



Half Yearly Report  
June - November 2024


# LOFOCAL *project*

PHASE 2

Project No. 321-105-1033

Prepared by **SWI**

**MESOREOR**

For Social Welfare Institute  
  
Secretary

Prepared for

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1.1	Project no. & title:	Empowered communities' foster climate adaptive agriculture and livelihood practices and secure adequate nutritious food in 3GPs of Maldah district, WB.		
1.2	Project location/region:	Aktail, Mangalpura and Habibpur Gram Panchayats of Habibpur Block, Maldah district, West Bengal, India.		
1.3	Reporting period:	June – November 2024-		
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## Basics of the approved project

Name- ECFCAL - II

Project No. 321-105-1033

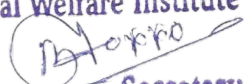
Duration- 3 Years.

Reporting period – June – November 2024

## General Objectives:

- By 2026, 75% of the target HH will acquire better capacity towards management of Natural Resources and agriculture to secure their livelihood and to minimize the effects of natural disasters through DRR smart agricultural plan and practices in Habibpur block of Maldah district will have increased access to different government resources, schemes and entitlements.
- By 2026, around 80% Target HH of 3 GPs in Habibpur block of Maldah district will have increased access to different government resources, schemes and entitlements related to their livelihood, health, education and other domestic concerns.
- 70% of FC/ FPC/ SHGs of 3 GPs of Habibpur block in Maldah district will have increased participation, ownership and support in management of village level governance.

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## Direct Beneficiaries:

PARTICULARS	TOTAL	REMARKS
Aktail	288 - Direct ben.	The minority communities, migrant workers and more of all by farmers predominantly populate the selected villages under this project. They are the deprived sections who have no accessibility to their basic rights related to health, education and or livelihood. Economic stability for the majority of population languishing in poverty is the best approach to increase community capacities and resilience and minimize the vulnerabilities to various disasters as well as distress migration
Mangalpura	254 - Direct ben.	
Habibpur	247- Direct ben.	

## The project area

SI No.	Name of the Panchayat	No of Villages	Beneficiary covered
1	Aktail	11 no	1000 HH
2	Mangalpura	10 no	1000 HH
3	Habibpur	10 no	1000 HH

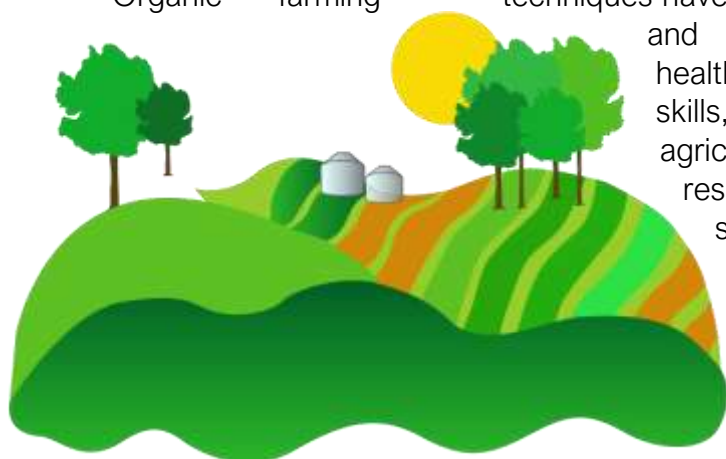
## A. Summary of activities undertaken in the period.

This section will be documented with major activities performed with the outcomes in brief or in small paragraphs. Some quantitative data may be supported to this section in terms of making this section more practical and interesting.

### Trainings and capacity building

Under the DRR Smart Agriculture and Livelihood Project, SWI has implemented targeted training and capacity-building programs for farmers across several villages over the last six months. The initiative introduced key practices such as crop rotation, cultivation of short-term paddy varieties, and organic farming. These activities aim to enhance agricultural resilience while improving farmers' livelihoods. The benefits have been profound. Crop rotation has improved soil fertility and reduced pest infestations, promoting sustainable farming. The adoption of short-term paddy varieties has allowed farmers to harvest earlier, conserve water, and allocate time for additional cropping cycles, increasing overall income.

