

Connect

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Seema Arora
CEO
CII Foundation

“
I am happy to share that we have taken the road less travelled and are working in remote areas such as Assam and Leh to galvanise social development through our initiatives.”

India's growth story continues to gain momentum with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projecting India's DGP in fiscal 2024-25 at 6.8% while the Reserve Bank of India projects it at 7%. According to a recent report, CSR spending in FY 2023 is estimated at Rs 23,000 crore which is also encouraging, but the focus now should be on working towards a more equitable distribution of funds to address development issues in geographies such as the Northeast, which often get overlooked.

I am happy to share that we have taken the road less travelled and are working in remote areas such as Assam and Leh to galvanise social development through our initiatives.

We are working in 8 districts of Assam – Kokrajhar, Chirang, Bongaigaon, Dhubri, South Salmara Mankachar, Goalpara, Jorhat and Golaghat – to identify and empower grassroots women leaders through the Empowering Champions of Change program. We identified and recognised 15 grassroots women leaders from the 8 districts in March and will build the leadership capacity of these women to help them scale up their work and support them to take up community development projects making them the change-makers in their region.

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A community-led waste management initiative was launched in Leh on 28th March aimed at addressing waste management in 25 villages to begin with. The CII Foundation team met several key stakeholders to discuss the opportunities to complement and enhance current waste management practices. Extending the waste management project to rural areas, forming village committees, and organising workshops with village representatives and the local administration to foster deeper community engagement were discussed and a plan of action crystallised. A waste management initiative was also launched in Chellanam, a coastal village in Kerala, to promote environmentally sustainable waste management practices in the area.

This quarter, we initiated a capacity building program for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Himachal Pradesh. This program will equip FPOs with essential skills and knowledge to enhance productivity and foster sustainable growth.

It has been an interesting quarter in other ways too: our teams fanned out across the country to meet the grassroots women leaders shortlisted for the Woman Exemplar Award 2024. They travelled to remote and often difficult-to-access regions in states such as Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar, spending time with the nominated women leaders to hear their awe-inspiring stories of transformation and leadership. To gain a deeper understanding of their work and impact, they met community members who shared how their life was enriched because of the work undertaken by the grassroots women leaders. The winners of the Woman Exemplar Award 2024 will be recognised for their contribution to social transformation at the forthcoming CII Annual General Meeting.

The collective power of a collaborative with multiple stakeholders, especially corporates, is what will help accelerate social transformation to create a truly inclusive India, where the fruits of economic growth reach all.

Under the thematic area of Disaster Relief, we have been reconstructing and renovating key schools and healthcare centres damaged by the devastating floods in Kerala in 2018. In February, the newly constructed facilities at Paravoor Taluk Headquarters Hospital, which includes a Maternity Block and Operation Theatre, were inaugurated. These will significantly improve access to healthcare facilities for the marginalised sections of society which were deeply impacted by the flood.

We remain committed to reach out to the underserved to address issues and challenges, leveraging the collective strength of our valuable partners whose efforts and dedication power our initiatives.

The collective power of a collaborative with multiple stakeholders, especially corporates, is what will help accelerate social transformation to create a truly inclusive India, where the fruits of economic growth reach all.



CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

CROP RESIDUE MANAGEMENT

The agricultural sector stands as a cornerstone of India's economy, providing sustenance and livelihood to millions. However, amidst its contributions lie challenges: farmers, especially in Punjab and Haryana, often resort to burning crop residue at the onset of winter due to the pressing need to clear the field quickly to sow the next crop. Crop residue burning not only aggravates air pollution and adversely affects the health of people, it also damages the soil, killing micro-organisms that are useful for farmers. This depletion in soil quality eventually lowers farm yield and farmers' earnings.

To mitigate crop residue burning and promote sustainable agricultural practices, the CII Foundation launched a multi-stakeholder crop residue management initiative in Punjab in 2018 with Government, industry

and the farmer community as key stakeholders. Since then the project coverage has been expanded to cover 432 villages across Punjab and Haryana. Last season, due to project interventions, stubble burning was reduced by 86% in the 432 project villages.

In the January to March quarter, ground work was intensified with several farmer outreach events held to recognize and honour farmers for their participation and active support for the project. Additionally, work intensified on implementing ex-situ management strategies for crop residue. The installation of bio compost and paddy straw-based plants across villages in Punjab and Haryana, coupled with extensive groundwork on awareness and farmer outreach, reflects our commitment to driving tangible positive change.

Key Components of the Program

Building Awareness

Creating Community Tool Banks

Technical Training and Handholding

Local Engagement and Ownership

Research and Policy Advocacy

Managing Biomass through Ex-situ Technology

FARMER OUTREACH EVENTS

HDFC Bank, India's leading private sector bank, under its CSR brand, Parivartan, and the CII Foundation held farmer outreach events at Jagraon and Khanna Blocks in District Ludhiana to recognise and honour farmers and Cooperative societies associated with the crop residue management project for their active participation and support. The project was launched in November 2023 in Ludhiana District, focussing on two blocks, Jagraon and Khanna, to support farmers in adopting environment-friendly agricultural practices and mitigating stubble burning.

At a farmer outreach event on 19th March in village Mallah, Block Jagraon, 15 Cooperative societies were recognised for their contribution. Baba Kulwant Singh, Gurudwara Shri Mehdeana Sahib honoured the farmers with a certificate of appreciation. The Cooperative societies house and maintain the farm machinery making it easily available to farmers for crop residue management. To further strengthen the access of farm machinery to farmers, 9 new machines were handed over to the Cooperative society at the event. Present at the occasion were over 150 farmers and officials from HDFC Bank and CII.

