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Self Help Group Training: SIGN organized a two-day training session on the formation and strengthening of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for women from project villages, held from 10th to 11th February at the Jharana Spirituality Centre, Namkum.



A total of three women from each of the 15 participating villages attended the training. During the session, Fr. Bipin Pani, the Director of SIGN, introduced the project's concept and encouraged the participants to actively support its implementation. Mr.

Walter Kerketta, the project coordinator, led the training program and provided an in-depth explanation of the SHG model. He began by explaining the fundamental concept of Self-Help Groups, describing them as groups that empower themselves through collective efforts. He emphasized the strength found in unity and the challenges of

going it alone. Mr. Walter traced the origin of SHGs to the 1980s in Bangladesh, with the establishment of the Grameen Bank by Prof.



Muhammad Yunus. The concept quickly spread to India in the 1990s, where it gained considerable momentum. Mr. Walter further elaborated on how SHGs function, noting that these groups typically consist of 10-20 members, primarily women, who come together to save money, lend to one another, and offer social and financial

support. This approach promotes mutual trust, accountability, and group decision-making. He also discussed the process of SHG formation, including how meetings are organized and how groups evolve over time.

He highlighted the key characteristics of an ideal SHG: The group should consist of 10-19 members. Ideally, one member per family should participate. The group should be made up of either all men or all women. Members should share a similar social and financial background. The group should meet regularly to maintain its effectiveness.

In addition, Mr. Walter outlined the two main functions of an SHG: Broad Functions: Promoting the collective well-being of the group. Specific Functions: These include



savings, internal lending, and addressing the personal and financial challenges faced by members. The two-day training proved to be an invaluable experience for the women, providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to form and strengthen SHGs in their communities.

Training on formation of Kisan Clubs: SIGN organized a two-day training session on the formation and strengthening of Farmers' Clubs for farmers from project villages. The event



took place from February 12th to 13th at the Jharana Spirituality Centre, Namkum. The training was led by Mr. Walter Kerketta, the Project Coordinator. During the session, Mr. Kerketta explained that Farmers' Clubs serve as

an essential organizational mechanism for mobilizing farmers to take collective self-help actions aimed at improving both their economic and social conditions, as well as that of their communities. He emphasized that these clubs are designed to benefit farmers by providing farming-related information, technology, and best practices. He then highlighted the main objectives of Farmers' Clubs:

fostering connections among farmers, addressing agricultural challenges, offering training opportunities, raising awareness about farmers' rights, and disseminating



information on government schemes. Mr. Kerketta also elaborated on the significance of these clubs, noting that they provide a platform for peer learning, problem-solving, assistance with accessing bank loans for agricultural needs, collective marketing of produce, and credit linkages for farming activities.

The training covered the stages involved in organizing a Farmers' Club, which Mr. Kerketta outlined as follows: **Forming:** The initial stage where members enrol and hold their first few

meetings.

Storming: The phase when members begin discussing and addressing various issues or conflicts.

Norming: The stage where the



group establishes norms and structures to operate effectively. **Developing:** Capacity-building initiatives to enhance the skills of group members across various areas **Performing:** The stage where the group begins to execute plans related to commodity convergence, developmental

programs, input/output management, value addition, packaging, grading, transportation, and marketing.



Mr. Walter Kerketta also guided participants on how to effectively conduct Farmers' Club meetings and addressed the common reasons why such clubs may become dysfunctional. He cited several factors, including a lack of understanding of the club's importance, accounting errors,

insufficient communication among members, and failure to repay loans. Throughout the session, there were group discussions, and participants actively engaged by raising questions. The session was lively, and attendees reported gaining valuable insights from the training