



Organization at a glance



STATE COVERED-
BIHAR, JHARKHAND,
WEST BENGAL, UTTAR
PRADESH



DISTRICT COVERED-
55+
VILLAGE COVERED-
2100+



2.8 LAKH



COMMUNITY
RESOURCE PERSON-
750+



COMMUNITY BASED
ORGANISATION
DEVELOPED-
FPO-63
FFS-350+
SHG- 15,850
PRODUCER GROUP-225+



MICROENTERPRUSE
DEVELOPMENT- 753+



Dr. Mahua Ghosh Sengupta
(Deputy Director, MEAL & Knowledge
Management)

Editorial Note

What does real change look like? It's not always in policies or PowerPoints. It's in the hands that shape a lac bangle. It is with the farmer who decides to stay rooted—and still dream big. It is in a quiet forest where villagers reclaim their right to protect and prosper.

Welcome to Volume 4 of 4S India's bi-annual newsletter, an anthology of courage, collaboration, and community-led breakthroughs. We've recast our sections this time for a sharper, more grounded narrative.

We celebrate the power of pause, reflection, and team alignment—from leadership journeys to the unforgettable 4S Teams' Get-Together, in the section Milestones and Moments.

The section **"Pathbreakers: New Beginnings"** brings you fresh, bold experiments. Our Entrepreneurship Development Programme in Gaya is not just skilling—it's sparking a shift in rural ambition. Meanwhile, Common Ground in Pakur marks a radical step toward community-owned commons governance.

Voices from the Field is the heart of this volume.

It's where change has a face and a name—Barnali, Gulshan, the farmers of Pilibhit, the forest protectors of Littipara. These aren't just success stories; they are roadmaps of what's possible when communities lead.

And in Reflections, we turn the lens inward. What keeps us going? What holds us back? These honest insights from our board, management, and frontline staff remind us that transformation is not only external—it's deeply personal.

You don't have to just read about it. Come see it. Walk through our project villages. Talk to the women leading FPOs. Witness a community that now governs its forest with pride. Let the energy, resilience, and dignity of the people we work with move you, inspire you, shake you.

We invite our friends, partners, and supporters to the field, not just to witness change, but to become part of it. Your presence motivates us. Your questions challenge us. Your solidarity strengthens us to keep pushing boundaries and making our work more meaningful. So, here's to deep impact, radical hope, and walking this journey—together.

MILESTONES & MOMENTS

Journey Within, Journey Together: Reflecting on Leadership and Alignment at 4S India

In a significant stride toward fostering stronger leadership and alignment within the organization, 4S India conducted the third session of its ongoing leadership training series on November 26th and 27th, 2024. Facilitated by Swetank Mishra at Ashraya Residency, this training brought together the Executive Director, senior management, and the extended leadership team. The session built on the momentum of the previous two, continuing the journey of self-awareness, organizational values, and sustainable development—an experience that was both inward-looking and action-oriented.



The outcome was clear: participants left with not just heightened self-awareness and stronger communication abilities, but also with practical tools and strategies to foster team synergy and lead with greater purpose. These learnings are expected to cascade through the organization, reinforcing a shared vision and commitment to community empowerment.

"Fostering Inner Growth and Collective Leadership for a Stronger 4S India"



The sessions invited participants to explore their internal landscapes—recognizing emotions, aligning thoughts with actions, and confronting personal limitations like guilt and discomfort that often hinder decision-making. Through a unique blend of reflection, discussion, and role-play, the group was encouraged to examine how individual beliefs and values shape organizational outcomes. One particularly engaging activity involved enacting various “rasas” or emotions, helping participants build empathy and enhance emotional intelligence.

By connecting personal development with organizational vision, the training aimed to nurture a culture of ownership, accountability, and continuous improvement. Discussions around values and ethics prompted a renewed commitment to 4S India’s core mission—empowering rural poor and women through sustainable development. Case studies and group activities further sharpened communication skills and deepened understanding of collaborative strategies.

As 4S India continues to evolve, the training underscored a timeless truth: the journey toward sustainability begins with self-discovery and is sustained by collective intent. This session wasn’t just about learning; it was about becoming—better individuals, better leaders, and a better organization.

Reviving Tradition, Empowering Women: Lac Bangle Making as a Group Enterprise

In a vibrant step toward women's economic empowerment, 4S India has launched a skill development initiative focused on Lac Bangle Making for Mahadalit women. Rooted deeply in Bihar's cultural traditions, especially in Gaya, lac bangles—known locally as lahathi—are more than just ornaments; they symbolize marital bliss and social identity. With high seasonal demand, particularly during festivals like Chhath Puja, this art form offers a sustainable livelihood opportunity.

