

END-TERM EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT 'STRENGTHENING LIVELIHOOD SECURITY OF MARGINALIZED TRIBAL AND FOREST DWELLING COMMUNITIES IN POOR TRIBAL REGIONS OF ODISHA': A REPORT



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A Note from the Evaluating Consultant

It is a privilege to evaluate this project at its end term after three years of implementation. I have approached this assignment with care and objectivity, while maintaining strong ethical standards. I hope this report serves as a credible and useful document for both The Hans Foundation and NIRMAN.

I acknowledge the support extended by the NIRMAN team during the evaluation process. I recommend reading this report alongside the mid-term evaluation report, as it provides complementary insights, especially in relation to images and key information.

Santosh Kumar Samal

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ANNEXURE(1,2,3,4)

1. Context:

The project of the present context, i.e. 'STRENGTHENING LIVELIHOOD SECURITY OF MARGINALIZED TRIBAL AND FOREST DWELLING COMMUNITIES IN POOR TRIBAL REGIONS OF ODISHA' was an ambitious initiative of the PIA(project implementation agency) NIRMAN in many respects. Firstly, it established a collaboration of mutual dignity with the The Hans Foundation (THF) that has US-links as its principal donor. As one understands from the THF website, it is not like a conventional CSR charity but is based on some concrete spiritual basis & experience that makes it distinguished & respectful. Secondly, this 3-year project initiative was very comprehensive in nature, targeting to directly benefit 3500 forest dwelling poor households across three tribal districts (Kalahandi, Kandhamal, and Rayagada) of Odisha with the following objectives:

- Objective 1: Sustainable farming practices adopted by 90% of the targeted population with improved farming techniques, crop diversity and 50% increase in agricultural productivity within 3 years of project period;
- Objective 2: Natural resources like land, rainwater and forest conserved, managed and governed sustainably increasing household income and consumption from these resources by 40% within 3 years;
- Objective 3: The capacity of 40% of leaders from community institutions and groups enhanced on livelihood skills, entitlements and enterprise building.

And thirdly, there was an initial understanding between THF and NIRMAN that the project would be given a 2nd-phase extension after it is over, thereby creating a lot of hope for the PIA (and the concerned implementing team); and this hope received a boost when THF decided to support NIRMAN, after a short period of sanctioning the present project, for a relatively small but complementary project(nicknamed in NIRMAN as THF-II as distinct from the 1st project) of improving collective business capacities & facilities through infrastructure developments (like, providing processing units) and the like. This 2nd project was primarily meant to complement the 1st project in the districts of Kalahandi, Kandhamal, and Rayagada, but THF generously accepted the request of NIRMAN to also extend its scope to the PIA's Dasapalla intervention area in the Nayagarh district.

Since then THF has carried out its own monitoring & evaluation processes independently at different times for these projects, although the final evaluation by the donor is pending as of now. The present end-term evaluation is commissioned by the PIA and not by the donor(THF), and is completely independent of the third party final evaluation to be commissioned(if any) by THF in respect of the perspective, methodology, and observations/conclusions although some or extensive similarities may not be unlikely between the two.

2. Methodology:

This evaluation has been conducted by the Consultant & author of this report on a rapid appraisal basis chiefly through field-level verifications & assessments. FGDs, KIIs, verification of relevant documents, and other means were employed for this purpose. As in the case of the mid-term evaluation, complex tools

including ranking have not been used with the understanding that the simple methods can also meet the purpose effectively. This is justified chiefly because the present evaluator has not been an outsider to this project, and hence tools required for the ‘outsiders’ (external consultants) to make out proper inferences were not required for him except for the basic ones.

The field visit was carried out from 24th to 27th of March 2025 as per the following details:

Table-1: Sites covered during the field visit

Date	District	Block	GP	Village	Activities
24.03-25	Kalahandi	Th.Rampur	Kiapadar	Tentulipadar	VDC meeting and collection of testimonies, visit to horticultural field and mushroom unit
		Bhawani-patana	-----	Bhawani-patana	Interview of Project Coordinator
25.03.25	Kalahandi	Th.Rampur	Kiapadar	Bhataguda	Site visit on vegetable farming, poultry, rain water harvesting structure
			Karlapat	Salpang	Site visit on vegetable farming
			Karlapat	Bada Tikraguda	FGD(Vegetable farming, poultry, improved paddy cultivation, organic manure, horticultural support, horticultural convergence, learning from exposure on forest conservation and from training to women’s SHG)
26.03.25	Kandhamal	Tumudibandha	Belghar	Madlakuna	FGD(Rain water harvesting structure, goatary, poultry, convergence, kitchen garden, vegetable cultivation, mushroom cultivation) followed by site visit
			Mundigarh	Madaspaju	Visiting the rain water harvesting structure(longest ?) with subsurface dyke
			Mundigarh	Sesari Gan	Visiting the RWHS (subsurface dyke)
			Tumudi-bandha	Bhaliapani	FGD (convergence & other support)
				Kilupadi	Interaction with the beneficiary of convergence for goat shed
27.03.25	Rayagada	Kalyansingpur	Seriguma	Tala Tadiguda	FGD (Goatary, poultry, vegetable cultivation, kitchen garden) followed by site visit

			Sikarpai	Bhalumaska	Interaction with SHG members on support to Maa Lakshmi women's group with weeder & pump; convergence for poultry with Maa Alapati SHG
			Sikarpai	Bishipaska	FGD (Goatary, poultry, exposure visit learning, learning from training on goatary, pot manure, cotton replaced with food crops, sunflower, vegetable cultivation) followed by site visits
			Seriguma	Boripai	Site visit to see the long RWHS; also interaction with a village woman on support received for goatary and vegetable cultivation
			Sikarpai	Sikarpai	Interview with BoD members of RFPCL ; also going through the business plan of RFPCL

The evaluation referred to the following documents:

- Project proposal & related documents
- Final project progress report(s) submitted by NIRMAN to the donor
- Relevant social media posts of NIRMAN
- Mid-term evaluation report.

