, frontline workers, and decision makers before proposed assessment.
- Comprehensive/holistic plan that clearly outlines specific ecosystem-based interventions tailored to the local context and aspirations.
- Constituency of community leaders, frontline workers and decision makers committed to bivalent results that are deeper and broad-based.

2. Stakeholder Engagement:

Action: Foster, continued collaboration among communities, government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

Result Driver: Establish a network/platform of committed partners, ensuring diverse perspectives and resources are brought to the programme to practice certain principled behaviors (agreed locally).

3. Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation, and beyond:

Action: Implement measures to restore and conserve ecosystems.

Result Driver:

- Document and communicate tangible improvements in ecosystem health and

resilience, such as increased biodiversity, improved water retention etc. to unlock PES and other incentives.

- Ecosystem health defined as standards, benchmarks and practices within the local context.
- Market access created for sustainably harvested outputs from various elements of the ecosystem.

4. Capacity Development:

Action:

- Provide learning opportunities for range of stakeholders on ecosystem services and disaster risk reduction.
- Establish a continuum of planning, learning, action and tracking of results along a locally relevant DRR metrics for various sectors/trade-groups/institutions/population-groups.

Result Driver:

- Empower communities to actively participate in ECO-DRR activities and make informed decisions regarding ecosystem management.
- System shifts: What needs to change through capacity development?

5. Early Warning Systems:

Action: Integrate ecosystem-based information into early warning systems.

Result Driver: Improve the accuracy and effectiveness of early warnings, leading to enhanced community preparedness and reduced vulnerability.

6. Policy Integration:

Action: Advocate for the inclusion of ECO-DRR principles in policies, processes, and institution development.

Result Drivers:

- Influence policy changes that support sustainable ecosystem management and disaster risk reduction at local, regional, and national levels.
- Develop multi-sectoral institutional support system to implement PES and track multi-

dimensional results such as DRR, water-livelihood-food-nutrition security.

- System shifts: alter status (institution, skills), processes, and policies, SOPs, standards.....

7. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

Action: Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with strong commitment to participatory tracking of results, use of digital workflows and localization of data.

Result Drivers:

- Use data to measure various commitments to enable PES and track the success of ECO-DRR interventions allowing for continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making.
- Reinforcing and balancing feedback loops: Front-line workers and community leaders use local data and evidence for planning and design of interventions and adaptation of ongoing programme.

8. **Knowledge Building and Sharing:**

Action: Engagement with Community and 'Communities of Practice' to build right knowledge, perspective and understanding to overcome barriers to normative and social change for practicing ECO-DRR and PES.

Result Drivers:

- Foster a culture of environmental stewardship and resilience within communities, frontline-workers and decision-makers through education and knowledge exchange.
- Improved awareness and understanding of ECO-DRR concept and practices follow principles of accountability to at-risk population to drive deeper results.
- Enable interaction between social and scientific assumptions:
 - How the social environment shapes vulnerability, cultural and scientific assumptions about disasters damage and losses and other issues.
 - How scientific assumptions shape social structures, culture, and interactions and performance of ecosystems
- Beyond PES, stakeholders gaining new

knowledge, understanding and expertise/domain skills to build micro enterprises by mixing it with traditional knowledge.

9. **Incentive Mechanisms (structured):**

Action: Implement incentive mechanisms, such as PES, awards, and rewards (recognition).

Result Drivers:

- Encourage sustainable practices by demonstrating the tangible benefits of ecosystem preservation and restoration.
- Local leadership for ECO-DRR results is mobilized and organized and individuals are recognized through an institutionalized system.

10. **Adaptive Programme Management (structured yet, high level of spontaneity):**

Action: Embrace an adaptive management approach.

Result Drivers:

- Respond effectively to changing environmental conditions and community needs/vulnerabilities, ensuring the ongoing relevance and success of ECO-DRR initiatives.
- Constituency of community leaders, frontline workers and decision makers is recognized and rewarded for contributing to learning and action platforms that leads on bivalent results.
- Intersection between social and formal governance is recognized and supported.
- Possible damage of natural asset and loss of ecosystems services is assessed and managed on the go.

By aligning specific actions from each programming domain emphasizing community and scientific involvement, the ECO-DRR program can drive positive and sustainable results in reducing disaster risks and fortifying ecological resilience.



When the sea takes over

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PANDA

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An ever aggressive sea is engulfing more and more coastal villages into its fold. In Odisha, on the Bay of Bengal, thousands of villagers are facing the wrath of climate induced devastations in the form of sea intrusion. While some villages are already displaced by the sea, some others are on the verge of being displaced. The ones facing displacement want a solution from the government through a permanent relocation, and the ones already relocated are asking the governments to restore their previous state of dignified living with assured livelihoods support systems. In the absence of a policy measure, both the tasks have posed serious challenge before the government.

Arguably, Odisha is the first state to have built a rehabilitation colony for people displaced by climate change. However, the effort is not enough. The problem of climate change is not the state's creation, but the solution – in terms of adaptation and building resilience - is its responsibility. With lack of a clear cut policy to deal with climate induced internal displacement and dearth of international financial support under the loss and damage framework, climate justice seems to be a distant dream for the most vulnerable communities who have almost zero carbon footprint but face the maximum consequences of climate impacts.

Bay of Bengal: cyclone hotbed - The Bay of Bengal bears the infamous distinction of being the cyclone hotbed. Eight of ten deadliest tropical cyclones in the world have originated over the Bay of Bengal. The Bay of Bengal region is experiencing the largest relative increase of flood risk and ingression of sea into the land with increasing frequency of cyclones. The state of Odisha bears the major brunt of the cyclone and sea-level rise for its geographical location on the Bay of Bengal. An increase in sea level has caused massive economic loss and disruption of life among the coastal communities of the state.

The frequency of cyclones and the impacts of sea-level rise have increased on the Odisha coast over the last several decades. So far, Odisha has lost 153.8 km, or about 28 per cent, of its coastline to sea water ingression. (National Centre for Coastal Research, 2018). Rising sea level coupled with change in wind patterns are causing high tidal waves and inundating habitable areas.

Cyclones displace them each year, sea is displacing permanently - Many coastal villages in Odisha are now experiencing increased levels of inundation and storm flooding, accelerated coastal erosion, seawater intrusion into freshwater including groundwater and encroachment of tidal waters into river systems. All these lead to multiple displacements and the poor living on the margins of subsistence are forced into greater poverty.



What they need is just rehabilitation and safe migration paths. The state of Odisha has been trying to provide them with relief and rehabilitation packages but we are calling for inclusive policy measures so that all these people, being constantly pushed back by the sea, can have choices to either stay or move with their rights to life, livelihood and local commons respected.

Local adaptation in such scenarios should include programmes that consider both 'people first' and 'nature

first' principles and have sufficient funding provisions and legislation backups. The legal and policy frameworks for 'just rehabilitation' and 'safe migration' should not only be confined to state boundaries but span across the entire nation. In fact, we are also calling for a regional cooperation framework to deal with climate-displaced and climate-migrant people



Combating Climate-Induced Migration: The Sundarban Story

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Caritas India with the support of CAFOD and 2 partners across border in Bangladesh and Nottingham university, Rights Lab conducted a pilot research study in Sundarbans region of India and Bangladesh in order to draw together three components – climate change, human trafficking, and migration – we undertook a three pronged study across the Sundarbans in the border-regions of both Bangladesh and India during 2022. This developed worked to achieve the aim of:

...moving from theory to quantified evidence in the understanding of the intersectionality between trafficking, migration and climate change along the Bangladesh-India border, in order to support active programming for climate resilience in communities.

First, an evidence review of academic and grey literature to understand existing knowledge in the area. This found that migration is a complex issue influenced by climate, economic and social factors. Climate change impacts like cyclones and flooding are pushing people to migrate, especially seasonally for work. However, migration can expose people to risks like debt bondage and human trafficking.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with 31 experts who work on issues related to migration, trafficking and climate change and have influence at several different levels, with district and union leaders, agricultural, fisheries, and forest officials, NGO workers, professors, chairmen, and other stakeholders. in the Sundarbans. The interviews highlighted that both women and men face vulnerabilities. Climate change impacts like cyclones are damaging livelihoods and infrastructure, pushing people to take up risky jobs.

Finally – and most importantly – the experiences of community members from the household level across the Bangladesh and India Sundarbans were undertaken. A total of 1217 viable responses were gathered from households that covered topics such as household livelihood, climate change hazard experience and perception of risk, gender-based risks, human trafficking knowledge and experiences, and support access and needs. The survey found that many households rely on multiple livelihoods like farming and fishing. They are facing challenges from climate impacts, loss of land and fewer job opportunities. While seasonal migration is common, there are also risks of debt and human trafficking for some migrant workers.

Much of the evidence focused on communities within the Sundarbans as well as other areas of Bangladesh and India highlighted in the papers assessed included the notion



that migration is seen as a form of coping strategy to offset the impacts of climate change (Bhatta et al. 2015); others that communities may be pushed to migrate as a result of economic or environmental turmoil but they may also be pulled to migration as a result of opportunities and better prospects (Decker Sparks et al. 2021). Further, evidence noted that there is an overlapping of the human trafficking-migration-climate change risks, and that the overlapping of these factors is mirrored by the presence of criminal actors seeking to profit from community vulnerability. This was confirmed from the KIIs and case stories from the field who stated that “the geographical exposure to risks means that communities are placed in a situation where they may come face-to-face with those who may seek to do them harm.”

Responses from stakeholder around their understanding of climate change impacts upon communities highlighted commonalities across the Indian and Bangladesh study regions. Most stakeholders reference cyclones, salt-water intrusion and flooding within their responses as hazards faced by the majority in the Sundarbans. Distinctions between slow- and acute-onset hazards were noted by participants with experts reporting that there was more consideration being placed into the response to hazards that occur more slowly as there is a view something can be done, which is in contrast to acute hazards such as cyclones which could not necessarily be responded to in the same manner. One reference to such risks that was

explored in detail by stakeholders was that of Cyclone Amphan which was viewed as having led people into situations of illegal activity as a result of households being damaged, and infrastructure destroyed. Not only did these actions leave communities vulnerable to the exploitation that is often associated with illegal work, but it also placed communities in direct conflict with wildlife causing increased safety issues.

Livelihoods were determined to have changed with less work in agriculture and fishing being available to households, and more general labour being undertaken. Some of these changes were attributed by participants as being associated with the effects of climate hazards with communities identifying similar risks to those of the stakeholders, with a high number of households reported being impacted by reporting cyclones, salt-water intrusion, storm surges, river-bank erosion, flash floods and monsoon as common hazards. In response to this livelihood adaptation and change has been seen as a response mechanism for households, which can go hand-in-hand with migration to other areas and sectors.

Further factors pertaining to risks by stakeholders reported that women and children experienced more risks as a results of male household members migrating for economic opportunities. There were gendered differences noted with women and girls being noted as a risk of sexual exploitation and forced marriage compared to more manual labour risks for men and boys. Others explained their views of the geographic



distances and opportunities between groups stating that “girls/women generally migrate internally whereas the boys/men go outside”. Interesting to note was the conflict that arose between the protections of the Sundarbans Mangrove Forest and the need for communities to engage with the land for economic and livelihood development – this placed natural climate change mitigation potential in opposition to the socio-economic factors that may see communities become less vulnerable to human trafficking risk through migratory practices.

The survey found that most households in the Sundarbans region across the India-Bangladesh border rely on multiple sources of income, mainly agricultural work and fishing. However, many households reported declining incomes and increasing economic pressures due to loss of livelihoods, depletion of land and fisheries, and lack of job opportunities. Seasonal migration was common, mainly undertaken by men for work in brick kilns, construction, and other sectors. While some migrants had jobs arranged in advance, others faced debt bondage and exploitation. Communities were aware of human trafficking risks, but they were exposed to it through various sectors. One of the participants in the survey informed that her husband had migrated 18 months back as a construction labour, after a few months of contact, he absolutely vanished. The contractor reported that he

had remarried and settled in the destination state, whereas a few speculated that something had happened to him, and this was an excuse to cover up the real story. Either way, the young woman is not left with any other option but to fend for her old in-laws and babies. These aspects not only point towards safety and economic concerns but also bring out a socio-cultural implication to the impacts of migration.

The decision to migrate is not a simple one. The decision-making process involves contending with obstacles, with family-related concerns and financial constraints guiding migration decisions. Economic pressures and familial responsibilities emerge as common barriers. However, for the sake of some minimal earning (just enough to keep the family from going hungry), most resort to this last option which comes at a cost. This cost are the various risks that entails with climate induced migration such as cultural displacement, vulnerability to exploitation, health risks, and challenges in adapting to new environments. Additionally, the influx of migrants into new areas may strain housing and infrastructure, and the loss of biodiversity knowledge among the indigenous population is a significant drawback. Social integration challenges, lack of legal protections, and increased competition for resources in destination areas further compound the risks associated with migration.

Labor patterns reveal a diverse landscape where pre-arranged work becomes a mitigating factor against exploitation. However, these may not also be fool-proof looking at the uncertainties that are faced upon arrival to a different state or countries. Migration for work is often seen to turn into debt thus turning into a financial tightrope. But the payment-related nuances expose potential risks of debt bondage in the Sundarbans with varied debt levels, associated with sectors like construction, fishing, agriculture, brick kilns, driving, and the seafood industry, paint a complex financial landscape. Human trafficking risks come to the forefront, with varying degrees of awareness and cases extending beyond short-term labor experiences, signalling prolonged periods of exploitation. Bonded labour may also be an additional issue providing risk to workers. 42 household responses referenced payments being made prior to employment being undertaken which exposed household members to potentially exploitative labour practices. Of these, 36 noted how a migrant had experienced a situation of debt. Average debt for the respondents in Bangladesh was 81,072 taka, whereas in the Indian Sundarbans side it was around 33,636 rupee. Of those with debt, 30 household respondents indicated that labour was used in exchange for the repayment of the debt. Most concerning was one household leader responded to the survey by indicating that they “still could not repay the loan. The burden of debt still has to be carried.” This is an issue that is affecting labour in both India and Bangladesh.

Households consisting of the left-behind family members are left vulnerable experiencing many climate change hazards like cyclones, floods and erosion. This impacted their livelihoods and forced some to change occupations. Most perceived that climate change was intensifying hazards and influencing their decisions. Common adaptations included evacuation plans, stockpiling supplies and temporary migration. However, many households lacked coping mechanisms. Stakeholders and communities generally agreed on the issues but differed on the solutions. While communities sought financial assistance, some stakeholders felt this discouraged self-sufficiency. There were also differing views on forest access and usage for livelihoods. In summary, communities in the Sundarbans face a complex mix of economic pressures, climate risks and limited opportunities, highlighting the need for tailored interventions and support.

Gender-specific issues were noted in the survey responses including risks of child, early and forced marriage with children as young as 11 and 12 being married in Bangladesh. Another implication towards India was the rising social issues of extra marital affairs and abandonment of families back in the Sundarban. It was often seen that the migrating member had a 2-family set-up in the source and destination locations. Whilst indicated as an unlikely response by female-identifying household members as a response to climate change there were indications that sending children to work alongside migrating themselves was an option to support the household when male-identifying members had already migrated. Furthermore, women noted that the risk from environmental hazards followed by a lack of income were some of the greatest vulnerabilities they experienced whilst being left at home during migratory periods. Households reported that they had minimal engagement with human trafficking or migration support services in the past. When asked to provide details of additional support they would request, respondents overwhelmingly called for additional financial aid, education and training opportunities; with others requesting visa support, livelihood adaptability support and more human trafficking risk awareness training. Opinions of the support received by the national governments of India and Bangladesh were poor (as were those for the international governance community), whereas support from local government and NGOs/CSOs operating in the Sundarbans region fared more positively.

In the delicate dance between nature and humanity in the Sundarbans, the imperative for urgent and coordinated action becomes unmistakable. The interconnectedness of environmental degradation and societal well-being, underscoring the need for a shared commitment to address the root causes of climate change needs to be realised. The Sundarbans stand as a poignant reminder that the consequences of environmental degradation reach far beyond the immediate ecosystem, resonating in the lives and livelihoods of those who depend on its delicate balance. As we contemplate the future of the Sundarbans, the call for collective responsibility echoes—a call that transcends borders and speaks to the shared destiny of a planet grappling with the profound challenges of our time.



Climate Change Adaptation Localized Solutions

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The term climate change refers to the long-term changes in temperature, humidity, clouds, and rainfall and not day to day variation (IPCC2007). The report states that during past 100 years the global mean temperature has increased by 0.74 C. This increase is primarily caused by 33% increase in CO₂ in atmosphere during past hundred years. The climate change related phenomenon is now being experienced in each corner of the globe. The increase in mean surface air temperature, change in the rainfall pattern, fast melting of glaciers and rapid retreat of glaciers in the Himalayas, probable sea level rise, certain areas of the country experiencing severe drought and other intense flooding. Hence, agriculture, fisheries, health, energy and many more sectors are bound to be affected. In the given context, we must adopt strategies to adapt to climate change. Without sustained mitigation and accelerated adaptation actions damages and losses will continue to increase. The foremost task is to plan for energy requirements. There is an urgent need to reduce emission intensity. This may be through interventions to promote energy efficiency and introduce green energy. The renewable solar and wind energy production must be strengthened. This is the need of the hour. Urban growth to be monitored in terms of climate change scenario. Green infrastructure and water sensitive urban design must be promoted and planned. The roof must be thick and insulated. The buildings to have reflective coating. The clustering and orientation of buildings to be monitored.

Transport sector is witnessing rapid upscaling. Thrust must be given to local manufacturing of electric vehicles.

