

# **SIX DECADES**

**IGSSS JOURNEY OF BUILDING  
RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

*Study by Dr. Joseph Xavier SJ*



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## Foreword

**A**n organisation is essentially more than its physical structure. It is founded on the principles it promotes, the causes it supports, and the dedication and caring of those who carry out its Vision forward. This is especially true of Indo-Global Social Service Society, an organisation that has evolved over the past 60 years, playing multiple roles - from being solely a fund disbursal organisation, to an accompanier of civil society organisations, to a full-fledged developmental institution with its core programmatic areas and thematic expertise. This amply evidences the innate resilience and dynamism of the institution, anchored in the robust legacies of its past but also seeking to expand its horizons continually. Its relentless efforts over the course of 60 years embody the collective human spirit which has sustained us as a society.

On its 60th year, IGSSS commissioned nation-wide research for,

- Scientifically analysing and articulating the big picture that emerges from the resilience of the communities, which has resulted in improved quality of lives of marginalized groups and individuals, served by IGSSS in the last 7-8 years.
- Re-imagining the future mission of IGSSS in the current context

Dr. Joseph Xavier who undertook this study travelled across the country met all stakeholders and presented comprehensive finding in his detailed report. I immensely thank him for his valuable work in a short span of time.

While we look back at the journey we traversed with communities, civil society groups, governments, and other stakeholders over the decades, there have been learnings which not only shaped up the IGSSS's programmes and policies but have been instrumental in taking the developmental discourse from service delivery to people centric and people led.

Through the troughs and crusts of decades old relationship with the people, the support of communities, grass-root level organizations, implementing partners, funders and NGOs has been pivotal for the outreach and the quality of programmes. We are grateful to all the communities, partners, funding partners and everyone who walked along with us in this journey.

IGSSS would continue to serve the society through collaborative actions with communities, governments, and civil society actors to build resilience of marginalized and poor leading to a just and an inclusive society.

This document is an encapsulated version of a detailed study report and I urge readers to visit our website to peruse our comprehensive report and provide valuable insights.

Finally, special gratitude to my colleague Mr. Yasir Qureshi for preparing this summary document.

*John Peter Nelson*  
Executive Director

## Journey of IGSSS over Six Decades

Indo-Global Social Service Society (IGSSS) is a non-profit organisation based in India, working with the mandate for a humane social order based on truth, justice, freedom, and equity. Established in 1960, IGSSS works for the development, capacity building and enlightenment of vulnerable communities across the country for their effective participation in development. With its presence across India, IGSSS has set its thematic focus on promoting sustainable livelihood, building climate-resilient communities and livelihood systems, energising the Youth as change-makers, protecting lives, livelihood, and assets from the impact of disasters, and working with urban poor. Gender and Youth are underlining themes across all interventions.

In 1960, MISEREOR established Indo-German Social Service Society in response to their campaign against poverty and hunger to support development projects in India. IGSSS was registered as a Society in 1961 and worked as a financial support agency: received and disbursed funds according to the directions given by MISEREOR.

1960

Till the 1970s IGSSS was a grant disbursal agency of projects in India sanctioned by Misereor. By the 1980s, the organisation gained autonomy in partner and project selection. On March 29, 1980, the new office building of IGSSS of 28 institutional Area was established.

1970-80s

**1990s**

1990s was a crucial decade for IGSSS as it established regional structures and launched innovative programs like ATMA, which focused on community mobilization and capacity building and SMILE (Students Mobilisation Initiative for Learning through Exposure) which focused on youth development.

**2000  
-  
2020**

The decade of 2000 gave IGSSS a new identity. We became Indo-Global Social Service Society, with a new vision, mission, and a strategic plan. Focus moved beyond partner management to building thematic expertise, direct project implementation and establishing project-based structures.

**2020**

2020 has been a landmark year in shaping what we are today. Post changes in FCRA and the COVID pandemic, IGSSS' transformation started. In 2020, IGSSS shifted to complete direct implementation and into the process finalising its new Strategic Vision and approach.



Supreme Court of India used an IGSSS study on the homeless in Delhi and ordered night shelters in all states, on the criteria of one shelter per one lakh population.

