

Rhythms of Hope

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23





TRDSW was conceived as a symbol of empowerment, a catalyst for transforming the lives of women. Our singular focus has been to build integrated communities where women play a pivotal role in the developmental process, advocating for their own needs, perspectives, and capabilities.



Karuna Mary Braganza
Padma Shri Awardee
Founder TRDSW
(1923 - 2019)



From the Director's desk

Mariaelena Figueredo

Director
Torpa Rural Development Society
for Women (TRDSW)

I am delighted to present our annual report 'Rhythms of Hope' to you. Encapsulating our journey, it spotlights our insights, achievements, and lessons learnt. And as you peruse this report, you'll discover the invaluable lessons we've learned over the years.

For over two decades, our dedicated team has worked tirelessly across a difficult and fragile terrain, with a people who fiercely guard their privacy. Our quest for change has taught us to harmonize with their rhythm, celebrate their cultural heritage, and embrace their wisdom.

Our approach places the community's rhythm with nature and the surrounding ecosystem at the centre of our work. We honour traditional knowledge in farming and forestry, participate actively in village meetings, and seek consent from village elders and leaders when initiating new projects.

In rhythm with their daily lives, challenges, and vulnerabilities, we tailor our efforts in education, livelihoods, women's empowerment, nutrition, and overall well-being.

Fostering a sense of unity of purpose, we have strengthened our bonds. And in partnership with them, we have made significant strides.

With a membership of 2283 women, our SHGs have grown to a robust 182. Around 1000

farmers have enhanced their incomes and close to 2000 farmers have made the switch to climate-smart agriculture. Our efforts in education have seen an uptake of our services and now 7000 plus children are accessing quality education. Deepening our work in conservation, we've developed a Seed Bank and are actively promoting climate-resilient millet cultivation.

We count our selection as one of GROW's 100 stellar grassroots organizations, as a vote of confidence in our work. Embarking on a transformative journey with the GROW Fund, we are undertaking various projects ranging from agri-product assessments to the establishment of micro-enterprises.

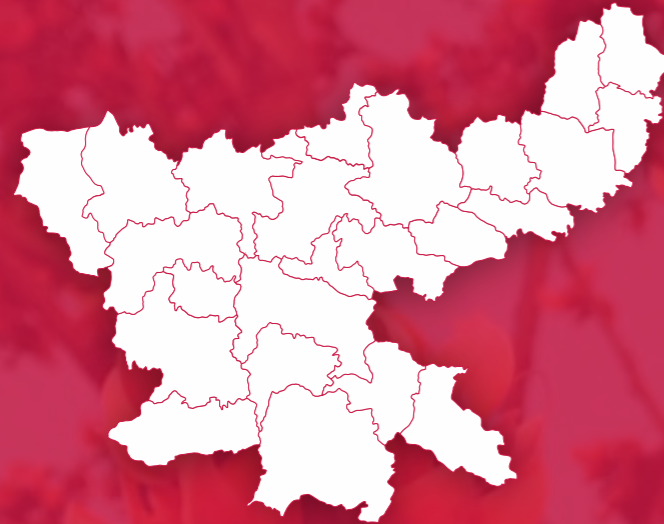
As we seek to expand our work to five new villages, we are thrilled that our community leader Mira Devi's inspiring struggle to entrepreneurial success won recognition from none other than the Prime Minister's 'Mann ki Baat.'

It is people like her who inspire us daily. It is their melody of resilience that leads this symphony of change.

And I share this rhythm of hope with you - our donors, partners, and the incredible TRDSW team. Together we are composing a brighter, hopeful future - where everyone's dignity is respected.

My deepest gratitude to you all.

Where we work



Jharkhand state

1 DISTRICT

2 BLOCKS

71 VILLAGES

18 PANCHAYATS



Vision

Fostering a just world where everyone's human dignity is respected.



Mission

A society that upholds the human dignity of the oppressed and the marginalized, especially the tribal by enhancing education and livelihood, by networking and collaborating with likeminded CBOs, NGOs and the Government through right based approach.