Water conservation is another segment which needs direct intervention. The Ahar pyne scheme of water management in irrigation and agriculture must be rejuvenated. This traditional action of water management is quite useful in groundwater recharging as well. The high yielding variety with less water intensive crops must be developed. The Jal Jeevan Hariyali, a Government of Bihar initiative has shown positive result in a short span of time. The quality of air, carbon sequestration may be achieved with large scale afforestation programme.

The concept of Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) introduced by Hble PM of India is to promote sustainable lifestyles and thus building a community of Pro Planet People adapting to the climate change scenario.



Risk Transfer – A Game Changer for Volunteering in times of disasters

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Risk Transfer is one of the most important tools for risk mitigation. This usually means transferring the risk to a third party, viz an insurance company for most of the time. Especially during disasters, insurance is a very critical mechanism for recovery from financial losses incurred by those affected. Life insurance and Medclaim are other variants that also are crucial means of support either due to the death in the family or for medical treatment. However, not much thought has been given to leverage Insurance as a risk transfer mechanism to strengthen disaster response.... Volunteer group insurance.

When disaster strikes, NGOs and their volunteers or independent volunteers are normally among the first to arrive at the scene. The golden hour 'providing care immediately when trauma has struck' is a well-known concept to save lives. Saving lives and reducing the number of people affected during disasters is also one of the key targets of the SENDAI Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Hence having more frontline volunteers at disaster site to support relief efforts can definitely contribute to this goal.

However, the average Indian person is not known for volunteering zeal, especially during a crisis, the good Samaritan law notwithstanding. And even if citizens do want to volunteer, the chances are that they are stopped by family and friends due to the risk to life. This is perfectly understandable as, If the volunteers put themselves in danger and something happens to them, what is to happen to their families? Research has shown that most of the Commercial insurance companies will not cover such unfortunate incidents. On the other hand, evidence also shows that offering insurance to volunteers can motivate more to join and build solidarity.

When COVID struck, the fear of infection was very real. Treatment too was initially very expensive. NGOs on the ground were stretched beyond their limits and were supported in large part by volunteers. RISE Infinity Foundation (RIF) also worked with volunteers for relief efforts, taking food and medicines to those left behind from large distribution campaigns. However due to the risk of COVID, there were many instances of volunteer hesitancy. We also lost some brave individuals, who put their life on the line daily to help others. This drove us to address the risk to our front line volunteers through insured as most of them came from low income and vulnerable backgrounds.

RISE Infinity Foundation (RIF) mooted the idea of providing Health insurance for volunteers to other NGOs working together as part of the CoAST (COVID Action

Support Team) network, which was immediately accepted. Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) came forward to support with funds and Idobro offered its team to take up the co-ordination. After much deliberations on the criteria and geographical coverage, it was decided to offer this to volunteers on a Pan-India basis, irrespective of their affiliation. This was a true testament to the national collective efforts of CoAST NGOs in assisting people crossing state boundaries and with no more than an appeal for support. Funds were allocated by FES and the process was started to identify an insurance service provider.

After approaching several Insurance companies, it was realised that a group policy could only be taken for a homogenous group linked to the single employer or premium payer. In this case, the donor was in no way linked to the volunteers, nor were the administrators – FES or RIF or Idobro and CoAST was also not a registered body. If an individual cover policy was opted for, the challenge was that pre-existing diseases, medical tests and waiting period clauses would negate the very intent to provide protection immediately, not to mention the cost as compared to group policies. However, taking cognisance of the situation, it was decided to go ahead with individual policies. The first phase saw 2234 frontline cadres insured under an individual COVID policy by SEWA, which also meant that we were supporting women empowerment and livelihood.

The efforts to research and reach out to insurers continued over time. Finally, New India Assurance through Alyve Health, worked with us to understand the critical and humanitarian nature of our request. They assured us of quick settlements of claims, and also got an added benefit of a doctor on a phone call for

consultations and the benefit of yoga lessons for well-being.

Once the policy was finalised, we approached NGOs across the India and requested them to share the names of their volunteers. This was a lengthy, time consuming process and had its share of challenges. All remote locations were covered, including North Eastern States. We also got the support of major NGOs working across the country, like Goonj, so that we could really reach as many deserving bravehearts. The activation and claim processes have been simple with cases of settlements early in the cycle. Most importantly, the terms are such that the list of volunteers could be changed depending on their involvement making it a truly dynamic policy that meets the needs of the sector. A Changemaker policy. This needs to be advocated for and continued.

Further, as the information spread, more NGOs have begun to insure their volunteers. The benefits are win-win, as when the risk is covered, a sense of belonging binds the volunteers to continue working with the NGO and for the community. This is not only meeting one target in the SENDAI Framework, but perhaps helping in achieving all the four priority actions – understanding risk, governance, investment and preparedness.

A point to note is that the Aapda Mitra (friends in disasters) programme by the government provides for insurance. However, this requires formal and prior consent. Disasters are unpredictable and we cannot map all potential volunteers in advance nor are they linked formally to any organisation. Hence the situation is different and so is the need.



Lightning Arrester

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LAL

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Bihar, a predominantly rural and multi-disaster-prone state, faces various natural and human-induced hazards, including floods, droughts, earthquakes, fires, and lightning. Lightning, identified as a major disaster, has resulted in a significant loss of life, with 2862 people in India falling victim to it, and Bihar alone witnessing 443 deaths in 2020 and 276 in 2021. Rural areas, particularly those engaged in agriculture and animal rearing, bear a higher casualty burden, with most deaths occurring between 12 noon to 6 pm. The state government has been providing ex gratia since 2009, recognizing lightning as a notifiable disaster since 2015.

The Global Programme in India, since 2021, aims to enhance resilience by improving the disaster management system at national, state, and local levels. Participatory disaster risk reduction processes, including community "SAMVAD," have identified lightning as a major disaster in targeted districts like Bhagalpur, Patna, Nawada, and East Champaran, where over 30 deaths per year have been recorded on average over a five-year span. In response, the program has initiated preventive measures to mitigate the impact of lightning at the local level.

Global Program Initiatives

A comprehensive initiative has been undertaken to mitigate the impact of lightning through the installation of 67 lightning arresters in 30 villages across Nawada district, Supaul, and East Champaran. This community based low-cost replicable models serves as a reliable safeguard for homes and farms, capturing lightning and redirecting it safely into the earth. The initiative extends beyond infrastructure, encompassing an extensive awareness campaign at the micro-level. The "We4Resilience" campaign spans 80 villages, 22 Panchayats, and 10 blocks, promoting resilience measures and educating communities about lightning risks.

An integral component of this effort involves the promotion of the Indra Vajra Application, developed by the Bihar State Disaster Management Authority. This innovative app facilitates direct alert information through alarms, aiding 356 users in receiving warnings about lightning occurrences within a 20 km radius up to 40 minutes in advance. Additionally, a crucial aspect of the program includes the Training of Trainers (ToT) initiative which empowered three dedicated Program staff from Nawada. Conducted by Nehru Yuva Kendra Purnia, with the collaboration of the Disaster Management officer of Nawada, the training focused on the preparation and installation of lightning arresters, reinforcing the resilience of the communities we serve.



Protecting Income by Adopting Integrated Farming System: A Case Study of Lingaraj Nayak, Khantakuada Village

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Mr. Lingaraj Nayak, a resident of Khantakuada village in Andola Gram Panchayat, is a well-educated and progressive farmer who has embarked on a journey to improve agricultural practices and protect the livelihood from natural disasters. This case study sheds light on his experiences, focusing on both paddy and vegetable cultivation. Lingaraj adopted the integrated farming system (IFS) is a comprehensive farm practice to improve small and marginal farmers' livelihoods. The IFS enhances nutrient recycling and food security and promotes greater efficiency of fertilizers and natural resources. To improve livelihood, profits, and employment generation holistically through an IFS method in a disaster-prone area. This method can be efficient and productive, but they frequently result in environmental issues, soil nutrient depletion, soil biota disruption, and more significant production costs.

In 2022, Lingaraj Nayak received a significant boost for his paddy cultivation when the Balasore Social Service Society (BSSS) supported with 20 kg of “Swarna Sub-1”, a climate resilient variety paddy seeds for 1 acre of land. Swarna Sub-1 (Ss1), a flood-tolerant rice variety, reduces yield losses under flooding conditions while leaving yields unaffected during non-flood years. This generous seed donation allowed him to cultivate paddy using high-quality seeds. The outcome was remarkable: the paddy production increased, resulting in an additional 3 quintals of profit compared to previous years.

Apart from paddy, Lingaraj Nayak also ventured into vegetable cultivation. Initially, he managed a 25 decimal area dedicated to vegetables cultivation, relying solely on his knowledge and hard work. Despite his efforts, he recognized the need for additional support and knowledge to enhance his vegetable cultivation. BSSS recognized his dedication and linked with local Horticulture Officer and enrolled him in a government-sponsored agricultural training program. As a result, Lingaraj received valuable insights into modern farming practices and techniques by using natural resources. Additionally, the program provided him with high-quality vegetable seeds, including brinjal, tomato, and chili seeds. These seeds, which had been carefully treated and processed, proved to be a game-changer for his vegetable cultivation. With the combination of improved techniques and better seeds, Lingaraj Nayak was able to significantly increase his vegetable production and he has started growing varieties of vegetables in larger area of land and using organic manure made by him. It is another way he has diversify his agricultural activities to protect his income sources and donot depend on only one crop, which is potential to damage due to frequent disasters such as to floods and cyclone.

Intensive livestock farms, such as large dairy, poultry, and animal feed preparations, because they relied on fewer agricultural commodities, these modern specialized and intense farming practices influence environment and biodiversity and increase resource-poor farmers' vulnerability to climate change and market change. At the farm level in Odisha, intensive agriculture systems cannot provide stable income and employment, food, environmental, and energy security. Farmers that rely on a single farm enterprise, such as a traditional monocropping system, cannot make a living. To overcome these challenges faced by Lingaraj adapted specialized, input-driven agriculture, integrating crops, livestock, and fishery components that preserve food and nutritional security while delivering regular and periodic income to small farmers is vital. Integrated farming systems (IFSs) that integrate animal and crop enterprises receive renewed interest in marginal and small farmers like Lingaraj who cultivate less than one-hectare cultivable lands in disaster prone such as frequent flood and cyclone areas. The IFS technique encourages ecological intensification by reducing anthropogenic inputs while improving ecosystem functions such as nutrient recycling, soil formation, soil fertility, and environmental performance. Well-managed IFSs are to be safer because they benefit from business synergy, crop diversification, and ecological stability.

Residue recycling and improved land-use efficiency are the two critical features of the IFS. Lingaraj used these components/enterprises of the IFS based on land type and water availability, his socioeconomic status, and market demand. He established good linkages and complementarities between components are required to construct effective holistic farming systems such as aquaculture, poultry, and horticultural crops. The proper management of crop wastes and an appropriate allocation of scarce resources lead to sustainable production for resource-poor farmers. A combination of one or more operations with crops offers better returns than a single enterprise when carefully chosen, planned, and implemented, especially for small and

marginal farmers. Dairy, poultry, pisciculture, and agrichorticulture, among other activities, play a significant role in bolstering farm income.

Lingaraj received comprehensive training in the art of chick rearing, commencing his journey with 30 fluffy chicks which were double vaccinated. Under the guidance of BSSS, he was equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to nurture these young birds. From his own interest he made a visit to the veterinary doctor and followed the instruction of giving medicines to the chicks regularly. Out of the 30 chicks he started with, one chick impressively reached a weight of 2 kg, showcasing his dedication and adherence to his training. Remarkably, 25 out of the 30 chicks reached the target weight of 50 kg, demonstrating his skill in following the instructions imparted during the training.

Lingaraj is having 3 cows and daily he is selling 10 Lts of milk within the village and cow dung used as manure. He is also having a small pond where he has the fish farming especially prefer to grow local variety of fish such as Magur and Gadisha, the local price of these fish is very costly. The waste of poultry is used as the feed of fish. On the other hand, he has grown banana and creeper plants on the boundary of the ponds, every alternative month some vegetables are sold in the local market and having regular income. He is visiting local horticulture and Fishery office and consult with them for quality cultivation practices and accessing vaccinations for livestock and fingerlings.

Lingaraj Nayak's journey as an educated farmer in Khantakhuada village highlights the potential for agricultural transformation when education and resources are made accessible. His achievements in both paddy, vegetable cultivation along with Fish farming, dairy and poultry rearing underscore the importance of knowledge and quality inputs in improving crop yields, enhancing livelihoods, and uplifting rural communities. His story serves as a beacon of hope and a model for sustainable agricultural practices in Andola Gram Panchayat.



Building resilient, Women-led businesses in Lakhimpur District, Assam India

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Assam*

Flood is not new and unprecedented but rather a mere reoccurrence of the same disaster in Assam. The State experienced many devastating floods in its history, the catastrophic floods became frequent phenomena after the 1950s (earthquake) as disastrous floods occurred in 1954, 1962, 1972, 1977, 1984, 1988, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2012 and recently, in 2019 and 2020. The flood in 2022 has affected around 5.5 million people across 32 out of 35 districts of Assam. The death toll increased to 190 (the number of unreported deaths would be more than that) and caused massive erosion and displacement while destroying houses, roads, railways, bridges and loss of livestock and livelihood. Frequent occurrence of flood impacted small scale business in the rural areas.



Mrs Rumi Phukan is a housewife resides in Panchnoi, a village which is very much vulnerable to flood due to Ranganadi River that flows along the village. The village comes under Dejoo Grama Panchayat in Lakhimpur District Assam. She lives with her husband named Pradip Phukan and two sons Lakhyaraj and Dhurbaraj. The people in this village have been experiencing flood every year causing huge lost to their livelihood and properties. She recalled it back the experienced of 2017 flood she had

wherein Caritas India had supported Cash worth Rs.2000/- (Two thousand) and Wash Kits. She said “that was the beginning of my journey towards building resilience entrepreneur. Caritas India not only supported relief materials but also gave technical support on preparedness and sustainability”.

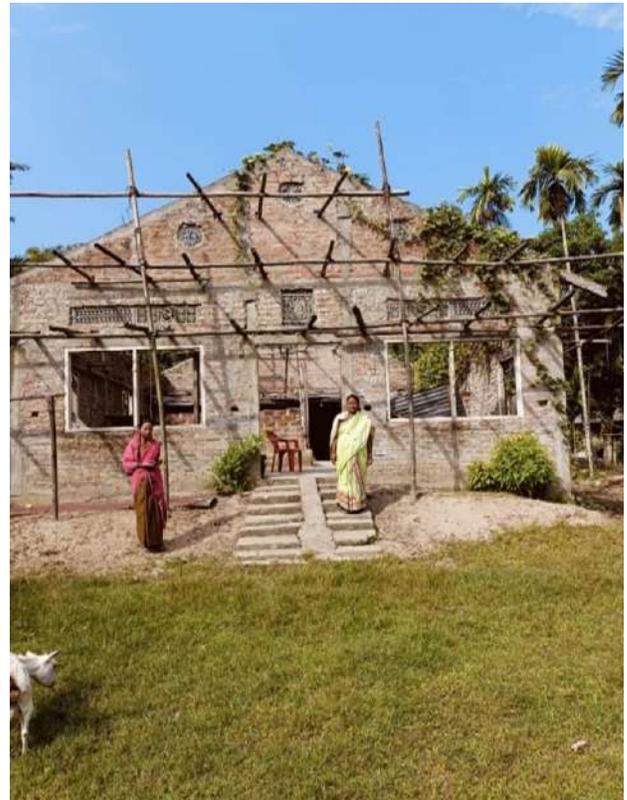
Now Mrs. Rumi Phukan is one of the best examples of female-led businesses resilience entrepreneurial because of her hard work and dedication. For years she



has been living in a very difficult situation because of the frequent flood caused by the Ranganadi River. “It was in the year 2021 Global Program came in my village and I came to know TSSS team Bonani, Angelus and Gabriel and Nilima in 2023. Whenever there is a meeting and training, they always invited me, and I never miss the meeting and training. In this way once again, I gain a confident to take forward my initiative in building resilience in my family”.

Now she is one of the leading women in the village who really promoting resilience entrepreneurship. She cultivates paddy, seasonal vegetables like potato, onion, garlic, black gram, sesame etc and have goat farming in

Chaang Ghar. She is also a founder member of a producer group call Jyotimoi Producer group. She started the group in 2019 with 10 members and later 40 members were added. This year they also received loan of 2 lakh. She is an active member of our Disaster Risk Reduction committee. She attends all the meetings and trainings conducted by KVK and Veterinary and Block in collaboration with BMZ Global Program.



With the income she received from her business she could build some resilience infrastructure measures like raised storage for animal fodders like cows and goats. She has constructed a stilt house, toilet, and farmhouse. Rice, water gaud, potato, a wooden almirah with important documents, first aid kit, a bed, warm clothes, mosquito nets, fodders for goat, firewood etc were kept on stilt house for the livestock and for her family members for three to four months.



Climate Resilient Infrastructure

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The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has reported based on mounting evidences of shifts in climate and consequent effects on natural resources and biodiversity that warming of the earth climate system is “unequivocal”. Shift in climate will bring different changes to different regions. Rural communities are tend to be more vulnerable due to their heavily dependence on climate-sensitive resources especially, agricultural land and water for their basic livelihoods. Vagaries of the weather are subjected to natural and climate disasters



Rural households require appropriate solutions to address issues in the areas like agriculture, shelter, health, education, energy, water, sanitation and home based products. Climate change adaptation aims to reduce the risks or vulnerabilities posed by climate change and to increase climate resilience. Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure shall withstand or to adapt to the detrimental impacts of climate change. Study reports that 79% of global GHG emissions are related to infrastructure; 4% growth in global GDP by 2030 is possible with clean energy investments and 92% of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets are achievable through infrastructure investment.

