

TATA TRUSTS



(Em) Powered by **CARE**

COMMUNITY

ASPIRATIONS

RESILIENCE

EQUITY



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“ The stories reflect how our work taps into the collective strength of communities, the power of aspirations, and the necessity of creating equitable opportunities for all. ”

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### About the book

'**Tales of Transformation: (Em)Powered by CARE**' highlights Tata Trusts' work over a century that addresses the unique societal and developmental challenges of India, simultaneously advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The book showcases some of these impactful initiatives underscored by **CARE**. Tata Trusts' transformative programmes that have empowered **Communities**, fostered **Aspirations**, built **Resilience**, and promoted **Equity**, reflect the Trusts' steadfast commitment towards creating lasting, sustainable change.

# Building a sustainable future with CARE



In a world afflicted by climate emergency, rising inequalities, economic instability, and health crises, the need for sustainable solutions has never been felt more urgently. Whether in empowering people to secure livelihoods that generate sustainable incomes while minimising environmental impact, assisting the underprivileged to unlock opportunities through education, or providing healthcare and social support to vulnerable communities, we, at Tata Trusts, have always dedicated ourselves to finding long-term solutions.

The 'Tales of Transformation' captured in this book demonstrate how sustainable change is built from the ground up. These stories can also be viewed through the unique lens of CARE: **Community, Aspirations, Resilience, and Equity**.

**Community** is central to many of these stories, where transformation begins through collective action. **Aspirations** highlight how hope and ambition, especially if felt collectively, fuel change. **Resilience** shows the strength of communities to adapt and recover, while **Equity** ensures that the underserved are not excluded from life-changing opportunities.

The stories reflect how our work taps into the collective strength of communities, the power of aspirations, and the necessity of creating equitable opportunities for all. Through these efforts, we continue to contribute to the global goals for sustainable development, collaborating across sectors to create lasting, transformative change.

I hope that these stories inspire readers to join the effort and create a multiplier effect that is visible and sustainable, long beyond 2030.

Warm regards,

**Siddharth Sharma**  
*CEO, Tata Trusts*



# Looking at CARE's multiplier effect in driving social change



The CARE framework – **Community, Aspirations, Resilience, and Equity** – offers a compelling lens through which the 'Tales of Transformation' in this book can be explored. The stories showcase how communities take ownership of change, fuelled by their aspirations, grounded in resilience, and also further the cause of equity. These principles underlie the transformative power of sustainable solutions, ensuring that change is lasting and inclusive.



The 'Tales of Transformation' in this book are organised around the four broad pillars of **Livelihood, Learning, Health, and Habitat** – key areas where Tata Trusts has focused its social initiatives. These pillars form the foundation of human welfare and inclusive growth. The stories within these pillars naturally reflect the essence of Community, Aspirations, Resilience, and Equity, offering a unique perspective on how these aspects drive long-term, sustainable impact.

Together, these pillars address the broader goals of economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental sustainability, contributing to the achievement of the UN SDGs. Through a collaborative, stakeholder-driven approach and sustained work around these pillars, Tata Trusts continues to bring transformative change in the lives of marginalised populations.

In this book, the CARE framework serves as both a powerful lens and a guiding principle, shedding light on the deep connections between these pillars and the broader, meaningful changes they bring to communities. To put it succinctly, these are 'Tales of Transformation: (Em)Powered by CARE'.



# Livelihood



## Mind the gap

Today, around 700 million people around the world make do with less than \$2.15 a day. In India, millions have broken out of multi-dimensional poverty in the past decade, but around 83 million people are still living **below subsistence levels**. The challenges are aplenty and wide-ranging – from economic and political to social and cultural, increasing the risk of pushing more people into poverty, especially in the face of extreme events like a pandemic or **climate change**.

Although agriculture's share in a nation's economic output has fallen steadily over the years to make way for manufacturing and services, almost two-thirds of the Indian population still rely on farming as their primary source of income. Agricultural incomes are **heavily reliant on monsoons**, further dampened by poor soil conditions, lack of modern farming techniques and technologies, proper irrigation facilities, absence of post-harvest facilities as well as robust and sustainable market linkages.



Creating sustainable livelihood opportunities lies at the heart of enabling households to break out of subsistence living, move up the socioeconomic pyramid and improve their living standards sustainably. But livelihood creation and the community's ability to break out of the cycle of poverty are intrinsically associated with a host of factors, which brings us to the continuum of CARE – Community, Aspirations, Resilience, and Equity. A community's cooperation in resource-sharing, ability to voice demands collectively, and participation in economic linkages are among the factors that change livelihood patterns in a village or region. A community's **aspirations for change** could lead to high investments in facilities or technology adoption that could stabilise incomes. **Resilience** in rural communities is inextricably tied to generating sustainable income from multiple sources.

Livelihood opportunities, again, also boil down to **equitable access** to critical factors that determine life choices, such as education and healthcare. In India, children from families of limited means or from rural areas often do not have access to schools, quality teachers and learning materials. Also, the poor, whether in rural or urban areas, cannot afford healthcare, which is often expensive or locationally inaccessible. This denial, or the inability of millions of Indians to access these constitutionally guaranteed rights – to education and healthcare without discrimination – impairs India's **social capital** and undermines its potential for equitable economic growth in the long term.

Integrated community-centric interventions must take into account these realities. Together with modern farming practices, introduction of better water management and soil conservation methods, livestock and animal husbandry ventures, improvement of market linkages, and so on, best use has to be made of **local knowledge**. While building up aspirations and the resilience of communities, consistent efforts must also be made to ensure everyone gets an equal opportunity to bring change in their lives.

### SDGs impacted





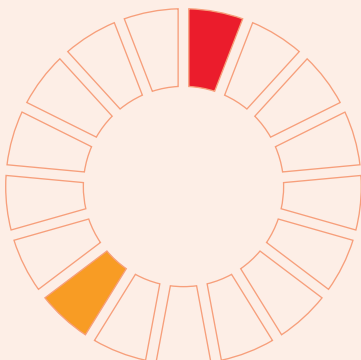
#### Stories covered

#### A role model is born

#### Winning together against all odds

#### Journey from darkness to light

Community participation is key to developing sustainable livelihoods, thereby ensuring that vulnerable communities are on a sustained road to prosperity. In India, as rural livelihoods still largely depend on agriculture, and a majority of agriculture-based incomes continue to be dependent on the monsoons, people find it difficult to break out of poverty. Further, poor soil conditions, lack of modern farming methods, insufficient irrigation facilities, absence of post-harvest facilities and market linkages make farm-based income volatile. Interventions in these areas require local knowledge and understanding in order to be successful, requiring community participation for building capacities and capabilities while ensuring optimal utilisation of resources that can drive a wider impact. If women can be encouraged to be the driving force behind such initiatives, the outcomes can have an even more significant impact on life and livelihood.



#### SDG impact indicators

**SDG 1**  
No Poverty

**SDG 11**  
Sustainable Cities and Communities



Facing declining demand for traditional handwoven products locally and limited access to urban markets, Khunietalu from a distant village of Nagaland was struggling to make ends meet.



**The Trusts' Antaran initiative, which supports traditional artisans, has helped her train, stabilise and diversify her business. Khunietalu now recruits artisans from her village, thus starting a virtuous cycle.**

## A role model is born

For 🧑 **Khunietalu**, hailing from the tiny Phusachodu village in Nagaland's Phek district, the world used to be very small, and her 37 years of existence centred around practising the craft of weaving, which had been handed down across generations. Khunietalu belongs to a family of weavers and was barely eking out a living with her limited reach and meagre resources.

Facing declining demand for traditional handwoven products locally and limited access to urban markets, she was struggling to make ends meet till she joined the Tata Trusts' Antaran Charkha to Market programme as an Artisan Entrepreneur in August 2022. It was a life-changing move for Khunietalu as she could experience the power of the Collective first-hand.

Launched in 2018, Antaran aims to support India's traditional artisans in finding new markets and customers. The intervention aims to directly benefit people involved in pre-loom, on-loom and post-loom processes, and thus, the livelihoods of thousands of craftspeople in the region.

Under the programme, Khunietalu received training along multiple flanks, from product diversification to developing contemporary designs, marketing skills and, not the least, financial literacy. She also learnt to

appreciate the importance of quality adherence and customer satisfaction. The project facilitated market exposure through participation in exhibitions, which gave her access to markets way beyond the perimeters of her village.

The intervention's overarching objective is to create entrepreneur-led enterprises and strengthen the traditional craft ecosystem. Khunietalu has been one of its beneficiaries. She now receives orders from customers in nearby towns and cities, and her income is steadily rising, often exceeding ₹10,000 a month, a tangible fruit of the intervention.

The most heartening evidence of the ripple effect this transformation has created is that with the additional capital, she has been able to hire and train six associate artisans from her village, providing them with employment opportunities and enabling them to become financially independent. Thus, the entire community has got a boost. Antaran also presents city-based designers the opportunity to collaborate with talented weavers from Assam, Odisha, Nagaland, and Andhra Pradesh, thus opening up new frontiers for India's handloom sector.

Today, Khunietalu is a role model in her community, inspiring other women to pursue weaving as a viable livelihood option, as she promotes entrepreneurship among her peers.



Mahindra had a borewell and good groundwater level in his 3-acre farm. But they were of no use given the irregular and insufficient power supply.



**Under the Trusts' Livelihoods programme, and with the assistance of Sustain Plus, Mahindra was able to install a 3HP solar pump under a community-owned solar irrigation model (CSIM). He not only solved his own problem but also that of his fellow farmers.**

## Winning together against all odds

👤 **Mahindra**, 👤 **Rachappa** and 👤 **Bheemappa** are farmers from Balichakra village of the Yadgir district in Karnataka, having small landholdings. While Mahindra owns three acres of land, both Rachappa and Bheemappa have two acres each. The latter two were entirely dependent on the rains for cultivation. In the case of Mahindra, he had a borewell to tap into the healthy groundwater reserves in his field, but he couldn't run the pump, given the unreliable electric supply. Due to severe power fluctuations, he often ended up with a burnt motor.

With the monsoons becoming increasingly erratic over the past two decades due to climate change, all three farmers suffered heavy losses. Saddled with debt, the families desperately prayed for rains while trying to make ends meet. They knew that without regular irrigation, it would be impossible to continue farming.

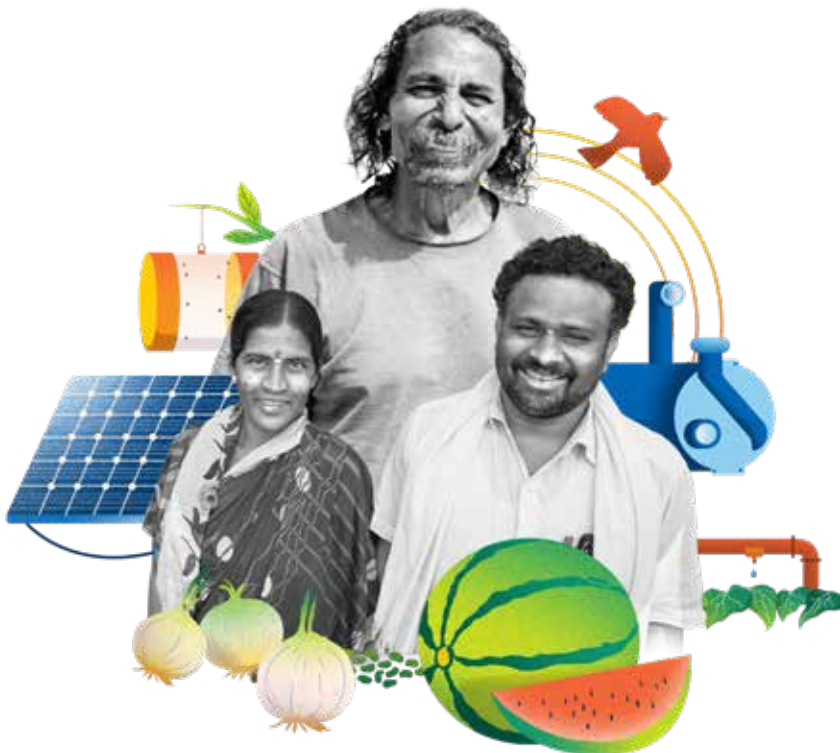
As part of the Trusts' Livelihoods programme, along with Sustain Plus (as a partner), a community-owned solar irrigation model (CSIM) was introduced in Yadgir, so that farmers could come together to use solar energy for irrigation. A 3HP solar pump was installed in Mahindra's field to address the farmers'

irrigation woes after his discussion with the Kalike team, the Trusts' implementing partner in rural Karnataka. Following a technical survey by the Kalike team and the solar pump vendor, a customised device was provided. Being powered by renewable energy, the pump would not need electricity. It could be operated at a minimum temperature of 25°C between 7 am and 5 pm. The pressure from the pump was sufficient for operating the drip irrigation system.

This community initiative offered an innovative service delivery model where three farming families could access critical irrigation facilities for their seven acres of land. While Mahindra bore 10% of the pump's cost, 50% came from the grant provided through the programme. The remaining 40% was linked to a bank loan, which Mahindra, being the lead farmer, would repay in instalments. In a win-win situation, Mahindra was thus not only able to meet his own irrigation needs but also provide water to Rachappa and Bheemappa – his 'fellow farmers' in this community-sharing model – who had to pay a nominal rent for the water.

The trio began growing watermelon, onion, and other commercial crops, benefitting further from the adoption of sustainable and integrated crop management practices such as drip irrigation, mulching, use of quality seeds and various tech-backed fly traps to avoid infestation under the guidance of the Kalike team. Post-harvest activities such as grading, sorting, and identification of proper marketing channels helped the families fetch better prices.

Through collective action, innovation, and support, these farmers have not only secured their livelihoods but also created a sustainable future for their families.





Unable to afford the high fuel costs of a diesel pump for irrigating his family's land, Arun had to take on work as a farmhand to provide for his family.



**CInI established a solar-powered micro lift irrigation system under the Lakhpati Kisan programme in Arun's village. This helped him save water and costs, and produce healthy soil-less saplings for his fellow farmers.**

## Journey from darkness to light

Here comes the sun. To cast away the gloom. That's literally what happened with **Arun Tudu** and his family. He had a piece of land but couldn't cultivate it as irrigation was a major challenge. Unable to afford the high fuel costs of a diesel pump for irrigating his family's land, Arun had to take on work as a farmhand to provide for his family.

Arun finally saw light at the end of the tunnel when CInI (Collectives for Integrated Livelihood Initiatives), the Trusts' implementing partner, established a solar-powered micro lift irrigation system under the Lakhpati Kisan programme in his village. He gained technical knowledge and expertise in agriculture. The exposure visits too helped him a lot, and before long, he was cultivating paddy as well as high-value agricultural (HVA) crops like capsicum, cucumber, cabbage, cauliflower, and

bottle gourd with a solar-powered drip irrigation system.

The drip irrigation system not only helped save water and reduce costs but also enabled healthier growth of saplings. Better inputs, such as saplings from a polyhouse nursery and the right quantity of fertilisers, insecticides and other pest-control ingredients, led to better production – a 50% increase in paddy, 100% in cucumber, 100% in capsicum and other HVA crops over the years.

A weight has lifted from Arun's shoulders. He can now offer his family a better life and secure their future. "The irrigation system took care of our water problems and led to greater productivity. CInI truly changed our lives with a series of interventions," he says.







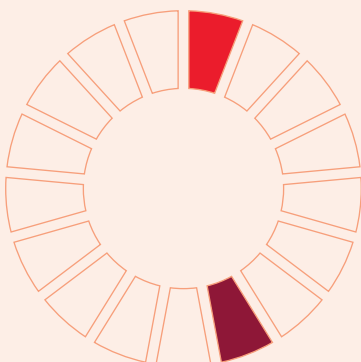
#### Stories covered

**Never giving up  
on dreams**

**Turning adversity  
into opportunity**

**Streamlining operations  
for better yield**

Aspirations trigger actions and can unleash a momentum of change in the life of an individual. Understanding aspirations of the economically disadvantaged has become a critical part of developmental economics, spurring forward-looking behaviour – encouraging efforts or investments that could help break the cycle of poverty. The presence of aspirations for change in a community sets off a virtuous cycle by way of better livelihood strategies, technology adoption, use of resources, voicing of collective needs, and thus more action for change. By helping create role models, shaping mindsets through training and counselling, and providing constructive support at the household and societal level, it is possible to nudge aspirations that can translate into a bigger impetus for change.



#### SDG impact indicators

**SDG 1**  
No Poverty

**SDG 8**  
Decent Work and Economic Growth



Farmers, like Dan Singh, growing pulses and legumes, are perennially plagued by the dearth of a good variety of seeds, little or no access to production and post-harvest technologies and the absence of any organised marketing ecosystem.



**Dan Singh, with the help of the Trusts' partner, Himmotthan Society, and its Mission Pulses programme, gained valuable knowledge of modern farming techniques. He was able to begin cultivation of cash crops and inspire others to do the same.**

<sup>1</sup>Nali – a unit of land measurement used in Uttarakhand, India, that's roughly equivalent to 200.6 square metres

## Never giving up on dreams

In Uttarakhand, farmers growing pulses and legumes are perennially plagued by the dearth of improved varieties, little or no access to production and post-harvest technologies, and the absence of any organised marketing ecosystem in the region. In order to mitigate these challenges, Himmotthan Society, supported by Tata Trusts, launched the Mission Pulses programme in the region in 2018. The Kapot block of Bageshwar district was one of many areas that witnessed the eventual transformation first-hand.

👤 **Dan Singh**, hailing from Kapot's Farsali Valli village, was a subsistence farmer growing paddy, wheat, and vegetables on his 14 nali<sup>1</sup> of land. He struggled to make both ends meet, despite toiling from dawn to dusk, as he didn't have the know-how and the wherewithal to shift away from outdated farming practices. However, he didn't give up on his dream of living in a pucca house or sending his children to good colleges.

Dan Singh became a part of the Mission Pulses programme, which helped him gain valuable knowledge in scientific techniques such as line sowing on raised beds, high-yielding seeds, modern machines like power weeders (especially designed for the hilly terrain), and the use of crop-specific fertilisers and pesticides. His newfound knowledge and support from Himmotthan Society emboldened him to take up the cultivation of cash crops like onion and garlic alongside other traditional crops, significantly augmenting his earning capacity.

By diligently following the Package of Practices (PoP) – from field preparation to harvesting – that he had learnt during the various training sessions organised under the programme, he now earns upward of ₹45,000 from onion seed production alone and around ₹1.5 lakh annually. His fellow farmers in his village now look up to him for guidance on scientific farming practices.

Dan Singh is living his dream. He was even made the Chief Guest at a village event organised by the Block Development Officer, where he shared his inspiring journey.







After both his parents passed away, Nirmal had to return to his village and face the daunting task of taking up farming, of which he had no knowledge.



**Nirmal received training and support from Tata Trusts and Himmotthan Society for pea seed production and goat rearing, enabling him to provide financial security to his family.**

*<sup>1</sup>Nali – a unit of land measurement used in Uttarakhand, India, that's roughly equivalent to 200.6 square metres*

## Turning adversity into opportunity

Life was harsh for **Nirmal Joshi**, who had to leave his village Riyad in Kotabagh, Uttarakhand, to work as a migrant labourer in Delhi. A graduate, he did odd jobs to survive and send money back home while his father struggled to grow paddy and millets in the family's 45 *nali*<sup>1</sup> of land. Tragedy struck when he lost both his parents, and he had to return to his village in 2014 to take up farming to provide for his siblings.