A farmer outreach event was held on 21st March at Jatana village, Block Khanna, which achieved zero-stubble burning in Season 2023 with the support they received under the crop residue management project. Sixty farmers and 12 Cooperative societies were



honoured and given certificates of appreciation for their participation and support in creating a zero-stubble burning movement. Mr Hardeep Singh Giaspura, District President Bharti kisan Union Kadian, honoured the farmers at this event. The event was attended by around 350 farmers and officials from HDFC Bank and CII.

At both the events farmers shared their experiences under the project to promote peer-to-peer learning and demonstrate how a viable alternative to stubble burning exists which is promoted by the crop residue management initiative.

AMPLIFYING REACH – BILINGUAL SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

On 18th January 2024, the CII Foundation introduced a new [Hindi/Punjabi bilingual Facebook](#) page to reach out to farmers in their native tongue. The page serves as an excellent digital platform showcasing the collaborative efforts between the CII Foundation, our partners and farmers across Punjab and Haryana in combatting stubble burning.

Through compelling narratives, the page chronicles the journey undertaken under the crop residue management initiative. It highlights the impactful measures implemented, the positive changes observed, and provides a platform for farmers to share their invaluable insights and feedback. Furthermore, the page aims to celebrate the resilience of our 'kisaanveers' who have pledged to refrain from stubble burning, thereby safeguarding our environment.

The content consists of a mix of static posts and videos including, testimonials in Hindi and Punjabi making the content more easily accessible to farmers.

CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR FARMER PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

A new Capacity Building Initiative for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Himachal Pradesh, facilitated by the CII Foundation's Business Support Unit (BSU) and supported by Blue Star has been launched to facilitate promotion and capacity building of FPOs pan India. This comprehensive program, implemented in partnership with CII FACE alongside ground support from Peepal Foundation, is designed to equip FPOs with essential skills and knowledge to enhance productivity and foster sustainable growth. By focusing on critical areas such as management training, technology deployment, and knowledge exchange, the initiative seeks to create a better environment for FPOs to thrive and contribute to the prosperity of the farming community. Currently the project is targeting the apple value chain across three districts of Himachal Pradesh, namely, Shimla, Mandi, and Kullu.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS



Training and Capability Building

- FPO management aspects
- Government schemes and business planning
- Orchard management
- Post-harvest handling
- Importance of farm gate processing and post-harvest infrastructure



Technology Deployment

- Exposure to startups providing predictive analytics, biological solutions, soil testing services, drone spraying, small implements etc.



Knowledge Exchange

- On site visits creating opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and experiential learning

ONE-DAY TRAINING PROGRAM ON APPLE ORCHARD MANAGEMENT

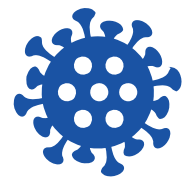
CII Foundation in collaboration with Blue Star and CII FACE conducted a one day On-Farm Training Program on 27th February 2024, on Apple Orchard Management for members of the Janja Valley Cooperative Farmer Organization in Village Kungash, District Kullu, Himachal Pradesh. The program witnessed an impressive turnout of over 100 farmers, with an outstanding footfall of women farmers.

The interactive sessions covered various aspects of apple farming, including soil management, balanced nutrition, pest and disease management, micro-irrigation techniques, and government schemes.

Experts from industry, grassroots organizations, startups, and the state government provided valuable insights and engaged in discussions on pressing issues such as pest infestation, soil nutrition, bio stimulants, irrigation practices and myths about orchard management.

Leveraging digital technology, experts from different regions joined the session online, enriching the learning experience for participants. The training program highlighted the importance of continuous support and engagement with FPOs to address their challenges and foster sustainable agrifood systems in India.





DISASTER RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

Disaster can strike anytime and anywhere.

In 2018, Kerala faced its worst-ever floods which resulted in a huge loss of life, livelihood, and more.

In 2022, Assam was hit by floods amidst the ongoing pandemic. Cities like Guwahati and Silchar were severely affected, along with rural areas.

In 2023, Tamil Nadu faced Cyclone Michaung leading to heavy rainfall and devastating floods. Chennai, Thiruvallur, Kanchipuram, Chengapattu, and districts

in Andhra Pradesh suffered, with thousands displaced and infrastructure destroyed.

The humanitarian crisis in terms of loss of lives and livelihoods that a disaster causes is enormous.

The CII Foundation has been at the forefront of disaster relief and rehabilitation efforts across India. It works closely with the governments, industry, the medical establishment, and civil society organizations and provides immediate relief by way of food and medical supplies and also undertakes rehabilitation initiatives to rebuild infrastructure and lives.

Key Components of the Program

Establishing a Robust Disaster Response System

Utilizing the extensive CII network to effectively execute disaster relief efforts, empowering numerous touch points across the country, and facilitating a comprehensive relief and rehabilitation process.

Distribution of Relief Material

Providing essential aid such as food, ration, and medicine to affected regions.

Rehabilitation Initiatives

Undertaking the reconstruction of impacted infrastructure like schools and health centers, coupled with livelihood programs for affected communities.

KERALA RELIEF & REHABILITATION

After the floods in 2018 that devastated Kerala, CII and CII Foundation undertook extensive relief measures to support those affected by the floods. Following the immediate relief work, rehabilitation interventions were designed around rebuilding infrastructure to help the affected. Under rehabilitation interventions, the construction of one school that was declared unfit (Government Lower Primary School (GLPS), Kayanad) and the reconstruction/renovation of six Public Health Centres (North Paravoor, Moothakunnam, Chittattukara, Puthuvyppu, Mulavukadu, and Avoly) to improve the access of services to the marginalised sections of society in the most-affected geographies was identified to be undertaken.

