

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2024

International Women's Day Celebration: This March International Women's Day was celebrated in different project areas of SIGN by women. On 9th March, 560 women and



adolescents together with 150 men gathered to celebrate International Women's day at Kairi Pahari in Mahuadanr of Amitppani Panchayat in Bishunpur Block. During the celebration in order to bring awareness on the issues of alcoholism, early marriage, migration and the importance of literacy, women took a rally around the village. After the celebration, all the women danced and made their presence felt.

On 10th March, 125 men and women from Dokapath, Lunpugpath, Lunpugpath Nawatoli, Bharia and Besnaph villages gathered at Dokapath Parish ground to celebrate International Women's Day. During the program, Mrs. Mary Lakra, the Zilla Parishad of Gumla District was the Chief Guest,

discussed about the richness of Tribal values. She exhorted the august gathering to revive, preserve and protect Tribal Heritage. She said that without active participation of women there is no development possible. Women need to play a big role in order to bring change in the society. She further said that every girl child needs to be educated. She shared the implementation and implications of "Abua Awas Yojna-2024". Mrs. Shobha Devi, the Mukhiya of Chainpur Gram Panchayat discussed about Gram Sabha and



importance in accessing the Government Schemes. Fr. Arvind Kujur, the Director of Gram Utthan Kendra emphasized the importance of education to bring change in the tribal community. Mr. Walter Zaphed Kerketta, the Regional Coordinator of SIGN, said that there are a lot of resources available in and around the community, we can make proper use of them and increase our family income. He also urged the parents to save, however little could be, for their children to secure their future.



Besides these, Sr. Anna, Ms Rose Xaxa and Lalita Lakra of Gram Utthan Kendra were present as the organizers of this celebration and Fr. Fulgence Soreng, the Parish Priest of Dokapath was present as the facilitator.

Goodbye to the President of SIGN: On 13th March 2024, SIGN organized a simple Send-off Ceremony for the Archbishop Felix Toppo, SJ, the outgoing President of SIGN. All the staff, together with Directors of five Diocesan Social Service Societies Viz. Fr.



Fr. Tomy and Fr. Prabal from Jan Vikas Kendra, Hazaribagh, Fr. Birender Tete and Fr. Fabian Toppo from Catholic Charities, Jamshedpur, Fr. Suresh Samad from Hoffman Social Service Society, Khunti, Fr. Binay Kerketta, from Catholic Charities, Ranchi and Fr. Arvind Kujur, from Gram Utthan Kendra, Gumla were present for this Farewell Ceremony.

It was a beautiful time reflecting back the contributions made by His Grace Archbishop Felix. Program started with a thanksgiving prayer followed by words of appreciation. Prayer was led by Manish Toppo, the Regional Coordinator of SIGN. It was followed by

a word of appreciation from Miss Archana Kujur, from accounts department, where she said Archbishop always promoted the principles of Catholic Social Teaching of safeguarding the Human dignities of poor and the marginalized. After this, Mr. Walter Zaphed Kerketta, the Regional Coordinator, who is there with SIGN from the inception of SIGN. Walter took us down to the memory lane saying that as he was there during the transition from BIJHAN Social Service Society to SIGN, he knows



the strong support was given by Archbishop Felix, when SIGN was undergoing a very difficult time. He also said that it is only because of Archbishop Felix's foresightedness



that he got Late Fr. Christudas to establish SIGN and later on bring Fr. Bipin Pani from Jamshedpur to SIGN after the departure of Fr. Christu. Fr. Tomy, the Senior most among the Directors, appreciated Archbishop Felix for the contribution made to SIGN. He said that person like Archbishop should be retired from the organization. It was followed by a short video presented by Mr. Vivek Soreng, from Sponsorship

Department. Then Fr. Bipin Pani, Secretary of SIGN, spoke on behalf of all the Board Members and General Body Members. He thanked Archbishop saying it is only because of Archbishop Felix, he is in SIGN. Finally, His Grace expressed his gratitude to the directors and to the staff. His Grace said I had the trust that Fr. Bipin will do a good work. He always gave freedom and promoted the good works done by anybody. With this program was concluded.

