

2023-2024

Annual Report



Foreword

As we embark on our 36th year of empowering every girl and every woman across India, I am profoundly inspired by and proud of the transformative journey we have been on. This has been a journey towards sustained, long-term change; where we have shifted the needle towards gender equality in both significant and subtle ways, fostered positive ecosystems for girls and women, and paved the way for equal opportunity, greater agency, and dignity. Driving this journey is our passionate team of change-makers, and their relentless commitment and dedication is at the crux of our every intervention, of every step we take.

Every year, every milestone we achieve in our journey serves as a powerful reminder of the work that still lies ahead, and strengthens our resolve to catalyze lasting change and build a truly gender-equal India. This year was no exception, as it brought forth new partnerships, innovative approaches, and an expanded geographical reach—propelling us closer to our mission.

New ecosystem-partnerships helped us expand the presence of our interventions in **new regions** of India. Our efforts to strengthen adolescent health and life skills have now

expanded to **three more states - West Bengal, Punjab, and Telangana**—shaping brighter, healthier futures.

Our journey has also been marked by significant norm-shifts at the community level. In Jharkhand, an impact assessment of our intervention **revealed significant progress in dismantling toxic masculinity** and redefining gender norms among young

boys. At the same time, we played a crucial role in the **Global 1.8 Billion Campaign** – a campaign that sought to amplify and understand the needs of young people across the world. As part of the campaign, C3 consolidated the voices of **over 130,000 young individuals from 11 Indian states**, shedding light on their asks for better health, education, and infrastructure.

In Bihar, we broke new ground by leveraging WhatsApp as a powerful tool for widespread outreach, awareness dissemination, and community mobilization **during the Nayi Chetna campaign**—a grassroots campaign to raise awareness and inspire action **around gender-based violence**. For the first time, we harnessed WhatsApp as a platform for driving social behaviour change. The campaign's success has paved the way for us to leverage digital mediums further, enabling amplified outreach and deeper impact. Technology-driven awareness-dissemination became a key strategy in our other initiatives as well. We launched a **month-long social media campaign** highlighting the importance of informed decision-making during childbirth to **reduce unnecessary C-sections**—a topic previously unexplored in the Indian digital landscape. The campaign reached over **14.9 million people** across social media platforms,

delivering critical information, sparking meaningful dialogue, and inspiring **mother influencers** to join the movement, lending their voices to the cause through user-generated content.

As we close out this year and look forward to the next, I am filled with optimism for what lies ahead. The partnerships we have nurtured, the innovations we are embracing, and the unwavering spirit of our team positions us to venture into even newer areas, address a wider gamut of issues, and continue to catalyze systemic change, from the ground-up.

Here's to continuing to catalyze change, together.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Aparajita Gogoi".

Dr Aparajita Gogoi

Executive Director

A Snapshot of Our Reach

In 2023-24, this is what our interventions have catalyzed:



575,000+ Young Girls

confidently navigating their lives, taking informed decisions about their wellbeing, career, and future; completing their education, and delaying marriage



23,000+ Grassroots Women Leaders

with strengthened leadership driving change at the grassroots and fostering healthier and gender-equitable communities



494,000+ Young Boys

equipped with life skills, better wellbeing, and the ability and will to challenge toxic masculinity and foster a gender-equal world



8,500+ Women from Collectives

achieving financial independence, while creating safer spaces for women and girls, and taking action against gender-based violence



9,500+ Healthcare Providers

committed to delivering quality, dignified, equitable, and respectful care for every woman, everywhere, every time



81,000+ Women

supported with vital information and access to services, enabling safe pregnancies and positive childbirth experiences

5,901 Young Peer Educators

leading adolescents in their communities towards better health and wellbeing, informed choices about their lives, through essential peer-to-peer support



13,500+ Teachers

transforming classrooms by embedding life skills, fostering wellbeing, and instilling gender sensitivity among young people



Youth Engagement

A key aspect of C3's work is to work with young people towards improved wellbeing, educational outcomes, ability to take independent decisions around their lives with confidence and strengthened agency, and to achieve gender equality and practice gender-equitable attitudes in their day to day lives.

Our youth engagement interventions are currently operational in the states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Telangana, and Punjab, empowering over 9 lakh adolescents with bolstered life skills and wellbeing. In school settings, C3 serves as a technical assistance partner for the implementation of the School Health and Wellness Program (SHWP), working closely with teachers and technical assistance groups to build curriculum and capacity around delivering life skills education to young people. In Uttarakhand and Bihar, C3 is also working in schools to establish in-school mental health response mechanisms, ensuring young people have access to critical emotional support. Beyond classrooms, C3 works in alignment with the government's Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) to empower peer educators who champion young people's health, nutrition, and progressive social norms in their communities. In Jharkhand, with support from Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, C3 is instilling gender-equitable attitudes and unpacking toxic masculinity among young boys. Building a cadre of 'Pragati Mitras' – or community volunteers - in urban clusters of Patna, Raipur, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Guwahati, C3 has been equipping communities to effectively address adolescent health and hygiene, environmental sustainability, while connecting them with government schemes and provisions.

New Interventions to Strengthen Adolescent Health and Education

In Mohali, Punjab:

Leveraging a CSR collaboration with **AkzoNobel**, and a partnership with **the Department of School Education**, Punjab, C3 has embarked on a journey

to improve the wellbeing and futures of more than 2,000 young people in Mohali every academic year. This initiative, *Project Parivartan*, combines academic enrichment support, life skills education, and a robust focus on mental health to empower students of Classes VI to X within school settings. Through School Health and Wellness initiatives, it equips adolescents with the knowledge to make informed decisions about their health and well-being, with a special emphasis on menstrual hygiene management for girls. The program also connects students who come from difficult backgrounds with academic support and scholarships, while ensuring workforce-readiness through skills trainings. Project Parivartan also works in alignment with government schemes like the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram to connect adolescents to accessible health services.

In Hyderabad, Telangana:

Through a CSR partnership with **GeBBs Healthcare Solutions**, C3 began an initiative to create safe, engaging, and empowering learning environments for adolescents in Hyderabad. Implemented in two schools and two Anganwadi Centres, the initiative ensures holistic educational enrichment for adolescents through learning resource centres, and meeting infrastructural needs like sports facilities and kits.



To address health and well-being, the initiative equips and engages teachers and health workers through health camps, and specialized training. Community connection is fostered through events and celebrations, bringing together stakeholders and corporate volunteers to amplify impact.

Conveying our Impact

Youth Catalyst Conclave, Jharkhand:

To commemorate National Youth Day in January 2024, C3 hosted the **Youth Catalyst Conclave** in Ranchi, Jharkhand – celebrating Jharkhand's journey of adolescent empowerment over the past two decades, and highlighting both the gains and areas of further investment around adolescent well-being in the state. For over 18 years, C3 has empowered young people in Jharkhand with life skills, agency, and well-being. Bringing together government stakeholders and the voices and stories of young people, the conclave reaffirmed the on-ground change our work has catalyzed, and the government initiatives that have facilitated this change. The conclave was a testament to how C3 has established its credibility and thought leadership in Jharkhand when it comes to implementing adolescent health initiatives.

National Youth Meet, Delhi:

In April 2023, C3's National Youth Meet, *Mera Manch Meri Awaaz*, brought together young people from our project locations in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha to New Delhi for four dynamic days of learning, dialogue, and collaboration. The meet empowered adolescents with tools like social media and street theatre to spread critical consciousness and drive change around young people's issues. Beyond indoor sessions, participants also explored the outdoors - visiting Delhi's cultural and historic landmarks, and gaining practical exposure. All in all, the meet not only amplified young people's voices and issues, it also equipped them to lead transformative change in their communities.



What Young People Want: The 1.8 Billion Campaign



Young people's needs must be **front and center** in conversations about their future. Hence, as part of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) network, C3 played a pivotal role

in the global **1.8 Billion Campaign** – which aimed to amplify the voices of the world's demographic dividend of 1.8 billion adolescents and youth. During the campaign, C3 gathered insights from over **130,000 young individuals** aged 16-24, spanning 11 Indian states, on their most pressing and critical needs. From the desire for greater mental health support, to menstrual health awareness and nutrition, C3's findings spotlighted the needs and aspirations of young people across India, ensuring their voices are heard in shaping interventions that impact their lives. Dr. Aparajita Gogoi, C3's Executive Director was also a panelist at the campaign's Global Forum for Adolescents, sharing insights on how commitments around adolescent health and wellbeing can translate to concrete change.

By collaborating with the global **1.8 Billion Campaign**, C3 translated young people's demands for better health and better future into actionable insights, bridging the gap between their lived realities and meaningful change.

Impact

Equipping Boys with Gender-Equal Attitudes in Jharkhand:

Over four years, C3's initiative in Gumla and Lohardagga districts, Jharkhand, engaged with **15,000 boys aged 10-19** to challenge toxic masculinity and build gender-equitable attitudes through sports, peer-to-peer learning, and community engagement. The project leveraged government schemes like the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (**RKSK**) and infrastructure like Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (**NYKS**) to maximize impact.

An impact assessment revealed significant perceptive and behavioral shifts among the boys we engaged with:

- **Positive Shift in Adolescent Boys' Perceptions of Gender Roles:** There has been a significant positive shift in adolescent boys' perceptions of masculinity as a result of the intervention. There was an 18% increase in the number of boys who believe in gender-equal sharing of household work, and a 20% increase in those who think girls' education is important.