Inauguration of the Reconstructed Paravoor Taluk Headquarters Hospital

On 6th February 2024, the newly constructed facilities at Paravoor Taluk Headquarters Hospital were inaugurated by Shri V D Satheeshan MLA, Paravoor Constituency, alongside dignitaries including Shri K K M Kutty, Past Chairman of CII Southern Region & Kerala, and Managing Director of Sealings & Jointings

Smt Beena Sashidharan, Chairperson of Paravoor Municipality, Dr Asha K John, Medical Superintendent, and other officials from Paravoor Municipality and the Hospital Management Committee.

These state-of-the-art additions include the Maternity block, Ophthalmology block with Operation Theatre and Post Surgical ward, and Men's Medical Ward which will benefit over 3 lakh individuals annually, significantly enhancing healthcare accessibility in the region. With a built-up area of 21,000 sq. ft, these facilities mark a significant milestone in our commitment to healthcare excellence.

Shri V D Satheeshan mentioned that the expansion paves the way for additional services like a dialysis unit, offering to provide 7 new dialysis units in addition to the 3 units offered by Hon'ble MP Shri Hibi Eden. Moreover, the expansion also includes a new operation theatre in the Ophthalmology block, bringing the total to three, making Paravoor Taluk Headquarters Hospital one of the main hospitals in the district. This will cater to the needs of ordinary people and save them from the financial burden associated with private hospitals.



Dr. Asha K John
Superintendent
North Paravoor Taluk
Headquarters Hospital

“As part of their Kerala Flood Rehabilitation initiative, the CII Foundation has provided support to our institution, the North Paravoor Taluk Headquarters Hospital. With their assistance, we were able to establish a Maternity Complex, an Ophthalmology Operation Theatre with a post-operative ward, and a Men's ward. This endeavour consolidated maternity services, previously scattered, into a cohesive structure.

With the new maternity block now situated on a single floor, we can deliver superior-quality services with a decreased need for staffing. Similarly, our ophthalmic ward and male ward were functioning in an old, dilapidated building constructed 105 years back. The construction of a new ophthalmic operation theatre now offers modern facilities for patients. With the new ward, we can accommodate up to 47 patients simultaneously.



Smt. Sreekumari
Nursing Superintendent
North Paravoor Taluk
Headquarters Hospital

“ The construction of a new building housing the maternity block, male ward, and ophthalmic wing operation theatre has significantly enhanced the quality of service provided to patients. Previously, these services were housed in an old building that posed a risk of collapse. The new facility not only ensures safety but also gives the hospital a fresh appearance and fosters a welcoming atmosphere for both patients and staff. As members of the staff, we are also invigorated to work in these updated facilities. ”

GLIMPSES OF MEDIA COVERAGE

പറവൂർ താലൂക്ക് ആശുപത്രിയിൽ നിർമ്മിച്ച പുതിയ കെട്ടിടം പ്രതിപക്ഷനേതാവ് വി.ഡി.സതീശൻ ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. എം.കെ.ബാനർജി, ശ്യാമള ഗോവിന്ദൻ, സജി നമ്പീയത്ത്, ബീന ശശിയരൻ, ടി.വി.നിഥിൻ, എം.ജെ.രാജു, അനൂ വട്ടത്തറ തുടങ്ങിയവർ സമീപം.

+ പറവൂർ താലൂക്ക് ആശുപത്രി: കെട്ടിടം ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്തു

പറവൂർ • കോൺഫെഡറേഷൻ ഓഫ് ഇന്ത്യൻ ഇൻഡസ്ട്രിയുടെ (സിഐഐ) ധനസഹായത്തോടെ പ്രളയ പുനരുദ്ധാരണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഗമായി 3 കോടി രൂപ സി.എസ്.ആർ ഫണ്ട് ഉപയോഗിച്ചു താലൂക്ക് ആശുപത്രിയിൽ നിർമ്മിച്ച കെട്ടിടം പ്രതിപക്ഷനേതാവ് വി.ഡി.സതീശൻ ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്തു.

പ്രസവ വാർഡ്, മെയിൽ മെഡിക്കൽ വാർഡ്, ഓഫീസൽ മേജർ വാർഡുകൾ ഉൾപ്പെടെ 20,250 ചതുരശ്രയൂണിറ്റുള്ള ഈ കെട്ടിടത്തിൽ ഉള്ളത്, മെഡിക്കൽ വാർഡ്, പ്രസവ വാർഡ് എന്നിവ സി.എഐ മുൻ ചെയർമാൻ കെ.കെ.എം.കൃഷ്ണൻ ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്തു. നഗരസഭാധ്യക്ഷ ബീന ശശിയരൻ അധ്യക്ഷയായി. ഉപാധ്യക്ഷൻ എം.ജെ.രാജു, സ്മിരിസമിതി അധ്യക്ഷരായ സജി നമ്പീയത്ത്, അനൂ വട്ടത്തറ, ശ്യാമള ഗോവിന്ദൻ, വനജ ശശികുമാർ, കൗൺസിലർമാരായ വി.എ.പ്രഭാവതി, ടി.വി.നിഥിൻ, ഡി.രാജകുമാർ, ജി.ഗിരിഷ്, ഗീത ബാബു, ജെസി രാജു, ലിജി ലൈലോഷ്, ജഹാംഗീർ തോപ്പിൽ, എം.കെ. ബാനർജി, പി.ഡി.സുകുമാരി, സി.ഐ.എ ഡയറക്ടർ ബി.ജയകൃഷ്ണൻ, കോസ്റ്റ് ഹോർഡ് പ്രൊജക്ട് ഡയറക്ടർ സുകൻ കുമാർ, ആശുപത്രി റവെന്യൂ കട്ടറി ചന്ദ്രൻ, ആശുപത്രി സൂപ്പർണ്ട് ഡോ.ആര.കെ.ജോൺ, എച്ച്.എ.സി അംഗം പി.എൻ.സന്തോഷ് എന്നിവർ പ്രസംഗിച്ചു.