Our thematic areas



Education

- ▶ Bal Niketan pre-primary school
400 children; 10 teachers
- ▶ Children of the New Dawn ISCE School
Class 1 to 10 = 789 children; 25 teachers
- ▶ Community Teachers trained and
appointed = 9; 13 supervisors; 2 trainers
- ▶ Village animators = 60 youth
- ▶ Kitchen gardens at government
school level = 28



Livelihoods

- ▶ Net earnings of lac farmers = Rs 1,98,580
- ▶ No of Households for Bank Linkages = 90
- ▶ Adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture
(CSA) = 2114 farmers
- ▶ Adoption of Zero Budget Natural
Farming (ZBNF) = 202 farmers
- ▶ 3 solar irrigation installations that
enhanced agricultural productivity by
30% for 27 households in 3 villages



Women's empowerment

- ▶ 182 SHGs
- ▶ 2283 SHG members
- ▶ 161 social audits
- ▶ Rs. 49,52,257 loans accessed
- ▶ Rs. 33,32,211 loans repaid
- ▶ 3350 participants at the International
Women's Day Mega event
- ▶ 46 kitchen gardens at village level



Institution building

- ▶ Teacher capacity building = 72 schools
at Torpa and 28 schools at Rania
- ▶ Upgradation of school library
corners and enhancing a print rich
environment = 100 schools
Children covered by library
activities = 1598
- ▶ Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN)
jointly with the district education office.
8 trainings for 160 government teachers



Micro-enterprises

- ▶ micro-business training = 1035 women
- ▶ Initiated own business = 8 women

Achievements

TRDSW was selected as one of #GROW's 100 – a collection of stellar grassroots organisations from across India.

The GROW Fund is a first-of-its-kind initiative by EdelGive Foundation aiming to support and strengthen 100 grassroots organisations from across India over a period of 24 months.

EDUCATION at TRDSW

Our work in education serves as a vital bridge between traditional knowledge and new learning.

Responding to the needs of the community, our educational programs have evolved and expanded. Spanning Balwadis, Bal Niketan, Mohalla classes and our very own school - 'Children of the New Dawn', our initiatives include exposing teachers to best practices, designing grade and context appropriate learning material.

And as Children of the New Dawn enters its 25th year, we are intensifying our efforts to bring quality education to the villages where we work.

Partnering with 100 Government schools, we upgraded their libraries. Colourful motifs and rich paintings now adorn their walls. Deepening the skills of nine community teachers and 60 village animators, we are laying strong foundations in literacy and numeracy for 400 children.

Targeting drop-outs, we initiated adult literacy classes as well as remedial classes. Ensuring continuity in education, the Mohalla classes launched during the pandemic have grown in strength and are now 2053 in number.



Bal Niketan (Nursery to Upper Kindergarten)

Reaching 400 children between the ages of three and five, our Bal Niketan is promoting joyful learning through an activity-based curriculum.

Trained by TRDSW, 10 empowered women from the community are employed as teachers. Our teaching methodology integrates tribal culture and traditional knowledge. Teaching children phonetics, alphabets and numbers, the teachers pay special attention to their motor activity.



Exposed to Mundari and Sadri language since birth, the children are introduced to English and Hindi. Through the creative use of art and craft, drawing and Bal Geet (songs), the teachers encourage children to converse in these new languages and build their proficiency.

In the last year, we partnered with Ummeed Foundation to build capacities of our teachers in art-integrated teaching methodology with a focus on child behaviour management.



Learning ABC under the Tamarind Tree

Children of the New Dawn

Born out of the community's desire to provide quality English-medium education to tribal children in Torpa, the 'Children of the New Dawn' enters its 25th year.

Currently, 789 students are enrolled in the school. The school has a team of 25 teaching staff and 10 non-teaching staff members. The co-curricular activities at the school take a holistic approach, nurturing the all-round development of our students.

- Two students secured the 1st prize at the Ranchi Zonal Level quiz competition.
- For the first time, our school secured representation in the Ranchi Zonal level Declamation Competition.
- Our Kabbadi team secured the 2nd and 3rd place at the Block and District levels, respectively.



Nestled atop the mountains on the border of the West Singhbhum district, Chengde was facing an educational crisis. With no access to quality education, its children were running amok. Most spent their days grazing animals or loitering aimlessly.

Concerned elders turned to TRDSW, expressing their desire for educational support for their children. In line with TRDSW's strategy of community ownership, the Gram Sabha (village council) selected Vijay Kandulna, a village animator, to lead the initiative.

And under the shade of a tamarind tree, 30 eager children gathered to attend their first mohalla class.

To ease the children back into learning, TRDSW included local materials like sticks,

stones, leaves and other natural elements, thus binding them to nature. Children also learnt math, Hindi and their local language, Mundari.

One month later, the excitement of the children was palpable. Overcoming their initial hesitation, they were enthusiastic about learning. Embracing his role as an educator, Vijay Kandulna sold one of his goats to create a much-needed covered space for classes.