Figures of target vs achievements were provided by the concerned project coordinator Mr. Kailash Chandra Sahoo who accompanied this evaluator during the field visits alongwith his local team members. His first updates were received before (15th March 2025) this evaluation began which indicated the progress against the status reflected in the mid-term evaluation report. His post-closure updates were received 2nd July 2025. On the other hand, the post-closure financial progress report was received from the NIRMAN accounts section on 7th July 2025.



Village meeting at Madalakuna

3. Limitations of the evaluation:

This evaluation was conducted in the last week of the project final year when the concerned project teams were busy enough to complete the pending tasks. There was also the financial limitation on travel-related expenditures (the major part of the cost of the evaluation assignment) for this evaluation, and this is only a day could be devoted on an average for each of the intervention districts (excepting Kalahandi). Sample sites were selected mostly by the Project Coordinator on the basis of the evaluation plan of the evaluator while considering the accessibility, community/beneficiary availability, limitations of time, and best practices, etc.; and it was not much feasible to make it random or number-wise adequate given the limitations. It is important to note that the evaluator had expressed his desire to cover specific cases of success, failure, rectified action, and tangible impacts, etc. which formed the basis of this selection.

As in case of the mid-term evaluation, it was not possible for the evaluator to independently verify the figures of target vs achievements that were provided by the concerned project coordinator, for obvious reasons.

However, the spontaneity with which the beneficiaries shared their experiences and feedback, correlated with the actual visits to the field sites and complemented with the author's own insight & experiences significantly contribute to the credibility of this report. Moreover, the mid-term evaluation already conducted by this evaluator just six months back (in respect of the field visits for the present evaluation) provided substantial experience & insight to carry out the end-term one.

4. Quantitative assessments:

For the purpose of this evaluation the quantitative assessments were made both for physical and financial achievements /accomplishments, and while the physical assessments were linked with whatever end-line survey data or impact data were otherwise available, the financial progress was compared with the physical achievements.

4.1 Programmatic target vs achievement:

The overall programmatic achievements vs targets look quite promising as well as satisfactory with only realistic deviations except for cases where the 1st year targets couldn't be met because of a late start and other issues. It is indeed impressive to note that the plan & commitment of the concerned Project Coordinator during this consultant's mid-term evaluation to minimize the negative deviations by the 3rd & 4th quarters of the final year have reportedly been successful in all feasible cases.



This photo of Feb. 2023 belongs to one of the earliest social media sharings by NIRMAN on its activities under the THF-1 project (source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts)

Table-2: Programmatic achievements & deviations

Objective-1 :

Sustainable farming practices adopted by 90% of the targeted population with improved farming techniques, crop diversity and 50% increase in agricultural productivity within 3 years of project period

Table 2.1

Sl. No.	Planned activities	Targeted HHs	Achievement HHs	Achievement in terms of adoption of sustainable farming %	Baseline crop diversity (Nos.)	Enhanced Crop diversity (Nos.)	Baseline production (Qtl. per Acre)	Increased Production (Qtl. per Acre)
1	Enhancing paddy production (Indigenous/ conventional variety)	1800	1617	90%	Nil	12	8.5	13.5
2	Mixed cropping	1700	1627	96%	2	5	2	3.2
3	Vegetables production	1200	900	75%	3	6	3	5
4	Kitchen Garden promotion (0.1) acre model	3500	3500	100%	4	9	0.8	1.5
5	Horticulture Promotion	400	400	100%	Nil	2 (mango ¹ & lemon)	-	-

¹ In mango, more than 2 improved varieties were supplied.

Table 2.2

Sl. No.	Planned activities	Total targets	Achievement	Achievement in %age
1	Development of Demo Plots (improved paddy cultivation, mixed crop, improved vegetable farming, etc.)	18	12	67%
2	Goatary Promotion	450	445	99%
3	Backyard Poultry Promotion	1200	1092	91%
4	Mushroom Production	30	23	77%
5	Farm mechanization	45	45	100%
6	Access to irrigation pump set through group sharing	18	13	72%

While end-line survey data of the impact against the activities in table 2.2 are not available comparing with the baseline, it does appear that overall objective was more or less fulfilled, given the field-level cross verifications by the evaluator which however did not find much encouraging results in case of group-based farm mechanization & provision of irrigation pumps chiefly because the concerned women's groups often lacked necessary team spirit, motivation, ambition, and skill to make efficient use of this support. Further, horticultural crop diversity was more successful for mango whereas lemon could hardly sustain itself.



The success story of Pulaka Kadraka (left in the side photo) of Bishipaska(Rayagada dist.) is indeed interesting. She got support from NIRMAN under this project for 2 goats, and when the goats multiplied she sold two big ones at Rs.22000 (approx..) which helped her purchase a sewing machine for her daughter Babita (on the right) who now uses the same for her self-employment. Babita is smart, and has learnt tailoring particularly for ladies' dresses. The machine has boost her self-confidence.