പറവൂർ താലൂക്ക് ആശുപത്രിയിൽ നിർമ്മിച്ച പുതിയ കെട്ടിടം പ്രതിപക്ഷനേതാവ് വി.ഡി.സതീശൻ ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. എം.കെ.ബാനർജി, ശ്യാമള ഗോവിന്ദൻ, സജി നമ്പീയത്ത്, ബീന ശശിയരൻ, ടി.വി.നിഥിൻ, എം.ജെ.രാജു, അനൂ വട്ടത്തറ തുടങ്ങിയവർ സമീപം.

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രൻ അധ്യക്ഷയായി. ഉപാധ്യക്ഷൻ എം.ജെ.രാജു, സ്മിരിസമിതി അധ്യക്ഷരായ സജി നമ്പീയത്ത്, അനൂ വട്ടത്തറ, ശ്യാമള ഗോവിന്ദൻ, വനജ ശശികുമാർ, കൗൺസിലർമാരായ വി.എ.പ്രഭാവതി, ടി.വി.നിഥിൻ, ഡി.രാജകുമാർ, ജി.ഗിരിഷ്, ഗീത ബാബു, ജെസി രാജു, ലിജി ലൈലോഷ്, ജഹാംഗീർ തോപ്പിൽ, എം.കെ.

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പറവൂർ താലൂക്ക് ഗവ. ആശുപത്രിയിൽ പുതിയ കെട്ടിടസമുച്ചയം തുറന്നു

പറവൂർ • താലൂക്ക് ഗവ. ആശുപത്രിയിൽ പുതിയ കെട്ടിടസമുച്ചയം പ്രതിപക്ഷ നേതാവ് വി.ഡി. സതീശൻ ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. കോൺഫെഡറേഷൻ ഓഫ് ഇന്ത്യൻ ഇൻഡസ്ട്രി (സി.ഐ.ഐ.) യുടെ ധനസഹായത്തോടെ പ്രളയ പുനരുദ്ധാരണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഗമായി മൂന്നുകോടി രൂപ സി.എസ്.ആർ. ഫണ്ട് ഉപയോഗിച്ചാണ് കെട്ടിടസമുച്ചയം നിർമ്മിച്ചത്.

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A program on Muziris Today about the inauguration of the Paravoor Taluk Headquarters Hospital supported by CII Foundation
6 February 2024

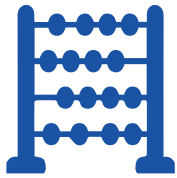
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MUZIRIS TODAY

മുസിരിസ് ടുഡേ ചാനലിൽ പരസ്യങ്ങൾ നൽകുവാൻ താല്പര്യമുള്ളവർ ബന്ധപ്പെടുക
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EDUCATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

For the bright future of any nation, it is imperative that its children are nurtured well and receive quality nutrition and education, particularly in their early years. These foundational years not only shape their survival and growth prospects but also pave the way for their overall learning and wellness.

The CII Foundation is dedicated to enhancing the quality of early childhood education (ECE) for children up to 6 years old, delivered through Anganwadi Centres. Many of these Centres face infrastructure challenges and lack the necessary resources to impart

quality education. To address this, the CII Foundation adopts a collaborative approach, partnering with government, industry and local NGOs. It identifies and supports Anganwadi Centres across India, focusing on creating a nurturing environment for children's development. This initiative positively impacts learning quality and outcomes.

The early childhood education program is currently being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.

Key Components of the Program

Infrastructure Support to Develop Model Anganwadi Centres

Transforming Anganwadi infrastructure into child-friendly learning spaces through wall art and other creative means under the Building as a Learning Aid (BaLa) concept.

Developing Age- and Culturally-Appropriate Curriculum

Creating and implementing curriculum aligned with state mandates where applicable.

Strengthening the Adoption of TLM

Promoting play-way learning with Teaching Learning Material for holistic child development, aligned with NEP 2020.

Capacity Building of Anganwadi Workers

Enhancing the skills of Anganwadi workers through comprehensive training sessions, group discussions, workshops and educational videos to work with children and monitor their growth and progress.

Engaging the Community

Strengthening collaboration between communities and Anganwadi workers to improve learning outcomes and nutritional levels of the children.

ANGANWADI ADOPTION PROGRAM, J&K

The CII Foundation is implementing the ECE program in four blocks across three districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

In the January to March quarter, the initiative was further strengthened with the launch of Teaching Learning Material (TLM) and a Nutrition Awareness Package.

A State Review meeting of the initiative was held on 29th February 2024, in Srinagar, J&K. At the meeting, a Nutrition Awareness Package, jointly with the Mission Director POSHAN J&K, was launched. The package comprised 3 flipbooks in Urdu, Hindi and English languages and a Teaching Learning Material (TLM) Kit along with a Handbook for Anganwadi workers (AWWs).