Organic farming techniques have reduced dependency on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, cutting costs and producing healthier crops. By empowering farmers with these skills, the project is fostering sustainable agriculture, improving food security, and building resilience to climate-related risks, ensuring a stable future for farming communities.





### **DDR smart agricultural activities**

Following comprehensive training under the DRR Smart Agriculture and Livelihood Project by SWI, farmers in target villages have begun implementing modern, sustainable techniques in their fields. Inspired by the program, a group of progressive farmers led the way, adopting these practices with enthusiasm. Around 50 farmers have embraced organic farming, reducing their reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This shift has not only lowered production costs but also resulted in healthier crops and enriched soil fertility. Additionally, many farmers have started cultivating short-term paddy varieties, enabling them to save water, reduce crop duration, and explore additional Rabi cropping cycles for increased income. These practices are transforming agriculture in the region, promoting environmental sustainability, and enhancing farmers' livelihoods. As their success inspires others, the movement toward sustainable farming continues to grow, reinforcing the community's resilience to climate and economic challenges.

### **Workshops and awareness**

Awareness programs and workshops conducted under the DRR Smart Agriculture initiative have sparked a significant shift in mind-set among community members. These sessions highlighted the benefits of sustainable practices like organic farming, crop rotation, and short-duration crop varieties, fostering a deeper understanding of their potential to improve livelihoods and resilience. By engaging farmers through interactive discussions and practical demonstrations, the workshops addressed traditional concerns and encouraged the adoption of innovative methods. Participants gained confidence in applying these techniques to their fields, leading to enhanced productivity, resource conservation, and financial stability. This newfound awareness has united the community in a shared vision of sustainable agriculture, ensuring a more resilient and prosperous future for all.

### **Linkages and networking activity**

Under the DRR Smart Agriculture and Livelihood Project, the team has initiated efforts to connect target beneficiaries with government departments to secure facilities, entitlements, and advocate for their rights. By working closely with the community, the team has identified relevant government departments and programs that can support the farmers' needs. In recent months, they have actively built rapport with key officials, fostering constructive dialogue and collaboration. This proactive approach has already yielded positive responses, with several departments showing a willingness to extend support to the beneficiaries. These linkages are empowering the community, ensuring access to essential resources such as agricultural subsidies, training programs, and welfare schemes. The initiative not only bridges gaps between farmers and government services but also strengthens the community's ability to raise their voices for their rights, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable development process.

## **B. Changes in the project context**

Major and specific milestones of the project will be elaborated in this section. This will be done in Bulette points with a little bit of elaboration. In other words, this section can be utilized to showcase with major achievements and accomplishments. In addition, some impacts may be included in this reporting section.

Since the commencement of the ECFCAL Phase 2 project in June 2024, the implementation team has worked diligently to achieve transformative outcomes. Within this

reporting period, several key milestones and achievements have been accomplished, showcasing the project's positive impact on the target communities:



1. **Adoption of Alternative Paddy Varieties:** Farmers have begun experimenting with alternative short-duration paddy varieties. These varieties not only reduce cultivation time but also yield better production and profit margins.
2. **Introduction of Relay Cropping:** Relay cropping practices have been successfully introduced, enabling farmers to grow additional crops on the same land in succession, optimizing land use, and boosting income.
3. **Shift to Short-Duration Crops:** Farmers are increasingly adopting short-duration crops, ensuring quicker harvest cycles and reducing dependency on traditional, time-intensive crops.
4. **Increased Awareness of Rights and Entitlements:** The community has become more aware of their rights and available government schemes. Beneficiaries are actively applying for entitlements, leading to greater access to resources and support.
5. **Empowerment of Women:** Women in the target areas have become more vocal and engaged in community discussions. They are now actively participating in decision-making processes, contributing to household and village-level governance.
6. **Women-Led Income-Generating Activities:** Several women have started small-scale income-generating activities, such as handicrafts, tailoring, and small business ventures, contributing to household income and enhancing financial independence.
7. **Improved Agricultural Practices:** The adoption of advanced agricultural techniques, such as organic farming and efficient irrigation methods, has improved productivity and resource management.
8. **Enhanced Livelihood Diversification:** Households have begun exploring multiple livelihood options, reducing their reliance on a single source of income and improving resilience against economic vulnerabilities.
9. **Strengthened Community Cohesion:** The project has fostered a sense of collective ownership and responsibility among community members, enhancing participation and collaboration in project activities.