Recognizing this potential, 4S India initiated a structured training program designed to revive the traditional craft while promoting it as a viable group-based enterprise. Led by artisan-trainer Md. Saifik Alam, the program blends hands-on practice with business-oriented learning. Participants are trained in the full spectrum of bangle-making—from heating and molding lac to applying intricate designs and embellishments. Emphasis is also placed on safety, creativity, packaging, and market-readiness.

*"Lac Bangle Making is
Empowering Women and
Creating Sustainable Livelihoods"*



This initiative goes beyond skill-building. By organizing women into collectives, it fosters shared decision-making, risk reduction, and better access to markets. With low capital investment and high value addition, lac bangle making stands as a promising enterprise model for grassroots women.

The initiative not only preserves a rich cultural tradition but also aligns with broader goals of women's empowerment and rural economic development. It is a celebration of art, science, and enterprise—where each handcrafted bangle carries the story of transformation, tradition, and hope.

As the initiative gains momentum, 4S India envisions scaling it across other regions, ensuring that the timeless craft of lac bangle making becomes a tool for lasting change.

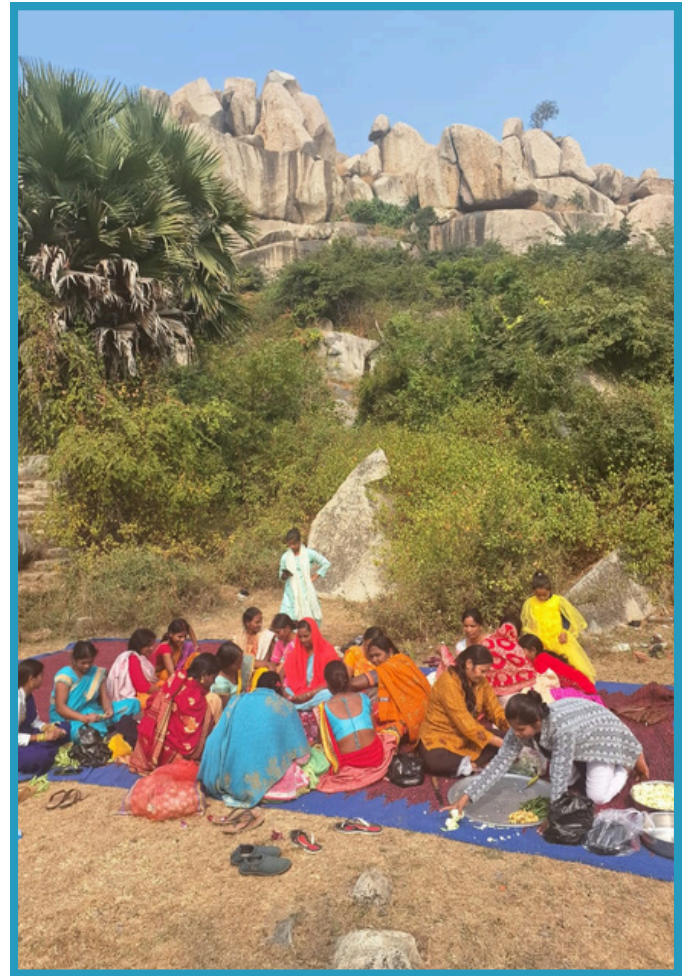


Bridging Vision and Team Spirit: Highlights from the Field Teams' Visioning cum Get-Together

To kick off 2025 with renewed alignment and energy, 4S India organized a series of Field Teams' Visioning cum Get-Together workshops across its six operational regions—South Bihar, North Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Mithila-Tirhut. Held between late December 2024 and early January 2025, the workshops brought together field and office teams in a shared space for reflection, alignment, and celebration.

The primary objective was to strengthen team cohesion and deepen collective ownership of the organization's vision, mission, and strategic direction. Through interactive sessions, teams engaged in discussions around roles and responsibilities, team norms, and organizational values. One of the key highlights was the *NAVARAS* game—an engaging ice-breaker designed to help team members express emotions, relate with one another, and set the tone for open and meaningful conversations.

"More than a workshop, it was a shared journey—realigning vision and deepening bonds"



They also provided a platform for teams to offer constructive feedback on operations—contributing ideas to enhance data reporting, field planning, and collaboration.