The TLM Kit is a play-based learning teaching material that is pivotal for making learning meaningful and enjoyable for children. It is aligned with the ECE curriculum 'Nanhe Kadam' followed across Jammu and Kashmir, and has a complete set of age- and culturally-appropriate material to support the activities addressing the different developmental needs of 3-6 year old children.

At the meeting, the Mission Director acknowledged the impact made by the project in the 3 Districts viz. Baramulla, Anantnag & Ramban adopted by CII Foundation under the Anganwadi Adoption Program – the 80 Model Anganwadi Centers in 4 blocks (20 in each block) act as a replicable and sustainable

infrastructure package that can be scaled up across the state, and the cadre of 40 Master Trainers (MT) across 3 districts from Jammu and Kashmir that have trained hundreds of Anganwadi workers in effective delivery of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCE).

A notable achievement for the project came with the Mission Director's announcement that the Anganwadi Level Monitoring and Support Committees (ALMSCs), formed and actioned to engage community members to spread awareness about, support and demand all the services provided at the Anganwadi Centres, will be replicated and constituted in all districts, and the MTs will be mobilised to share the learnings from the project to other districts and centres.

This meeting enabled a fruitful discussion on the way forward for the project in J&K with the ICDS members, pivoting around the introduction and inclusion of DIY (Do It Yourself) material as part of TLM, to provision for providing medical support for the target groups, and to support the state in growth monitoring of children to eliminate any anaemia and malnutrition cases in children in the months to come.



PROMOTING EXPERIENTIAL SCIENCE-BASED LEARNING

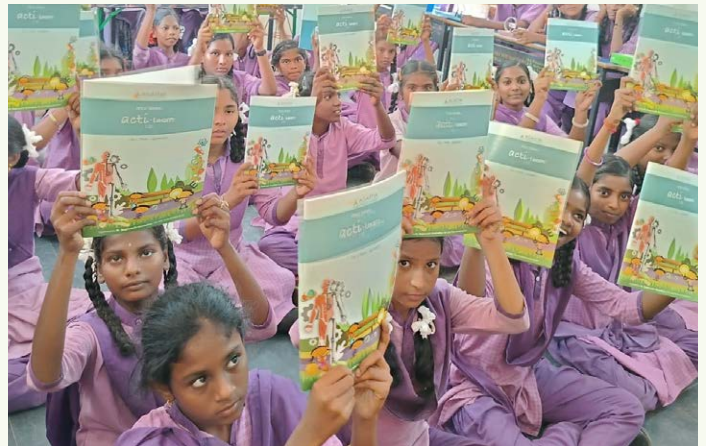
The CII Foundation works towards strengthening early childhood education and development of children up to age 6 through a multi-stakeholder project in Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Taking a step forward, the CII Foundation recently launched a Mobile Science Lab (MSL) program to enable Experiential Science-based Learning benefitting the children and teachers of rural government schools of Sri City, Andhra Pradesh. The project is being implemented in partnership with the Agastya International Foundation.

MSL is a powerful and innovative instrument to revolutionize rural education and make hands-on education increasingly accessible. The Mobile Science Lab will travel to the doorstep of 7 remote

Government schools with 100+ hands-on science models bringing to life a wide range of topics in Physics, Chemistry and Biology for Class 6 through 9, influencing key behavioural shifts in children by tapping into their natural intelligence, building motor skills, and allowing them to touch, feel, and work with objects they otherwise only read about. Apart from the everyday Science Sessions, the MSL will hold occasional Science Fairs to demonstrate science concepts to the children, train Young Instructor Leaders (YILs) who further deliver peer-to-peer learning during subsequent fairs; and Night Community Visits to impart a sense of responsibility in parents, while motivating them to send their children to schools.

This program will help improve the quality of education in government schools.





WASTE MANAGEMENT

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR A GREENER TOMORROW

India is facing significant challenges in managing urban waste, especially with rapid urbanization and increasing population densities in cities. In some pockets, especially in urban clusters, the current waste collection and management systems fail to collect and manage the enormous amounts of waste, leading to environmental harm and health risks.

For over two years, the CII Foundation has been actively addressing the issue of waste management. It began with the launch of a waste management project in Abul Fazal in June 2021, supported by PTC India Limited and PTC India Financial Services Limited (PFS). Since then, the project has made significant

progress in finding and implementing solutions to urban waste management challenges. The Abul Fazal project has now grown into a well-established initiative, and has successfully changed behaviour with improved waste segregation, treatment of waste through a specially set up composting unit, organizing waste workers in an NGO and training them among other interventions.

Given the significant on-ground impact of the project in Abul Fazal, the geographic footprint of the waste management project has been expanded. The project has been launched in Farrukhnagar, Gurugram, Haryana, as well as Leh in the North and Kochi in the South.

Key Components of the Program

Creating Awareness and Catalysing Civic Engagement

Promoting Waste Segregation at Source and Safe Waste Collection

Promoting Recycling Waste Locally and Value-addition in Bio-degradable Waste with the Involvement of RWAs

Segregating and Recycling Non-biodegradable/ Dry Waste such as Plastic

Building Skills of Waste Workers and Enhancing their Safety

Recently, the project achieved significant milestones with the official flag-offs in Taj Nagar and Hajipur villages in Farrukhnagar, and Chellanam in Kochi, Kerala, and a field visit in Leh. These efforts mark a crucial step towards the goal of establishing

modern, community-led waste management systems to create zero-waste neighbourhoods complementing governmental efforts and fostering sustainability across diverse urban landscapes.

