



एकम dialogues
संवाद से निर्माण



Echoes of EKAM

सम्मान के स्वर



प्रेरणा से परिवर्तन की कहानियाँ

© CEED, 2026

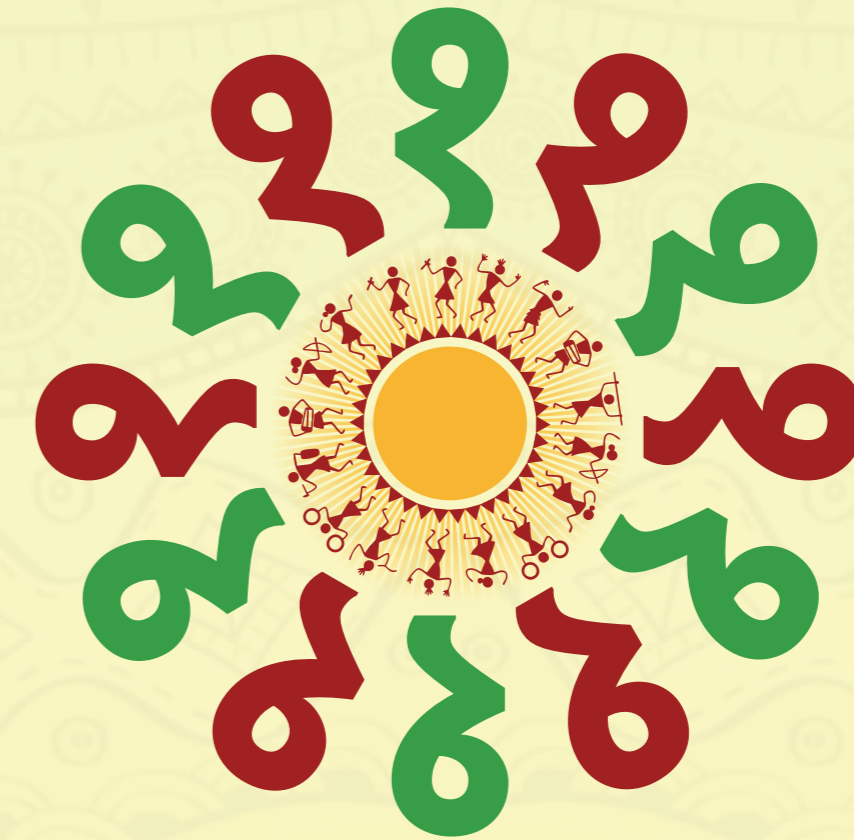
Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the invaluable support and insights provided by the representatives from community based grass root organisations, civil society organisations, senior government officials, think tanks, and academic institutions in identifying change-makers and do-gooders. We are equally thankful to women's and youth groups, tribal communities, and community leaders for taking part in this initiative, sharing their knowledge and lived experiences. We thank representatives from public sector undertakings, industries, business associations, and social entrepreneurs for their constructive engagement and guidance. The collective effort reflects the strength of collaboration and the importance of inclusive participation in celebrating grassroots leadership and change-makers.

Disclaimer

The information and narratives presented in this publication have been provided by the respective changemakers. The publishers do not independently verify the exact accuracy of the content. Any views or claims expressed are solely those of the contributors.

Published in April, 2026



शुभकामना संदेश



संजय सेठ
SANJAY SETH



सत्यमेव जयते

रक्षा राज्य मंत्री
भारत सरकार
Minister of State for Defence
Government of India

3 APR 2026

शुभकामना संदेश

"एकम डायलॉग्स-संवाद से निर्माण" के तत्वावधान में झारखण्ड, बिहार एवं उड़ीसा में जलवायु अनुकूलन, सतत विकास और सामुदायिक सशक्तिकरण के क्षेत्र में उल्लेखनीय कार्य कर रहे महानुभवों को "एकम सम्मान" से सम्मानित किया जाना हर्ष का विषय है।

सतत और समावेशी विकास की दिशा में सार्थक परिवर्तन तब संभव होता है, जब आम लोग एवं समुदाय स्वयं परिवर्तन के वाहक बनते हैं। विकसित भारत 2047 के संकल्प के साथ संस्था के सदस्य स्थानीय स्तर पर सामुदायिक नेतृत्व और साझा सहयोग के साथ पर्यावरण संरक्षण, जलवायु अनुकूलन कृषि, अक्षय ऊर्जा, अपशिष्ट प्रबंधन आदि विविध क्षेत्रों में व्यापक बदलाव लाने वाले कार्यों में सराहनीय भूमिका निभा रहे हैं। यह प्रशंसनीय है।

सभी सम्मानित व्यक्तियों को मेरी हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं।

वंदे मातरम्

संजय सेठ
(संजय सेठ)





डॉ० प्रेम कुमार
अध्यक्ष
बिहार विधान सभा



Dr. Prem Kumar
Speaker
Bihar Legislative Assembly

पत्रांक:


दिनांक :

शुभकामना संदेश

मुझे यह जानकर हार्दिक प्रसन्नता हो रही है कि सेंटर फॉर एनवायरमेंट एंड एनर्जी डेवलपमेंट (सीड) के द्वारा "एकम डायलॉग्स-संवाद से निर्माण" कार्यक्रम का आयोजन दिनांक:- 8 एवं 9 अप्रैल, 2026 को राँची, झारखंड में किया जा रहा है एवं इस अवसर पर 'एकम सम्मान' से सम्मानित अतिथियों के योगदान को प्रसारित करने के लिए एक विशेष स्मारिका का भी प्रकाशन किया जा रहा है। यह महत्वपूर्ण पहल जलवायु परिवर्तन, समावेशी विकास, सामाजिक-आर्थिक प्रगति जैसे विषयों पर संवाद एवं विचार-विमर्श के लिए एक सशक्त मंच प्रदान करेगी।

वर्तमान समय में सतत् एवं समावेशी विकास की आवश्यकता को ध्यान में रखते हुए यह कार्यक्रम सहभागिता, नवाचार एवं सहयोग की भावना को सुदृढ़ करने में सहायक सिद्ध होगा। मुझे पूर्ण विश्वास है कि यह पहल समाज में सकारात्मक परिवर्तन लाने के साथ-साथ स्थानीय आजीविकाओं को मजबूत बनाने, प्राकृतिक संसाधनों के संरक्षण और सामाजिक-आर्थिक विकास को आगे बढ़ाने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएगी।

मैं इस आयोजन के सफल संचालन हेतु आयोजक मंडल एवं सभी प्रतिभागियों को अपनी हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ प्रेषित करता हूँ तथा इनके उज्वल एवं दूरगामी परिणामों की मंगल कामना करता हूँ।


(डॉ० प्रेम कुमार)





विजय शर्मा
उप मुख्यमंत्री



छत्तीसगढ़ शासन
गृह एवं जेल, पंचायत एवं ग्रामीण विकास,
विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग
क्रमांक 1051
रायपुर, दिनांक 27-05-2026




“संदेश”

“एकम डायलॉग्स-संवाद से निर्माण” एक प्रशासनीय पहल है, जो क्षेत्रीय विकास, आर्थिक स्वावलम्बन, सामुदायिक समाधान पर केंद्रित विभिन्न विषयों पर संवाद सहयोग की नई संभावनाएं विकसित कर रही है। समाज में सार्थक परिवर्तन तभी संभव है, जब नवाचार, सहभागिता और सामुदायिक नेतृत्व साथ मिल कर काम करें।

एकम डायलॉग्स जलवायु परिवर्तन के समाधान से लेकर कृषि एवं अन्य आर्थिक गतिविधियों से जुड़ी आजीविका, कला, संस्कृति, तकनीकी ज्ञान पर विचारों के आदान-प्रदान को गति देने का कार्य करेगा साथ ही क्षेत्रीय विकास और भारत के समावेशी विकास के लक्ष्य को भी मजबूत करेगा।

मुझे अत्यंत हर्ष है कि इस अवसर पर झारखंड, छत्तीसगढ़, बिहार एवं उड़ीसा के परिवर्तनकर्ताओं (चेंजमेकर्स) को “एकम सम्मान” से सम्मानित किया जा रहा है। सभी को हार्दिक बधाई एवं शुभकामनाएं.....


(विजय शर्मा)



**सुदिव्य कुमार
मंत्री**

नगर विकास एवं आवास विभाग,
उच्च एवं तकनीकी शिक्षा विभाग तथा पर्यटन,
कला-संस्कृति, खेल-कूद एवं युवा कार्य विभाग,
झारखण्ड सरकार



कार्यालय:
कमरा संख्या-405, चतुर्थ तल
प्रोजेक्ट भवन, धुर्वा, राँची-834004
आवास-बंगला नं.-1,
स्मार्ट सिटी परिसर, धुर्वा, राँची-834004
दूरभाष नं.- 0651-2440000
मो.- 9431144328
ई-मेल: udhministerjhr2024@gmail.com

पत्रक : १९८/शं.की०

दिनांक : २५/०९/२०२४

शुभकामना संदेश

वर्तमान समय में जलवायु परिवर्तन के दुष्प्रभावों और विकास की चुनौतियों के बीच स्थानीय स्तर पर व्यक्तिगत एवं सामूहिक प्रयासों की भूमिका बेहद महत्वपूर्ण है। समुदाय के पारम्परिक ज्ञान, विद्युत, कला एवं संस्कृति के संरक्षण से सर्वांगीण विकास को बल मिलता है।

इस संदर्भ में 'एकम डायलॉग्स-संवाद से निर्माण' एक उत्प्रेरक प्रयास है, जो सतत विकास से जुड़े अनेक महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दों सामुदायिक पहल एवं जमीनी प्रयासों पर सार्थक संवाद को आगे बढ़ा रहा है और विभिन्न पक्षों को एक मंच पर ला रहा है। यह जान कर प्रसन्नता हुई कि समाज में बेहतर कार्य करनेवालों विभूतियों को इस मंच से 'एकम सम्मान' से सम्मानित किया जा रहा है, जिनके अथक प्रयास स्थानीय स्तर पर पर्यावरण संरक्षण से लेकर आजीविका एवं सशक्तीकरण के नए अवसरों का निर्माण कर रहे हैं। ये प्रयास राज्य एवं क्षेत्रीय विकास को गति देते हुए विकसित भारत के लक्ष्य की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दे सकते हैं। इस महत्वपूर्ण अवसर पर मेरी तरफ से सभी को शुभकामनाएं।

!!जोहार!!


(सुदिव्य कुमार)





केदार कश्यप
मंत्री
छत्तीसगढ़ शासन
वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन, परिवहन
सहकारिता एवं संसदीय कार्य विभाग



फ़सल क्रमांक : एम-3/13, मंत्रालय, महानदी
भवन, अटल नगर, नया रायपुर
फोन (मंत्रालय): 0771-2510321
फैक्स नं. : 0771-2221321
निवास : निवास एम-10, सेक्टर-24,
नया रायपुर अटल नगर
मो. नं. : 94252-61000, 98939-61000
फोन नं. : 0771-2331032, 2331033
ई-मेल : kashyapbstar@gmail.com

क्रमांक 147/VSP

दिनांक 21/03/2026

“शुभकामनाएं संदेश”

स्थानीय स्तर पर किए गए प्रयास भी बड़े बदलाव का आधार बन सकते हैं। जमीनी नवाचार और सामुदायिक पहलें क्षेत्रीय विकास को सुदृढ़ करते हुए भारत के सतत और समावेशी भविष्य की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दे सकते हैं।

इस संदर्भ में 'एकम डायलॉग्स-संवाद से निर्माण' का प्रयास सराहनीय है, जो सतत विकास से जुड़े विविध मुद्दों पर सार्थक संवाद को आगे बढ़ाने का एक महत्वपूर्ण मंच प्रदान कर रहा है। 'एकम सम्मान' से सम्मानित परिवर्तनकर्ताओं को हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं, जिन्होंने अपने समर्पण और दूरदर्शिता से समाज में सकारात्मक बदलाव की प्रेरक मिसाल प्रस्तुत की है।

आपके कार्य प्राकृतिक संसाधनों के संरक्षण और समाज के वंचित वर्गों को आगे बढ़ाने में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दे रहे हैं तथा विकसित के संकल्प को सशक्त बना रहे हैं।

इस कार्य के लिए असीम शुभकामनाएं।

(केदार कश्यप)





मंगल पाण्डेय
मंत्री
स्वास्थ्य एवं विधि विभाग
बिहार, पटना



Mangal Pandey
Minister
Health & Law Department
Bihar, Patna

पत्रांक... 289 (810)

दिनांक 25/03/2024


शुभकामना संदेश

मुझे यह जानकर अत्यंत प्रसन्नता हो रही है कि सेंटर फॉर एनवायरनमेंट एंड एनर्जी डेवलपमेंट (सीड) द्वारा 'एकम डायलॉग्स-संवाद से निर्माण' कार्यक्रम का आयोजन 8 एवं 9 अप्रैल 2026 को रांची में किया जा रहा है।

यह पहल न केवल विचार-विमर्श का एक सशक्त मंच प्रदान करती है, बल्कि 'एकत्व' की भावना के साथ सामूहिक विकास के मार्ग को भी प्रशस्त करती है। आज विश्व जलवायु परिवर्तन, सामाजिक-आर्थिक असमानताओं और सतत विकास की चुनौतियों का सामना कर रहा है।

'एकम सम्मान' के माध्यम से जमीनी स्तर पर परिवर्तन लाने वाले व्यक्तित्वों को सम्मानित करना प्रेरणादायक पहल है, जो समाज में नवाचार, सेवा और समर्पण की भावना को और सशक्त करेगा। यह कार्यक्रम युवाओं, विद्यार्थियों एवं समाज के सभी वर्गों को पर्यावरण संरक्षण, जलवायु अनुकूलन तथा सतत आजीविका के प्रति प्रेरित करेगा और एक जिम्मेदार एवं जागरूक समाज के निर्माण में सहायक सिद्ध होगा।

अतएव, मैं 'एकम डायलॉग्स' की पूरी टीम को सफल आयोजन के लिए शुभकामनाएं देता हूँ।


(मंगल पाण्डेय)





राम कृपाल यादव
मंत्री
कृषि विभाग
बिहार सरकार



RAM KRIPAL YADAV
MINISTER
Agriculture Department
Government of Bihar

पत्रांक: 674/.....