Participants explored the organization's vision and goals in depth, translating them into actionable ideas relevant to their contexts. They also worked together to define acceptable, unacceptable, and non-negotiable workplace behaviors—reaffirming their commitment to a culture rooted in integrity and respect. Role clarity sessions enabled area-specific work planning and improved understanding of accountability structures.

Beyond the formal agenda, these gatherings created an atmosphere of camaraderie and collaboration. Informal exchanges over shared meals and a day-long picnic allowed teams to build deeper interpersonal connections. Cross-departmental dialogues helped surface shared challenges and field innovations, leading to improved coordination around community engagement and reporting processes.

The spirit of these sessions has carried forward into 2025, energizing teams and reaffirming a shared commitment to 4S India's mission at the grassroots.



Crucially, the workshops reinforced organizational values and policies, including the Code of Conduct, Work From Home norms, and field visit protocols.

PATHBREAKERS: NEW BEGINNINGS

Common Ground Initiative Launched in Jharkhand: A Bold Step Toward Community-Led Commons Governance

Restoring the commons,
reclaiming community
power

JHARKHAND'S TRIBAL HEARTLAND LEADS THE WAY



Sarva Seva Samity Sanstha (4S-India) has launched the Common Ground Initiative in the tribal-rich districts of Pakur and Sahibganj, Jharkhand, with a focus on sustainable and community-led management of common resources like forests, water bodies, and uncultivated lands. This effort spans five blocks—Littipara, Hiranpur, Amrapara in Pakur and Rajmahal, Taljhari in Sahibganj—where the initiative seeks to empower tribal communities, particularly the Mal Pahariya and Santhal groups, to reclaim their role as stewards of the land they have lived on for generations.

The initial phase of the project, from October to December 2024, laid the groundwork for a decentralized governance model. Five local catalysts, one in each block, were selected to lead the initiative at the grassroots level under the guidance of a central team leader. In December, a three-day residential training program in Ranchi, conducted by Living Landscapes, brought together these catalysts to deepen their understanding of commons governance, socio-ecological systems, and participatory landscape restoration. Following this, 25 villages across nine Gram Panchayats were identified based on ecological importance and livelihood dependence, marking the beginning of localized action in vulnerable but resource-rich landscapes.

However, the path ahead is not without hurdles. A major challenge lies in the limited engagement from government functionaries, primarily due to the absence of formal directives from higher authorities. Ensuring institutional buy-in remains essential to move from intention to impact.

The coming months will see the training of village-level catalysts, awareness generation through local fairs and melas, and block-level meetings to align government departments and civil society actors with the vision of the initiative. The Common Ground Initiative is not merely a program—it is a renewed call for ecological justice, returning the governance of natural resources to the hands of those most intimately connected to them.

In Littipara block, over 30 key local stakeholders—including elected Panchayat leaders, forest department staff, and local media—were mapped as part of an emerging Multi-Actor Platform (MAP) to enable collaborative decision-making. Community consultations and focus group discussions followed, uncovering critical insights into the degradation of common resources, community dependence on forests and uncultivated land, and the urgent need for locally adapted restoration strategies.



Fostering Rural Entrepreneurship: 4S India Launches EDP through ABF

Empowering
individuals today

**BECOME THE BUSINESS LEADERS
OF TOMORROW**



In a significant step toward promoting rural entrepreneurship, 4S India launched the Entrepreneur Development Program (EDP) through support from Axis Bank Foundation (ABF) at the middle of 2024. The program is being implemented in two key districts of Bihar—Bankebazar in Gaya and Begusarai—aiming to nurture local entrepreneurial talent and establish a robust ecosystem that supports sustainable, small-scale enterprises.

The initiative seeks to onboard 25 to 30 entrepreneurs every quarter in Bankebazar and around 25 in Begusarai. Beyond the numbers, the program is designed to inspire other entrepreneurs. By helping rural entrepreneurs grow viable businesses, 4S India hopes to generate a series of success stories that will serve as role models for others in the community, sparking wider interest and ambition.

The EDP begins with a detailed identification and finalization process, where potential entrepreneurs are surveyed and selected based on their interest, capacity, and potential. Once selected, a tailored business framework is developed for each entrepreneur. Weekly field visits ensure regular need assessment and handholding, allowing for timely intervention and guidance. From support in preparing business documentation to facilitating specialized training and financial inclusion, the program offers comprehensive assistance. Entrepreneurs are also connected to essential market linkages—both backward and forward—ensuring access to raw materials and markets.

However, the path ahead is not without hurdles. A major challenge lies in the limited engagement from government functionaries, primarily due to the absence of formal directives from higher authorities. Ensuring institutional buy-in remains essential to move from intention to impact.