## Few Key Points

During the period of 1961 to 2022, Rs. 738.83 crores were expended for various socio-economic development projects, reaching out to 1.12 crore families in 60 years.

IGSSS did exemplary interventions during Covid-19 and the organisation also received a national award - Best NGO Offering Healthcare Services During Covid-19, by India Today group.

## Coverage and Resource Utilisation

| Financial Utilisation and Families Served since 1961 |                       |                    |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Year   | Amount (INR)          | Families Served    |
| 1961-1971  | 31,75,61,500          | 14,59,810          |
| 1971-1980  | 42,45,05,411          | 16,65,820          |
| 1981-1990  | 1,06,94,39,108        | 20,60,098          |
| 1991-2000  | 1,17,63,83,019        | 20,60,098          |
| 2001-2010  | 1,60,95,09,822        | 16,67,010          |
| 2011-2020  | 2,02,80,55,824        | 17,46,155          |
| 2021-2022  | 76,28,61,109          | 5,51,882           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>7,38,83,15,792</b> | <b>1,12,10,873</b> |

| Theme/sector wise financial utilisation over the last 60 years |                       |            |
|--|-----------------------|------------|
| Theme  | Amount                | %          |
| Livelihood, Agriculture, Climate Change Adaptation             | 3,33,38,35,348        | 45.12      |
| Emergency Responses and Disaster Risk Reduction                | 1,09,50,06,430        | 14.82      |
| Youth Development and Gender Equity                            | 20,78,70,137          | 2.81       |
| Urban Poverty Reduction  | 35,99,31,749          | 4.87       |
| Institutional Development                                      | 24,71,90,692          | 3.35       |
| Health and Medical Aid   | 46,82,48,288          | 6.34       |
| Education  | 1,67,62,33,149        | 22.69      |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>7,38,83,15,792</b> | <b>100</b> |

## Introduction

A nationwide study in March 2020 aimed to explore the impacts on the ground that IGSSS had generated since its establishment in India in 1961. However, the Covid-19 pandemic struck, causing unprecedented disruptions worldwide. The sudden outbreak brought numerous challenges, making it difficult for the study to proceed as planned. Travel restrictions, lock-downs and health risks posed hurdles in accessing intervention sites and interacting with participants. Fortunately, as the situation gradually improved and everyone learned to adapt, the study could resume in September 2021. The study regained its momentum slowly but steadily, allowing the team to forge ahead. The study concluded in June 2022.

## Rationale of the Study

The study's rationale is to re-imagine the IGSSS' future as it has experienced a shift in its active role, transitioning from a partner and hand holding supporter of local organizations to a direct implementer of projects. This change necessitates thoroughly re-imagining IGSSS's future mission and governance, envisioning a new approach that aligns with the changing context. Originally established as an Indian counterpart of the Misereor Campaign against Hunger and Disease, Germany, in 1960, IGSSS has evolved remarkably, transforming into an independent Indian developmental organization with its unique identity, mission, and strategic priorities. Throughout its journey, IGSSS has been recognized for its commitment to professional excellence, nurturing young development aspirants, promoting partnerships and lay leadership, and staying connected to the realities of the underprivileged.

To avoid redundancy and build on its historical growth, the study refrains from focusing on IGSSS's past trajectory, as documented in the "Memoirs" published after its golden jubilee celebration in 2013. Instead, the study is designed to achieve specific objectives that will guide IGSSS in envisioning its future.

## Objectives of the Study

The study had two objectives:

1. Scientifically analyse and articulate the outcomes that emerges from the resilience of the communities resulting in improved quality of lives of the marginalized, served by IGSSS from 2011- 2021.
2. Re-imagine the future mission of IGSSS amidst the
  - a. Covid-19 pandemic challenges and
  - b. Changing paradigms of NGO/CSO interventions.