These achievements highlight the project's tangible impact on improving livelihoods, empowering women, and fostering resilience. With continued efforts and momentum, ECFCAL Phase 2 is well positioned to deliver long-term benefits and meet its ambitious objectives.

## C. Implementing the Project and & achieving the objectives

What conclusions do you draw from this concerning the achievement of each of the project objectives: Which objectives will you be able to achieve as planned by the end of the project, and which objectives currently appear problematic?

### SO - 01

By 2026, 75% of the target HH will acquire better capacity towards management of Natural Resources and agriculture to secure their livelihood and to minimize the effects of natural disasters through DRR smart agricultural plan and practices in Habibpur block of Maldah district will have increased access to different government resources, schemes and entitlements.

The DRR Smart Agriculture and Livelihood Project in Habibpur block, Maldah district, has made significant strides toward its objective of empowering 75% of the target households (HH) by 2026. The goal is to enhance their capacity for managing natural resources and agriculture, thereby securing livelihoods and mitigating the effects of natural disasters through DRR-smart agricultural practices.

As of now, approximately 55% of the target HH have successfully adopted advanced practices and strategies, marking substantial progress within the timeline. These households have not only demonstrated improved agricultural practices, such as organic farming and the use of short-duration crops, but have also shown resilience in managing resources more sustainably. Furthermore, the project's efforts in building linkages with government departments have facilitated better access to schemes, resources, and entitlements for the beneficiaries. This access has enabled them to leverage government support effectively, strengthening their agricultural base and economic stability.

While there is room to achieve the remaining 20%, the current achievements underscore the efficacy of the project's interventions. The positive response from government departments and the enthusiasm among farmers reflect a strong foundation for achieving the ultimate goal. The progress so far highlights the transformative potential of DRR-smart

agricultural practices and collective action. With continued effort and sustained momentum, the project is on track to realize its objectives by 2026, ensuring a more resilient and sustainable future for the farming community in Habibpur block.



For Social Welfare Institute

*Signature*  
Secretary



## SO - 02

By 2026, around 80% Target HH of 3 GPs in Habibpur block of Maldah district will have increased access to different government resources, schemes and entitlements related to their livelihood, health, education and other domestic concerns.

The project aims to ensure that by 2026, 80% of the target households (HH) across three Gram Panchayats in Habibpur block, Maldah district, gain enhanced access to government resources, schemes, and entitlements covering livelihood, health, education, and other domestic needs. As of now, over 40% of the target HHs have been reached through awareness campaigns. These efforts have focused on informing beneficiaries about the various government facilities and entitlements available to them. This foundational step is crucial for equipping the community with the knowledge necessary to claim their rights and benefits effectively.

The gradual approach of raising awareness before facilitating access ensures that the target HHs are prepared and informed when engaging with government departments. As the next phase involves assisting beneficiaries in availing these entitlements, the project is well positioned to achieve its goal. The current progress represents a significant milestone, highlighting the project's systematic and inclusive approach. While much work remains to cover the remaining 40% and ensure tangible benefits, the positive engagement and growing awareness among the target HHs are promising indicators. With sustained efforts, the objective of empowering 80% of the target households by 2026 appears achievable.



## SO - 03

70% of FC/ FPC/ SHGs of 3 GPs of Habibpur block in Maldah district will have increased participation, ownership and support in management of village level governance.