दिनांक: 23/03/2024...

शुभकामना संदेश

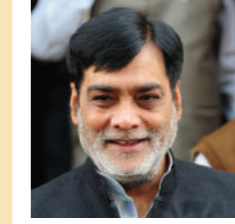
मुझे यह जानकर अत्यंत प्रसन्नता हो रही है कि सेंटर फॉर एनवायरनमेंट एंड एनर्जी डेवलपमेंट (सीड) द्वारा "एकम डायलॉग-संवाद से निर्माण" कार्यक्रम का आयोजन दिनांक 8 एवं 9 अप्रैल, 2026 को रांची, झारखंड में किया जा रहा है। इस अवसर पर 'एकम सम्मान' से विशिष्ट अतिथियों का अभिनंदन एवं उक्त अवसर पर एक विशेष स्मारिका का प्रकाशन अत्यंत ही सराहनीय पहल है।

यह कार्यक्रम जलवायु परिवर्तन, समावेशी विकास एवं सामाजिक-आर्थिक प्रगति जैसे महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर सार्थक संवाद का मंच प्रदान करेगा। वर्तमान समय में सतत एवं संतुलित विकास की आवश्यकता को देखते हुए ऐसे आयोजन अत्यंत प्रासंगिक हैं, जो सहभागिता, नवाचार और सहयोग की भावना को सुदृढ़ करेंगी।

मुझे पूर्ण विश्वास है कि यह पहल न केवल समाज में सकारात्मक परिवर्तन लाने में सहायक सिद्ध होगी, बल्कि स्थानीय आजीविकाओं को सशक्त बनाने, प्राकृतिक संसाधनों के संरक्षण तथा समग्र विकास को गति देने में भी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएगी।

मैं इस आयोजन के सफल संचालन हेतु आयोजक मंडल, प्रतिभागियों एवं सभी सहयोगियों को अपनी हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं देता हूँ, तथा कार्यक्रम की उज्ज्वल एवं दीर्घकालीन सफलता की कामना करता हूँ।

राम कृपाल यादव
(राम कृपाल यादव)





Sanjeev Kumar, I.F.S.
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
& Head of Forest Force



Government of Jharkhand
Forest, Environment and Climate Change Deptt.
Van Bhawan, Doranda, Ranchi - 834002

Message

The growing impacts of climate variability are deeply felt by all, particularly to vulnerable communities, making collective action and community-led stewardship more important than ever. In this context, meaningful engagement with local communities emerges as a cornerstone of resilient and inclusive development.

It is encouraging to know that 'EKAM Samman' is celebrating the contributions of changemakers who strive to do such impactful work. EKAM Dialogue-Samvaad se Nirmaan will help in strengthening their vision and commitment to sustainable progress.

I extend my best wishes to all the awardees for their inspiring contributions to climate resilience, community empowerment and sustainable development. Initiatives like these, reinforce the value of grassroots leadership and strengthen the pathway to inclusive, long-term development.


(Sanjeev Kumar)





ए.के. रस्तोगी, भा.ज.से. (सेवानिवृत्त)
अध्यक्ष
A.K. Rastogi, IFS (retd.)
Chairman



टास्क फोर्स-सस्टेनेबल जस्ट ट्रांजिशन
झारखण्ड सरकार
Task Force, Sustainable Just Transition
Government of Jharkhand



Message

Changemakers and innovators play a pivotal role in advancing social development by translating ideas into impactful action, empowering communities, and driving practical solutions at the grassroots.

I am delighted to note that 'EKAM Dialogues – Samvaad se Nirmaan' has been initiated to felicitate changemakers from Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to all the changemakers being honoured through 'EKAM Samman'.

Their contributions are particularly significant in the context of climate resilience, where local knowledge and community-led initiatives form the foundation of stronger, adaptive, and future-ready societies.

Such efforts resonate strongly with the vision of Viksit Bharat, anchored in inclusive, sustainable, and environmentally responsible growth. They also reflect the principles of sustainable just transition—ensuring that development pathways are equitable, participatory, and leave no one behind.

A.K. Rastogi, IFS (retd.)



Arun Kumar Pandey I.F.S.
अरूण कुमार पाण्डेय भा.व.से.



**PCCF (Wildlife) cum
Chief Wildlife Warden,
Chhattisgarh**
प्र.सु.व.सं. (वन्यजीव) सह
मुख्य वन्यजीव वार्डन, छत्तीसगढ़

D.O. Letter No. 25... Dated: 23/02/2026

संदेश

'एकम डायलॉग्स - संवाद से निर्माण' एक ऐसी सार्थक पहल है, जो जलवायु परिवर्तन जैसे जटिल विषय को समाज के विभिन्न वर्गों के बीच संवाद और सहभागिता के माध्यम से सरल, समावेशी और क्रियाशील बनाती है। वर्तमान समय में, जब जलवायु परिवर्तन का प्रभाव हमारे प्राकृतिक संसाधनों, आजीविका एवं पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र पर स्पष्ट रूप से दृष्टिगोचर हो रहा है, तब ऐसे संघों की आवश्यकता और भी बढ़ जाती है।

छत्तीसगढ़ में जलवायु प्रकोष्ठ के माध्यम से किए जा रहे प्रयासों का मूल आधार भी यही है कि नीति और समुदाय के बीच एक मजबूत सेतु स्थापित किया जाए। 'एकम डायलॉग्स' इस दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण पहल है, जो स्थानीय अनुभवों, पारंपरिक ज्ञान और वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण को एक साथ लाकर समाधान-उन्मुख संवाद को प्रोत्साहित करती है।

'एकम सम्मान' के अंतर्गत छत्तीसगढ़, झारखंड, बिहार एवं ओडिशा के परिवर्तनकर्ताओं को सम्मानित करना न केवल उनके उत्कृष्ट कार्यों का सम्मान है, बल्कि यह अन्य समुदायों के लिए प्रेरणा का स्रोत भी है। ये परिवर्तनकर्ता अपने-अपने क्षेत्रों में जलवायु अनुकूलन, संसाधन संरक्षण एवं सामुदायिक सशक्तिकरण के सशक्त उदाहरण प्रस्तुत कर रहे हैं।

मैं इस महत्वपूर्ण पहल की सफलता के लिए अपनी शुभकामनाएँ प्रेषित करता हूँ और आशा करता हूँ कि यह संवाद सतत एवं समावेशी विकास की दिशा में ठोस परिणामों का मार्ग प्रशस्त करेगा।


(अरूण कुमार पाण्डेय)





Ravi Ranjan
IFS



झारखण्ड सरकार

PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF
FORESTS, WILDLIFE & CHIEF WILDLIFE
WARDEN, JHARKHAND, RANCHI-834002

Ph. : 0651-2481744 (Off.)
Mob. : 9431142808
E-mail : pccf-wildlife@gov.in

Message

Efforts led at the grassroots level are crucial in strengthening ecological balance and fostering resilient communities. By nurturing sustainable livelihoods, encouraging locally driven solutions, and reinforcing the harmony between people and nature, these initiatives contribute meaningfully to regional and national development. Delighted to know that EKAM Dialogues-Samvaad se Nirmaan echoes the same.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the changemakers being felicitated through 'EKAM Samman'. Their exemplary contributions toward climate resilience, sustainable development, grassroots innovation, and community empowerment stand as inspiring models of responsible stewardship and people-centric progress.

The work of these changemakers reflects the true spirit of sustainable development—where progress is measured not only in economic terms, but also in the well-being of ecosystems and communities alike.

As India moves forward on its journey towards *Viksit Bharat*, such endeavours highlight the importance of inclusive growth, environmental responsibility, and collaborative action.


(Ravi Ranjan)





Message

EKAM Dialogues - Samvaad se Nirmaan deserves appreciation for initiating a solution-driven discourse on key themes of sustainable development and climate resilience. By creating a platform for shared learning and action, EKAM Dialogues can shape a more inclusive and sustainable path of development.

It is heartening to know that grassroots changemakers from Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha are being recognised for their remarkable work in climate resilience, sustainable development, grassroots innovation, and community empowerment through EKAM Samman.

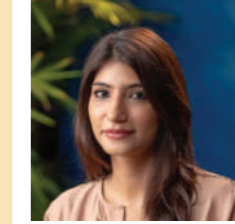
I am hopeful that these efforts are contributing immensely to helping communities adapt to climate challenges while strengthening local livelihoods and protecting valuable natural resources.

Warmly,

Shloka Nath

CEO, India Climate Collaborative (ICC)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shloka Nath".





रामपति कुमार
चौक एग्जीक्यूटिव ऑफिसर
Ramapati Kumar
Chief Executive Officer



सेंटर फॉर एनवायरनमेंट एंड
एनर्जी डेवलपमेंट (सीड)
Center for Environment and
Energy Development (CEED)



संदेश

झारखंड, ओडिशा, छत्तीसगढ़ और बिहार जैसे पूर्व-मध्य भारत के राज्य देश की विकास यात्रा में अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण स्थान रखते हैं। प्राकृतिक संसाधनों से समृद्ध, सांस्कृतिक रूप से विविध और मानव संसाधन से परिपूर्ण ये क्षेत्र देश की अर्थव्यवस्था, ऊर्जा सुरक्षा और औद्योगिक विकास को मजबूती प्रदान करते रहे हैं। आज जब भारत सतत और समावेशी विकास की ओर अग्रसर है, तब इन राज्यों में उभर रहे जमीनी प्रयास और स्थानीय नवाचार राष्ट्रीय प्रगति के नए आयाम तय कर रहे हैं।

इसी संदर्भ में 'एकम डायलॉग्स - संवाद से निर्माण' का आयोजन विशेष महत्व रखता है, जो केवल चर्चा व विमर्श का मंच नहीं, बल्कि साझा चिंतन और सह-निर्माण की सतत प्रक्रिया है। इसका उद्देश्य अतीत की सीख, वर्तमान की चुनौतियों और भविष्य की संभावनाओं को जोड़ना है।

एकम डायलॉग्स उन परिवर्तनकर्तओं को सम्मानित करने का एक मंच है, जिनकी प्रतिबद्धता और दूरदृष्टि समाज में बदलाव ला रही है। 'एकम सम्मान' की रूपरेखा इस बात का सशक्त उदाहरण है कि छोटे-छोटे प्रयास किस प्रकार बड़े परिवर्तन का आधार बनते हैं, जहाँ हर स्थानीय पहल, आगे चलकर व्यापक प्रभाव उत्पन्न करती है।

इस कार्यक्रम में सम्मानित की जा रही सभी विभूतियाँ जलवायु अनुकूलन, सतत विकास, जमीनी नवाचार और सामुदायिक सशक्तिकरण के क्षेत्रों में प्रेरणादायक कार्य कर रही हैं। उनके प्रयास न केवल स्थानीय समुदायों के जीवन में सकारात्मक बदलाव ला रहे हैं, बल्कि क्षेत्रीय विकास को भी गति दे रहे हैं। सभी चेंजमेकर्स को हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ!

ऐसी पहलें इस विचार को और मजबूत करती हैं कि क्षेत्रीय विकास ही राष्ट्रीय विकास की आधारशिला है। जब झारखंड, ओडिशा, छत्तीसगढ़ और बिहार जैसे राज्य अपने स्थानीय संसाधनों, ज्ञान और समुदायों की शक्ति के साथ आगे बढ़ते हैं, तो यह पूरे देश की समृद्धि और स्थिरता को सुनिश्चित करता है। हमें पूर्ण विश्वास है कि एकम डायलॉग्स इस प्रक्रिया में विमर्श एवं समाधान के जरिए सार्वक योगदान देने को तत्पर रहेगा।


Ramapati Kumar



Foreword

At a time when the urgency of climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods is increasingly shaping global and local discourse, the stories of changemakers and do-gooders offer a powerful reminder: enduring solutions are often rooted in the ground realities of communities themselves. Drawn from lived experiences, local knowledge systems, and cultural traditions, their journeys can illuminate how resilience is not merely conceptualised, but practised—every day, in diverse and meaningful ways.

EKAM Dialogues-Samvaad se Nirmaan brings together a constellation of voices that both shape and reflect the realities of India's resource-rich eastern and central heartlands—Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Odisha. These regions, long integral to the nation's ecological balance, cultural richness, industrial prowess and economic fabric, are also at the forefront of navigating complex development and climate challenges. Within this context, EKAM Dialogues emerges as a platform grounded in the spirit of oneness—connecting people, practices, and perspectives to reimagine pathways for inclusive and resilient development.

Under the aegis of EKAM Dialogues, EKAM Samman is a thoughtful facilitation of individuals whose work strengthens the intrinsic relationship between communities, culture, and the natural environment. It celebrates changemakers who, through their dedication and vision, are shaping pathways of transformation that are deeply local, yet widely relevant. By honouring these efforts, EKAM Samman underscores the critical importance of locally rooted initiatives in driving sustainable and resilient regional development.