## Methodology of the Study

The study's methodology was participatory and ensured the active involvement of all potential stakeholders throughout the study. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized, with more emphasis on primary data sources. This study adopted a mixed methodology approach, using qualitative and quantitative techniques of social research methods. Multi-stage and purposive sampling were followed to identify project partners. Data was collected from 956 respondents from 10 States and one Union Territory. The operational areas of IGSSS were divided into six zones: East, West, North, South, Northeast, and Kashmir. Further, in each zone, the projects were divided into partner implementation and direct implementation. Finally, 15 projects implemented in 11 states were considered for this study.

### Thematic areas identified for the study:

1. Livelihood Enhancement through Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition
2. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Action
3. Urban Poverty
4. Youth Development

### Areas of Inquiry:

1. What are the significant milestones in the journey of 60 years?
2. What kinds of interventions were carried out by IGSSS in the last few years, and how are they related to the organization's core mission?

3. What are the significant impacts on the lives of the communities through livelihood promotion and income generation activities, climate adoption practices, addressing urban poverty and youth development?
4. What relevant contribution could IGSSS offer in nation-building, or how the future relevance of IGSSS can be re-imagined, given the new realities and challenges for the next ten years?
5. What are the new learnings, innovations, and challenges of the communities? Showcasing the most significant change narratives.



## Limitations of the Study

1. The subject matter for the study was complex. The economic aspect, limited time, and Covid-19 restrictions greatly influenced the selection of projects for analysis.
2. It is important to note that some projects had a life of 7 to 10 years, and some were implemented for a shorter duration. Ideally, one must compare the effects of the projects using a different yardstick. Some projects had specific thematic areas as interventions.
3. The study was initiated in March 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the process got disrupted. The study was resumed in September 2021.
4. The field-based data collection was done after Covid-19 second wave and was completed by January 2022. When the data was collected, the morale of the grant-received partner organization working in the field was low as some projects were discontinued.
5. Until September 2020, the critical strategy of IGSSS was the partnership model. About 40 per cent of projects were implemented through partners, and about 60 per cent were directly implemented by IGSSS. Owing to new regulations, IGSSS had to discontinue its partnership strategy and transition into direct implementation mode. While the transition happened in a few months, there was considerable churning in the organization and among the partners, which profoundly impacted the mission.
6. When the study was initiated, IGSSS had only about 60 to 70 staff. By March 2022, the staff was about 225, and most were new.

## Stakeholder Perceptions of IGSSS

One of the striking elements observed during the study was the way many different stakeholders described the nature and characteristics of IGSSS from their personal experiences. While many respondents highlighted several positive dimensions, some offered some critical inputs. Everyone expressed an extraordinary sense of gratitude and appreciation. Some described using images. The respondents included former and present board members and staff, old and recent partner NGOs, staff members, donor partners, consultants, and people served. These are perceptions shared by different stakeholders and only a few major characteristics are presented.

- **A trust space**-partner organizations stated that they cherished the trust and confidence of IGSSS, which made them more responsible in project implementation, reporting and accountability.
- **A learning space**- Many who had come in contact with IGSSS gratefully acknowledged IGSSS as a space for learning.
- **A daring space**- IGSSS was never content with traditional interventions. It looked for new and challenging opportunities.
- **A (youth) nurturing space**- One of the unique thrust areas of IGSSS has been youth development. IGSSS identified potential youth and nurtured them.
- **An evolving aspirational space**- IGSSS has evolved over the years organisationally and programmatically, responding to the needs of the times and the aspirations of the people served.
- **An inclusive space**- Diversity and inclusion have been the hallmark of IGSSS. Thematic approach helped IGSSS not to get trapped into an exclusive sectoral or social category (caste) approach.
- **A self-critiquing space**- There had been several tumultuous times in the journey of IGSSS. Self-critiquing in humility is a unique gift very much needed for a developmental organisation. The ambience and culture at IGSSS provided space for self-critiquing and to be a learning organisation.



- **An institution builder** - IGSSS nurtured small organisations living in remote areas. Many of these NGOs gained identity and visibility because IGSSS enabled them through partnership model programmes.
- **Expert in humanitarian response** - The organisation has carried out massive humanitarian relief for people affected by flood, earthquake, cyclone, tsunami, drought etc and has received a few awards for being effective in disaster response.