Additionally, 10% more boys now agree that women should engage in paid work after marriage. These changes demonstrate a growing recognition of gender equality and a breakdown of traditional gender roles among boys.

- **Improved Understanding of Masculine Qualities:** Boys' understanding of what constitutes masculinity has evolved significantly. 54% of boys described an ideal man as "polite and respectful" (compared to only 27% who said the same before the intervention). Furthermore, the percentage of boys who didn't know what masculinity entails dropped dramatically, from 59% at baseline to just 8% at end-line, highlighting an increased awareness and engagement on the topic.
- **Increase in Gender Equality Score:** The project has resulted in a substantial increase in adolescent boys' gender equality attitudes. The 'Gender Equality Score' of boys in the intervention group rose from 2.6 at baseline to 3.4 at the endline, reflecting a shift toward more progressive views on gender roles and equality.
 - » **Shift in Understanding of Power Dynamics:** There has been a notable shift in adolescent boys' understanding of power dynamics. Their awareness of sexual and reproductive health has also improved significantly, signaling a broader understanding of gender relations and health.
 - » **Improved Awareness of Health:** Knowledge about health also saw a significant improvement as a result of the intervention. The awareness score for reproductive health rose from 1.58 at baseline to 3.20 at the endline. This substantial increase highlights the effectiveness of the program in enhancing adolescent boys' understanding of key health topics.
 - » **Increased Awareness and Utilization of Adolescent Health Programs:** Awareness of adolescent health services, such as those under the Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), increased from 12% at baseline to a whopping 56% at endline. In comparison areas, awareness remains low at just 9%. More than half of those who are aware of the program also attended sessions with Peer Educators regularly, showing greater engagement with health services. There was also an increased awareness and utilization of Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHC), and Adolescent Health Days.

Overall, the impact assessment underscored that shifts in gender norms are possible when young boys are equipped with tools to question harmful norms and champion equality, even if certain gaps and areas of further engagement remain. These shifts are stepping stones towards a **gender-equal future** where respect and care define masculinity.



Championing Adolescent Health in Odisha through the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK):

As a technical support partner, C3 has been strengthening the implementation of the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) program in Bhadrak district, Odisha, since 2020, empowering adolescents to better understand their health and confidently access health services.

Through its technical support, C3 facilitated the formation of adolescent groups at the village level, enabled peer educators to conduct monthly meetings and sessions with fellow adolescents in their communities, and ensured the regularization of Adolescent Health Days (AHD) – which ensure critical consciousness around and linkages to health and nutrition services.

Through a cross-sectional endline study, we found significant improvement in health knowledge and awareness among adolescents in the community, especially regarding physical health, nutrition, and sexual health, leading to better access to services and informed choices:

- **Increased Awareness of Menstruation:** There has been a remarkable improvement in awareness of menstruation, especially among boys. At the baseline, only 25% of boys were aware of menstruation, but this increased to 54% by the endline. Among girls, awareness jumped from 75% to 96%. However, in terms of menstrual taboos, while 39% of girls have unlearned the myth about not cooking during menstruation (compared to 19% at baseline), taboos regarding visiting religious places during menstruation remain high.
- **Knowledge of Anaemia and Nutritional Concerns:** Adolescents have gained a significantly better understanding of anaemia and its impact. Only 4% of adolescents now report not knowing the symptoms of anaemia, compared to 54% at baseline. Similarly, the number of adolescents unaware of the causes of anaemia dropped from 72% to 9%, and the percentage of those who didn't know how to prevent anaemia decreased from 65% to 8%. These improvements reflect a positive shift in awareness, equipping adolescents with essential knowledge for better health management.
- **Reduction in Diabetes Diagnoses:** The diagnosis of diabetes among adolescents has significantly decreased over the course of the project. While 3% of girls and 18% of boys were diagnosed with diabetes at baseline, these figures dropped to just 1% for girls and 3% for boys at endline. This positive shift highlights the impact of increased awareness and healthier lifestyle choices promoted throughout the program.
- **Reduction in Hypertension Diagnoses:** Similarly, the incidence of hypertension among adolescents has seen a notable reduction. Baseline data indicated that 3% of girls and 18% of boys were diagnosed with hypertension, but by endline, these figures had decreased to 3% and 5%, respectively.
- **Improved Access to Health Information and Services:** Access to health information and services has significantly improved, with a marked increase in adolescents seeking support from local health workers. Among girls, 93% accessed information and services from ASHAs (up from 61% at baseline), and 88% received services from Anganwadi Workers (compared to 59% at baseline). Among boys, 97% accessed ASHA services (compared to 76% at baseline), and 80% received information and

services from Anganwadi Workers (compared to 69% at baseline). These improvements indicate better outreach and service delivery, ensuring that more adolescents are getting the health information and support they need.

- **Improved Knowledge on HIV and STIs:** Knowledge about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS among adolescents has also seen a significant boost. 80% of boys are now aware of HIV/AIDS, compared to 52% at baseline, and 70% of girls have gained awareness, compared to just 42% at baseline.

Highlights:

C3's innovative programming for adolescents and young people took center stage at a co-branded G20 event in June 2023, organized by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

As a key member of the National Technical Resource Group for the School Health and Wellness Program (SHWP), C3 has been instrumental in capacity bridging of state resource groups in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. These efforts are empowering states to effectively implement the SHWP and build awareness around wellbeing and gender equality among adolescents.

Girls' Empowerment

Investing in young girls creates ripple effects that benefit families, communities, and society at large. Hence, C3 is committed to empowering every girl, everywhere, and at the core of our work is building their agency—enabling girls to stay in school, delay marriage and pregnancy, and tackle patriarchal norms with confidence, knowledge, and negotiation skills.

In Chhattisgarh, with support from the Norwegian Embassy, C3 has been working in two blocks of Surguja district, Chhattisgarh – at the individual, family, community and system level – to curb child marriage. Similar interventions to curb child, early and forced marriages are operational in Jharkhand and Odisha, mobilizing adolescents, families, community leaders and faith-based leaders. In West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Haryana, we are shaping positive ecosystems for young girls, where their agency and education is prioritized. To ensure young girls' menstrual hygiene, we equip young girls with the correct resources and information, dismantling period myths and taboos.

Launching Navya: A First Menstruator Kit

Navigating their first period can be a daunting experience for young girls, often clouded by confusion, a lack of awareness about menstrual health and pervasive taboos, myths, and misinformation around menstruation.

To address this critical gap, C3 launched *Navya: Kyunki Life Hai Beautiful* – a unique and empowering first-menstruator kit designed for girls aged 11-13, a foundational period for forming lifelong healthy habits

and understanding their changing bodies. Navya equips young girls with the tools and knowledge to embrace their first period with confidence and safety. Each Navya Kit includes reusable pads, a fun and engaging *Navya Diary* filled with essential menstrual health information and a period tracker to foster early adoption of the practice of tracking menstrual health patterns. The kit also features a hot water bag for pain management and a washing liquid for reusable pads, encouraging sustainable and hygienic menstrual management practices.

The kit was launched by renowned embryologist and health influencer Dr. Tanaya Narendra, popularly known as Dr. Cuterus, who brought her engaging insights on menstrual health in an interaction with young girls in Jharkhand.

New Initiatives

Strengthening Girls' Education in Howrah, West Bengal:

In 2023, C3, with the support of Credilla, set out to empower adolescent girls in Bagnan Block, Howrah, West Bengal, with its all new Manushi initiative. The initiative empowers adolescent girls by amplifying their voice, enhancing their decision-making power, and improving health outcomes through customized health sessions and service linkages. By offering academic enrichment and strengthening school retention, the project ensures sustained educational engagement. Additionally, it boosts digital and financial literacy, equipping school-going girls with future-ready 21st century skills.



Ensuring School Completion of Girls for the Prevention of Child, Early and Forced Marriages in Odisha:

C3 had been working in Dashpalla block, Nayagarh, Odisha since 2022, to address and mitigate key barriers to girls' education and empowerment. Since its inception, the initiative has been building agency and aspirations among girls, shaping an enabling environment for them, and improving access to education and entitlements, while leveraging partnerships with government departments and community leaders. With the conclusion of the first phase of the project in December 2023, a grant from the Echidna Foundation has fueled us to scale this initiative district-wide, covering all eight blocks of Nayagarh to impact the lives of 50,000 girls.

Over the next three years, the initiative will enhance educational outcomes by equipping girls with life skills, leadership capacity-building, academic enrichment support, and access to scholarships and entitlements. By addressing systemic and community-level barriers, the initiative aims to increase school retention and completion rates, while instilling negotiation skills that young girls can leverage to delay marriage. The initiative will also work with ecosystems that impact young girls, i.e. families, schools, and community leaders - including faith-based leaders - ensuring that the ecosystem normalizes the wellbeing, access to education, and safe spaces for young girls.

The Echidna Foundation grant offers essential momentum in strengthening C3's organizational capacity, sustainability, and workplace culture around gender equity, innovation, and growth.

