# NEWSLETTER MARCH 2026

**International Women's day Celebration:** On 19th March, International Women's Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy at Kudagara village under the SIGN-supported project area. Around 500 women from 15 villages gathered to mark the occasion and celebrate the strength, unity, and valuable contribution of women in society.



Rev. Fr. Bipin Pani, Director of SIGN, graced the programme as the Chief Guest. The Guests of Honour included Ms. Shobha Kumari, Women and Child Development Officer, Ms. Naiyana Minj, Block Welfare Officer, and Mr. Nandlal Patar, Block Agriculture Officer. Their inspiring presence encouraged and motivated the women participating in the programme.

The event was organized by Mr. Walter Kerketta, Project Coordinator, with the support of Project Animators Mr. Sanjay Toppo and Mr. Sudip Toppo. The celebration provided a meaningful platform for women from different villages to come together in a spirit of unity, joy, and cultural pride.



One of the major highlights of the programme was the tribal dance competition presented by various Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from the 15 villages. Eight groups participated in the competition, and each group beautifully showcased traditional tribal dances reflecting their rich cultural heritage and strong community spirit. The SHG from Jaratoli village won the first prize for their outstanding performance, especially for their excellent traditional drum music and dance presentation, which greatly impressed everyone present. The second prize was secured by the SHG group from Bhajan Patka, while the SHG group from Bajarmara stood third.



After the cultural programme, lunch was shared by all participants, creating a sense of fellowship and celebration among the gathered women and guests. Later in the programme, District Council Member (Zila Parishad Sadasya) Mrs. Reeta Horo and her husband Mr. Kalyan Horo, a member of the

Panchayati Samiti, joined the gathering. As a gesture of encouragement, they distributed a consolation prize of Rs. 500 to all the groups that participated in the competition but could not win.




The celebration of International Women's Day at Kudagara was not only a cultural event but also an opportunity to recognize the important role of women in community development, self-help initiatives, and social empowerment. The programme strengthened unity among women and encouraged them to continue working together for the progress and well-being of their families and villages.

**Strengthening Farmers' Access to Government Schemes: Diocese-Level Training Organized by SIGN:** As part of its commitment to promoting sustainable agriculture and improving rural livelihoods, SIGN, Ranchi organized a series of diocesan-level trainings on Government Agricultural Schemes across its project areas in Jharkhand. The trainings covered 50 villages in the districts of Gumla, Khunti, Simdega, Lohardaga, and Hazaribag, reaching a total of 246 farmers, including both men and women.



The primary objective of the initiative was to strengthen the linkages between farming communities and government agricultural departments, enabling farmers to access various government schemes, subsidies, and technical services more effectively. To achieve this, SIGN collaborated closely with officials from the Department of Agriculture, including representatives from the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA), Block Agricultural Officers (BAOs), and Block Technology Managers (BTMs), who served as resource persons during the training programmes.




Prior to the trainings, SIGN's project animators met with the concerned government officials and briefed them about the project objectives, the socio-economic conditions of the target communities, and the specific needs of local farmers. The officials responded positively and actively participated in the programmes. Their involvement not only enriched the training sessions with practical knowledge but also provided

farmers with an opportunity to interact directly with government functionaries who can support them in accessing various agricultural services and schemes.

The training programmes were organized at five different locations. The first programme was held at Nawatoli, Konbir in Basia Block of Gumla district, where 50 participants attended the session. This was followed by a training at Latra, Khunti, attended by 56 farmers. Another programme was conducted at Tumdegi in Simdega district with the participation of 50 farmers. Simultaneously, training sessions were organized at Eradon in Lohardaga district and Jori in Hazaribag district, reaching 50 and 40 participants respectively.



The resource persons provided detailed information on a wide range of government agricultural schemes and services available to farmers. Key topics included soil testing, subsidized paddy and pulse seeds, solar-powered irrigation systems under the Kusum Yojana, solar water pumps, drip irrigation facilities, subsidized agricultural equipment, horticulture development through MGNREGA, vermicomposting, organic farming practices, sustainable soil fertility management, and the proper use of fertilizers and pesticides. Farmers were also informed about incentives available for ragi cultivation and the importance of forming Farmers' Clubs and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to access government benefits more effectively.

The programmes generated considerable interest among the participants. Farmers appreciated the opportunity to clarify their doubts directly with government officials and learn about schemes that could improve their agricultural productivity and income. Many participants expressed their willingness to apply for solar irrigation systems, horticulture plantations, soil testing services, and other government-supported initiatives.



Beyond knowledge sharing, the trainings played an important role in building trust and collaboration between rural communities and government departments. By facilitating direct interaction between farmers and agricultural officials, SIGN has helped create pathways for greater access to resources, technical guidance, and livelihood opportunities.

Through such capacity-building initiatives, SIGN continues to empower farming communities, strengthen sustainable agricultural practices, and contribute to the socio-economic development of rural families across Jharkhand.