CLEAN ABUL FAZAL PROJECT, OKHLA, NEW DELHI

Since its launch in June 2021, the project in Abul Fazal has actively encouraged civic engagement to improve the waste management process. The project complements the efforts of the local municipal corporation and is being implemented using a community-led, multi-stakeholder approach with the active engagement with local government bodies, residents, and community institutions such as Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs).

It disseminates awareness amongst the residents and promotes good waste management practices, thereby creating a collective commitment to cleaner and healthier urban environments.

In the January to March 2024 quarter, a series of awareness sessions and community meetings were held to strengthen the initiative.



ADARSH VILLAGE WASTE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE, FARRUKHNAGAR, HARYANA

The waste management initiative in Farrukhnagar called Project Adarash is being implemented in 4 villages – Taj Nagar, Judola, Hajipur and Ghoshgarh. Interactions with the community members revealed a few key challenges: open dumping of waste, lack of infrastructure and pollution in local water bodies, which the project aims to address.

The project launch in Taj Nagar village, Farrukhnagar, was held on 9th January 2024. Present on the occasion were officials from the Government, Sandeep Agarwal, SDM Gurgaon, and Krishna Yadav, Mandal Adhyaksh of Pataudi and community members. At the event, Block Development Officer Naresh Kumar flagged off the E-Cart for waste collection.



The project was inaugurated on 1st February 2024 in Hajipur village, Farrukhnagar, Haryana. The ceremony saw the symbolic flagging off of an E-Cart for waste collection by Block Development Officer Naresh Kumar. Present on the occasion were other government officials and a large number of people from the community. This initiative marks a significant



step towards addressing waste management challenges in the villages, reflecting the collective efforts and support of the local administration and community towards building a cleaner and greener environment for all residents by fostering sustainable waste management practices in the villages.



'CHELODE CHELLANAM' WASTE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE, KOCHI, KERALA

On 6th March 2024, the waste management initiative was launched in Chellanam, a coastal village in Kerala in partnership with the General Insurance Corporation of India. Called the 'Chelode Chellanam' waste management initiative, it will address the waste management challenges in the region.

During the launch event, Mr Aju Jacob, Chairman, CII Kerala & Joint Managing Director, Synthite Industries Pvt Ltd handed over the Safety Kit to Haritha Karma Sena members in the presence of Mr K L Joseph, President, Chellanam Grama Panchayat, and Mr Subramaniam, Additional Director, LSGD, Ernakulam.



The occasion was graced by Ms Sneha Nair, Assistant General Manager, General Insurance Corporation of India, Fr Solomon Charanghat, Vicar St Francis Xaviers Church, Mr Berly Cyriac, Convenor, CII Kerala Clean Kerala Panel & Director, Medivision Scan & Diagnostic Research Centre Pvt Ltd, Mr Zakaria Joy, Co -Convenor, CII Kerala Clean Kerala Panel & CEO Northamps and other ward members of Chellanam Grama Panchayat.

The initiative aims to promote sustainable and environment-friendly waste management practices while fostering community engagement to strengthen the initiative's impact.



WASTE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE IN LEH, LADAKH

In February, a CII Foundation team visited Ladakh to explore opportunities to enhance waste management practices in the region and forge partnerships with local stakeholders. Meetings were held with Mr. Thinley, CII Member, Syed Sajjad Qadri, Director of Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj, UT Ladakh and Mr. Rizvi, Chairman Imamia School, Chuchat.

Discussions revolved around extending the waste management project to rural areas, forming village committees, and organizing workshops involving village representatives, Ladakh administration and media. The team discussed the existing government project 'Tsangda' on waste management and identified areas where the project could complement and enhance the existing framework and explored the opportunities for plastic recycling.



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

WOMAN EXEMPLAR PROGRAM

The significant role of women in uplifting society cannot be overstated, particularly for grassroots women from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds whose contributions often go unnoticed. Recognizing the importance of acknowledging and empowering these unsung heroes, CII initiated the identification and awarding of grassroots women leaders as early as 2005. This public recognition not only served as a source of encouragement for the

women but also paved the way for additional support to help them scale up their impactful work.

The initiative evolved over the years and became an integral part of the CII Foundation in 2011 and was subsequently integrated into a broader women's empowerment program in 2017, known as the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Program. This program aims to identify and empower grassroots women to amplify the social impact of the transformative change they are driving within their communities.

Key Components of the Program



Scan the Ecosystem for Exemplars



Award and Recognize/ Amplify Work



Assess & Design Inputs for Women for Scale & Impact



On Ground Interventions to Create New Leaders



Broadening and Strengthening the Network

Each year, the Woman Exemplar Program receives hundreds of nominations, from which 15 exceptional women are shortlisted through a rigorous selection process. This process includes desk reviews of nominations and telephonic interviews. An eminent jury, comprising leaders from various sectors, carefully evaluates the nominees' contributions towards social transformation to select three winners in the categories of Health, Education, and Micro-enterprise.

The winners are recognized at a national-level event and receive a prize and a certificate, which further builds the stature of their work through recognition and support.

Today, the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Program has created a powerful network of over 100 grassroots women leaders who are collectively driving social change within their communities.

IDENTIFYING THE EXEMPLARS

For the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Award 2024, over 300 applications were received last year in response to a call for nominations, highlighting the growing recognition and importance of grassroots women's leadership. The nominations were scrutinized through a multi-step rigorous process comprising of desk reviews of forms and telephonic interviews and at each level of evaluation, select women entered the next round of evaluation.

During the January-March 2024 quarter, the CII Foundation embarked on a crucial phase of its Woman Exemplar Program: the due diligence visits. This phase is instrumental in gaining deeper insights into the initiatives led by grassroots women leaders and assessing their impact on the communities they serve.