By nurturing sustainable livelihoods, encouraging community-led innovations, and reinforcing the harmony between people and nature, these changemakers are contributing meaningfully not only to regional progress but also to broader national priorities of Viksit Bharat@2047.

These initiatives foster a sense of shared responsibility, inspire community participation, and contribute to long-term, systemic change. Their work is especially significant in the context of climate resilience, where local action and indigenous knowledge systems form the bedrock of adaptive, inclusive, and future-ready societies.

This endeavour is a tribute to their inspiring journeys—stories and moving anecdotes that remind us that transformation is most powerful when it is inclusive, grounded, and driven by the collective strength of communities.

Content

Chapter 1

| | |
|---|----|
| EKAM Dialogues: संवाद से निर्माण <i>Concept & Philosophy</i> | 35 |
|---|----|

Chapter 2

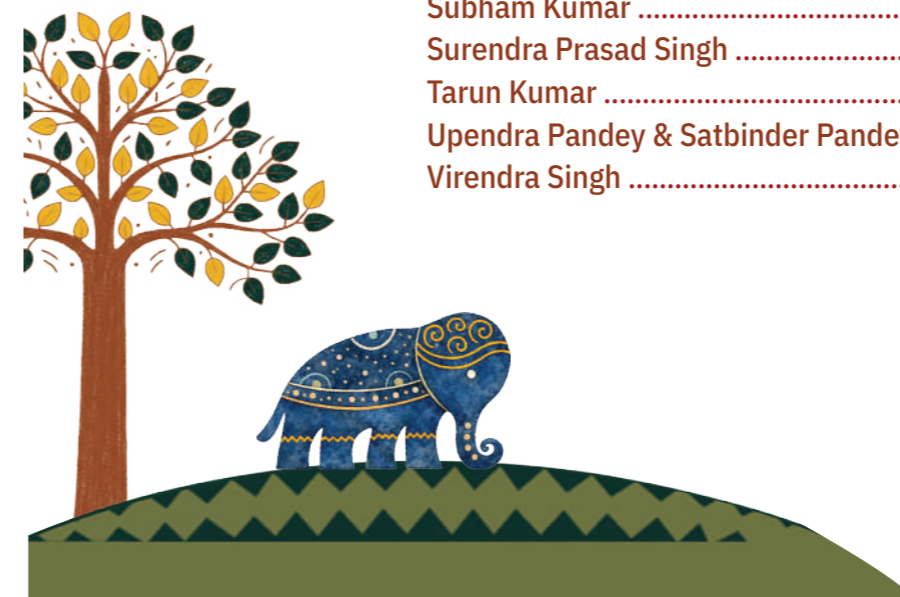
| | |
|--|---------|
| EKAM Samman (एकम सम्मान) <i>Honouring the Voices of Resilience from India's Heartland</i> | 37 - 38 |
|--|---------|

Chapter 3

| | |
|--|--------|
| Changemakers (प्रेरणा से परिवर्तन की कहानियाँ) | 40 -93 |
| Aparna Kumari | 40 |
| Ashok Kumar Raut | 42 |
| Bhau Rao Godbole | 44 |
| Damodar Kashyap | 46 |
| Dr. Manoj Kumar | 48 |
| Dropadi Devi | 50 |
| Francis Munda | 52 |
| Jhumuk Lal Merawi | 54 |



| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Kalawati Kashyap | 56 |
| Lekesh Bai Jain | 58 |
| Lokanath Nauri | 60 |
| Mahadev Mahto | 62 |
| Neelima Mishra | 64 |
| Prabhat Kumar Mahato | 66 |
| Prabhat Mishra | 68 |
| Raimati Ghiuria | 70 |
| Rajendra Baghel | 72 |
| Ravi Kumar Singh | 74 |
| Sangita Devi | 76 |
| Sanjay Kacchap | 78 |
| Shibani Padhy | 80 |
| Shyam Lal Rajwaade | 82 |
| Subham Kumar | 84 |
| Surendra Prasad Singh | 86 |
| Tarun Kumar | 88 |
| Upendra Pandey & Satbinder Pandey | 90 |
| Virendra Singh | 92 |



CHAPTER 1

EKAM Dialogues: संवाद से निर्माण Concept & Philosophy



EKAM Dialogues: Samvaad se Nirmaan

EKAM Dialogues emerges from a simple yet profound idea - oneness. Not as an abstract ideal, but as something lived, felt, and practiced across people, places, and possibilities.

Rooted in India's eastern and central heartland - Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Odisha, EKAM is shaped by regions that have long sustained the nation's cultural, ecological, and economic fabric. These landscapes are not peripheral to India's story; they are foundational to it. Here, dialogue begins with listening - deeply, patiently, and with intent. EKAM brings together communities, changemakers, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and youth to collectively reflect and respond to the realities of our time. In recognising shared histories and interconnected futures, EKAM invites a reimagining of development - one that is resilient, inclusive, and grounded in the strength of the regions themselves.

EKAM Dialogues : Oneness in Action

EKAM Dialogues is not a moment - it is a process. A space where the past informs the present, and the present shapes what comes next. It is designed as a living continuum of reflection and action, where ideas are not only exchanged, but evolved.

At its core are two interwoven movements:

- **Samvaad** - conversations that are intentional, inclusive, and solution-oriented.
- **Nirmaan** - the act of building together, shaping pathways that are rooted in context and responsive to the future.

Within this rhythm, EKAM becomes more than a convening. It becomes a space where:

- diverse perspectives meet without hierarchy
- regions articulate their own narratives
- ideas are shaped through trust, dialogue, and shared purpose

Here, oneness is not declared - it is practiced through participation.

One Platform, Diverse Voices

EKAM Dialogues brings together a constellation of voices that shape and experience the realities of India's resource-rich heartlands.

From policymakers and public institutions to private sector leaders, from academic and research communities to civil society organisations, each brings a distinct lens to the table. Alongside them are grassroots changemakers and indigenous knowledge holders, whose lived experiences anchor the dialogue in authenticity and place. Artists, storytellers, and cultural practitioners expand the imagination of what resilience can mean, while philanthropy and impact funders help translate ideas into sustained action.

What emerges is not just a gathering, but a shared ecosystem - where those who design systems and those who live within them engage as equals. Rooted in Samvaad and moving towards Nirmaan, EKAM becomes a space where diverse leadership converges to shape pathways for inclusive, region-led transformation.

CHAPTER 2

एकम सम्मान

Honouring the Voices of Resilience from India's Heartland

EKAM Samman

Honouring the Voices of Resilience from India's Heartland

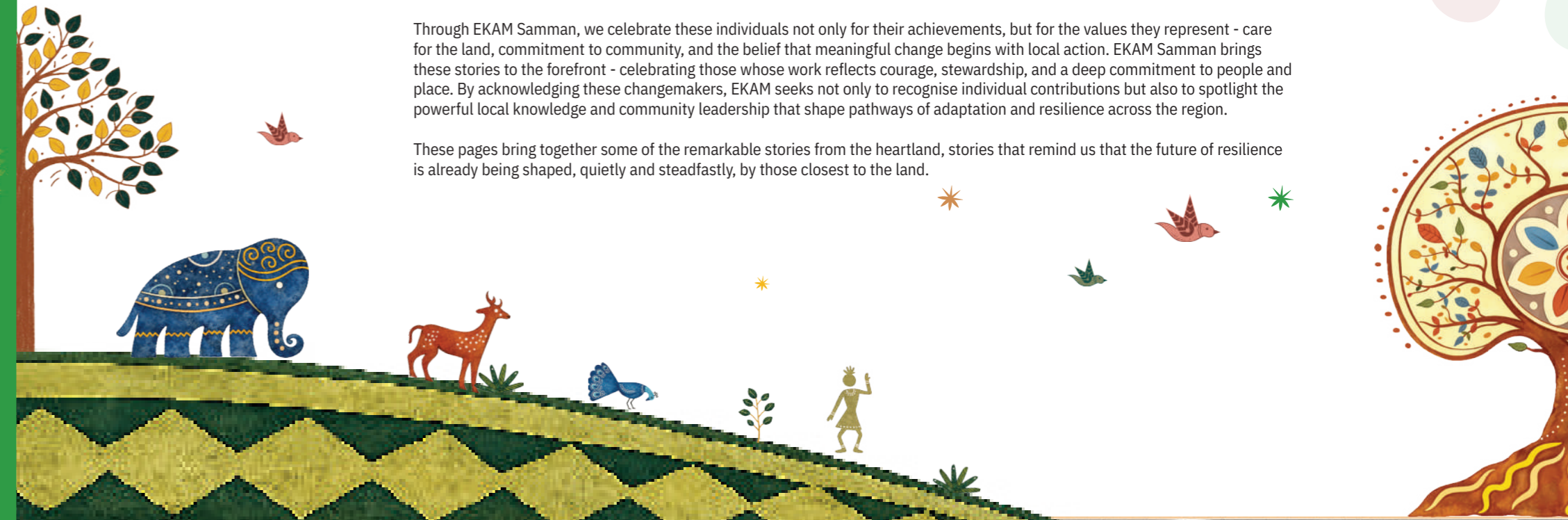
Across the landscapes of Eastern and Central India, resilience has long been shaped not only by policy or institutions, but by the quiet efforts of individuals within communities. Farmers who adapt to changing seasons, artists who preserve cultural memory, teachers who inspire stewardship of forests, and local leaders who mobilise people to protect the resources around them - these are the changemakers who sustain the region's living traditions of resilience.

EKAM Samman is a recognition instituted under EKAM Dialogues that recognises such individuals whose work strengthens the connection between communities, culture, and the natural environment. Their initiatives may begin modestly, a song sung in a village gathering, a craft revived in a small workshop, a symbolic thread tied around a tree, but over time these actions grow into movements that inspire collective responsibility and long-term change.

At a time when conversations around climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods are becoming increasingly urgent, the stories of these changemakers remind us that solutions often emerge from the ground up. Rooted in local knowledge, cultural traditions, and community participation, their journeys offer powerful examples of how resilience is built in practice.

Through EKAM Samman, we celebrate these individuals not only for their achievements, but for the values they represent - care for the land, commitment to community, and the belief that meaningful change begins with local action. EKAM Samman brings these stories to the forefront - celebrating those whose work reflects courage, stewardship, and a deep commitment to people and place. By acknowledging these changemakers, EKAM seeks not only to recognise individual contributions but also to spotlight the powerful local knowledge and community leadership that shape pathways of adaptation and resilience across the region.

These pages bring together some of the remarkable stories from the heartland, stories that remind us that the future of resilience is already being shaped, quietly and steadfastly, by those closest to the land.



What EKAM Samman Ensues

EKAM Samman honours individuals whose work bridges climate adaptation, livelihood generation, ecological stewardship, and community leadership. The recognition celebrates those who have strengthened the resilience of communities through sustained grassroots action, cultural preservation, or innovative approaches that respond to environmental change.

Beyond felicitation, EKAM Samman also aims to document and amplify the journeys of these changemakers, ensuring that their experiences become part of a wider narrative on regional resilience.

The Process Behind Recognition

Changemakers recognised through EKAM Samman are identified through a rigorous, multi-layered selection process designed to ensure credibility, depth, and regional relevance.

The process begins with nominations and recommendations from CEED's network of partner organisations and institutions across the regions. These are followed by an internal screening to assess alignment with EKAM's focus on resilience, livelihoods, and community-led change.

Shortlisted individuals are then engaged through one-on-one conversations, enabling a deeper understanding of their journeys, values, and lived experiences.

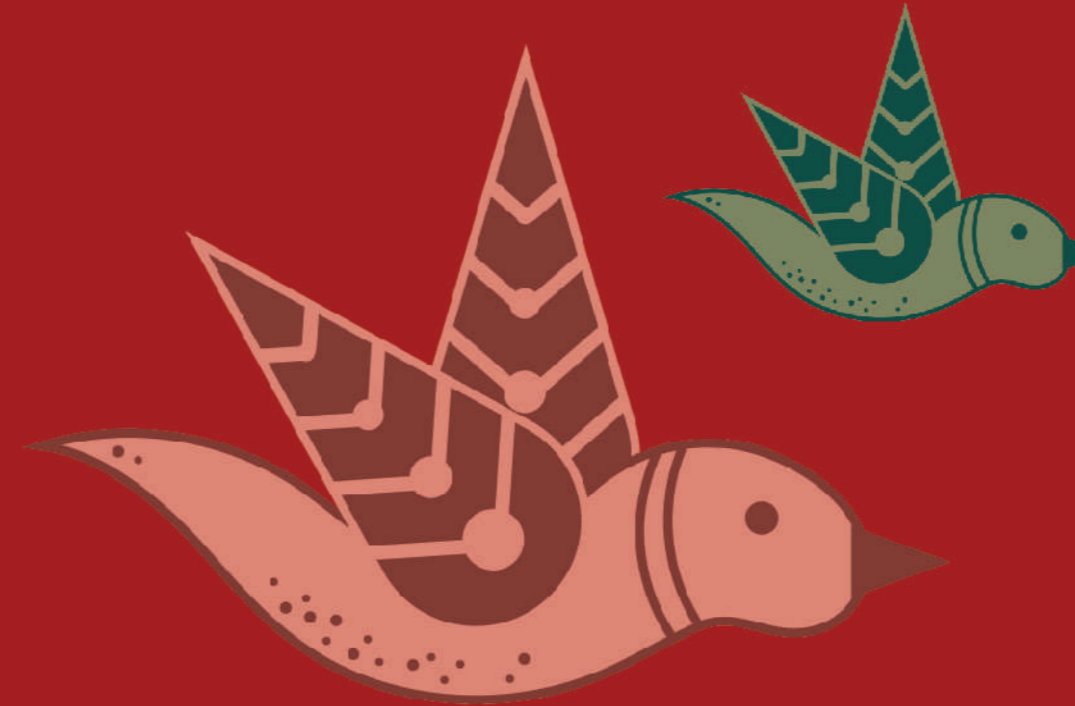
The final selection is undertaken by an independent external committee, comprising diverse experts and stakeholders, ensuring a balanced and credible evaluation.