Investing in Adolescent Girls in Odisha: A Roundtable

To drive action and share insights on preventing child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) in Odisha, C3, in collaboration with the Odisha State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and USAID Momentum Country and Global Leadership: India-Yash, hosted a state-level roundtable in November 2023. The event shed

essential light on ground realities, celebrated key successes, and charted an ambitious path toward creating **child-marriage-free communities**. C3's innovative approach to eliminating CEFM involves mobilizing **faith-based leaders** and **adolescent champions** to drive community awareness and action. Both faith-based leaders and adolescent champions took the centre-stage at the roundtable, sharing their inspiring stories of catalyzing change, and showcasing how grassroots leadership and community mobilization are dismantling harmful norms and practices, and fostering a future where every young girl can thrive.



Impact

Preventing Child Early & Forced Marriages (CEFM) in Odisha:

Since 2022, in the Nayagarh and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha, C3 has been building individual agency and collective solidarity among adolescents to lead community action against CEFM. The initiative, supported by USAID Momentum, empowered girls make informed choices, develop self-esteem, negotiate gender roles and work towards career aspirations, shaping an enabling environment where girls receive holistic support.

With its conclusion in 2023, an impact assessment charted the progress that this initiative catalyzed:

- **More girls are now completing graduation before marriage**—and the percentage has more than doubled post C3's intervention, with 23% girls now marrying after finishing graduation, compared to 11% pre-intervention.
- **Aspirations for higher education are growing**—40% of young girls from C3's intervention areas now want to complete their graduation, while the desire to study even beyond graduation has increased, with aspirations for postgraduate education rising by 7%.
- **Career ambitions are expanding**—the number of young girls who wanted to just be homemakers dropped from 23% at baseline to 16% at endline, reflecting a shift toward diverse professional goals.
- **Gender norms around education are shifting**—more respondents now believe girls should complete graduation before marriage, with this perception rising from 11% to 23% pre and post intervention.
- **Young girls are choosing to delay marriage**—49% of girls now want to marry at age 23 or older, which is up from 33% at baseline. The prevailing reason for this is girls prioritizing the completion of their education - cited by 50% girls, compared to just 38% at baseline
- **Awareness of the legal age for marriage has increased among young girls**—rising from 45% to 54% in our intervention areas.
- **Forced marriage is becoming less common**—70% of girls reported no such cases within their immediate family or community.
- **Girls are gaining a voice in marriage decisions**—while parental influence remains strong with 64% girls, more

young girls in intervention areas now have a say. The proportion of those with no say has dropped to 12%, while 49% report having some say, and 39% have significant influence over marriage decisions.

- **Attitudes toward ending child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) are shifting**— measured on an index from -2 (strongly agree with harmful norms) to +2 (strongly disagree), scores in intervention areas rose from 8.24 at baseline to 8.92 at endline, reflecting positive change.



Gender Equity

A gender balance in governance and communities leads to positive social development.

In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and David and Lucile Packard Foundation, C3 has been mentoring and equipping grassroots women leaders to address gender inequalities and spearhead social change within their communities, particularly around reproductive and maternal health services, nutrition, and promoting access to social entitlements, safety and mobility.

Women's collectives at the rural level promote access livelihoods and peer support. In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, C3 is strengthening gender responsive community-based institutions and building the capacities of members of collectives to tackle patriarchy, gender-based discrimination and violence; connecting women to legal and support services.

Strengthening Gender Transformative Leadership in Bihar

Learning Camps for Elected Women Representatives:

Strengthening women-led grassroots governance in Bihar, C3's capacity-building Learning Camps equipped **360 women leaders** from Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to address community-level issues and to map government schemes, identify beneficiaries, and enable access to entitlements. The camps also highlighted the critical role of nutrition and POSHAN Panchayat Committees (a community-driven platform enhancing nutrition through improved service delivery and local ownership) in fostering healthier communities, inspiring women leaders to take up nutrition as a key issue in work. All in all, these camps empowered these women leaders with actionable knowledge and tools to drive impactful change.

Empowering Panchayat Leaders to Tackle Health and Social Issues:

Between April 2023 and March 2024, C3, in partnership with the Department of Panchayati Raj and the State Health Society, empowered grassroots leaders across Bihar to drive community-wide change in health and social outcomes. Through "District Level One-Day Orientations," C3 equipped newly elected **Mukhiyas in 18 districts and Sarpanchs in 12 districts** with the knowledge and tools to address the wellbeing of women in their communities

The impact of these efforts was remarkable. Armed with training, the Panchayat leaders catalyzed community engagement by organizing **991 Saas Bahu Beti Sammelans** to facilitate conversations between women of various age groups around family planning and reproductive health. They also **distributed Nayi Pahel Kits to 309 families** – which are kits given to newly married couples by the Government of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, containing essential resources for family planning and birth spacing, including contraceptives, and health and hygiene items.

The Panchayat leaders played a crucial role in organizing community-level health camps, in partnership with 268 other Elected Representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Through **1769 special Gram Sabhas (village gatherings)**, the Panchayat leaders sparked widespread and detailed conversations on family planning issues. The ripple effect was evident in **1631 Gram Panchayats**, where Panchayat leaders integrated maternal health and family planning needs into Gram Panchayat Development Plans, unlocking project approvals worth **₹12 crores**. During Family Planning Fortnight (celebrated on the occasion of World Population Day, between July 11 – July 24), **1377 community programs** led by the Panchayat leaders amplified critical consciousness around family planning, paving the way for gender-equitable reproductive choices and healthier futures.

Leveraging Jan Arogya Samitis:

Jan Arogya Samitis (JAS), at the Panchayat level, are committees that ensure community participation in the planning, monitoring, and decision-making around health services.

In **7 districts of Bihar**, C3 built the capacities of PRI members and staff from the National Health Mission (NHM)—including Medical Officers, Community Health Officers, and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) – to effectively activate and sustain Jan Arogya Samitis at Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs) and Additional Primary Health Centers (APHCs), strengthening community health.



Out of the 195 Jan Arogya Samitis that were eventually formed in these districts, C3 catalyzed the formation of **40 Jan Arogya Samitis at rural HWCs, and 6 at APHCs**, while ensuring that **49 Jan Arogya Samitis held regular meetings with active PRI participation in 51 instances**. Financial accountability and service improvements were prioritized, with C3 assisting **16 Jan Arogya Samitis** in opening bank accounts, and guiding **53 Jan Arogya Samitis** to utilize untied funds totaling ₹16.35 lakh.

This funding directly translated into improved wellbeing of community members. **49 Jan Arogya Samitis displayed Citizen Charters** in health centers, **4 installed complaint boxes** for grievance redressal, and **15 introduced patient feedback registers**. Basic amenities were addressed, with **81 Jan Arogya Samitis enabling drinking water facilities** and **93 Jan Arogya Samitis ensuring improved seating arrangements in waiting areas** at health centers. Additionally, **54 Jan Arogya Samitis ensured proper signage, and 13 displayed annual health calendars** at health centers, fostering transparency and accessibility.

C3's efforts have laid the foundation for responsive, community-centered healthcare systems in Bihar, driven by community leaders and healthcare officials.

Strengthening Gender Transformative Leadership in Uttar Pradesh

New Partnerships:

C3's efforts to support women-led grassroots leadership in Uttar Pradesh continue to gain momentum.

- **The National Health Mission (NHM)** has allocated a **₹46 lakh budget** in its Program Implementation Plan (PIP) to onboard Gram Pradhans as key stakeholders in the Family Planning program. C3 is supporting this for increased awareness and uptake of family planning services and reversible contraception within communities.
- **The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) department** is working collaboratively to strengthen Panchayat leaders' nutrition-focused efforts in four districts—Varanasi, Fatehpur, Moradabad, and Shravasti. With this essential institutional support, Panchayat leaders are now fostering healthier communities by improving last-mile access to nutrition services.

Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs):

With C3 building critical consciousness around the significance of LSDGs through its grassroots leadership capacity-bridging initiatives, Panchayat leaders have demonstrated a strong commitment to achieving these goals, actively integrating them into their governance strategies to drive sustainable development at the last mile:

- In Uttar Pradesh, out of the **1,182 Panchayats** in our 4 intervention districts (Varanasi, Fatehpur, Moradabad & Shravasti), **208 (18%)** have integrated strategies to work towards shaping a "Healthy Village" (LSDG Theme 2) in their Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP).
- Over **535 women led Gram Panchayats (45%)** in UP have allocated budgets ranging from ₹5,000 to **₹1,50,000 per Panchayat** within their GPDP specifically for nutrition-focused activities.

These Panchayats are now proactively working toward creating Panchayat-specific health plans, paving the way for tailored, grassroots-driven health initiatives.

Nurturing and Amplifying Community Voices

With C3's support, grassroots leaders have been actively contributing to more equitable and participatory community development:

- A total of **335 Bal Sabhas** have been formed in Moradabad and Shravasti, which are dedicated groups of children in villages who share their perspectives and concerns with the Gram Panchayat and the wider community. The Gram Panchayat is responsible for incorporating the issues and recommendations from the Bal Sabha into their annual plans and budgeting. These forums have been vital for adolescents, enabling them to actively participate in community decision-making, have their voices amplified and heard, and have their rights be championed.

- A total of **203 Mahila Sabhas** have been supported in these districts, providing women with a crucial platform to voice their needs, identify priorities, and actively participate in decision-making processes. Through Mahila Sabhas, women collectively identify and voice their priorities, which are then presented to the Gram Panchayat. The Panchayat incorporates these perspectives into its plans and decisions, ensuring that women's needs and concerns actively influence community development. By empowering women to engage in critical discussions, Mahila Sabhas drive inclusive governance.