Nirmal now faced the daunting task of taking up farming, of which he had no prior knowledge. He tried to learn by trial and error and by observing other farmers in the village. However, the yield was disappointingly low, and hence the earnings were too low to support his family.

Riyad was one of the many villages to benefit from the Mission Pulses programme launched by Tata Trusts and

Himmotthan Society in 2018. Nirmal joined the programme to learn the ropes of agriculture. Under the guidance of the Himmotthan team, he purchased 12 kg of pea seeds worth ₹3,000 and sowed them in 12 *nali* of land. Using scientific methods, he significantly improved his pea production, generating ₹60,000 as income, thrice what he used to earn before.

The following year, when Himmotthan Society, supported by Tata Trusts, initiated a livestock programme in his area, Nirmal signed up. He received training and support for goat rearing, including materials for building a goat shed and training on semi-stall-feeding practices, goat diseases, and their treatment. He now sells his goats to local businesses in Kotabagh, earning between ₹60,000-70,000 annually from goat rearing alone. Nirmal can now look after his family without trouble and look ahead to fulfilling his dreams of owning a house and living a better life.





The hilly terrain of Tehri Garhwal in Uttarakhand makes accessing regular water supply for farming challenging, which in turn made it hard for Ameer to break the cycle of poverty.



**With the support of Himmotthan Society, Ameer learnt about sophisticated techniques like polyhouse farming and also became aware of government schemes offering subsidies for farm equipment.**

## Streamlining operations for better yield

For 60-year-old **Ameer Chandra Ramola**, life in Saud Jadipani in Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, revolved around the uncertainties of rain-fed farming. The area, made up of small and dispersed landholdings, is located at an altitude of 2,000 metres above sea level, the hilly terrain making it more difficult to access regular water supply for farming. Ameer wanted to increase his crop yield and buy livestock to diversify his income, but he didn't have access to formal credit.

Thanks to interventions by Himmotthan Society, supported by Tata Trusts, Ameer learnt about sophisticated techniques like polyhouse farming and also became aware of government schemes offering subsidies for farm equipment like power tillers, power weeders, and seed drills. "Previously, growing peas and capsicum took three months from sowing to harvesting. However, since I started cultivating them in the polyhouse, the crop cycle has been reduced by 20 days," he says.

The Himmotthan Society provided him with low-density polyethylene tanks to store water, fulfilling his irrigation needs, and supplied him with improved seeds of pumpkin, cucumber, and spinach for commercial cultivation. He bought a power tiller through government subsidies and installed sprinklers to ensure uniform irrigation. All these measures led to a noticeable improvement in production. Ramola could also eliminate middlemen in the marketing chain and, in the process, got higher rates for his produce.

After joining a self-help group (SHG) formed by the Himmotthan Society, his wife availed a loan that enabled the couple to purchase livestock as well.

"The unwavering support from Tata Trusts and the Himmotthan team has been the primary catalyst for my farming success," says Ameer.





#### Stories covered

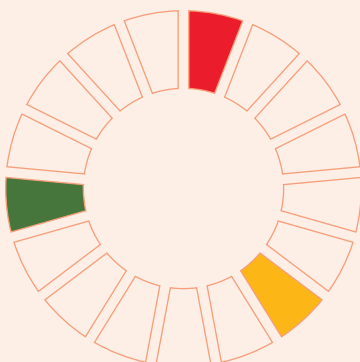
**From daily wage to prosperous farmer**

**A caring, fruitful partnership**

**A novel approach to water conservation**

**Innovation brings new hope in Ladakh**

Population pressure, growing urbanisation, shrinking natural resources, and climate change are making communities vulnerable all over the world. To survive and bounce back from natural vagaries, economic shocks or adverse seasonality, it is important to boost the inherent capabilities of the community, create preparedness for adversities, strengthen social connectedness, community systems and health. Livelihood diversification is an indispensable part of building up resilience, particularly in a rural setting. By creating an alternative and sustainable flow of income from both farm and non-farm sources, families can spread risk and become self-reliant. Layering of livelihoods and backing it with enablers such as cost-effective solar technologies, improved irrigation methods, knowledge of crop diversification, precision farming, livestock rearing, and small backyard gardens to meet family nutrition needs – along with promoting sustainable tourism and fostering collectivisation – are crucial to driving lasting, irreversible change.



#### SDG impact indicators

**SDG 1**  
No Poverty

**SDG 7**  
Affordable and Clean Energy

**SDG 13**  
Climate Action



With Sheela's paltry wages of less than ₹100 a day as an MGNREGA labourer, the family struggled to meet basic needs.



**With knowledge gained from workshops run by the Lakhpati Kisan programme, Sheela was able to undertake crop diversification and use superior farming practices. These made her resilient against market fluctuations and crop failure, ensuring a sustainable livelihood.**

## From daily wager to prosperous farmer

Sheela's world seemed dark and desolate. With her husband living far away as a migrant worker, and her paltry wages of less than ₹100 a day as an MGNREGA labourer, the family struggled to meet basic needs.

When Tata Trusts came with the Lakhpati Kisan programme to her village, Nagdi, located in the Churchu block of Hazaribagh district, Jharkhand in 2015, she resolved to soak up as much knowledge as she could. The programme implemented by Collectives for Integrated Livelihood Initiatives (CINI) introduced her to cost-effective drip irrigation, which delivers water directly to the roots to boost sapling growth.



She also learnt the efficient use of agricultural inputs like fertilisers and pest control, the benefits of growing saplings in a polyhouse rather than in open fields, and the importance of diversifying crops instead of relying solely on paddy.

This learning was life-changing, and soon her income grew exponentially. Not only do her children study in a private school now, but Sheela also employs farmhands in her field. For her, the journey from being an MGNREGA labourer to a Lakhpati Kisan has been a long one. But her thirst for knowledge continues to be insatiable as she aspires to learn new agricultural techniques to further enhance her production and income.

Crop diversification and the use of superior farming practices have enabled her to mitigate risks associated with market fluctuations and crop failure, ensuring a stable and sustainable livelihood.

Sheela lives a simple but happy life, with her earnings going mostly towards her children's education and savings. "When I look back at life, I realise what a great blessing CINI has been for me and for all those who have been part of the programme," she says with a radiant smile.



Anil could barely earn enough to sustain himself and send money back to his family in the village.



**Under the Lakhpati Kisan programme, both Anil and Gangi received training in scientific methods of crop cultivation and benefitted from the solar-powered micro lift irrigation system set up in their village.**

## A caring, fruitful partnership

Anil Tudu and his daughter sitting on his motorcycle with crates of cucumber tied to the seat make for a heartwarming sight. It was not long ago that he and his wife, Gangi, found it difficult to scrape together a decent meal for the family, let alone buy a motorcycle.

As a migrant worker, Anil could barely earn enough to sustain himself and send money back to his family in the village. Gangi had to take care of the children and her in-laws all by herself. For the young couple, life seemed bleak, without much hope for a positive change.

Anil's decision to come back to the village and join the Lakhpati Kisan programme in 2015 gave fresh hope to his family. Under the programme, both Anil and Gangi received training in scientific methods of crop cultivation and benefitted from the solar-powered micro lift irrigation system set up in their village. They harnessed all the knowledge

and training, and were linked not only to better farm inputs like healthy saplings and fertiliser but also a market for their produce. In the first year, the couple could produce around 50 quintals of tomato, cucumber, cabbage, watermelon, and bottle gourd. The total production from their farm has increased over the years, and so has their income, reaching a total of ₹3.5 lakh annually.

Anil and Gangi are hardworking and have a caring partnership. Both are working in the field in the rain and blazing sun so that their daughter can have a bright future.

"Earlier, I used to cry due to my hardships. Today, my tears are of joy," says Gangi.







In semi-arid regions like Gujarat, water levels are depleting at an alarming rate. Hard rock aquifers make recharging difficult, endangering the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.



**By enhancing storage capacity in wells by increasing water infiltration and retention, the BBT intervention supported by the Trusts is providing farmers with a more reliable water source for irrigation. This bolsters their resilience against drought and water scarcity.**

## A novel approach to water conservation

In the dry parts of Gujarat, where 25% of the India's cotton is grown, a lot of groundwater is used for irrigation. As rainfall is limited and the hard rock aquifers make recharging difficult, water levels are depleting at an alarming rate, endangering the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. There is a growing need to promote water-use efficiency in these regions.

Rainwater harvesting is being popularised to counter aquifer desaturation due to excessive extraction and provide assured irrigation. Artificial recharge is also being increasingly adopted to enhance the depleted groundwater resources in the area.

The bore blast technique (BBT) is another such intervention by which additional storage within the low-potential hard rock areas is created. It involves controlled blasting at a depth in several closely spaced bore wells around or beyond the main production well, thereby enhancing groundwater recharge. In the impact caused by simultaneous blasting, rocks are crushed underground, creating additional fractures. Such fractures or secondary porosities generate additional storage space as well as conduits for water to flow into the wells.

For BBT intervention, the Coastal Salinity Prevention Cell (CSPC),

supported by Tata Trusts, chose an area of 550 hectares in the Talaja block spanning five villages. Three villages have river Talaji as their catchment while two villages have river Navli as their catchment.

These villages are populated by small and marginal farmers practising cotton and groundnut cultivation during the Kharif season. In the Rabi season, onions, wheat, and chickpeas are grown while in summer, bajra, fodder crop, and summer groundnuts are grown on a fraction of the land.

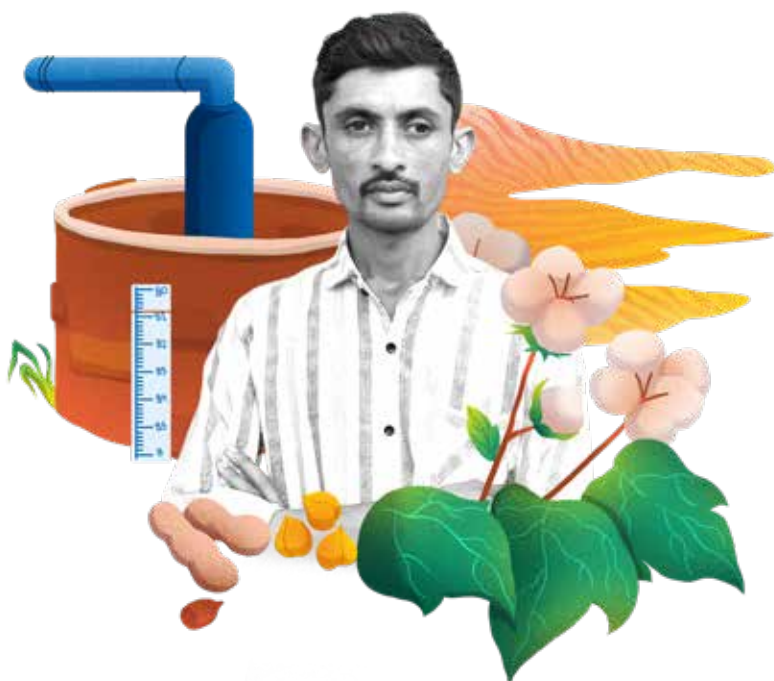
In the Mota Ghana area, BBT was first taken up in 33 clusters along the river Navli, between 10 check dams constructed on the stream. **👤 Bhayabhai Vihalbhai Bhammar**, a resident of Mota Ghana village in the Talaja block in Bhavnagar district, reported that his well, which is close to the fourth check dam, was positively impacted by BBT. The water level in his 99 ft-deep well had risen to 81 ft after a fall to 14 ft in September 2022. The water also showed a reduction in total dissolved solids (TDS) from 728 ppm to 528 ppm. According to him, about 50 wells located near the BBT sites in the village had similarly seen an increase in water levels post-BBT implementation.

**👤 Dadubhai Najabhai Bhammar**,

a resident of the same village also said that his well, located close to the first check dam, showed a remarkable change following the BBT implementation at the first and second check dams. The water level in his 90 ft well had climbed from 39 ft in September 2021 to 80 ft. There was also a significant reduction in TDS from 930 ppm to 870 ppm.

"My well had dried up during summer, but after BBT, more water was available and I could irrigate an additional 3-4 acres of land, and also grow fodder crop during summer," says Dadubhai.

By enhancing storage capacity in wells through increased water infiltration and retention, BBT is providing farmers with a reliable water source for irrigation, which bolsters their resilience against drought and water scarcity.





Despite a strong market demand for apricots, Phurboo in remote Ladakh couldn't capitalise on it as almost 40–50% of the produce would go to waste due to low shelf life and the lack of market access.



**The solar apricot dryer, provided under the project, reduced drudgery and protected the fruits from dust, flies, bees, and stray animals. This resulted in improved quality of the end produce, making it easy for Phurboo to market the produce and thus enhance her income.**

## Innovation brings new hope in Ladakh

For **Phurboo Dolma**, a subsistence farmer in Takmachik, a small village of 60 households in Ladakh's Sham valley, life was challenging, to say the least. The negligible quantities of barley, buckwheat and vegetables she grew on her little patch of land would be used up feeding her family of five. Her main source of income were the 40 apricot trees she owned. Despite a strong market demand for apricots, Phurboo couldn't capitalise on it as almost 40–50% of the produce would go to waste due to low shelf life and the lack of market access. The average annual production of dried apricots was only 160 kg. Phurboo suffered particularly because she did not have a proper drying facility. Traditional methods of open sun-drying of apricots often resulted in inconsistent quality, further hampering her earning potential.

Recognising the plight of farmers like her, Tata Trusts-supported Himmotthan Society stepped in to provide the much-needed assistance. Phurboo was provided a solar apricot dryer at a subsidised rate, and this simple device completely changed her life. The mechanisation reduced drudgery and saved her from the vagaries of bad weather. The fruits were protected from dust, flies, bees, and stray animals. It resulted in improved quality of the end produce, making it easy for Phurboo to market the produce and thus enhance her income.

Superior quality apricots fetch ₹100–150 extra per kg, which meant Phurboo could earn an additional ₹15,000–20,000. This not only improved her standard of living but also empowered her to invest in her children's education.

Phurboo's journey exemplifies the transformative power of grassroots interventions in uplifting rural livelihoods. By providing access to appropriate technology and support services, Tata Trusts helped tap the potential of farmers like Phurboo, enabling them to improve their lives, and inspire others to embrace innovation and resilience in their pursuit of a better tomorrow.





#### Stories covered

#### Striving hard to optimise returns

#### A journey to self-empowerment

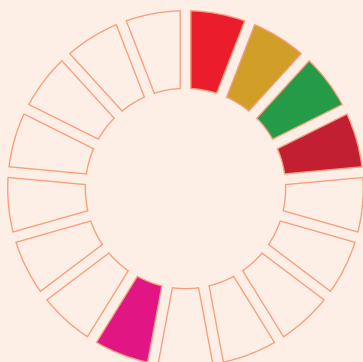
#### Overcoming barriers to prove their worth

#### A gateway to more opportunities

#### Knowledge-sharing revives lost breed

Inequality and power imbalances at all levels, be it at an individual level or household level or within communities, regionally, constrain the abilities of people to generate sustainable livelihoods. For example, casteism may deny many equitable ownership and access to land or natural resources. Indigenous people, who are custodians of much of India's forests and natural habitats, are often ignored and their traditional knowledge underestimated. Again, discriminatory social norms often impede women from employment opportunities, undermine their self-worth and increase their vulnerability.

Inequity manifests itself in economic disparities, social discrimination, and unequal access to not only quality education and healthcare – the fundamental rights of a citizen – but also the lack of financial and digital inclusion. These barriers, particularly the lack of education, make it difficult for marginalised communities like the rural poor, women, and backward castes and classes, to access government schemes targeted at removing inequities. Yet, to stimulate all-round economic development, build stable, healthy societies, reduce poverty and economic disparity, equity must be ensured. In fact, the central transformative promise of the UN SDGs is to 'leave no one behind', which means the most marginalised and vulnerable populations – or the furthest behind – have to be brought within the ambit of the sustainability ambition, and even reached first, to ensure the fulfilment of the goals across nations, people, and all segments of society.



#### SDG impact indicators

**SDG 1**  
No Poverty

**SDG 2**  
Zero Hunger

**SDG 3**  
Good Health and Well-being

**SDG 4**  
Quality Education

**SDG 10**  
Reduced Inequalities





Sunita's three bighas<sup>1</sup> of land were not sufficient to fulfil her family's needs. Although she took to livestock rearing or 'pashu-palan', the money she earned was not even sufficient for the upkeep of the animals.



**With fair pricing, timely payment, and marketing support received from the milk producer company formed by DHANII, Sunita has now graduated into a dairy farmer who can financially support her family and fulfil her own aspirations.**

<sup>1</sup>Bigha – a unit of land varying from ½-1 acre metres

## Striving hard to optimise returns

A resident of Kothiyar village in Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh district, **Sunita's** three bighas<sup>1</sup> of land were not sufficient to fulfil her family's needs. In 2015, after a discussion with her family, she decided to start pashu-palan (livestock rearing). Her father bought her two cows, and Sunita began selling milk. The price of milk fluctuated – on special occasions, such as during the wedding season or festivals, it went up to ₹22 per litre while on normal days, the middleman paid her ₹15 per litre. The money she earned was not even sufficient for the upkeep of the animals.

In 2016, Tata Trusts-supported DHANII set up the Shwetdhara Milk Producer Company in Pratapgarh with technical support from NDDDB Dairy Services (NDS), offering better prices to dairy farmers. Alongside, the Trusts provided training on milk production and scientific dairy management while distributing quality seeds of green fodder.

Sunita became a member of Shwetdhara in 2017 and began selling milk to the producer company, which paid her a fair price that was a marked improvement from the previous rates she

was offered by the middleman.

She would also receive payments in her bank account within a matter of 10 days, which was again a major improvement from the previous situation, when there was no surety of the time of payment.

Following the training she received from the Trusts, Sunita was able to take genuine care of her animals. She regularly dewormed the animals, gave them a balanced diet, and incorporated a mineral mixture and salt in their daily feed. Earlier, she neither had the knowledge nor could she afford the resources needed to provide her animals the right feed and right medical care, which naturally impacted the milk yield.

With the fair pricing, timely payment, and marketing support, Sunita has now graduated into a successful dairy farmer who can financially support her family and fulfil her own aspirations. She not only sells milk to Shwetdhara, but as a member, she also receives an annual bonus from the company. Sunita now takes care of her siblings' education and recently funded her sister's wedding from her savings. Confident and self-reliant, Sunita takes pride in her achievements and looks forward to a future she has built with determination and hard work.





The successive deaths of her near and dear ones had left Bhabani Boro aimless and in acute hardship, till she found her feet as a pump operator as part of the Jal Jeevan Mission in her area.



The training taught Bhabani to operate and maintain water pumps and undertake water quality testing, transforming her into an expert in the field. Her story is one of triumph against all odds.

## A journey to self-empowerment

Born into a destitute family, **Bhabani Boro's** world crashed when her father died prematurely. Her brother Bhupen became the family's sole breadwinner. However, tragedy struck again when Bhupen died in an accident. Refusing to crumble under adversity, Bhabani, guided by her uncle, Paban Rabha, a worker at the Public Health Engineering Department, began performing tasks related to Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), such as starting the machines and managing the backwash system. That's when 153 household tap connections were installed in her village – Choudhury Para in the Kamrup district of Assam.