The concerned project coordinator has provided the following data in respect of the impact of goatary & poultry:

Table 2.2.1

Activity	Total Households Benefited	Total nos. supported (Goat @2 and poultry @ 5)	Till date the total grown with mother goat & poultry	Till date the total survived with mother goat & poultry	Till date the total motility in nos. (goat & poultry)	Till date No. of HHs/Nos. of household consumption of goat or chicken	No of HHs/No of Goats/ Chicken sold	Till date the total earned amount in Rs.
Goatary	445	890	1704	1539	94	-	68HHs / 71 goats	430000/-
Poultry	1092	5460	13304	10644	862	621HHs/856	534 HHs /984 Chicken	343300/-

Regarding mushroom cultivation, the PIA has submitted that although this activity was planned for income generation for the most vulnerable families but due to lack of skill and finance of the interested households and field staff on mushroom cultivation in the project implementation area, only 23 families could be supported through this activity in 23 villages in 03 districts. The project provided input support of Rs. 10500/- to each beneficiary who was to contribute (in kind) through labour worth Rs. 4500/ for preparation beds and allied activities. Training with exposure was conducted for the beneficiaries with special knowledge support from the Krishi Vigyan Kendras of their respective districts. The families started initially with 20 beds and earned an average Rs. 1000 to 1200. Then they enhanced this to 50 beds with an increased income of Rs, 2400 to 3000/. Now they are said to be able to more or less regularly produce & sell their mushroom except for the agriculture season from July to Sept when they are busy otherwise. The evaluator however finds reason to doubt the consistency in this impact as the beneficiaries have differential capacities and limitations.

As of the farm mechanization support, the PIA claims that total 760 paddy farmers have used the equipments in 03 districts and that they have availed this facility paying the daily user fee of Rs, 5/- per day per equipment. Similarly, for support of irrigation pumps it is said that out of the 13 groups that benefited, 3 groups cultivated vegetables collectively and made a profit Rs. 18000/- by selling them, but the other 10 groups, due to lack of suitable land, cultivated vegetables in their own land and earned upto Rs. 4200/- each by selling the vegetables. The support is also said to have helped to access irrigation during the Rabi and summer season for farming. This claim could not however be verified by the evaluator.

Objective -2 :

Natural resources like land, rainwater and forest conserved, managed and governed sustainably increasing household income and consumption from these resources by 40% within 3 years

Table 2.3

Sl. No.	Planned activities	Targeted Acres /Villages	Achievement Acres /Villages	Achievement Acres /Villages in %age
1	Building community-based rain water management structures (with soil conservation measures)	900 Acres	701 Acres	78%
2	Facilitating preparation of CFR management plans	50 villages	40 villages	80%

As of the impact, the PIA has submitted that “The project intervention villages are a rainfed region, and local communities of this region practice rain-fed agriculture. Studies have proved that large scale multi-purpose dams or sophisticated technologies are not required to conserve rain water and recharge ground water table. Small-scale structures such as trenches and graded bonds have been proved to be very efficient not only in conservation of rainwater and checking soil erosion, but also cost effective.

Small-scale water harvesting structures have the ability to check the runoff time, thereby increasing retention and percolation time of the rain water, as a result recharging the ground water table. During the project period of 2022 to 2025 under the support of THF project NIRMAN had considered to build the construction of rain water harvesting structures in 03 districts. The site selection and estimates were done/prepared by the expert (on participatory basis). The lands were mostly not being used for crop growing. After the rain water conservation structures have been constructed in 12 villages in 03 districts, these eventually ensured secured water access for 312 marginal Tribal farmers over about 701 Acres of land.

During the first year the rain water structure building was implemented in 04 villages of the Kalahandi district only. Subsequently, in the second year it was implemented in 03 villages of the Kandhamal district. And in the third year it was implemented in 05 villages in the Kandhamal, Kalahandi, and Rayagada districts. The results have been noticed of 1st year and 2nd year constructions. Earlier, the local farmers used to leave

their fields fallow, but after the structures were built they started cultivating Ragi and short duration paddy cultivation during the monsoon, and pluses and sunflower in the Rabi season. During discussions and assessment about the impact of the structures with the participating farmers, they expressed their opinion that the soil moisture in the fields is maintained and that the risk of drought(localized) is reduced, thereby increasing the yield. The productivity of the land has been increased by about 20% percent, in case of the structures created in 7 villages in 2 districts (constructions of the year-3 are obvious excluded). The increase in ground water table has created new opportunities for the local community to expand the cropping season to both summer and winter.



The rain water harvesting structure at Boripai (27th March 2025), Rayagada district

As of forest management plans, this project intervention played a huge role in mobilizing the village communities to sit together for planning and sustainable management of their Community Forest Resource (CFR) areas. These meetings provided the village communities the platform to plan and demarcate the areas for forest regeneration, open areas for shared use with neighboring villages, areas of traditional worship, fuelwood and grazing etc. apart from establishing rules for the use of resources, apart from planning for the plantation of NTFP & other forest food species, etc.. While the 1st year targets were mostly missed due to internal issues as well as late start of the project, forest management plans have been prepared in 03 districts for 40 villages. Forest management committees were formed at the village level and after frequent discussions in this committee, the plan was made for its restoration, forest protection, forest fire prevention, and wildlife protection etc.. As a result, awareness has increased in all the concerned villages and in 2025, the number of fires has reportedly reduced by 50%. At the village level, the community is trying to employ some kind of watch & ward system so as to prevent the forest degradation, indiscriminate tree cutting, and theft of timber by the neighboring villages or outsiders.”

While this evaluator would endorse the above submission of the PIA in respect of the qualitative changes (which are differential in nature across the project areas and not consistent), no evidence was available to validate the sub-objective of increasing the household income and consumption from these resources by 40% within 3 years. This is chiefly because the 40% enhanced income would require much more time if the interventions are well-sustained (and improved where possible) for next 4-5 years.