As the first phase of implementation progresses, EDP is beginning to reshape the rural enterprise landscape. With continuous support and a clear roadmap, 4S India is fostering a new generation of entrepreneurs poised to lead change from the grassroots.

One of the defining features of the program is its emphasis on financial integration and transparent reporting. By enabling access to loans, credit and debit cards, and converging multiple financial services, the EDP ensures that each entrepreneur has the tools necessary for growth. Regular monitoring of turnover and business performance allows for effective tracking and support.





Barnali Dhara: A Beacon of Women's Empowerment in Agriculture

For your newsletter, don't just rely on listings and pictures of properties to make it interesting. People want newsletters, so they can stay informed. Add articles that will help homeowners and property buyers make the most of their investment. You can also update them on the state of the market, so they have an idea of what to do next.

Barnali's story began in 2005 when she took charge of her family's agricultural livelihood. Determined to uplift her community, she formed a self-help group (SHG) that brought local women together to explore income-generating opportunities. In 2017, after receiving training from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Nimpith Ramakrishna Ashram, she gained insights into government agricultural schemes and resources. She leveraged this knowledge to connect marginalized women with innovative farming practices and livelihood projects.

Under her leadership, the Ashwatthala Mahila Janakalyan Samiti, supported by 4S India, expanded its scope to include hybrid sunflower seed cultivation, coconut farming, poultry, and goat rearing. Her initiatives have benefited over 2,000 women farmers, empowering them through advanced techniques such as drip irrigation and precision water management.

Barnali Dhara's achievements reflect the core mission of 4S India—to drive rural transformation through women's leadership and sustainable agriculture. Her visionary leadership exemplifies how collective action, skill enhancement, and access to market linkages can create resilient rural economies. Her recognition as a progressive farmer is not only a personal triumph but a beacon of hope for countless women striving to achieve self-reliance and dignity in agriculture. Her journey, celebrated with pride by 4S India, will continue to inspire a new generation of women farmers to break barriers, innovate, and lead

When women lead the field, they cultivate change far beyond the farm



From Survival to Stability: Gulshan's Journey with Goats and Grit

*With Two Goats and
Unshakable Grit, Gulshan
Turned Survival into
Stability*

In the quiet village of Chainpur in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, Gulshan Khatun lived with the weight of responsibility on her shoulders. As a mother of eight—five daughters and three sons—she worked tirelessly to keep her large family afloat. Her limited income from small-scale farming, poultry, and goat rearing was never enough to cover essential expenses like food, education, and healthcare. Each day brought new financial stress, and her aspirations for a better life often felt like a distant dream.

Things began to shift in 2024, when field mobilizers from the LIC HFL LIFE Project, implemented by 4S India Foundation, identified her during a community outreach. Seeing her commitment and potential, Gulshan was selected for a goat-rearing initiative and received a financial grant of ₹5,500. With this support, she purchased two goats, marking the beginning of her transformation.

What followed was not just a business opportunity, but a journey of learning and growth. With regular guidance from the field team—on animal care, planning, and income tracking—Gulshan saw her herd grow and her income stabilize. She started selling milk, reinvested earnings into livestock upkeep, and even managed to sell goats for additional income. Over time, her household became more secure, and her children's needs were better met.

Today, Gulshan is not just financially stronger but emotionally empowered. She's respected in her community, seen as a role model by other women who now approach her for advice. Her confidence has grown, and she actively participates in household decisions. With dreams of expanding her enterprise and mentoring others, Gulshan's story stands as proof that when given a chance, rural women can build lasting change—not just for themselves, but for generations to come.



A Shot of Change: How a Vaccination Camp Revived Hope in Madaripur

*A Single Vaccination Drive
Sparked Hope, Health, and
Herd Resilience in
Madaripur*

On a crisp December morning in 2024, the village of Madaripur in Minapur Block came alive with an unusual buzz. Farmers, women, and youth gathered in large numbers—not for a festival or a market day, but for something far more vital: a goat vaccination camp. For many, it was the first time they had seen veterinary services come so close to their doorstep. The initiative, organized through collaborative community outreach, aimed not just to protect livestock but to build awareness around the importance of preventive animal healthcare.

Though only 78 goats were initially registered, word spread quickly, and by the end of the day, 100 goats had been vaccinated. The presence of Dr. Sumanta Kumar, the Block Veterinary Officer, lent credibility and comfort to the event. He patiently explained to farmers the significance of timely vaccinations, disease prevention, and improved livestock productivity. His approachable manner and deep knowledge encouraged the farmers to ask questions and actively engage with the process.