Through her uncle, the story of Bhabani's efforts and resilience reached the ears of the panchayat president. The village panchayat of No. 6 Dakhin Bongaon recognised her diligence and appointed her as a pump operator for a JJM scheme in 2022. She not only managed the operations with remarkable efficiency but also underwent training conducted by the Centre for Microfinance and Livelihood (CML), an implementing partner of Tata Trusts. These training sessions equipped her with the knowledge of pump operation, maintenance, and water quality testing using field testing kits, transforming her into an expert in the field.

Bhabani's influence extended beyond the scheme's machinery. With a heart dedicated to her community's welfare, she actively participated in awareness meetings organised by CML-Tata Trusts. She became an advocate for safe drinking water, echoing the importance of this vital resource. In the face of challenges like pipe leakages or damaged machinery, Bhabani employed her interpersonal skills, motivating the community to contribute towards repairs. Her astute management ensured the scheme's sustainability and longevity.

The depth of Bhabani's commitment is mirrored in her meticulous record-keeping, documenting cash flows, costs, and savings in a diligent record book. She regularly participates in the tariff collection drive from the community, whenever any maintenance issues arise. After a bank account is opened for transactions by the community, the operations and maintenance will be overseen by the Treasurer of the Water User Committee (WUC). Due to the continuous effort of Bhabani, the community is gradually forming a habit of contributing towards the maintenance drive under the supervision of the WUC member. Her collaborative spirit shines as she maintains open lines of communication with the President and Secretary of the water user group.

Bhabani Boro's journey – from a life shadowed by adversity to a position of empowerment and influence – stands as a testament to her unyielding spirit and the transformative potential of determination. Her story is one of triumph against the odds, a true success story that illuminates the path to progress, not just for herself but for her entire community.





Hasina, like other candidates from underprivileged communities, had to work doubly hard to prove herself in the highly competitive job market that required communication skills as well as industry-specific expertise.



**Tata STRIVE, which prepares young people from economically disadvantaged communities for employment, entrepreneurship and community enterprise, provided her with the necessary tools for success.**

## Overcoming barriers to prove their worth

Hailing from a family of six in Panvel, Navi Mumbai, **Hasina**, as a responsible young adult, wanted to ease her parents' financial burden and become a role model for her younger sisters. Many a time, it requires tangible proof of success and resilience to inspire others to overcome their circumstances. Hasina knew that graduation wasn't enough to get her a job. Candidates like her had to work doubly hard to prove themselves in the highly competitive job market that required communication skills as well industry-specific expertise. They also lacked the resources and opportunities that their privileged peers often had recourse to.

Tata STRIVE, a skill development programme supported by the Tata Trusts, aimed to prepare young people from economically disadvantaged communities for employment, entrepreneurship and community enterprise, provided her with the necessary tools for success. Hasina says, "I got to know about the skill-building initiative from a pamphlet distributed in my college." After completing the BFSI (Banking and Finance, Securities Markets and Insurance) course, she began working in a Capital Securities firm.

An unalloyed sense of triumph now fills Hasina, who has defeated numerous odds to reach the place where she is now. Most importantly, she is proud to have set an example for others in her locality and her community.

"It is a matter of great pride for me and my family that people now ask me to guide their kids on how to land a good job and where to upskill," she says.

A similar pride fills young **Om**, who has experienced first-hand the benefits of equitable access to education and skills development. He came to know of Tata STRIVE while pursuing BE at Pune Vidyarthi Griha's College of Engineering, Nashik. He registered to pursue the Google IT Automation with Python Professional Certificate, organised by STRIVE. The high-quality course helps students internalise fundamental concepts better and imbibe a problem-solving approach that prospective employers prefer. The trainer-mentors ensure that students gain both theoretical knowledge and practical tools. Om is working in Pune as a software developer.

Om says, "I am looking forward to travelling far in this tech world. As I become an expert, gain experience and ascend the corporate ladder, I will be contributing even more to the financial stability of my family."











Heera Singh Rawat from the Chokori village in Uttarakhand's Almora district, used to wrestle with the challenges of erratic rainfall and prolonged dry spells that inevitably led to crop failures.



**To tackle water scarcity, a solar pump scheme was launched by Tata Trusts-supported Himmotthan Society under the Mission Pulses programme, which was implemented through local SHGs.**

## A gateway to more opportunities

Like most other farmers in his area, **Heera Singh Rawat** from the Chokori village in Uttarakhand's Almora district, used to wrestle with the challenges of erratic rainfall and prolonged dry spells that inevitably led to crop failures. So much so, that he had to supplement his income by working as an electrician. Low family income also created friction within families, leading to domestic wrangles on how best to spend the scarce money, which invariably meant a neglect of women's aspirations for better education or domestic facilities.

But life has changed for Heera Singh and other villagers, thanks to the Mission Pulses programme, implemented by Tata Trusts and Himmotthan Society. To tackle water scarcity, a solar pump scheme was launched, which was implemented through local SHGs. The pump installed at the water source in Heera Singh's field lifted water to a reservoir 600 metres above. It was then channelled into the neighbouring fields through a network of pipes.

The water opened a floodgate of opportunities for Heera Singh. Having already acquired smart farming knowledge from the Himmotthan team, he started growing red rice and ragi

(finger millet) as well as a high-yielding variety of basmati rice. To optimise production, he embraced new techniques like line sowing and began the use of a tractor and power weeder, the last helping him reduce drudgery as well.

"The best part of the programme was providing irrigation facilities and its emphasis on establishing a cost-effective, community-owned marketing network for agricultural produce in the region," he beams.

Heera Singh is now regarded as a farming expert in his village. He enjoys imparting lessons on improved agricultural practices, disease management, and the use of fertilisers and pesticides, which have considerably improved the yields of his fellow farmers. With his encouragement, many have shifted to solar-powered irrigation, which has lowered costs and ensured more reliable irrigation, ensuring greater equity and efficiency in the use of resources.

The community has not only seen increased prosperity but also a shift in social attitudes towards women. Women are now actively involved in decision-making regarding crop selection, children's education, and family matters, a significant change from the past.





In Rajasthan's Sirohi district, famous for its 'Sirohi' goats, the absence of proper veterinary care and high mortality among the livestock led to a steady decline in purebred goats. This prevented many tribal families from reaping the benefits of commercial goat farming.



**Pashu sakhis like Movi Bai, trained by CmF under a joint initiative of CISCO and Tata Trusts, are training others to take care of the goats through proper feeding and disease control, sparking a new interest in goat-rearing.**

## Knowledge-sharing revives lost breed

The Sirohi district in Rajasthan, known for its prized 'Sirohi' breed of goats, faced a decline in purebred goats due to a lack of veterinary care, leaving many tribal families unable to benefit from commercial goat rearing due to high mortality rates. However, in December 2021, a transformative change began in Sirohi. To encourage rural entrepreneurship, a joint initiative of CISCO and Tata Trusts was implemented by the Centre for microFinance (CmF). The initiative trained local women (called pashu sakhis) as doorstep preventive healthcare services providers, which led to a reduction in goat mortality from 30% in 2018 to less than 7% in 2021.

In December 2021, **Movi Bai**, a determined pashu sakhi from the Malera village of Pindwara Tehsil, Sirohi, organised a meeting with goat-rearing households to boost rural entrepreneurship. The idea was to procure and raise 4-5 male Sirohi kids and sell them during upcoming festivals. **Kali Bai**, another resident of Malera, saw this as an opportunity to boost her family's income, which depended on agriculture and wage labour.

With support from Movi Bai and CmF, Kali Bai underwent a seven-day training on management practices in the Malera village of Pindwara Tehsil, Sirohi. The training covered balanced feed,

deworming and vaccination schedules, proper housing, identifying common diseases, and home-based treatments. Despite being unlettered, Kali Bai, with CmF's guidance, prepared a business plan and took a ₹15,000 loan from her SHG to purchase five bucks. CmF also assisted her with wire fencing, a feeding manger, and a water pot stand for her mini goat farm.

Beaming with happiness, Kali Bai says, "I am taking great care of the bucks I have bought. To avoid diseases, I give feed and fodder in the manger. I clean the manger and the water utensils daily. The fencing provides protection from wild animals at night." She plans to sell the bucks at ₹10,000-₹12,000 each once they are 10 months old.

This initiative has sparked renewed interest in commercial goat rearing in Malera. Women from Malera and neighbouring villages are coming forward to become buck entrepreneurs, unlocking further potential. This movement is not just about financial independence but also about transforming the role of women in a traditionally male-dominated field, promoting equity, and driving community-wide socio-economic progress.

As these women organise into a producer company and establish wider market linkages, they are redefining rural entrepreneurship and proving that with the right support, they can lead and transform their communities.



# Way forward

In a country where the agricultural sector continues to employ the largest number of people, it is essential to ensure agriculture is able to generate sustainable livelihoods by being more equitable and environmentally responsible. For this, proper attention has to be paid to soil health, reduced water consumption, crop diversification, and more efficient energy usage. Innovation, farm mechanisation and adoption of the latest technologies like IoT are already making this possible. But a far more vexing issue remains women's unpaid agricultural labour, which continues to perpetuate economic inequities. Women lack access to land assets and critical infrastructure that are necessary to amp up agricultural productivity. More inclusive agricultural practices, together with income diversification through non-farm activities like animal husbandry, agro-forestry, horticulture, particularly for small farmers, and an improved role for women in these areas can alter the stasis. These have to be backed by support for women-led village institutions like SHGs or farmer producer organisations, and the linkage of these production hubs with markets beyond. Given India's rapid urbanisation, the rising aspirations of the youth and their increasing dissociation from traditional sectors like farming, more focus has to be devoted to vocational skill development, digital literacy and soft skill training to enable them to gain from and contribute to India's economic development.

“

**Freedom without the strength to support it and, if need be, defend it, would be a cruel delusion. And the strength to defend freedom can itself only come from widespread industrialisation and the infusion of modern science and technology into the country's economic life.**

”

Jamsetji Tata



# Learning



## Nurturing the future

India has made rapid strides in ensuring access and enhancing the quality of education over the past decade. However, millions of children in the age group of 6 and 17 are still out of school, with some reports pegging the number at 250<sup>1</sup> million. Further, school closures during the pandemic are estimated to have affected 1.5 billion students globally, with over 300<sup>2</sup> million from India, particularly those who were studying in low-cost private schools or public schools, posing uncertainty about the continuity of their education. Inconsistent access to devices and internet, and disruptions of essential meal programmes among others, further aggravated the challenges.

At Tata Trusts, ensuring quality education for all children, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, has been central to its learning interventions. Skilled teachers, an engaging learning environment, and an increased capacity to support educators and schools will ensure equity and quality in education, resulting in nurturing future-ready citizens and a forward-looking education system.

The focus is not just on age and grade-appropriate learning in curricular subjects; it is also on leveraging 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative learning and the use of technology. Towards promoting higher learning in the sciences, social sciences and the arts and fuelling aspirations for a brighter future, Tata Trusts has partnered with eminent national and international institutes.

In India, academics has long been viewed as the sole route to economic progress. Sports, arts and culture have been accorded a lower priority in school and college curricula. Only a few individuals, with the passion and resources to sustain and nurture their interest in sports, are able to realise their dream of becoming sportspersons. The limited availability of skilled resources such as certified coaches, physiotherapists, nutritionists, psychologists, and data analysts makes the playing field more uneven. But sports when combined with education, equips children with life skills that results in holistic development and prepares them for future challenges when they move out of the security of the school.

<sup>1</sup>Source: UNESCO  
<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/250-million-children-out-school-what-you-need-know-about-unescos-latest-education-data>

<sup>2</sup>Source: <https://www.tatatrusts.org/our-work/disaster-relief-and-rehabilitation/one-against-covid/empowering-students-and-teachers-in-the-pandemic>

## SDGs impacted





#### Stories covered

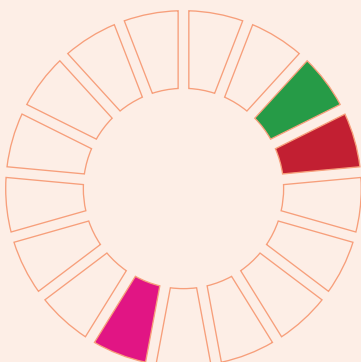
**From a decrepit room to a vibrant children's library**

**Bringing children back to school**

**Transforming the futures of bright, aspiring students**

Education doesn't happen in isolation in classrooms; parents, families and the larger community intrinsically play an important role. Society and the community support parents and families in the upbringing of children, and their socialisation and education. The earliest schools in India resulted from the community's drive to advance education. Even now, in many parts of India, communities provide the site for schools and libraries; panchayats sometimes pay for their upkeep and may even influence teacher selection. Through activities such as sports and competitions, communities in rural and urban India promote scholastic and non-scholastic activities. Studies have shown that in places where the community does not take an interest in these activities, the demand for schooling is low.

Community involvement is critical in mobilising resources for education, motivating parents and families so that children enrol and remain in schools, maintaining educational standards in schools, encouraging the adoption of new pedagogical methods or technology and promoting holistic education. Improvement programmes thus have to be directed as much towards creating change within the classroom as promoting community engagement outside it.



#### SDG impact indicators

##### SDG 3

Good Health and Well-being

##### SDG 4

Quality Education

##### SDG 10

Reduced Inequalities



From a ramshackle school library, student apathy, to her own limited knowledge of the usefulness of libraries, Sanju confronted a host of problems as the new librarian.



**The RSLPP library training introduced Sanju to the need for and ways of engaging children through the school library. She refurbished the space and began read-aloud sessions.**

## From a decrepit room to a vibrant children's library

Reading empowers and broadens horizons. To enhance the quality of education in government schools, especially in the remote corners of India, Tata Trusts focuses on promoting reading as a fundamental skill in a child's educational journey.

The Centre for microFinance was supported by Tata Trusts to initiate the Rajasthan School Library Promotion Project (RSLPP) in partnership with the Rajasthan state government, covering 3,333 government schools statewide – 101 schools in each district (1 district-level model library and 100 school libraries).

The impact the initiative has created can be gleaned from the story of **Ms. Sanju**, a dedicated teacher at the Government Upper Primary School, Lambor Chhipiyan, Rajgarh block in the Churu district of Rajasthan, one of the project intervention schools under the RSLPP. On becoming the school library in charge in July 2023, Sanju faced a plethora of problems, ranging from the ramshackle condition of the library room to lack of proper infrastructure and resources for its effective functioning and a general apathy of students

towards library activities, which was further compounded by the absence of any designated library class. New to the role, Sanju had no prior knowledge of how libraries impacted children's development, or ways of engaging with young readers and making the space vibrant and inviting.

As part of the project, she received a two-day library training along with periodic on-site support from the project team. The training introduced her to various new activities and strategies for engagement in the library. Inspired, she decided to create an attractive library space in her school. Post-training, she initiated activities such as read-aloud sessions, book talks, big book reading and discussions on stories with students. She received unstinted support from her school Principal and other fellow teachers, who all helped her clean and paint a classroom, turning it into an attractive library space. With the help of the staff and students, she decorated the room and created display corners like those in the model library.

She also started engaging children in various activities, ensuring that students from classes 1 and 2 enjoy library activities every week. These efforts have transformed the library into an interesting and dynamic learning space, where books are neatly arranged and displayed. A reading corner has been set up for children, and a 'book hospital' has been established for book maintenance. Like the model library, various corners for library activities have been created, which students use regularly.

Every class is provided with book contributions, and lending cards have been made for students to borrow books and maintain records. This passion to change things for children and get them drawn to books is being appreciated by block education officials. Other schools in the block are also getting inspired to replicate the same refurbishment model.

Sanju aspires to further enhance the library's impact by introducing additional resources and activities to foster a culture of reading and learning within the schools and communities.







At just 13, Ronjali Boro was forced to drop out of school to take care of her younger brother and help with household chores, joining countless other children who slip through the cracks in the education system.



**The challenge was not only to identify out-of-school children and bring them back to school but also to convince their parents on the importance of education. In Ronjali's case, the CML team as well as the local school headmaster and villagers had to speak with the parents.**

<sup>1</sup>Unified District Information System for Education Plus UDISE+ Report 23-24

## Bringing children back to school

Fun on the school bus, starched school uniforms and neatly labelled books with their brown covers may make up the everyday life of numerous children in India. But for many others, especially in India's villages, this is a distant reality. The long walk to school, non-functional toilets, a pouring roof or absent teachers may discourage a child from attending school. More so if parents at home feel there are way more important things that a child needs to do than go to school.

Take the case of **Ronjali Boro**, a 13-year-old girl from Charan Jungle village in the Tamulpur subdivision of Assam's Baksa district. Having to take up the responsibility of dropping her stepbrother to school and lending a hand in household chores, she dropped out of school. In another village of the same district, 10-year-old **Sujit Barman**, too decided to drop out. He couldn't follow what happened in the classroom, and thus found no joy in attending school.

Ronjali and Sujit are among the countless others in Assam who fall through the education gap. Assam<sup>1</sup> reports one of the highest drop-out rates in the country, and every year, the rate is increasing. Poor infrastructure and pedagogy in schools are just some of the many reasons why children stay away from schools. They are often expected to share the burden of household work or pitch in to financially support their families. This is particularly true among first-generation learners. Their parents are often poor and unlettered themselves, they unable to grasp the importance of education. Even for the children who do manage to stay on in school, the absence of an effective remedial support system may leave them struggling to understand the fundamental concepts in class.

The Assam State Initiative of Tata Trusts was taken up in 2019 to help children return to school. Implemented through the Centre for Microfinance and Livelihood (CML), a partner organisation, ASI focused on identifying out-of-school children (OoSC), bringing them back to school, and ensuring that they continued their education. Supporting children through remedial education was thus a critical part of the initiative.

To create an eagerness for learning, CML conducted motivational camps for the children. Engaging children through fun and games was part of the strategy to win over their confidence. An equally important part was convincing parents. For them, education was low priority. They believed that like the adults in the family, children too had to contribute their labour to add to the family income. In the case of Ronjali, the CML team had to speak with both the parents to convince them to send her to the motivational camp.

The camp was not just about motivating children to go back to school. Through various activities, programme facilitators also tried to gauge the educational levels of the children, many of whom lacked foundational literacy and numeracy skills. In the case of Ronjali, it turned out to be a pleasant surprise for the ASI team. Although they had been told that Ronjali lacked interest in studies, ASI team members found her enthusiastically participating in all the activities. Ronjali, quite surely, wanted to be in school. But it wasn't easy to get her back. The ASI team had to take the help of the local school headmaster and other villagers to convince her mother about the transformative impact of elementary education in the lives of poor families like theirs. Finally, in March 2021, Ronjali was successfully enrolled at a Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya in Nagrijuli.

A similar situation unfolded for **Deepak Lal Choudhury**, whose protective mother had deliberately kept him out of school after Deepak had got injured during a fight. The CML facilitator had to reason with Deepak's mother before he was allowed to attend a motivational camp, and then enrolled at Jharpara Bapuji Girls' MV School (a co-ed school) as a regular student. Sujit, too, joined the Residential Special Training Centre (RSTC) in Kalakuchi in March 2020. With remedial support provided by CML, he showed keen interest in his studies.





