NEWSLETTER MAY 2026

SIGN Strengthens Gram Sabhas in 105 Villages Through PESA Awareness Programme: As a follow-up to the successful three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme on "Strengthening Gram Sabhas through PESA Awareness," SIGN extended the initiative to the grassroots by organizing two-day Gram Sabha Strengthening Programmes in 105 selected villages across seven districts of Jharkhand—Ranchi, Khunti, Gumla, Simdega, Lohardaga, Garhwa, and Seraikela-Kharswan.



The programme aimed to deepen the understanding of Gram Sabha members regarding their rights, roles, and responsibilities under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996, while strengthening grassroots self-governance in Scheduled Areas. Participants who had undergone the district-level ToT programme served as facilitators and resource persons, ensuring that the knowledge and skills acquired during the training reached village leaders and community members effectively.

The two-day village-level sessions focused on the constitutional provisions of PESA, the powers and functions of Gram Sabhas, community participation in local governance, protection of natural resources, and the safeguarding of tribal rights, traditions, and cultural identity. Discussions also highlighted the importance of transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making in local governance processes. Special emphasis was placed on the critical role of Gram Sabhas in managing community resources, monitoring government schemes, protecting land, water, and forests, and ensuring that development initiatives respond to the needs and aspirations of local communities.



Participants were encouraged to recognize Gram Sabhas as the foundation of democratic self-governance in Scheduled Areas.

The programmes witnessed enthusiastic participation from traditional leaders, elected representatives, women, youth, and other Gram Sabha members. Through interactive discussions, group exercises, case studies, and the sharing of local experiences, participants gained greater confidence in exercising their constitutional rights and responsibilities. The sessions also provided a platform for community members to discuss local governance challenges and explore collective solutions.



One of the significant outcomes of the programme was the renewed commitment among participants to convene regular Gram Sabha meetings, maintain proper records, actively participate in village development planning, and strengthen collective decision-making processes. Community members expressed their determination to make Gram Sabhas more vibrant and effective institutions capable of safeguarding tribal rights and promoting inclusive development.



By building the capacities of Gram Sabha members across 105 villages, SIGN continues its commitment to promoting participatory governance and empowering tribal communities to exercise their rights under PESA. The initiative contributes to the creation of informed, empowered, and accountable Gram Sabhas that can effectively address local challenges and foster sustainable community development.

The village-level strengthening programme marks another significant milestone in SIGN's ongoing efforts to advance the spirit of PESA and strengthen democratic self-governance in the Scheduled Areas of Jharkhand. Through such initiatives, SIGN remains committed to empowering communities and building resilient local institutions that place people at the centre of development.