The camp drew 55 participants, each of whom returned home not only with healthier goats but with renewed confidence in the role of veterinary care. For families dependent on goat rearing for income and nutrition, this simple act of vaccination meant protection against loss, improved productivity, and hope for a more stable livelihood. More importantly, it fostered a sense of collective responsibility within the community.

The Madaripur vaccination camp wasn't just about numbers; it was about trust, awareness, and empowerment. It set in motion a ripple effect, with nearby villages expressing interest in similar drives. The success of this effort lies not only in the goats protected that day but in the minds awakened to the power of knowledge and care. It was a small intervention, but for Madaripur, it was a shot of lasting change.



Mallava Agro FPO: From Rural Roots to National Recognition

Mallava Agro Farmer Producer Company Limited has set a gold standard for what rural farmer collectives can achieve through vision, unity, and innovation. Promoted by 4S India and established in July 2021, the FPO began with limited resources but limitless determination. In just under four years, it expanded its operations exponentially, reaching an impressive turnover of ₹5.32 crore in 2024-25. With 896 shareholders and well-structured financial backing, Mallava Agro has become a model FPO, demonstrating how collective farming can be both sustainable and profitable.

Its success lies not only in its strong agri-business model—supplying inputs like seeds and fertilizers and trading crops like potato, paddy, and wheat—but also in its commitment to forward-looking solutions. The launch of a Plasma Water Manufacturing Unit is one such innovation that reflects its leadership in agri-technology and environmental sustainability. Mallava Agro FPO has also ventured into cross-border trade, dealing in potato and maize with markets across India and even extending to neighboring countries like Nepal and Pakistan—demonstrating resilience and enterprise, even during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The DGM of NABARD also inaugurated their PMFME oil and flour processing unit on 25th February 2025.

Mallava Agro's journey has earned widespread acclaim. On 4th January 2025, representatives of the FPO were invited to attend a prestigious event hosted by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Bharat Mandapam, Delhi. They had the rare opportunity to interact with national-level innovators, visit various exhibition stalls, and proudly showcase the impactful work of the FPO in the presence of dignitaries, including Union Finance Minister Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman.

The recognition continued when, on 26th January 2025, the FPO was again honored with a special meeting with the Prime Minister, following its selection by NABARD as one of the country's outstanding FPOs.

FPO cultivating a movement for rural prosperity and innovation



Spicing Up Success: Puranpur FPO Showcases Turmeric and Chili at Pilibhit Fair

In a vibrant celebration of rural enterprise and agricultural innovation, the Farmers' Fair held at Gandhi Hall, Pilibhit, brought together stakeholders, leaders, and cultivators from across the region. Organized by the Agriculture Department, the event was a major platform to promote farmer-led initiatives and showcase regional agri-produce.

The fair was inaugurated in the presence of several distinguished guests, including Shri Jitin Prasada, Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce and Electronic Technology, along with Shri Baburam Paswan, Hon'ble MLA, Puranpur, and Shri Sanjay Gangwar, Hon'ble State Minister for Sugarcane Development. Also attending were Shri Swami Pravatanand Ji, Shri Vivek Verma, Shri Sanjeev Pratap Singh, and senior officials from the district administration and agriculture department.

Among the many stalls at the fair, the Puranpur Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) made a strong impression with its display of locally grown turmeric and chili products. The stall was managed by a committed team led by Ms. Urmila Mandal (Chairperson), Ms. Reena Mandal (Director), Mr. Vivekananda Sarkar (CEO), and Mr. Biplab Sarkar (Accountant). The display not only drew appreciation from visitors but also sparked interest among officials and buyers for the high quality and market potential of the region's spices. The FPO's participation exemplified the strength of collective farming and the growing role of rural producers in value-added agriculture.

Events like these are more than just exhibitions—they are spaces where farmers find recognition, networks, and new possibilities. For Puranpur FPO, it marked another step forward in its mission to uplift rural livelihoods and build farmer-led agri-business success stories.

From local farms to center stage—Puranpur FPO turns spices into symbols of rural pride and progress



Empowering communities to protect their forests: A grassroots movement in Littipara

In the heart of Littipara block of Pakur district, a transformative environmental movement is unfolding, led by the very people whose lives are intertwined with the forest. Home to the Mal Pahariya people—one of India's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)—this forested landscape has long been a source of livelihood, especially through the seasonal harvesting of Mahua flowers. For generations, the community relied on controlled burning to clear the forest floor and ease the collection of Mahua. But over time, this practice became more widespread, resulting in ecological imbalance, loss of biodiversity, and a decline in Mahua yields.