Over the course of a month, the CII Foundation team meticulously conducted due diligence visits for all 16 nominees, traversing long distances, utilizing various modes of transport to reach the nominated women. Through face-to-face interactions with the women and the communities they serve, the team delved into the heart of their work, gaining valuable insights into the real-world impact of their initiatives. These visits provided an invaluable opportunity to witness firsthand the transformative changes catalyzed by these exceptional women leaders. As the due diligence phase drew to a close, the CII Foundation team emerged with a wealth of knowledge and insights that would inform the final selection process, ensuring that these women would be recognized for their extraordinary contributions to social transformation.

The CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Cohort of 2023

Name	Location
EDUCATION 	
Pramila Chauhan	Madhya Pradesh
Basmati Gagrai	Jharkhand
Sandhya Devi	Odisha
Bideshni Patel	Odisha
Ranjita Pawar	Maharashtra
HEALTH 	
Chandravati	Uttar Pradesh
Maina Jaat	Rajasthan
Khiroda	Jharkhand
Meena Devi	Uttar Pradesh
Rumi Parveen	Bihar
MICRO ENTERPRISE 	
Godawari	Madhya Pradesh
Sangeeta Gaikwad	Maharashtra
Amitaben	Gujarat
Lilawati	Odisha
Anuradha Bharadwaj	Uttar Pradesh
Saraswati	Andhra Pradesh

The winners will be selected and recognized at the CII Annual General Meeting in the next quarter.

CELEBRATING THE POWER OF WOMEN ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

This year, International Women's Day resonated globally with the theme "Invest In Women: Accelerate Progress". As the world grapples with myriad crises, from geopolitical conflicts to escalating climate change impacts and soaring poverty levels, empowering women emerges as a pivotal solution. Upholding the rights of women and girls across all spheres of life is necessary for fostering prosperous and just economies, as well as safeguarding the health of our planet for future generations.

To mark this significant day, the CII Foundation spotlighted the voices of women from diverse backgrounds through various media platforms.

Two of our Woman Exemplars, Minakshi Birajdar (Cohort of 2021), and Rama Sharma (Cohort of 2019) shared their journey of emerging stronger and paving the way for a better life for women through their work, since they won the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Award and received training and support through the program. Once faced with abuse, discrimination and financial hardships, they have now emerged resilient and are helping women facing similar circumstances. Through these narratives, we celebrate the resilience and determination of women worldwide, reaffirming our commitment to advancing gender equality and empowerment.



Rama Sharma
 Woman Exemplar, 2019
 Jaipur District, Rajasthan
 Category: Education
 Organisation: Bhavi Nirman Society



Minakshi Birajdar,
 Woman Exemplar, 2021
 Aurangabad District,
 Maharashtra
 Category: Micro-enterprise
 Organisation: Ekatmik Krushi
 va Gramen Vikas Sanstha

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Highlighting this year's theme of International Women's Day, 'Invest in women: Accelerate progress', let's celebrate the remarkable journey of Rama Sharma, CII Foundation Woman Exemplar, 2019. As a former program coordinator at an NGO, she led Project "Pehchaan" which educated drop out students, Dalits and enabled girls from the marginalized Banjara community, to enter and succeed in the formal schooling system.

Rama faced uncertainty when the project concluded in 2020 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Undeterred, she embarked on a new chapter, founding her own NGO, Bhavi Nirman Society.

Through one-on-one sessions and mentorship programs, she gained valuable insights into navigating the complexities of starting an NGO, from documentation to registration processes.

"Associating with the Woman Exemplar program has helped me scale up my work from 10 to 30 villages successfully", says CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Minakshi Birajdar from Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Minakshi works with single women, empowering them to achieve financial independence and improving the lives of the last mile minority communities. As a CII Foundation Woman Exemplar, Minakshi not only received recognition and respect for her work, but she also received training and mentorship to help her scale up her work and #LeadLikeANaari. Supported by the CII Foundation, Minakshi was mentored by a senior leader from corporate India, Mukta Dhavale, Head- Corporate Social Responsibility Voltas Limited who gave her valuable insights to enhance her work and visited her in Aurangabad to understand her increase the scale and expanse of her work.

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Chandrajit Banerjee



Women-driven development to be a catalyst for India's progress

Across the world, the conversations around women's empowerment and the increasingly significant role of women in socio-economic progress are gaining traction. In India, there has been a paradigm shift with the government's strong focus on women-led development, going beyond women's development, as a key pillar of India's progress.

This is apparent in many recent policies which have led to the growing presence of women in the economy. The passage of the Women's Reservation Bill, which will give women a greater voice in the Lok Sabha and state legislatures is a transformative step. This comes after a host of schemes and initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Ujwala Yojana and PM Mudra Yojana, all targeted at women-led development.

Such initiatives have yielded impressive outcomes on the ground and demonstrate India's leadership in gender empowerment. The female labour force participation rate has grown by four percentage points and now stands at 37 per cent. Over 100 million self-help group women are accessing easy loans through the Mudra Yojana. Financial inclusion among women has improved greatly and women have accessed loans to the tune of ₹7.88 trillion in the past 10 years. Under the National Digital Literacy Mission and Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (Disha), around 5.25 million persons are targeted for digital literacy with a focus on women, as the beneficiaries include the Asha and Anganwadi workers.