Through this process, EKAM Samman recognises not just impact, but the integrity, commitment, and rootedness that define meaningful change.



CHAPTER 3

प्रेरणा से परिवर्तन की कहानियाँ





Aparna Kumari

Renewable Energy Innovator |
 Founder, ARD Electricals |
 Leader, "Kumari Girls"



"In a small village of Bokaro, she turned sunlight into opportunity, empowering women, powering homes, and lighting the path toward a cleaner future."



In Dantu village of Jharkhand, where access to reliable energy has long been a challenge, Aparna Kumari chose to reimagine what rural communities could achieve. As a young student, she believed that villages need not remain passive consumers of energy, they could become producers of clean, sustainable solutions.

With this vision, she founded ARD Electricals and began building a grassroots model of renewable energy entrepreneurship. What started as a small initiative soon grew into a movement led by local women - the "Kumari Girls". Today, Aparna and her team manufacture LED bulbs, assemble solar lighting systems, and repair electrical equipment, bringing affordable and reliable energy solutions to surrounding communities. Her work goes beyond access, it creates skills, livelihoods, and confidence among women and youth.

From powering homes to enabling farmers and small enterprises, her journey reflects how clean energy can become a catalyst for both climate resilience and community transformation.

Driving Clean Energy Solutions

- Produced 20,000+ LED bulbs and 1,500 solar lighting devices
- Promotes decentralised renewable energy in rural communities
- Developed solar innovations including vendor lights, dryers, and emergency devices
- Supported farmers in accessing solar irrigation under PM-KUSUM

Community Impact

- Trained 30+ women and youth in solar and electrical skills
- Facilitated solar installations in community spaces and public infrastructure
- Mobilised 200+ villagers in clean energy awareness and action
- Enabled green entrepreneurship and local livelihood opportunities

Sustainability & Innovation

- Introduced energy-efficient solutions for rural processing (e.g., solar dryers)
- Promotes circular practices such as recycling plastic into eco-bricks
- Strengthens climate resilience through accessible, low-cost technologies

Recognition

- Featured by UN Women in 75 Women Leaders in India
- Showcased during the G20 Summit as a model of women-led climate action
- Recognised as a Climate Champion by National Youth Climate Consortium (UNICEF-supported initiative)
- Winner, Eco Innovation Awards (2025) and Runner-up (2024)
- Featured in national media including Doordarshan, Scroll, and The Times of India
- Represented Jharkhand at the India Skills Competition 2024
- Serves as the "Voice of Vocational Education" for Lend A Hand India

Leadership & Roles

- Founder, ARD Electricals, Bokaro
- Leader of the women-led group "Kumari Girls"
- Renewable energy entrepreneur and grassroots innovator

A Message for the Future

Aparna Kumari believes that energy access is the foundation of opportunity. Her vision is to build energy-secure communities where clean technology powers not just homes, but livelihoods, dignity, and a more resilient future.



*"20,000+ LED bulbs,
 1,500+ solar devices-
 powering homes and
 possibilities."*



Ashok Kumar Raut
Wetland Conservationist |
Community Mobiliser



“When a wetland is restored, it doesn’t just bring back water - it revives ecosystems, livelihoods, and the balance that sustains them.”

In the coastal landscapes of Odisha, where wetlands are lifelines for both ecology and livelihoods, Ashok Kumar Raut has emerged as a committed grassroots environmental advocate. Witnessing the steady degradation of traditional water systems, he joined hands with a collective of retired professionals to initiate a sustained effort to restore and protect the Asrukholā wetland ecosystem, turning concern into coordinated action.

As a key member of the Asrukholā Development Council (ADC), established in 2021, Ashok Kumar Raut has played a central role in driving the restoration of the Asrukholā–Sukpaika wetland system.

What began as a local initiative has evolved into a large-scale ecological restoration effort spanning a 63 km stretch. Restoration work has expanded from an initial 4.7 km to 58 km, involving extensive cleaning, desilting, and an average depth recovery of 3.5 metres.

Through a convergence-based approach, ADC has successfully mobilised government support and aligned multiple public agencies to scale the initiative. With a long-term vision, the council aims to position Asrukholā as an internationally recognised serpentine wetland.

Restoring Water, Restoring Systems

- Restored degraded wetland ecosystems through desilting, cleaning, and revival of natural water flow
- Strengthened biodiversity habitats and ecological balance across the wetland landscape
- Improved water retention and hydrological functions critical for climate resilience

Community Impact

- Revived 4.7 km of drainage (Phase I) with a ₹15 crore investment and secured approval for 58 km restoration (Phase II) with ₹165 crore
- Improved water availability, supporting agriculture and local livelihoods
- Strengthened community awareness and participation in wetland conservation



Recognition

- Led one of the region’s most significant community-driven wetland restoration efforts through the Asrukholā Development Council
- Successfully enabled government convergence and institutional backing for large-scale ecological restoration
- ADC’s 11-point restoration framework formally accepted by the Drainage Authority, setting a precedent for structured, community-led wetland management
- Recognised as a strong example of how citizen-led initiatives can influence policy, funding, and environmental governance

Leadership & Roles

- Core Member, Asrukholā Development Council (ADC)
- Grassroots environmental advocate for wetland restoration
- Community mobiliser promoting collective ecological action

A Message for the Future

Ashok Kumar Raut believes that wetlands are critical to sustaining life, livelihoods, and ecological balance. Protecting and restoring them is not just an environmental need, but a shared responsibility for the future.



“63 km restored. ₹180+ crore mobilised. One community-led movement.”



Bhau Rao Godbole

Traditional Healer | Biodiversity Conservationist | Keeper of Indigenous Knowledge



“In the forests of Bastar, he protects not only the plants that heal, but also the knowledge that keeps forests alive.”

In the forested landscapes of Bastar, where healing traditions are deeply rooted in nature, Vaidyaraj Bhaurao Godbole has dedicated his life to preserving both biodiversity and the wisdom that sustains it.

A traditional healer by lineage, his knowledge of medicinal plants was passed down through generations. Over time, he witnessed many of these valuable species gradually disappearing from the forests. Rather than letting this knowledge fade, he chose to act.

Through years of observation, learning, and community engagement, he began conserving rare medicinal plants and documenting their uses. One of his most significant contributions is the creation of a medicinal plant seed bank, ensuring that these species can be preserved and regenerated for the future.

His work bridges ecology and health, demonstrating how traditional knowledge systems can play a vital role in sustaining both forests and communities.

Conserving Medicinal Biodiversity

- Protects and cultivates rare medicinal plant species of Bastar
- Established a medicinal plant seed bank for long-term conservation
- Preserves indigenous knowledge linked to forest ecosystems

Community Impact

- Promotes awareness on conserving medicinal plants and forest habitats
- Encourages sustainable harvesting practices among local communities
- Strengthens the connection between traditional healing and ecological stewardship

Knowledge & Ecology

- Safeguards intergenerational knowledge of herbal medicine
- Demonstrates the role of indigenous practices in biodiversity conservation
- Links community health with the preservation of natural ecosystems

Recognition

- Recognised at state and national levels for contributions to traditional healing and biodiversity conservation
- Acknowledged for preserving rare medicinal plant species and indigenous knowledge systems

Leadership & Roles

- Traditional healer and medicinal plant conservationist
- Grassroots leader in biodiversity preservation in Bastar

A Message for the Future

Bhaurao Godbole believes that forests heal when their knowledge is protected. His vision is to ensure that both medicinal plants and the wisdom they carry continue to sustain communities for generations to come.



“200+ rare plants documented—protecting both forests and their wisdom.”



Damodar Kashyap

Community Leader | Forest Guardian |
Advocate of Collective Stewardship



“In the forests of Bastar, he proved that when communities protect the forest, the forest protects the future.”

In the dense forests of Bastar, where livelihoods and identity are deeply intertwined with nature, Damodar Kashyap has spent a lifetime nurturing a quiet yet powerful idea that communities are the true custodians of forests.

Belonging to the Bhatra tribal community, he witnessed both the richness of these ecosystems and the growing pressures they faced. Rather than waiting for external intervention, he turned inward to community wisdom and collective action.

In Sandhkarmari village, he led the revival of degraded forest land through the Thengapalli system, a traditional model of shared responsibility. Villagers came together to protect, monitor, and sustainably manage their forests transforming depleted landscapes into thriving ecosystems.

What began as a local effort has since inspired neighbouring villages, demonstrating how indigenous knowledge and community governance can restore both ecology and livelihoods.

Community-Led Forest Conservation

- Regenerated over 240 hectares of degraded forest
- Revived the traditional Thengapalli system of forest governance
- Prevents illegal felling and promotes sustainable resource use
- Strengthens biodiversity and ecosystem resilience

Environmental Impact

- Improved groundwater recharge and local water availability
- Supports sustainable harvesting of forest produce (mahua, tendu, chironji)
- Demonstrates long-term ecological restoration through community stewardship

Community Impact

- Strengthened collective decision-making and local governance
- Secured forest-based livelihoods for village households
- Inspired neighbouring villages to adopt similar conservation models



Recognition

- Featured in the Social Science curriculum of Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education
- Recognised for contributions to forest regeneration and community stewardship

Leadership & Roles

- Advocate of the Thengapalli community forest protection model
- Unopposed head of the village panchayat for 35 years
- Grassroots conservation leader in the Bastar region

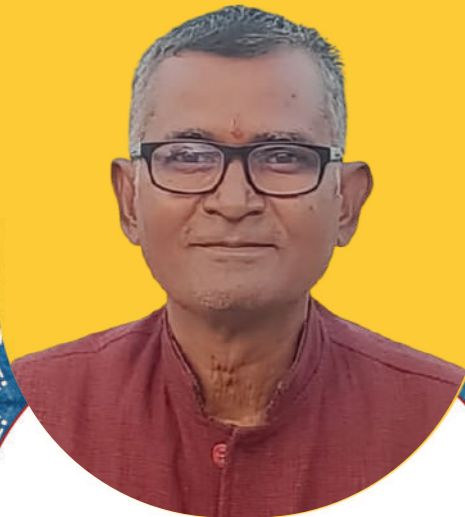
A Message for the Future

Damodar Kashyap believes that forests thrive when communities lead their protection. His vision is rooted in a simple truth, that sustainable futures are built when people and nature grow together.



“35 years of leadership, 240 hectares restored - turning tradition into a model for resilience.”





Dr. Manoj Kumar

Teacher | Environmental Steward |
Community Mobiliser



“Some plant trees for shade; he plants them for the future - one sapling, one hope, one forest at a time.”



In the forested landscapes of Jharkhand, where communities have long lived in close relationship with nature, Dr. Manoj Kumar chose to dedicate his life to restoring what was gradually being lost. A teacher by profession, he has spent decades shaping young minds in classrooms, while quietly nurturing a larger mission beyond them.

As he witnessed the steady decline of green cover across Hazaribagh and neighbouring districts, the loss felt both ecological and deeply personal. Rather than accept it, he began with a simple act, planting a sapling, with care and intent. What started as an individual effort grew steadily over time. Over the past twenty-five years, Dr. Manoj Kumar has planted and nurtured thousands of trees, transforming barren stretches into living, breathing green spaces. His work, rooted in patience and persistence, gradually evolved into a collective movement, bringing together students, villagers, and volunteers to take part in restoring their environment.

Today, fondly known as “Bargad Baba,” he carries a vision that extends beyond individual plantations. He imagines entire districts - Hazaribagh, Chatra, and Ramgarh, thriving as green, resilient landscapes where communities and nature coexist in balance.

Through sustained action and quiet leadership, Dr. Manoj Kumar has shown how one person’s commitment can grow into a shared responsibility, turning small acts of planting into long-term pathways for ecological restoration

Restoring Landscapes, One Sapling at a Time

- Planted and nurtured over 8,000 saplings across Jharkhand over 25 years
- Advanced ecological restoration through consistent, long-term plantation efforts
- Promotes a vision of greener, climate-resilient districts across Hazaribagh, Chatra, and Ramgarh
- Demonstrates the power of sustained individual action in environmental conservation

Community Impact

- Mobilised students, volunteers, and local communities in plantation drives
- Inspired collective ownership of environmental stewardship
- Encouraged youth to engage with sustainability as a shared civic responsibility
- Strengthened awareness around the role of green spaces in livelihoods and well-being

Recognition

- Prabhat Gaurav Samman (2025) recognising contributions to social and environmental causes
- Environmental Conservation Honour (2022) at the Piplantri Festival, Rajasthan
- Certificates of Appreciation (2008–2023) from institutions including Birsa Agricultural University, Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board, Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change (Jharkhand), and District Administration, Hazaribagh

Leadership & Roles

- Professor and Environmental Advocate
- Grassroots leader promoting community-led tree plantation initiatives
- Widely known as “Bargad Baba” for his enduring commitment to nurturing trees

A Message for the Future

Dr. Manoj Kumar believes that every sapling planted today carries the promise of a more resilient tomorrow. Through collective effort and sustained care, he envisions landscapes where communities actively participate in protecting and restoring the ecosystems that sustain them.