In FY 2024–25, 4S India, through its Common Ground Initiative, sought to empower these communities to rethink their relationship with the forest. Rather than imposing rules or offering financial incentives, 4S India encouraged open dialogues and deep listening. Early discussions in villages such as Durio, Kathalpara, and Jhapari revealed the unintended consequences of fire—vanishing mushrooms, declining Mahua, and the retreat of wildlife from the area. On February 11, 2025, a significant event took place at Gadphari Chabutra, where 14 villages came together and made the collective decision to abandon the burning practice. They formed the Jungle Bachao Samiti—a community-driven body tasked with forest stewardship. This collective action soon inspired two more villages to join, expanding the movement to 16 villages. Each community established its own Forest Protection Committee, including women leaders and traditional authorities like Pradhans and Gudits, to develop rules for forest entry, Mahua collection, and rotational monitoring.

The women of Littipara played a pivotal role in this transformation. Martha Paharin, who leads a 12-member group, shared how they now harvest Mahua without using fire. “The forest feels alive again,” she said. “It listens to us, and we listen to it.” Their leadership reshaped harvesting norms and challenged gender roles, placing women at the heart of decision-making and forest stewardship. The results were swift. Mahua yields improved across several patches, and forest fires dropped dramatically—only two minor incidents were reported across 14 villages. Though formal income assessments are pending, villagers report better quantity and quality of Mahua, fetching higher prices in the market. This model stands out for its authenticity. Rooted in local traditions, built through consensus, and driven by ownership, it required no financial incentives—just facilitation and trust. Its governance structure mirrors cultural realities, sustained by those most invested in the forest's future.

Now, 4S India and community leaders are documenting the model into standard operating procedures (SOPs), with plans to scale it to other villages, grazing lands, and water conservation areas. Steps are also being taken to formalize community roles with the Forest Department. What began with a simple question—“What is the cost of fire?”—has become a powerful grassroots movement. Littipara's forests now speak of resilience, renewed harmony, and a future shaped by the people who have always lived closest to the land.

A community-led movement in Littipara is transforming forest management, bringing sustainable practices and women's leadership to the forefront



Transforming Farming in Wajidpur: Green Net Shed Brings Year-Round Prosperity

*One Shed, One Farmer,
Endless Harvest- The Shed
that sparked a movement*

In Wajidpur village of Bankey Bazar, Bihar, a quiet agricultural revolution is underway, led by Sumanti Devi, a smallholder farmer and the wife of Amresh Bhuiya. With support from 4S India, Sumanti installed a green net shed on her land in July 2024. This modest yet transformative structure is changing the way farming is practiced in the region.

Spanning 120 square meters and built at a cost of ₹70,000, the shed provides a controlled environment that shields crops from extreme weather, pests, and diseases. By reducing dependency on chemical pesticides and protecting against climate uncertainties, it promotes sustainable, year-round cultivation.

Before adopting this model, Sumanti relied solely on seasonal crops like rice and wheat, earning around ₹10,000 per season. Today, her green shed supports the cultivation of tomatoes, cucumbers, bitter melon, okra, and bottle gourd, while crops like moong and pointed gourd grow outside. By February 2025, she had already earned over ₹40,000 in profits from tomatoes and cucumbers alone.

Her success has inspired others: A fellow farmer Kamlesh Kumar is now replicating the model. What began as a single experiment is now a scalable solution, fostering resilience, food security, and rural prosperity.

Green net sheds are more than infrastructure; they are a pathway to climate-smart agriculture. With the right guidance and adoption, they hold the power to transform smallholder livelihoods across India.



From Struggle to Strength: The Journey of Sanju Sinha

One Woman and a thousand Challenges; Yet Sanju Sinha Turned Adversity into Action

In the quiet village of Rasulpur Bhitiya, Bihar, lives 52-year-old Sanju Sinha—a woman whose journey from grief to growth exemplifies courage, resilience, and reinvention. After losing her husband and becoming the sole caregiver for her two differently-abled sons, Sanju faced overwhelming financial and emotional challenges. But instead of giving in to despair, she chose determination.

Her turning point came in 2023 when she connected with 4S India and was introduced to Natural Farming through the Non-Pesticide Management (NPM) approach. With technical support and a willingness to learn, Sanju adopted eco-friendly farming methods. Gradually, she not only improved her crop yields but also started producing and marketing her own organic inputs, like Bahubali Pesticide, Tonic, and Fungicide, earning ₹12,000 in just three months.