Countless rural students are unable to pursue university education due to resource crunch, lack of language fluency, and the digital divide.



**The Karta Initiative is equipping young adults with soft skills, awareness and exposure so that they can transform their lives.**

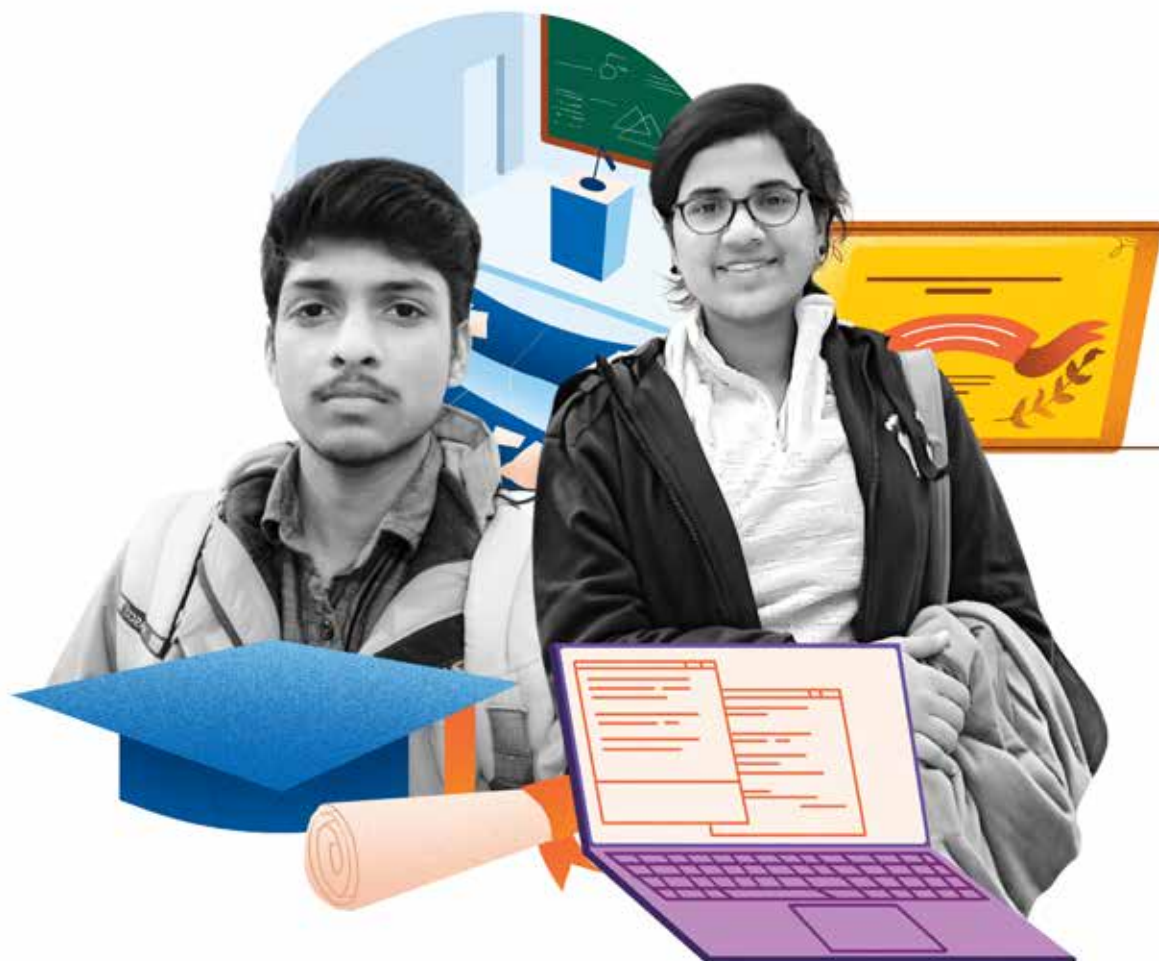
## Transforming the futures of bright, aspiring students

The Tata Trusts has supported the Karta Initiative in India to improve access to world-class education and employment opportunities for talented youngsters from low-resource backgrounds. It seeks to motivate countless rural students who are unable to pursue a university education due to resource crunch, lack of awareness about academic and career pathways, the 'digital divide' plaguing rural areas, and a poor grasp of English. The Karta Initiative is equipping young people with the necessary skills, knowledge and exposure to transform their lives, thus creating a new talent pipeline with meritorious and deserving students.

This partnership enhances the Trusts' existing programmes on education, complements the JN Tata Endowment postgraduate scholarship programme

and strengthens collaborations with premier universities. The initiative has also resulted in the creation of a multiple-stakeholder scholarship fund. A rigorous screening process identified academically brilliant students who show belief in the same set of core values of service, integrity, flexibility of thought and action, and perseverance that the initiative upholds. The long-term aim of the initiative is to sustain the movement, expand it and have students lead it.

The Karta Initiative has attracted the support of prestigious global universities, philanthropists, charitable organisations, global firms, eminent academics and others. The impact of the initiative goes beyond the students, creating a ripple effect that transforms the entire community. Scholars who have benefitted from the programme are inspiring and mentoring new cohorts, thus paving the way for the long-term sustainability of the initiative.





#### Stories covered

**Supporting the best and most gifted**

**Developing teachers**

**Capacity building for scientific research**

**Upskilling to boost opportunities**

Education is deeply linked to the notion of 'moving forward' – a powerful vehicle for achieving social mobility, spatial advancement, and material success. Yet, it is crucial to recognise that education alone does not guarantee these outcomes. For many disadvantaged communities, pathways like sports and skill development can also fulfil aspirations, opening doors that education may not reach.

Aspirations are ignited by a complex interplay of social, economic, and familial influences. In communities striving for upward mobility, there is a clear demand for enhanced educational facilities and skill development opportunities.



#### SDG impact indicators

**SDG 3**

Good Health and Well-being

**SDG 4**

Quality Education

**SDG 5**

Gender Equality

**SDG 8**

Decent Work and Economic Growth

**SDG 17**

Partnerships for the Goals



A comparatively better economic and educational status among parents often correlates with increased aspirations for their children's education.

For students too, educational aspirations are not always tied with self-worth and personal growth. They also see in it a possibility to uplift their families and escape poverty or rural confines. For teachers, aspirations are tied to their hopes to excel among their peers, promote student engagement, and create a broader social impact through education.

Meanwhile, schools aim for top academic results and a nurturing environment, while governments pursue better educational outcomes. So, there can be multifarious aspirations connected to education.

To truly transform lives, it is necessary to prioritise inclusive, quality education alongside equitable access to sports and skill development opportunities. These combined efforts hold immense potential to reshape individual futures and uplift families, communities, and the nation as a whole.





Jamsetji N. Tata sought to create opportunities for deserving students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, empowering them to realise their potential and contribute to nation-building.



**The JN Tata Endowment scholarship has supported over 5,700 meritorious students, many of whom have excelled in the fields of arts, science, commerce, or served the country as part of the administrative services.**

## Supporting the best and most gifted

Jamsetji N. Tata wanted to create opportunities for deserving students from economically disadvantaged families – to help them realise their potential and contribute meaningfully to the country. So, in 1892, he set up the JNT Endowment for Higher Education that helped meritorious Indian students, irrespective of caste and creed, to pursue higher studies abroad. Two women doctors, Freany K. Cama and Krishnabai Kelavkar, were the first beneficiaries (JN Tata Scholars) selected by Jamsetji.

More than 5,700 Indian students have been awarded the JN Tata Endowment's loan scholarship. The Endowment supports overseas studies – Masters,

Doctoral and Postdoctoral fellowships – in selected educational streams. Several JN Tata scholars have served the nation in key governmental and administrative positions and many are carrying out pathbreaking research or teaching at reputed institutions. Many of them are heading national and international banking, commercial and financial institutions, multinational corporations or providing quality healthcare and legal services and entering sunrise industries such as IT, biotechnology, and computing, including areas such as machine learning, artificial intelligence, robotics and so on. Jamsetji Tata's vision, realised through this scholarship has empowered countless individuals and strengthened the nation, turning education into a catalyst for progress and collective endeavour to enrich the nation.





CETE focuses on one of the neglected aspects of Indian education – teacher development – and provides policy guidance apart from training and equipping teachers.



**By pursuing its vision of designing high-quality research and academic programmes that address social realities, CETE is transforming the status of teachers in India.**

## Developing teachers

The Centre of Excellence in Teacher Education (CETE), at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, is the first of its kind in India seeded by Tata Trusts and focuses on one of the neglected areas of education in the country – teacher development. The main objective is to improve the quality of teacher education/ professional development in the country, develop teaching and learning resources for teachers' professional development, carry out research to deepen the understanding of teacher development and to guide policy.

CETE works across five key areas: academic programmes, research, system strengthening, technology-enabled programmes, and evidence-based policy advocacy.

The Tata Trusts works extensively on enhancing educational outcomes for children from disadvantaged communities by focusing on teacher development, improving the school learning environment and strengthening educational leadership. In this context,

CETE's report, 'No Teacher No Class - State of the Education Report for India 2021', highlighted the complexities related to teaching and teacher education in India.

By pursuing its vision of designing high-quality research and academic programmes that address the evolving social realities, CETE is playing a critical role in transforming the status of teachers in the country. This work would require a multidisciplinary approach and implementation of best practices guided by top mentors in the field. The National Education Policy 2020 has placed teachers at the centre of the transformation envisioned for the sector, making CETE's mission both timely and crucial. The key focus areas would be improving the quality of teacher education, creating professional development-linked career pathways for educators, and advocating for improved service and employment conditions.





TIGS focuses on important and urgent issues related to human health and agricultural productivity, addressing challenges that relate to human well-being and food security.



**TIGS' work reflects the profound belief of Tata Trusts, that genetics and genomics have the potential to solve some of the most complex challenges in agriculture and healthcare and create significant societal value.**

## Capacity building for scientific research

Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS) is a unique initiative of the Tata Trusts to support applications of cutting-edge science and technology in genetics and genomics that can potentially solve societal problems of the country. Established in 2017, TIGS is a non-profit institution focusing on important research and urgent issues related to human health and agricultural productivity, addressing challenges that relate to the two critical areas of human well-being and food security. In agriculture, TIGS is working on developing rice varieties that can overcome biotic and abiotic stresses to increase productivity and address the economic well-being of farmers. In human health, TIGS research revolves around devising mechanisms to reverse antibiotic resistance, developing therapeutic interventions for hematopoietic stem cell disorders and reducing the burden of mosquito-borne diseases using new tools and technologies.

In addition to its efforts in developing technologies for human health and agriculture, TIGS also considers building expertise through talent development and skill enhancement as core objectives for enabling India to become a leader in cutting-edge science. Postdoctoral scientists from India undergo training in research laboratories at the University of California campuses and return to continue their work at TIGS India. TIGS' work reflects the profound belief of the Tata Trusts, that genetics and genomics have the potential to solve some of the most complex challenges in agriculture and healthcare and create significant societal value.







Tata Indian Institute of Skills (TIIS, Mumbai and Ahmedabad) is on a mission to empower the youth of India, focusing especially on marginalised sections of society.



**To achieve its aim of disseminating high-quality training to the widest audience possible, TIIS will be leveraging AR and VR based training and a hub-spoke model.**

## Upskilling to boost opportunities

Established through a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, the Tata Trusts and the Tata Group, Tata Indian Institute of Skills (TIIS, Mumbai and Ahmedabad) is on a mission to empower the youth of India by equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the ever-evolving job market. It particularly focuses on the marginalised sections of society and on encouraging maximum participation for women.

To disseminate high-quality training among the widest audience possible, TIIS Mumbai and TIIS Ahmedabad will work in a hub-and-spoke model, whereby they will act as the hubs, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, and support smaller centres of learning, which will act as 'spokes' to maximise outreach.

Aligned with its technology-first approach, TIIS will use augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies

in training programmes. This innovative strategy is intended to bring technology and facilitate skill development in remote areas in a cost-effective manner. At the same time, the use of AR and VR is expected to improve the overall learning experience for students.

The Mumbai centre of TIIS was inaugurated on October 9, 2024, by the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi. The Ahmedabad campus is also operational.

TIIS has made progress by partnering with renowned industry players to launch short-term courses. These courses have been meticulously designed based on a thorough demand-mapping process, ensuring they closely align with industry needs. The goal is to provide extensive practical exposure and hands-on experience in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills across a range of sectors, including advanced manufacturing, electric vehicles, electronics, and hospitality.







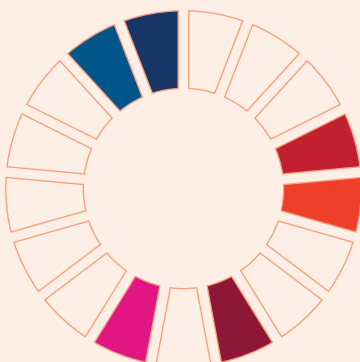
#### Stories covered

#### Restoring a masterpiece of history

#### Preserving India's film heritage

Educational institutions play a critical role in building resilience at the grassroots level. This became even more apparent during the pandemic, which completely disrupted the education system, disconnecting millions of children from the school environment and their external support system, thus making both children and young adults fragile and open to mental turmoil. A strong education system is fundamental to individual, community, and institutional resilience, enhancing self-efficacy and crisis-coping skills, strengthening social capital through supportive networks, serving as a hub for knowledge sharing, and inspiring the aspirations of students, parents, and communities. Community spaces like libraries provide inclusive engagement, inspiring imagination through the joy of reading, which promotes mental health and well-being, ultimately bolstering community resilience. Sports facilities and events too help nurture back the community by providing safe spaces and bringing people together to rebuild their lives while providing ways for the community, particularly the youth to destress and sharpen their talent.

To build resilient education systems that help individuals, families and communities fight back chronic vulnerability and move towards an inclusive future, interventions from various



#### SDG impact indicators

##### SDG 4

Quality Education

##### SDG 5

Gender Equality

##### SDG 8

Decent Work and Economic Growth

##### SDG 10

Reduced Inequalities

##### SDG 16

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

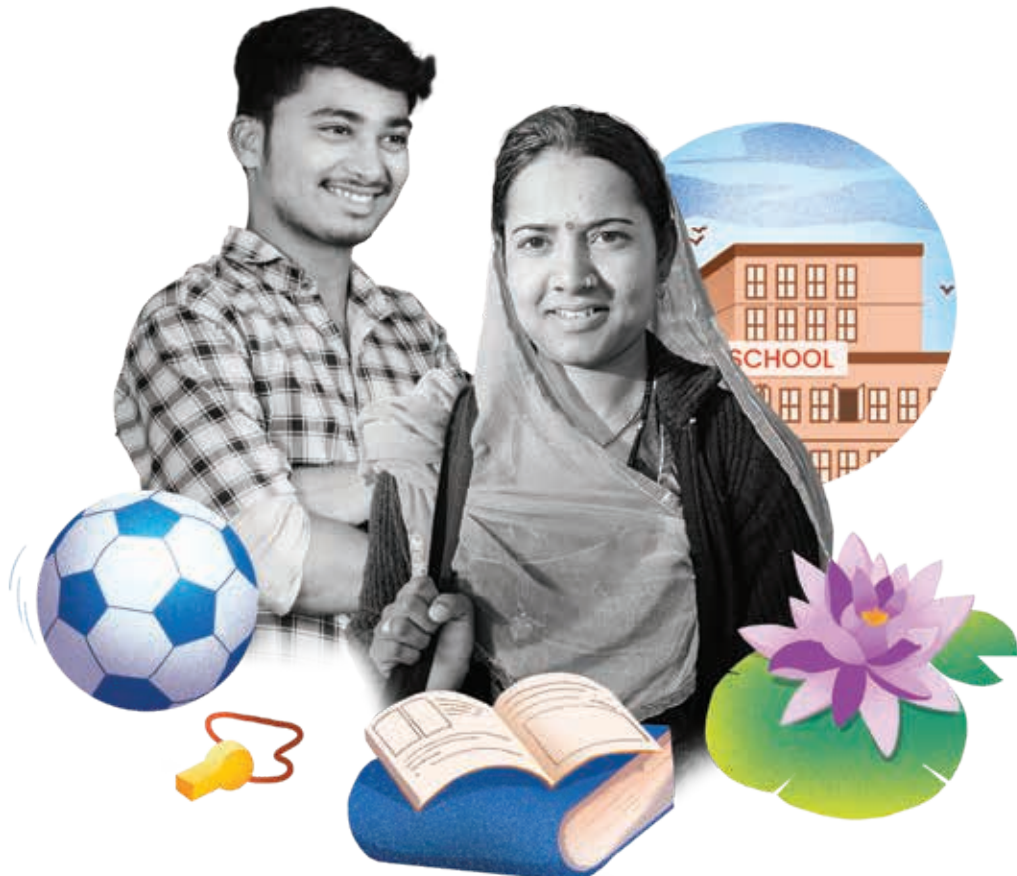
##### SDG 17

Partnerships for the Goals

agencies are necessary, particularly from community leaders, education departments, and social groupings that can support and promote growth in the system through training, technology adoption, mobilisation of resources and so on. Teachers play a vital role in building both individual and community resilience through education and mentorship, and so building the capability of teachers is particularly important. Availability of resources, sustained professional development, social support and continuous communication with teachers and students are integral to resilience-building.

Knowledge, preservation of cultural heritage and its transmission in building safe, resilient, inclusive communities, again, is recognised as an integral part of the sustainability goals as well as the international policy of Disaster Risk Reduction. This is because a strong cultural identity and a sense of cultural belonging enhance a community's solidarity, which also contributes to the community's adaptive capacity during times of stress. Culture strengthens individual and collective capacity by encouraging expression of creativity, promoting an understanding of and respect for diversity, and strengthening social bonds through a shared history.

These realities have to be taken into consideration to build resilience through education and learning in the most comprehensive way.



Humayun's Tomb, weather-beaten and neglected for years, was losing its charm. The lives of the people inhabiting its surroundings and dependent on it for their livelihood, were also invisibilised.



**The restoration work was the first project in South Asia to see government organisations come together with private corporations to conserve a heritage monument. What was also remarkable was its focus on reviving the Nizamuddin neighbourhood.**

## Restoring a masterpiece of history

Humayun's Tomb was the first garden tomb of epic scale and complexity to be built in the Indian subcontinent. Decades later, it inspired the building of the greatest mausoleum of all, the Taj Mahal. Over four centuries old, the majestic monument was losing its original charm and splendour, with weathering and neglect damaging the masterpiece. The ochre and white artistry of the emperor's mausoleum had dulled in parts, many of the jalis (lattice screens) were broken and, in some places, crudely repaired with factory-produced grey cement.

From 2008-2011, the Tata Trusts stepped in to provide crucial support for the conservation of this UNESCO World Heritage site. Led by the Aga Khan Foundation and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and supported by the Trusts, the restoration of the tomb together with the surrounding public spaces was a pioneering project. A critical part of the restoration efforts was the revival of the Nizamuddin neighbourhood with health- and education-focused efforts.

For the first time in South Asia, government organisations, led by the Archaeological Society of India, joined hands with private corporations and public trusts to protect and nurture cultural traditions and conserve heritage monuments. What was particularly notable about the project was its dynamic, multi-disciplinary approach to conservation, which integrated the traditional craft of conservation with modern techniques. 3D laser scanning was used in the conservation project together with 3D documentation and other contemporary technologies, all of which help modernise the way conservation is done in India.