## Stakeholder Perception on IGSSS Strategies, Interventions & Outcomes

The study focuses on five thematic areas and considers the methodological dimension of organization, institution building, and the Covid-19 impact. The analysis includes common aspects across all thematic interventions and personal satisfaction levels.

1. General profile of the respondents
2. Organisation and Institution Building
3. Sustainable Livelihoods
4. Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action
5. Urban Poverty Reduction
6. Youth Development
7. Covid-19 Impact
8. Overall Satisfaction

### 1. General Profile of Respondents

| Total Respondents                  | 956               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Male                               | 46.7%             |
| Female                             | 43.3%             |
| Hindus                             | 62%               |
| Muslims                            | 28.4%             |
| Christians                         | 5.9%              |
| Other Religions                    | 3.7%              |
| Farmers Cultivating Their Own Land | 36.4%             |
| Agricultural Labourer              | 13.3%             |
| Home-makers                        | 13%               |
| Students                           | 8.3%              |
| Average Monthly Hh Income          | 3000-10000 Rupees |
| Upto Age Of 35 Years               | 44%               |
| Literate                           | 70.3%             |

## 2. Organization and Institution Building

The developmental process initiated by IGSSS began with building trust and confidence between the organization and the communities. Various groups were formed based on specific needs and objectives, including Self-Help Groups (SHG), youth, children, men, and others. These groups were nurtured through capacity building and knowledge development, enhancing a sense of collective identity and 'collectivization' among the members. The goal was to bring these focused groups together under the umbrella of a community-based organization (CBO) as part of their project implementation strategy, prioritizing people's growth, and development over physical infrastructure. The four key benefits, as identified by the respondents, were:

- a. Helped us to discuss issues that affected our lives.
- b. Allowed us to know the problems of others.
- c. Helped us to arrive at collective decisions.
- d. Enabled individuals to develop leadership qualities.

80.7% responded that groups were capacitated to function independently. 82.4% said that groups are still operating, and 80.7% responded that group leaders have the skills to negotiate with states. The four foundations of institution building as perceived by the respondents were:

- a. Inclusion of the most vulnerable (widows, transgender, people with disability)
- b. Inclusion of social and economically weaker sections
- c. Respect for the dignity of individuals
- d. Equal participation of women.

## 3. Sustainable Livelihoods

Livelihood interventions are crucial for sustainable development, especially in addressing poverty. Agriculture, traditionally the backbone of the Indian economy, faces challenges due to climate change and lack of adaptation knowledge, leading to many agriculture-dependent workers migrating to cities. The Covid-19 pandemic further complicated the situation as migrants

returned to their native places, facing uncertainty about reviving agriculture or continuing as migrants. In this context, IGSSS focused on livelihood enhancement by introducing agricultural income and multiple income generation programs, including skills development. Four top-ranking aspects that helped in improving income levels through sustainable agriculture were.

- a) Improvement in the quality of land
- b) Organic, mixed crop and integrated farming
- c) Water conservation techniques
- d) Seed support

The top four helpful methodologies identified by the respondents:

- a) Motivation and guidance
- b) Formation of groups
- c) Inputs are given on crop patterns.
- d) Agri-based training

During the FGDs, communities emphasized the positive impact of adopting organic, mixed crop, and integrated farming and water conservation methods, which helped increase their income levels and improved soil quality. OBC and *Adivasi* families in the villages historically relied on organic farming due to the high costs of chemical fertilizers. Still, they faced challenges with a single crop pattern, leading to significant losses in case of crop failure. Despite initial hesitation, IGSSS's introduction of mixed crop patterns was eventually adopted by many families. Water harvesting techniques were also learned, leading to the construction of ponds, upland wells, and lowland wells, ensuring a steady water supply even during the dry season. The formation of water committees in all villages facilitated effective management and sharing of water resources.

59.5% responded that they were guided to connect with government schemes, 36% were able to access these schemes, and 33% feel that government takes an interest in the welfare of farmers. 78.3% responded that they are engaged in kitchen garden activity, out of which 97% reported improved health of the family members. On a scale of 1-10, respondents felt there was a 6.15-unit improvement in income due to livelihoods enhancement.