BMotivated by her progress, Sanju trained in composting and sold 250 kg of organic compost, becoming a mentor to other women in her village. She now leads by example, encouraging others to adopt sustainable, low-cost farming practices.

Sanju's journey is more than a story of personal success. It's about nurturing the soil, building community, and sowing seeds of long-term change. Her dream: to see an entire village practicing natural farming, earning dignified incomes, and living healthier lives.

"If I can do it, so can you," she says, - A message that continues to inspire many across rural Bihar.



BOARD MEMBER



Mrs. Smita Rawat

A JOURNEY OF LEARNING AND GROWTH

After 34 years in government service, joining the 4S Board has been a truly enriching and eye-opening experience. Although I haven't worked directly in the development sector, my husband's long-standing association with it introduced me to its values and challenges early on. I've also served on the boards of other NGOs and public sector undertakings, but 4S has offered a uniquely deeper engagement with development work.

When Mihir invited me to join the Board, I was initially unsure—would my background be relevant in this context? But from the very first meeting, including a thought-provoking workshop led by Prof. Ghosh, I saw how much I could learn from the diverse and experienced professionals on the Board, including colleagues like Vijay Nadkarni and Manas Satpathy. What stands out at 4S is the depth and seriousness of its Board processes.

Meetings are not just formalities—they are well-prepared, rich in information, and designed to draw on each member's expertise. The Board is not only kept informed but actively involved. The committees, composed of Board members, require sustained engagement. Serving on the Audit Committee and helping revise the by-laws has broadened my perspective on governance, especially in the nonprofit space.

Being part of 4S has been a meaningful learning experience. I've grown—both professionally and personally—and I hope I've been able to contribute in return. This role has helped me engage more deeply with the real-world issues facing NGOs and has reinforced the value of thoughtful, transparent, and participatory governance. I'm grateful for the opportunity and look forward to supporting 4S's impactful work in the years ahead.



Mr. Dharmendra Sriwastava

EMPOWERING THE GRASSROOTS: MY RURAL DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

Reflecting on my journey, I feel a deep sense of purpose and fulfilment in having dedicated over 25 years to the field of rural development. With a postgraduate degree in Rural Development from the Xavier Institute of Social Service, my professional life has been rooted in creating sustainable livelihoods for rural communities, particularly in regions like Jharkhand, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh.

From the outset of my career, agriculture management and its allied sectors have been at the core of my work. I've had the opportunity to lead and contribute to a wide range of initiatives—from organizing Self Help Groups (SHGs) and supporting farmer mobilization, to developing market-driven strategies that help small farmers thrive. My efforts in connecting farmers directly to markets have been instrumental in enhancing their income and resilience.

I've always been passionate about the role of technology and innovation in rural transformation. Whether it was introducing solar microgrids, solar irrigation pumps, or promoting sustainable farming technologies,

I've strived to bring scalable solutions that empower communities. Over the years, I've also built expertise in marketing, fundraising, and project implementation, helping shape and sustain impactful interventions.

A significant part of my work has involved supporting women's cooperatives, producer companies, and microfinance-based institutions—particularly in Jharkhand and Bihar. Guiding around 35 such organizations to evolve as strong agents of livelihood promotion has been both a challenge and a privilege.

Looking back, I take pride in the networks I've helped build, the innovations I've helped introduce, and most importantly, the lives I've touched through persistent efforts in rural development. Each experience has deepened my belief in the power of grassroots engagement and the transformative potential of inclusive, community-led development.

GROWING TOGETHER: MY SEVEN-YEAR JOURNEY WITH 4S INDIA

As I look back on my seven years with 4S India, I feel immense gratitude for a journey that has been as humbling as it has been enriching. I joined in July 2018 through the NITI Aayog-ITC collaboration, stepping into a role that would eventually take me across some of the most underserved regions of Jharkhand. From Field Coordinator to Project Associate, my role has evolved—but what has remained constant is the opportunity to work at the grassroots. Engaging deeply with communities, especially the Mal Pahariya tribe, I have come to understand that true development goes beyond agriculture or water—it's about health, rights, education, and sustainable livelihoods, all interwoven into the fabric of rural life. This journey has helped me grow not just professionally—in monitoring and evaluation, documentation, team leadership, and government engagement—but also personally. Each project and interaction has offered a new perspective. The support from mentors, the camaraderie of teammates, and the wisdom of the communities we serve have all left an indelible mark on me. As I move forward, I remain committed to the values and vision of 4S India—of inclusive, community-led change. I carry forward not only the lessons and skills, but also the relationships and purpose that continue to inspire me every day.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this shared journey.