The highest standards of conservation – surveys and documentation, detailed architectural drawings and in-depth research and peer reviews – were undertaken.

At the same time, craftsmen were trained in ancient skills such as firing tiles and making lime mortar. Conservation architects from Uzbekistan trained and worked with local conservationists in experimenting with clay and quartz, types of soil and chemicals, to get the exact shades of green, lapis blue, turquoise blue, yellow, and white – the five colours originally used on the tiles decorating the canopies, arches, and walls of the tomb.

The impact of the conservation work is being felt much beyond the Nizamuddin area. From Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, and elsewhere, conservationists have begun to engage in intense dialogues on lime mortar, colours and dyes, cleaning techniques, and tile work. Further, the detailed documentation has established a new benchmark for Indian conservation efforts.

With increasing footfall at the Tomb complex, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture subsequently initiated the development of a museum and Interpretation Centre at the site. These aim to educate the public about Mughal architecture, the craftsmanship involved in built heritage, and the social and cultural history of the neighbourhood.

Tata Trusts has also supported the establishment of a conservation gallery within the museum to shed light on the conservation process which followed best practices of built heritage conservation while placing traditional craftsmanship at the centre of the conservation efforts. Detailed documentation of the process could serve as a prototype for more such conservation of heritage structures in India. The conservation gallery also showcases replicas of portions of Humayun's Tomb, the conserved 18-foot-tall copper-gold finial that is installed in-situ together with scaled models of the tomb. The conservation project at the Humayun Tomb complex is not just about preserving a heritage structure, but a holistic initiative that recognises how conservation is deeply intertwined with the lives of communities around these structures.





India's cinematic heritage is threatened due to insufficient institutional backing, inadequate facilities, and subpar storage conditions, causing rapid deterioration of films. The shutdown of film laboratories and a general lack of awareness lead to the yearly loss of countless works, especially from the silent era. There is an urgent need to archive and restore films to preserve this cultural legacy.



**Tata Trusts supports the Film Heritage Foundation in establishing a dedicated centre and undertaking workshops to raise awareness and train and build capacity for film preservation and appreciation.**

## Preserving India's film heritage

Film preservation in India faces significant challenges due to limited institutional support, inadequate infrastructure, and poor storage conditions, leading to the rapid decay of the country's rich cinematic heritage. With the closure of many film laboratories and a lack of awareness within the industry and the government, numerous films are abandoned or lost each year. Archiving and preservation, together with film restoration, are essential to protecting the country's artistic heritage. Preservation efforts, which involve the careful handling, duplication, storage, and public access of films, have become crucial to safeguarding what remains. The urgency is heightened by the historical loss of early films, particularly those from the silent era, due to neglect and wilful destruction.

As part of its conservation strategy, Tata Trusts supports the Film Heritage Foundation (FHF), a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation, preservation and restoration of films and creating awareness about the language of cinema. When it was founded in 2014, there were few trained film archivists or training programmes in film preservation. To address the lacunae, in association with the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), FHF conducts intensive week-long film preservation workshops annually, supported by the Trusts and others.

The Tata Trusts has supported five film preservation workshops through infrastructure support and fellowships. These workshops have trained individuals

in film preservation, digital preservation, and archiving practices, creating a local resource of skilled experts. To date, 101 fellowships have been supported by the Trusts. Many former fellows have gone on to work at National Film Archives of India and other government archives or to pursue further studies in the field.

Take **Aparna Subramaniam**, a Tata Trusts fellow and workshop alumna, who went on to study moving image archiving and preservation at the NYU Tisch School of Arts.

**Johnson Rajkumar** is another Tata Trusts fellow and workshop participant. He has been instrumental in setting up a government film archive with support from the Manipur State Film Development Society, which has nudged further efforts in the field with active support from the Manipur state government and FHF. The collaboration led to the successful restoration of 'Ishanou', a 1990 film by Aribam Syam Sharma that premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2023. Rajkumar believes that these regional repositories will play a crucial role in safeguarding the country's micro-histories and thus preserve the localised collective memories that are left out of the broader narrative of cinema preservation. For this to happen, it was critical to train people, including locals, so that they could effectively manage the regional film archives.

Together with helping implement the workshop model across the nation, raising awareness, and building capacity, there is also a need for a permanent teaching lab. Tata Trusts is helping FHF address this need.







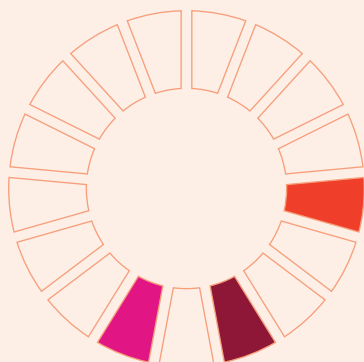
#### Stories covered

#### Shuttle success through, grit and opportunity

#### Making the most of natural abilities

#### Helping cricket change lives

Education could unlock many opportunities, particularly for the socially disadvantaged by economic disparity, discrimination based on caste, gender, geography or religion. A lot of attention has thus been devoted to ensuring equitable access to education. But even within the classroom, socially and economically marginalised students may not have equal opportunities as do their peers who do not come from the same background as them. To create a level playing field, it is necessary to provide them essential resources such as books, technology, well-trained teachers, proper school facilities and infrastructure such as toilets, which is a major cause for dropout among adolescent girls. Education in the vernacular medium, too, could lead to better learning outcomes and a more equitable learning environment since many students from rural and marginalised communities face educational barriers due to the dominance of non-native languages, often leading to the lack of comprehension and discontinuation of education. Inequity in education can undermine self-esteem, limit career prospects, and perpetuate social inequalities. An equitable education system could help an individual rise above the circumstances to seize the opportunities that education unlocks. Equity in education directly promotes more equitable economic development, results in better health indices for the community, leads to better community resilience and better national growth.



#### SDG impact indicators

**SDG 5**  
Gender Equality

**SDG 8**  
Decent Work and Economic Growth

**SDG 10**  
Reduced Inequalities

A level playing field could be created through the encouragement of sports and vocational skill development as well. By excelling in sports or acquiring vocational skills, individuals from marginalised communities can gain recognition and impetus through scholarships, access to career opportunities, thus fostering upward social mobility. By promoting discipline, perseverance, team spirit, and offering opportunities for marginalised groups to excel and gain recognition, sports can help improve their socio-economic status. This plays a crucial role in addressing complex issues such as responsible citizenship, gender equality, and bridging learning and skill gaps among India's youth. Women's participation in sports has been seen to be particularly transformative, creating opportunities for them to dismantle social barriers and change societal attitudes towards them. So, while transforming classrooms, Tata Trusts has been laying equal emphasis on sports for tribal and marginalised communities.



Zoramthari had both passion and potential for badminton, yet in a remote corner of Mizoram, talent met limited opportunity and big dreams were tested by harsh realities.



**Zoramthari's experience shows what can be achieved with proper support and equitable access to opportunities. Her rise is inspiring many others to believe in their dreams.**

## Shuttle success through grit and opportunity

It seems **Zoramthari** was born to play badminton, such was her passion for the game from a very early age. The youngest of three siblings, Zoramthari was born to Lalthlekchuailova and Rinsangpuii, a couple in Mizoram. Her parents' unstinted support has been the bedrock of her success. Her story from a corner of Mizoram to the national arena of sports is not only a testament to her talent and passion for badminton but also to the power of opportunity and equity in sports.

Zoramthari's sporting journey began in 2018, when she enrolled at the Champhai Grassroots Centre. Her talent for badminton was apparent when she clinched the women's singles title at the Champhai district tournament. Her racket skills alerted scouts from the ITM Academy Bihar in 2022, and they regarded her talent worthy of nurturing.

But Zoramthari opted to stay close to home and joined the Regional Competitive Training Centre in Aizawl, where she continued to hone her skills. This regional development centre (RDC)

formed the second tier of the Tata Trusts' pyramid approach to sports development. These regional centres not only offer professional training under experienced coaching but also provide opportunities for young athletes from underserved areas to excel, ensuring talent isn't hindered by financial or geographic limitations.

The Aizawl and Serchip centres groom sporting talents and also scout for dedicated and technically sound coaches who can train these youngsters at the RDCs.

While she harmoniously balanced her studies at school and her badminton, Zoramthari never lost sight of her goal to excel in her chosen sport. Her dedication at the RDC in Aizawl paid off when, in December 2023, her consistent performances earned her a coveted spot at the prestigious Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy (PGBA) in Hyderabad.

Zoramthari's relentless drive fuelled her steady progress. In 2022, she emerged runner-up in the Under-17 singles category at the Mizoram Badminton Association (MBA) junior ranking tournament. It was in 2023 that she truly shone, becoming the Under-15 singles champion at the Junior Nationals in Chandigarh. She kept up the momentum with a first-round victory and a pre-quarterfinal finish at the National Sub-Junior Ranking Tournament. Not content with singles success alone, she showcased her versatility by reaching the semi-finals in the mixed-doubles category as well at the All-India Sub-Junior Ranking Badminton Tournament.

In a system that often leaves talent behind due to unequal access to resources, Zoramthari's journey exemplifies what can be achieved when proper support and equity are integrated into sports development. Given the Trusts' commitment to nurturing talent from all backgrounds, Zoramthari's rise is inspiring many others to believe in their dreams. As she deftly sends each shuttlecock soaring across the court, it is evident that her story is just beginning to unfold. She has shown that with resilience, grit, and the right opportunities, the sky truly is the limit.





Shruti Kumari belonged to a family of wage labourers and subsistence farmers. Her family supported her dreams, but that alone was not enough for her to forge ahead.



**The grassroots centre that Shruti attended at Mahil lay at the base of Tata Trusts' pyramid approach to sports development. By introducing sportspeople to best practices and proper coaching, these centres create a pathway for sustained growth.**

## Making the most of natural abilities

Sports have proved to be a powerful tool for breaking societal barriers for women, especially from underserved communities. For girls in rural and tribal regions, like Jharkhand's Shruti Kumari, sports have helped build confidence, skills and unlocked possibilities that extend far beyond the playing field.

Shruti, a young tribal girl, discovered her passion for hockey early on. What inspired her was her role model, Nikki Pradhan, who had risen from the fields of Hesal, a neighbouring village, to become a star player and the first Olympian from Jharkhand. Watching Nikki on television fired Shruti's hopes of making her mark in sports.

She belonged to a family of wage labourers and subsistence farmers, who supported Shruti's dreams. Despite the limited resources available, Shruti wanted to forge ahead.

Her potential did not go unnoticed, and her school headmaster encouraged her to join the Hockey Grassroots Centre at Mahil, run by the Collectives for Integrated Livelihood Initiatives (CINI), supported by Tata Trusts. The grassroots centres that lay at the base of the Trusts' pyramid approach to sports development, aim to elevate grassroots hockey in India by introducing global best practices, training local coaches, and creating a pathway for emerging talent to excel at the professional level.

At the centre, Shruti received formal coaching in hockey for the first time in her life. Shruti began training under Coach Nauri Mundu, who helped her get the basics right. Always curious to know more, Shruti found out that she wasn't even holding the hockey stick in the right way. Under Coach Mundu's guidance, she corrected her grip, and this led to marked improvement in her performance.

Her hard work caught the eye of Sumit Batham and Govind Nayak, coaches from the Tata Trusts' Regional Development Centre (RDC) in Khunti, who saw her potential and invited her for a trial match at the RDC. However, the COVID-19 pandemic put her training on hold for nearly six months as the country went into lockdown. Determined not to lose out on practice, Shruti's coach began sending her daily hockey tasks to complete and record from home. This remote coaching kept her connected to the sport, and she soon resumed practising in her village with her friends.

It was not before June 2020 that Shruti was able to attend the trial for Khunti RDC. Much to her joy, she got selected.

She began cycling daily to the centre, where she trained on the artificial turf and received the necessary equipment, including a fibre hockey stick. Her RDC coach, Govind Nayak, noticed her dedication. She always arrived early to practice on her own and never stopped asking questions on how to better her game.

Shruti's determination led her to a new opportunity in 2023, when she participated in trials held by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in Hazaribagh. Out of the 14 girls from RDC Khunti and Simdega, Shruti and two others were selected to join the SAI centre. On November 13, 2023, Shruti officially became a player at SAI Hazaribagh, a moment she proudly shared with her family. She continues to excel and receive accolades.

Shruti's journey exemplifies the transformative power of equity in sports. The Tata Trusts' sports initiative not only provided her access to proper coaching and equipment but also ensured that her socioeconomic background did not stop her from chasing her dreams. By creating opportunities for underprivileged athletes like her, the Tata Trusts is helping young stars like Shruti to rise and inspire others.







With the parks in disrepair and private playgrounds out of their bounds, the children struggled to play their favourite game – cricket. They lacked motivation to study and the schools found it challenging to keep them interested in class.



**The 'Life through Cricket' programme supported by Tata Trusts partners with local schools, providing children access to safe spaces to play. Talented students are shortlisted for the programme, prioritising the selection of those who face extraordinary hardships.**

## Helping cricket change lives

The Tata Trusts has championed the promotion of various sports across India, tailoring this support according to region-specific needs and traditions. For example, the promotion of football and boxing in Manipur, hockey in Jharkhand and Odisha, badminton in Mizoram, and athletics in Uttarakhand nurtures local sports traditions that have produced some of the nation's best athletes. The sports initiatives are driven by the belief that sports can be a powerful tool for development, particularly in underserved regions where children and young adults face multiple barriers to progress. These barriers, rooted in poverty, social inequality, and other systemic challenges, often prevent them from realising their full potential. By promoting sports played locally, the Trusts aim to unlock opportunities for personal and community growth.

The Trusts' sports development strategy begins at the grassroots level. Through physical education and school programmes, talented players and coaches are identified and nurtured. Those who show promise are offered advanced training at the Regional Development Centres, with elite academies at the top, where professional coaching further hones their skills. This multi-tiered structure integrates sports with formal education, building essential life skills like discipline, teamwork, and confidence while striving to level the playing field for all participants.

One example of this approach is the 'Life through Cricket' programme, a collaboration between the Tata Trusts and the Cricket Live Foundation from New Zealand. This proved to be life-changing for the children of Mumbai's Borivali suburb who did not have access to safe, suitable playing spaces. With local parks in disrepair and private grounds out of reach, children struggled to play their favourite game, cricket. Schools in the area found it challenging to keep these children engaged in the classroom as the children lacked motivation, and the absence of focused guidance compounded their lack of interest in school.

The 'Life through Cricket' programme partnered with local schools, providing children with access to safe spaces to play. Schools also facilitate the selection process for the programme, which sought to provide education, impart life skills as well as hone sporting talent among these children.

Physical educators in local schools shortlisted students based on their passion and talent for cricket. But the selection also took into account the child's living circumstances, prioritising those facing extraordinary hardships. This inclusive approach ensured that the programme reached out to talents who are most in need.

Since mentoring was a critical part of the programme, special attention was given to developing credible coaches. Cricket Live Foundation sent its teachers and coaches to work with local prospects, developing their technical expertise as well as helping them impart teaching through games. While working with the children, the coaches emphasised on five core principles – Self Discipline, Respect, Teamwork, Punctuality and Time Management, and Nutrition and Healthy Living. These values were woven into every training session, ensuring that the children not only developed as athletes but also as well-rounded individuals.

Since its inception in December 2017, the programme has made a profound impact. It began with 48 children, but its most significant milestones have been beyond numbers: growing self-confidence, leadership skills, and positive interactions between boys and girls. In 2018, the Cricket Live Premier League saw 96 boys and girls participate in a three-day tournament – many playing on a proper pitch with a leather ball for the first time. The sense of teamwork and mutual support on display exemplified the power of sports to inspire young minds.

One participant, **Arbaz Shaikh**, a student at Rajda School, reflects on the deeper lessons of the programme: "Through this programme, we have learnt that sports have no boundaries – no race, religion, or gender. It has the power to break down barriers, unite communities, and most importantly, teach us life skills." For Arbaz and his peers, the programme gave rise to new dreams, not just in sports, but in education and life.



# Way forward

India has made significant progress in improving enrolment at the primary level through policies aimed at providing free and compulsory education to children. Programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right to Education (RTE) have tried to promote inclusivity in education, mid-day meal schemes have tried to break the connection between malnutrition and poor learning outcomes and schemes like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao have tried to address the gender gaps in literacy. But challenges remain, including poor learning outcomes, inadequate infrastructure, high girl dropout rates, student-teacher imbalances, and a lack of adequate teacher training.

There must be sustained focus on enhancing school infrastructure by improving classroom facilities, drinking water and sanitation, particularly on providing safe and inclusive learning environments for all genders. There is also a need to improve learning methods by promoting critical thinking and creativity. Integration of technology in the classroom, equipping teachers with smart learning tools and increased teacher training to enhance the pedagogy can break the mould. Better coordination between state and central governments to achieve equitable education outcomes, allocation of adequate funds to improve access, quality, and learning outcomes, and collaboration between non-profit organisations and civil society to raise awareness and support the government's education initiatives can improve matters. While access to quality education has to be made more equitable, there is also a need to impress upon parents the necessity for quality education, especially given its innate connection with better life opportunities and with the improvement in health and educational status of women.



**Being blessed by the mercy of Providence with more than a fair share of the world's goods and persuaded that I owe much of my success in life to an unusual combination of favourable circumstances, I have felt it incumbent on myself to help to provide a continuous atmosphere of such circumstances for my less fortunate countrymen...**



Jamsetji Tata

# Health



## Equity for a healthier India

India has achieved notable advancements in healthcare since Independence. **Life expectancy at birth** is much better and both the maternal mortality rate (MMR) and infant mortality rate (IMR) have dropped. From 52 in 2018, India has improved its score for SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) to 77 in 2023–24, earning a place in the ‘frontrunner’ category<sup>1</sup>. But the progress is **not consistent** across the states and the country is shouldering the **dual burden of disease** and an **ageing population** due to demographic and epidemiological shifts<sup>2</sup>.

India’s healthcare system faces several challenges that are deeply interconnected, reflecting the country’s **inequitable progress** and the lack of adequate emphasis on this critical facet of human development. For one, there is a **stark disparity** between urban and rural healthcare services, and even in urban areas, access to healthcare services varies across social segments. Urban India has hospitals offering advanced medical treatments, but these services can be afforded mostly by the affluent. Conversely, rural regions **lack basic healthcare infrastructure**, leading to inadequate access to even fundamental medical care.

This urban–rural divide is compounded by a **shortage of healthcare professionals**, which particularly affects rural areas. The doctor-to-patient ratio remains alarmingly low, and there is an urgent need for more trained medical staff across the country. Additionally, the healthcare system suffers from **uneven resource distribution** and outdated infrastructure, further limiting the availability and quality of care.

The drawback particularly hampers India's progress in child and maternal health ratios. Although there has been substantial improvement since Independence, **pregnancy-related complications**, which are treatable and preventable, continue to affect women both in rural and urban areas.