## 4. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Action

Disasters in India are rising due to climate change, necessitating more than just emergency support and relief efforts. While the government has implemented mechanisms for reducing loss of life during disasters, aspects like risk governance, social resilience, and restoration of livelihoods still need to be addressed. The DRR strategy included the following:

- Psychosocial support.
- Emergency Response
- Hazard information dissemination.
- Disaster-resilient infrastructure.
- Livelihood restoration.
- Community-based preparedness.

Climate action is also integrated into agriculture-based livelihood projects. Data from 286 respondents in Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, and Odisha were analysed for this study.

72.4% said yes to changed cropping patterns due to climate change after receiving training. 60.1% said they take weather information seriously after receiving awareness of it. 46.5% said they learnt some techniques after receiving training on disaster preparedness. One of the initial steps taken in the intervention areas was the establishment of DRR committees, also known as Village Development Committees in some states. The first programmatic intervention involved the capacity building of committee members entrusted with developing a comprehensive DRR strategy for the community. Training included risk assessments, prevention measures, awareness campaigns, and creating contingency plans through village contingency plans and disaster risk management training.

## 5. Urban Poverty Reduction

IGSSS has been working with the urban poor for many years. The Delhi night shelter model has been one of the unique contributions of IGSSS. In a few states, IGSSS had intervened directly; in many states, it had worked

with the urban poor through a partnership model. The people served include domestic workers, daily wage labourers, migrant labourers, waste pickers and slum-dwellers. This study collected data from Assam, Chattisgarh, and Uttar Pradesh. The total respondents were 195, 80 from Assam, 35 from Chattisgarh and 80 from Uttar Pradesh. The focus area of inquiry under this thematic area has been on common issues of all poor, specifically emphasizing access to entitlements.

88.07% of respondents claimed to possess basic cards, including Voter ID, Aadhaar, and Ration cards which are mandatory for various government processes to access subsidized food through PDS and receive less promotion. 34.6% of respondents were registered in multiple schemes, including Welfare scheme, worker union & health insurance. 62.1% of respondents had better access to basic facilities, including clean drinking water, sanitation, old age, and widow pension. These results are vital in reflecting the impact of IGSSS over the years.

## 6. Youth Development

With more than 50 per cent of the population below the age of 25 and economic challenges impacting employment opportunities, fulfilling the aspirations of the youth becomes a crucial challenge in India. IGSSS has been devoted to youth development for over four decades through various initiatives like the SMILE project, providing training in digital literacy, health awareness, and skill-building programs.

77.3% youth said their concerns were taken on board while panning. 54.5% responded saying their groups are still functioning well. Awareness workshops and life-skill orientation to youth topped the list for contributing to positive energy of youth.

| Percentage of youth as responded to the respective component |      |
|--|------|
| Up for action for peace                                      | 78.4 |
| Substantial changes have happened                            | 72.7 |
| Training helped reduce conflicts                             | 72.7 |

## 7. COVID-19 Impact

It was heartening to see a sense of solidarity among the community members. It was reported that the group members reached out to those in need with food and solidarity support. While everyone feared Covid, still the bonding among the members was visible. People took an interest in the welfare of others. Care for others was evident among the poor during Covid-19.

| Were the Covid affected persons taken care of by the groups formed by IGSSS' interventions? |      |
|---|------|
| Yes   | 38.0 |
| To some extent  | 38.9 |
| No  | 18.2 |
| No one bothered about others  | 4.9  |

## 8. Overall Satisfaction

In this section, respondents were asked about their overall satisfaction concerning their experience with IGSSS. More than half (56%) reported that the most deserving participants were identified for the given intervention, while 40% believed it was transparent. A significant chunk (58%) reported an improvement in their socioeconomic life to a large extent, while others (28%) reported a change to some extent. Respondents claimed a high increase in income, improved livelihood options, enhanced self-confidence and reliance, improved bargaining power due to group formation and better access to entitlements. 51.5% of respondents believed collaboration among community, government and NGOs is the right way forward. 69% of the respondents reported accompaniment of the project staff on the field and claimed it to be beneficial. The overall satisfaction score for IGSSS was found to be 73%.