The project aims to ensure that by 2026, 70% of Farmer Collectives (FCs), Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in three Gram Panchayats of Habibpur block, Maldah district, actively participate in and support village-level governance. To achieve this, several foundational activities have been initiated, focusing on capacity building, fostering financial, and governance literacy among community-based organizations (CBOs). Interface meetings with banks and financial institutions have been conducted to establish rapport and facilitate access to financial resources. Training sessions have empowered CBOs with the knowledge to prepare micro-plans for identifying community needs and potential gaps, enabling them to advocate for their priorities effectively. Discussions on generating a village development fund have further emphasized the importance of collective action and self-reliance.

These efforts are gradually fostering a sense of ownership and participation among CBOs. While the journey toward achieving 70% engagement is ongoing, the active involvement of CBOs in capacity-building initiatives demonstrates promising progress. By strengthening the financial and organizational capacity of these groups, the project is laying a robust foundation for sustained participation in village-level governance. With continued momentum, the objective of achieving increased ownership and support among CBOs appears well within reach by 2026.





## D. Implementing the Project and & achieving the objectives

What is the status regarding implementing the planned activities and achieving the outputs. Major activities under each objectives.

Activity code	Activities	Target (As per project plan)	Achieved	Activity wise result / outcome (period of June to Nov 2024)
<b>Objective 01 - By 2026, 75% of the target HH will acquire better capacity towards management of Natural Resources and agriculture to secure their livelihood and to minimize the effects of natural disasters through DRR smart agricultural plan and practices in Habibpur block of Maldah district will have increased access to different government resources, schemes and entitlements.</b>				
1.1	Training on CAAP for project core staff - Use of varieties of Seeds / Participatory water use / Soil health etc.	1	1	We have organised a training program on participatory water use and soil health. Agriculture Department official SAURAV PATRA was present as the main speaker of this training camp. Through this training, we gain knowledge specifically about Soil health and collecting of soil for testing.
1.2	Training village youth and volunteers on soil health, temperature and rainfall recording (Basic orientation)	2	2	Empowering village youth and volunteers with skills to monitor soil health, temperature, and rainfall enhances climate resilience and agricultural productivity. Training focuses on practical techniques, data recording, and analysis, fostering awareness and sustainable practices for improved farming outcomes and rural development.
1.3	Training on Integrated Resource Management for the target farming community - Seasonal Crops	1	1	The PM-KISAN scheme provides ₹6,000 annually to farmer families via Aadhaar-linked bank accounts. Upon discovering many villagers were excluded, government authorities were contacted, enabling 13 individuals to access the benefits. Consequently, their economic infrastructure was significantly improved.
1.4	Training on Integrated Resource Management for the target farming community- Seasonal Vegetables	2	2	Cultivation in the area is limited to the rainy season due to irrigation issues. To address this, 25 farmers were encouraged to grow onions, which require minimal irrigation and offer high profitability. This initiative aimed to enhance agricultural productivity and farmers' income during non-rainy seasons.
1.5	Training on Integrated Resource Management for the target farming community- Fishes	1	1	Fishery cards, essential for accessing training and grants, were arranged for 34 fish farmers after they had informed about its benefits. As a result, the farmers gained significant advantages in fish cultivation and support opportunities.