In a meeting of community members, including 36 children, two government teachers, and the TRDSW team, village elders expressed their joy at the initiative's success.

With only five youth educated in Chengde, the village is waiting eagerly for the 30 children to lead the change.

LIVELIHOODS at TRDSW



Encompassing a diverse range of activities, TRDSW's livelihood programs are geared towards empowering women, preserving tribal culture, and ensuring sustainable development.

Self-help and decision-making power define each project under the Livelihoods theme. Trained in goatery, handicrafts, lac cultivation, allied agri-products, tailoring et al, women are equipped to be self-reliant and to take ownership of their entrepreneurial venture.

TRDSW places significant importance on an alternative path to development that respects tribal perspectives and local wisdom. Even as new skills and technologies are introduced, they are carefully integrated into the tribal culture and leverage local resources.

This approach ensures that the livelihood programs are both culturally sensitive and economically viable, and set the women on a path to financial stability.



Agri-based Activities



Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA):

TRDSW has been promoting climate-smart agricultural practices, enhancing the resilience of 62 farmers and enabling them to earn a total of Rs 3.47 lakhs.

Line Sowing - Systematic Millet Intensification (SMI) Technique: This innovative approach has been shared with 354 farmers and adopted by 155, contributing to improved millet cultivation practices.

Millet Cultivation: TRDSW distributed 100 kgs of finger millet seed to 100 farmers, supporting sustainable millet production.

Nutrition/Kitchen Garden: Kitchen gardens at government school level = 28; Kitchen gardens at village level = 46.





Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF)

Adoption of natural manures by 81 self-help groups (SHGs), vermicompost by 15 farmers, and organic pesticide by 75 SHGs, promoting eco-friendly and sustainable farming practices.

Lac Cultivation

238 farmers trained in lac cultivation. 66 farmers provided 170 kg of lac seed support. The net earnings of lac farmers reached an impressive Rs 8,43,820.

Additionally, 186 kusum trees and 1613 other trees were added to support lac cultivation.



Floriculture

74 farmers adopted floriculture resulting in a total earning of Rs 7.5 lakhs, while simultaneously beautifying the local environment.



Livestock - Goatery

4734 goats successfully reared by 53 households, resulting in total earnings of Rs 4.38 lakhs.



From Resin to Riches

Walking to the forest, Sushana still couldn't believe that Lac, a natural resin, had become her pathway to prosperity.

It all began when supported by TRDSW, Sushana along with 21 other women enrolled for a lac processing training program at the Indian Institute of Natural Resins and Gums (IINRG). Secreted by a tiny insect, lac is scraped off trees and used in the production of shellac found in dyes, resins, wax, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

Through her training, Sushana not only learned the art of cultivating lac but also discovered that it could be a year-round endeavour, requiring minimal time and labour.

With her newfound expertise, Sushana began

cultivating lac on her land, starting with seven ber trees. Over time, she expanded her endeavours, managing 25 ber trees and five kusum trees.

As her operations grew, her earnings soared. From living on a meagre 25,000 rupees a year, she was now netting a handsome three lakh rupees solely from her lac business. All in the course of just three years.

Sushana attributes her success to the right knowledge and the right opportunity. It is with this belief that she has mobilized and trained more than 500 women in her community, enabling them to embark on their own lac cultivation and create better lives for their families.



The Sweet taste of Success: A beekeeping story



With wild flowering trees flourishing in Kelo and Jarakel villages, TRDSW embarked on a unique endeavour - to train the community in apiary management and establish a honey hub in Jharkhand.

Conversant with beekeeping, traditional communities usually extract honey for their personal use, or to sell at local markets. The training launched by TRDSW, aimed at moving people from looking at honey production as a mere home activity to a full-scale apiary venture.

Building upon existing knowledge, TRDSW introduced the community to the benefits of regular hive inspections and monitoring. Through live demonstrations, participants learned to record the date of visit, note the presence of the queen bee in each hive,



The Apiary Management program is supported by The Grow Fund, an initiative of the EdelGive Foundation.

track formation of queen cell, brood pattern, health of the bees and presence of honey in the combs. Within weeks, the participants could confidently identify the queen bee and assess the health of each hive.

Soon the honeycombs were glistening with honey. Both Kelo and Jarakel witnessed the successful extraction of pure Karanj honey, with 40 kgs harvested from Kelo and 26 kgs from Jarakel. Manually operated cylindrical extraction machines made the process efficient. The resulting pure Karanj honey was meticulously filtered and stored in food-grade containers, ready for marketing.