## IGSSS Staff Perception

This section explores the current staff's perceptions, understanding, aspirations, and perspectives in response to the new approach after 2019. A short questionnaire was sent to all staff. About 76 per cent of the team responded to the questionnaire, shedding light on the organization's future direction and the opportunities brought by this development.

The top two key strengths identified by staff were:

- Reaching out to the most vulnerable
- Community mobilization

The top three areas for growth identified by staff were:

- Engagement with policy makers
- Community mobilization
- Reaching out to the most vulnerable

The top three aspects cherished by staffing governance and management were:

- Freedom and accountability
- Gender equity
- Space for innovation and creativity

The top three aspects that need strengthening:

- Technology use
- Recognition and award
- Gender equity



## Change Narratives

The field visits during the study led to stories from participants, such as domestic workers, migrants, agricultural workers, transgender people, women, and men from marginalized communities. These people expressed gratitude for the positive changes brought about by IGSSS's initiatives.

### Organic Food, Nurturing Earth, Growing Healthy



Saram village is in Gola Block, Jharkhand. IGSSS selected this village as it was remote, comprising Adivasis, a clan of the Santhal tribe. Every family has a few acres of land and a few livestock. They needed to be made aware of how to produce organic manure and were dependent on chemical fertilisers. Kalavathi Devi stated, "We have formed a Village Development Committee with 45 members. IGSSS helped us to reclaim about 30 small ponds and build 2 check dams. Now, we have a perennial water source for cultivation. All the families are into organic farming. Almost all families own a few cows or oxen, goats, chickens, and ducks. So, it was not difficult to produce organic manure. While the cost of production decreased, the soil became rich. The produce increased year by year. We also got into mixed crops. Vegetable production has helped us to increase our daily income. The additional profit per acre is about Rs. 3,000 to 4,000. Some hotels from cities are buying our vegetables as they are produced organically. We have applied to the government for a certificate – 100 per cent organic village and are waiting".

During a Focussed Group Discussion (FGD) in an Anganwadi school, the researcher observed a few bags stored up in one corner. When an explanation was sought about the bags, the women laughed. Bendeswar Bedia, another women leader, said, "Sir, you can take them. These bags contain chemical



fertilisers. We do not know where to throw them. It would spoil the soil. Take them away. We have also initiated a Block level campaign against the use of chemical fertilisers.” She proudly stated, “Earlier, we went by cycle, but now by a Tempo. We have a water harvesting system, ensured Anganwadi is built, and proper roads are laid. In my house, I have installed a borewell pump. My children are studying in college.” Despite all these fantastic changes, about 30 people migrated to Gujarat. The village leader said, “We have grown and are happy with organic agricultural production. But our needs are also increasing. So, some migrate and work in difficult circumstances in Gujarat.”

### Civic Engagement of Youth



“It was not easy to bring the youth together in Delhi. After many rounds of talks and motivation, some of us have formed a youth group in Baljit Nagar. IGSSS trained us on various issues, such as youth as leaders, the importance of working for the community, leadership, the Right to Information (RTI) Act, Gender issues, children’s education, etc. After a few youth meetings, we, as a youth, felt that the dump yard was a big issue. It was close to the community and caused many health hazards to the community, especially to children. We submitted a petition to the Patel Nagar corporation office. There was no response. Again, we filed a complaint and visited the office three times. In the meantime, the youth got fed up due to the delay. The youth leaders did not give up but followed it up. Finally, the dump yard was cleaned. Unfortunately, the community members asked, “Where will we throw the waste now?” We took some time to explain to the community members why we had done so and the importance of such a cleanliness

drive. All youth members were excited to see the success of their efforts. There was new energy to do more. I learnt that patience and perseverance will work. I learnt valuable lessons for my life by engaging in community work than what I learnt in my college”, said Mr Rohit, a youth leader.