Collaborations between Panchayati Raj Institutions and Self-Help Groups for Gender Equitable Development:

C3, in collaboration with Panchayati Raj Institutes of Training (PRIT), Government of Uttar Pradesh, under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), has designed and rolled-out training curriculum to enhance synergy and convergence between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for stronger community-driven governance. This curriculum was specifically designed to strengthen local capacities in effectively managing resources, addressing community needs, and ensuring sustainable development in the areas of health, sanitation, and nutrition.



The convergence training has led to the efficient utilization of funds for community health services across 4 demonstration districts. Pradhans have effectively utilized funds worth 89 to

strengthen Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs), which has led to streamlining of local health services, and the procurement of essential medical equipment such as weighing machines, BP monitors, and more, for Village Health and Sanitation Days (VHSNDs). Additionally, Pradhans have taken significant strides in regularizing VHSNC meetings. Out of **1,182 VHSNCs, 1,029 (87%)** have now established regular meeting schedules, ensuring consistent community engagement in health and sanitation matters. The activation of Jan Arogya Samiti (JAS) committees has also seen remarkable progress, with **140 out of 179 (78%) committees now functioning effectively**, driving local health initiatives.

PRI-SHG convergence is proving to be a powerful tool for enhancing community health services, and ensuring that financial resources are efficiently directed towards the well-being of the community.

Strengthening Community Nutrition and Hygiene:

C3 provided essential support to Pradhans in advancing community health and welfare by leveraging government schemes like "**Mission Kayakalp**" (which aims to promote cleanliness, hygiene, infection control, and environment-friendly practices in Public Health Facilities) and the "**Hot Cooked Meals**" (which aims to provide nutritious meals to children aged 3-6 years at Anganwadis).

Celebrating POSHAN Maah (Nutrition Month)

In September – which has been delineated the 'Nutrition Month' by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare - Mahila Pradhans worked in collaboration with the ICDS department to mobilize their communities for greater nutrition awareness. Through fairs, rallies, and community events such as games, Rangoli-making, and Mehndi competitions, Pradhans highlighted locally available nutritional foods and raised awareness on health and nutrition.

Under Mission Kayakalp, Pradhans have played an active role in transforming Anganwaadi centers, with **44 out of 155 sites in 2052 Panchayats** already brought up to standard. Parallely, C3 has been working with Pradhans and

Anganwadi Workers to implement the Hot Cooked Meal scheme across all four districts, reaching 95% of Anganwaadi centers across 4 districts. Mothers' Groups have been formed to ensure meal quality, positively impacting the health and nutrition of children.

Additionally, Pradhans have spearheaded a social security initiative, leading a meticulous line-listing process that resulted in the approval of old-age pensions for **911 individuals out of which 121 started receiving pension individuals** in Moradabad and Shravasti, significantly enhancing social security for vulnerable communities.

Mahila Pradhans also played an instrumental role in **Chhaya Integrated Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day (CiVHSND)** sessions - a community-level service delivery platform where vital Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Nutrition (RMNCH+N) services are provided. With active participation and leadership from the Pradhans, nearly **5000 children** were successfully immunized, pregnant women were registered for ante-natal checkups, and POSHAN corners were established within communities for greater community awareness.

Building Learning Resources for Women Leaders:

C3 developed flipbooks for Pradhans on key topics like LSDGs, the Panchayat Development Index, and GPDPs, providing them with essential self-learning tools to strengthen their gender-transformative leadership. These resources empower Pradhans to make informed decisions, driving meaningful progress and change in their communities.



C3 also facilitated a series of virtual sessions for Mahila Pradhans which provided interactive spaces to discuss essential topics such as Own Source Revenue, LSDGs, and GPDPs. These sessions helped Mahila Pradhans deepen their understanding of governance, resource optimization, and sustainable development.

Gender Integration in JEEViKA

Since 2006, the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotions Society (BRLPS)-JEEViKA has been empowering women in rural Bihar by creating one of the largest networks of women's collectives in India, offering access to financial resources, supporting micro-enterprises, and connecting women to banking services. Despite these efforts, societal and patriarchal barriers remain, hindering women's agency and economic participation. To address this, BRLPS-JEEViKA partnered with C3 to integrate gender equality into its operations. C3 has been guiding the inclusion of gender-transformative strategies, focusing on gender-sensitive capacity building for staff at all levels and within the women's collective network.

Capacity Building on Gender Equality:

Over the past year, C3 has strengthened the capacities of key stakeholders and functionaries within JEEViKA systems, deepening their understanding of gender-based violence, discrimination, and the power dynamics of patriarchy. This capacity-building has equipped them to better address these issues and leverage JEEViKA's operations to amplify the agency of women within its collectives.

500

Gender Point Persons
Associated with JEEViKA
equipped with knowledge on:
gender equality concepts,
their roles in driving gender
integration

15

**Gender Resource
Centre Coordinators**
equipped with knowledge on:
Gender, Resource Centre
operations, Counselling Skills

200

**Leaders of Cluster-Level
Federations of Women's
Collectives** equipped with
knowledge on: gender, patriarchy,
gender-based violence

200

**Village Organizations and
Social Action Committees**
under JEEViKA
equipped with knowledge on:
gender equality, patriarchy,
gender-based violence and their
role in tackling these issues

90

**Social Development Managers
and District Training Officers**
from 38 Districts empowered to:
develop strategies to promote
gender equality within district
teams and across regions

140

**Coordinators of Didi Adhikar
Kendras** from 38 Districts
empowered to: develop
strategies to promote gender
equality within district teams and
across regions

POSH Trainings

For JEEViKA's Internal Committee
members on the Sexual
Harassment of Women at
Workplace Act, strengthening
gender-responsive policies and
practices across 38 districts

Scaling-Up of Gender Resource Centres:

JEEViKA Gender Resource Centres, also known as Sajha Shakti Kendras, are dedicated spaces in Bihar that provide critical support for women facing gender-based violence. These centers offer emergency assistance, access to helplines, free legal aid, and help with securing social entitlements.

The experiences of the Sajha Shakti Kendras (SSKs) over the past year, coupled with valuable insights from studies, have emphasized the urgent need to prioritize and address gender and social issues at a higher level. Hence, establishing a dedicated platform at the block level to assist Cluster Level Federations in championing and supporting the rights of women and marginalized groups can play a pivotal role in addressing several critical challenges:

- Normalization of social attitudes that perpetuated discrimination, violence, injustice, and corruption.
- The financial and logistical barriers to accessing government schemes, often exacerbated by middlemen, leading to women's reluctance to engage with essential government programs.
- Women's fear of stigma, which prevents them from speaking out against injustices.
- A widespread lack of awareness about redressal mechanisms, service providers, and legal rights among women.
- The absence of safe spaces for women to share experiences of violence and file complaints.

In response, JEEViKA has made the bold decision to scale up the Sajha Shakti Kendra model from 3 districts across 4 blocks to 174 blocks and 37 districts in Bihar.

Starting with 15 Sajha Shakti Kendras across four blocks in three districts (Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, and Patna), C3 too, has now expanded its support to JEEViKA - currently directly reaching **10 districts and 73 blocks**, and indirectly supporting **19 districts and 120 blocks**. This year marks significant progress in scaling up and expanding our efforts to integrate a gender lens into JEEViKA.

JEEViKA-led Safety Audits:

To identify and address safety risks women and girls face in public spaces, JEEViKA's Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) have begun the process of **conducting safety audits** in their communities. With support from C3 and the collective participation of members and leaders of self-help groups, village organizations, cluster level federations and Sajha Shakti Kendra coordinators; these audits survey various locations like public transportation routes, bus stops, markets, and JEEViKA offices at different times of the day to assess potential risks and areas of improvement.

Findings from the audits are then shared to catalyze action around enhanced infrastructure and fostering safe spaces for women and girls - which include efforts like street lighting, road repairs, and fostering a "zero tolerance" environment toward violence.



Strengthening Convergence Between Systems to Achieve Gender Equality:

• **Convergence with Support Services on Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence:** Over the past year, C3 has worked closely with JEEViKA district, block, and community based networks to strengthen collaboration with support services like One Stop Centres, Mahila Thanas, Police Stations, and the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to address gender-based violence. There has been continued engagement with these support services, with Sajha Shakti Kendra coordinators, Cluster-level Federation Leaders, and Village Organization leaders escalating cases that were not resolved easily at Sajha Shakti Kendras. Support services have started recognizing the importance JEEViKA networks in resolution and escalation of cases, and in multiple instances, JEEViKA leaders have ensured cases are picked up and filed by the respective support service. In Rajgir and Dhanarua districts, DLSA's Paralegal Volunteers have also facilitated sessions on legal entitlements during meetings of Cluster-level Federations, building greater awareness around violence redressal among the women in JEEViKA collectives.

• **Block and Panchayat-level Gender Forums:** Addressing key community-level gender issues and gaps, in Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, and Patna districts, C3 facilitated 85 Panchayat-level Gender Forums and 9 Block-level Gender Forums. These forums brought together PRI members, health, education, and nutrition representatives, as well as Rozgar Sevaks, building convergence across various departments to work towards achieving gender equity across the 3 districts.