“25 years. 8,000+ trees. One man’s mission became a community’s movement.”



Dropadi Devi

Women's Collective Leader |
Agricultural Entrepreneur



“She didn't just bring women to the fields, she brought them to the forefront of power, income, and decision-making.”

In the agrarian landscapes of Banke Bazar block in Gaya district, where farming sustains everyday life, Dropadi Devi emerged as a powerful force reshaping the role of women in rural economies. A resident of Saifganj village, she witnessed how women's contributions to agriculture often remained invisible, limited by lack of access, opportunity, and decision-making power. Determined to change this, she began mobilizing women through collective, agriculture-led initiatives grounded in cooperation and self-reliance.

Dropadi Devi serves as the President of the Adarsh Mahila Vikas Swawlambi Sahkari Samiti and leads the Women Farmer Producer Company in Banke Bazar. Through these platforms, she has brought together women farmers into self-help groups and cooperative networks focused on agriculture-based livelihoods.

Working in a region shaped by both social and economic challenges, she enabled women to step into farming, entrepreneurship, and leadership roles. Through training programmes in mushroom cultivation, lemongrass farming, and allied agricultural practices, thousands of women have built sustainable and independent sources of income, transforming not just livelihoods, but local economies.

Collective Pathways

- Promotes climate-resilient crops like lemongrass and mushrooms that require less water and adapt to marginal lands
- Encourages diversified farming practices that reduce dependency on traditional cropping systems
- Strengthens sustainable agriculture models suited to local ecological conditions

Community Impact

- Trained over 12,000 women in agriculture-based livelihoods
- Mobilised 1,090+ women farmers into cooperatives and producer groups
- Developed 20 acres of collective lemongrass cultivation in Bela village
- Enabled the Women Farmer Producer Company to achieve ₹50 lakh+ annual turnover
- Supported women to earn ₹5,000–₹6,000 per month, improving household stability and agency



Recognition

- Established as a leading example of women-led cooperative entrepreneurship in Bihar, with her model frequently referenced in discussions on rural livelihoods and gender-inclusive development
- Recognised by development institutions and grassroots networks for mobilising large-scale women participation in agriculture and building sustainable, income-generating collectives
- Her leadership has helped position Banke Bazar as a growing hub for women-driven agricultural enterprise and community-led economic transformation

Leadership & Roles

- President, Adarsh Mahila Vikas Swawlambi Sahkari Samiti, Banke Bazar, Bihar
- Leader, Women Farmer Producer Company, Banke Bazar, Bihar
- Grassroots advocate for women's empowerment through agriculture

A Message for the Future

Dropadi Devi believes that when women gain access to land, knowledge, and collective strength, they don't just transform their own lives - they reshape the future of entire communities.



*“12,000+ women trained,
₹50 lakh+ turnover -
building women-led rural
economies.”*





Francis Munda

Community Teacher | Grassroots Educator | Youth Leader



“In a forest village where classrooms once did not exist, he carried learning across hills and trees - one child, one journey, one lesson at a time.”

In the remote Saranda forests of Jharkhand, where access to education remains limited, Francis Munda chose to bridge a gap that many had long accepted. A young community teacher from West Singhbhum, he began teaching in Rangring village, an isolated settlement where formal schooling had yet to reach.

His classroom is not defined by walls, but by intent. Every day, Francis walks nearly 20 kilometres through forested terrain to reach his students. When he began in 2019, just 38 children attended. Today, over 60+ children from nearby villages gather to learn, many of them first-generation learners.

In a region with minimal infrastructure, Francis teaches not only literacy and numeracy, but also awareness, confidence, and a sense of possibility. His work extends beyond the classroom, encouraging families to value education and helping children imagine futures beyond the limits they were born into.

Through quiet persistence, Francis Munda is not just teaching lessons, he is building the foundation for long-term resilience in one of India's most remote communities.

Education in the Last Mile

- Provides access to education in a remote forest region with no prior schooling infrastructure
- Walks nearly 20 km daily (round trip) to ensure uninterrupted learning
- Supports first-generation learners across multiple villages
- Integrates life skills and awareness into foundational education

Community Impact

- Educates 60+ children from three remote villages
- Encourages families to prioritise education for future generations
- Transforms daily realities, from grazing livestock to attending school

Environment & Awareness

Promotes environmental sensitivity among children in forest-dependent communities
Encourages tree plantation and conservation through local initiatives
Connects education with awareness of natural ecosystems in the Saranda region



Recognition

- Honoured by West Singhbhum district administration on Independence Day for contributions to rural education

Leadership & Roles

- Community Teacher, Rangring village, West Singhbhum
- Grassroots educator supported by Aspire and Tata Steel Foundation
- Youth leader advocating education in remote tribal regions

A Message for the Future

Francis Munda believes that education is the foundation of resilience. By nurturing young minds in remote forest communities, he hopes to build a generation that can shape its own future while protecting its roots.



“20 kms a day - bringing education to first-generation learners beyond the last mile”





Jhumuk Lal Merawi
Traditional Healer | Guardian of
Medicinal Forest Knowledge



*“In the forests of Chilpi,
where every plant carries
the memory of healing, he
keeps alive the wisdom of
generations.”*

In the biodiverse forests of Chilpi in Kawardha, Chhattisgarh, Vaidyaraj Jhumuk Lal Merawi has dedicated his life to preserving a knowledge system that lives quietly within nature. A respected vaidyaraj, his understanding of medicinal plants has been shaped by years of learning from the forest and from generations before him.

At a time when traditional healing practices are fading, he has remained deeply rooted in them, offering care to rural communities while safeguarding the ecological knowledge that sustains these practices.

Recognising that healing and conservation are inseparable, Vaidyaraj Merawi established a herbal garden and treatment space in Chilpi, where medicinal plants are cultivated, preserved, and used for community healthcare. Beyond individual practice, he has actively worked to strengthen networks of traditional healers, ensuring that this knowledge is not lost, but shared and carried forward.

Through his work, the forest is not just a resource, it is a living pharmacy, a repository of wisdom, and a foundation for community well-being.

Healing Through Forest Wisdom

- Conserves and cultivates medicinal plant species native to forest ecosystems
- Promotes sustainable use of forest resources through traditional healing practices
- Maintains a herbal garden supporting preservation and regeneration of key species
- Strengthens the link between biodiversity and community health

Community Impact

- Provides accessible, nature-based healthcare to rural communities
- Encourages conservation of medicinal plants through awareness and practice
- Builds networks of traditional healers to preserve indigenous knowledge
- Sustains cultural traditions rooted in forest-based healing



Recognition

- Supported by the Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce Cooperative Federation through the establishment of Vanaushadhalaya, at Chilpi, Kawardha.
- Recognised by State Government and Local Health Traditions and Medicinal Plants Board of Chhattisgarh as a renowned "Nadi Vaidya"

Leadership & Roles

- Traditional healer (Vaidyaraj) practicing herbal medicine
- District Coordinator, Ayurveda World Council
- President, Paramparagat Vanaushadhi Vaidya Sangh, Kawardha

A Message for the Future

Vaidyaraj Jhumuk Lal Merawi believes that protecting forests is inseparable from protecting community health and knowledge. When medicinal plants are conserved, so too are the traditions, wisdom, and resilience of the communities that depend on them



*“200+ medicinal plants
conserved, 100+ healers
connected - keeping forest
wisdom alive.”*





Kalawati Kashyap

Community Leader | Champion of Women's Livelihoods | Guardian of Forest-Based Economies



“From forest produce to community prosperity, she shows how women's leadership can protect both livelihoods and biodiversity.”

In the forested landscapes of Thanabodi village in Uttar Bastar Kanker district of Chhattisgarh, where livelihoods are deeply intertwined with nature, Kalawati Kashyap (also known as Kalawati Didi) has emerged as a powerful force of change. Rooted in tribal traditions, she recognised early on that strengthening women's economic independence could also lead to the protection of forests and biodiversity.

Her journey began with mobilising women across villages into self-help groups, enabling them to collectively engage in forest-based livelihoods. Over time, she built a network spanning 40 villages, where women now lead initiatives in non-timber forest produce (NTFP) collection, value addition, and sustainable enterprises. Through her efforts, forest resources are no longer just sources of subsistence, but pathways to dignity and resilience.

She further strengthened this model by promoting scientific lac cultivation, organic farming, and poultry development. At the same time, her creation of a community seed bank conserving 92 indigenous paddy varieties stands as a vital step toward safeguarding agricultural biodiversity and climate-resilient farming.



Forest Livelihoods & Biodiversity Conservation

- Promotes sustainable use of forest resources through NTFP collection and value addition
- Encourages lac cultivation on native trees like Kusum, Palash, and Ber
- Conserves 92 indigenous paddy varieties through community seed banks
- Supports organic farming and biodiversity-rich agricultural practices

Women-Led Community Impact

- Mobilised 35,000 women across three districts through SHG networks
- Organised women from 40 villages into forest-based livelihood groups
- Increased household incomes through sustainable enterprises and value addition
- Strengthened local capacities through training in farming, poultry, and forest produce



Recognition

- Supported under initiatives of the Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce Federation
- Recognised for advancing women-led forest livelihoods and lac cultivation in Kanker
- Recognised by District Police Administration in the field of women's empowerment
- Recognised by Indira Gandhi University Raipur, Chhattisgarh for promoting organic farming

Leadership & Roles

- Leader of women's self-help group networks in forest-based economies
- Promoter of lac cultivation, organic farming, and seed conservation
- Former Project Director, HIV/AIDS Control Program, Kanker district

A Message for the Future

Kalawati Kashyap believes that when women lead, communities thrive, and forests endure. Her work shows that protecting biodiversity and strengthening livelihoods are not separate goals, but deeply connected pathways to a more resilient future.



“35,000 women, 40 villages - scaling resilience through women's leadership.”





Lekesh Bai Jain

Progressive Farmer | Pioneer of Integrated Farming Systems | Champion of Climate-Resilient Agriculture



“From a small paddy field to a thriving integrated farm, she shows that resilience in agriculture grows through diversity.”

In the agrarian landscapes of Kanker, Chhattisgarh, where farming often depends on uncertain conditions, Lekesh Bai Jain has reimagined what a resilient farm can look like. Beginning with a small paddy field, she chose to move beyond traditional practices, seeking knowledge, experimenting with new methods, and steadily transforming her land.

With guidance from agricultural institutions and Krishi Vigyan Kendra programmes, she adopted the Integrated Farming System (IFS) model, diversifying her farm to include vegetables, dairy, goat rearing, fisheries, poultry, and organic inputs. Over time, her 4-acre farm expanded into a 17-acre integrated ecosystem, where each component supports the other, reducing risk, improving productivity, and strengthening sustainability.

Today, her farm stands as a living example of how diversification and resource efficiency can build climate-resilient livelihoods, especially for small and marginal farmers.



Climate-Resilient Farming through Integration

- Promotes integrated farming systems for efficient use of water, soil, and resources
- Reduces dependence on monocropping through diversification
- Encourages organic inputs and on-farm resource recycling
- Demonstrates sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural practices

Community Impact

- Developed a 17-acre integrated farm with diversified income streams
- Generates sustainable livelihoods through crops, livestock, and allied activities
- Serves as a demonstration model for farmers across the region
- Inspires women and small farmers to adopt resilient farming practices



Recognition

- Best Farmer Award (2025), ICAR – National Academy of Agricultural Research Management
- Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Antyodaya Krishi Puraskar (2018), Government of Chhattisgarh

Leadership & Roles

- Progressive farmer and practitioner of Integrated Farming Systems
- Demonstration farmer associated with Krishi Vigyan Kendra initiatives
- Mentor to farmers adopting diversified and sustainable agriculture

A Message for the Future

Lekesh Bai believes that the future of farming lies in diversity and self-reliance. By building integrated farm systems, she shows how agriculture can become both sustainable and secure, nurturing the land while strengthening livelihoods.



“From a 4-acre paddy field to a 17-acre ecosystem - farming reimagined.”





Lokanath Nauri

Seed Conservator | Champion Farmer | Advocate for Indigenous Agriculture



“In every seed he preserves, a story of resilience, heritage, and future harvests continues to live.”

In the tribal landscapes of Rayagada, Odisha, where agriculture has long depended on indigenous crops adapted to local climates, Lokanath Nauri witnessed a quiet loss - the gradual disappearance of traditional seeds. What was once abundant knowledge began fading under the pressures of changing farming practices.

Determined to protect this legacy, he dedicated himself to conserving indigenous crop varieties and reviving sustainable farming practices rooted in local wisdom.

Over the years, Lokanath Nauri has conserved more than 50 varieties of paddy, 20 varieties of millets, along with traditional pulses and oilseeds. Through farmer-to-farmer engagement, he has supported over 800 farmers by sharing seeds and knowledge, helping communities return to resilient, low-input agriculture.

His work goes beyond conservation - it restores a system where biodiversity, food security, and cultural knowledge are deeply interconnected.

Seeds of Resilience

- Conserved 50+ indigenous paddy varieties and 20+ millet varieties
- Promotes organic farming and climate-resilient agricultural practices
- Strengthens biodiversity and traditional knowledge systems

Community Impact

- Supported 800+ farmers through seed sharing and knowledge exchange
- Encouraged revival of indigenous crops and sustainable farming
- Strengthened local food security and farming resilience



Recognition

- Recognised at regional and national levels for contributions to traditional seed conservation and sustainable agriculture
- Featured across agricultural and environmental platforms documenting community-led preservation of indigenous crop varieties
- Acknowledged as a champion farmer advocating biodiversity and climate-resilient farming practices

Leadership & Roles

- Champion Farmer and Seed Conservator
- Community mentor promoting indigenous agriculture

A Message for the Future

Lokanath Nauri believes that traditional seeds carry the wisdom of generations and protecting them is essential to securing the future of farming, food, and the land itself.