It was also amazing to hear from Rohit how he had learnt photography and used his skills for community development by using social media platforms. He is a freelance photojournalist. He had made Rs. 7.5 lacs income in the last two years, which he had efficiently used for the well-being of his family members. His dream has been to become a cinematographer. He duly acknowledged the role of IGSSS in his development and the development of the youth group

### **Aatma Santushti**

Deepak Kumar has been working as a painter for 20 years in Allahabad. “I could earn my livelihood and live a happy life with my wife and children. Around 2017, I saw a board about the Labour union on the roadside. I had passed that road many times. One day, I went closer to the board and read carefully what was written. I said to myself, “Why not join this union?” I enquired about the union, learnt how to become a member, and joined the union. When I started working with the labour union, many labourers came to me for help. I did what I could. Eventually, I emerged as a leader. People started recognising my skills and capacities. I studied up to BA in the second year and discontinued my studies. During the lock down I got to speak to the Chief Minister virtually and put forward the demands of the daily labourers. Using my knowledge and skills as a union leader, I ensured the government schemes reached the poor workers. I got cycles for the construction labourers, cash support for the education of children of labourers and gas connections to low-income families. Today, I am surrounded by many poor people for help. I continue painting, and all my spare time goes into helping needy people. In 2021, I could support 15 families who received maternity benefits of Rs. 63,000, in cash Rs. 31,000, Rs. 25,000 as a fixed deposit and Rs. 8,000 for food during pregnancy. I am so thrilled. I go home late at night. I hardly spend time with my wife and children. They feel stressed since I receive phone calls for help whenever I leave home. My wife is aware of my good work. I can only say that I have gotten *Aatma Santushti* throughout my career. Later, I learned that IGSSS had a role in sowing the seed of forming this collective.

## Shejaar - Platform for Farmers



Shejaar Vegetable Producer Company Limited (SVPCL) is a farmer's company located in the Sumbal cluster of Bandipora District and established in 2019 under the Company's Act of 2013 with support from NABARD. SVPCL comprises smallholder vegetable farmers who have been organised into a joint business organisation for realising higher profits through lower operating costs and higher sales prices.

The journey began with farmer groups which slowly emerged as formal and well-structured Farmer Producers Organisations (FPO) with a good gender ratio in membership. The seed to expand FPO into a company was sown in 2015 during the decennial assessment study of Kashmir interventions of IGSSS. One of the members stated, "After several awareness generations, capacity building and extensive team building exercises, we have understood the concept of the cooperative, the role of members, leader, and treasurer. We have learnt participative work culture. All groups have been exposed to modern techniques of agriculture. Our production has increased by 32 per cent. Agriculture departments of Baramulla and Bandipora districts supported the FPO and provided High Yielding Vegetable seeds free of cost to progressive farmers, the shareholders of the FPO.

The FPO is constantly diversifying their products and business. The company now has its brand and developed its packaging services with its members

as skilled human resource capital. The company had a turnover of over Rs. 25 lacs with a net profit of Rs. 1.5 lacs. A significant chunk of this income has come from organic fertilisers/vermicompost produced mainly through women shareholders. The FPO has signed a MOU with Tahoor Srinagar (Milk Vendor) to supply the milk daily, and the dairy business has been constantly growing. IGSSS also supported the FPO with packaging and food processing machines. Now, the FPO can save highly perishable produce by processing and packaging in times of oversupply. Currently, the company has 416 shareholders with a share capital of Rs. 416,000, through which they are doing their regular business.

## Transcending the Gender Barriers

Ms Lipi Nayak is a leader of a domestic workers SHG in Raipur, Chattisgarh. She said, "Training sessions helped me to be a confident leader. I found men were drinking and passing comments on women when we were returning to our homes in the evening. Some women were scared, and they never questioned men. Some of us got together, and we challenged men. Men got scared and left the area, and women felt safe. For me, this is a big change." She also said, "During lockdown, as a group, we took out our savings and provided cooked food for 50 families. I have learnt the availability of various government schemes and how to access them. Domestic working women come to me for help to get entitlement cards and government schemes. I help them. I was not allowed to leave my home earlier, and now it is changed. I have met the MLA, District Collector, and other officials to press for our demands. We have bargained and succeeded in getting some benefits. These works have increased the confidence level of domestic workers." Another domestic working woman Ms Arti said, "I used to cry when men mocked me. Now, I have stopped crying and give them a fitting reply."