• **Support to JEEViKA Leaders in Establishing Convergence with Buniyaad Kendra:** With support from the World Bank, the Bihar government has launched the *Bihar Integrated Social Security Strengthening Project*, establishing 101 *Buniyaad Kendras* to expand access to essential social security services, ensuring greater reach and support for beneficiaries across the state. C3 has been facilitating connections between JEEViKA networks and Buniyaad Kendras, to ensure the health needs and social entitlements of women and girls are consistently addressed.

'Sajha Prayas, Sajha Shakti': Celebrating One Year of Gender Integration in JEEViKA:

Marking a year of impactful progress and key milestones, JEEViKA, in collaboration with C3, convened a Sharing and Learning Workshop in Patna in June 2023, highlighting field experiences, achievements, and strengthened collaboration and convergence efforts, laying the foundation for a strategic roadmap to advance gender integration in the year ahead.

Campaigns on Gender Equity:

Over the past year, C3 has developed and disseminated impactful Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials to amplify linked to Gender-Based Violence and women's social entitlements, catalyzing action through targeted campaigns during significant cultural events like



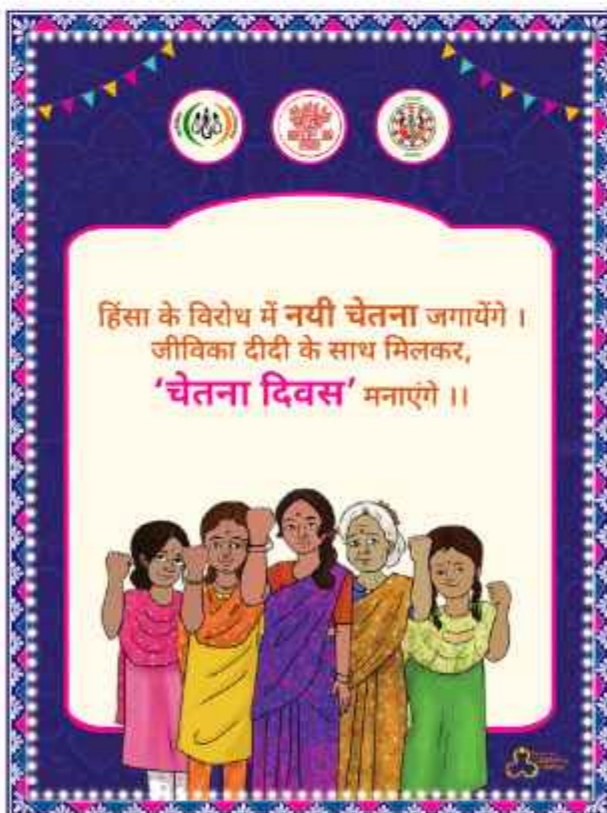
Durga Puja, Chhath, Holi, and Raksha Bandhan; and for Nayi Chetna—India's national campaign to end GBV. These campaigns have leveraged posters, WhatsApp messages (including text and graphics), and flyers to effectively reach members of Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), Village Organizations (VOs), and Self-Help Groups (SHGs), amplifying messages of empowerment. As part of the roll-out of Sajha Shakti Kendras and now Didi Adhikar Kendras, C3 has created critical awareness-building resources that equip women with the knowledge to recognize, address and take collective action against gender-based violence and discrimination, building safer, more equitable communities.

- **Nayi Chetna Campaign 2.0:** The *Nayi Chetna 2.0* campaign - a nationwide campaign to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that runs throughout November and December, was observed across Bihar - particularly in the Gender Integration districts of Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, and Patna. During the campaign, nearly **500 Self-Help Group (SHG) leaders, Gender Point Persons, and Social Action Committee members**, came together to break the silence around gender-based violence and reaffirm their collective resolve to end violence against women and girls. Adding to the momentum, the Gender Integration districts marked a significant milestone—one year of successfully operating 15 Sajha Shakti Kendras (Gender Resource Centres). These centers have emerged as crucial spaces for women, addressing cases of gender-based violence while ensuring access to social entitlements for JEEViKA members.

- **Durga Puja Campaign:** During Durga Puja - which is among the biggest festivals of Bihar - leaders of JEEViKA community-based organizations leveraged venues where the festival was celebrated (puja pandals) to sensitize and raise awareness around gender-based issues among community members and stakeholders, who gathered in large numbers at these venues. The campaign ran in all three Gender Integration districts.

- **Raksha Bandhan Campaign:** On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, JEEViKA leaders in the 3 intervention districts redefined the essence of the festival by tying *Raksha Sutas* to one another, instead of male relatives. This symbolic act carried a powerful pledge: to stand together, support one another, and offer protection in moments of vulnerability. Across various Cluster Level Federations and Village Organizations, community-based organization leaders transformed the day of festivities into a platform for change, raising slogans around gender equality, and standing united against violence.

- **Campaign on International Women's Day and Holi**
Ongoing discussions on gender issues at the community-based organization level have sparked a significant shift—communities are now acknowledging and accepting that gender inequalities persist. In a Village Organization meeting in Rajgir, a concerning spike in child marriage cases was identified in specific villages. Determined to address this issue, JEEViKA leaders leveraged the platforms of International Women's Day and the Holi festival for targeted community campaigns. Through collective action and community mobilization, they took bold steps to challenge harmful practices like child marriage, and promote girls' education.



Impact

Gender Integration in JEEViKA, One Year On:

The Mid-line Qualitative Evaluation of the Gender Integration Program - with reports and briefs from the study now being prepared for broader circulation - offered valuable insights for learning and replication of the model.

The overall progress in advancing gender integration has shown promising outcomes, marked by distinct **shifts in gender attitudes** among members of community-based organizations. Special focus on Cluster Level Federation and Village Organization Social Action Committees has fostered an environment where gender and social issues are now regularly discussed in meetings and gatherings.

The **establishment of the Sajha Shakti Kendras** (Gender Resource Centres) has been a game-changer for JEEViKA members, significantly enhancing their ability to address gender-related challenges. The surge in reporting of gender-based violence over recent months is a clear indicator of **growing recognition of gender and social issues**, alongside increased trust in the Sajha Shakti Kendra's capacity to provide critical support.



In Muzaffarpur, Patna, and Nalanda, over the past year, the **15 established Sajha Shakti Kendras have recorded 183 cases, with nearly 70% related to gender-based violence**, including domestic abuse, sexual harassment, child marriage, dowry-related violence, and cyber abuse. The SSK coordinators have provided comprehensive support through one-on-one counseling, legal assistance, medical aid, and interventions with police and other formal service providers. Remarkably, **54% of these cases have**

been fully resolved, often through sustained counseling sessions and community engagement, while ongoing cases continue to receive follow-up and escalations to ensure justice and safety for survivors.

Beyond addressing violence, the SSKs have been instrumental in empowering communities by **enabling access to vital social entitlements**, such as pensions, housing schemes, scholarships, and disability aid. Coordinators have facilitated these services by connecting individuals with relevant authorities and escalating cases through Panchayat Level Gender Forums. While 58% of entitlement-related cases are still in process due to systemic delays, the SSKs' consistent efforts have driven tangible progress and fostered a culture of accountability. Together, these centers represent a beacon of hope, amplifying the voices of marginalized women and ensuring pathways to justice, safety, and social equity.

Breastfeeding Facilities at the Gram Panchayat Bhawan:

Shaping a secure and private environment for breastfeeding in public spaces is not just a crucial necessity, but also key to ensuring the dignity and self-esteem of women. Addressing critical barriers faced by lactating mothers, particularly in gram panchayats - where nearly 50% of the elected PRI members are women - Mukhiyas, bolstered by C3's capacity-building, have taken decisive action to operationalize **dedicated breastfeeding rooms** within Gram Panchayat Bhawans. These spaces are crucial for increased participation of women in governance, since, in the past, lactating PRI members have had to forgo executive committee meetings and Gram Sabhas due to the lack of suitable breastfeeding spaces.

To date, **16 Mukhiyas from Muzaffarpur, East Champaran, Rohtas, and Nawada districts** have led this initiative in their constituencies. This trailblazing step by Bihar's gram panchayats is a testament to their commitment to addressing women-specific issues, fostering gender-equitable communities, and promoting better nutrition for newborns and infants, ensuring that no woman has to choose between fulfilling public duties and nurturing her child.

Highlights:

1

C3's expertise and work in Bihar has been **recognized by the Panchayati Raj Department**, which has appointed C3 as a key technical support partner in training District and Block Panchayati Raj Officers from **all 38 districts of Bihar**. These trainings are essential for advancing the Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDG) 2—*Healthy Village—* and LSDG 9—*Women-Friendly Village*, driving change at the grassroots.

2

On a global stage, C3's achievements have been **spotlighted in the World Economic Forum's Davos report on Women's Empowerment**. The report celebrates the pivotal role of *Mahila Pradhans* in Uttar Pradesh, emphasizing C3's contributions to fostering women's leadership and creating gender-equitable communities



Reproductive Health and Rights

When women are treated with respect and dignity during childbirth, it leads to a positive clinical outcome.

In Odisha and Chhattisgarh, C3 works to enhance women's experiences of care by improving the quality of reproductive and maternal healthcare services and reducing unnecessary C-sections. C3 also works to strengthen the midwifery cadre in India to ensure non-discriminatory, equitable, compassionate, women-centric and respectful services to women throughout the continuum of pregnancy and childbirth.