By embracing the sweet success of beekeeping, communities have opened new doors to economic empowerment. The future is buzzing with the promise of hope and opportunity.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



Believing in the immense potential of women, TRDSW is committed to breaking down barriers that hinder women's progress. Fostering equality, the women's empowerment initiative ensures that women have the opportunity to thrive, not just as individuals but as leaders and change-makers.

Despite their crucial contributions, women often bear the brunt of unequal distribution of household tasks and additional responsibilities, such as fetching water, gathering firewood, and toiling in the fields. This imbalance not only impacts their physical security but also limits opportunities for personal growth, income generation, and overall well-being.

Playing a facilitative role, TRDSW encourages women to actively participate in identifying and articulating their own needs, perspectives, and abilities. This lays the foundation for Self Help Groups, that foster a path towards economic independence, skill development, and entrepreneurship.

◆ 2283 SHG Members

◆ 161 Social audits

◆ Rs. 49,52,257 Loans accessed

◆ 3350 Participants at the International Women's Day Mega event.

◆ Rs. 33,32,211 Loans repaid



Our objectives



Reducing drudgery: to lighten their load and freeing up valuable time for self-improvement and economic activities.

Promoting savings: to set them on the path to financial security and independence.

Enhancing decision-making skills: to foster an environment where women participate actively in decision making.

Honing skills: to offer training opportunities and equip women with valuable skills that help them excel in various fields.

Creating Women Entrepreneurs: to nurture a new generation of women entrepreneurs who will not only support their households but also drive local economic growth.

In tune with the Rhythms of Hope



Khushbu Devi Village: Kelo

- Runs a tenting business
- Input: Training in micro-enterprise and entrepreneurship building
- SHG loan accessed: Rs 49,000
- Impact: Expanded volume of business, enhanced monthly savings in bank
- Income: Rs 1.20 lakh per annum.

“When I started only people from my village would hire tent house equipment like mandap cloth, chairs etc from me. Now, neighbouring villages send their orders to me. Not only do I meet my family expenses, I am also building a corpus”.



Anima Kandulna Village: Kelo

- Vermicomposting entrepreneur and Apiculturist
- Input: Training in vermicomposting and apiary business.
- SHG loan accessed: Rs 950
- Impact: Expanded volume of business, mobilised 4 SHGs in Kelo that led to 40 kg honey extraction
- Income: Rs 60,000 per annum

“My knowledge on the apiary business has increased and I am able to identify the queen bee and check the health of bee hives. Now, I encourage 49 women of 4 SHGs in Kelo village to earn an income through vermicomposting and managing an apiary business.”



Mahima Kandulna Village: Jaipur

- Tractor services on hire and rice hulling services
- Input: Micro-enterprise training and access to bank loans
- SHG loan accessed: Rs 4,75,000
- Impact: Expanded volume of business services from tractor to huller machine
- Income: Rs 5 lakh per annum

“I learnt how to use the tractor at one of my trainings. I now plough my fields with it. Seeing the outcome, people in my village wanted to hire my tractor. That's how I started this business. This helped increase the productivity of farm lands in Jaipur village”.



Rajmuni Devi Village: Jaipur

- Serial entrepreneur
- Input: Entrepreneurship training
- SHG loan accessed: Rs 15,000
- Impact: Expanded volume of business services from kirana and stationery to photocopying service and a Common Service Centre in Jaipur village.
- Income: Rs 96,000 per annum.

“My training gave me the confidence to start a kirana (grocery) store, which helped me buy a xerox machine and also sell notebooks, pens and pencils for school children. My family also supported me in managing my own business and I can now support my family with my earnings.”



Fulmani Guria Village: Kocha

- Hand-made bags and purses
- Input: Micro-enterprise training and bank savings
- SHG loan accessed: Rs 1,800
- Impact: Expanded volume of business from making and selling bags in her own village, to selling at local bazaars in Torpa, Tapkara and Rania.
- Income: Rs 72,000 per annum.

“I turned a small investment of Rs 1800 into an earning of Rs 4000 to 6000 per month. Initially I began by selling bags in my own village. By public demand, I am now selling bags at Tapkara, Rania and Torpa weekly markets. The additional income helps boost our family savings.



Rina Devi Village: Pakna

- Input: Micro-enterprise training and access to bank loans.
- SHG loan accessed: Rs 50,000
- Impact: Earnings from readymade garment shop go towards expanding the business.
- Income: Rs 1 Lakh per annum.