Objective-3:

The capacity of 40% of leaders from community institutions and groups enhanced on livelihood skills, entitlements and enterprise building

Table 2.4

Sl. No.	Planned activities	Target (No. of events)	Achievement (No. of events)	Target (No. of leaders/ members from community institutions)	Achievement (No. of leaders/ members from community institutions)	Achievement (No. of leaders/ members from community institutions) %age
1	2 days' trainers' training to project staffs and leading farmers on improve methods (SRI and SMI) of farming.	6	6	120	120	100%
2	1 day trainers' training to staff and women farmers on kitchen gardening and nutrition management	9	9	180	180	100%
3	2 days' training programme for project staff and SHG leaders on group-based enterprise promotion, and collective marketing	9	9	180	180	100%
4	2 days' trainers' training for project staff and SHG leaders on livestock management	9	9	180	180	100%
5	Exposure visits for SHG members and Livestock rearer HHs to successful SHGs	9	9	135	135	100%
6	1 day training of farmers' producer organization members and project staff on objectives, governance,	9	8	180	160	89%
7	2 days' capacity building training for PRI members	9	9	180	180	100%

8	1 day training to staff and community leaders on convergence	3	3	60	60	100%
9	Capacity building training on gender and developing gender strategy	9	9	180	180	100%
10	Village level wall paintings/writings on project themes	120 villages	120 villages	-	-	100%
11	Mobilization & promotion strengthening of FPOs	9	6	108	72	67%
			Total	1503	1447	
			Total	3500 HHs	Trained-1447	Achieved 41%

As of the impact, the PIA has submitted that after the capacity building training of the Panchayat representatives in three districts the Panchayat representatives were found participating in the project implementation village meetings and giving their opinions on how to properly implement the project. These representatives are focusing on addressing the grievances of the people as a result of which enrollment of all job card holders under the MGNREGA work was possible. Further, the livelihood training & exposures have helped the 3,500 families to adopt better farming practices and livestock rearing, apart from promotion of small enterprises where possible. The lead persons from the community are familiarized with the improved methods.

The evaluator's observations more or less agree with the qualitative impact claimed by the PIA, but the way some of the training events were organized particularly during the 1st year appeared to be lacking the ecosystem to duly influence the participants. Of course it might not have been easy to arrange the competent resource persons in the initial phase of the project in the project districts, but the Project Coordinator is supposed to study the training module (to be used by the hired resource person) prior to the event so as to assess its potential. Further, the skill & efficiency of the concerned resource person in giving the training is also to be assessed to the possible extent, atleast to avoid repeat contracts in case the person couldn't prove his/her efficiency in the 1st event assigned.

The project envisaged to strengthen the two existing FPOs promoted by NIRMAN in Rayagada and Kandhamal districts, and to promote a similar FPO in the project area of the Kalahandi district. However, the target for Kalahandi district could not be fulfilled. In this regard the Project Coordinator explains that Producer Groups are to be formed first so as to make an FPO, but in Kalahandi districts such groups could not be created in the project area due to want of scope, time, and resources which resulted in the failure in promoting a new FPO there.

4.1.1 District-wise variations:

As annexure-2 would show, district-wise variations have been noticed both in the target and achievement in respect of several activities which is but quite realistic. For instance, Rayagada district achieved better in respect of improved paddy cultivation (enhancing paddy production), mixed cropping, and kitchen garden promotion; whereas Kalahandi achieved better in respect of vegetable production and mushroom units; and Kandhamal was ahead of other districts in respect of rain water harvesting structures and forest management planning. This variation adds to the credibility of the PIA's overall progress report, and are caused by the differential local ecosystems (socio-ecological, socio-economic).

4.2 Financial target & achievement vs physical achievements:

As Table-3 would show, the overall financial utilization remained at 88.59% which marks a significant improvement as compared to the status during the mid-term evaluation (as per the data received on 13th October 2024) with 66.83% utilization then creating concern if the achievement could be 100% by the end of the project period after the remaining few months. However, if the latest status is apparently not fully satisfactory then the reasons to be blamed are as under:

- Late start of the project causing loss of the favorable season which curtailed the scope of many activities in the 1st year. This is also supposed to have impacted the utilization under salary-, field travel-, and other heads; but the critical point is that THF had already asked the PIA to revise the 1st year's budget for the actual available period (i.e. 5 months) which was duly complied with by NIRMAL.
- The donor maintained a principle of not allowing 'carry forward' of unspent funds of the previous year to the following year, which is another major reason of increasing the fund utilization in the remaining project duration despite having the capacity. It is understood that THF allowed only a limited 'carry forward' of Rs.1,80,000/- (approx.) in case of rain water harvesting structure under a special consideration.
- Inefficient project planning & utilization as reflected in the utilization status (83.34%) of the 'Other Direct Costs', particularly during the tenure of the 1st Project Coordinator. Even some key programme activities such as promotion of mixed farming and vegetable production also reflect this inefficiency. Similarly, no utilization was reported against HH-based livelihood planning.

Insufficiency of allocated funds is said to be the reason of the underutilization in case of the purchase of two wheelers as the available funds could not suffice to purchase the target number (3) of two wheelers, and only two such vehicles could be purchased, as explained by the last Project Coordinator.

What is however remarkable is that against the originally budgeted fund mobilization of Rs. 8703720.00 from other sources (mainly contribution from the beneficiaries), the PIA reportedly mobilized Rs. 81,00,873.00, i.e. 93.07%.