## Core Strengths of IGSSS

Several respondents, partners, staff, donors, and other stakeholders have emphasised the following strengths using various expressions. Ability to identify like-minded partners and develop local organisations.

- Ability to identify like-minded partners and develop local organisations.
- Credibility
- Inclusion
- Adaptability
- Closeness to the community
- Transparency and accountability
- Professionalism
- Research, action, and policy engagement
- Clarity of thought on social change processes.

## Scope of Improvement for IGSSS

Following are some of the areas where IGSSS needs to work hard and further strengthen them.

- Engagement with policy makers.
- Technical expertise.
- Recognition and awards.
- Innovation and creativity.
- Gender equity at all levels.
- Transparency in decision-making.



## Re-imagining Future

The organization should focus on capturing and documenting its partners' learning, data, methodologies, strategies, and contacts. This will strengthen the direct implementation of projects in the coming years. It should also explore ways to tap into partners' expertise in a non-financial manner.

Recognizing and rewarding staff and partners who have played vital roles in developing innovative models is crucial to promote a cheerful ambience and value basis within the organization. Identifying unsung heroes/heroines and honouring them will be a practical way to acknowledge their contributions. An ongoing structural mechanism should be created to promote ongoing reflection and deliberation on new ideas, or the agenda can be discussed in annual state-level and board meetings. This will ensure that new imaginations and strategies are consistently integrated into the organization's activities. The organization should also focus on lessening administrative hassles and costs, promoting volunteerism, mainstreaming social change processes, and maintaining professionalism rooted in a value foundation. Documentation of community processes and evidence-based knowledge, as well as implementation of a social equity and on-board training policy, will further strengthen the organization's approach to human development.

Leveraging technology to promote the organization's ethos and democratic culture is essential in the digital age. Building communities through an integrated and inclusive programmatic approach will contribute to sustainable development. Considering the circumstances, the organization may need to undergo a structural change, moving away from a monolithic and centralized system. Networking, collaboration, and embracing a more decentralized strategy could benefit the future.





## Funding Partners who walked with IGSSS

IGSSS has fostered partnerships with global and national funding partners to achieve its vision and mission. Their support has been vital for the growth of the organization as well as furthering the agenda of socioeconomic development of poor and marginalized sections of the society. Some of the notable funding partners in last 60 years are being mentioned below.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Apollo Tyres   | 24. Irish Embassy   |
| 2. BBMP, Bangalore  | 25. KFO   |
| 3. BEGECA   | 26. LIC Housing Finance Limited (LIC HFL)                         |
| 4. Caritas Germany  | 27. Misereor Germany  |
| 5. Caritas Italiana   | 28. MIVA  |
| 6. Charities Aid Foundation India                               | 29. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NAB-ARD) |
| 7. Christian Aid  | 30. ODISHA Government (Millet Mission)                            |
| 8. Cipla Foundation   | 31. Quest Alliance  |
| 9. Citi Bank  | 32. Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF)              |
| 10. Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)                    | 33. Secours Catholique, France                                    |
| 11. HDFC Bank Parivartan  | 34. Selco Foundation  |
| 12. Dan Church Aid  | 35. Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland (SKN)                    |
| 13. DDMA Assam  | 36. Stryder Cycle Pvt Ltd   |
| 14. Delhi Government  | 37. Suzlon Foundation   |
| 15. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe                                    | 38. The Bishop's Conference of Italy                              |
| 16. DKA Austria   | 39. UNICEF  |
| 17. ECHO  | 40. United Home Entertainment (Disney)                            |
| 18. ELRHA   | 41. United Way India  |
| 19. European Union  | 42. USL / DIAGEO  |
| 20. Foundation L'Albero Vita Onlus (FADV)                       |   |
| 21. Give to Asia  |   |
| 22. HCL Foundation  |   |
| 23. Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) |   |



**INDO-GLOBAL SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY**

28, Institutional Area, Lodhi Road New Delhi – 110 003

web: [www.igsss.net](http://www.igsss.net)