“After learning about the principles of business management, I applied them to my garment business. I procure readymade garments from Ranchi wholesale market and sell them at retail prices in my shop. This gives me a neat profit and augments my income”.

Sowing Seeds of the Future

Celebrating International Women's Day

One of the most anticipated events on our calendar is the celebration of International Women's Day or Mahila Divas. With a twin goal of knowledge building and motivating women, the event was held on 13th March 2023.

Shelly Kerketta, GM of MLinda Charitable Trust and Swati Sethi, from Village

Square encouraged the 3350 women gathered to follow their dreams.

Showcasing a diverse range of activities, an exhibition of local products was organized. Stalls displayed traditional seeds, karanj honey, eco-friendly cloth bags, vermicomposting and agri-products.

Highlights of Mahila Divas

- An exhibition highlighting local products and local talent was organized.
- **Seed Bank:** to raise awareness about conserving traditional seeds, over 50 traditional seed varieties and six millet varieties were displayed.
- **Apiary Business:** An informative stall introduced participants to Langstroth Hive components, primary and secondary flora for bees. The entrepreneurs registered a sale of 25 kg of Karanj Honey at a rate of Rs 600 per kg.
- **Vermi Compost Stall:** The stall demonstrated vermicompost preparation processes and its various uses.
- **Craftsmanship Showcase:** Live demonstrations of lac bangle making by the Asha Self-Help Group from Bishunpur and bamboo handicrafts by Mira Devi and her team.
- **Eco-friendly Initiatives:** Fulmani Guria from Kocha, Torpa Block, showcased and sold cloth bags.
- **Agricultural Products:** Attendees had the opportunity to explore and purchase rice, paddy, urad dal, kurti dal, and madva flour, among other agricultural products.
- **Food Processing:** Ujwala Self-Help Group from Gumla district shared their knowledge of madva snacks, including biscuits, ladoos, and shankarpala. Shanti Self-Help Group, also from Gumla district, educated participants about mustard oil processing and its by-products.





Crafting Dreams. Inspiring Lives.

Surrounded by products woven by her hands, Mira Devi marvelled at the journey she had traversed. From poverty to entrepreneurship to empowerment. And she still couldn't believe that she had found mention in the Prime Minister's monthly radio programme 'Mann ki Baat'.

A resident of Kelo village, Mira Devi dreamed of enhancing her family income. And when TRDSW organized a training on bamboo handicrafts, she saw her opportunity.

Starting with globe lanterns, pen stands and boxes, she learnt to bend and weave the versatile grass. Graduating to complex designs, she was soon weaving flower baskets, lampshades and other products. Honing her skills under the guidance of a master trainer in Ranchi, she furthered her craft.

With abundant bamboo in the surrounding forests of her village, Mira Devi's natural talent

and flair for design found wings. Exhibiting her products at the SARAS Melas (fairs organized by the Ministry of Rural Development), her tasteful and intricate creations found many takers. Recognizing her talent, the Jharkhand Government gave her shelf space at the government promoted 'Palash' store.

With a net annual income of INR 7 lakhs, Mira Devi is an icon for entrepreneurship.

Invited to speak on many fora, she shares her entrepreneurial journey with other women.

Serving as a master trainer, she has trained 22 women, setting them on the path to empowerment.

Mira Devi was one of the participants of the skill training program organized by TRDSW in 2018 with the support of EdelGive Foundation.



Powering Dreams: TRDSW's Working Women Hostel

From its very inception, TRDSW has been steadfast in its commitment to a women-centric approach in all its interventions. So, when the Central Government extended a grant-in-aid to construct a hostel under the Working Women Hostel scheme of 1972, it was a perfect alignment with TRDSW's vision and mission.

More than just bricks and mortar, the hostel is a haven for women from remote villages. Pursuing higher education or training, many need to live away from their families. The hostel's main objective is to provide these aspiring young women with safe and conveniently located accommodation.

In the academic year 2022-2023, TRDSW's Working Women Hostel became a home to

71 remarkable women. Pursuing various fields, 12 are gearing up for the sixth semester to obtain their B.A. degree and 13 have completed a basic computer course. Further, 31 residents appeared for the Inter second year (class XII) examination, with results eagerly awaited in May 2023.

What sets this hostel apart is its commitment to fostering a self-driven atmosphere of pro-active leadership, financial literacy, and a clean, eco-friendly environment. Taking ownership, the residents manage the day-to-day operations, ensuring not just a roof over their heads but a vibrant community of empowerment.



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