Sustainable Infrastructure refers to achieving 17 SDG goals and 169 targets and deliver climate mitigation and adaptation benefits. Sustainable infrastructure



highlights an opportunity for positive change in fostering climate compatible with collective efforts, inclusive growth (Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas). Localizing SDGs enabling local governments and communities to be the catalysts of change to support the achievements of the global goals at villages. Theme – 6: Self-sufficient infrastructure in village has facilitated implementing basic infrastructure to provide basic needs and promote continuous growth and sustainable development.

National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) has establishment Rural Technology Park (RTP) with an objective to uplifting the rural people in all aspects of life such as live demonstration and production units, capacity building, rural employment generation, livelihoods, transfer of technology through live demonstrations etc. The National Building Centre in RTP brings together a range of cost-effective construction technologies with variety of materials, technologies and blends the old and new techniques of construction. The technologies

depicted are suitable for disaster-prone locations viz., earthquake, cyclone, fire etc. These structures are erected utilising the locally available resources and skills of the people. The cost of construction will be in the range of 25% 40% less than that of the cost with conventional construction at that particular place.

Appropriate low cost-low water sanitation models (23 nos.) are placed in the RTP with the focus on three areas viz. Low cost; low water usage; and solid and liquid waste disposal for gainful agricultural & for other activities. In addition to the solar energy development, wind energy is also established in RTP as a part of the renewable energy development. A 5 KW solar power unit and 3.65 KW of wind power units have been set up and the power is being used for the office premises.

It can be concluded that NIRD&PR has initiated promotion of climate resilient infrastructure through building capacities of masonry and SHG members in establishing climate resilient infrastructure under Theme – 6: Self-sufficient infrastructure in village such as earthquake resistant buildings, renewable energy efficient, waste management structure, etc.

#We4Resilience

TECHNICAL
SESSION 3

**DEFINING
THE SCOPE
AND
STRATEGIES
OF
ADDRESSING
NUTRITION AND
FOOD SECURITY
AND SOVEREIGNTY -
CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES
TO BUILD RESILIENCE**





Comprehensive Strategies for Resilient Nutrition and Food Sovereignty

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In the realm of global health, the persistent challenge of child malnutrition demands comprehensive strategies that not only address immediate nutritional needs but also foster resilience and ensure long-term food sovereignty. Resilience in this context involves the ability of communities to withstand, adapt to, and recover from shocks while maintaining adequate nutrition for children. This note explores multifaceted approaches to resilient nutrition and food sovereignty, drawing insights from successful initiatives in India and across the globe.

POSHAN Abhiyan: "POSHAN" stands for Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition, emphasizing the holistic approach required to combat malnutrition. The program focuses on the first 1,000 days of a child's life, recognizing this period as critical for physical and cognitive development. It integrates multiple schemes and endeavors to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia, and low birth weight, which are prevalent issues in India. POSHAN Abhiyaan employs a convergent and community-based approach, involving various ministries, departments, and stakeholders at the national, state, and district levels.

Key components of the initiative include ensuring the availability of nutritious food, promoting behavioral change through community engagement, strengthening health systems, and leveraging technology for real-time monitoring and tracking of nutritional interventions. As a comprehensive strategy, POSHAN Abhiyaan reflects the government's commitment to prioritizing nutrition and achieving sustainable development goals.

Holistic Agricultural Practices: One cornerstone of resilient nutrition and food sovereignty is the promotion of holistic agricultural practices. Agroecology, for instance, emphasizes sustainable and organic farming techniques, minimizing the use of external inputs. In India, the Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) initiative in the state of Andhra Pradesh has gained attention for its success in reducing input costs for farmers while enhancing soil fertility and crop yields. By prioritizing biodiversity, preserving traditional seed varieties, and reducing reliance on chemical inputs, ZBNF contributes to the resilience of farming communities and ensures a diverse and nutrient-rich food supply.

Community-Based Nutrition Programs: Community involvement is vital for the success of nutrition programs. Initiatives that empower local communities to take charge of their nutritional outcomes have shown promise. The Anganwadi system in India, for instance, engages community workers to deliver essential nutrition services,

monitor growth, and educate mothers on proper feeding practices. This decentralized approach not only ensures the availability of locally relevant solutions but also fosters community resilience by building capacity and knowledge at the grassroots level.

Global Examples: Beyond India, successful global examples demonstrate the effectiveness of comprehensive strategies for resilient nutrition and food sovereignty. In Brazil, the "Zero Hunger" program incorporates a multi-sectoral approach, integrating health, education, and social policies to address the root causes of malnutrition. By combining income support, school feeding programs, and agricultural development, Brazil has made significant strides in reducing child malnutrition and fostering food sovereignty.

In Africa, the Malawi Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) program is a notable example. This initiative takes a holistic approach, incorporating agriculture, health, and social protection interventions to address malnutrition comprehensively. Through the promotion of diversified and nutritious crops, community engagement, and the provision of essential health services, Malawi has seen improvements in child nutrition outcomes.

Technology and Innovation: Leveraging technology and innovation is another crucial aspect of building resilience in nutrition and ensuring food sovereignty. Mobile applications that provide real-time information on weather patterns, market prices, and agricultural best practices empower farmers to make informed decisions. In Kenya, for instance, the iCow app assists farmers in managing livestock and optimizing their agricultural practices, contributing to increased food security and income generation. Some of the innovative technologies introduced by Action Against Hunger to build resilience globally are as under:

Alliance for integrated e-DIAgnostic (AleDIA) An adaptable, digital solution to reduce childhood mortality in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs). It is a digital solution combining a decision-support job aid for the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) and the management of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) at the primary health care facility level, a referral management tool, and web dashboards for monitoring at district and national levels. This tool was jointly developed by Terre des hommes, Action Against Hunger and World Vision

SMART+: SMART+ is an all-in-one digital infrastructure designed to revolutionize the way nutrition data is collected, analyzed, and shared. SMART+ provides a real-time global view of malnutrition on the ground, allowing governments, public health organizations and NGOs to identify where malnutrition is occurring so they can respond in a targeted, timely manner. SMART+ streamlines today's fragmented and time-consuming survey methods into an easy-to-use tool that incorporates the nutrition survey and reporting process from start to finish.

Modelling Early Risk Indicators to Anticipate Malnutrition (MERIAM): The aims of the MERIAM project are to develop, test and scale up cost-effective means to improve the prediction and monitoring of undernutrition in difficult contexts, in such a way that it enables an effective response to manage and mitigate nutritional risk. The approach developed by the MERIAM team will result in techniques and tools suited to strengthen early warning systems. Achieving these goals entails (1) forecasting circumstances susceptible to an increased risk of undernutrition, (2) identifying the key drivers of that risk, (3) generating scenarios that demonstrate how the timing and type of services provided may affect the impact of a shock on communities, and (4) considering the implications of responses for expected outcomes. A focus will be isolating leading indicators of undernutrition, leveraging a variety of existing, accessible, granular data to capture causal factors and model dynamic variation in contexts where projections are urgently required.

SAM PHOTO: The SAM photo diagnosis app is an innovation that responds to the need to improve screening, diagnosis and treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM).

Comprehensive strategies for resilient nutrition and food sovereignty require a holistic approach that addresses the complex interplay of factors contributing to child malnutrition. By promoting sustainable agricultural practices, engaging local communities, learning from successful initiatives in India and globally, and leveraging technology, we can build resilience at various levels of the food system. These approaches not only address immediate nutritional needs but also contribute to long-term food sovereignty, ensuring that communities are equipped to thrive despite challenges.



Ecosystem-Based Adaptation Planning for Climate Resilient Livelihood and Food Security in India

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An ecosystem is a dynamic intertwined community consisting of populations of plants, animals, microorganisms, and the non-living environment that interact as a functional unit. A given ecosystem is also influenced by the geographical condition of a region such as forest, agriculture, and urban areas, each of which produces a different bundle of services. The natural ecosystems are sunlight, soil, nutrients, and water, while wastes from one part of the system provide energy for other parts and through this process biomass (or carbon-based life) are created. Broadly speaking the entire biosphere of Earth is an ecosystem since the elements interact with each other. However, at a smaller scale, a well-defined ecosystem has strong interactions among its components and weak interactions across its boundaries.

Human society also derives benefits from ecosystem for survival. This implies the livelihood and food security of human beings are always ensured from their own ecosystem. Costanza et al. (1997) notes, "Ecosystem services are the benefits received by human society through the transformations of environmental assets into a flow of essential goods and services e.g., clean air, water, and food."¹ In recent decades owing to severe climate change, many of the world's traditional ecosystems have been endangered thereby limiting the supply of required ecosystem services for the wellbeing of human beings in the neighbourhood community. A study published by Forbes in February 2020 has estimated that due to warming ocean waters, ocean acidity, and pollution, about 70% to 90% of all coral reefs will disappear in coming twenty years' time frame. Living Planet Report, 2020 points out that about 1 million species including animals, plants and insects are threatened with extinction. As per the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) statistics, primary forest worldwide has decreased by over 80 million hectares since 1990. A resilient ecosystem is desirable for steady flow of ecosystem services for the livelihood and food requirements of neighbourhood community. Resilience ecosystem means the ability of ecosystem to maintain its equilibrium in the face of impacts or pressures that arise from natural or human-made interactions or events. A resilient system has the capacity to absorb disturbance and essentially retain the same function, structure and feedbacks including livelihood and food security of the neighbourhood community.

Implementing Nature-based solutions, including reforestation and wetland restoration, play a crucial role in maintaining steady flow ecosystem services. These interventions regulate water flow, mitigate erosion, and enhance water quality

¹Costanza R, d'Arge R, De Groot R, Farber S, Grasso M, Hannon B, Limburg K, Nacem S, O'Neill RV, Paruelo J, Raskin RG, Sutton P and Vandenbelt M (1997). 'The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital', Nature 387:253–260.

sustainably supports the resilience of ecosystems and provides essential services for both the environment and society. In this paper, an attempt has been made to highlight the importance of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) as a climate resilient strategy among climate change vulnerable groups in different parts of India.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) including Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and Ecosystem-based Mitigation (EbM) has gained increased public attention for climate resilient livelihood and food security. Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) is a nature-based solution that attributes biodiversity and ecosystem services to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to climate change. United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) advocates for nature-based solutions as integral to adaptation strategies for climate change which should take place at global, national, and local levels.² A part of EbA measures can also be called Ecosystem-based Mitigation (EbM) strategy because some of the adaptation measures like afforestation also contribute to carbon sequestration. So, Nature-based Solutions (NbS) is considered an overarching concept which includes EbA and EbM.

EbA is the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. EbA uses range of opportunities for the sustainable management, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems to provide services that enable people to adapt to the impacts of climate change. It aims to maintain and increase the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems and people in the face of the adverse effects of climate change. Ecosystem-based adaptation is most effective when appropriately integrated into broader adaptation and development strategies (CBD, 2009).³ According to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), "the ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way"

and which aspires to maintain the natural structure and functioning of ecosystems. Drawing on the linkages between ecosystem services, climate change and biodiversity, EbA is recognised for its potential to support poor and rural communities who are more directly dependent on natural resources and ecosystem services in adapting to climate change. The co-benefits of EbA contribute towards a broader set of socio-economic and development goals, including job creation, poverty reduction and sustainable rural development including livelihood and food security.⁴ The concept of EbA is aligned with the Mission LIFE programme of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MOEFCC) to encourage people to lead a lifestyle that is pro-planet.

Climate Change and Ecosystem Services

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, (2003) categorises ecosystem services under four functional groupings as follows.

- Provisioning services: These are the products obtained from ecosystems, such as food, water, fibre, fuel, medicines, and genetic resources.
- Regulating services: These are the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem process, such as the maintenance of air quality, water regulation, climate regulation, pollination, and erosion control.
- Cultural services: These include non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems such as cultural diversity, spiritual and religious values, knowledge and education, inspiration, a sense of place, recreation, and ecotourism.

Supporting services: These are necessary to produce the above ecosystem services categories, they are long time-scale processes soil formation, oxygen production and nutrient cycling.

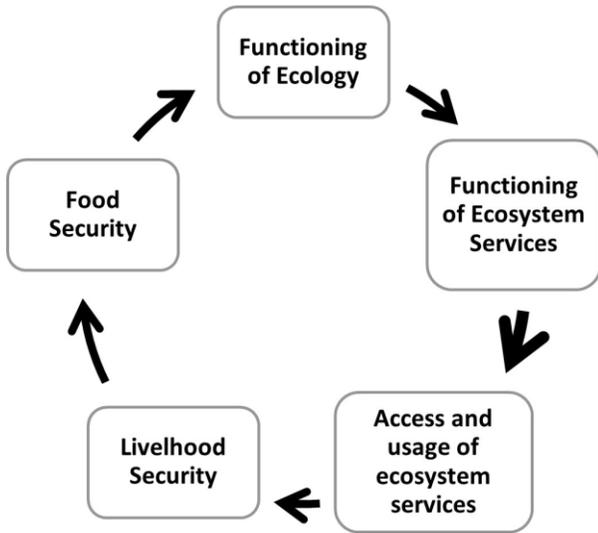
EbA Implementation Mechanism

Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) involves people using biodiversity and ecosystem services to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and promote sustainable development. Like community-based adaptation (CbA) it has people at its centre, and it uses participatory, culturally appropriate ways to address challenges, but there is a stronger emphasis on

² Reid, H. (2016), "Ecosystem-and community-based adaptation: learning from community based natural resource management", *Clim. Dev.*8(1),4-9.

³ CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) (2009), "Connecting biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation: Report of the Second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change", Technical Series No. 41. Secretariat of the CBD, Montreal.

⁴ IPCC, 2014. Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri, and L.A. Meyer (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland.



ecological and natural solutions. World wide there are EbA implementation mechanisms which are mostly implemented through local level participatory planning. Further the geographical boundary of natural resource planning is for a defined ecology and a given ecology is influenced by a defined landscape, so, EbA implementation mechanism is mostly landscape based participatory planning to promote ecology and consequently ecosystem services which further promotes livelihood and food security of local people. Thus, there exists a circulatory relationship between ecology and ecosystems, functioning of ecosystem services, access and usage of ecosystem services, livelihood security and food security.

EbA and Climate Resilient Livelihood and Food Security

Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA) is a strategy that utilizes biodiversity and ecosystem services to help communities adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. Ecosystem wise possible EbA planning is highlighted in the following table. For this purpose, the ecosystem classification is based on Millenium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). MA has classified the ecosystems under 10 broad categories. The polar ecosystem is not applicable to India. So, the ecosystem services under nine ecosystems and possible impacts of climate change on ecosystem wise livelihood patterns are discussed in the following table. Based on secondary data, the possible EbA intervention for climate resilient ecosystem is also indicatively highlighted in the following table. However, with local

level planning, the EbA intervention for attaining ecosystem services from a given ecosystem can be customised.

Concluding Remarks

From the above discussion, it is noticed that the nature of different ecosystems is very much overlapping and there is no such water tight compartment between different ecosystems. Most often a given ecosystem service is obtained from multiple sources. It can be stated that climate change adaptation challenge diverges geographically along with local conditions. The condition of local ecosystems affects their capacity to deliver ecosystem services, and consequently people's vulnerability. Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) measures can help to secure ecosystem services and reduce people's vulnerability in ecosystem contexts across different landscapes, i.e., the typical geographic situation of the defined ecosystem. It is in this background, there is no one size of EbA fits to all geographical situation with identical and differential ecosystems. Thus, for ensuring an effective EbA, there should be ground level participatory planning by involving all types of stakeholders of a given region.



Community-Based Nutrition Management: Public-Private Partnership

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Although India has made tremendous advances in science, medicine, information technology, and many other fields, and has experienced unprecedented economic growth over the past decade, malnutrition remains unacceptably high. Poor nutrition is a major cause of other health problems in the country, including high infant and maternal mortality.

The national costs of malnutrition are very high: a vicious intergenerational cycle of poor health, high death rates, poor quality of life, decreased mental capacity, and reduced worker productivity. Productivity losses are estimated at more than 10 percent of lifetime earnings for individuals and 2-3 percent of gross domestic product for the nation. This means that improvements in nutrition are important for a healthy and productive life as well as for continued economic growth and development.

The data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21 reveals that India should more than ever focus on nutrition. Although there is a slight improvement seen in the trends of India's child nutrition indicators such as stunting, wasting, and underweight among under-5 age groups children, malnutrition parameters remain disheartening. There is an increase in the percentage of severely wasted and overweight children.

Acute Malnutrition is an important public health concern, as it is associated with significant short and long-term morbidity and mortality. Children with severe acute malnutrition require immediate attention along with proper nutritional rehabilitation not only to decrease mortality but also to achieve their full potential after recovery. Traditionally, within India and internationally, severe malnutrition has been treated in institutional (hospital-based) settings. The National protocol was on Facility-based management of severe acute malnutrition allowed these children to be treated at facility (Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre / Malnutrition Treatment Centres) wherein SAM child is stabilized following a strict standardized clinical regime that includes medical treatment. However, facility-based care has lots of limitations as families are not willing to go or stay at the facilities for the stipulated time, limited capacities of the facilities to bear the caseload of all severely acute malnourished children, chances of cross-infection, etc. Again, facility-based treatment at NRCs are only required for a small proportion (15-20%) of children with SAM who have medical complications. Evidence shows that about 80-85 % of children with SAM without medical complications can be treated at the home/community level through community-based management programs for acute malnutrition.