Five Days Composite Training: SIGN organized five days Composite Training from 21st March to 25th March at Jharna Spirituality Centre, Namkum, Ranchi. There were 48



participants from Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Khunti, Gumla and Simdega districts. On the first two days, participants learnt about lac cultivation from Dr. Dilip Kumar Singh, the Senior Technical Officer of Indian Institute of Natural Resin and Gum, Namkum, Ranchi. Dr. Dilip said that lac cultivation is the scientific management of lac insects to produce high-quality lac. Kusumi lac is produced on Kusum and Ber host tree, whereas Ragini Lac is produced on Ber and Palas host trees. He said that

paying attention to factors like Selection of host trees, climate & environmental conditions, cultivation & care of lac insects, harvesting techniques, processing method, quality control measures, we can produce high quality lac. In scientific method of lac cultivation, selection of nutrient host trees, timely pruning of the host trees, placing the insects onto the branches or by using techniques such as tying them onto the branches, proper treatment of lac seeds and use of lac seeds in the right proportion is important. Then Dr. Dilip went on to explain industrial and commercial applications of lac resin. Under industrial application, lac resin is used as shellac production, Food & Pharmaceutical Industries, Cosmetics and Textile Industry, whereas under commercial applications, it has economic importance, and environmental impact. Overall, lac is good livelihood option.



On the third and fourth day, participants learnt about pig rearing from Mr. Nakul Kumar, a self-made trainer and a practicenor for last 13 years. Mr Nakul started his session sharing the benefits of pig rearing saying rearing pigs is a suitable option for small and landless farmers, farm women. He said that pig rearing could also be taken as a part time work by the employed personals to get additional income. Pigs convert inedible feeds, forages, certain grain by-product, damaged feeds and garbage into valuable nutritious meat.

Pig is a highly prolific breeder which gives 10-12 piglets at a time and it grows faster with minimal inputs. Then he said that breed of the pig plays major role in the profitability of pig rearing. Then he mentioned a few breed of the pigs like Agonda Goan, Large White Yorkshire, Duroc, and Crossbred pig. He gave advise on housing of pigs saying house should be simple and durable. The flooring should have a rough finish

and made proof cement mortar or rough stone flooring. Proper drains should be provided so that the effluents are disposed off. Generally under village condition the housing can be made up of pens measuring 3 m X 2.4 m with an open yard of nearly the same dimension or in some cases slightly longer. Walls should be 1.2-1.5 m high from the floor. For the proposes of farrowing some of the pens could be converted into farrowing pens by providing guard rails made up of G.I pipes of 5cm diameter, along the walls, 20-25 cm from the ground and the wall. In addition to guard rails, creep space can be provided for the piglets along the wall by making a partition or in one of the corner with separate entrances for the piglets. This space usually of 0.75 m X 2.4 m



area. The successes of the pig farming are dependent upon the efficient scientific feeding practices. Three types of rations are fed to the pigs before they reach the market weight i.e. creeper/ starter, grower and finisher rations. The creeper/ starter feed is generally fed up to the attainment of 15-20 kg body weight, which is followed by grower feed up to the attainment of 50 kg body weight, and then followed by finisher feed up to the attainment of 70 kg body weight.

On the 5th day, Alice Lakra, the skilled supporting staff in ICAR-RCER, Plandu Ranchi took the session on agriculture activities. She gave input session on nursery raising, field preparation, plantation utilization of pesticide in the standing crops. She introduced a new concept of grafting on tomato and brinjal. She also explained about the importance of mulching method. Participants gained important knowledge on these topics dealt by the resource persons.

PRA Exercise: From 12th March to 18th March, Mr. Walter Zaphed Kerketta, the Regional Coordinator for Agriculture performed Participatory Appraisal Exercise in Jartatoli and Bajarmara village of Lali Panchayat in Ranchi District. There were 87 villagers who participated in the exercise. Project coordinator gave short introduction about SIGN and the purpose of having this exercise. In Bajarmara village, Mrs. Jiren Topno, the Mukhya of the panchayat participated in the exercise and encouraged the villagers. Villagers were divided in the group to do different PRA exercise to identify Natural Resources available in the villages. Time Trend was done to get a idea of quantitative changes over time in different aspects of village life. Income and Expenditure Analysis was done so as to find out financial status of the people in the village. Besides these, Seasonality, Social and Resource Mapping were done and to get crossed checked all these Focus Group Discussion. These exercises involved young and old people of the villages. They have lot of respect for each and every one for their knowledge shared by the participants about the surroundings. Villagers were happy to take part in these exercises. It made them aware about existence of their own villages. They are very eager to support the upcoming project in their area