“70+ indigenous seed varieties, 800+ farmers supported - bringing indigenous agriculture back to life.”





Mahadev Mahto

Teacher | Forest Guardian |
Founder of the Vriksh Raksha
Bandhan Movement



*“With a thread tied gently
around a tree, he turned
a festival of bonds into a
promise between people
and forests.”*



In the villages surrounding Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, forests have long been silent companions to everyday life—sheltering wildlife, sustaining livelihoods, and shaping cultural memory. It was here that Shri Mahadev Mahto grew up and later served as a school teacher for nearly four decades.

Over the years, he witnessed the forests around him slowly thinning under the pressure of indiscriminate felling. The loss was not just ecological—it was cultural. Rather than turning away, he chose to act.

In 1995, when large parts of the Dudhmatiya forest had begun to lose their green cover, Mahadev Mahto introduced a simple yet powerful idea inspired by the tradition of Raksha Bandhan. He began tying protective threads around tree trunks, urging villagers to treat trees like siblings whose safety they had pledged to protect.

What began with a small group of supporters gradually grew into a powerful people’s movement. Each year, thousands gather in the forest during the Paryavaran Mela, tying rakhis to trees and renewing their promise to safeguard them.

Through this symbolic yet deeply meaningful act, Mahadev Mahto transformed a cultural tradition into a living movement for conservation—one that continues to inspire communities across Jharkhand.



Forest Conservation through Culture

- Initiated the Vriksh Raksha Bandhan campaign, symbolically protecting trees through cultural tradition
- Helped revive community awareness and protection of the Dudhmatiya forest ecosystem
- Encouraged conservation of native species, particularly sal forests in the region
- Demonstrated how cultural practices can strengthen grassroots environmental stewardship

Community Impact

- Mobilised thousands of villagers, students, and youth through annual environmental gatherings
- Built strong community ownership of forests through collective cultural rituals
- Inspired schools and local organisations to integrate environmental awareness into community events
- Helped shape a grassroots movement where conservation became a shared social responsibility



Recognition

- Jharkhand Gaurav Samman (2012) awarded by Prabhat Khabar during its Rajat Jayanti celebrations
- Jharkhand Ratan Award (2012) conferred in Ranchi for outstanding contribution to society
- SHISTI – GYIT Grassroots Samman (2017) presented in New Delhi for impactful grassroots leadership
- Jharkhand Samman (2017) recognising his contributions to social and environmental causes

Following these recognitions, Mahadev Mahto became widely known as “The Jungle Man” for his tireless commitment to forest protection.

Leadership & Roles

- Retired School Teacher and Grassroots Environmentalist
- Founder, Vriksh Raksha Bandhan Movement
- Organiser of the annual Paryavaran Mela in Dudhmatiya forest

A Message for the Future

Mahadev Mahto believes that forests will endure only when communities feel a deep sense of responsibility toward them. By weaving conservation into culture and tradition, he has shown how small symbolic acts can grow into enduring movements for protecting nature.



*“50,000+ trees planted,
15,000+ hectares
protected—one ritual
that grew into a
people’s movement.”*





Neelima Mishra

Urban Sustainability Leader |
Founder, Ceiba Green Solutions



“She didn’t just rethink waste - she’s redefining how cities take responsibility for what they leave behind.”

In the rapidly growing urban landscapes of Odisha, where waste is often treated as an afterthought, Neelima Mishra chose to confront the problem at its core. With a background in Forestry Management from the Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal, and an M.Phil in Environmental Policy from the University of Cambridge as a Chevening Scholar, her journey bridges policy, practice, and purpose.

With experience working across government systems and global climate platforms, she turned her focus toward one of the most urgent urban challenges - waste management, and the need to build systems that are both efficient and accountable.

Neelima Mishra is the Founder of Ceiba Green Solutions, a Bhubaneswar-based environmental enterprise working across dry and wet waste management, along with reducing single-use plastic. Through a combination of innovation and community engagement, her work focuses on building sustainable and scalable urban waste systems.

One of her key initiatives, Recycle Pay, supported by the British Deputy High Commission, Kolkata, promotes scheduled collection of recyclable dry waste from households and businesses. By encouraging segregation at source and enabling recycling, her work is helping shift cities toward circular economy practices, where waste is not discarded, but reintroduced into the system as a resource.

Building Circular Cities

- Promotes circular economy practices through recycling, segregation, and responsible waste disposal
- Reduces dependency on landfills by strengthening dry and wet waste management systems
- Encourages sustainable urban living through systems-level interventions
- Total Carbon saving is approximately 21 lakh+ kgs.
- 6.5 lakh + kgs of waste (paper, plastic, e-waste, metal, glass, thermocol and textile) diverted from landfills

Community Impact

- Builds awareness on waste segregation through community-led programs; reaching over 50,000+ people.
- Engages households, institutions, and local bodies in responsible waste management
- Strengthens citizen participation in creating cleaner, more sustainable cities



Recognition

- Young Sustainability Professional – Jury Appreciation Award (2022), Wipro Foundation & XIM University
- Chevening Scholar (2021), University of Cambridge
- Edex 40 Under 40: India’s Most Inspiring Young EcoSapiens (2019), The New Indian Express
- Chairman’s Silver Medal for Academic Excellence (2013), IIFM Bhopal
- Director’s Prize for Best Summer Internship Project (2013), IIFM in collaboration with WWF-India
- Selected for the Climate Force Arctic Expedition led by polar explorer Robert Swan, representing India in a global climate leadership initiative

Leadership & Roles

- Founder, Ceiba Green Solutions
- Environmental policy professional and sustainability advocate

A Message for the Future

Neelima Mishra believes that sustainable cities are built not just through policy, but through everyday choices. When communities take responsibility for their waste, they become active participants in shaping a cleaner, more resilient urban future.



“6.5 lakh+ kg waste diverted, 50,000+ people engaged - making circular living actionable.”





Prabhat Kumar Mahato
Cultural Artist | Manbhum Chhau
Performer | Keeper of Folk Traditions



“Through rhythm, masks, and movement, he keeps the spirit of Jharkhand’s forests and traditions alive for the next generation.”

In the cultural landscapes of Jharkhand, where forests, folklore, and seasonal rhythms shape everyday life, Prabhat Kumar Mahato has dedicated himself to preserving the vibrant tradition of Manbhum Chhau.

What began as a passion for performance soon grew into a larger commitment—to keep this indigenous art form alive in a rapidly changing world. Through years of practice and dedication, he not only mastered the dance but also became a torchbearer for its continuity.

Leading his own Chhau troupe, Prabhat has taken this traditional art form to stages across India, including the closing ceremony of IPL 2022. Yet, his most meaningful work lies closer to home, training young learners, passing on the discipline, symbolism, and storytelling that define Chhau.

Through rhythm and movement, he is not just preserving an art form, he is sustaining a living connection between culture, community, and the natural world.



Preserving Cultural Heritage

- Promotes and performs Manbhum Chhau, a traditional tribal dance form
- Revives storytelling traditions rooted in nature, folklore, and seasonal cycles
- Takes Jharkhand’s cultural expressions to national platforms

Community Impact

- Inspires youth to learn and practice Chhau dance
- Strengthens community identity through cultural pride and participation
- Creates platforms for traditional artists to perform and sustain their craft

Culture & Environment

- Uses Chhau as a medium to reflect ecological knowledge and forest traditions
- Promotes environmental awareness through cultural storytelling and performance



Recognition

- Leads a Chhau troupe performing across India
- Performed at the IPL 2022 closing ceremony, showcasing Jharkhand’s folk culture on a national stage
- Participated in over 13 international events and more than 54 national-level engagements
- Delivered the closing ceremony of the Tata IPL 2025 in Kolkata
- Participated in 79th Independence Day programme (2025) at the Embassy of India in Myanmar
- Participated in the Asian Day Celebration 2025 at Siam Paragon, Thailand

Leadership & Roles

- Cultural artist and Manbhum Chhau performer
- Leader of a Chhau dance troupe
- Cultural ambassador for Jharkhand’s tribal arts

A Message for the Future

Prabhat Kumar Mahato believes that culture is a living bridge between the past and the future. By nurturing traditional art forms, he hopes to keep communities rooted in their identity while inspiring future generations to carry these traditions forward.



“From forest traditions to national arenas - taking Chhau from roots to the national spotlight.”





Prabhat Mishra

Social Thinker | Environmental Advocate | Champion of Community Stewardship



“Through awareness and collective action, he reminds communities that protecting water and land begins with understanding their value.”

In the evolving landscapes of Raipur, Chhattisgarh, where growing development often places pressure on natural ecosystems, Prabhat Mishra has dedicated himself to strengthening the connection between people and the environment. A social thinker and environmental advocate, he believes that lasting change begins with awareness.

His journey took shape through community engagement, organising lectures, awareness drives, and grassroots initiatives that encourage citizens to protect water bodies, forests, and biodiversity. Recognising the urgent need to address water scarcity and ecological degradation, he has consistently worked to bring environmental conversations into everyday community life.

In 2023, he founded the Gram Vikas Shodh Samadhan Kendra, creating a platform for environmental education and rural development. Through shramdaan initiatives, public outreach, and sustained engagement with farmers and youth, he has inspired communities to take collective responsibility for conserving resources such as groundwater, wetlands, and rivers like the Kharun.

Environmental Awareness & Conservation

- Promotes groundwater conservation and wetland protection through public engagement
- Advocates for the conservation of the Kharun River and local water bodies
- Encourages ecological restoration through plantation and awareness drives

Community Impact

- Mobilised farmers, youth, and local communities through lectures and outreach
- Strengthened community participation through shramdaan initiatives
- Promotes awareness of sustainable and organic farming practices
- Built local engagement in villages such as Aamdi (Abhanpur) and surrounding regions



Recognition

- Honoured by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (2021)
- Recipient of Shri L.N. Pandey Utkal Award
- Recipient of Pandit Ayodhya Prasad Tiwari Samman
- Honoured with Bramh Samman and Harshit Yug Rajya Mahakavi Sangh Samman

Leadership & Roles

- Founder, Gram Vikas Shodh Samadhan Kendra (2023)
- Speaker and educator on environmental conservation and sustainable development

A Message for the Future

Prabhat Mishra believes that environmental protection must become a shared social responsibility. His work reminds us that when communities understand the value of their natural resources, they become their strongest protectors.



“One platform, many communities - turning awareness into a growing movement for conservation.”





Raimati Ghiuria

Farmer | Seed Conservator |
Millet Champion



*“In the fields of Koraput,
she safeguarded seeds of
resilience - reviving forgotten
grains to nourish both
people and the land.”*

In the tribal landscapes of Koraput, Odisha, where farming traditions are deeply tied to nature, Raimati Ghiuria has spent nearly three decades protecting what many had begun to lose, indigenous seeds. A Bhumia tribal farmer from Nuaguda village, she grew up understanding the rhythms of the land and the value of traditional crops.

As modern, high-input agriculture began replacing native varieties, Raimati recognised the risk to both biodiversity and food security. In response, she began conserving traditional millet and rice seeds, building a community seed bank that now preserves dozens of climate-resilient varieties. Her farm has since evolved into a living classroom, where farmers, researchers, and young learners gather to rediscover sustainable agriculture rooted in indigenous wisdom.

Today, widely known as the “Millet Queen of Odisha” Raimati’s work has not only revived forgotten crops but also repositioned millets as a pathway to nutrition, resilience, and cultural pride.

Agricultural Biodiversity & Climate Resilience

- Conserved 30 traditional millet varieties and 72 indigenous rice varieties
- Established a community seed bank preserving climate-resilient crops
- Promotes low-water, drought-resistant crops suited to changing climates
- Encourages a shift toward traditional, sustainable farming practices

Community Impact

- Trained 2,500+ farmers in millet cultivation and seed preservation
- Established a millet farming school for women and young girls
- Promotes value-added millet products to enhance incomes
- Strengthened food security and nutrition in tribal communities
- Revived millets as both a livelihood and cultural identity



Recognition

- Honorary Doctorate of Science (2024), conferred by the President of India
- Amazing Indians Award (2024 – Agriculture)
- Represented Odisha Millets Mission at the G20 Summit (2023)
- Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy Fellowship (2015)
- Genome Saviour Community Award (2012), PPV&FRA

Leadership & Roles

- Traditional seed conservator and millet farmer
- External Livelihood Support Person (ELSP), Odisha Livelihood Mission
- Trainer and mentor for sustainable tribal agriculture

A Message for the Future

Raimati Ghiuria believes that the future of farming lies in protecting the seeds of the past. By conserving indigenous crops and empowering communities to grow them, she is nurturing a food system that is resilient, nourishing, and deeply rooted in the land.



*“100+ indigenous seeds,
2,500+ farmers trained
- reviving resilience from
the ground up.”*





Rajendra Baghel
Master Artisan | Keeper of the
Dhokra Metal Tradition



“In molten metal and ancient fire, he preserves a story that began thousands of years ago.”

In the tribal heartland of Kondagaon, Bastar, where craft and culture are deeply intertwined, Rajendra Baghel has devoted his life to sustaining one of the world’s oldest metal casting traditions, Dhokra. Born into a lineage of artisans, he learned the intricate lost-wax technique from his uncle, carrying forward a practice that dates back over four millennia.