Normalizing Respectful Maternal Care

C3 works with women, communities, healthcare providers and facilities, shifting provider and institutional norms through various social behaviour change programs, and ensuring that every woman, everywhere, every single time, receives maternity care that is quality, respectful, compassionate, and equitable

Ensuring Safe Motherhood, At the Very Last Mile:

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's **SUMAN (Surakshit Matritva Ashvasan) program** ensures that every woman and newborn receives assured, dignified, and respectful healthcare services—at no cost—while maintaining a zero-tolerance policy for service denial at any public health facility. C3 has played an instrumental role in facilitating the initiative's on-ground implementation in Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Over the past year, C3 has taken significant steps to strengthen the last-mile delivery of the SUMAN scheme, ensuring that it reaches the most vulnerable communities with the quality care they deserve and empowers healthcare providers to deliver services effectively:

- **The SUMAN App:** To empower frontline workers and community platforms to connect women and communities to the SUMAN scheme, C3 developed a unique mobile app. The app - operational in 2 languages, Hindi and Odia - is designed to support and strengthen the capacity of SUMAN volunteers at the grassroots level, by digitizing essential resources and information around the scheme. With multiple modules integrated into it, the app ensures that SUMAN volunteers have a distinct understanding of key aspects of the scheme, from SUMAN entitlements (which guarantee quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health services in public health facilities), to the principles of Respectful Maternity Care (RMC), Gender and social inclusion.

- **SUMAN Help Desks:** To amplify community engagement and drive greater critical consciousness around and access to quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) services, C3 **established SUMAN Help Desks across 47 health centers** in

our intervention areas in Chhattisgarh. These help desks serve as a critical touchpoint for communities, providing timely, accurate information about the SUMAN scheme, guiding women and families through the process of accessing essential health services, and ensuring they are fully informed about their rights to quality, respectful, and free maternity care.

- **Capacity-building:** In Chhattisgarh and Odisha, C3 built the capacity of **2081 members of various community platforms, 1217 SUMAN Volunteers, and 4085 healthcare providers** - including both facility-based and community-based healthcare providers - to



deliver women-centric, respectful, socially inclusive, and high-quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) services under the SUMAN scheme. By fostering dignity, respect and inclusion in healthcare service provision, C3 is ensuring that women and families receive compassionate care, driving tangible improvements in maternal and child health outcomes across the region.

● **Animated Short Films for Information**

Dissemination: C3 developed eight animated short films to ensure community-wide awareness around the maternity service assurances provided to women and families under the SUMAN program. The films also emphasized the importance of Respectful Maternity Care (RMC), and equitable services for women. The films have been widely distributed through a WhatsApp campaign and has been equipping C3's expansive network of stakeholders across Odisha and Chhattisgarh - including healthcare facilities, women, and communities - with key information on SUMAN and respectful maternity care. Additionally, these films are being screened in the Outpatient Departments (OPDs) of 25 healthcare facilities in Chhattisgarh, reaching even more community members directly. With over 300,000 views on YouTube, the films have proven to be a powerful tool for sparking conversations around quality, respectful, inclusive care practice

Mothers' Picnics:

C3 has pioneered the innovative concept of **Mother's Picnics in Chhattisgarh and Odisha**, which offers pregnant women - particularly first-time mothers - from remote, rural, and tribal backgrounds a thorough glimpse into the continuum of healthcare services available at health facilities, from pregnancy to childbirth to newborn care.



The Mother's Picnics play a crucial role in building confidence and trust among women around approaching healthcare institutions and accessing the services available at these institutions. The picnics include counseling sessions for pregnant women and guided tours of healthcare facilities, where women are introduced to labor rooms, and the process of seeking ante-natal and post-natal care. By addressing common myths and misconceptions around institutional deliveries, the picnics also help dispel the fears that often deter women in remote, rural communities from seeking maternity care at health facilities. One-on-one interactions with doctors, nurses, and healthcare staff provide a safe space for women to ask questions and gain clarity about what to expect during childbirth, making the maternity care experience less intimidating and more accessible.

Reducing Unnecessary C-Sections

Unnecessary C-sections can cause added health complications for pregnant women, and yet, C-section rates continue to remain high in India. To address this issue, and prevent unindicated C-sections, C3 has been working in collaboration with Linde India Limited to foster community engagement and the capacity building of health care providers in Jajpur district and Bhadrak district, Odisha.

Spotlighting C-Section Awareness on National Safe Motherhood Day, 2023:

Every year, C3 spearheads the national-level celebrations of National Safe Motherhood Day, an occasion dedicated to promoting and championing the principles of Respectful Maternity Care, for positive pregnancy and childbirth experiences. In 2023, National Safe Motherhood Day celebrations emphasized the importance of reducing unnecessary C-sections for safer, positive, and risk-free deliveries.



On this occasion, C3 launched its digital campaign - "Promoting Women-Centered Care, Reducing Unnecessary C-Sections" - which mobilized over 100 maternal health champions, advocates, healthcare providers, and partners from both public and private sectors. A thought-provoking panel discussion was convened on this theme, bringing together a diverse group of experts, including ministry officials, practicing obstetricians and gynecologists, midwifery champions, social media influencers, and advocates for natural births in cases of complication-free pregnancies. The National Safe Motherhood Day celebrations not only emphasized the importance of promoting safe, woman-centered birthing practices but also catalyzed meaningful conversations about the need to empower women with the right knowledge and choices during their pregnancy and childbirth journey.

Capacity Building of Healthcare Providers:

In Jajpur and Bhadrak districts of Odisha, C3 strengthened the capacity of healthcare providers to understand the risks and implications of unnecessary C-sections, and deliver quality maternal health services. **61 private healthcare providers in Jajpur from facilities with high C-section rates** were made aware of and encouraged to operationalize C-section protocols and audits, while **114 facility-based healthcare providers** - including doctors, nurses, and program managers - were equipped to administer non-medicalized pain management during labor, understand the importance of preventing unindicated C-sections and the role of birth companions.

Additionally, **503 community health workers** - including ASHAs and ANMs - were equipped with skills in birth preparedness and complication readiness (BPCR), labor pain management techniques, and mechanisms to prevent unindicated C-sections.

Through focused training and mentoring support, healthcare providers at both public and private facilities are now better prepared to identify high-risk pregnancies, recognize danger signs, and adhere to evidence-based guidelines for labor and birthing. As a result, **1007 high-risk pregnancies** were identified and referred to healthcare facilities for timely intervention.

Community Outreach:

Alongside sensitizing healthcare providers, C3 amplifies outreach around respectful care and birth preparedness among women and communities.

C3 built knowledge on Birth Preparedness and Complication Readiness (BPCR) during pregnancy, labor

and pain management techniques, advantages and disadvantages of C-sections and normal deliveries, and the critical role of birth companions, among **3792 leaders of women's self-help groups**.

We ensured that **7989 pregnant women** receive quality antenatal check-ups and counselling on BPCR, the benefits of normal deliveries for complication-free pregnancies, labor pain management techniques, and selecting their birth companions to provide support during delivery.

Two health awareness camps organized in Basudevpur and Danagadi blocks also ensured widespread community engagement, conveying critical health information to **196 pregnant and lactating mothers**.

As a result, significant shifts have been evidenced in the knowledge levels of women and families about BPCR, pain management techniques during labor, and informed decision-making on childbirth options. There has also been a significant increase in the number of birth companions being allowed in labor rooms, ensuring essential physical and emotional support during childbirth.

"Normal Ya Caesarian?": Our Digital Campaign on Reducing Unnecessary C-sections:



Launched on National Safe Motherhood Day, our nationwide digital campaign sought to raise widespread awareness about the critical need to make informed choices around childbirth and

C-sections. It aimed to drive home the fact that while C-sections are lifesaving in emergencies, unnecessary C-sections can lead to serious complications and long-term health issues.

The month-long campaign leveraged social media platforms, **reaching over 14.9 million people** with key information and generating **28.5 million impressions**. Through engaging videos, the campaign debunked myths about vaginal deliveries, tackled misconceptions like body shape changes post-normal delivery, and highlighted the role of midwifery and birth companions for safe and positive birthing experiences. Content was also produced in English and Odia to ensure wider accessibility. Influencer engagement, user-generated videos and visually impactful static posts amplified the campaign's reach, fostering open conversations about the importance of informed decision-making around normal births and C-sections.

Strengthening Midwifery-led Care

Midwifery-led care centres the needs of women and families, offering a compassionate approach that catalyses positive birth outcomes and reduces birth complications and maternal health risks over time. C3 has been actively supporting the government to further the recognition and importance of midwifery-led care while fostering inter-professional collaboration between midwives and other healthcare providers.

Celebrating International Day of the Midwife, 2023:



In May 2023, C3 (as the National Secretariat of White Ribbon Alliance, India) and Jhpiego co-convoked International Day of the Midwife celebrations, emphasizing the theme: *Together Again – From Evidence to Reality*. The event highlighted the essential role midwives play in addressing challenges in sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and adolescent health (SRMNAH), preventing neonatal deaths, stillbirths, and maternal deaths; eliminating inequities in care access and experiences; and reducing the reliance on over-medicalized maternity care. Bringing together 250 diverse stakeholders, including maternal health leaders, midwifery champions, educators, and decision-makers, the event amplified support for the Government of India's Midwifery Initiative and reinforced the essential role midwives play in providing life-saving, high-quality, and respectful care for mothers and newborns. A C3-led panel discussion, *“What Midwives Want: Voices and Calls to Action from Midwives in India,”* highlighted midwives' aspirations and solutions based on their on-ground experiences, amplifying their voices and needs for systemic change.

