NEWSLETTER JULY 2026

General Body Meetings Mark Leadership Transition and Renew Commitment to Good Governance: Social Initiatives for Growth and Networking (SIGN) entered a new chapter in its institutional journey as its Governing Board Meeting and Annual General Body Meeting (AGBM) were held on 22 and 23 July 2026 at the Conference Hall of the Social Development Centre, Ranchi. The two meetings provided an opportunity to review the organization's achievements during the past year, strengthen institutional accountability, and chart the way forward for the years ahead.



They also marked an important leadership transition as Fr. Alwin C.V. assumed the responsibility of Secretary from Fr. Bipin Kumar Pani, who had led SIGN for the past seven years.

Reviewing a Year of Service and Impact: The Governing Board Meeting, presided over by the President of SIGN, was attended by all members except Bishop Julius Marandi and Fr. Binay Kerketta. The meeting began with the confirmation of the minutes of the previous Governing Board Meeting, followed by the presentation of SIGN's Annual Report. The report highlighted the organization's journey over the past year, showcasing its continued commitment to empowering marginalized communities across Jharkhand through programmes in community governance, climate-adaptive agriculture, women's empowerment, sponsorship, tribal heritage, and institutional capacity building. The Board appreciated the steady progress made by SIGN in promoting sustainable development while remaining rooted in the values of justice, dignity, participation, and service.

Honouring Seven Years of Dedicated Leadership: One of the most significant moments of the meeting was the farewell accorded to Fr. Bipin Kumar Pani, who completed seven years of dedicated service as Secretary of SIGN. The Governing Board members expressed their heartfelt appreciation for his committed leadership, acknowledging his contribution to strengthening the organization, expanding partnerships, improving governance systems, and guiding SIGN through several important initiatives and institutional developments. They also conveyed their sincere prayers and best wishes for his speedy recovery and God's abundant blessings in his future ministry.





The members then warmly welcomed Fr. Alwin C.V. as the new Secretary of SIGN. During the meeting, Fr. Bipin formally handed over the official records and responsibilities of the organization to Fr. Alwin, completing the transition of leadership and symbolising the continuity of SIGN's mission.

Preparing SIGN for the Future: Looking beyond the achievements of the past year, the Governing Board also deliberated on important developments that will shape the future of the organization. The members were briefed on the implications of the recent FCRA Amendment and the need for voluntary organizations to strengthen compliance while continuing to serve communities effectively.

The Board was also informed about a promising opportunity to collaborate with Dhwani Foundation, a Bengaluru-based non-profit organization that supports grassroots NGOs in strengthening governance systems, organizational capacity, and the effective use of technology. The proposed collaboration is expected to contribute to SIGN's long-term institutional development and organizational effectiveness.



The meeting concluded with the presentation and discussion of the Audited Financial Report, reaffirming SIGN's commitment to transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of resources.

Annual General Body Reaffirms Commitment to SIGN's Mission: The Annual General Body Meeting, held on 23 July 2026, brought together members from across the organization to review SIGN's performance and provide strategic guidance for the future. All members attended the meeting except Bishop Julius Marandi, Fr. Tomi, Fr. Prabal, and Fr. Binay Kerketta.

Following the confirmation of the minutes of the previous Annual General Body Meeting, members reviewed the Annual Report, which reflected the impact of SIGN's programmes and reaffirmed the organization's commitment to promoting inclusive and sustainable development among vulnerable communities.



The General Body once again extended a warm welcome to Fr.

Alwin C.V., assuring him of its full cooperation and support as he begins his leadership of the organization.

The Audited Financial Report was presented and adopted by the General Body. The members also unanimously reappointed NRV & Associates as the statutory auditors of SIGN for the financial year 2026–2027, reaffirming the organization's commitment to sound financial management and accountability.

Looking Ahead with Hope: In his concluding remarks, the President thanked the members of the Governing Board, the General Body, and the entire SIGN team for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to the organization's mission. He encouraged everyone to continue working with renewed enthusiasm and a spirit of service so that SIGN may reach even more marginalized communities and contribute meaningfully to building a just, dignified, and sustainable society.



The meetings concluded with a renewed sense of purpose and optimism. As SIGN begins this new phase under fresh leadership, it remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening community institutions, promoting good governance, protecting the rights of vulnerable communities, and walking alongside the people of Jharkhand in their journey towards justice, dignity, and sustainable development.

Farmers Scale Up Grafted Tomato Cultivation with Confidence

The success of grafted tomato cultivation continues to inspire farming communities in the SIGN project area. Building on the encouraging results of last year's initiative, many farmers are now expanding tomato cultivation as a reliable and profitable source of income.



In 2025, **138 farming families** cultivated **5,193 grafted tomato saplings** for the first time. Although each farmer began with a modest number of plants, the excellent harvest and improved income generated widespread confidence in this innovative farming practice.

One of the most inspiring success stories comes from **Mr. Vindeshwar Munda** of **Garurpiri Village**. By cultivating just **500 grafted tomato plants**, he earned nearly **₹1,00,000** in a single season. His remarkable achievement has encouraged many neighbouring farmers to explore grafted tomato cultivation as a viable livelihood option. Reflecting his confidence in the crop, Mr. Munda has increased his investment this year by placing an order for **1,500 grafted tomato saplings**.



The growing enthusiasm among farmers is clearly visible in the preparations for the **2026 cultivation season**. A total of **39 farming families** from **12 villages** in **Lali** and **Rajaulhatu Panchayats** of **Namkum Block, Ranchi District**, have collectively procured **8,500 grafted tomato saplings**—an increase of **more than 60 percent** over the previous year. While fewer farmers are participating this season, each has chosen to cultivate tomatoes on a much larger scale. This is largely because the current agricultural season coincides with paddy cultivation, which continues to be the primary occupation of most farming households.

The grafted tomato saplings were procured from **Raipur, Chhattisgarh**, and distributed to the participating farmers. SIGN facilitated the identification and registration of beneficiary farmers and coordinated the procurement process. Significantly, the farmers themselves bore the entire cost of purchasing the saplings. This demonstrates not only their confidence in grafted tomato cultivation but also a strong sense of ownership and commitment towards adopting sustainable and market-oriented farming practices.

The increasing demand for grafted tomato saplings reflects a positive shift in farmers' mindset—from experimenting with a new crop to investing confidently in an enterprise that promises higher productivity and improved household income. SIGN remains committed to accompanying these farmers by promoting climate-resilient agriculture, strengthening livelihoods, and enabling rural communities to build a more secure and prosperous future.