Given the lack of adequate prenatal care, **social biases** that aggravate the neglect of women's health, knowledge and policy gaps as well as social inequities that limit access to maternal and postnatal healthcare, India continues to grapple with high rates of malnutrition, low birth weight, and stunting among children. This is particularly true for rural regions, contributing to poor health outcomes for mothers and infants. Addressing these issues is vital for breaking the **cycle of intergenerational malnutrition** and fostering a healthier population.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WaSH) are intrinsically linked to health outcomes in India. The country is facing a severe water crisis, with millions lacking access to clean drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities. **Contaminated water sources** lead to widespread diseases, exacerbating health challenges. For women in crowded urban settings and rural regions, the problem is severe since acute water shortage, lack of sanitation facilities, **lack of privacy and poor menstrual hygiene** compound their chances of contracting endogenous infections. Added to this is the drudgery and unavoidable responsibility of having to manage water access and usage for the family.

The **rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)** such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer presents another significant challenge. These diseases account for a substantial proportion of deaths in India, driven by factors such as unhealthy lifestyles, poor diet, and lack of preventive healthcare measures. Addressing NCDs requires a shift towards **preventive care, health education, and early detection**.

India's healthcare challenges are multifaceted and deeply rooted in socio-economic disparities. Interventions to improve access to **affordable and quality healthcare** necessitate a comprehensive approach addressing infrastructure and knowledge gaps, prioritising women and child health, attention to calibrated nutritional intake, **sustainable WaSH practices**, keeping in mind the realities women face, and focusing on preventive measures for NCDs. Together with strengthening healthcare delivery capability, this requires institution building, partnerships, innovation, and adoption of technology. Also, **community involvement** is key to building a resilient and inclusive healthcare system in India.

<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2032857>

<sup>2</sup>Source: Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, March 2022 report <https://apo.who.int/publications/item/india-health-system-review>

### SDGs impacted







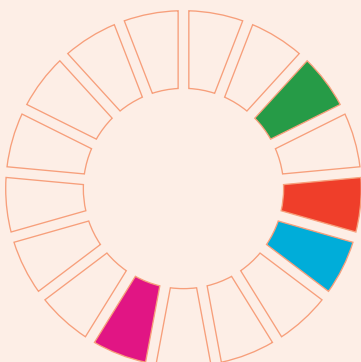
#### Stories covered

**Collaborating to deliver quality, compassionate care**

**Restoring the dignity of human life**

**Sowing good health, creating a garden of inspiration**

'Leave no one behind' is a fundamental principle for the fulfilment of the UN SDGs. Populations left behind are at greater risk of poor health status and healthcare access. They experience significant disparities in life expectancy, access to and use of healthcare services, and have higher morbidity and mortality. In India, backward castes and classes, religious minorities, tribals, senior citizens, transgenders, persons engaged in substance abuse and people working in sanitation are regarded as vulnerable communities. Intersecting factors such as age, socio-economic status, disability and occupation exacerbate vulnerability, making healthcare inaccessible and unaffordable. Contextual factors could also raise the vulnerability of a community, as it happened with migrant populations during the pandemic.



#### SDG impact indicators

**SDG 3**  
Good Health and Well-being

**SDG 5**  
Gender Equality

**SDG 6**  
Clean Water and Sanitation

**SDG 10**  
Reduced Inequalities

There are also gender gaps in access to as well as utilisation of healthcare facilities, which are aggravated by women's outlook towards their own health as a result of social conditioning<sup>1</sup>. Social determinants of health, such as safe drinking water, sanitation and housing too are crucial while considering a healthcare intervention.

In such a complex scenario, decentralised planning and targeted initiatives that understand the vulnerabilities and needs of communities could be more successful in addressing evolving healthcare needs. Particular attention needs to be paid to improving health outcomes for women, children and adolescents, especially girls. This would further improve child and maternal mortality rates in India, address the problem of child malnutrition and improve educational outcomes, particularly in the case of adolescent girls. An integrated approach to health, nutrition and WaSH, where improvement in one area reinforces advancement in another, could uplift an entire generation.

<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://www.thegec.org/blogs/gender-equality/women-and-health-india>





Ranvir was suffering from hydrocele – a painful swelling of the scrotum – for years, but had got no relief from the treatment carried out on him.



**Ranvir's story shows the urgent need for proper screening services, which help identify diseases so that patients can receive care before their condition takes a serious turn.**

1 The name and image used are for representative purposes only.

## Collaborating to deliver quality, compassionate care

One night, the SEARCH Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) arrived in Mahawada, a village in the Dhanora taluka in Maharashtra.

It was relatively far from the nearest primary health centre in Rangi, and even more distant from the Rural Hospital Dhanora. 🧑 **Ranvir<sup>1</sup>**, a 65-year-old man from the village, decided to pay a visit together with his friend. He was in pain from a swollen scrotum.

The attending doctor examined Ranvir in a dedicated private area to diagnose that he was suffering from hydrocele – a condition when fluid collects in the scrotum, causing discomfort and heaviness. Ranvir had been dealing with this discomfort for years but didn't get any relief from the treatment elsewhere. Upon visiting SEARCH for further treatment, other health complications were diagnosed by a multidisciplinary team.

Ranvir's story brings forth the ardent need for proper screening services, which help identify diseases, so that patients can receive care before a serious issue arises. Further, SEARCH allows families of patients to stay with them to make them feel as comfortable as possible – reflecting compassionate care. After undergoing the right treatment, Ranvir today leads a healthy life with his loved ones.





Despite its phenomenal progress, India is struggling to do away with the inhuman practice of manual scavenging by sanitation workers, who often spend hours at a stretch inside sewers.



**The project's success has set the stage for the scalability of the model across many urban local bodies, promising to be a game-changer for civil society as a whole.**

## Restoring the dignity of human life

India has witnessed rapid urbanisation over the past two decades, significantly impacting the distribution of population, stretching urban boundaries and exerting significant stress on infrastructure in cities. Sanitation is one such area that calls for immediate intervention to address the occupational health and safety hazards of sanitation workers, as most municipalities still rely on manual scavenging.

Workers go down and work inside the sewers for up to eight hours at a stretch to manually clean the sewer lines and chambers. This inhuman practice of scavenging has led to health issues, including skin diseases, which also affected the financial well-being of the sanitation workers.

To implement technology solutions towards addressing the plight of the

workers, Tata Trusts partnered with the Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation, Maharashtra, to safely clean and manage sewer-related interventions by deploying a robotic scavenger. The machine explores the depth of the chambers, cleans them and scoops out the filth, thus maintaining the flow in the drain. This has stopped manual scavenging, keeping the workers away from intoxicants and potential health hazards.

The project brought together all the stakeholders to collectively address the challenge of manual scavenging. Its success has set the stage for the scalability of the model across India's many urban local bodies, promising to be a gamechanger for civil society as a whole.



Adequate food is not enough to combat malnutrition, a key public health challenge. Dietary diversity has to be ensured to guarantee nutrition is complete.



**Tata Trusts and its partners promoted the adoption of the nutri-garden model under the Yes to Poshan programme, which facilitated the setting up of backyard gardens with fruit and vegetable plants in individual households.**

## Sowing good health, creating a garden of inspiration

Malnutrition is a key public health concern, especially among pregnant and lactating women and under-five children. Many women and children are often found to be on unbalanced diets, predominantly comprising cereals, millets, milk, and milk products. To address the issue of undernutrition as well as consequent stunted growth and lower birth weight among children, ensuring adequate nutrition is not enough, and interventions should extend to dietary diversity.

▲ **Regina Begum**, a 28-year-old lactating mother from Velvadam, Andhra Pradesh realised the importance of diversifying her family's diet while making it more nutritious when she came in touch with the Vijayavahini Charitable Organisation (VCF), supported by Tata Trusts. VCF promoted the adoption of the nutri-garden model under the Yes to Poshan programme of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, which facilitated the setting up of backyard gardens with fruit and vegetable plants, in individual households and Anganwadis.

Under the programme, Regina learnt to cultivate a variety of easy-to-grow nutritious fruits and vegetables, and planted the seeds of spinach and bottle gourds on a small patch of land in her backyard. She did not stop there. Regina also motivated and trained fellow villagers to grow vegetable gardens in their backyards. The produce from the gardens contributed to dietary diversity in individual households and Anganwadis. The Anganwadi workers use the vegetables from the nutri-gardens to provide hot, cooked meals to the children.

"With the handholding of Tata Trusts and VCF, I helped my community members understand the importance of diet diversity and how easy it was to achieve it through the nutri-garden," says Regina. Today, Regina is an inspiration to her entire village, with her small step now turning into an initiative across five villages in Andhra Pradesh – creating an impact on the overall community health and well-being.







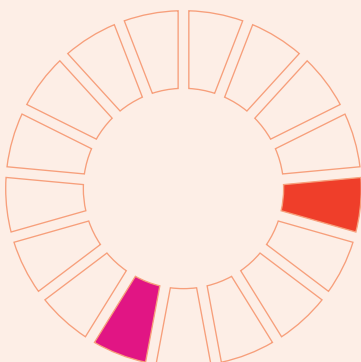
## Story covered

### Spearheading transformation of a parched village

Community participation in healthcare has long been a preferred objective in India. It has been variously emphasised by successive health plans, and the National Rural Health Mission had even mooted the formation of effective management structures at the village level together with villagers acting as health workers, such as ASHA workers, to encourage community participation in healthcare. Research<sup>1</sup> has also found that participation may directly impact individuals by changing attitudes and actions towards the cause of ill health, such as the lack of proper water supply and hygiene, and encourage a sense of collective responsibility, thus leading to better health outcomes.

Community aspirations are closely tied to the betterment of life through their influence on collective actions and priorities. When communities aspire to improve their living conditions, they often focus on essential aspects such as health, education, and infrastructure. These aspirations drive local initiatives and investments in areas like healthcare, clean water, and sustainable practices, leading to tangible improvements in the quality of life.

Women, burdened by the responsibility of securing water supply for the family, aspire to have reliable access to clean and safe water that would free up their time, allow them to pursue work opportunities or improve their quality of life and that of their families. Adolescent girls aspire to have access to proper menstrual hygiene products and a supportive environment that enables them to attend school without interruption and maintain their dignity and health.



## SDG impact indicators

**SDG 5**  
Gender Equality

**SDG 10**  
Reduced Inequalities

Undernourished families aspire to have consistent access to nutritious food so that their children can grow strong and healthy, and they can seek work that the able-bodied are able to access.

The aspirations of the multiple stakeholders in the health system are manifold. For example, the aspirations of patients and communities for accessible, affordable, timely, and quality healthcare services depend on the medical infrastructure, effective government policies that safeguard patient interests, effectual healthcare providers and the availability of affordable health insurance schemes. Health professionals, particularly in rural areas, aspire to have better infrastructure, sufficient medical supplies and trained staff to provide comprehensive care for communities. Silent sufferers of NCDs (non-communicable diseases) in rural areas hope for regular medical check-ups, appropriate treatment, and community support to manage their conditions effectively. The government hopes to reduce the prevalence and impact of communicable diseases and NCDs, and thus reduce pressure on the public health system, through effective prevention, vaccination, and treatment programmes that are utilised by communities.

By aligning community goals with developmental projects and policies, planners can effectively address local needs, enhance well-being, and foster economic and social progress. It is also important to develop multi-focal interventions that address the other critical parameters associated with public health, such as women and child health and nutrition, proper water and sanitation facilities, the importance of menstrual hygiene and mental health. Comprehensive strategies are also required to address behavioural issues and habits that are related to the rise of NCDs in India.

<sup>1</sup>Abad-French F. et al. Community Participation in Chagas Disease Vector Surveillance: Systematic Review. PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases, 2011; 5: e1207.  
Source: [https://iprr.impriindia.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/SA3\\_Community-participation-in-rural-healthcare-system\\_Manoranjana-Mohapatra\\_IPRR\\_V212\\_July-December-2023.pdf](https://iprr.impriindia.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/SA3_Community-participation-in-rural-healthcare-system_Manoranjana-Mohapatra_IPRR_V212_July-December-2023.pdf)





Sairep, a remote settlement situated atop a steep mountain in Mizoram, had long grappled with water scarcity. Large-scale deforestation and poor connectivity aggravated its water crisis.

## 6.9 lakh litres

Cumulative storage capacity created with the help of Lalawmpuii



**Lalawmpuii's activism that has led to significant water conservation and management processes being established in her community, has earned her the prestigious Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman Water Warrior.**

## Spearheading transformation of a parched village

Sairep, a remote settlement situated atop a steep mountain in Mizoram, had long grappled with water scarcity. Large-scale deforestation and poor connectivity aggravated its water crisis. The village elders had tried to address the issue in various ways, including constructing tanks, but the structures developed leaks and proved to be inefficient.

Things started to change from 2015 when **H.S. Lalawmpuii**, a village resident and mother of five, got elected to the Village Council. Motivated by her personal aspiration to secure a better future for her children and inspired by the collective hopes of her community, she took it upon herself to spearhead impactful initiatives for the betterment of her village. Together with other Village Council members, Lalawmpuii helped formulate a development plan, mobilised funds from the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, and enlisted support from the community to set forth on her mission. She ensured the tanks were repaired, conducted awareness drives on forest conservation, catchment area treatment, and rainwater harvesting, and ensured women's participation in all the initiatives through 'shramdan'.

In 2020, she ran as an independent candidate and was elected the Village Council President. Her election was a testament to the community's trust in her vision. She continued her hard work, collaborating with NGOs and government departments to facilitate funds and resources for developmental work.

The year 2022 proved to be a turning point for Sairep. Joining hands with the Tata Trusts' associate organisation, North East Initiative Development Agency (NEIDA), Lalawmpuii played a pivotal role in the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission. She mobilised the community, facilitated the installation of water connections, and strengthened the village group to undertake regular water testing.

Water tanks with a cumulative storage capacity of 6.9 lakh litres were constructed. With support from NEIDA and the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), additional water harvesting tanks were built, and essential machinery and materials were procured to enhance water infrastructure. This collaborative effort significantly improved water availability and quality in the village. Today, every household in Sairep village enjoys an abundant clean water supply. Mobilisation of the Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) Committee has ensured swift action is taken on all water-related issues.

To ensure water management is practical and equitable, a water fee structure has been agreed upon by the community, and the revenue generated is used for community development purposes, including the payment of salaries, maintenance, and other infrastructure like streetlights. An effective waste management practice has also been put in place, funded by the Council.

Lalawmpuii's significant contribution to water conservation and management has won her the prestigious Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman Water Warrior in 2023, bestowed on her by the President of India, Shrimati Droupadi Murmu. Another feather in her cap has been the World Water Awards 2023-2024, which recognised her achievements in the distinguished category of Women Entrepreneurs/Women Contributors in the Water Sector.

This triumphant moment not only underscores her remarkable efforts but also highlights the collective commitment of the community, the village institutions, and their partners to foster positive change and innovation in water management. The coalescing of individual aspirations like Lalawmpuii's and the broader goals of the community has led to a resilient and sustainable future for Sairep.







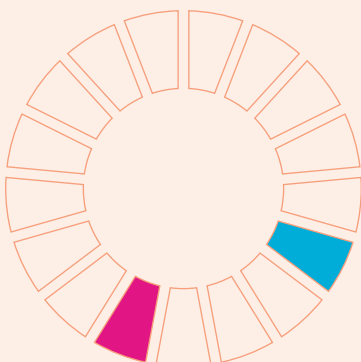




#### Story covered

### Embedding circularity in the community

Resilient communities are better equipped to handle and recover from health crises and environmental challenges. Enhancing community resilience involves empowering residents with knowledge, resources, and support systems, which in turn strengthen their capacity to maintain and improve health outcomes. An integral part of this support network are the community medical facilities, central to public health, which gained significant attention during the pandemic. During the health crises, they served as the main catalyst of community defence, helping people to organise themselves and manage the crises. Resilient healthcare systems can boost community resilience by ensuring access to essential health services during crises, reducing vulnerability to health emergencies, and promoting rapid recovery. But preventative healthcare is just as important, and in this, proper attention needs to be devoted to women's and children's health and nutritional challenges, deep-seated habits and attitudes related to menstrual hygiene as well as the infrastructural challenges related to waste treatment, clean water supply, and sanitation.



#### SDG impact indicators

##### SDG 6

Clean Water and Sanitation

##### SDG 10

Reduced Inequalities

It is not that these challenges have gone entirely unaddressed. There are various institutional and community-driven programmes aimed at improving nutrition, health, and sanitation. Anganwadis provide crucial child development services like health checkups, immunisation, and nutrition, supporting early development and combating malnutrition. Poshan Pakhwadas raises awareness about nutritious food for vulnerable groups, addressing deficiencies, thereby improving public health. Institutional Health and Primary Healthcare Centres provide essential, though rudimentary, primary healthcare services in underserved areas. ASHA workers connect women to maternal and child health programmes of the government. Again, government schemes like the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) provide safe drinking water through household connections, while Pani Samitis manage local water resources and systems.

But it is important to ensure that these programmes reach the last-mile population and communities in need, and that these are supported and backed by private and community initiatives where necessary. By collaborating with local organisations and leveraging community resources, these initiatives can be more effectively tailored to the specific needs of each area. This would create greater awareness about disease prevention and cure, while also improving health outcomes through early detection and intervention.





At present, only a minimal percentage of the wastewater produced in villages is recycled and reused.



**The Soil Bio-technology (SBT) system, set up in the Anakapalli district of Andhra Pradesh under the Trusts' WaSH initiative, helps build community resilience through sustainable wastewater management, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.**

*<sup>1</sup>IIT Bombay has used the SBT technology to devise a Continuous Advanced Multiscale System, which has been licensed by Vision Earth Care Pvt. Ltd.*

## Embedding circularity in the community

The water supply schemes have significantly improved access to water for rural households in India, but it is not enough to ensure the resilience of the community against waterborne diseases. Effective wastewater management is crucial to ensure the sustainability and health of the communities, as it is essential to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases and contamination of water bodies and the environment. At present, only a minimal percentage of the wastewater produced in villages is recycled and reused. Since it is not feasible to implement conventional methods of wastewater treatment in villages due to their expenses and maintenance needs, it is pertinent to find a feasible and cost-effective method to treat wastewater. With technology support from Vision Earth Care Limited, Tata Trusts is implementing a pilot Soil Bio-Technology (SBT)<sup>1</sup>, through its associate organisation, Vijayavahini Charitable Foundation.

The SBT pilot is set up in Laxmipuram village in the Anakapalli district of Andhra Pradesh. This intervention is part of the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WaSH) programme of Tata Trusts, which aims to improve access to sanitation and hygiene facilities for underserved communities.

Based on the 'trickling filter' mechanism, this offers a sustainable and cost-effective wastewater management technique. Natural biological and chemical reactions occurring within the soil – such as mineral weathering – are used to cleanse the water of suspended solids and organic and inorganic content. This treated water can be utilised for a range of non-contact purposes like gardening, construction, and in toilets.

The system can be easily operated even by unskilled labour and works despite unreliable power supply, making it ideal for use in rural India. With the capital cost under ₹40,000 per KLD, to be covered by the village panchayat, it would also be financially viable. On average, only 120-130 kWh/MLD of energy is required to operate the system, which relies on entirely naturally available materials such as sand, red bricks, gravel, and microorganisms. The other bonus is that the treated wastewater meets the discharge standards laid down by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Given the recyclability of greywater, it automatically reduces freshwater use.

Given the criticality of community participation, several awareness programmes to educate the residents of Laxmipuram about the benefits of SBT were conducted. They have also been trained to manage and maintain the system. The capacity-building and engagement of the local communities strengthen their capability to manage both environmental and health issues that lie at the heart of their well-being. The SBT system thus helps build community resilience through sustainable wastewater management, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.