State-level IDM convenings in Patna, Bihar, and Meerut, and Uttar Pradesh further celebrated the contributions of midwives through addresses by key officials, panel discussions, and engaging activities such as competitions to inspire and honor midwifery professionals. These events brought together midwifery educators, nurse practitioners, state officials, and development partners, fostering collaboration and recognizing midwives as agents of change in India's healthcare system.

State Multi-Stakeholders' Consultation for Midwifery in Bihar:

In November 2023, C3, co-convoked a high-level consultation with the **State Health Society, Bihar (SHS)** to accelerate the roll-out of the midwifery initiative and support cadre-building efforts for specialist Nurse Practitioners in Midwifery (NPMs). Bringing together state and district-level implementers—including civil surgeons, hospital superintendents, OBGYN heads, District Program Managers, and labor room in-charges from Patna, Gaya, and Begusarai—the event fostered collaboration between midwifery educators, NPMs, and leaders from professional organizations like Society of Midwives, India (SOMI), Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI), and The Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India

(FOGSI). The consultation explored systemic opportunities to strengthen midwifery education and practice, including licensure, career pathways, and role clarity for midwifery educators and practitioners, paving the way for mainstreaming midwifery-led care in Bihar.

Research Priority-Setting for Midwifery:

C3, in partnership with SOMI, co-convoked a state-level workshop in Patna around *Research Priority Setting for Midwifery*, which brought together stakeholders to collaboratively craft a preliminary research agenda for midwifery in Bihar, identify priority areas, and develop actionable research questions to advance midwifery education and practice. The workshop also explored opportunities for further research, mentoring platforms for newly trained midwives, and evidence generation at Midwife-led Care Units (MLCUs) to strengthen midwifery practices across diverse settings. The session focused on formulating targeted, measurable objectives for a state specific midwifery agenda of action to fortify the midwifery workforce and drive the effective implementation of midwifery-led, women-centric maternity care in Bihar.

Empowering Communities for Positive Family Planning Outcomes in Nuapada, Odisha

C3 spearheaded an initiative in the Nuapada district of Odisha, directly engaging diverse community stakeholders—including traditional healers, youth leaders, women's self-help group (SHG) leaders, and civil society organizations (CSOs)—to strengthen the demand and uptake of family planning (FP) information and services at the very last mile. Supported by the New Partnerships Initiative EXPAND: New Partners for Better Health (NPI EXPAND) project, implemented by Palladium International, LLC (Palladium) and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), this program aimed to expand access to high-quality family planning services by leveraging local partnerships.



At the heart of this initiative was a commitment to dismantle systemic barriers and foster greater access to gender-equitable family planning information, choices, and services for underserved populations – women, girls, young couples, and people with disabilities.

The project was implemented in all five blocks of Nuapada district, engaging:

- **201 traditional healers**, so they influence communities to seek modern, reversible contraceptive options
- **501 youth leaders** across 162 youth clubs, so they are equipped to conduct youth-to-youth interpersonal counseling around family planning and contraception
- **3,305 NSS volunteers and young leaders** from 50 schools and colleges, so they promote contraception acceptance among young couples
- **753 women self-help group (SHG) federation leaders**, so they promote discussions among young couples around informed family planning choices
- **405 healthcare providers**, for inclusive delivery of family planning services
- **62 NGOs**, forming strong coalitions to amplify impact

By embedding knowledge on gender equity, social inclusion, and FP services—including accessible modern contraceptive methods—C3 enabled communities to take charge of their reproductive health, particularly emphasizing the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Impact:

Strengthened Reproductive Health in Nuapada, Odisha:

Post the year-long implementation of the NPI EXPAND project in Nuapada, significant gains were witnessed at the community level:

- **Increased Availability of Family Planning (FP) Services:**

- » **963 newly married couples** were equipped with vital information on family planning, including healthy timing and spacing in pregnancies, and the range of contraceptive choices available under the family planning program.
- » **191 couples with disabilities** were specifically targeted with tailored information on family planning services and contraceptive choices, ensuring their social inclusion and access to family planning services that were previously difficult for them to access.

- **Strengthened of Youth/SRH Organizations:**

- » The 501 youth leaders from difficult-to-reach areas and marginalized populations that C3 capacitated from five blocks of Nuapada district were instrumental in engaging women and men as equal partners in the family decision-making process. In youth club meetings, these leaders disseminated messages among peers through one-on-one counseling, and have reached 438 newly married and young couples with information on healthy timing and spacing in pregnancies, the range of available family planning services, and entitlements for contraceptive users. They also addressed prevailing cultural taboos associated with contraceptives, resulting in the increased uptake of modern contraceptives among young couples.



- **Empowerment of Women, Communities, and Platforms to Advocate for Quality Last-Mile Service Delivery**

- » The 201 traditional healers who were trained on modern contraceptive methods, have been actively promoting and influencing the uptake of modern contraception and facility-based family planning services, many of them actively discouraging the use of traditional, non-scientific methods of delaying pregnancies.
- » The 753 SHG federation leaders who were equipped with greater knowledge of modern contraceptive methods and their availability in the public health system, actively helped address socio-cultural barriers in the utilization of family planning services. The self-help group meetings have emerged as a vital community-level forum, hitherto untapped, to discuss family planning and provide group counselling to eligible couples to support them in making informed, gender-equitable family planning choices. The **women's self-help group leaders have reached 1,084 eligible couples** with information on healthy timing and spacing in pregnancies and the range of available contraceptive choices.

- **Measured Increase in Couple Years of Protection (CYP)**

- » A 14% increase in Couple Years of Protection (CYP) - a metric used to measure the effectiveness of family planning programs, which estimates the protection offered by family planning methods over a one-year period - was recorded, indicating a significant increase in the utilization of family planning services across the district.
- » This was testament to the role traditional healers, SHG leaders, and youth leaders played in addressing socio-cultural norms and gender barriers in family planning access, and

engaging newly married couples through interpersonal counseling. Alongside these stakeholders, C3's block coordinators also conducted one-on-one meetings with eligible couples, ensuring they had improved access to quality FP information and services. Frontline health workers were also key to catalyzing this change, influencing young couples through counseling sessions to address and correct gender imbalances in decision-making regarding family planning methods.

Driving Global Conversations: Our Reproductive Health Initiatives at International Conferences

At International Maternal Newborn Health Conference, Cape Town, South Africa:

At the International Maternal Newborn Health Conference (IMNHC) 2023 in South Africa, we presented our work around advocating for Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) in India.



We also presented our groundbreaking **digital training curriculum on RMC** for healthcare providers, which highlighted C3's innovative approach to improving maternal health outcomes by standardizing respectful, woman-centered care practices.

Additionally, C3 held a **Concurrent Session** titled "**Unlocking the Power of Media and Communication for Social Change**", where key insights were shared on how social behavior change communication can be harnessed to drive awareness and action around maternal and reproductive health, and C3's decades-long expertise in harnessing the same.

Besides this, C3 presented on the "**My Job, My Voice: Harnessing Midwives' Demands at Scale to Strengthen the Enabling Environment for Midwifery**" panel that explored how the "What Midwives Want" global campaign partners used the results to inform and strengthen midwifery policy development and implementation in their countries. C3 shared the vision, process and top findings of the campaign in India, including the evidence-based Charter of Action for strengthening the midwifery cadre.



At the International Confederation of Midwives Conference in Bali, Indonesia

At the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) Conference 2023 in Bali, C3, co-convened a **high-level satellite symposium** titled "**Amplifying Midwives' Voices and Building Leadership,**" supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The symposium brought together key decision-makers around maternal health, including **Dr. Pawan Kumar, Additional Commissioner (MH & FP), MoHFW**, and **Dr. Deepika Khakha, Nursing Advisor, MoHFW**, to engage in critical discussions about advancing maternal health and midwifery leadership in India. The symposium was a platform for Midwifery champions to share their experiences and demands around strengthening midwifery care in India for improved maternal and newborn health outcomes.

Furthermore, C3's **posters** developed for the conference were recognized for their excellence, being awarded among the **top 4 posters** at the event.



Highlights:

C3 was awarded the 1st prize at the **6TH ICC Social Impact Awards 2024** for its intervention in Odisha to mobilize community engagement and build the capacity of healthcare providers to reduce unnecessary C-sections – a recognition of our innovative approaches and impact.



Unniti: Connecting Women & Girls to Skills & Opportunities

Through its **Unniti program**, C3 addresses gender disparities in economic empowerment by equipping women and girls who come from difficult circumstances and have limited access to skills and resources. The initiative focuses on creating sustainable livelihoods for women by offering technical support to enhance entrepreneurship skills, fostering financial independence, and equipping young people with essential life skills for a brighter, more equitable future.

Goods for Change: Empowering Women Through Livelihood Opportunities

C3's **Goods for Change Initiative** economically empower women by equipping them to build sustainable incomes and entrepreneurship ventures. This initiative focuses on training women in **handicrafts, digital literacy, financial literacy, functional literacy, and entrepreneurship development**, enabling them to establish self-sustained nano-group and individual enterprises. Operating across three key locations in Delhi—**Bakkarwala, Peeragarhi, and Khichripur**—the program fosters collective empowerment and entrepreneurship among women.