The Protocol for Management for Malnutrition in Children of GoI, released last month will mainstream community-based care for acute malnutrition as a routine part of the government system. This guideline helps to support to prevent and manage acute malnutrition with a specific emphasis on the continuum of care to deliver the best services possible for children and their families. This protocol is calling for more integration of nutrition services into health systems and the strengthening of those health systems. This is a more comprehensive approach to addressing the complex issue of acute malnutrition in children than ever before.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has also launched its new guidelines on the prevention and management of wasting and acute malnutrition in this month. This milestone is a crucial response to the persistent global issue of acute malnutrition, which affects millions of children worldwide.

This is the first WHO guideline focusing on both prevention and management of acute malnutrition and highlights the vital importance of investing in both these aspects to have real impact on reducing the prevalence and negative impacts of acute malnutrition on children and their families around the world.

Key recommendations of the guideline focus on:

- Child-centred approach and of caring for mothers and their infants as an interdependent pair;
- Breastfeeding and access to nutrient-dense home diets are a critical component of both prevention and management; and
- Community health workers can play an important role in providing evidence-based care for children with acute malnutrition.

India is at a historic juncture with respect to development and its position in the world. The country faces critical choices in terms of benefiting from its recent economic growth. We can continue the present course, leaving half of our people under-nourished, in poverty, and suffering - risking the political and economic destabilisation that can result from such a divide. We have to take bold leadership steps to eliminate malnutrition and improve the health and well-being of our mother and child. Together we have the power to come forward in order to ensure that we take the path that will end the “curse” of malnutrition.

How to do it:

Based on the Indian context and significant programming experience, the following ways may improve nutrition security.

1. Expand efforts to engage and empower vulnerable communities, particularly women in these communities, to overcome malnutrition (including through Gram Sabhas (local councils) and self-help groups.
2. Ensure that nutrition-related programs focus on key nutrition outcomes and are reaching the priority target groups of children under two years of age, and women (especially adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers) in order to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and to achieve the desired results.
3. Strengthen the focus on improving nutrition through a leadership and coordination mechanism with clear authority and responsibility at every level.



Food Sovereignty and Resilience Building: India's Approach and Strategies

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Human civilization has graduated from brawn power to brain power. Jharkhand has a considerable rural and tribal population which is malnourished specially with iron deficiency. Spinach is considered to be a major source of natural iron for these population. With the advent of modern agricultural practices and chemical inputs, it has been noticed that there has been a reduction in crop nutrients and soil fertility.

Annam Brahma- We have been hearing this adage since childhood. Food has a huge impact on our character and mindset. But, in today's fast paced humdrum life, its ethos is somewhere lost. We have forgotten that if we poison (use chemical pesticides) our lands, pesticide residues in our food are what we will get. If we provide nutrition, it will give us nutritious food! The problem with today's food production system is that it is being grown with the help of poisons and we are expecting nutrition in our foods. Due to extensive use of chemicals across the decades, the nutrition content in our food has decreased as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Decline of mineral content in some vegetables, 1914-1992

Crop	1914	1948 (average)	1992
Cabbage			
Calcium	248.00 mg	38.75 mg	47.00 mg
Magnesium	66.00 mg	29.60 mg	15.00 mg
Iron	1.50 mg	5.70 mg	0.59 mg
Lettuce			
Calcium	265.50 mg	38.50 mg	19.00 mg
Magnesium	112.00 mg	31.20 mg	9.00 mg
Iron	94.00 mg	26.25 mg	0.50 mg
Spinach			
Calcium	227.30 mg	71.75 mg	99.00 mg
Magnesium	122.00 mg	125.40 mg	79.00 mg
Iron	64.00 mg	80.15 mg	2.70 mg

Source: The Healing Power of Minerals by Paul Bergner, Prima Publishing 1997

As one can observe from these figures, we are experiencing a dramatic loss in our essential and vital nutrients which keep the population healthy. This loss arises from the erosion and mineral loss inherent in year after year of tilling and monoculture. It is imperative that we implement techniques to revitalize our soil and plants and thereby our own health.

With more research with us, it is becoming clearer now that traditional systems of farming and processing were much more nutritive to fulfil our requirements for a healthy life than the latest state-of-the-art systems but now the question is that can we revive them or more importantly do we want to go back? Human civilization has been evolving and more research is being undertaken to understand the various aspects of food and health. After Corona, health and immunity have become the buzzword for people and the young generation has become more health conscious. Today, the need of the hour is to undertake more research on our traditional systems and integrate them with modern scientific evaluations so that their relevance is understood more deeply.

Amrit Krishi is an advanced form of Natural farming where the entire impetus is on formation of nutritive soil known as amrit mitti. It evolved with experiments of Late Shri Sripad Dhabolkar in the 1960s with hundreds of farmers and was followed by his students. Late Shri Deepak Suchde was one such student who carried forward his ideas and conducted much research in his small farm. I was fortunate enough to learn the basics under his guidance. Amrit Krishi is an important milestone for nutrition-based farming which is needed by all in today's world. It has shown that if we use

traditional seeds and understand how a nutritive soil can be formed, the entire nutrition loss in our foods resulting from excess use of agrichemicals can be reversed. We can grow high nutrition crops with the use of indigenous seeds along with amrit jal and amrit mitti. With this technique, the soil fertility improves dramatically which ultimately provides high nutrition crops. This technique has many advantages. Once the amrit mitti is formed, there is no requirement of any fertilizer or pesticides for a minimum period of 10-15 years which practically means it won't be required at all if we are able to learn how to maintain it which is relatively easier than spending thousands of rupees on costly agrochemicals. It is a zero-tillage system which means that once the amrit mitti is formed, ploughing won't be required in our fields. This will save considerable amount of labour for our farmers and money as well. The general experience amongst the scientific community is that if we shift from chemical to organic farming, the fertility declines in the initial few years which is not wrong. Organic farming has its limitations in terms of its integration with nature. Natural farming is what will be sustainable & cost effective for farmers and a source of nutrition in food for the common man. Amrit Krishi has shown that once the amrit mitti is formed, there is no decline in nutrition in crops and the productivity improves from the very first crop.

Hence, the way to go forward is to move towards nutrition sovereignty instead of production sovereignty.



Food Systems and Resilient Building: Caritas India's Experiences

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V.R.

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In India, agriculture is constantly vulnerable, particularly for farmers on marginal land as 60 percent of the country's total cropped area is not irrigated. Crops are also dependent upon the annual monsoon, which contributes 80 percent of the year's total rainfall yet has been particularly erratic over the last few decades. Consequently, food insecurity in rural India is getting more severe by the day, with increasing pressure on land, rapid environmental challenges (e.g., loss of soil fertility, waterlogging, ground and surface water pollution, intensified pests, and diseases), frequent natural calamities, and inequitable distribution of resources, and socioeconomic problems like increased farm input prices and regional disparity. In addition to all these, climate change has added a new dimension to the existing problems by posing a significant threat to the agriculture. India is also identified as one of the highly vulnerable countries to climate change (INCCA, 2010). Agriculture is crucial for ensuring food, nutrition and livelihood securities for India and it engages almost two-third of the workforce in gainful employment. Food production and farm-based livelihoods are sensitive to climate changes such as variability in monsoon rainfall and temperature changes within a season. Resilience building assumes critical significance because most of the country's population relies on farm for their subsistence and livelihoods. Climate change and its variability are likely to aggravate the problem of future food security by putting pressure on agriculture affecting its sustainability.

Small and marginal holding farmers constitute a major chunk of population that Caritas India works with. Caritas India has helped thousands of farmers secure their agriculture-based livelihoods by increasing farm productivity by reducing input costs and making agriculture practices more sustainable and environment-friendly. Agriculture, which was integrated with the Natural Resource Management (NRM) vertical, is the most diversified intervention portfolio of Caritas India. Several interventions were implemented across the country in the sectors of water-conservation, drought-proofing, organic farming, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Integrated Nutrient Management (INM), seed conservation, family farming, crop intensification, etc. Caritas India has chosen to work with small and marginal-holding households because these groups have long been in the clutch of livelihood, food, and nutrition insecurity. The onset of climate change and its allied ramifications have further aggravated their miseries and jeopardized whatever livelihood they managed to cling on to. Market forces have also played a malevolent role by destabilizing micro-economies of villages and rural households. Caritas India, hence, stepped in to help farmers claim control, in whatever small ways they could, on market and free themselves from predatory input markets.

Caritas India believes that decisive, vigorous, and sustaining campaign for Agriculture Sovereignty and Climate Resilience is an imperative because of three prevailing disturbing conditions. First, climate change has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the poor and vulnerable who have been grappling with livelihood and food crisis; second, small farmers who meet over 70% of food needs of the country are themselves starving and finally, even those who get food are being denied their right to healthy and nourishing food. Agriculture sovereignty and livelihood and farm resilience hold key to addressing the widespread livelihood, food, and nutrition insecurity, particularly among the agrarian population of the country. India is home to diverse food cultures and this rich diversity is naturalized by the diversity of country's agroclimatic conditions. Such rich diversity of food cultures calls for the celebration of this rich heritage; at the same time, this unparalleled diversity also makes the ground for greater recognition of subsystems of food systems. For Caritas India, agriculture and food sovereignty is the right of communities to define their agriculture and food systems. Communities have the right to have complete control over all processes relating to production, processing, and distribution of food.

Caritas India respects the integrity of creation and is committed to ensure that agriculture and food production do not violate the ecological integrity of nature. The principal objective of Caritas India strategy of resilient agriculture and democratized food systems is insulating the livelihood and food security of agrarian and farm-dependent communities. The climate resilient agriculture and food strategy of Caritas India amalgamates four thrusts as a coherent endeavor to help agrarian communities gain more control over farming and to secure their lives with greater livelihood, food, and nutrition security. We situate its farm-based interventions in the following four domains:

1. Localizing agriculture and helping farmers recoup control over farming.
2. Building resilience potential of farming, especially of small & marginal farming systems.
3. Improving farm productivity while respecting and restoring nature's equilibrium.
4. Democratizing food systems and restoring dignity to local food systems.

We have taken 8 cluster projects of Caritas India for

measuring the results achieved by these cluster projects in the promotion of sustainable farming system and water conservation. These 8 projects have contributed to the promotion of organic farming in 21353 acres of land of various food crops such as paddy, pulses and vegetables. 32089 acres of land is brought under food crops which was earlier used for cultivating cash crops. 5214 acres of land is brought under millet cultivation. 4050540110 litres of water is conserved through various water conservation measures. 429372 tree saplings of various species were planted in which 334466 trees survived (77% survival of the total trees planted). These plants are able to absorb approximately 10,00,000 kilogram of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere are able to release around 17,00,000 kilogram of oxygen to the atmosphere every year. Various schemes from various government departments were mobilised especially in digging of water conservation measures like ponds and trenches. Ponds and trenches were dug by the community and through linking with MGNREGA and other government schemes. Construction of these ponds and trenches have facilitated in conserving 4.05 billion litres of water which has facilitated in recharging of the groundwater resources in the surrounding areas and hence the improvement in the water potential. This has facilitated also in the soil moisture retention.



Nutrition Resilient Building Approach in Global Program

MS. SNEHA

JHA

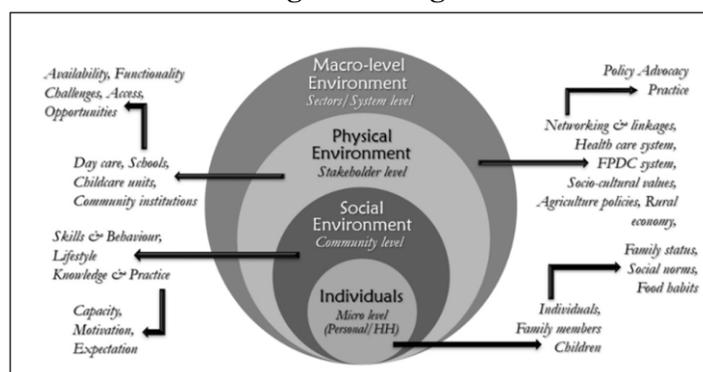
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SDG 2 ('End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture' clearly defines the concept of 'nutrition'. Nutrition security explains the access to adequately nutritious and safe food and its connectedness to other factors like health, care, education, water, sanitation, and hygiene, access to food and resources, women's empowerment, and more.

Caritas India's Global Program aimed at improving the food and nutrition security systems by increasing access of the local communities to nutrition services and government programs. The global program aims to actively promote synergies between all available programs at the local level to ensure that families are able to support their children in the growth and development process. The program adopts a system-strengthening approach in collaboration with local ICDS centers and local government by placing the community control bodies such as village health sanitation and nutrition committees, women's self-help groups, and mothers' groups as change makers.

The program, in close association with and guidance of the women and child development department, trained frontline health workers, and women-led community organizations for better nutrition services and balanced diet promotion. The program has also become an instrument to redesign the ICDS and school infrastructures with hand washing stations, child-friendly toilets, and Nutri- gardens. Traditional food festivals and promotion of indigenous food practices such as millet promotion brought nutrition-centred behavioural changes among the target villages. As a result of the interventions, the number of children and young mothers registering in the ICDS centers increased.

Program Strategies





MACRO-LEVEL: Program provides policy inputs, and technical assistance aimed at enhancing efficiency, targeting, service delivery, and improving access to food.

MESO -LEVEL: The program is working towards supplementing the systems at institutions to address issues. For this, the program facilitates the community to access various government schemes and programs.

MICRO-LEVEL: The Program connects the children and their families to the major state nutrition programs that benefit children and their families. The project promotes targeted communities with community-based nutrition management, behavioral change communication actions, and nutrition-led livelihood measures.



Fostering Local Champions: Building Resilient Health and Food Systems through Community Governance Ownership

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Achieving enduring change within a community necessitates a focus on systemic transformations. Systemic change involves a profound restructuring of the fundamental elements within a system, transcending superficial modifications to address root causes.

Over the past seven years, Caritas India, in collaboration with its partners, has been dedicatedly engaged in combatting chronic hunger and malnutrition within the Korku community across Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. An effective strategy employed by Caritas India involved enhancing food availability in a culturally sensitive manner and breaking down cultural barriers impeding access to nutrition, especially for children.

Initial efforts emphasized effecting transformative changes at the household level. Gradually the need for broader and more sustainable impact was recognized and the program has now expanded its scope to instigate transformative change at the community level. This approach seeks to overhaul the very foundation of the system itself, promising more profound and far-reaching effects compared to incremental adjustments.

Central to this initiative is the development of local champions who play a pivotal role in ensuring the enduring impact of the Sabal program's efforts toward food and nutrition security within the Korku community. These local champions are envisioned as pillars who will continue to sustain and propagate the advancements made, even after the program concludes its active presence within the community.

Sabal actively supported the placement of local champions in governance systems by empowering them and leveraging community support to facilitate their roles and contributions as -

Representatives in local governance system

A notable outcome of the Sabal initiatives is the significant presence of community members within the local panchayat system. Many individuals, previously engaged in various capacities such as members of Sabal collectives, nutrition friends, volunteers, and even staff members of the Sabal program, have transitioned into influential roles within the local governance system. Drawing from their experiences and learnings from Sabal, they have actively contributed to the welfare of their communities and instigated remarkable changes.

Motivated and supported by their communities, these individuals took the initiative to contest in the Panchayat elections. Through the overwhelming support they received, they emerged victorious and now hold key positions within the local governance structure. Currently, eight former Sabal participants are serving as village heads (Sarpanch) and members of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI).

The advantage of having these Sabal representatives within the governance framework lies in their ability to apply the knowledge acquired during their involvement with the program. Furthermore, these representatives are dedicated to ensuring an inclusive decision-making process by involving a diverse array of community members, including those from marginalized groups. This approach is fundamental in shaping policies and programs related to food and nutrition security, ensuring they address the comprehensive needs of the entire community.



Representatives in local grassroots institutions viz. Health and Nutrition

Ensuring food and nutrition security within the Korku community necessitates a strategic focus on bolstering local grassroots health and nutrition delivery systems. Sabal has dedicated substantial efforts to fortify the capacities of Anganwadi and ASHA workers, fostering robust connections with the community. Joint household visits and comprehensive health assessments for children and women stand as key initiatives by Sabal to cultivate stronger ties between institutional workers and the community.

One persistent challenge has been establishing a

profound emotional bond, especially considering that many Anganwadi and ASHA workers assigned to villages were not native to those areas. This geographical divide often posed obstacles in delivering timely responses during emergencies, resulting in delayed community support.

To address this issue, Sabal took proactive steps by encouraging the selection of qualified community members from within the villages for roles as Anganwadi and ASHA workers. Over the past seven years, Sabal has facilitated the selection of 8 Anganwadi Workers and 14 ASHA Workers from eligible community members. These individuals were drawn from Sabal women and adolescent girls' collectives, volunteers, nutrition advocates, or program staff.

The inclusion of these community members in local grassroots institutions has significantly improved system functionality. It has ensured efficient delivery of entitled health and nutrition benefits to the community, strengthened counselling abilities, increased referrals, and brought transparency to health profiling. Their representation has played a crucial role in adopting a more effective and empathetic approach to address the community's needs.



Sabal Aarogya Mitras (Traditional Healers & Priests)

In the Korku tribes, traditional healers and priests wield significant influence. Their position is deeply respected, and the community places immense trust in them, often more than in modern doctors.

During emergencies, the immediate instinct of the tribal members is to seek the aid of these traditional healers for illnesses affecting their loved ones. Transitioning their belief system from traditional practices to modern healthcare is a challenging prospect.