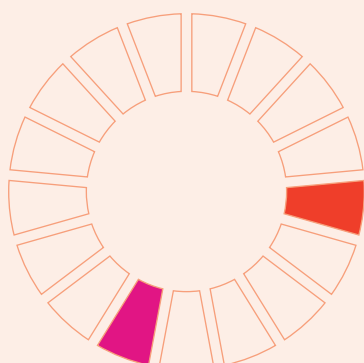


#### Story covered

### A rightful share of water

Healthcare in India faces significant challenges due to socio-economic disparities, geographic isolation, financial constraints, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Marginalised groups such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and economically disadvantaged communities suffer disproportionately, resulting in higher morbidity and mortality rates.

Health inequalities in India result from the unjust distribution of primary social goods, such as education and nutrition, power and resources<sup>1</sup>. Gender and caste are powerful determinants of these. For example, women and children in rural areas or from disadvantaged communities may face greater challenges in accessing nutritious food and healthcare services.



#### SDG impact indicators

**SDG 5**  
Gender Equality

**SDG 10**  
Reduced Inequalities

Both women and children in India are seen to suffer from 'hidden hunger', which means micro-nutrient deficiencies that are seen to aggravate in women during menstruation, pregnancy and lactation<sup>2</sup>. Nutrient-deficient women are seen to pass on their deficient micronutrient condition to newborn children. Of them, the newborn girl children are most likely to grow up on an unbalanced diet, and thus grow into micronutrient-deficient adolescents.

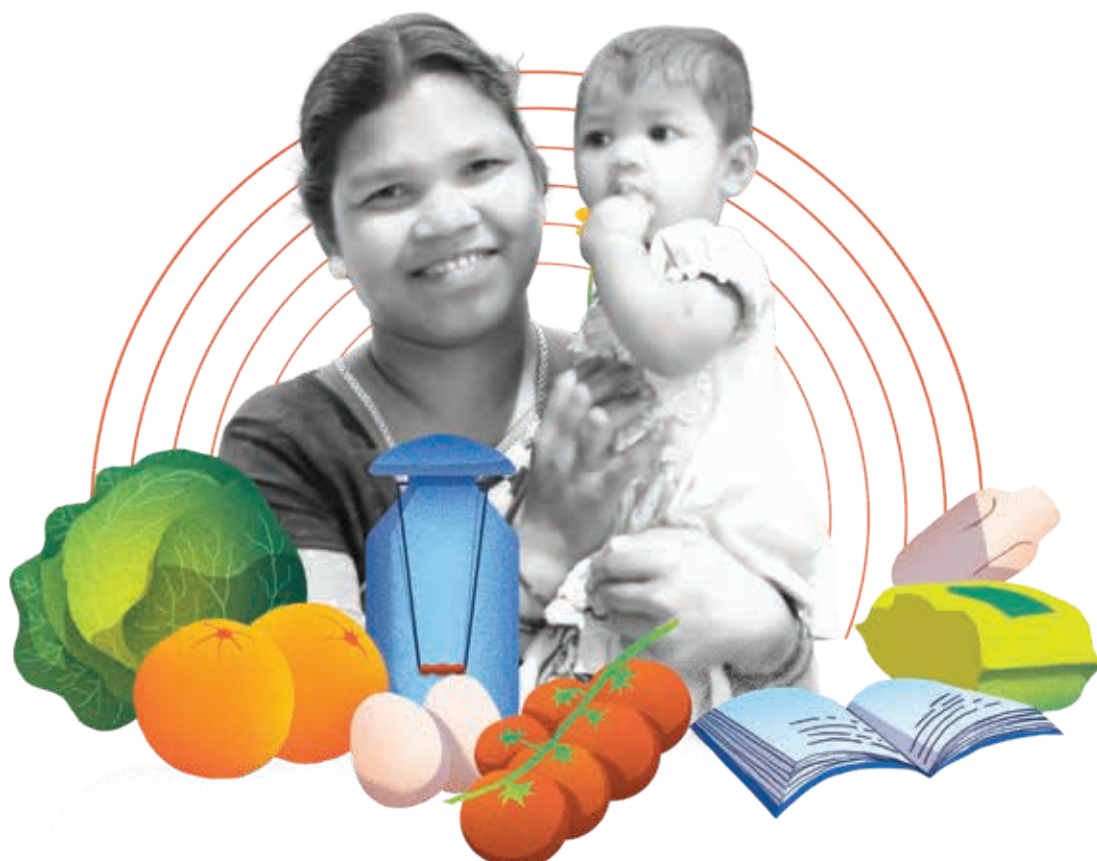
Addressing these inequities requires effective policies that take into account existing realities, improvement in healthcare infrastructure, nutritional outcomes for women and children, expansion of financial protection through universal health coverage, increase of the healthcare workforce, and enhanced community awareness and education. Additionally, strengthening WaSH services is crucial to prevent diseases, particularly among women, who are often disproportionately affected by inadequate sanitation and hygiene conditions, leading to higher risks of waterborne diseases and related health issues.

Leveraging technology and developing policies that prioritise health equity are essential steps. Engaging local communities in decision-making processes and ensuring resource allocation based on need will further support the goal of equitable healthcare access for all.

<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3093249/>;

Health care and equity in India  
Yarlini Balarajan, S Selvaraj,  
and S V Subramanian

<sup>2</sup>Source: The silent tragic reality  
of Hidden Hunger, anaemia, and  
neural-tube defects (NTDs) in India  
Aśok C. Antony, Ravindra M. Vora,  
Santosh J. Karmarkar  
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lansea/article/PIIS2772-3682\(22\)00087-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lansea/article/PIIS2772-3682(22)00087-7/fulltext)





In Churchu, Jharkhand, women had to fetch water from half a kilometre away from the village. The water was not quite safe for drinking either.



**The Trusts—supported CInI implemented Jalapurti Yojana across several villages in Churchu has helped the community ensure equitable access to potable water. Villagers manage the water supply and contribute to its maintenance through the 'Pani Passbook'.**

## A rightful share of water

A bottom-up approach ensures policy success far better than a top-down one. Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of water resource management in India. When a system is built around the lives of the community, meets their needs, and echoes their aspirations for a better quality of life, community members can associate with it more closely, thus ensuring its sustainability in the long run. This is what happened with the water scheme in Churchu, Hazaribagh district, Jharkhand, where village communities, together with the panchayat, actively manage their water supply. The Drinking Water and Sanitation Department of Hazaribagh, in collaboration with Tata Trusts and CInI, launched the Jalapurti Yojana (Water Supply Scheme) across several villages.

Once the scheme became functional, the community swiftly undertook the task of efficiently distributing water to ensure equitable access and providing for the operation and maintenance of the water supply system. One of the initiatives they took was the introduction of the 'Pani Passbook' to record the water tariff due and paid by the water user. Each family contributes ₹65 per month as water tariff, supporting both the implementation and maintenance of the scheme.

The impact of the water initiative on the community has been profound. For women in villages like Lote, who previously faced the arduous task of fetching water from distant sources, the new tap water connection marks a significant improvement.

👤 **Basanti Murmu**, a 32-year-old Jal Sahiya, recalls their earlier tribulations. "Before the construction of the water connection as part of this scheme, life was very challenging. We had to fetch water from a long distance, around half a kilometre from the village, and the water wasn't safe for drinking."

The water connection has reduced the physical hardship of the women, reduced drudgery and the burden of providing water for their families, enabling them to focus on other aspects of their lives, such as education, work opportunities, etc. It has also fostered a sense of dignity and well-being. Basanti says that women now have ample water for household chores, and maintain clean homes.

Community members (along with the Village-level Water and Sanitation Committee) manage their water resources and track financial contributions through the Pani Passbook, which captures the monthly and annual contributions from villagers as water tariff, and details the recurring costs of maintenance. This model ensures that a crucial resource like water is equitably shared, efficiently used, and the financial responsibilities are fairly distributed, benefitting all community members, irrespective of their socio-economic status. The responsibility of sustaining the water supply infrastructure and management is being shouldered by community members themselves.

By ensuring that every community member has a role in water management and benefits from these resources, the initiative sets a standard for equitable access and management.



# Way forward

To deal with its healthcare problems, India needs a multifaceted approach including preventative health measures, improved nutrition, and the use of technology to enhance care and equity. Take the case of malnutrition. Despite concerted efforts, more than 50% children under the age of 5 are suffering from chronic malnutrition in India, based on the Poshan Tracker data<sup>1</sup>. Further, the outcomes vary widely based on diverse regional factors – economic inequality, dietary shifts (lacking essential nutrients), poor sanitation, delayed and inconsistent delivery of services, and lack of regular monitoring, among others.

To achieve better health outcomes, the focus should be on strengthening primary healthcare infrastructure, implementing WaSH programmes, and, above all, creating adequate infrastructure at the grassroots level and ensuring robust programme governance. Further, community participation is key to bringing about behavioural changes while addressing the prevailing taboos associated with menstrual hygiene, water and waste management.

There is also a need to supplement government efforts for early detection of diseases by providing equipment and capacity building among frontline health workers.



**Moving ahead, we shall continue to invest in programmes that are embedded in principles of continuity and change, seeking to build pathways for irreversible, intergenerational shifts in the lives of the communities we serve.**



Ratan N. Tata

<sup>1</sup>June 2024



# Habitat



## Conserve and grow

India, renowned for its rich and diverse ecosystems, faces significant habitat challenges. One of the primary issues is population pressure and the aggrandising expansion of agriculture, which comes at the cost of forest cover loss in order to feed a growing population. The expansion of agriculture coincides with the increase in livestock, both of which demand more land for grazing and feed production. This interconnected growth impacts land use and resource allocation, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, and increases the risk of diseases from greater contact between livestock and wild reservoirs of zoonotic pathogens like SARS, Nipah, and Ebola.

Although deforestation and habitat destruction are primary drivers of biodiversity loss, urbanisation exacerbates this through land conversion for development, fragmenting ecosystems and isolating wildlife. Urban areas face specific challenges, including unplanned housing growth, inadequate solid waste management, reduced per capita water availability, and deteriorating air quality. These issues particularly affect the urban poor, who often live in overcrowded conditions with limited access to potable water, sanitation facilities, and affordable healthcare, thereby heightening health problems.

The constant migration to cities in search of better livelihood opportunities further intensifies the strain on urban habitats. According to the Multiple Indicator Survey (NSS 78<sup>th</sup> round), migrants make up a third of a city's population (34.6%) in India.

Often uneducated, poor and unskilled, migrants face reduced economic choices, which invariably culminate in deprived living situations in their new places of residence. Women, 'dependent movers' who migrate with their husbands/families, are doubly disadvantaged with regard to their health, physical safety and financial wherewithal. From cultural to psychosocial stress, health complications to increased risk of exploitation and gender-based violence, women face the biggest brunt of displacement. Mitigation strategies must prioritise both the vulnerabilities of women and the growing pressures on urban habitats.

Ensuring equity and inclusion is essential to set right the skewed balance in cities against the urban poor and ensure the marginalised get access to the opportunities the city offers – from the possibility of improved earnings to social mobility to quality healthcare, education and better living standards.

Women should be at the centre of all efforts to enhance equity, as without addressing their rights to economic empowerment, safe living conditions, and equitable access to public spaces there can be no real change. Beyond improving basic services like water, sanitation, and waste management, there must be an increased focus on women's health, education, and promoting behavioural changes for better hygiene and public safety. Further, connecting communities to government schemes, social security, and financial and legal services can reduce vulnerabilities. Strengthening urban local bodies with trained manpower, resources, and technology, while including the voices of the marginalised, is essential to ensure efforts and policies succeed in the long run.

To preserve rural habitats, comprehensive conservation strategies are essential. Climate-smart agriculture, with a consistent focus on sustainable practices, reforestation, pollution control, and stringent resource regulation can help. Equitable resource distribution and involving local communities in conservation efforts are integral to restoring India's vital ecosystems and building resilience against climate change.

### SDGs impacted





#### Stories covered

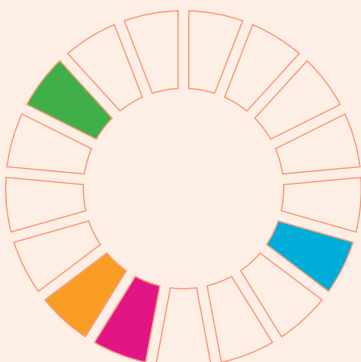
### Transforming slums into liveable habitats

### Partnering to address critical urban issues

Human intervention is one of the prime reasons for habitat loss and destruction, and human habitats suffer enormously if they fail to grow in harmony with nature. They suffer by way of reduced access to natural resources, such as clean water and food, and increased vulnerability to extreme weather events. Engaging communities in habitat conservation is necessary to sustain environmental health and community well-being.

Urbanisation globally poses challenges, and migration-induced urbanisation doubly so because unplanned growth creates enormous pressure on urban environments. Effective and innovative city planning that prioritises equitable access to resources, proper waste management, integration of parks, green spaces and sustainable buildings is crucial to mitigate habitat loss. Most importantly, such planning can engage the community in conservation efforts through community-led initiatives to preserve the natural environment, thus fostering a culture of conservation and meaningful use of space. This approach is particularly vital in tourist centres, where engagement of local communities is critical to balancing visitor influx with sustainable development of the region.

With half of India's population expected to live in cities by 2050, targeted planning and improved infrastructure are essential, especially in Tier II–IV cities, which will become epicentres of growth in India in the next few decades. They will face acute resource crunch and governance challenges due to sudden population growth.



#### SDG impact indicators

**SDG 6**  
Clean Water and Sanitation

**SDG 10**  
Reduced Inequalities

**SDG 11**  
Sustainable Cities and Communities

**SDG 15**  
Life on Land

Currently, urban local bodies lack the autonomy and resources needed to manage these issues effectively.

This means that urban policies will need to be relooked. Nothing demonstrated the urgency for this more than the pandemic, when cramped habitations became hubs for disease spread, highlighting the plight of migrants. For cities to be resilient, they must provide affordable housing, healthcare, and education for all citizens. Community involvement in decision-making and urban planning is crucial to ensuring that cities thrive.

There is also a need to provide support to rural households that have to cope with the impact of migration. The migration of younger men in families can leave elders vulnerable to health risks and increase the household burden and responsibilities for women, who often have to take up informal work in case of low remittances. There have to be focused efforts to empower and build resilience within migrant households, give them access to entitlements and schemes that help them withstand risks, and even connect them with non-farm-based livelihood opportunities through skill mapping and linkage to skilling opportunities.







Kathagada Parbatia Sahi slum lacked essential amenities like electricity, piped water or sanitation facilities, and its residents lived in constant fear of eviction.



**Working with the Odisha government, Tata Trusts helped implement a landmark legislation that secured the urban poor's land rights. They also led the scientific documentation and creation of planned civic infrastructure apart from assisting in capacity-building for civic management.**

## Transforming slums into liveable habitats

In the narrow lanes of Kathagada Parbatia Sahi, a slum in Odisha's Dhenkanal city, daily life was marked by uncertainty. Lacking essential amenities like a piped water connection, electricity, proper roads, and sanitation, the 123 households struggled for basic dignity and security. Worse, they lived in constant fear of eviction. For years, despite repeated appeals to the authorities, their voices went unheard. But in 2017, the tide turned with the enactment of the Odisha Land Rights to Slum Dwellers Act.

This landmark legislation, championed by the Government of Odisha, was a critical step towards securing land tenure for thousands of urban poor. Given the Tata Trusts sustained focus on providing affordable and sustainable housing for the urban poor, the ground was set for collaboration between the Odisha government and Tata Trusts. The government brought in Tata Trusts to help it implement the groundbreaking legislation.

The Trusts' contribution went beyond policy support. The Trusts provided technical support to conduct drone surveys – an approach never used before in such initiatives – slum mapping, habitat planning and designing of housing and common spaces. It also involved digitisation of the data, capacity building among local institutions and urban local bodies (ULBs) to handle data and interpret provisions of the legislation and creating processes within the government to build and maintain the habitats created. A comprehensive spatial and socio-economic database for 1,725 slums in Odisha resulted in more than 52,000 families being given land rights and housing development in 109 ULBs. The Trusts also partnered with reputed organisations like Omidyar Network and the Norman Foster Foundation, globally renowned contemporary architects. A master plan developed by the latter foundation is guiding the government in building community toilets, access roads, and public spaces through community-driven designs.

The Trusts also partnered with the Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha, to support the pilot implementation of the Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission or Jaga Mission in nine ULBs, in Puri and Ganjam districts. The mission was aimed at bringing sustainable civic infrastructure and

services to slum areas, ensuring access to amenities at par with more developed neighbourhoods.

The Kathagada Parbatia Sahi slum has been a beneficiary of this mission. Its residents were sceptical of the plan and the promises initially. However, the consistent engagement of the Tata Trusts' team, including the Jaga Fellows, along with officials from Dhenkanal Municipality, began to rebuild the community's trust. Participative decision-making was made possible through the formation of the Slum Dwellers Associations (SDA), as in other places. These associations ensured that every voice was heard and that residents had a say in the development of their neighbourhoods.

Community-led assessments identified gaps in essential services, and soon, paved roads, stormwater drains, individual and public toilets, and streetlights were installed. Each household received piped water and electricity, and an open space was developed for recreation, complete with exercise equipment, a badminton court, and a playground for children. A new multipurpose community centre, Parichaya, became the heart of the community, offering a space for gatherings and social events.

The impact of these efforts was felt even more deeply during the COVID-19 pandemic. When livelihoods were disrupted and families faced economic hardship, the MUKTA wage employment scheme, initiated by the Odisha government, provided a lifeline. Under this scheme, slum dwellers themselves undertook the development work, earning wages while upgrading their own infrastructure. The Trusts provided them support and training. This community-driven approach not only improved infrastructure but also fostered a sense of ownership and resilience within the community.

Today, Kathagada Parbatia Sahi stands as a model of what community-led transformation can achieve. The slum that once lacked basic services is now a thriving neighbourhood, with secure tenure, improved infrastructure, and a vibrant community spirit. The success of the Jaga Mission, driven by Tata Trusts and the Odisha government, shows how deeply integrated community involvement can create lasting, sustainable change for urban poor populations.



Urban areas in India face critical challenges related to healthcare, water, energy, and poverty, exacerbated by rapid growth and inadequate infrastructure. Long-term solutions require collaboration and sustained knowledge-building.



**The University of Toronto Centre in India will promote focused urban research and entrepreneurship, fostering collaboration among scholars and innovators from Canada and India for sustainable solutions and support emerging start-ups.**

## Partnering to address critical urban issues

The Tata Trusts has had a long history of collaborating with the University of Toronto (U of T) to address critical issues related to healthcare, water, energy and poverty. The partnership was deepened with the establishment of the University of Toronto Centre in India in Mumbai, which will focus on urban research and entrepreneurship, bringing together leading scholars and innovators from Canada and India.

Through focused research on pressing social, environmental, and economic challenges in India and beyond, particularly critical urban issues, the Centre will help connect innovators and entrepreneurs, offering opportunities to share knowledge and resources.

