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Three-Day ToT Equips Gram Sabha Leaders on Land Rights and Traditional Governance: As part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen grassroots self-governance and empower tribal communities, SIGN organized a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme on "Land Laws, Customary Systems and Social Structure" for representatives of Gram Sabhas from seven districts of Jharkhand—Ranchi, Seraikela-Kharswan, Khunti, Gumla, Garhwa, Simdega, and Lohardaga. A total of 45 participants attended the programme, representing selected Gram Sabhas from these districts.



The training aimed to deepen participants' understanding of land rights, strengthen their knowledge of legal protections available to tribal communities, and revive traditional governance systems that have long safeguarded indigenous identity, culture, and community resources. The programme forms part of SIGN's larger initiative to build a cadre of informed and capable grassroots leaders who can effectively strengthen Gram Sabhas and promote community-led development.

During the three-day programme, participants received detailed orientation on the Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act and other legal provisions that protect tribal land from alienation and unlawful transfer. Through interactive sessions and case studies, participants learned about legal safeguards, procedures for protecting community land, and remedies available in cases of land disputes and encroachments.



The training also covered the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, helping participants understand the legal mechanisms available to protect the rights and dignity of tribal and marginalized communities. Practical sessions on complaint and petition procedures enabled participants to learn how to prepare applications, approach authorities, and pursue legal remedies when community rights are violated.

A special feature of the programme was hands-on training in reading and sketching land maps, an important skill for understanding land records, identifying village boundaries, and preventing land-related disputes. Participants gained practical

knowledge that can help Gram Sabhas safeguard community resources more effectively.

The programme further explored the relevance of customary justice systems and traditional governance structures, including the Munda–Manki and Manjhi–Paraganait systems. Discussions highlighted how these indigenous institutions have historically played a crucial role in maintaining social harmony, resolving conflicts, and ensuring collective decision-making within tribal societies. Participants also reflected on the need to preserve and strengthen these traditional systems alongside constitutional governance mechanisms.



In addition, sessions on cultural practices, folklore, oral traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems emphasized the importance of preserving tribal heritage as a vital source of community identity and social cohesion.



The training adopted a participatory methodology, combining expert inputs, group discussions, practical exercises, and experience-sharing. Participants were encouraged not only to gain knowledge but also to become resource persons and facilitators within their own communities.

A key outcome of the ToT programme is its multiplier effect. Upon returning to their respective villages, participants are expected to share the knowledge and skills acquired during the training with their Gram Sabhas and community members. Through village-level meetings and awareness programmes, they will help strengthen Gram Sabha functioning, promote informed decision-making, protect land and resource rights, and encourage greater community participation in local governance.



By investing in the capacity building of Gram Sabha leaders, SIGN continues to nurture a network of grassroots champions committed to safeguarding tribal rights, preserving indigenous traditions, and building stronger, more empowered Gram Sabhas across Jharkhand.

Empowering SHG Women through Value Addition Training: In its continued efforts to strengthen the livelihoods of rural women and promote sustainable income generation, SIGN organized a three-day Value Addition Training Programme for members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from 15 project villages. The training was held at Jharna Training Centre from 16 to 18 June.



The programme aimed at equipping SHG members with practical knowledge and skills in value addition of locally available agricultural and forest produce. By learning various value-addition techniques, participants were encouraged to work collectively through their groups and explore opportunities for enhancing family income and economic self-reliance.

A key feature of the training was its combination of both theoretical inputs and hands-on practical sessions. The resource persons provided detailed explanations on the concepts, importance, and methods of value addition, while also demonstrating the processes involved. Participants were given the opportunity to practice the techniques themselves, enabling them to gain confidence and firsthand experience in processing and preparing value-added products.



The women received training on product processing, preservation, packaging, quality control, hygiene, branding, and marketing. Resource persons also highlighted how locally available resources can be transformed into products with higher market value, thereby creating greater livelihood opportunities for rural families.



The training provided an interactive platform for participants to share their experiences, learn from one another, and develop confidence in undertaking small-

scale income-generating activities. The practical demonstrations and group exercises generated considerable enthusiasm among the participants, many of whom expressed



their willingness to apply the newly acquired skills in their villages and SHGs.

Through this initiative, SIGN seeks to promote women's economic empowerment by strengthening the capacity of SHGs and enabling them to contribute more effectively to household income and community development. The programme is expected to encourage collective enterprise initiatives and foster greater financial resilience among rural families.

The training concluded with a renewed commitment from the participants to utilize their learning for the benefit of their groups and communities, thereby advancing the vision of sustainable livelihood development in the project area.