Caritas India, through its Sabal programme, aimed to convert these traditional healers and priests into Aarogya Mitras to combat severe chronic malnutrition prevalent in the region. The response has been promising, with an increasing number of individuals from the Korku tribes being directed towards government healthcare centers.

Caritas India, in collaboration with the Department of Health, has taken the proactive step of harnessing the influence wielded by these influential figures to bridge the gap between traditional healing practices and modern healthcare services. As part of this collaborative effort, the Department of Health has duly recognized the contributions of these traditional healers and has initiated regular capacity-building programs and interactive sessions. Additionally, they have introduced referral incentives for these healers to encourage the referral of cases concerning malnutrition and anemia. The Sabal Aarogya Mitras now act as the vital link between the Health Department and the community, holding formal recognition for their role.

More than 178 Arogya Mitras, previously perceived by the District Administration as impeding community access to the healthcare system, are now part of the governance system and actively assisting in community awareness efforts and bolstering referrals.



Sabal fishing group combatting malnutrition in their community

A core focus in the battle against childhood malnutrition has been ensuring adequate protein intake. Sabal took proactive measures by promoting poultry and fishing within the Korku community, ensuring families met their protein needs and effectively tackled child malnutrition.

A collective group of farmers from Ghota village of Dharni block, Amravati, Maharashtra initiated collective fish farming in the village community pond. With guidance from the Sabal team, 16 community members formally united, electing representatives and naming themselves the "Gram Parivartan Samuh." They sought permission from the Panchayat office for collective rights over the community pond, granted on 25th January 2020 for a one-year lease.

Sabal initially supported the collective by providing necessary equipment for establishing the fish farm. An agreement was made that the collective would supply fish, free of cost, to families with malnourished children in neighboring villages embraced by all members.

Within a mere six months, the collective started selling their yield in local markets at agreed-upon prices. Not only did this venture generate a sustainable income for the group, but it also facilitated regular fish supplies to families with malnourished children.

The Gram Parivartan Fishing Collective of Sabal has since maintained its initiative at the same community pond, reaping profits from fishing initiatives while providing free fish supplies to support children in their community and nearby villages. Today, Ghota and its neighboring areas stand liberated from severe acute malnutrition cases, with no children found in critical conditions due to this impactful initiative.



Building Agricultural Resilience: Smallholder Farmers in Northeast India, Supported by Caritas India's FARM Cluster Project

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SEN

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Caritas India*



The Facilitating Agricultural Resilient Measures (FARM) Northeast (NE) initiative has been on a dedicated mission to empower smallholder farmer families in the Northeast Region (NER) of India. At its core, the FARM initiative revolves around the theme of "Climate Adaptive Agriculture and Food Sovereignty." Caritas India, drawing upon its extensive experience in diverse regions across the country, has emerged as a leading exemplar within the Northeast region. Collaborating with Misereor, Caritas India spearheaded the initiation of the People Led Action (PLA) philosophy in India. This empowerment approach, termed "animation," has been embraced to empower individuals to architect their transformative development, fostering the development of a resilient society.

The FARM program signifies a decade-long commitment to the ongoing progression of an initiative across the North East Region (NER) of India. Partner organizations, actively involved in implementation, have played a pivotal role in benefiting smallholder farmer families. The impact of the climate crisis has posed significant challenges for smallholders, prompting the FARM program to focus on building resilience through various smallholder-led thematic interventions tailored to the context of the region.

The ongoing phase of the FARM project, executed by 16 partner organizations across 25 districts, covers 17,775 smallholder farmer families, representing a noteworthy journey of self-betterment. The People Led Action concept's progressive evolution empowers individuals to take control of their transformative development, marking a significant stride toward building a resilient society. FARM has been actively working with diverse ethnic communities in NER, employing a community-led intervention approach. By gaining the confidence of smallholder farmers and understanding their needs, FARM has designed and implemented interventions that uplift conventional agricultural practices. Working closely with diverse ethnic communities in the NER, FARM has gained popularity by instilling trust among smallholder farmers. Through a community-led intervention strategy, FARM understands the unique needs of these farmers, implementing interventions that uplift traditional agricultural practices. From upscaling kitchen gardens to blending science with traditional farming methods, the program supports smallholders in adapting to a changing climate while maintaining the integrity of their traditional systems.

Caritas India, through FARM interventions, has successfully integrated traditional farming methods with scientific approaches. Starting with the upscaling of kitchen gardens, FARM supported smallholder families in increasing their agricultural productivity. Acknowledging and respecting traditional means of farming, this blend of science and tradition enabled smallholders to overcome challenges posed by climate change. FARM continues to support ethnic communities in enhancing production, reaching markets, and achieving sustainable and resilient livelihoods.

Conservation of nature and natural resources has always been inherent in the DNA of ethnic communities in the region. FARM has played a pivotal role in triggering behavioral changes among these communities, encouraging them to actively contribute to environmental conservation. Plantation drives, conducted in consultation with communities, have not only supported environmental causes but also triggered an overall behavioral change toward responsible and sustainable practices.

The diverse array of thematic interventions introduced by FARM caters to the specific needs and circumstances of smallholder farmers, recognizing their vital role in the region's food security and livelihoods. Notably, millets along with the other major crops like paddy have been highlighted for their exceptional nutritional value and resilience in challenging environmental conditions. This emphasis reflects FARM's commitment to sustainable farming practices and supports crop diversification, reducing vulnerability to external shocks and climate change.

Anticipation surrounding the continuation of FARM is grounded in the belief that sustained efforts and investments in agricultural interventions will usher in a new era of sustainable development and prosperity for smallholder farmers in Northeast India. The long-term impact of these interventions is poised to create economic stability, enhance food security, and empower farmers with valuable knowledge and resources.

Furthermore, the project's commitment to sustainable practices aligns with the region's unique environmental challenges, positioning it as a model for responsible agricultural development. As these efforts continue to unfold, positive outcomes are anticipated to ripple across communities, strengthening the agricultural backbone of the region and paving the way for a more prosperous and self-sufficient future for smallholder farmers in Northeast India.

Caritas India's commitment, in collaboration with Misereor, has not only empowered smallholder farmer families but has also pioneered the People Led Action philosophy, helping resilience and sustainability. As the FARM programme continues its journey, the anticipation is optimistic, rooted in the belief that sustained efforts will lead to a prosperous and self-sufficient future for smallholder farmers in Northeast India. The programme's commitment to sustainable practices positions it as a model for responsible agricultural development, offering a beacon of hope amid the unique environmental challenges of the region. The positive outcomes unfolding is expected to resonate across communities, fortifying the agricultural backbone and paving the way for enduring prosperity in the Northeast.

#We4Resilience

TECHNICAL
SESSION 4

RESILIENCE BUILDING: COLLABORATION FOR IMPACT – THE CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT





Resilience Building: Collaboration for Impact – The Civil Society Engagement

**MR. VIKRANT
MAHAJAN**

*CEO,
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In today's dynamic world, the resilience of communities relies significantly on the collective efforts of multiple stakeholders, particularly the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). CSOs serve as crucial pillars in fortifying communities, employing diverse strategies to foster resilience and effect meaningful change. CSOs stand out for their ability to innovate, often developing new models and pilot projects that, when successful, can be adopted and scaled up by governments and larger institutions. Their strength lies in the intimate understanding they possess of grassroots issues, enabling the creation and implementation of strategies tailored to the specific needs of communities. Through these innovative approaches, CSOs effectively address core challenges faced by local populations.



Collaboration at the core amplifies the impact, particularly in addressing specific local issues, enabling more comprehensive and effective responses. Operating across sectors, such as education WASH, healthcare, Food and Nutrition, CSOs leverage the expertise to advocate for causes that align with the holistic strengths aligning with the aim and objectives of the SDG and other global priorities including SFDRR and Paris Agreement. The role extends beyond service provision, ensuring accountability and championing critical issues. By utilizing the specialized knowledge, CSOs aim to create sustainable, positive change.



Despite the impactful work, challenges persist, such as sustaining the organizations, securing funding, and staying updated with evolving needs. Collaboration stands as a key solution to address these challenges. By strengthening multi sector- multi stakeholder partnerships, learning from each other, and adopting more effective approaches, humanitarian sector as a whole can overcome hurdles and enhance the collective impact.

For CSOs in the humanitarian and development sector, collaboration is the cornerstone. Through our collaborative efforts, sharing of successful practices, and a unified approach to challenges, we can bolster our capacity to make a substantial and lasting difference in the communities we serve. It's about standing together, learning from each other, and growing stronger as a force dedicated to building resilient and empowered societies.

The way forward for civil society organizations in building resilience requires a strategic and collaborative approach. Strengthening sectoral, technical and local capacities is of paramount importance and requires comprehensive initiatives. CSOs need to conduct thorough research, foster cross-sector partnerships and advocate for policies that prioritize resilience. Technical capacity development should include training programs, technology integration and knowledge-sharing platforms. Strengthening local capacity includes empowering communities through participatory planning and training at grassroots level. A collaborative framework that emphasizes network building, resource mobilization, and robust monitoring and evaluation is critical for sustainable impact. This holistic roadmap lays out a pathway for civil society organizations to work together to build resilience and promote adaptation strategies for a more sustainable future.



Civil Society Learning- Possibilities for Collaborative Action

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*Head of Programs
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The engagement of Civil Society Organizations and their contribution in the development sector has over the years emulsified the socio-political and economic fabric of the country. Even though their engagement is challenged due to the prima facie role of the state for mainstream development, this ecosystem of civil societies has augmented and has constantly kept people as the core of development.

Having worked in challenging contexts, such as conflicts, environs of political instability, or natural calamities, the civil society organizations have contributed extensively, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in society in a timely and effective manner. They have an invaluable role to play in facilitating citizen participation and social accountability mechanisms to support the building and rebuilding of social cohesion.

There is an underlying layer of complex ecosystem that cringes the civil society space, with the introduction of new amendments and laws and regulations that deteriorate the civil society and state relations.

The civil society nexus brings a vast forum of sectoral and thematic expertise, skills, knowledge, innovations, strategies that contribute indirectly towards nation building. Whatsoever be the strength of the civil society, be it international or national, there is common understanding of aiding support and access to every individual that is vulnerable. Unfortunately, civil society organisations have been narrowed down from humanitarian actors to service deliverers. One of the questions to consider is the capacity of the local organizations to manoeuvre.

In the current day complexity of life, where in the geopolitical ecosystem is unpredictable, the civil society organizations have a very strong vital role to play to harness the strength of this community for creating scope and opportunity with the state machinery for larger impact. The community of civil societies have a plethora of learnings and experiences that are not only diversified but also strategic for better engagement. Each of the humanitarian organizations can harness and strengthen on the following attributes

Diversified community reach: Civil society in India epitomises its social capital - a diverse group and sector. This includes vulnerable sections such as the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, indigenous groups, women and children, people with disabilities, older people, and minority groups based on religion, class, gender, and sexual identity. Civil society also represents sectors based on their demography and livelihoods (i) agricultural farmers and labourers (ii) unorganized urban and rural



settlers; and iii) vulnerable sector of children, women and people with disability. As a conglomeration, There is a need for the civil society organizations to harness this community base and engage in a multisector approach with an aim to contribute to the groups' social, economic, and political empowerment. The civil society organizations can promote community led development initiatives that will have a greater impact on the well being of the larger population

Dialogue and working with the state machinery: In addition to representing different sectors, our engagement with the government through dialogue and liasoning, is another attribute to be realized. Having persistent dialogue can help achieve the goal of collaboration, resistance, community participation or other objectives. The focus engagement are diverse, ranging from environmental protection, human rights, resettlement, and rehabilitation, to poverty eradication, gender equality, access to education, and social inclusion. As a larger forum, there is a need to work closely with the government and create a scope as an advisory group for influencing decision making initiatives.

Drafting policy action plans and legislation: There

is a need for building effective and long term narratives in dialogue with the government to support policy action plans and legislation. Through representative task force groups, civil society has formally contributed to the drafting of legislation, including the Right to Food Act and Right to Information Act. With such mechanisms, organizations now also have a defined priority of working closely with policy makers to enable structural and scalable changes.

Research and evidence: With the growth of research and evidence in the policy landscape within the country, civil society plays a significant role. The civil societies should come together to gather relevant data from the grassroots, plan comprehensive and cluster based programs rooted in evidences. Furthermore, there is a need to establish think tanks and advisory groups with representation and mandate of research-driven role for policy discourse to contribute to such change.

Innovation: The civil society organizations have the potential to develop and scale innovative models of change with a unique strength to pilot models, share good practices, and replicate through example. Innovation may also result from new relationships with companies, or more informal groups, movements and

organisations that are often left out of the picture. Experimentation with new ways of working will be encouraged in this situation, so that lessons can be learned from them.

Engagement of local organizations

More control and ownership for local civil society organisations is a major step towards establishing relationships on an equal footing and promoting the role of civil society. It increases their legitimacy and thus their ability to play a more independent role in their specific context. More ownership and control by local organisations also ensure that programmes can be embedded more effectively and more sustainably in the local context



Mutual capacity enhancement

Capacity strengthening is a learning process in which every partner contributes expertise and knowledge and develops them further. The civil societies should aim towards improving cooperation, while at the same time strengthening the consortium in areas such as lobbying and advocacy and improving practical capacities and skills in, for instance, financial and other management.

When the global world is talking of globalization and grand bargain, the role of the civil society becomes even more crucial. Hence following are some of the key takeaways

- Civil societies need to come together as a community under a larger framework, in order to create a resource repository for liaoning with governments at the national and regional levels. This might include identification of issues, sharing lessons learned, facilitating discussions between

relevant actors, and being a liaison between policy circles and field realities.

- Building a common platform of knowledge exchange and learnings for creating a cohesive approach towards development and humanitarian interventions.
- To diversify our scope of engagement and initiate collaborations and engagement with universities, academia and research organization for evidence generation and sharing
- As an umbrella or parent body, the civil society networks should rebuild a positive narrative for the state showcasing the potential scope and reach of adding strategic value for policy formulation, operational plans, strategic engagement and partnership strengthening.
- The civil society institutions should also centre around sectoral themes and geographical areas in order to synergise the inputs, resources and its own support capacities
- There is an imperative need for standardization and mainstreaming to further supplement the initiatives of the government in providing development support especially humanitarian assistance to people in distress, especially in areas where government outreach is limited.



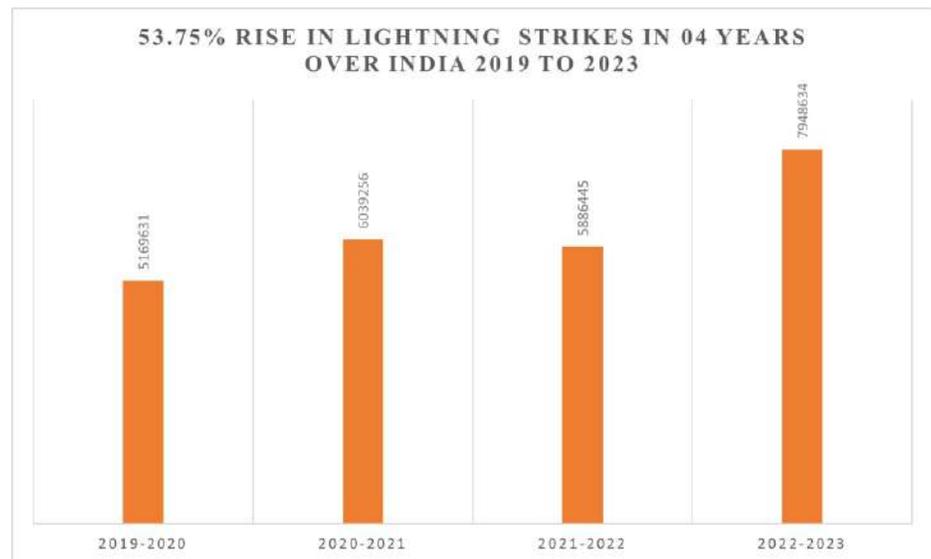
Lightning Resilience Framework for Community

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Lightning has emerged as challenging hazard. Lack of education and awareness among community at rural grass root level has been the main cause and Socio-economic vulnerability. Basic knowledge about lightning, its risks, how to utilise available early warning, timing of forecast, mitigation measures like availability of lightning safe shelters and lightning protection rods have been found wanting.

In recent times, lightning and thunderstorms have registered phenomenal rise globally in its intensity, frequency and dimensions. As per status of Climate Report 2022 by World Meteorological Organisation, the losses due to thunderstorms and lightning contributes 48% of total losses due to natural hazards. India too has registered more than 53.75 % rise in lightning during 2019 to 2023 as shown below. This change varies among states. However, mortality of human has remained average more than 2800, more so in rural areas and is matter of grave concern.