India's leadership on women's empowerment is

now gaining global recognition as seen earlier this year with the launch of the Alliance for Global Good — Gender Equity and Equality at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting. Guided by women and child development minister Smriti Irani, the alliance found supporters in industry and brought within its fold the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Economic Forum. Anchored by CII's Centre for Women Leadership, the alliance is envisioned as a global collective of governments, industry and development organisations led by India. Sharing of best practices, developing new solutions and targeted investments in women-centric initiatives that this alliance plans to incubate and catalyse will accelerate progress towards gender equity and equality.

The alliance's focus on investing in women ties in well with the theme of International Women's Day 2024: "Invest in women: accelerate progress".

I believe that Indian industry complements the efforts of the Indian government and has played a significant role in empowering women through various initiatives and policies. Today, there are several key enablers that corporates have initiated and can continue to intensify to catalyse women-led development.

First, many companies have initiated gender-responsive policies in the workplace. Targeted recruitment, conducting training on unconscious gender bias, sensitisation to address societal barriers and greater support to women through various stages of their personal and professional lives will enable women to stay and grow within the work-

place. Enhanced reporting on disclosures and formulating a Diversity Index will further help create targeted and evidence-based interventions related to work flexibility, childcare and leave.

Two, many companies are focusing on skilling women for trades or work traditionally considered to be male preserves, such as manufacturing jobs. Over the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of women employed in manufacturing and this can be further expanded with targeted skill programmes. In this, the government has offered inspiration by encouraging women to join the armed forces and police services.

Three, with greater technical advancement and penetration of technology, women now have access to location-agnostic learning and working opportunities. The advent of Generative AI adds a whole new dimension. Digital and financial literacy programmes can help women take greater control over their education and employability.

Four, the proper valuation of care work and domestic work undertaken by women will result in many skilled and talented women being able to realise their economic potential. Under CII's Care Economy Strategy, the government and industry together can help women to build their skills in this fast-emerging sector and provide job offerings, including in locations convenient to them.

Five, while corporates continue to foster more and better openings for women, women themselves are taking the lead in community empowerment. CII's Woman Exemplar Award, launched in 2005, identifies and recognises grassroots women leaders who

have made a difference in their communities in education, healthcare and entrepreneurship. Today, this programme has evolved to create a large cohort of grassroots women leaders who are being mentored and coached to amplify their work and social impact, reaching out to more than a million women and children from the most vulnerable sections of society.

The Indian Women Network is another initiative to enable professional women and women entrepreneurs to come together to support each other and achieve their full economic potential. With the guidance of Ms Smriti Irani, CII launched the Centre for Women Leadership, which is a platform to inform policy, promote best practices, build the capacity of women, and develop alliances to promote the inclusion of women in the economy. Through programmes informed by research, the centre works with industry to promote practices like gender responsive procurement, targeted programmes and initiatives to drive inclusion and enable the measurement and progress of inclusion of women within industry. With the women, the initiatives aim at building capacity and giving access to information and resources that enable women not just to enter, but to stay and lead within the economy.

Indian industry is committed to playing a critical role in pushing forward the development agenda and fostering women-led development. Let us now all commit to unlocking the potential of women.

The writer is director-general of the Confederation of Indian Industry

EMPOWERING CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE IN ASSAM

The CII Foundation, in partnership with Apraava Energy, initiated a new program - the 'Empowering Champions of Change' program - in Assam to identify, recognize and empower grassroots change agents from the region who are driving social transformation. The program was launched in October 2023 in 8 districts of Assam – Kokrajhar, Chirang, Bongaigaon, Dhubri, South Salmara Mankachar, Goalpara, Jorhat and Golaghat. The selected 15 women leaders will receive a stipend of INR 25,000 each for their contribution and work. Under the program, these women will also be trained to build their capacity to enable them to scale up their work for greater social

impact and create a new rung of leaders working within marginalized communities. Additionally, they will be encouraged to take up community development projects funded and supported by the CII Foundation and Apraava Energy.

From over 50 applications spanning 8 districts of Assam, a rigorous selection process including desk reviews and telephonic interviews was undertaken to identify 15 exceptional change agents. In February, the program team conducted field visits to personally engage with these grassroots women leaders.



HONORING UNSUNG HEROES: CELEBRATING GRASSROOTS WOMEN LEADERS

On 15th March 2024, at a prestigious award ceremony in Bongaigaon, the women were recognized for their contributions in the presence of distinguished guests such as Mrs. Bijaya Boro, General Manager of Bongaigaon & Kokrajhar Circle, alongside Mr. Rakesh Yadav, State AMI Lead at Apraava, Ms. Srushti Bangera, CSR Manager at Apraava's Corporate office, and Mr. Pintu Dekaraja, CEO of Bongaigaon, Apraava, among others.



During the ceremony, each of the 15 women were honored with an award, certificate, and a stipend of INR 25,000. The highlight of the event was the unveiling of a special booklet containing the inspiring stories of these women, showcasing their resilience and determination to effect change within their communities.



Empowering Champions of Change Winners 2024

Name	District
Ratna Rabha	Goalpara
Promila Roy	Goalpara
Pampi Kalita	Bongaigaon
Fala Khatun	Chirang
Hasina Ahmed	Chirang
Rashida Begum	Kokrajhar
Lokhimoni Hembrom	Kokrajhar
Nur Yesminara Begum	Dhubri

Name	District
Junaki Rajuwar	Jorhat
Dipamoni Pachani	Jorhat
Junti Chutia	Golaghat
Jyotshna Bordoloi Sharma	Goalpara
Rima Ray	Bongaigaon
Morjina Yeasmin	Dhubri
Asrafa Ahmed	Salmara South

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For feedback and suggestions please contact Priya Shirali, Head - Communication at Priya.Shirali@cii.in

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