1.6	Training on Integrated Resource Management for the target farming community- Poultry and animal husbandry	2	2	Duck and hen farming was promoted as a source of income by providing 20 chicks each to 33 women. This initiative enabled them to earn money, contributing to the improvement of their livelihoods.
1.8	Important Days Celebration	1	2	World Environment Day and Children's Day were celebrated. On World Environment Day, 50 beneficiaries planted jackfruit saplings and pledged to plant two new saplings for every tree cut, promoting environmental conservation and sustainability in the community.
1.2.1	Participatory water management models on irrigation and drinking water in 20% villages	2	2	Water conservation was discussed with farmers and officials, focusing on rainwater harvesting and government projects. Four ponds were dug for rainwater storage, and 11 beneficiaries were provided with black plastic pipes for irrigation, enhancing water resource management.
1.2.2	Promoting Climate Appropriate Agriculture Practice models in 20% villages - Non -farm based	2	2	Due to irrigation challenges and high pump installation costs, climate-appropriate agricultural practices were promoted. As a result, 7 farmers cultivated mung beans, and 43 farmers cultivated lentils during non-rainy seasons, enhancing land utilization and agricultural productivity.
1.2.3	Function linkage with different stakeholders for input support and market network.	0	0	N.A
1.2.4	Exposure visit for the farmers group	0	0	N.A
1.2.5	Soil testing camps and events at village level.	0	0	N.A
1.2.6	Promotion of Low cost Kitchen gardens (50% village covering)	2	2	Already 87 families have kitchen gardens. So those families has benefited financially. They also eat chemical free vegetable.
1.3.1	Formation and strengthening of farmers collectives with emphasis on Women.	2	2	Kisan Mandi, an online agricultural market, helps prevent financial losses from selling paddy locally at lower prices. So far, 22 new Kisan Mandi cards have been issued, and 18 cards have been renewed, benefiting farmers economically.



1.3.2	Training of farmers on minimizing post-harvest losses.	0	0	N.A
1.3.3	Training on development of business plan for the core group of farmer's representatives.	0	0	N.A.
1.3.4	Technical Support visits by the Experts and others.	1	1	N.A.

**Objective 02 - By 2026, around 80% Target HH of 3 GPs in Habibpur block of Maldah district will have increased access to different government resources, schemes and entitlements related to their livelihood, health, education and other domestic concerns.**

2.1	Awareness on MGNREGS / SASPFUW / MKSY/ BSKP/ horticulture/fishery/ARDS, NRLM and Agriculture Related Govt. schemes (KCC, water shed Management, Manure, subsidy on Agriculture equipment's irrigation schemes and crop insurance etc.)	3	3	Linking mobile numbers to Aadhaar ensures identity verification, security checks, OTP-based verification, and fraud protection. So far, 55 people have been assisted in linking their mobile numbers with Aadhaar, enabling better access to services and security.
2.2	Formation of volunteer led TOT of farmers group and SHG in selected GPs.	3	3	A volunteer-led Training of Trainers (TOT) program was organized for farmer groups and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in selected Gram Panchayats. This initiative aims to build local capacity, empower community leaders, and promote knowledge sharing for sustainable agricultural practices and rural development at the grassroots level.
2.3	Follow up training for selected community representatives.	0	0	N.A
2.4	Monthly Review meeting.	6	6	Various aspects of work are discussed in every monthly meeting, including solutions for problems that arise. The most preferred aspects of work by the beneficiaries are also discussed, along with strategies to reach the main goal.

2.5	Development of IEC and VIC resource materials on schemes, promotional brochures.	0	0	N.A
2.2.1	GP level networking meeting for capacity development of the target community.	1	1	It was discovered that many villagers had incorrect voter ID details, causing difficulties in accessing services. So far, the voter ID cards of 200 people have been updated and corrected, improving their access to essential services.
2.2.2	Block level networking meeting for capacity development of the target community.	0	0	N.A
2.2.3	Interface meeting with line departments at GP / Block level	1	1	Interface meetings with line departments at the Gram Panchayat (GP) and Block levels were organized to foster collaboration and address community needs. These meetings focused on aligning development goals, sharing resources, and resolving issues to ensure effective implementation of government schemes and projects at the local level.
2.2.4	Linkage meeting with skill development / vocational training institutes (VTI) / line departments for target groups (FC and SHG).	2	2	Due to increased unemployment, many individuals have resorted to immoral activities. To address this, our team collaborated with DHOSA Microfinance Company, providing employment opportunities to ten unemployed youths so far, helping them improve their livelihoods.
2.2.5	Exposure visit to different demo plot for farmers and or SHG groups	0	0	N.A