Table-3: Activity-wise financial utilization as compared to physical achievements (important programmatic components only)

Budget Categories	Total Approved Budget	Actual Expenditure	%age of utilization	Physical achievement (important programmatic components only) in %age
I. PERSONNEL (Salaries)				
Programme Facilitator State Level [01]	13,58,955.00	12,50,890.00	92.05	
Programme Facilitator District Level [03]	31,26,876.00	29,24,028.00	93.51	
Programme Facilitator Cluster Level [06]	36,99,600.00	34,08,697.00	92.14	
Executive Director (part salary)	6,78,260.00	6,32,995.00	93.33	
Accountant [01]	9,71,148.00	8,75,565.00	90.16	
Programme Organiser [12]	30,19,980.00	27,97,855.00	92.64	
TOTAL PERSONNEL	1,28,54,819.00	1,18,90,030.00	92.49	
II. TRAVEL, PER DIEM & LOCAL TRANSPORT				
Field travel of field staff	7,70,750.00	7,22,233.00	93.71	
Field travel(HO programme monitoring staff)	4,35,000.00	3,94,161.00	90.61	
Field travel:Consultant(s) (excluding evaluation)	2,17,500.00	1,88,530.00	86.68	
TOTAL TRAVEL, PER DIEM & LOCAL TRANSPORT	14,23,250.00	13,04,924.00	91.69	

III. DIRECT COSTS FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION				
Project orientation meeting for partner staff and field organizers	70,000.00	52,553.00	75.08	100
2 days trainers' training to project staff and leading farmers on improved methods (SRI and SMI) farming.	3,00,000.00	2,93,195.00	97.73	100
1 day trainers' training to staff and women farmers on kitchen gardening and nutrition education	2,70,000.00	2,58,035.00	95.57	100
2 days training programme for project staff and SHG leaders on group based enterprise promotion, on collective marketing/establishment market place/Haat etc	4,50,000.00	4,35,709.00	96.82	100
Two days trainers' training to project staff and SHG leaders on livestock management (goatary, backyard poultry)	4,50,000.00	4,35,107.00	96.69	100
Exposure visits for SHG members and Livestock rearers, to successful SHGs and livestock rearing sites(and other project relevant matters) for cross learning.	6,30,000.00	5,92,808.00	94.10	100
1 day training of farmers' producer group members and project staff on objectives, governance, role and responsibilities, record keeping, (with subsequent review & updation training next years)	2,70,000.00	2,24,077.00	82.99	88.88
Capacity building training of PRI members(2 days)	4,50,000.00	4,44,429.00	98.76	100
1 day training on Convergence Programme	90,000.00	79,114.00	87.90	100

Capacity building on gender and developing gender strategy for staff and cadre/CBO leaders (1 day)	2,70,000.00	2,56,878.00	95.14	100
Village level wall paintings/writings	2,40,000.00	2,40,000.00	100.00	100
Developing IEC materials for nutrition education and other relevant project themes (each 5000 copies)	60,000.00	59,870.00	99.78	100
Mobilisation & Promotion/strengthening of FPOs	1,50,000.00	49,745.00	33.16	66.67
Development of annual business development plan of the FPOs	1,20,000.00	79,775.00	66.48	66.67
Market study	1,80,000.00	1,69,000.00	93.89	100
Developing Demonstration Plots (18)	1,80,000.00	1,19,672.00	66.48	66.67
Enhancing paddy production (SRI)(1800 HHs)	9,00,000.00	7,34,933.00	81.66	89.83
Promotion of mixed farming and ecological agricultural practices (1700HHs)	8,50,000.00	6,41,401.00	75.46	95.71
Promotion of vegetable production	6,00,000.00	4,49,950.00	74.99	75.00
Support for vermi compost unit(linked with vegetable cultivation)	-	-		0.00
Promotion of kitchen garden with women farmers	8,75,000.00	8,74,880.00	99.99	100.00
Horticulture promotion- 400 HHs	8,00,000.00	7,91,328.00	98.92	100.00
Promotion of Goatary	27,00,000.00	26,70,000.00	98.89	98.89
Promotion of backyard poultry	14,40,000.00	13,23,600.00	91.92	91.00

Support for mushroom cultivation, for the ultravulnerable	3,15,000.00	2,41,500.00	76.67	76.67
Farm mechanisation (mechanical hand tools like Weeder, Sprayer, Trench Hoe and other hand tools) through group sharing/SHG.(45 groups)	2,25,000.00	2,21,250.00	98.33	100.00
Access to irrigation pump set through group sharing/SHG.(18 groups)	1,80,000.00	1,30,000.00	72.22	72.22
Building rain water management structure with soil conservation measures	45,00,000.00	35,02,705.00	77.84	77.88
Forest Management Plan	5,00,000.00	3,78,649.00	75.73	80
Hiring diverse technical support for project implementation and value added services	10,44,000.00	8,67,000.00	83.05	
Supervising/analysing Baseline /Endline	1,44,000.00	1,44,000.00	100.00	100
Coordinating & finalizing HH based livelihood planning	72,000.00	-	0.00	
Mid term/End term evaluation	1,20,000.00	69,252.00	57.71	100
Identification, Documentation, and Dissemination of best practices	1,50,000.00	1,00,000.00	66.67	66.67
MIS-related set up at headquarters	-	-		
Laptop, printer, and accessories	1,71,000.00	1,65,014.00	96.50	
Purchase of two wheelers	2,40,000.00	1,78,314.00	74.30	66.67
Furniture & Fixture	60,000.00	58,096.00	96.83	
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	2,00,66,000.00	1,73,31,839.00	86.37	
IV: OTHER DIRECT COSTS				