At a time when many artisans were leaving the craft due to declining markets, Rajendra chose to stay rooted. With quiet determination, he not only mastered the art but also worked to revive it, ensuring that Dhokra remains a living, evolving tradition rather than a fading memory.

Through workshops, exhibitions across the globe, and mentorship, he has trained hundreds of artisans, connecting traditional craftsmanship with contemporary markets. In doing so, he has helped transform Dhokra into both a symbol of Bastar’s cultural identity and a source of sustainable livelihoods for artisan communities.



Crafting Heritage, Sustaining Futures

- Preserves the ancient Dhokra (lost-wax) metal casting tradition
- Promotes low-impact, indigenous production techniques
- Strengthens cultural knowledge systems rooted in tribal craftsmanship
- Supports sustainable livelihoods beyond forest-dependent income

Community Impact

- Trained 350+ artisans in Dhokra metal craft
- Revitalised artisan livelihoods across Kondagaon and Bastar
- Enabled market linkages through exhibitions and platforms
- Strengthened pride in local cultural heritage



Recognition

- National Award for Handicrafts (1996), Government of India
- Kala Nidhi Award (2003) for excellence in tribal metal craft
- Widely recognised for preserving Bastar’s Dhokra heritage

Leadership & Roles

- Master artisan and mentor of Dhokra craft
- Cultural ambassador for Bastar’s tribal art traditions

A Message for the Future

Rajendra Baghel believes that traditional crafts are living knowledge systems. By passing the Dhokra tradition to future generations, he ensures that culture, identity, and livelihoods continue to thrive, shaped by fire, skill, and time.



“A 4,000-year-old craft, 300+ artisans empowered - tradition that endures.”





Ravi Kumar Singh

Rural Development Practitioner |
Champion of Water Security &
Community-Led Resilience



“In the villages of Surguja, he helped communities turn water into strength, restoring not just resources, but resilience.”

In the tribal landscapes of Surguja, Chhattisgarh, where water defines both survival and prosperity, Ravi Kumar Singh has spent over two decades working at the intersection of natural resource management and rural livelihoods. Through his work with Sarguja Gramin Vikas Sansthan (SGVS), he has focused on strengthening communities to manage their own resources with confidence and care.

Recognising that water lies at the heart of rural resilience, he championed community-led watershed development, mobilising farmers, local institutions, and village groups to restore degraded landscapes and improve water availability. His approach goes beyond infrastructure, placing equal emphasis on building strong local institutions and enabling communities to access and benefit from government programmes.

By linking water conservation with sustainable agriculture and livelihoods, Ravi Kumar Singh has helped transform fragile rural ecosystems into more secure and productive landscapes, where communities are not just beneficiaries, but active stewards of their future.

Water, Livelihoods, and Local Leadership

- Promotes community-led watershed management and water conservation
- Encourages climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural practices
- Strengthens groundwater recharge and efficient water use systems
- Builds local institutions for long-term natural resource governance

Community Impact

- Improved water security and groundwater availability across villages in Surguja
- Enhanced agricultural productivity and livelihood opportunities
- Strengthened farmer collectives and grassroots institutions
- Enabled convergence with government schemes, improving access to resources



Recognition

- Recognised at state and regional levels for leadership in rural development
- Acknowledged for contributions to sustainable development in tribal regions through SGVS

Leadership & Roles

- Secretary, Sarguja Gramin Vikas Sansthan (SGVS)
- Rural development practitioner focusing on watershed, livelihoods, and institutional strengthening

A Message for the Future

Ravi Kumar Singh believes that resilient villages are built when communities take ownership of their natural resources. Through collective action and strengthened institutions, water becomes not just a resource, but the foundation of a secure and sustainable future.



“58 villages, 2,350 farmers, ₹100+ crore leveraged - scaling community-led resilience.”





Sangita Devi

Progressive Farmer | Agripreneur |
Champion of Women's Livelihoods



“From working in the fields for a daily wage to cultivating acres of opportunity, she turned the soil into a pathway for dignity and resilience.”

In the villages of Ormanjhi in Jharkhand, where agriculture often determines survival, Sangita Devi's journey began with hardship. As a daily wage labourer earning barely enough to sustain her family, she chose to reimagine her future through farming.

Starting with just half an acre of leased land, Sangita began cultivating vegetables, learning through experience, persistence, and trial. What began as a small step soon grew into a transformative journey.

Today, she manages close to 70 acres of farmland, cultivating a diverse range of crops including cauliflower, tomatoes, capsicum, ginger, and watermelon. By adopting modern practices such as drip irrigation, vermicomposting, and polyhouse farming, she has built a sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural model. She mentors approximately 500+ women farmers from 25 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in modern techniques like drip irrigation, mulching, and polyhouse farming.

Her journey reflects more than individual success, it has become a source of inspiration for many rural women. Sangita Devi has redefined farming as a pathway to entrepreneurship, dignity, and long-term resilience.



Climate-Resilient Agriculture

- Expanded cultivation from 0.5 acre to nearly 70 acres
- Introduced drip irrigation for water-efficient farming
- Promotes organic inputs such as vermicompost
- Practices crop diversification to strengthen climate resilience and soil health

Community Impact

- Provides employment to 50+ villagers through farming activities
- Mentors local farmers on modern agricultural techniques
- Strengthens local markets by supplying produce to Ranchi and Bokaro
- Inspires women to transition from labour to agricultural entrepreneurship



Recognition

- Widely recognised as the “Superwoman of Farming”
- Featured as a leading case study under JSLPS (MKSP initiative)
- Celebrated as a role model for tribal women farmers in Jharkhand

Leadership & Roles

- Progressive farmer and agripreneur
- Mentor to women farmers and agricultural groups
- Advocate for sustainable and climate-resilient farming practices

A Message for the Future

Sangita Devi believes that agriculture must evolve to sustain both people and the planet. Her vision is to empower more women farmers to adopt modern, climate-resilient practices and build livelihoods rooted in dignity and independence



“From half an acre to 70 - scaling resilience, one harvest at a time.”





Sanjay Kacchap

Educator | Founder, Community Library Movement | “Library Man of Jharkhand”



“In villages where books were once rare, he opened doors to imagination - one library, one child, one dream at a time.”

In the rural landscapes of Jharkhand, where access to books often ends with school textbooks, Sanjay Kacchap chose to create spaces where learning could go beyond the classroom. Growing up in Khunti, he saw how the absence of reading spaces limited curiosity and opportunity for many children.

What began as a small effort with a handful of books soon grew into a larger movement. Since 2008, Sanjay has been building community libraries across villages - transforming unfamiliar concepts into vibrant learning spaces.

Today, these mini hybrid libraries are more than just rooms with books. Equipped with digital tools, internet access, and learning resources, they have become hubs of imagination and growth. Thousands of rural students are now connected to these spaces, with many pursuing higher education and over 250 securing jobs.

Widely known as the “Library Man of Jharkhand,” Sanjay’s work reflects a simple yet powerful belief - that access to knowledge can reshape futures. Through books, he is not just building readers, but enabling a generation to think, question, and dream beyond their circumstances.

Expanding Access to Learning

- Established community libraries across rural Jharkhand since 2008
- Developed Mini Hybrid Libraries with books, digital resources, and internet access
- Connected thousands of students to reading and learning opportunities
- Enabled pathways to higher education and employment for rural youth

Community Impact

- Created accessible reading spaces in villages with limited educational resources
- Encouraged reading habits, creativity, and critical thinking among children
- Mobilised teachers, volunteers, and local youth to sustain library initiatives
- Strengthened community participation in education and youth development

Environment & Awareness

- Promotes environmental awareness through books, storytelling, and discussions
- Encourages children to understand sustainability and their relationship with nature
- Integrates learning with themes of conservation and community responsibility



Recognition

- Recognised as “Library Man of Jharkhand” and “Library Man of Kolhan”
- Featured in Mann Ki Baat by Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2022, 2023)
- Highlighted on national platforms including DD News and Good News Today
- Recipient of Jharkhand Gaurav Samman for contributions to education
- Invited to Raj Bhavan and national-level forums for his grassroots work

Leadership & Roles

- Founder, Community Library Movement, Jharkhand
- Grassroots educator promoting reading culture and youth empowerment

A Message for the Future

Sanjay Kacchap believes that access to books can quietly transform communities. His vision is to see a library in every village, where children discover knowledge, confidence, and the courage to imagine new possibilities.



“50+ libraries built, 250+ livelihoods enabled-turning books into pathways for change.”





Shibani Padhy

Environmental Innovator |
Youth Climate Leader | Founder,
Project Dolphin



“In a coastal city, she turned technology into a tide of change - where innovation meets communities to reclaim water, one solution at a time.”

In Berhampur, Odisha, where coastal ecosystems and communities are increasingly impacted by pollution and climate change, Shibani Padhy chose an unconventional path. With a degree in MCA, she stepped away from a corporate career to dedicate herself to environmental protection and community empowerment. Today, she stands as a young climate leader whose work bridges technology, grassroots action, and public awareness.

Her journey began with a simple concern - plastic waste choking local water bodies. This led to the creation of Project Dolphin, a machine learning-based submarine detection system designed to identify and remove plastic from freshwater ecosystems. The innovation earned her global recognition, including representing India as the country's sole youth delegate at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025 in Abu Dhabi.

Beyond technology, Shibani's work is deeply rooted in community mobilisation. Through clean-up drives, climate workshops, and campaigns like The Red Revolution, she has engaged thousands of young people in conversations around environmental responsibility, waste management, and menstrual hygiene—building a generation that is both informed and action-oriented.

By combining innovation with collective action, Shibani Padhy is reimagining how young leaders can shape climate solutions, locally grounded, yet globally relevant.

Climate Action through Innovation

- Developed Project Dolphin, an AI-powered system to detect and remove plastic waste from water bodies
- Helped restore local ponds and expand efforts to beach and large-scale clean-up drives
- Promotes sustainable waste management through eco-bricks and recycling initiatives
- Demonstrates how technology can strengthen community-led environmental solutions

Community Impact

- Reached 10,000+ youth through climate awareness and education programmes
- Organised hundreds of clean-up drives across public spaces and water bodies
- Mobilised communities, including women and fishermen, to adopt sustainable practices
- Led campaigns like The Red Revolution to integrate social awareness with environmental action

Recognition

- India's sole youth representative at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, Abu Dhabi
- Recognised by UNICEF and Berhampur Municipal Corporation for Project Dolphin
- Honoured with Yuva Pratibha Samman and Women Achiever of Odisha (WAO 2025)
- Recipient of Indian Golden Award (TIGA 2025) and NYCC Climate Fellowship (2024–25)

Leadership & Roles

- Environmental innovator and youth climate leader
- Developer of Project Dolphin
- Associated with Sattvic Soul Foundation

A Message for the Future

Shibani Padhy believes that the future of climate action lies at the intersection of innovation and community. By equipping young people with knowledge, tools, and purpose, she envisions a world where technology not only solves environmental challenges but also empowers communities to lead the change.



“One idea, 10,000+ youth - powering climate action through innovation.”



Shyam Lal Rajwaade

Water Conservationist | "Pond Man"
of Chhattisgarh | Champion of
Community Resilience



*"With a spade and
unwavering resolve, he
turned a dry landscape
into a source of life for
his village."*

In the drought-prone villages of Koriya, Chhattisgarh, where water scarcity shaped everyday life, Shyam Lal Rajwaade chose to act, not with resources, but with determination.

At just 15 years old, he began digging a pond with his own hands, driven by the simple need to secure water for his community. What started as a personal effort soon became a lifelong commitment. For 27 years, he worked tirelessly, day after day, expanding and deepening the pond.

Today, that effort stands as a one-acre, 15-foot-deep water body, sustaining households, livestock, and agriculture. His journey is a powerful reminder that resilience is not always built through large systems, but through patience, persistence, and individual resolve.



Water Conservation & Climate Resilience

- Created a one-acre pond through 27 years of sustained effort
- Supports rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge
- Reduces water stress in a drought-prone region
- Strengthens local resilience against irregular rainfall patterns

Community Impact

- Provides a reliable water source for households and livestock
- Supports small-scale agriculture and local livelihoods
- Inspires communities to adopt self-driven water conservation practices
- Demonstrates the power of individual action in environmental stewardship

Environmental Significance

- Promotes sustainable natural resource management
- Highlights the role of grassroots efforts in addressing climate challenges
- Encourages long-term thinking in water security and conservation



Recognition

- Recognised at state and regional levels for grassroots water conservation
- Widely known as the "Pond Man" of the Chhattisgarh region

Leadership & Roles

- Grassroots environmental activist
- Community advocate for water conservation

A Message for the Future

Shyam Lal Rajwaade believes that change begins with individual responsibility. His journey shows that even one person, with patience and resolve, can create a lasting source of life for generations to come.



*"27 years... from a spade
to an acre - proving
resilience is built
drop by drop"*





Subham Kumar

Environmental Activist | Founder,
Being Helper Foundation | Youth
Leader for River Conservation



“What began with one young person cleaning a riverbank has grown into a powerful movement to restore dignity to the Ganga.”

In Patna, along the banks of the Ganga, where pollution had quietly become part of everyday life, Subham Kumar chose to act, alone at first. What began as a simple effort to clean plastic waste from the riverbank soon grew into something far larger.

As more young people joined him, this individual action transformed into a collective movement. Through the Being Helper Foundation, Subham has mobilised a growing network of volunteers to restore riverbanks, reduce plastic waste, and promote civic responsibility.