Source: Annual Lightning Report 2022-2023 by IMD and CROPC

India with its vast tropical expanse, exhibits diverse geographical features, physiography, geomorphology, and climatic conditions. The combined impact of these factors plays a crucial role in determining the spatial and temporal distribution of lightning occurrences in the country. Notably, the most prevalent seasons for lightning are the Nor-wester, pre-monsoon, and monsoon periods, with some regions

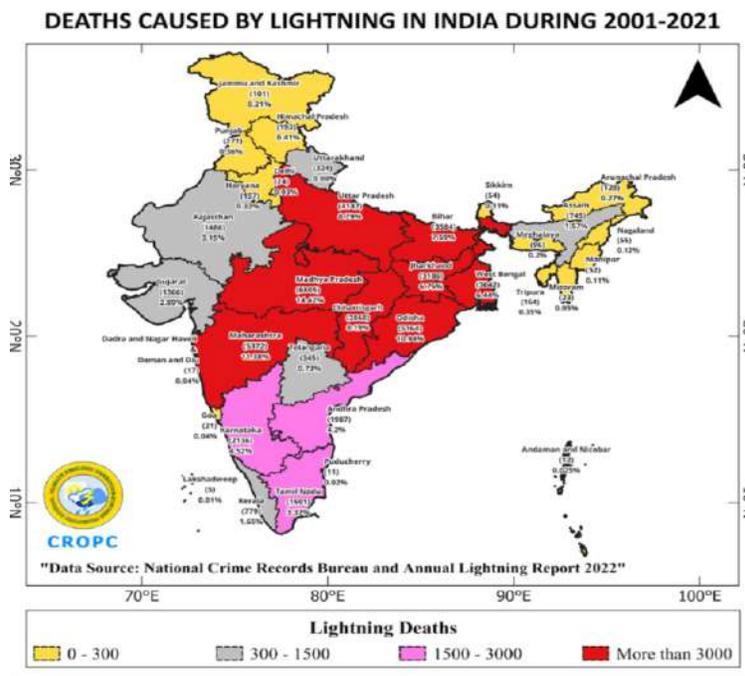
experiencing as high as 40-45 lightning flashes per square kilometre per year.

Efforts to reduce Lightning Deaths

Efforts by national and state-level agencies have been made to address this issue, including early warning systems and awareness campaigns. Lightning Resilient India Campaign by CROPC-IMD-NDMA has been torch bearer in leading the knowledge and operational showcasing of best practices in India in many states like Odisha, Bihar, Bengal, Jharkhand, North East and Andhra Pradesh etc. NDMA has proactively dealt by issuing guidelines, consultations and public awareness campaigns with SDMAs and at National Level. India Meteorological Department (IMD) issues lightning

forecasts since 2019, extending these efforts to the last mile, along with raising awareness and implementing preventive measures. Civil Society Organisations like CARITAS India, World Vision India and state IAGs played significant role. While some states like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Jharkhand have successfully reduced lightning-related deaths, the mortality rate remains high in central Indian states such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Maharashtra, and it is on the rise. The victims of lightning incidents are predominantly farmers, tribal communities, cattle graziers, laborers, children, and individuals working in fields and open conditions. Map 1 below showing state wise human mortality due to lightning from year 2001

Map 1: State wise distribution of deaths due to lightning during period 2001 to 2021



As per the NCRB report (2021), out of 2,280 deaths, 77% (2,218) of men died, and 23% (681) of women were killed due to lightning. Most of the affected people reside in rural areas. They are majorly engaged with work which requires them to work in open areas or fields, such as farmers, fishermen, cattle grazers, labourers, construction workers, horticulturists and the tribal population living in remote areas. As per the Annual lightning Report 2021-2022, of the 96% casualty in rural areas, 75% of deaths are of farmers, primarily men.

It is paradoxical to state that the lightning deaths are more in areas central Indian states and eastern states where maximum early warning sensors are deployed and least in areas devoid of early warning sensors like North East. Gap between EW of IMD and corresponding action by SDMA/DDMAs are main reason for this. This calls for proper re-evaluation of EW systems in place.

Insufficient awareness about lightning and its safety measures in India has led to increased loss of life and

property damage due to frequent lightning strikes, particularly in the northern and eastern regions. To address this issue, a comprehensive national lightning program is needed. This program would focus on raising community awareness, improving understanding of lightning activity, developing early warning systems, promoting education, and offering guidance on risk mitigation. By implementing such a program, India can reduce lightning-related fatalities, property damage, and disruptions, ultimately enhancing safety and resilience in the face of this hazard.

India's local and Global experiences show changing dynamics of lightning and hence research and development has been the essence of achieving lightning resilience.

It is pertinent to note that the successful practices of lightning risk management needs to be analysed and critically reviewed. These aspects are :-

1. Citizen Science approach
2. Early warning and its efficacy
3. Community awareness
4. Mitigation practices at grass root level and its efficacy
5. Local traditional knowledge
6. Myths
7. Gap Areas

It is intended to bring out the Resilience framework on lightning specially at grass root level and develop coordination and communication tool.

Way Forward

Lightning is 100% avoidable death. There are adequate and affordable scientific solutions available. They need to be suitably designed a local citizen science and community oriented practical actionable modules and programme. We have had many such success and challenging stories. These successful models and achievements shall form part of overall DRR strategies on lightning among CSOs and its supporting organisation with community at its focal point.



Humanitarian Leadership, Localization, and Collaborative Approaches

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In the face of escalating climatic shocks, prolonged conflicts, and the global spread of infectious diseases/ viruses which the world witnessed recently during the 3 waves of Covid-19, humanitarian needs have reached unprecedented levels. The humanitarian system, despite grappling with evolving complexities, remains steadfast in its commitment to save and transform lives. As the success of a humanitarian organization hinges on its ability to navigate these challenges through resilience and innovation, Caritas India understands the pivotal role of strong leadership in ensuring the effectiveness of humanitarian operations. Adopting innovative leadership and localization approaches, it aims to enhance capacities to anticipate, respond, and address the multifaceted challenges of humanitarian needs. Guided by its Standard Operating Procedure, Caritas India places a significant emphasis on achieving these through a broader cooperation to solve local humanitarian issues through formation of a comprehensive whole-of-system response.

Humanitarian leadership being a linchpin in the efficacy of humanitarian operations, it encompasses the ability to inspire and guide teams, make informed decisions in the face of uncertainty, and adapt strategies to dynamic and often volatile environments. Effective leaders in the humanitarian sector must possess qualities of empathy, strategic thinking, and a commitment to ethical principles. Caritas India exemplifies such leadership by prioritizing the development of a coordinated and adaptive leadership approach. These humanitarian leaders in return have fostered a culture of collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning within their organizations. This helps in embracing a transparent and inclusive decision-making process ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, contributing to more comprehensive and effective solutions.

Involvement of local actors in the design, implementation, and management of humanitarian responses has been one of the key initiatives taken by Caritas to foster localization and leadership. With its commitment to achieve broader cooperation, Localization not only enhances the relevance and effectiveness of interventions but also promotes community ownership and resilience. To implement localization successfully, organizations should prioritize building the capacity of local actors, including Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and community leaders. This has been undertaken at Caritas India through investing in training, technology, and infrastructure to empower local communities to take a leading role in disaster response and recovery. Moreover, this has ensured incorporation of local knowledge and cultural context into program design making interventions contextually appropriate and sustainable.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a vital role in providing humanitarian assistance, ensuring representation, and being accountable to affected populations. Caritas India recognizes the importance of engaging community workers, volunteers, and leaders, especially those emerging from the affected communities. Women's leadership, including women leaders and representatives of women-led organizations, is a focal point in Caritas India's inclusive response strategy. This emphasis ensures that specialized services for women and girls are integrated into the broader humanitarian efforts.

Community-based organizations, along with village, camp, or community leaders, are regarded as key stakeholders in the coordination of humanitarian responses. In many instances, these local leaders are already engaged in coordination with government entities or other actors, making them indispensable in the effective management of humanitarian initiatives within their communities. Acknowledging that communities themselves may be the primary responders in certain situations, Caritas India actively supports and collaborates with these local structures.

Faith leaders and faith-based organizations have also been increasingly recognized for their vital role in humanitarian efforts. International faith-based networks or confederations have demonstrated a commitment to localization, working extensively with local CSOs. Caritas India, aligning with this trend, acknowledges the value of faith-based organizations.

Integral to effective humanitarian action, particularly in the face of escalating global challenges, Caritas India fosters greater cooperation and complementarity among diverse actors, aligning efforts with Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Collaborative approaches extend beyond organizational boundaries to include partnerships with governmental bodies, international organizations, and local stakeholders. To ensure that humanitarian leadership, localization, and collaborative approaches align with global frameworks, organizations must actively engage with international standards and best practices.

While progress has been made in policy and guidance to ensure connectivity between humanitarian, development, and peace frameworks, acute conflict situations pose unique challenges. The principles of neutrality,

independence, and impartiality is crucial in safeguarding access to people in need. Collaboration in such contexts must be carefully navigated to avoid undermining adherence to humanitarian principles and to mitigate risks for affected populations and humanitarian workers.

At the same time sustainability in humanitarian leadership and localization stands crucial for ensuring a lasting impact in the communities served. This involves not only addressing immediate needs but also building the capacity of local actors to respond independently to future challenges. Caritas India has invested in long-term partnerships with local entities, transferring skills and knowledge that empower communities to be self-reliant.

As sustainable leadership requires an ongoing commitment to professional development, mentorship programs, and the cultivation of a leadership pipeline. Caritas India's emphasis on evidence-based learning is a valuable strategy for continuous improvement and adaptability. Regular evaluations of leadership effectiveness and the impact of localized interventions contribute to a culture of accountability and innovation.

Caritas India's approach to humanitarian leadership, localization, and collaborative efforts stands as a beacon of innovation in the ever-evolving landscape of global challenges. By embracing a comprehensive, community-centric, and inclusive strategy, Caritas India is not only addressing immediate humanitarian needs but also contributing to the broader goals of sustainable development, disaster risk reduction, and peacebuilding. As the organization continues to learn, adapt, and collaborate, its impact on transforming lives in the face of complex crises remains significant and commendable.

In conclusion, humanitarian leadership, localization, and collaborative approaches are integral components of effective humanitarian action. Caritas India provides a compelling model, showcasing how these strategies can be implemented, sustained, and aligned with global approaches. By prioritizing inclusive leadership, empowering local actors, and fostering collaboration, organizations can enhance their capacity to address complex challenges and contribute to sustainable development goals.

(Compiled by: Mr. Anjan Bag and Ms. Aditi Kumari, Caritas India)



Role of Civil Society in Addressing Nutrition and Food Security Challenges

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MAMTA Health Institute for Mother and Child (MAMTA-HIMC) is a leading National-level not-for-profit institution. In the last 30 years, MAMTA has been dedicated to improving the health and well-being of mothers, newborns, children, and adolescents a life cycle approach in resource-poor settings through our program management, training, advocacy, and research across India.

In the complex web of global challenges, nutrition, and food security stand out as fundamental pillars for human well-being. India faces several food and nutrition security challenges. Despite progress, Malnutrition remains a significant concern. Both undernutrition (lack of essential nutrients) and overnutrition (consumption of unhealthy, high-calorie foods) are prevalent issues. Despite substantial progress in various sectors, millions worldwide still face harsh, hidden hunger. According to the Global Hunger Index report (2023), India ranked 111 out of 125 countries with a severe hunger situation, one of the major causes of Malnutrition. Changing weather patterns and environmental conditions such as unpredictable rainfall, droughts, floods, and extreme weather events can impact agricultural productivity and the nutritional quality of the produce.

Addressing the intricate challenges of nutrition and food security in India necessitates a comprehensive strategy that engages diverse stakeholders and incorporates various interventions. To enhance agricultural resilience, promote sustainable farming practices, and invest in research for climate-resilience crops like millets. Diversifying crop production. ensures a more balanced diet and can contribute to overall food security. Nutrition education programs, primarily targeted at children and mothers, vulnerable sections of society, play a vital role in raising awareness about the significance of a balanced diet and adequate nutrition.

In the pursuit of sustainable solutions, the role of civil society emerges as a critical force in bridging gaps through innovation. Civil societies play a pivotal role in raising awareness about the root causes of nutrition and food security challenges by emphasizing community engagement and empowerment. By involving local communities in designing and implementing interventions at the grassroots level, civil society organizations create sustainable solutions that resonate with the specific needs and cultural contexts of the affected populations.

Empowering communities involves providing education on sustainable agricultural practices, promoting dietary diversity, encouraging the production and consumption of millets, facilitating access to resources and health services, and spreading awareness

about health practices like exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding, etc. Through initiatives like community gardens, farmer cooperatives, and vocational training, civil society can foster a sense of ownership and resilience, enabling communities to break free from the cycle of food and nutrition insecurity. Collaboration is vital in tackling the complexities of nutrition and food security.

Civil society acts as a bridge, fostering partnerships between various stakeholders, including governments, businesses, academia, and international organizations. By leveraging diverse expertise and resources, these collaborations enhance the impact and scalability of interventions.

Mamta has been contributing to addressing the challenges of nutrition and food security across the age groups.

Focussing on preventing malnutrition at an early stage in early childhood years, MAMTA has implemented one project to assess the impact of millet-based supplementation on mild malnutrition in 3-5-year-old children of Maharashtra. This program has focussed on three pillars- early identification of malnutrition, millet-based nutritional supplementation, and focused nutrition education intervention for parents/caregivers of identified children. The primary goal is to address malnutrition at the initial stage only before the severe stages set in.

Adolescent health and nutrition are important areas of focus for MAMTA because a healthy adolescence sets

the stage for a healthy adulthood. Several projects were implemented under this umbrella to improve the nutritional status of malnourished school-age children by adding ready-to-eat nutrition mix supplementary nutrition to their diet and providing nutrition education sessions. The most common cause of wasting worldwide in the 21st century is tuberculosis. Malnutrition can produce secondary immunodeficiency, making the host more susceptible to infection. Tuberculosis reduces appetite, malabsorption of nutrients and micronutrients, and metabolism, causing wasting. Protein-energy and micronutrient deficiency raise TB risk. Malnourished tuberculosis patients show slower recovery and greater fatality rates. MAMTA is also contributing to nutritional care and support for patients with tuberculosis to address the dual burden of tuberculosis and malnourishment in 3 States of India. Nutrition care and support recommendations include scaling up and strengthening nutrition care infrastructure, coordinating public health services and investing in capacity-building and training healthcare workers in evidence-based nutrition assessment and counselling.

In the grand tapestry of addressing nutrition and food security challenges, civil society emerges as a vibrant thread that weaves together advocacy, community engagement, implementation, collaboration, and accountability. As we navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world, recognizing and supporting the pivotal role of civil society becomes a strategic imperative and a moral obligation in pursuing a hunger-free and nutritionally secured global future.



Enhancing Resilience Against Climate Change Disaster Risks for Disadvantaged Communities of Sundarbans

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The Sundarbans, a sprawling mangrove ecosystem cradled at the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers in the Bay of Bengal, is more than just a geographic entity; it's a symbol of the delicate dance between nature's grandeur and human existence. Recognized as the largest mangrove reserve in Asia, the Sundarbans holds a special place as one of the world's most vital repositories of biodiversity. This significance has earned it the esteemed status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. However, beneath the lush greenery and winding waterways lies a story of vulnerability and resilience, starkly illustrated by the 2020 assessment under the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, designating the Indian Sundarbans as endangered.

The Sundarbans, with its intricate web of waterlogged islands and tangled mangrove forests, is not merely a geographical entity; it is a living, breathing testament to the coexistence of diverse ecosystems. Its significance transcends borders, making it the largest mangrove reserve in Asia and a sanctuary for a myriad of species. The UNESCO World Heritage Site status bestowed upon the Sundarbans is a global recognition of its ecological importance, emphasizing the need for its preservation.

The IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, however, sounds a somber note. In 2020, the assessment categorically labeled the Indian Sundarbans as endangered. This classification serves as a stark reminder that even the most enchanting natural wonders are not impervious to the far-reaching impacts of climate change. The endangered status is a call to action, prompting a closer look at the factors that threaten this delicate equilibrium.

Delving into the heart of the Sundarbans reveals a tapestry of life that is both vibrant and delicate. The biodiversity of this region is unparalleled, making it a haven for a diverse array of flora and fauna. As the largest mangrove reserve in Asia, the Sundarbans plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. The confluence of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers forms a unique ecosystem, further enriching the biodiversity of the region.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site declaration is a recognition of the Sundarbans' global importance and a commitment to its conservation. This designation implies not only prestige but also an obligation to safeguard the delicate ecosystems within its borders. However, this distinction also serves as a poignant reminder of the challenges the Sundarbans face. The very features that make it an ecological treasure—its intricate mangrove ecosystem and the convergence of major rivers—also render it vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The Sundarbans, while resilient, bear the scars of both natural and human-induced threats. Destructive cyclones have etched their mark on this landscape, leaving behind tales of devastation. Cyclone Sidr (2007), Phailin (2013), Hudhud (2014), and Bulbul (2019) stand as historical benchmarks of the region's vulnerability to extreme weather events. However, the narrative reaches a crescendo with Cyclone Aila in 2009, a catastrophic event that brought the Sundarbans to its knees.

The aftermath of Cyclone Aila was felt not just in the physical landscape but in the very fabric of the communities that call the Sundarbans home. Massive casualties, upward of 100,000 affected individuals, and a landscape transformed by the fury of nature painted a grim picture. This cyclone, like the others before it, highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive disaster preparedness and resilience-building measures.

In the face of these challenges, the Sundarbans has become a crucible of resilience. The inhabitants, bound by a deep connection to their land, defy the odds by refusing to abandon their homes despite short-term and permanent migrations.

The socio-economic conditions of the Sundarbans population paint a picture of resilience amid adversity. Traditional livelihoods, deeply intertwined with the natural bounty of the region, face continuous disruption from climate disasters. Cyclones, like Aila in 2009, not only jeopardize human lives but also impact the intricate balance of livelihoods, triggering migration patterns and causing habitat loss for the wildlife inhabiting the mangroves and increasing the salinity of the soil in areas to such extent that the land may be sterile for many more years. Moreover due to collection of silt in the delta region there is a substantial increase in the height of the sea side by side the Sundarbans itself is subsiding.

In response to these challenges, a noteworthy development has been the formation of self-help groups, predominantly led by women. These groups serve dual purposes — income generation and mutual support. In a region where the unpredictability of climate events can shatter livelihoods, these groups provide a safety net.