**Objective 03 - 70% of FC/ FPC/ SHGs of 3 GPs of Habibpur block in Maldah district will have increased participation, ownership and support in management of village level governance.**

3.1.1	Formation of Farmers Club, SHGs and small clusters.	3	3	Self-Help Groups (SHGs), crucial to India's microfinance system, aim to improve living conditions and are supported by banks, agencies, and the government, including Gram Panchayats. So far, four new SHGs have been formed. Additionally, 11 conflicted groups have been reunited and their operations renewed, ensuring continued support and empowerment for their members.
3.1.2	Building capacity of FCs and SHGs and Clusters.	3	3	
3.2.1	Interface meetings with banks and other financial institutions.	1	1	Because of this meeting, the people got to know about the rules and regulations of the bank.



3.2.2	Training on Skill Development activities (Tailoring, Basic Computer, Handcraft)	1	1	Tailoring training has been imparted to 42 women to improve their quality of life and livelihood. Out of these, 10 women, enabling them to earn money, have bought sewing machines.
3.2.3	Increase capacity of the CBOs in taking Financial Loans. - Meetings between bankers and members.	1	1	As a result of this meeting, 12 women group loans has applied, 7 farmers taken KCC lone and 2 have applied for personal loans from the bank.

## E. Major challenges faced & Strategy Adopted to overcome challenges

Major and specific challenges faced by the project implementation team will be elaborated in this part. Along with the challenges, the overcome strategy will also be added just to add value of the report in different terms.

The ECFCAL Phase 2 project, launched in June 2024, has made commendable progress in improving livelihoods and fostering resilience within the target communities. However, like any ambitious initiative, it has encountered several challenges during the first six months of implementation.

One major hurdle has been **political challenges**. Shifts in local governance and conflicting priorities among stakeholders occasionally slowed down decision-making processes and the smooth execution of project activities. Building consensus and ensuring alignment with local authorities required additional time and effort from the team. **Environmental challenges** also posted significant obstacles. Unpredictable weather patterns, such as unseasonal rains and temperature fluctuations, disrupted farming schedules and impacted the adoption of improved agricultural practices. This required the team to adjust strategies and provide real-time solutions to mitigate the effects on the community.

Achieving **100%, community participation** has been another area of difficulty. While many households actively engaged with the project, a portion of the community remained hesitant due to lack of awareness, pre-existing commitments, or scepticism about new techniques and practices. Continuous awareness campaigns and rapport-building activities were essential to address these concerns. Additionally, the team faced **strategy-based challenges** in integrating diverse livelihood options and tailoring interventions to the specific needs of different households. Balancing long-term goals with immediate community expectations required careful planning and flexibility.

Despite these challenges, the dynamic and dedicated project team has demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and project remains on provided valuable

innovation, ensuring that the track. Each challenge has learning opportunities, strengthening the team's ability to deliver impactful outcomes in the coming phases.

## F. Summary assessment

Major lesson learned in this project / how relevant were the project outcomes?

### Insights and Learnings from the Project's Progress

- The project team has gained a deep understanding of the local context, including social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors. This awareness has become a cornerstone for designing and implementing effective livelihood development strategies.
- Active engagement of community members in decision-making processes has proven precious. Their participation fosters ownership and responsibility, ensuring project sustainability and amplifying its long-term impact. This shows how owned they this project is.
- The project team recognizes the vulnerabilities associated with reliance on single livelihood activities in rural communities. Promoting income diversification and providing skills training in various income-generating activities have emerged as vital strategies to enhance resilience.
- Capacity-building initiatives, including technical skills, business management, and leadership training, are empowering community members to take charge of their livelihoods. Investing in these areas has shown remarkable promise in building local expertise.
- Collaborating across sectors such as agriculture, health, education, and infrastructure is proving to be a holistic approach, magnifying the project's impact and addressing interconnected challenges.
- Building strong relationships with policymakers and advocating for supportive policies have created favourable conditions for the project's sustainability, ensuring its objectives are aligned with broader developmental goals.