His work goes beyond clean-up drives. By engaging communities, vendors, and local institutions, he has helped shift behaviours, turning environmental responsibility into a shared civic habit. Initiatives like Mission Civic Sense and the Wall of Change have transformed polluted spaces into cleaner, community-owned environments.

Today, his journey reflects the power of youth-led action, where one step towards change can inspire thousands to protect what sustains them.

Restoring River Ecosystems

- Removed 1.43 lakh kg of waste from Ganga riverbanks
- Recycled 2 lakh+ plastic bottles into reusable materials
- Reduced single-use plastic at ghats through sustained awareness
- Distributed 5,000 dustbins to promote responsible waste disposal

Community Impact

- Built a network of 1,100+ youth volunteers
- Improved cleanliness across ghats supporting 16,000+ livelihoods
- Created initiatives like Wall of Change to transform public spaces
- Established women's changing rooms at 42 ghats, improving sanitation

Driving Behavioural Change

- Leads campaigns like Mission Civic Sense for civic responsibility
- Engages citizens, vendors, and communities in sustainable practices
- Promotes long-term environmental awareness and participation



Recognition

- Appointed Brand Ambassador, Namami Gange Project (Bihar)
- Recognised for grassroots leadership aligned with Swachh Bharat Mission

Leadership & Roles

- Founder, Being Helper Foundation
- Environmental activist leading youth-driven river conservation
- Brand Ambassador, Namami Gange Project (Bihar)

A Message for the Future

Subham Kumar believes that change begins with individual action, but grows through collective responsibility. His vision is to build communities where protecting rivers and the environment becomes a shared civic duty, led by youth, sustained by all.



“1.43 lakh kg waste removed, 16,000+ livelihoods supported—impact that flows beyond the river.”





Surendra Prasad Singh
Teacher | Folk Voice for Forests |
Community Conservation Advocate



“When people forget the forests, sometimes a song can remind them.”

In the forested landscapes of Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, where sal trees and village paths shape everyday life, Surendra Prasad Singh grew up witnessing the quiet relationship between people and nature. As a government school teacher, he spent years observing how forests sustained both the ecology and the livelihoods of local communities. Over time, he also noticed how this bond was slowly weakening.

Rather than turning to protest or policy, he chose a language deeply rooted in the culture of the region - song.

Through folk melodies and local dialects, Surendra Prasad Singh began writing and singing about forests, rivers, and the delicate balance between people and nature. What began as songs shared with students in school courtyards soon travelled to village gatherings and community meetings, where simple lyrics carried powerful messages of conservation.

In 1995, this cultural expression grew into a community initiative when he helped start Vriksh Raksha Bandhan in the village of Doodhmatia - a tradition where people tie rakhis to trees as a symbol of protection and kinship with nature. Celebrated every year on October 7, the initiative has since grown into a powerful community ritual across parts of Jharkhand.

For more than two decades, his voice has echoed through villages, reminding people that protecting forests is not just an environmental responsibility, but a cultural one.

Conservation through Culture

- Uses folk songs and cultural gatherings to spread awareness about forest protection
- Communicates environmental responsibility through local dialects and storytelling
- Strengthens the emotional connection between communities and their natural landscapes

Community Impact

- Jointly led the Vriksh Raksha Bandhan initiative with Shri Mahadev Mahto
- Expanded the movement from Hazaribagh to several districts of Jharkhand
- Mobilised villagers, students, and farmers to symbolically protect trees and forests
- Inspired communities to view conservation as part of their shared cultural heritage



Recognition

- Felicitated at Jantar Mantar by Shri Sanjay Seth for his work in environmental conservation
- Honoured by Shri Bhupender Yadav for promoting awareness on environmental protection
- Recognised by the Jharkhand Forest Department and Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board for contributions to conservation and plantation drives

Leadership & Roles

- Government School Teacher, Hazaribagh
- Environmental awareness advocate using folk music
- Community educator promoting forest conservation

A Message for the Future

Surendra Prasad Singh believes that when conservation becomes part of culture, it becomes a way of life. Through songs, traditions, and collective memory, he continues to remind communities that the forests they protect today are the legacy they pass on to the next generation.



“He made conservation a culture, one song, one village at a time, and has reached out to 1200 villages so far!”



Tarun Kumar

Social Worker | Founder | Youth & Community Advocate



“In villages where silence once surrounded difficult conversations, he turned awareness into action - helping young minds grow with dignity, knowledge, and care for the earth.”

In the rural landscapes of Jharkhand, where access to information and safe spaces remains limited for many young people, Tarun Kumar chose to work at the intersection of dignity, education, and awareness. A social worker with over sixteen years of grassroots experience, he began with a simple yet urgent concern, children, especially girls, were growing up without the resources or support needed to lead healthy, confident lives.

What followed was not a single intervention, but a series of community-led initiatives that addressed deeply rooted challenges through openness and participation. From menstrual health awareness to youth engagement, Tarun introduced programmes that encouraged dialogue where there was once silence.

Through initiatives such as Pad Banks in government schools, rural libraries, and campaigns like “Gift Sanitary Pads for Rural Girls” he worked to normalise conversations around health and dignity. His campaign “One Pad, One Tree” uniquely connected menstrual awareness with environmental responsibility, transforming a social taboo into a collective act of care for both people and the planet.

Fondly known as “Padman Bhaiya” among children, Tarun Kumar has built trust through consistency and empathy, reaching thousands of young people across Jharkhand. His work reflects a belief that resilience begins when communities are informed, empowered, and unafraid to engage with the issues that shape their everyday lives.

Dignity, Awareness & Environment

- Introduced “One Pad, One Tree,” linking menstrual health with environmental action
- Promotes environmental education through youth-led initiatives and campaigns
- Integrates sustainability and energy awareness into community programmes
- Demonstrates how social awareness can drive ecological responsibility

Community Impact

- Reached over 150,000 children and youth through education and awareness initiatives
- Established Pad Banks in government schools, improving menstrual hygiene access
- Reduced stigma around menstrual health through open community dialogue
- Empowered youth through education, sports, leadership, and digital literacy
- Helped create a menstrual waste-free village in Dhatkidih, Ghatshila



Recognition

- Featured in Limca Book of Records (2019; 2020–22)
- Recognised at South Asia level for Sanitary Pad Relief Campaign during COVID-19
- NCERT Award for documentary Taruni (Best Educational Video Content for Children)
- International Enviro Care Green Award for environmental initiatives
- Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Youth Ratna Award recognizing his contributions in education, health, gender equality, environment, and human rights.
- Icon of Jharkhand Award recognizing his efforts in menstrual hygiene management and environmental conservation.

Leadership & Roles

- Founder, Nischay Foundation, Jharkhand
- Social worker focusing on child rights, youth development, and community welfare
- Swachhta Brand Ambassador, Jamshedpur Notified Area Committee

A Message for the Future

Tarun Kumar believes that when young people grow up with dignity, awareness, and a sense of responsibility toward their environment, they shape stronger, more resilient communities. His vision is to nurture a generation that is informed, empathetic, and empowered to lead change.



“150,000+ young lives empowered - turning awareness into dignity, and dignity into action.”





Upendra Pandey & Satbinder 'Sona' Pandey
Social Entrepreneurs | Founders,
Polythene Daan Abhiyaan |
Champions of Circular Living



“Where waste once gathered in silence, they sowed seeds of change - turning discarded plastic into a movement for dignity, livelihood, and a cleaner earth.”

In the towns of Jharkhand, where plastic waste was quietly becoming an everyday crisis, Upendra and Sona Pandey chose to act before it was too late. What began as a concern during a visit to Delhi in 2013 soon turned into a grassroots movement back home.

Determined to prevent smaller towns from facing similar environmental challenges, they launched the “पोलिथीन दान अभियान” (Polythene Daan Abhiyaan)- a simple yet powerful initiative rooted in community action. Their idea was straightforward: involve people directly in managing their waste.

In its early days, domestic workers were encouraged to collect plastic waste from households and exchange it for plants. This small intervention sparked a larger behavioural shift. Over time, the initiative grew into a community-driven model for waste segregation, recycling, and sustainable living.



Driving Circular Economy Practices

- Led the “Plastic-Free Ramgarh” campaign promoting waste reduction
- Encourages waste segregation, recycling, and reduction of single-use plastic
- Conducts community campaigns and clean-up initiatives
- Promotes circular economy practices at the grassroots level

Community Impact

- “Selfie With Jhola Abhiyaan” they promoted the adoption of sustainable, plastic-free alternatives in everyday life, actively engaging students as key drivers of this change.
- Engaged schools, colleges, and institutions in sustainable practices
- Created livelihood opportunities for waste workers through organised recycling
- Built a network of volunteers and environmental advocates across Jharkhand

Environment & Awareness

- Conducts workshops on responsible waste management and sustainable living
- Encourages behavioural change towards eco-friendly consumption
- Uses simple, replicable models to drive large-scale community participation



Recognition

- Recognised for the “Plastic-Free Ramgarh” campaign on environmental awareness and waste management

Leadership & Roles

- Founders, “पोलिथीन दान अभियान” “एकक सम्राज नए भारत की पहचान”
- Social entrepreneurs working on waste management and environmental awareness
- Community leaders advocating plastic-free and sustainable lifestyles

A Message for the Future

Upendra and Sona Pandey believe that waste is not just a problem, it is a responsibility. Their vision is to build communities where sustainable living becomes a habit, and environmental stewardship is shared by all.



“15 tons of plastic recycled, 2 lakh+ plants distributed - turning waste into a circular movement.”





Virendra Singh

Water Conservationist |
Environmental Activist | Champion
of Community-Led Restoration



*“Where water once
disappeared and ponds
lay forgotten, he helped
communities bring life
back to their landscapes.”*

In the landscapes of Dalli Rajhara in Chhattisgarh, where water bodies once defined community life, Virendra Singh saw a quiet crisis unfolding - ponds drying up, traditional systems fading, and water scarcity becoming a growing concern. Rather than accepting this decline, he chose to act.

Known as the “Waterman of Chhattisgarh” his journey began with reviving neglected ponds and traditional water structures. What started as a local effort gradually evolved into a community-led movement, bringing together villagers, youth, and local groups to restore water bodies and rebuild ecological balance.

Over two decades, his work has expanded beyond water conservation to include tree plantation and environmental awareness, creating a holistic model of ecological restoration. By reconnecting communities with traditional water systems, he has demonstrated that resilience lies not in new solutions alone, but in reviving and strengthening what already exists.



Water Conservation & Ecological Restoration

- Revived 40+ traditional ponds, 2 kunds, and sections of local rivers
- Promotes rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge
- Leads large-scale plantation drives to restore local ecosystems
- Encourages community-led protection of natural resources

Community Impact

- Improved water availability for drinking, agriculture, and daily use
- Mobilised youth and communities for voluntary conservation efforts
- Revived traditional water management practices
- Strengthened local ownership of natural resource conservation

Environment & Awareness

- Conducts workshops on responsible waste management and sustainable living
- Encourages behavioural change towards eco-friendly consumption
- Uses simple, replicable models to drive large-scale community participation



Recognition

- Water Hero (2020), Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India
- Jal Star Award (2011) for water conservation
- Taru Bhushan Award (2022) for environmental protection
- Widely known as the “Waterman of Chhattisgarh”

Leadership & Roles

- Environmental activist and water conservationist
- Grassroots leader mobilising communities for ecological restoration
- Advocate for sustainable water management and environmental awareness

A Message for the Future

Virendra Singh believes that water is the foundation of life and resilience. His work reminds us that when communities come together to restore their natural resources, they don't just bring back water, they bring back the future.



*“26 years, 40+ ponds,
2 lakh+ youth - turning
conservation into a
movement.”*

प्रेरणा एवं परिवर्तन के व्यक्तित्व



Aparna Kumari
(Jharkhand)



Ashok Kumar Raut
(Odisha)



Bhaurao Godbole
(Chhattisgarh)



Damodar Kashyap
(Chhattisgarh)



Dr. Manoj Kumar
(Jharkhand)



Dropadi Devi
(Bihar)



Francis Munda
(Jharkhand)



Jhumuk Lal Merawi
(Chhattisgarh)



Kalawati Kashyap
(Chhattisgarh)



Lekesh Bai Jain
(Chhattisgarh)



Lokanath Nauri
(Odisha)



Mahadev Mahto
(Jharkhand)



Neelima Mishra
(Odisha)

प्रेरणा एवं परिवर्तन के व्यक्तित्व



Prabhat Kumar Mahato
(Jharkhand)



Prabhat Mishra
(Chhattisgarh)



Raimati Ghiuria
(Odisha)



Rajendra Baghel
(Chhattisgarh)



Ravi Kumar Singh
(Chhattisgarh)



Sangita Devi
(Jharkhand)



Sanjay Kacchap
(Jharkhand)



Shibani Padhy
(Odisha)



Shyam Lal Rajwaade
(Chhattisgarh)



Subham Kumar
(Bihar)



Surendra Prasad Singh
(Jharkhand)



Tarun Kumar
(Jharkhand)



Upendra Pandey &
Satbinder Pandey
(Jharkhand)



Virendra Singh
(Chhattisgarh)



Center for Environment and Energy Development (CEED) is a solution-driven organisation working at the intersection of climate action, energy transitions, circular economy, and sustainable development, particularly at the subnational level. CEED's work is rooted in the belief that meaningful climate action emerges where community realities, collaborations, and systems thinking converge. Through on-ground engagement, research, and partnerships, CEED supports regions and communities to strengthen resilience, enable sustainable livelihoods, and navigate the next phase of growth responsibly.

Email: info@ceedindia.org, ekam@ceedindia.org

Website: www.ceedindia.org