The Centre will amalgamate new research and innovations with historical knowledge of community engagement to develop skills, address urban environmental and economic issues and develop a model of sustainable urban development that can be replicated across communities in India. It will also facilitate collaborative research partnerships and mutual opportunities for students, faculty and entrepreneurs, support emerging start-ups and develop networks in both innovation ecosystems. The focus on urban research will provide great value to both Canada and India, with the shared goal of sustainable economic growth with environmental consciousness.



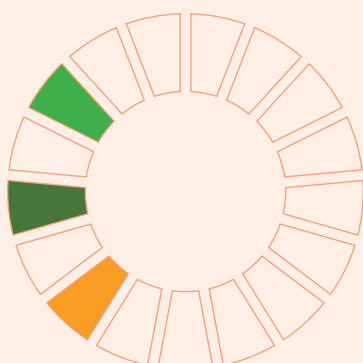


#### Story covered

### Building thriving destinations for future generations

A community's aspirations for a better life are irrevocably connected with the health of the surroundings that provide it sustenance. Migrants seek better employment opportunities in new destinations, but their hopes to improve their lives are tied to better living conditions and access to basic services. Women's aspirations for economic independence, education, and safety are deeply tied to the availability of a supportive urban infrastructure and inclusive policies. Urban local bodies, tasked with governance and service provision, aim to create liveable, prosperous cities but their success depends on public cooperation in the proper use of public facilities. Other stakeholders, including businesses, seek thriving urban centres that attract talent and customers, but these are dependent on the city's ability to provide a safe, clean, and sustainable environment.

On the whole, collective aspirations are intertwined with the well-being of the urban environment. A healthy and sustainable urban habitat supports economic growth, social equity, and overall quality of life, making the pursuit of these interconnected goals essential for a community's progress. This connection is especially evident in tourist spots, where the footfall of visitors boosts the local economy, creating jobs and driving aspirations. But for tourism to be sustainable in the long run, it must prioritise the preservation of natural habitats and align with the aspirations of local communities. This approach, known as 'Regenerative tourism', goes beyond economic benefits. It fosters empathy, education, and equity, ensuring that the community's dreams and environmental goals are achieved in harmony.



#### SDG impact indicators

##### SDG 11

Sustainable Cities and Communities

##### SDG 15

Life on Land

##### SDG 13

Climate Action



Tourism is heavily impacted by climate change and often neglects the vital interconnection between people and nature. This oversight leads to economic disparities and environmental degradation, threatening the sustainability of destinations and the livelihoods of local communities.



**Tata Trusts has been implementing community-based tourism projects that enhance sustainability and climate resilience. By fostering collaboration among local communities, governments, and the tourism industry, Tata Trusts promotes initiatives that empower locals, protect cultural heritage, and create meaningful tourism experiences that address the aspirations of both tourists and the local populace.**

## Building thriving destinations for future generations

Tourism, heavily impacted by climate change, relies for its sustenance on its ability to restore and rejuvenate affected destinations while supporting local communities. It is crucial to recognise the interconnectedness of people and nature. For tourism to be meaningful and sustainable in the long run, it must align with the aspirations of local communities and create long-term value for them. To achieve this, local communities, governments, NGOs, and the tourism industry must work together to protect the cultural, environmental, economic, and aesthetic integrity of the destinations. This collaborative approach would ensure that the focus shifts to where it belongs – to empathy, education, and equity.

The Tata Trusts' innovative community-based tourism projects imbibe these principles and showcase how tourism can positively impact both people and the environment.

In Uttarakhand, despite infrastructural challenges, the Trusts, through Himmotthan Society, initiated a rural tourism project involving approximately 700 women from local self-help groups. The women were trained to become hospitality service providers through skill development in management, tourism and soft skills. The project identified key themes that could attract visitors, such as nature trails, cultural traditions, and local crafts, creating opportunities for

experiential tourism. This approach has successfully attracted tourists, including school groups, and expanded the region's tourism offerings while providing sustainable livelihoods for local women.

Another notable example is in Dzuleke village, Nagaland, where the Tata Trusts-supported North East Initiative Development Agency (NEIDA) facilitated a community-based ecotourism model to preserve the area's natural and cultural heritage. The local council's ban on hunting and trapping transformed the village into a destination for birdwatchers, researchers, and eco-tourists. NEIDA's initiative involved extensive training for villagers – youth and elderly alike – covering hospitality, guiding, and essential skills. This project, grounded in equity and sustainability, attracted thousands of visitors and highlighted the importance of enhancing village hosting facilities.

Indigenous communities have long held unique relationships with nature and natural ecosystems. Regenerative tourism seeks to revitalise this knowledge through collaborative stewardship. The Trusts' efforts in fostering local youth training, encouraging digital documentation, and authentic storytelling help shift knowledge and mindsets, creating deep and impactful experiences for visitors. By promoting mindfulness, ecological respect, and deeper engagement with local communities, the Trusts is paving the way for tourism that protects heritage, supports local incomes, and offers travellers unique and meaningful experiences.



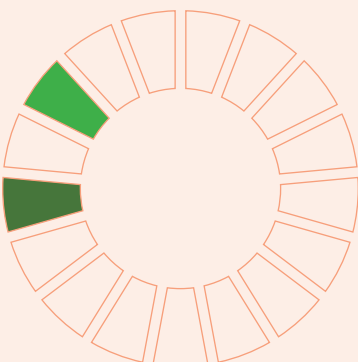




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**Story covered****India Climate Collaborative**

UN Habitat defines 'resilience' as the ability of individuals, communities, cities, institutions, systems, and societies to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively, efficiently and effectively when faced with a wide range of risks, while maintaining an acceptable level of functioning without compromising the future. In the case of a city, resilience is believed to signify its ability to continually adapt to various challenges in an integrated and holistic manner. A trait integral to resilient communities, societies and cities is the ability to plan and take action so that they are ready to respond to all kinds of hazards. This could be caused by climate change, conflict, disease outbreak, economic disaster as well as disruption caused by power outages or cyberattacks.



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**SDG impact indicators**

**SDG 13**  
Climate Action

**SDG 15**  
Life on Land

For a city to be resilient, it must involve and integrate the efforts of all stakeholders, including residents, businesses, urban planners, civic bodies, academia, community organisations as well as non-governmental organisations. This is true especially for tourist destinations that need to balance the interests of both residents and tourists, as well as balance economic growth with environmental protection.

Achieving this requires leveraging local insights, collective knowledge, resources, and expertise. There is a need for integrated planning and policy-making that considers land use patterns, transportation and housing policies, and most importantly, the interests of a variety of stakeholders – residents, businesses, and urban bodies, for example.

It also needs to be backed by sound scientific and technical expertise and climate knowledge. Engagement and collaboration among the stakeholders, such as government, communities, businesses, and non-profit organisations can engender sustainable practices, trigger policy changes, create requisite infrastructure and partnerships necessary to ingrain resilience in communities.





India faces a critical climate crisis, yet current actions are insufficient and lack scalable solutions. Limited investment from private, philanthropic, and corporate sectors hampers effective climate response, leaving vulnerable populations at risk.



**Tata Trusts launched the India Climate Collaborative (ICC) to accelerate investment in essential climate initiatives. By targeting key sectors like agriculture and water management, ICC mobilises resources, fosters industry coalitions for decarbonisation, and enhances resilience in vulnerable communities, driving progress towards a sustainable climate future.**

## India Climate Collaborative

The enormity of the climate challenge and the urgency to act calls for mobilising the domestic philanthropic ecosystem towards finding catalytic climate solutions. However, the climate actions in India have been insufficient, with scalable solutions lacking the desired speed of implementation. Further, private, philanthropic, and corporate CSR spending towards climate solutions remains limited. The available mitigation and adaptation solutions and technologies are receiving limited support.

To address these challenges, the India Climate Collaborative (ICC) was set up by the Tata Trusts to expedite investment in climate action initiatives across India. It identifies critical sectors that need investment and ensures funding flows towards high-impact climate sectors to enable more effective climate action. ICC works closely with the climate ecosystem, including research organisations, implementers, government

stakeholders, businesses and more, focusing particularly on agriculture and land use, industrial decarbonisation, and water and hydro-hazards. These sectors collectively account for 44% of India's total emissions and cover over 200 million people at risk.

ICC is working to aid the reduction of emissions and carbon intensity in critical sectors by building industry coalitions to drive deep decarbonisation, scale decentralised renewable energy-based micro cold storages for agriculture and support sub-national climate planning. It is increasing the resilience of vulnerable populations through adaptation measures by enhancing the capacity for risk and vulnerability-informed policymaking and investment decisions, building a Water Diagnostic Toolkit to enhance rural water security and building climate-resilient cities. The Collaborative is augmenting climate justice by building capacity, supporting re-skilling in vulnerable regions and supporting communities in air quality action.











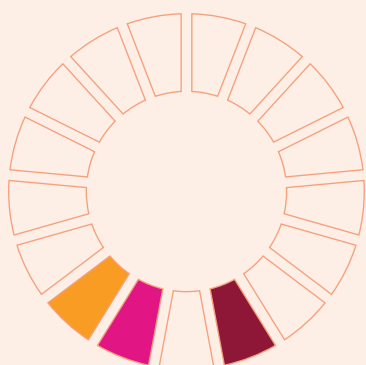
#### Story covered

### Bringing children of migrant labourers back to school

Most often the brunt of environmental damage as well as the cost of popular mitigation and adaptation measures are disproportionately borne by marginalised communities who are most vulnerable to environmental degradation. Even within the vulnerable segments, there are pockets of extreme vulnerability. For example, women are the most disadvantaged when habitat destruction, economic imbalance, conflict, or extreme weather events lead to livelihood loss and displacement.

The impact on marginalised communities, women, and tribals, as well as their rights, must be kept in mind when developing crisis mitigation and resilience plans to ensure a fair distribution of both burdens and benefits of interventions.

In tourist destinations, the equitable distribution of tourism benefits is crucial, as marginalised communities, often tribal populations, face the brunt of environmental degradation and economic disparities.



#### SDG impact indicators

##### SDG 8

Good Health and Well-being

##### SDG 10

Reduced Inequalities

##### SDG 11

Sustainable Cities and Communities

An inclusive approach that involves the stakeholders could change the nature of the interventions by making them more acceptable. Habitat preservation, urban development as well as climate action interventions should also be linked to co-benefits like nutrition, livelihood, better access to housing, education and employment opportunities to be meaningful for the affected communities. Efforts should be made to prioritise equity, ensuring that the most vulnerable have a voice and their rights are protected. Understanding women's needs and realities, and placing them in decision-making roles also ensure that policies and solutions are more sustainable and responsive.



Daughters of migrant workers face early marriage; and children of migrants in general suffer from discontinuation of education due to family responsibilities and relocation for work. This often results in a lack of access to quality education, leaving children like Bharti with uncertain futures.



**In partnership with government agencies, Tata Trusts piloted the Digital Education Guarantee Card (DEGC) programme to track and facilitate school enrolment of migrant children. Together with the creation of an improved learning environment, the intervention can ensure uninterrupted education for thousands of migrant children across India.**

## Bringing children of migrant labourers back to school

▲ **Bharti Dharasingh Wakode**, a young girl from Padegaon in the Phaltan taluka of Maharashtra, faced an uncertain future. After passing Class V, her parents planned to pull her out of school and marry her off, a common reality for many daughters of migrant workers who labour in the sugarcane fields, stone quarries and brick kilns in rural Maharashtra. These families often migrated as far away as 500 km in search of livelihood. For girls like Bharti, this meant a discontinuation of studies as they were compelled to stay home to take care of their younger siblings. In many instances, it also meant being married off at an early age.

To ensure children of migrant labourers had access to quality education, the Tata Trusts, in collaboration with government agencies and partners, piloted the Digital Education Guarantee Card (DEGC) programme. The innovative initiative was designed to digitally track and facilitate school enrolment for 1,200 migrant children in the vicinity of a sugar factory near Baramati, Pune. Based on the data collected from primary and secondary sources, need-based education plans were created and executed with the support of the Maharashtra State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and the Primary Education Directorate.

The DEGC card, embedded with a chip, tracks children as they migrate and then enables their enrolment in schools near their new address. This helps ensure their fundamental 'Right to Education', guaranteed by the Constitution of India that makes it mandatory for the government to impart education to children in the 6-14 age group. As families settle into new locations for work, and children get seamless admission to schools near the location, they are able to continue their education. This gives them a sense of stability and hope for the future. In Bharti's case, the card enabled her enrolment in Class VII in a school near her new destination. Not only did she excel academically, but she also made her parents and school proud by winning a taluka-level sports championship.

Besides ensuring admission, the initiative also provided children like Bharti with essential resources such as books, uniforms, and study materials. The Trusts also worked to improve the school infrastructure, supplying libraries, sports equipment, and other necessary facilities. The project covered 80 schools across four talukas of Baramati, Someshwar, Phaltan, and Khandala.

The success of this pilot project has demonstrated its potential as a scalable model. With the right support from the government and social sector organisations, the DEGC programme can be expanded, making a lasting social impact by ensuring that education remains uninterrupted for thousands of migrant children across India.



# Way forward

The relentless pursuit of economic development and progress, backed by rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, has brought about multi-dimensional impact. From deforestation to displacement, from pollution to loss of livelihood, from climate change to depletion of natural resource, the threat to natural habitats has never been so apparent.

Addressing challenges of such magnitude requires innovative solutions at scale and coordinated efforts involving the authorities, communities, social bodies and non-profits. For example, the introduction of a layered model of income enhancement together with the strengthening of local institutions and encouraging climate-smart, sustainable agriculture is helping build resilience in rural communities while reducing risks to the environment. In urban habitats, capacity building of urban local bodies through knowledge-sharing and technical assistance is bearing fruit.

Further, concerted efforts should continue to be made to empower women, strengthen women-led local institutions, enhance their access to health and quality education, skill them and support them in the urban habitat by creating safe spaces like community centres.

The key to building a sustainable future lies in finding a comprehensive way to decouple the preservation of the natural environment, resources and habitat for all life from economic development.

“

**A woman has the power to shape her family's future. She has the power to instil the right values and mould entire generations, building a nation of people free of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice.**

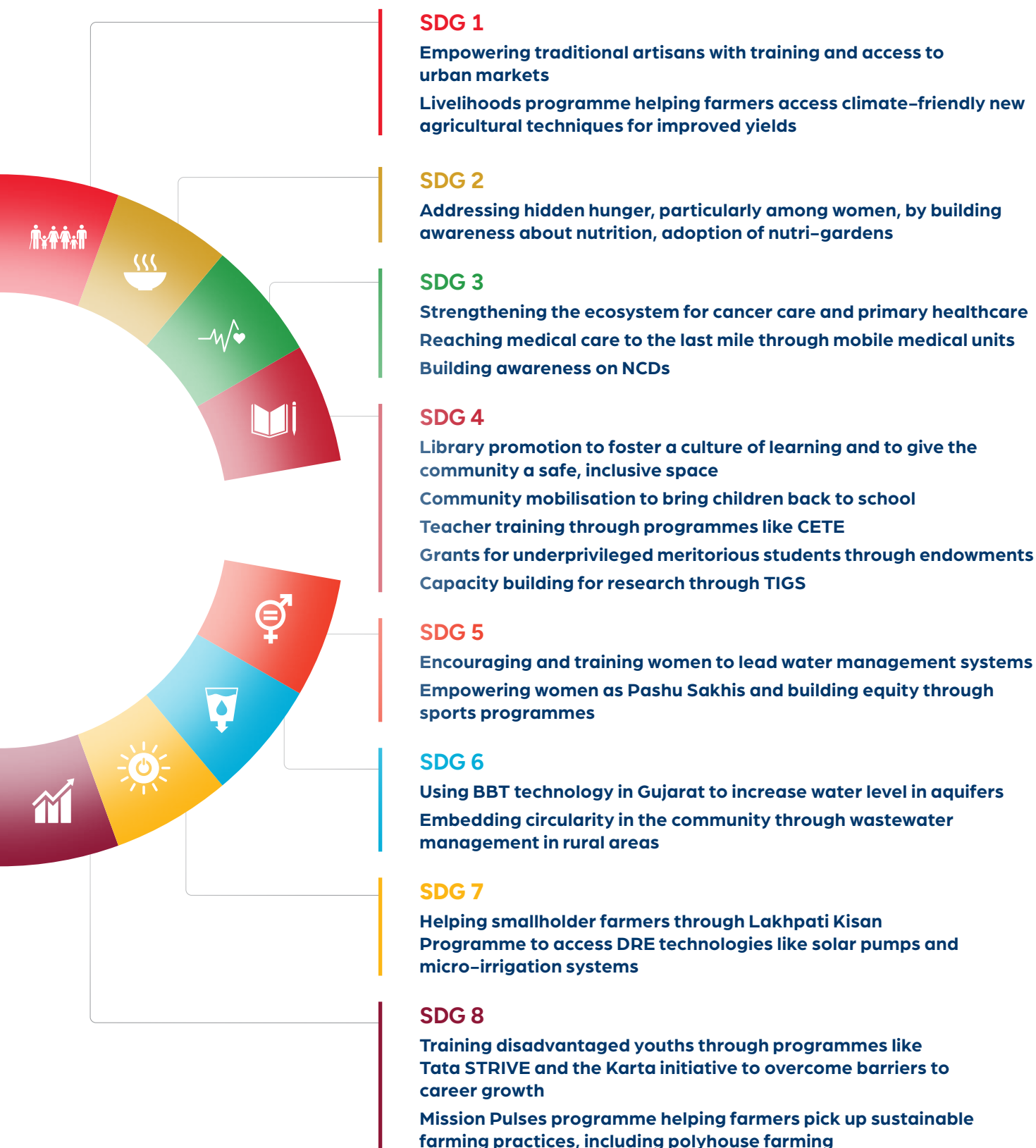
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Lady Meherbai Tata



# Advancing

## the UN SDGs



### SDG 9

Implementing technologies like soil-biotechnology for wastewater treatment, developed by IIT

Using digital tools and data science for urban planning

Monument preservation as in the restoration of the Humayun Tomb complex and its environs

Providing access to appropriate technology and supporting rural communities to enhance their livelihood

### SDG 10

Establishing community-led institutions like Shwethdara Milk Producer Company to promote fair pricing for dairy farmers

Giving migrant children access to school education

### SDG 11

Partnering with Odisha government to help the urban poor own their houses

Restoring art, heritage and handloom to maintain cultural diversity

### SDG 12

Promoting community-based tourism that boosts livelihood of locals in Nagaland and Uttarakhand among other areas

### SDG 13

Promoting climate action in critical areas like air quality, land use, water etc., and collaborating with philanthropies through the India Climate Collaborative

### SDG 14

Building climate resilience in Ladakh, Mizoram, coastal Gujarat, among other regions through better water management practices

### SDG 15

Promoting regenerative tourism that preserves local ecosystem  
Restoring human dignity of sanitation workers through robotic scavengers

### SDG 16

Fostering centres of excellence, of learning, research, and innovation, such as TIFR, TISS and TIIS that continue to contribute to India's advancements in medicine, science, and education

### SDG 17

Supporting the University of Toronto Centre in Delhi to drive research on critical urban issues











### Published in 2025 by

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### Acknowledgment

Special thanks to all individuals and staff at Tata Trusts, and the Trusts' partners and associates for generously sharing information, stories, and photographs that contributed to this compendium. Their support and collaboration were instrumental in bringing together this volume.







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