## Positive Outcomes of ECFCAL Phase 2 Project

SWI's ECFCAL Phase 2 project, launched in June 2024, builds upon the success of the initial phase, expanding its reach to a greater number of households (HH) in the same area. As the project progresses into its advanced stage, the impact is becoming increasingly evident. A key indicator of success is the significant 30% decrease in migration rates, highlighting the effectiveness of alternative livelihood options provided by the project. This shift reflects how the community is now able to rely on sustainable, local sources of income, reducing the need for seasonal migration.

In addition, the implementation of government schemes and the adoption of improved agricultural practices, including advanced equipment, have led to a noticeable increase in income for the target population. On average, household incomes have risen by 15% annually, showcasing the success of these interventions. Furthermore, the project has fostered a deeper sense of community ownership, with increasing participation in decision-making processes and a stronger engagement with government resources. The emphasis on diversified livelihoods, skill building, and access to financial support has empowered the community to achieve greater economic stability. With continued momentum, these outcomes demonstrate the project's transformative potential in enhancing the lives of rural families, providing a solid foundation for long-term growth and resilience.







## Thoughts & vision of the program for the next period

(December 2024 – May 2025)

As we mark the completion of six months of the ECFCAL Phase 2 project, the outcomes so far have been highly encouraging, with significant strides made in improving livelihoods, income generation, and community engagement. The dynamic project team, supported by technical experts and key stakeholders, has successfully taken this initiative to new heights, building on the foundations laid during the first phase.

Looking ahead, the vision for the next few months is to sustain the momentum and deepen the impact across all target areas. There is a strong focus on scaling up the implementation of improved agricultural practices, expanding access to government schemes, and enhancing the capacity of local communities to manage their livelihoods independently. By fostering stronger partnerships and refining community-driven solutions, we aim to further reduce migration rates and increase income levels for the target population.

Moreover, the project will continue to emphasize capacity building, particularly in business management, technical skills, and leadership, empowering community members to take charge of their development. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will remain key in tracking progress and ensuring foundation, we are confident

continuous improvement. With this solid that ECFCAL Phase 2 will achieve its objectives, creating long-lasting positive change and resilience for the community in the months to come.



## G. Conclusion.

The Social Development Project has made notable strides in promoting the right to livelihood in rural areas, albeit with challenges that have limited its overall success rate. Despite a well-conceived multi-pronged strategy encompassing education, skill development, infrastructure enhancement, and community empowerment, the project's impact has been mixed, with progress occurring at a slower pace than anticipated. A key initiative within the project has been the implementation of skill development programs tailored to rural contexts. These programs have provided training in areas such as agriculture and animal husbandry, helping participants diversify income streams. However, the scale and reach of these initiatives have been constrained, leaving significant sections of the target population yet to benefit fully.

The emphasis on community participation through the formation of self-help groups (SHGs) and cooperatives has shown potential but requires more facilitation that is robust. While these groups have enabled resource sharing and encouraged entrepreneurship, their impact on collective economic resilience and innovation has been uneven across regions. Although the project has contributed to incremental improvements in living standards, access to education, and healthcare, the gains have been unevenly distributed. To achieve sustained and broader success, the project must strengthen its monitoring mechanisms, allowing for better tracking of outcomes and interventions that are more effective. Additionally, regular training and capacity building for staff are imperative to ensure the delivery of high-quality support. By addressing these gaps and recalibrating strategies, the project can enhance its effectiveness and foster greater progress towards sustainable livelihoods in rural communities.

For Social Welfare Institute  
*M. Torro*  
Secretary





# Stories of change - I

Altering crop production through Short-Duration Paddy variety:  
A Success Story from Haridevpur



For years, farmers in Habibpur relied on the Swarna variety of paddy, a traditional crop that required four months to mature and yielded modest production. This long cultivation period left them with limited opportunities to pursue additional farming activities and supplemental income. The advent of the ECFCAL Phase 2 project, however, marked a turning point for these farmers, introducing them to advanced cultivation techniques and short-duration paddy varieties with high production potential.