WALKING THE HEALTH PATH TOGETHER: REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD

Since joining Sarva Seva Samity Sanstha as a Field Health Coordinator in November 2024, I've been working across eight villages to improve health, nutrition, and hygiene practices. Over time, I've seen significant changes—more women are attending health meetings, seeking check-ups, vaccinations, and opting for institutional deliveries. However, challenges remain. Male participation is still low, often due to time constraints or lack of interest. Remote village locations, lengthy meetings, and deep-rooted traditional beliefs also make it harder to engage everyone equally. To overcome this, I've focused on building a team of local changemakers—people from within the community who can lead, motivate, and carry forward the message. My goal is to foster inclusive participation, where both women and men take responsibility for their community's well-being. It's a slow but rewarding journey. Every small shift feels like a step toward lasting change—and I remain committed to walking this path.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this shared journey.



Amit Saha



Susmita Malto



Abhishek Behera

FROM VILLAGE FIELDS TO HUMAN RESOURCES: MY JOURNEY OF PURPOSE

My name is Abhishek Behera. In 2018, after completing my BBA (Hons), I joined World Vision India — a step that changed the course of my life. I was posted in remote, disaster-prone areas of Sunderban in which I got Basanti, Nafarganj, and Jharkhali Blocks to serve, covering eight villages and over 600 children. Initially, I had no big expectations, but the experience transformed me. World Vision's India focus on fighting child malnutrition became my mission too. I wasn't just an employee — I became a caregiver, mentor, and sometimes even family to the people I served. One unforgettable moment was when a mother told me, "Because of you, my child is alive today." That remains the most meaningful achievement of my life.

Despite challenges like cyclones Amphan and Yaas and even Covid-19, I stayed with the community, offering shelter, food, and hope. I became part of their lives and their fight for dignity and survival.

Today, I work as a Human Resource Executive at Sarva Seva Samity Sanstha (4S India). My field experience helps me support frontline workers with empathy and understanding. From a BBA (Hons) student to a village field worker to an HR professional — my journey taught me that true success lies in serving others and making a real difference.

JOURNEY OF GROWTH: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

I take pride in how far I have come; a journey shaped by the values, determination, and support instilled in me by my middle-class upbringing. These guiding principles played a crucial role in helping me complete my Bachelor's degree in Finance and Accounting with Honours in 2022. This achievement not only strengthened my academic foundation but also equipped me with valuable practical skills.

Before stepping into the world of accounting, I worked for 1.5 years in a medicine warehouse as a barcoder. During this time, I juggled night shifts with my academic pursuits; a period that tested my endurance, time management, and resilience. Though it was challenging, it proved to be one of the most formative experiences of my life.

My professional journey formally began in February 2023, when I joined 4S India as an Accounts Trainee. Stepping into the accounting field without prior experience was daunting, but I was eager to learn, grow, and adapt at my own pace. Over the past year, I have gained significant exposure to accounting practices, financial management, and the unique challenges faced by non-profit organizations, and how to navigate them effectively. Working at 4S India has been a deeply enriching experience. The supportive and collaborative environment created by my peers and mentors has been instrumental in my growth. I continue to learn from their insights, dedication, and the organization's unwavering commitment to its vision. The positive work culture and collective focus on creating meaningful impact inspire me every day.

Looking back, I feel a strong sense of accomplishment and gratitude. My journey so far has been filled with lessons, and I look forward to continuing to grow, both personally and professionally, within the 4S India family.



Subhra Acharya

Appreciate You

Biannual newsletter about our organisation!

Gangtok Retreat 2025

We were delighted to announce that our annual retreat was held in Gangtok, Sikkim with all our staff during March 2025. The retreat featured meaningful discussions, sharing of experiences, and team reflections that enriched the overall experience.

The retreat successfully created a space for meaningful exchanges and team bonding.

Special Diwali Arrangements

Diwali 2024 brought a wave of joy and togetherness to our workplace. In the spirit of the festival, special arrangements were made to make our employees feel truly celebrated.

The vibrant festive came alive with cultural performances, festive décor, and thoughtful gift distributions. It was more than just a celebration; it was a beautiful reminder of the bonds we share as a team. A truly joyful and heartwarming experience for all!

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Head Office- BC-247, Sector 1, Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700 064, Email:
info@4sindia.org.in

Editor: Dr. Mahua Sengupta (Deputy director, MEAL & KM)
Associate Editor & Designer: Mrs. Payel Biswas Sarkar (MIS &
Documentation Officer)



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