Women, often disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change, find strength and resilience in collective action.

The introduction of salt-resistant paddy stands as a testament to the adaptive measures taken by the Sundarbans population. Traditional agriculture faces challenges due to increased soil salinity, a consequence of cyclones and rising sea levels. The shift to salt-resistant paddy not only ensures food security but also reflects the community's ability to innovate and adapt to the changing environmental conditions.

The resilience of the Sundarbans population is a narrative of strength and determination in the face of environmental adversities. Despite the challenges posed by climate disasters, the community has mobilized efforts in mangrove restoration. Recognizing the vital role mangroves play in safeguarding against cyclones and providing habitat for diverse wildlife, community-led initiatives have emerged.

Managed retreat, a strategic withdrawal from vulnerable areas, has become a crucial aspect of resilience-building. This involves planned relocation to safer zones, minimizing the risks posed by climate events. The Sundarbans population, in collaboration with local authorities, has actively engaged in this process, underscoring the importance of community-driven solutions in adapting to a changing climate.

Government and NGO initiatives further contribute to building resilience in the Sundarbans. Robust structures designed to withstand cyclones, known as Multipurpose Cyclone Shelters, serve as a lifeline during extreme weather events. Early warning systems, supported by NGOs and government agencies, provide crucial information, enabling timely evacuations and reducing the loss of lives.

The cultural unity of the Sundarbans community emerges as a powerful force in fostering resilience. The shared vulnerability to climate change creates a collective consciousness, encouraging mutual support and collaboration. This cultural cohesion not only strengthens the social fabric but also serves as a foundation for collective action in the face of environmental challenges.

Government policies play a pivotal role in enhancing resilience in the Sundarbans. Recognizing the urgency of addressing climate change impacts, policies have been crafted to support vulnerable communities. These encompass a range of measures, from financial support for livelihood restoration to the development of sustainable infrastructure.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are crucial partners in this endeavor. They bridge gaps, providing support, resources, and expertise to the affected communities. NGOs work on multiple fronts, from community capacity building to advocating for sustainable practices. Their involvement is instrumental in ensuring that the Sundarbans population has the tools and knowledge to adapt and thrive in the face of climate change.

Multipurpose Cyclone Shelters, an outcome of government policies and collaborative efforts, stand as tangible examples of resilience infrastructure. These shelters not only provide a safe haven during cyclones but also serve as community centers during non-emergency times, contributing to overall community development.

Early warning systems, another product of government-NGO collaboration, represent a critical component of disaster preparedness. Timely and accurate information about impending cyclones allows for proactive evacuation, reducing the vulnerability of the population. The success of these systems relies on the coordination between government agencies, NGOs, and the active participation of the community.

Acknowledging the challenges that the Sundarbans face, it is essential to emphasize the progress made in resilience building. The collective efforts of communities, government, and NGOs showcase a pathway forward. A holistic approach, balancing policy changes with grassroots initiatives, is key to sustainable development in the region.

Encouraging further research, innovation, and collaboration is imperative. The Sundarbans serve as a living laboratory, offering insights into the complex dynamics between ecosystems and human societies. Continued research can inform adaptive strategies, ensuring that interventions align with the evolving needs of the community and the environment.

Global cooperation is paramount in addressing climate change and its impacts. The Sundarbans, while a microcosm of environmental challenges, is interconnected with broader global climate patterns. Collaborative efforts, knowledge sharing, and financial support from the international community are essential to bolster the resilience of vulnerable regions like the Sundarbans.

In order to move forward, it is crucial to express optimism about the future. The Sundarbans, with its resilient population, adaptive measures, and collaborative initiatives, stands as a beacon of hope. Despite the challenges, there is a palpable potential for positive change.

In this delicate dance between nature and human perseverance, the Sundarbans beckons as a beacon of hope, reminding us that collective action can indeed shape a more resilient and sustainable future.

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(PS- The writer is a career civil servant and rural development professional and disaster management professional. The views and opinions expressed above are the personal ones of the writer and has nothing to do with Government views.)



A Story of Resilience from Inclusion Lens

MS. SUBINA

*Community
Member
Caritas India-CBR*

Subina is 21 years old visually impaired girl from Ghaseda village of NUH block. Subina lost her eyesight at an age of 6, her parents were lost when one day she said that she is unable to see anything, they tried their best to give available treatment and rush her to the nearest hospital for consultation. But after close examination doctor said that the condition was serious, and it can't be cured leaving her loss of vision for rest of her life.

As time passed, she started feeling isolated and made her burdensome as she has to take support of her mother or brother for any need. Subina is a girl with high ambition and want to do things on her own. She had faced huge number of hurdles not only emotionally but socially as well, she got restricted to one room turning her entire world black.

It was year 2017, when she got visited by one the community educator from CBR unit of Caritas India, she was then explained the world has not ended and she has still many options to live for. The team supported her to get register to get her disability certificate and UDID card which led to get the monthly disability pension and access to other government schemes.

The next step was to enrol her to school, and she got admission in Class 8th at Govt. Senior secondary school Ghaseda. It was not very easy for her to learn thing with out seeing but Subina didn't leave any hope and continued her education. Currently she is pursuing her BA second year. Subina understand disability more than any one and wants to support others to uplift them as hers. She eagerly participates in Disability Day celebration at Rohtak where once she secured 1st position in games and singing.

No one could then stop her moving forward and she enrolled in tailoring centre which provides free training. While Subina was struggling to live, life gave her another shock and she lost her father and her only brother became alcoholic ignoring all his responsibilities. But Subina continued her journey and started knitting woollen sweaters, and now she is supporting her family financially.

She also got opportunity to recite a poem on Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in a function and got appreciated by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar in the year 2018. Subina has also received further support from Asgar NGO, for her business.

#We4Resilience

TECHNICAL
SESSION 5

**CONFERENCE
WAY FORWARD
DISCUSSION FOR
JOINT INITIATIVES**





Road Map of GO – NGO Coordination

**MR. RAJENDRA
RATNOO, IAS**

*Executive
Director,
NIDM*



Resilience building through the collaboration of government and NGOs, with active civil society engagement, is instrumental in creating a robust and adaptive framework for disaster management. GO-NGO partnership is a harmonious and constructive approach with mutual respect and recognition based on four aspects such as cooperation, co-option, complimentary and confrontation (UNESCO, 1989). Government and NGO collaboration is crucial for effective disaster risk reduction and management, as it combines the resources, expertise, and networks of both sectors to enhance overall resilience. Governments possess the authority, infrastructure, and funding required for large-scale interventions, while NGOs contribute valuable local knowledge, community engagement, and agility in responding to specific needs. This collaboration ensures a comprehensive and inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction, reaching the last mile and addressing diverse challenges.

In India, the Government and NGOs have come together for not only post-disaster assistance but for preparedness and awareness generation towards DRR as well. The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami is an example of successful collaboration where the government, along with various NGOs, worked together to provide immediate relief and long-term rehabilitation. The collaboration between government and NGOs plays a significant role in enhancing the impact of resilience-building efforts, and civil



society engagement is a key component of this partnership. Their grassroots presence enables effective engagement with local populations, addressing diverse needs. Community empowerment is achieved through civil society involvement, fostering ownership and responsibility for sustainable outcomes. Knowledge exchange between government and NGOs enhances resilience initiatives, combining innovative approaches and localized expertise. To improve disaster management collaboration, clear communication channels with centralized hubs, and joint training exercises in capacity building are essential. Information sharing, early warning systems, and joint planning exercises contribute to informed decision-making. Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) can help formalize partnerships, and create an enabling environment for government-NGO partnerships leading to inclusive decision-making ensures stakeholder involvement. Strengthening coordination within different NGOs also plays an important role in

better coordination with government in planning these strategies in a more collaborative, efficient, and resilient approach to disaster management, serving affected communities comprehensively and promoting sustainable development. Ensure that decision-making processes are inclusive and involve input from both government and NGO representatives. This inclusivity promotes a sense of ownership among all stakeholders and contributes to the development of more effective and sustainable strategies.

By strengthening these strategies, governments and NGOs can foster a more collaborative, efficient, and resilient approach to disaster management, ultimately better serving the needs of affected communities. This partnership will also ensure that initiatives are comprehensive, community-driven, and responsive to the unique challenges faced by different populations, contributing to the overall sustainable development of societies.

Speakers of National Conference



Fr.(Dr). Paul Moonjely
Executive Director, Caritas India

Fr.(Dr). Paul Moonjely is the Executive Director, Caritas India, is a high performing strategic thinking professional with more than 23 years of experience in the social sector. His core area of competence is NGO management, financial management and systemic organizational development, rural energy entrepreneurship and program formulation. Some of his notable positions are, the Country Coordination Member (CCM), Global Fund, with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, member of the Health Task Force of Caritas International.



Shri Rajendra Ratnoo, IAS,
Executive Director, NIDM

Shri Rajendra Ratnoo, an IAS officer of the 2001 Batch from Tamil Nadu Cadre, is the Executive Director at the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. A gold medalist in Economics, Psychology, and Philosophy, with postgraduate and M.Phil. degrees, Shri Ratnoo began his career as a university teacher. With notable contributions to disaster management, he led NIDM's initiatives and played a key role in organizing the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) 2023. His expertise spans humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and integrating disaster management into education. His extensive service includes earning prestigious awards like the Prime Minister's National Award and the 'Yuva Ratna' Award for his leadership in disaster management and public administration.



Fr.(Dr). Jolly Puthenppura
Assistant Executive Director, Caritas India

Fr.(Dr). Jolly Puthenppura, is the Assistant Executive Director, Caritas India Fr. Jolly has 14 years of experience as Executive Director of Amravati Diocesan Social Development Society as well as Forum Director of Western Regional Forum covering Maharashtra, Goa and Gujarat. He holds a doctorate for research in Catholic Social Teachings on the theme of "The Principles of Catholic Social Teachings; their Relevance and Influence on the Catholic NGOs of Maharashtra". He was instrumental in making Jeevan Vikas Sanstha NGO of the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. He was also a consultant to various social sector organisations in Maharashtra.



Fr. Sushil Modi
Administrator, Caritas India

Fr. Sushil Modi has been associating with Caritas India as Administrator since 2018. Prior to this he served as Director of Bhagalpur Social Service Society as Executive Director from 2013-2018. During his tenure in Bhagalpur, he successfully executed the Disaster Risk Reduction programs like Partners for Resilience (PfR).



Mr. Samanjit Sengupta
Sr Personnel Manager, WBPCB

Mr. Samanjit Sengupta is a West Bengal Civil Service Officer having expertise in the areas of Public Administration, Skill Development, Poverty Alleviation, Governance and Disaster Management. He also served as a Block Development Officer, Deputy Magistrate, District Youth Officer, Project Director of District Rural Development Authority and National Rural Livelihood Mission. He served as Joint Secretary in Consumer Affair Department, Sunderban Affairs Department and P&RD Department. Currently, Mr. Sengupta is holding a position of Sr. Personnel Manager at West Bengal Pollution Control Board with a rank of Additional Secretary, Government of West Bengal.



Dr. Jaison Varghese
Senior Program Lead, GPI

Dr. Jaison is the Senior Programme Lead of the BMZ Global Programme India at Caritas India. He effectively steers towards the impact in DRR, Nutrition and Food Security, Social Inclusion and Civil Society Learning. He is best known for his leadership, management, execution and decision making. Prior to Caritas India, he had worked as Programme Coordinator of GEF-UNDP-Small Grants Programme at Centre for Environment Education (CEE). He has a close association with the Northeast as part of his professional journey.



Mr. Niranjan Urawan,
Gram Panchayat Mukhiya, Purnea

Niranjan Urawan, the Mukhiya of the Panchayat Rural Institution in Rampur, Bihar, is a dedicated leader known for his active role in the Global Program India. His commitment to community development, inclusive growth, and sustainable practices aligns with the program's objectives, showcasing exemplary leadership in local governance and community development in Purnea district.



Ms. Prerna Rajkonwar
Coordinator, Dhemaji, Assam

Prerna Rajkonwar is a social work professional who hails from Dibrugarh district of Assam. She has been following her passion of working for the upliftment of the marginalised sections of the society by engaging herself in the development sector since 2018. She is currently working as a Program Coordinator in a Disaster Risk Reduction Program under “BMZ Global Program India” which is supported by Caritas India and is implemented by “Women Development Centre” in Dhemaji District of Assam.



Mr. Sarbjit Singh Sahota
Emergency Specialist, UNICEF India

Mr. Sarbjit Singh Sahota, Emergency Specialist, at UNICEF is a highly accomplished, results-driven leader with more than 25 years of progressive experience in the domain of 'emergency preparedness for response', 'disaster risk reduction', climate change adaptation, urban DRR planning and safe construction. He brings practical skills in development-diplomacy, organizational development, policy advocacy & communication, risk-aware-development planning, resource mobilization, result oriented-monitoring, evaluations and teaching-learning design.



Mr Ranjan Panda
Convenor at Combat Climate Change Network, India

Ranjan Kishor Panda is a distinguished sociologist with an illustrious career spanning over thirty years, dedicated to fostering initiatives that address pressing concerns surrounding water, environment, and climate change. Renowned as the "Water Man of Odisha" and esteemed as a "Climate Crusader" within India, Panda's influence extends across various levels, from grassroots initiatives to national and South Asian platforms. His impactful contributions include spearheading and convening two prominent networks: the Water Initiatives (WI) and Combat Climate Change Network in India. Panda serves as a Steering Group Member for the global Climate Migration and Displacement Platform, leveraging his expertise in advocating for environmental and climate actions.



Ms. Monisha Majumdar
Thematic Associate, Caritas India

Armed with a master's degree in conflict management and development, Monisha Majumdar is a dedicated catalyst for positive change in the Development and Humanitarian fields. Her skill stems from a blend of academic rigor and hands-on experience garnered at grassroots levels, emphasizing governance and healthcare dynamics. Monisha Majumdar specializes in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), leading various projects and emergency responses. Her strength lies in understanding the complexities of Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Risk Reduction (HA-DRR) to address disaster responses effectively.



Dr Atul Aditya Pandey,
Professor, Patna University

Dr. Atul Aditya Pandey holds the position of Professor and former Head of the Department of Geology at Patna University. Additionally, he serves as the Chairman of the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) in Bihar. In his role as the Director-in-Charge, Dr. Pandey oversees the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre at Patna University. His areas of research are Himalayan glaciers, rivers, and sedimentary basins. He has worked extensively on meltwater characteristics of glaciers of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh and flood-prone regions of Bihar. He has published papers in many national and international journals. Committed to societal welfare, he actively motivates youth to build a resilient future.



Ms. Karon Shaiva,
Chief Impact Officer, MD, Maha PECOnet, Mumbai

Karon Shaiva is Chief Impact Officer & MD at Idobro Impact Solutions, Managing Trustee at RISE Infinity Foundation, and Secretariat at Maha PECOnet. She is an award-winning social entrepreneur, writer, speaker, and trainer. With a career spanning over 20 years in diverse sectors such as technology, education, finance, gemology, and development, Ms. Karon has made significant contributions to women's empowerment, community development, and social entrepreneurship. She was honored with the "Most Inspiring Social Enterprise" award by the late Dr. C. K. Prahlad and featured in the prestigious SHE IS: 75 Women in STEAM publication on the 75th anniversary of India's Independence and also the recipient of "COVID Shero" by Twitter India.



Mr. Chhota Lal
Nawada, Bihar

Chotelal, from Sokhodewara village in Kawakol, Nawada, Bihar, is a dedicated individual born on September 27, 1980. With 15 years of community experience and a bachelor's degree in arts from Nawada, he understands the challenges faced by his villagers. Since March 2021, he's been actively involved in the BMZ Global Program India, working as an animator with the Bihar Water Development Society in Patna. His focus is on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and addressing climate change in the community.



Mr. Lingraj Nayak
Farmer, Bhadrak, Odisha

Mr. Lingaraj Nayak, a resident of Khantakuada village in Andola Gram Panchayat, is a well-educated and progressive farmer who has embarked on a journey to improve agricultural practices and protect the livelihood from natural disasters.



Ms. Rumi Phukan
Lakhimpur District, Assam

Mrs. Rumi Phukan from Panchnoi village, Lakhimpur district in Assam, India, is a resilient entrepreneur. She became a successful businesswoman after the 2017 flood hit her village. She now earns a living through a small shop and farming activities, cultivating and raising goats. She started a group called Jyotimoi Producer with 10 members in 2019, which has now grown to 40 members and received a loan of 2 lakh this year. Rumi actively participates in the Disaster Risk Reduction Committee, attending meetings and training sessions conducted by various organizations.



Dr. V Suresh Babu
Associate Professor, NIRD, Guwahati

Dr. V. Suresh Babu, with a Ph.D. in Agronomy from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, is an Associate Professor at NIRD&PR - NERC, Guwahati. His expertise spans NRM, climate-resilient agriculture, rainfed agriculture management, integrated farming systems, and Agro-Forestry. A prolific author, he has published in national and international journals, conducted research projects, and organized workshops at both national and international levels.



Mr. Vinay Iyer
CEO, Action Against Hunger

Vinay Iyer is the Chief Executive Officer for Action Against Hunger with more than 15 years of experience across various national and international organizations, Vinay Iyer is a humanitarian and development professional. As an active member of the Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief (RedR), India, he delivered over 35 training programs for various UN agencies, international NGOs, and corporate organizations. Over the last 10 years, he was actively involved in responding to major disasters in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.