Among the first to embrace this change were two progressive yet marginal farmers, Uttam Murmu and Shyamal Mandal. As part of an experimental initiative, the project team provided them with BB-II paddy seeds. With guidance and support, they planted the new variety on their respective lands. The results were remarkable. The BB-II variety not only matured faster but also delivered a significantly higher yield compared to the traditional Swarna crop. This improvement had a ripple effect on their livelihoods. The shorter cultivation cycle enabled the farmers to sell their produce earlier, fetching better market prices due to lower competition. More importantly, the saved time allowed them to engage in Ravi cropping, planting and harvesting additional crops within the same agricultural cycle.

The shift translated into a substantial increase in income for both farmers. Beyond financial gains, the success of their experiment became a source of inspiration for neighbouring farmers, who had been observing the process with keen interest. Uttam and Shyamal's achievements demonstrated the potential of short-duration paddy varieties, sparking enthusiasm and hope among the farming community in Habibpur and nearby villages.

The project's impact was not confined to economic benefits alone. By adopting advanced agricultural practices, the farmers gained confidence and a sense of empowerment, breaking free from the constraints of traditional farming methods. This shift paved the way for a new era of sustainable farming, where innovation and knowledge play a pivotal role.

Today, Habibpur stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and forward thinking in agriculture. The success of Uttam Murmu and Shyamal Mandal underscores how small interventions, when implemented thoughtfully, can transform lives and inspire broader change within rural communities. As more farmers in the region prepare to adopt short-duration paddy varieties, the seeds of progress sown by the ECFCAL Phase 2 project continue to grow, promising a brighter future for all.

For Social Welfare Institute  
  
Secretary

# Stories of change - II

## Reclaiming Prosperity: The Moong Revolution in Habibpur A Success Story from Habibpur



Habibpur, a village once steeped in traditional farming practices, faced numerous challenges that threatened its agricultural sustainability. Farmers relied heavily on the Swarna variety of paddy, which took four months to mature, yielded low production, and consumed significant water resources. With worsening water scarcity during winter, most farmers left their fields barren or resorted to minimal cultivation of local mustard crops, yielding little profit. This struggle led many villagers to migrate seasonally to other states in search of better livelihoods.

The ECFCAL project by SWI brought hope to this struggling community. Recognizing the need for low water, high-impact solutions, and the project introduced training on sustainable Rabi cropping in water-scarce conditions. As part of the initiative, progressive but marginal farmers like Shyamal, Sudhir, Bhavesh and Uttam were identified and supported with Moong seeds, a legume crop that requires minimal water and offers multiple benefits. The initial batch of farmers, inspired by the training and armed with Moong seeds, began cultivating their fields during the winter season. The results were transformative. The Moong crop not only thrived in the low-water environment but also provided a host of advantages.

First, the farmers earned additional income from selling Moong in the market, addressing a critical financial gap. Second, the legume's nitrogen-fixing properties enriched the soil, preparing it for the next paddy season and reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers. Third, cultivating Moong on otherwise barren fields incurred negligible costs, turning previously



unproductive land into a source of value. Lastly, Moong's high nutritional content enhanced family diets, offering better health and well-being.

The success of these farmers sparked interest among their peers, encouraging a broader shift towards adopting Moong cultivation. Empty fields once symbolic of despair were now filled with lush, green crops, reflecting a renewed sense of purpose and prosperity. The ECFCAL project's intervention not only provided economic relief but also fostered environmental sustainability and strengthened community resilience. Farmers who once saw no future in agriculture are now empowered with knowledge and resources to build a better life for their families.

Today, Habibpur stands as an example of how targeted interventions and innovative practices can address rural challenges and transform lives. The Moong revolution has rekindled hope, showing that with the right support; even the most marginal farmers can thrive against the odds.

For Social Welfare Institute  
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Secretary