Women Mastered Skills Around:

Crochet and Candle-making, creating products like earrings and decorative candles.

Appliqué and Thread Embroidery on diverse products, including diaries, mobile covers, tic-tacs, and fabric jewelry.



Handmade Fabric Products such as Rakhis, jewelry bags, and keychains, including bulk orders for innovative items like evil-eye keychains.

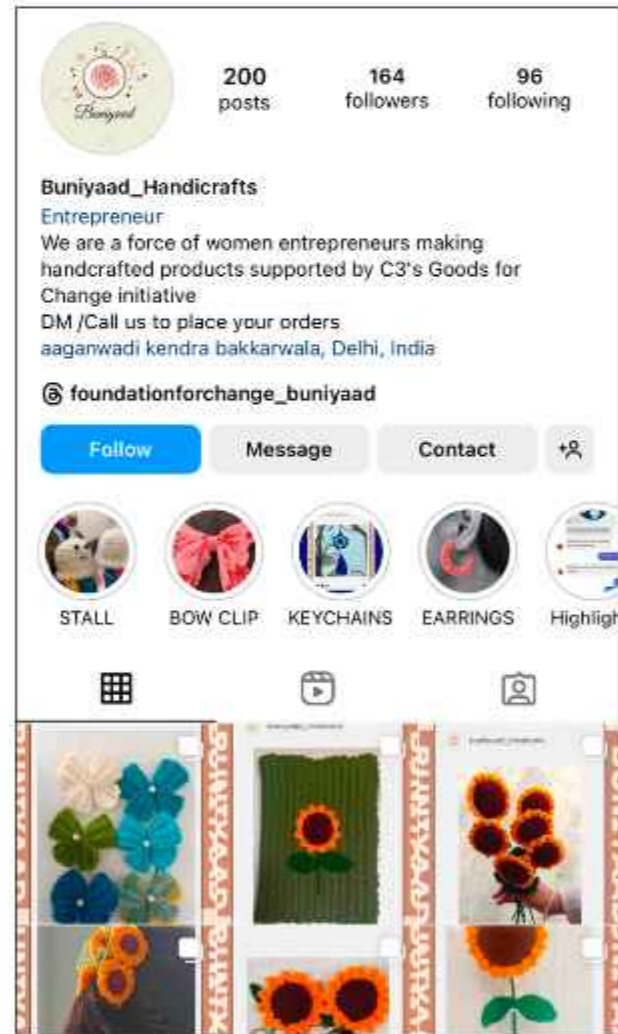
Cutting, Stitching, and Tailoring various garments, including kurtis, suits, and table runners.



Digital and Entrepreneurial Literacy:

To improve their market reach, and ability to sell their products online, women were upskilled in **Instagram marketing**, mastering photography techniques, content creation, and digital branding for their respective Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The women have begun showcasing their products online through a custom Instagram page, and have begun accepting online orders.

They have also enhanced the product packaging, and have learnt billing, pricing, tagging and book keeping.



Leadership Achievements:

Two women – who are also single mothers, and had been trained in livelihood skills through Goods for Change – transitioned to becoming trainers at our Khichripur center, overcoming societal challenges to become role models for others.

Market Reach and Economic Impact:

- Women exhibited handmade products at prestigious venues like **IIT Delhi, Pacific Mall, IMI College, and MSF South Asia**, broadening their exposure to diverse customers and markets.
- All **75 women entrepreneurs associated with Goods for Change saw a significant uptick in their incomes**, leading to substantial growth not only enhanced their financial stability but also strengthened their **agency, self-reliance, and decision-making power** within their households and communities.



Saat Rang: Empowering Children from After-Care Homes

Saat Rang builds emotional resilience and life skills among children from shelter homes -After Care Home for Girls and Children Home for Girls at Nirmal Chhaya Complex through the power of theatre and music. This innovative program integrates life skills, communication, and drama-based learning, empowering children with tools for self-expression and personal growth. Interactive activities such as storytelling, emotional regulation, and team-building exercises, including blindfolded trust walks, foster creativity, confidence, and collaboration among participants.

As part of the initiative, the play "Laal Pari" was scripted, staged and performed all by the young girls within the institution, highlighting issues around menstrual health and hygiene through compelling narratives. The young girls are now motivated and equipped to showcase their talent beyond their after-care homes, bringing their learnings and stories to a broader audience while building confidence and life skills for the future.

Highlights:

The women from Goods for Change hand-embroidered the covers for C3's annual new year diary, and through their artistry, brought to life our mission to empower every girl, every woman, everywhere. With their resilience, skill, and willpower, the women imbued every stitch of every hand-crafted diary with hope and strength.



Testimonials from the Ground

“

In school, we were never taught what we have learned through the RSKS program. We have gained knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, anemia, and nutritious food.

Now, we share this knowledge with others—each of us are teaching five adolescents, who then teach five more, spreading awareness further. I can recognize health issues in myself and my friends, identify symptoms, and seek help from ASHA didi, AWW, or ANM. My peers are also more confident with sharing their problems and have started making healthier choices, eating more vegetables, eggs, and milk instead for their health.

Peer Educator,
Basudevpur, Bhadrak district, Odisha

With support and encouragement from capacity-building trainings, I have been able to regularize Bal Sabhas (meetings of children and adolescents), which has transformed our panchayat into a place where children can dream without fear and grow with confidence.

Addressing the demands of young people, I have ensured that young girls can walk to school safely, and pursue their ambitions and aspirations. These changes prove that when children have a voice and a safe space to express their concerns, the entire community rises with them. This is just the beginning—we are building a future where every child can thrive without limitations.

Ms. Shashi Bala Ji,
Mahila Pradhan, Shahpur Mubarakpur
Panchayat

I have been a traditional healer in Palsada village for over 20 years. Before C3's trainings, I had no knowledge of modern contraceptive methods or family planning services, I only relied on what I learned from my family. But with the knowledge of modern family planning methods, I now counsel couples in my community on birth spacing and reversible contraception.

I am committed to spreading awareness about these services, and over the past few months, have spoken to 56 newly married couples, helping them understand the benefits of timing and spacing pregnancies.

Mr. Kokila Naik,
Traditional healer, part of our NPI-EXPAND
intervention in Odisha

I have always relied on sign language to express myself, but I often felt unsure about where I truly belonged. Joining the Saat Rang Initiative and performing on stage has been a turning point for me, and theatre has become a space where I can truly express myself.

Now, I'm preparing for a horror-comedy play, taking on a key role that challenges me in exciting ways. Practice sessions are my new routine, and with each day, I feel myself growing.

Pooja,
15 years, Delhi

”



Abridged Balance Sheet

(in'000)

| PARTICULARS | March 31, 2024 | March 31, 2023 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| | INR | INR |
| SOURCES OF FUNDS | | |
| General Reserve Fund | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Designated Fund | 2,89,229 | 2,04,923 |
| Restricted Fund - Corpus/ Endowment Fund | 1,75,517 | 72,105 |
| Restricted Fund - Grants & Contributions | 2,88,637 | 2,97,808 |
| Current Liabilities and Provisions | 29,973 | 26,371 |
| TOTAL | 7,88,356 | 6,06,207 |
| APPLICATION OF FUNDS | | |
| Fixed Assets | 1,95,058 | 12,105 |
| Current Assets | 19,701 | 11,461 |
| Cash and Bank Balances | 5,58,287 | 5,69,824 |
| Advances Recoverable in Cash or Kind | 15,310 | 12,817 |
| TOTAL | 7,88,356 | 6,06,207 |

(in'000)

| PARTICULARS | Year ended March 31, 2024 | Year ended March 31, 2023 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | INR | INR |
| INCOME | | |
| Income from Programs | 3,31,167 | 3,05,231 |
| Other Income | 42,890 | 29,253 |
| TOTAL | 3,74,057 | 3,34,484 |
| EXPENDITURE | | |
| Establishment and Communication | 41,871 | 28,363 |
| Workshop, Information & Dissemination | 27,971 | 24,257 |
| Salaries and Benefits | 1,85,960 | 1,54,345 |
| Consultancy | 65,320 | 57,895 |
| Travel & Transportation | 25,495 | 22,080 |
| Project Consumables | 1,037 | 439 |
| | 3,47,654 | 2,87,379 |
| Transferred to Funds | 26,403 | 47,105 |
| TOTAL | 3,74,057 | 3,34,484 |

(in'000)

| PARTICULARS | Year ended March 31, 2024 | Year ended March 31, 2023 |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | INR | INR |
| RECEIPTS | | |
| Opening cash and bank balances | 5,69,824 | 5,80,724 |
| Voluntary Contributions | 4,77,953 | 2,51,995 |
| Interest and other receipts | 42,400 | 29,855 |
| TOTAL | 10,90,177 | 8,62,574 |
| PAYMENTS | | |
| Establishment and Communication | 27,791 | 23,129 |
| Workshop, Information & Dissemination | 27,355 | 25,621 |
| Salaries and Benefits | 1,82,941 | 1,53,849 |
| Consultancy | 65,486 | 57,999 |
| Travel & Transportation | 25,101 | 22,687 |
| Project Consumables | 1,038 | 439 |
| Computer and other office equipments | 1,97,391 | 5,981 |
| Advances to project partners, staff & other payments | 4,787 | 3,045 |
| Closing cash and bank balances | 5,58,287 | 5,69,824 |
| TOTAL | 10,90,177 | 8,62,574 |