Monthly Progress Review meeting [3 Field offices]	2,17,500.00	1,78,945.00	82.27	
Quarterly Progress Review Meeting	1,20,000.00	87,461.00	72.88	
Office Rent, Electricity, Water & Sanitation, Internet Charges	5,20,800.00	4,46,026.00	85.64	
Newspaper, Periodical and Other Consumables	26,100.00	20,353.00	77.98	
Printing, Stationery, Telephone & Postage	58,000.00	52,600.00	90.69	
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS	9,42,400.00	7,85,385.00	83.34	
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	3,52,86,469.00	3,13,12,178.00	88.74	
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS	27,86,040.00	24,15,197.00	86.69	
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,80,72,509.00	3,37,27,375.00	88.59	

5. Qualitative assessments:

The activity-wise remarks of qualitative assessment of this evaluator are presented in table-4 which is an updated version of what was incorporated in the mid-term evaluation report.

Table-4: Qualitative remarks from the evaluator

Activities	Qualitative remarks of the evaluator
Objective 1:	
Sustainable farming practices adopted by 90% of the targeted population with improved farming techniques, crop diversity and 50% increase in agricultural productivity within 3 years of project period	
Developing Demonstration Plots (18)	Target for 6 plots for 1st year could not be achieved; total achievement so far=12. Field-level observation suggests that while these demo plots have the potential to motivate the local farmers, the latter are however less interested in adopting the practice without a formal support. On the other hand, some champion farmers have carried forward their own demo plot experiences(such as the trellis) and have added value to that either by diversifying the crop or otherwise. Like, farmer Adrai Patra of Gutmapadar has adopted some improved techniques without any support for that except for the idea & motivation from NIRMAN.
Enhancing paddy production (SRI)(1800 HHs)	This seems to have met its purpose through the promotion of line sowing/transplantation, and farmers have noticed how beneficial is this method in terms of reduction in the seed quantity and enhancement in the production.

Promotion of mixed farming and ecological agricultural practices (1700HHs)	This too has clicked although not so extensively so far, like in mixed farming one or two additional crops added to the original monocrop practice, and the pot manure for which both training & materials have been given is yet to be extensively used or mainstreamed. The project principle of giving support either for enhancing paddy production or for mixed farming (i.e. not the both to the same farmer) seems to have discouraged some farmers who want both as the common practice is paddy as a monocrop in the low land and mixed cropping(millet, etc.) in the upland which most of the beneficiaries have.
Promotion of vegetable production (1200 HHs)	Very promising examples have been seen in the beneficiary fields, and farmers(particularly women) have confessed that whereas they used to grow only one or two conventional vegetable crops earlier, now with the project support they have significantly diversified it and have been able to enjoy several vegetables like the bottle gourd for the 1st time from their own production. Some have even been able to sell the surplus and get a good money.
Support for vermi compost unit(linked with vegetable cultivation) (90 HHs)	This could not click at all being dependent on govt funds which could not be mobilized as the concerned schemes were no more in continuity by the time the project started.
Promotion of kitchen garden with women farmers (3500 HHs)	This too seems to have worked well more or less, and women look for more & diversified seed support.
Horticulture promotion- 400 HHs	It did not work well for lemon supplied in the 1st phase except for few cases in the Rayagada district (like in Charpai village) where many of the lemon plants are said to have survived, but the initiative is now chiefly focused on mango varieties like Daseri, Lengeda, and Amrapalli etc. which are said to be feasible in the local conditions. The support for metal net fencing for the saplings has been very effective. In the initial phase the metal fencing was not envisaged, and also the sapling supply was reportedly untimely in some cases which caused damage of the plants chiefly due to livestock. Later on, the 2 nd Project Coordinator identified the flaws, emphasized on the SoPs (like the size & depth of the hole), managed to arrange

	adequate metal fencing within the available funds, and ensured timely supply of the saplings which succeeded.
Promotion of Goatary (450 HHs)	Differential beneficiary experiences were shared during the field visit, but the overall impression is that of a promising impact because while many beneficiaries have been able to see a good increase in the number originally supported for, few have even sold some goats and have earned a good sum. Organizing vaccination camps was an added value in this activity although not budgeted. The breeds are said to be indigenous ('Ganjam' and 'Black Bengal') procured locally.
Promotion of backyard poultry (1200 HHs)	More impressive results than that of goatary as the beneficiaries have enjoyed the eggs and even some of the chicken but still have a good number (mostly chicks). Major issue to the chickens falling prey to the jungle cats during free ranging, but people are accustomed to it. The project principle of giving support either for goatary or for poultry (i.e. not the both to the same beneficiary) is not liked by many who want both kinds of support because while goatary takes a longer time to be economically beneficial and adds more responsibilities, it fetches a higher income than that from chicken. The birds are claimed to be desi birds procured locally, but vaccination could not be ensured. In fact, the local people are not habituated in vaccinating their small livestock, and poultry receives least priority than goat.
Support for mushroom cultivation, for the ultravulnerable (30 HHs)	The field level interactions suggest that this support has been more or less successful and even motivating, but the limitations are the season, want of seed support, and arrangement of the raw materials for making the beds. Like arranging enough straw for the beds is said to be not an easy affair for some because their prevalent local practices do not produce much straw. What is however interesting is that although the mushroom units are in the rural areas where cultivated mushroom is an uncommon item, some of the growers have been able to see their product in the village itself.