Dr. Radhakrushna Panda
Director, Green India, Odisha

Dr. R K Panda, a Ph.D. holder in Economics from Berhampur University, is a distinguished development sector analyst with expertise in monitoring and evaluating intervention projects spanning Agriculture, Forest, Environment, Health, Nutrition, and Water. Dr. Panda's professional journey extends to teaching Economics at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. His extensive portfolio includes collaborations with NCAER, New Delhi, AFC Ltd., Mumbai, and BIRD (NABARD), Lucknow, among others. To date, he has meticulously crafted around 200 research projects for diverse entities, including the Government of India, State Government Departments, and Non-Governmental Agencies.



Dr. Sujeet Ranjan
Associated Director-Nutrition, TATA Trust, Jharkhand

With over two decades of dedicated service in the public health sector, Dr. Sujeet Ranjan stands as a seasoned professional with a rich background in large-scale program management, policy advocacy, and partnership management. Currently serving as the Associated Director – Nutrition at Tata Trusts, he spearheads the organization's comprehensive strategy to combat malnutrition. Dr. Ranjan's illustrious career includes roles such as Executive Director at The Coalition for Food and Nutrition Security, Director at CARE India, and Senior Vice President cum Chief Operating Officer at the Swasthya Management and Research Institute, Hyderabad.



Mr. Siddharth Jaiswal
CEO of BPD-Birsa Agriculture University Society, Ranchi, Jharkhand

Siddharth Jaiswal is an alumnus of IIM-Ahmedabad and has been heading the agribusiness incubation center as CEO of BPD-BAU Society at Birsa Agricultural University, Ranchi, Jharkhand since 2012. He was a students' secretary at IIM-Ahmedabad but opted to work for farmers instead of multinational companies after graduating out. He has guided many entrepreneurs to set up their businesses in agriculture and allied services. Besides the incubation center, he has been working with tribal farmers in Jharkhand for an advanced Natural farming system for the last 8 years i.e. Nutrition based farming with native seeds for which he has been awarded by AIIMS, New Delhi.



Dr. Haridas VR,
Thematic Lead - Climate Justice, Caritas India

Dr. Haridas holds a doctorate in Water Resources, and is the thematic manager for Climate Adaptive Agriculture and Livelihoods in Caritas India. He co-ordinates the Sustainable Agriculture programme of CARITAS ASIA for South Asia region including India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. He has authored several books on organic farming, including the 'Pollution Free Poultry Farm', 'Family Farming', 'Rice: The Golden Grain', and 'Soil and Water', among others. Besides, his articles have been published in many national and international journals and publications. He is also the recipient of the Harith Varsha Award bestowed by the Kerala Social Service Forum in 2011.



Ms Sneha Jha,
Thematic Lead -NFS, Carita India

Ms. Sneha is currently positioned as the Thematic Lead for Nutrition and Food Security - BMZ Global Programme India at Caritas India. Her professional journey boasts a diverse educational background, including certifications in CSR from ICSI, complemented by studies in NGO management, and Developmental Therapy. Accumulating over 12 years of involvement in the development sector, she has demonstrated her proficiencies in diverse capacities within different organizations. Throughout her career, Ms. Sneha has taken on multifaceted responsibilities, ranging from establishing and managing partnerships to executing projects, capacity building, community engagement, stakeholder management, and training.



Mrs. Sukumari Hikabadi
Community Member, Rayagada, Odisha

Ms. Sukumari Hikabadi, belonging to the Kui tribe in Papikhal village, Gudari Block of Rayagada district, has been actively involved in promoting nutrition and locally available nutrient-rich vegetables and fruits. She underwent several training sessions on Food and Nutrition Security as part of the global program in India. Understanding the significance of nutrition, Sukumari created an impactful Nutri garden in a small area of land. She generously shares her knowledge and experiences with other families in her village, setting a remarkable example as a proactive leader.



Mr Robin George
Program Lead - Sabal, Carita India

Robin George is a dedicated professional with - 8+ years of experience working in social development sector under varied thematic including RMNCHA, food & nutrition security, WASH, sustainable agriculture, natural resource management & organizational development. Currently working as Programme Lead Food & Nutrition Security (FNS) for Caritas India organization and experienced in strategic - planning and effective project implementation.



Mr. Ramdas
Community Member, Sabal

Ramdas attended ashram schools that shaped his commitment to addressing societal challenges in the tribal community. The COVID-19 pandemic led him back to his village, where he embraced the Sabal program, initiating change as a Poshanmitra (nutrition volunteer). Recognizing the need for systemic impact, he courageously contested for Sarpanch and secured overwhelming support.



Mr. Nandalal Chote Dande
Community Member, Sabal

Nandalal Chote Dande, the devoted Secretary of the Gram Parivartan Fishing Collective, led a transformative journey in the Ghota village. Empowered by the Sabal program, the collective secured the tender for the fishing in community pond, yielding annual revenues of Rs 2-2.5 lakh. The group's diverse catches—Rahu, Katla, Silver fish—spurred economic growth.



Mr. Ramesh Bapurao Mavaskar
Community Member, Sabal

Ramesh Bapurao Mavaskar, a 42-year-old farmer from Girguti Village, underwent a remarkable agricultural transformation through Sabal. Formerly reliant on chemical farming, he transitioned to organic practices and embraced millet cultivation. Shifting from monocropping to mixed farming, Ramesh abandoned chemical fertilizers and pesticides in favour of organic alternatives like vermicompost and organic urea. Learning seed treatment techniques and employing improved seeds elevated his crop yields.



Mr. Prabal Sen,
Programme Associate, North East Zone, Caritas India

Prabal Sen, a seasoned professional with a master's in ecology and environmental sciences, holds a distinguished career of over two decades. His commitment lies in advancing Climate Adaptive Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Security, and Environmental Conservation. As Caritas India's Program Associate (NE Zone), he leads the millet program and community-driven initiatives, showcasing strategic leadership in climate-resilient farming. His expertise spans Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, extending to disaster relief and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WaSH) efforts for sustainable development. With a rich academic and publication background, Prabal Sen stands as a multifaceted contributor to agriculture, environmental management, and sustainable development.



Mr. Ratan Lal Deka
Field Programme Associate, FARM NE

Ratan Lal Deka has witnessed a transformative journey that explores the essence of indigenous farming in Northeast India. Reflecting on his youth, where a deep connection to the land and resilient cultivation prevailed, he observed a significant shift towards health issues in urban areas due to modern lifestyles. In response, Ratan Lal Deka is leading the Facilitating Agricultural Resilience Measures (FARM) project since 2021 in Arunachal Pradesh, under the Itanagar Diocesan Empowerment Association (IDEA). According to him, more than an acronym, FARM embodies resilience, particularly within the Apatani community of Arunachal Pradesh. This endeavour aims to revive traditional farming practices, ensuring not only food security but the holistic well-being of communities.



**Mr. Vikrant Mahajan,
CEO, SPHERE India, Delhi**

Mr. Vikrant Mahajan is the CEO of Sphere India. He comes with 26 years of versatile professional experience having worked across sectors with Government, UN, NGOs, Corporates, Academia and Armed Forces. He is a passionate humanitarian and has been on the frontline of most disasters in India and the region over nearly two decades. He has also been very active on the Global and National policy forums and represents on several inter-agency forums and boards of many organizations. He comes with a multi-disciplinary background in Engineering, Public Administration, organizational behavior and Law.



**Ms. Babita Pinto
Head of Programs, Caritas India**

Babita Pinto currently serves as the Head of Programs at Caritas India. She has served and managed various portfolios from handling communications to leading humanitarian aid and risk reduction, migration and anti-human trafficking and reconciliation initiatives. As a Disaster Management specialist, she has led various humanitarian responses. She took the lead in developing a manual on “Contingency Planning during Emergencies” and together with her team, explored innovative mechanisms of building resilience and preparedness through demonstrative programs on Integrated Risk Management. She has found her path, and she now encourages young women to find their path.



**Col. Prof. Sanjay Srivastava,
Chairman, CRPOC**

Colonel Sanjay Srivastava, a distinguished disaster management practitioner with 37 years of professional experience, excels in Lightning resilience, SDGs, Carbon Neutral Goals, and climate change action. Hailing from the technically advanced Air Defence branch of the Indian Army, he specializes in radars, satellites, remote sensing, communication, AI, and modern technology-based solutions. With master's degrees in technology, management, Mass Communication, and Defence Management, he has contributed extensively in India and internationally. Colonel Srivastava emphasizes a proactive, technology-driven approach to disaster management, advocating for futuristic strategies. His research-focused community approach bridges the gap between academia, governance, and community for effective disaster preparedness.



**Mr Anjan Bag,
Thematic Lead - HADRR, Caritas India**

Mr. Anjan Bag holds 20 years of expertise on multi-sectoral program conceptualisation and management in the field of Disaster Management with Results-based & Rights-based approach. Along with knowledge of Ideating, Planning, Operation, Crisis Management, M&E Experience in smoothly interfacing with internal & external stakeholders to ensure smooth day to day operation. He works across South Asia, providing technical support in assessment, programme development and developing knowledge product. He is member of technical group of Caritas Internationalis on protection mainstreaming.



**Mr. Sanjeev Dham,
Deputy CEO, MAMTA**

He has rich experience of over 30 years in the development sector. As Deputy CEO, he helps expand the organization by focusing on outreach, branding, digitization, and innovation. He is also responsible for program implementation for Maternal & child health, communicable, non-communicable and nutrition portfolio, diseases, and climate resilience portfolio. In his last engagement with Smile Foundation as Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Dham has also worked with organizations like Population Services International, Engender Health, and Palladium. Further, he has worked on forging business partnerships in global markets and also led cross-functional teams.



**Fr. Bimal Chandra Nayak,
Director-SWAD, Odisha**

Fr. Bimal is currently serving as a Director of SWAD, Odisha. He has completed his studies from Papal Seminary, Pune. He also served as a Secretary of the Diocesan Education Commission; Law, Peace and Justice Coordinator in the Diocese.



**Mr. Sanjay Habada (Rtd IAS)
SSC Member, Global Program Odisha**

Sri Sanjay Habada, IAS Retd, is a well-known former administrator of Odisha who served as an administrator under the Odisha government in different capacities like Tahsildar, Sub Collector, Collector, and Director. He had served as a director of the Department for Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disability. Presently, he is also associated with a platform of excluded communities for socio-economic development and also a member of the State Steering Committee.



**Ms. Ranjini Mukherjee
DRR Specialist, United Nations**

Ranjini Mukharjee, currently positioned as a Disaster Risk Reduction Specialist UN Resident Coordinator's Office in India, is a seasoned Development Sector Professional, specializing in Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Action, and Resilience. With over 19 years of experience, she has worked extensively on disaster management, urban resilience, COVID-19 response, and international cooperation. Ranjini excels in project management, capacity-building, and networking, aiming to collaborate with organizations driving positive societal change.



**Ms. Nandini Saraswati
Additional Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal**

Mrs. Nandini Saraswati is a West Bengal Civil Service Officer having over 20 years of experience in Public Administration, Rural Development and Skill Building. She served as a Block Development Officer, Deputy Magistrate, and District Minority Officer in various Districts across West Bengal. She also served as a Joint Secretary in Disaster Management Department and Chief Executive Officer of West Bengal Renewable Energy Development Authority. Mrs. Nandini is holding a position of Additional Secretary at Consumer Affairs Department, Government of West Bengal.



**Mr. Dibyendu Sarkar (Rtd. IAS)
Government of West Bengal**

Dibyendu Sarkar, a retired IAS Officer, served for 35 years as Secretary to the Government of West Bengal. He has diverse experience in rural development, self-help groups, and implementing government programs like Mahatma Gandhi NREGA and Swachh Bharat Mission. Post-retirement, he's engaged in planning, research, and advisory roles with various organizations. He's the founder of Ecovocal Solution Pvt. Ltd., focusing on environment-sensitive sustainable development, and a director at Smart Farming India Pvt. Ltd. Currently, he's experimenting with organic farming and integrated development, aiming to create a model for community livelihood and skill development.



**Mr. Sanjay Pandey,
Director, Yugantar**

Sanjay Pandey, Executive Director at Yugantar and Honorary Convenor of Bihar Inter Agency Group, is a seasoned professional in Health, Community-Based Flood Early Warning systems, Disaster Management, Relocation, and Rehabilitation Programs. With vast experience collaborating with government agencies, he excels in strategic planning and implementation aligned with program objectives. Known as a visionary leader, he leverages extensive knowledge in program management, social development, and disaster mitigation. Sanjay is adept at empowering communities and individuals and possesses excellent communication and relationship management skills.



**Mr Luit Goswami
Director, RVC, Assam**

Director at "Rural Volunteers Centre (RVC), a Non-Government Organization (NGO), particularly operational in Dhemaji, Majuli & Lakhimpur District and in general across Assam. Mr. Luit's work reflects a commitment to making a meaningful impact in the lives of vulnerable communities, emphasizing resilience, adaptation, and disaster preparedness. His exceptional dedication to social service deserves recognition and acknowledgment through prestigious awards like "Assam Baibhav," "Assam Saurav," or "Assam Gaurav."



**Ms. Subina
Community Member, Caritas India CBR**

Subina, a 21-year-old visually impaired girl from Ghaseda village, lost her eyesight at 6. Despite challenges, she pursued education, currently studying BA. She learned knitting and supported her family. Recognized for her talents in games, singing, and poetry, she aims to empower others with disabilities. Supported by Caritas India and Asgar NGO, she exemplifies resilience and determination.



**Ms. Puni Mahapatra,
Animator -SWAD, Ganjam District, Odhisa**

Miss Puni Mohapatra, residing in Ganjam district, Odisha, has had a passion for working with rural communities since her school days. Since graduating in 1998, she's been dedicated to empowering Women SHGs and farmers' groups for resilient livelihoods. Post Cyclone Phailin in 2013, she actively engaged with NGOs in relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts. Currently, she focuses on disaster risk management in Ganjam district and is a master trainer for OSDMA's task force training. Puni also has experience in nurturing self-help groups, providing skill development training, and preparing community based PDRA for risk reduction. She's currently associated with SWAD - Ganjam under the Global Program.



**Mr. Suraj Patil,
PESA Act-President, Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh**

Suraj Patil, 57, stands as a beacon of change in Chiktalai village, Khalwa block, Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh. His transformative journey began in 2017 with Sabal, where he honed leadership as a lead farmer, championing organic farming and health awareness. In November 2022, Suraj ascended to the role of Village President under the PESA Act, amplifying community empowerment in resource management. His tenure witnessed remarkable strides, from curbing illegal possessions to catalyzing infrastructural development. Suraj's proactive initiatives, including MGNREGA and government schemes, showcase a leadership committed to grassroots impact, uplifting community welfare and fostering self-sufficiency.



Mr. Abanikanta Sahoo
Chairperson, Odisha State Food Commission

Mr. Abanikanta Sahoo holds a comprehensive educational background in Mining Engineering and has held significant leadership roles in various government and mining organizations, showcasing extensive experience in the field over nearly two decades. Currently serving as Chairperson for the Odisha State Food Commission, his expertise spans development authorities and prominent roles within mining engineering, demonstrating a robust professional profile.



Mr. Joseph Mathew
Program Lead - Khushaal Bachpan

Joseph Mathew, a dedicated Development Professional with over a decade of experience, holds a Mechanical Engineering degree and a Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Marketing. He began his career working with marginalized communities in Southern Rajasthan, focusing on livelihood enhancement, child protection, and youth skill training. His liaison skills, innovative approaches, and commitment to combating child trafficking have made him a valuable asset in strengthening child protection structures. Joseph also excels in donor reporting, proposal writing, and team management. Currently, he is leading Khushaal Bachpan program in Caritas India.



Dr. Amir Ali Khan
Associate Professor, NIDM

Dr. Amir Ali Khan is a trained Civil Engineer and Urban Planner holding a Ph.D. in Urban Earthquake Risk Mitigation. With a Post Graduate Diploma in Geological Risks from the University of Geneva, he received training from various international organizations in disaster risk management across Asia and Europe. Having contributed nearly two years to UNDP as National Disaster Reduction Advisor in Uzbekistan, Dr. Khan chaired the 'Disaster Preparedness and Response Group' while also serving as the UN focal point for humanitarian assistance. His expertise spans program development, knowledge management, capacity building, and partnership establishment in disaster risk mitigation and management, both nationally and internationally.



Mr. Thangsha Sebastian Anchong
Asst Thematic Lead, HADRR, Caritas India

Thangsha Sebastian Anchong is presently working as Asst. Thematic Lead HA & DRR in Caritas India. He has an experience of 13 years in the developmental sector especially in DRR and Humanitarian response. He has received Best Regional Officer 2014 and Employee Excellence Award 2016 from Caritas India. In 2019 he was also awarded the Bright Spark Award from IGSSS.



Mr. Abhishek Kumar
Program Associate- Bihar, Caritas India

Abhishek Kumar, a DRR thematic associate working with Caritas India since 2015, excels in networking with government and academia for Disaster Risk Reduction. His journey includes facilitating the development of Disaster Management Plans in districts & Development of management revival of wetland and fostering strong relationships with SDMA, academia, IMD, and DMI in the state of Bihar.



Ms. Sangita
Associate, Caritas India

Sangita brings 16 years of experience in the field of disability management. She is a prosthetist and orthotist and has been serving the community. She has gained experience in networking, handled livelihood projects, delivered training in wheelchair assembling and fitment to many partner organizations and worked as clinician for fitment of artificial devices.



Ms. Rucha Thakkar
Lead - Networking & Dialogue, Global Program

Ms. Rucha is the Consultant Lead – Networking & Dialogue of Global Program India at Caritas India. She is a development professional with 20 years of experience in social development sector across India. Her professional commitment extends to working on disaster management; rights-based approach, livelihood and entrepreneurship development, engaging with communities, and duty bearers.

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