	At Tentulipadar(Kalahandi) the evaluator interacted with one lady beneficiary who did not have the capacity to arrange sufficient straw to prepare the beds. The project team then facilitated an arrangement under which some co-villagers contributed the straw and in return she gave them some of her mushroom to eat.
Farm mechanisation (mechanical hand tools like Weeder, Sprayer, Trench Hoe and other hand tools) through group sharing/SHG.(45 groups)	Groups have been provided with manual Mandva weeder(usually 3/group) and 1 sprayer(per group), but the purpose for which this was given seems to be under-fulfilled despite their good experiences of the weeder. In some cases the crops are so dense that weeders can't work. These weeders are suitable for line sown/transplanted fields which are limited in the village areas. However, this support has indeed increased the capacity & confidence of the SHG groups which were earlier doing almost nothing practical except for some loan disbursement, etc.. The real objective behind this support is to complement the promotion of good practices for enhanced crop production (like, for those practicing line sowing the weeder shall be helpful and for all farmers the sprayer shall be useful for spraying the ecofriendly/organic pot manure). At the same time the SHG groups can charge user fees against these tools and get some income for maintaining & multiplying the same, apart from the profits. This is very good and needs more time to be effective. However, it is observed that such groups were usually not efficient or smart enough to make collective commercial use of this support, and rather some member(or her husband) individually made efficient use of the same in which case adequate financial return was not so certain.
Access to irrigation pump set through group sharing/SHG.(18 groups)	The experience is more or less similar to the above. At Bhalumaska this evaluator came to know that it was used to lift water from the local well in the interest of the villagers as the situation demanded the same.

Supervising/analyzing Baseline /Endline	Baseline study has been done with reports. End-line survey also reportedly done with about 100 samples, but the consolidated report is yet to come.
Coordinating & finalizing HH based livelihood planning	The vision with which this was planned as a systematic & formal process has not materialized, and no such formal livelihood plan is available. No fund utilization is reported against the same. Instead some crop planning activities were facilitated.
Conducting mid-term evaluation and end-term evaluation	What the donor conducted on its own in 2023 was primarily limited to the Kalahandi field area only, and was much before mid-term of the project in the true sense. When NIRMAN commissioned the mid-term evaluation in October 2024 it was relatively late enough in that sense although it covered all the three districts. The end-term evaluation commissioned by NIRMAN was more or less timely in that sense as its field visits were over in the last week of the project final year.
Mid term/End term evaluation	
Identification, Documentation, and Dissemination of best practices (3)	Video documentation on this aspect was to be done each year, but it was not feasible to do it for the year-1. What has been created later is not exactly specific to the best practices but gives an overall idea of the project achievement.
Objective 2:	
Natural resources like land, rainwater and forest conserved, managed and governed sustainably increasing household income and consumption from these	
Building rain water management structure with soil conservation measures (900 acres)	These are among the most appreciable actions done under this project because of their immediate & long-term impacts. Many such WHSs were visited by this evaluator including the supposedly longest ones(surface bunds) at Madaspaju(Kandhamal) and Boripai(Rayagada) and some subsurface dyke(not visible) sites also like that as Sesari Gan(Kandhamal). Since part of these have been created in the private lands of interested farmers, it is also dependent on the concerned farmers how they take it forward. Like, at Badabandha it was found that farmer Pandav Patra planted cashew, castor, and colocasia on the earthen embankment; and

	even grew ragi there which would definitely help strengthen the embankment saving it from a collapse under the water pressure during heavy rains; apart from yielding grains, and vegetables, etc... This was not found at Jilagan (mid-term evaluation). Although much impressive particularly for the long ones(surface), the unconsolidated nature of many such bunds is a matter of concern, and there is a likelihood of gradual siltation of the channels and/or collapse of the bunds in the future². No proper arrangement has been made in case of most of the sub-surface dykes to locate them or identify their length on the surface. These RWHSs are very important and potential socio-ecological assets created under the project, but while their expected impact is a time-taking process, their sustainability is a matter of concern, particularly for the surface dykes/bunds.
Forest Management Plan (50 villages=50 plans)	40 plans are said to be done so far and few of these plans were examined by this evaluator at Sikarpai during the mid-term evaluation. The plan formats are in Odia to help the villagers make their own plans in a meaningful way, and are quite simple & people-friendly. Each format has general sections(like, flora & fauna) and specific sections(like, wild foods, medicinal plants, bamboo, kendu leaf, etc.). It also has a section where the open space area is to be mentioned for a possible plantation activity. Since the villagers are not habituated in documenting their forest resources systematically, and the plan requires them to be specific for each of their customary forest areas making the task more complex for them, hence the process required a time longer than expected, particularly as it was dependent on the facilitation of only one external resource person whose availability was limited.

² As learnt from the concerned project coordinator the beneficiary communities were later on asked to broadcast grass seeds on these bunds which succeeded in developing a grassy cover. This seems to be a post-closure development.

	The evaluator understands that in most of the 'completed cases' the formal plan was yet to come although relevant meetings & data collection processes had been initiated.
Objective 3:	
The capacity of 40% of leaders from community institutions and groups enhanced on livelihood skills, entitlements and enterprise building	
Project orientation meeting for partner staff and field organizers (3)	Done, but supposedly not very adequately which obviously impacted the staff skills during the initial phase of implementation.
2 days trainers' training to project staff and leading farmers on improved methods (SRI and SMI) farming. (9)	It was not possible to interview the participants of each of these trainings either because of their absence in the village during our visit (as happened in Badabandha in Kandhamal and Upar Rambh in Rayagada) or the paucity of our time, but feedback received in the village meetings at other places suggests these did have some positive impact; and that the villagers seemed to be particularly keen on learning skills of immediate use, like in agriculture or kitchen garden, etc.. Similarly, Chakradhara Praska, who is in the Board of Directors of Rayagada Farmers' Producers' Company Ltd. and was interviewed by this evaluator at Sikarpai was quite confident & vocal about the learning on value addition in the training and explained how the same has been decided to be used in the hill-broom business(i.e. instead of selling the hill broom grass loose it has now to be sold in the broom form).
1 day trainers' training to staff and women farmers on kitchen gardening and nutrition education (9)	
2 days training programme for project staff and SHG leaders on group based enterprise promotion, on collective marketing/establishment market place/Haat etc (9)	
Two days trainers' training to project staff and SHG leaders on livestock management (goatary, backyard poultry) (9)	
Exposure visits for SHG members and Livestock rearers, to successful SHGs and livestock rearing sites(and other project relevant matters) for cross learning. ((9)	
1 day training of farmers' producer group members and project staff on objectives, governance, role and responsibilities, record keeping, (with subsequent review & updation training next years) (9)	
Capacity building training of PRI members(2 days) (9)	
1 day training on Convergence Programme (3)	

Capacity building on gender and developing gender strategy for staff and cadre/CBO leaders (1 day) (9)	Ajay Behera of Badabandha village(Kandhamal) who has received this training, was interviewed by this evaluator during the mid-term evaluation, and his learning suggests the success of the programme.
Village level wall paintings/writings (120)	Completed as per the update shared from NIRMAN. This evaluator could see few such wall paintings at different project sites which were more or less intact displaying the concept of Jeevamruta, a bioinput.
Developing IEC materials for nutrition education and other relevant project themes (each 5000 copies) (2)	One brochure on nutrition in foods from the wild & agriculture has been published in Odia, and two (one on backyard goatary and one on backyard poultry) are in the digital form. It is understood that press printing of the booklets(which have been developed actually on the basis of feedback received from THF) on poultry and goatary is yet to be done may be because of paucity of funds.
Mobilisation & Promotion/strengthening of FPOs (3)	This activity was proposed keeping two existing FPOs in Rayagada & Kandhamal and expecting a third to be promoted in Kalahandi district; but while the existing FPOs (Rayagada Farmers' Producers' Company Ltd. and Kandhamal Farmers' Producers' Company Ltd. are definitely on the path of being strengthened with differential progress (because of differential opportunities & support systems, like RFPCL also gets a small support from a project funded by CRS), the expected FPO for Kalahandi is yet to be formed. During the mid-term evaluation the Project Coordinator said he was planning for facilitating the formation of Producers' Groups in this district in order to help create the FPO, however he could not do it actually because of various limitations. However, the key strength of the NIRMAN-promoted FPOs in Rayagada & Kandhamal lies in the support from NIRMAN's partnership with the erstwhile Odisha Millet Mission(now Shree Anna Abhiyan or SAA) in these two districts whereas for Kalahandi NIRMAN doesn't have any such partnership which seems to be the chief reason of the initiative lagging behind here. What is however concerning is that the core strength of both these FPOs being linked with the government

	support under SAA, and the SAA itself losing its strength after the change in government in 2024, both RFPCL and KFPCL have become very vulnerable. Their inherent weakness lies in the poor skill & capacity of their Board of Directors who can hardly take wise & effective business decisions & initiatives independently; and despite NIRMAN's efforts to develop their capacity the required coherence seems to be still lacking although the present project is in no way responsible for that.
Development of annual business development plan of the FPOs (3)	This evaluator was present in the workshop that was organized at Bhubaneswar for orienting the concerned field-level participants on how to make the business plan, the concerned expert later on sat with the field teams as well as BoDs separately at their respective places to develop very practical business plans on a participatory basis. Digital versions of such plans have been shared with this evaluator which are appreciable.
Market study (3)	3 market studies of provisional nature have been done @1 per intervention district, and local products of business priority & feasibility have been identified for each such district keeping the FPO in mind. While the study reports awaited further enrichment with additional data from the field, the business plan preparation process made things a bit clear & more practical in the districts of Rayagada and Kandhamal.



A wall painting in the Kandhamal district explaining Jeevamruta, an organic manure-cum-pesticide



Photos for NIRMAN courtesy Mutu Mandal. All rights reserved by NIRMAN (www.nirmanodisha.org).



Gangadhar Majhi of Pedam(Kandhamal) received Rs.980 by selling 14 kg beans(Nov. 2024). His improved veg. farming was supported under the THF-1 project. (source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts)



Women learning organic seed treatment with Bijamruta at Charpai(Rayagada) under this project initiative

(source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts)



A beautiful view of the project participants and project staff of the THF_INDIA -supported project learning on Azolla farming during an exposure visit to NIRMAL's Dasapalla field (Feb. 2023; source: NIRMAL's Twitter photos).



Kitchen garden of Rama Majhi and Jodi Majhi at Railpada(Kalahandi) (Sept. 2024) (source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts)



Khariff crop planning exercise at Charpai(Rayagada) in April 2024 ((source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts)



Photo courtesy Rajesh Kumar Kasalya. All rights reserved by NIRMAN (www.nirmanodisha.org).



Project participant Sile Tiaka of village Charpai (Serigumma GP, K.Singhpur Block, Rayagada dist.) adopted farming of Oyster(Dhingiri) mushroom with 25 beds and has sold the 1st harvest of 5 kg @ Rs. 100/kg (19 March 2024). The farm was supported by THF_INDIA under NIRMAN's facilitation.(source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts)



The centralized training on business planning for FPOs organized at Bhubaneswar (Feb. 2024). Photo source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts.





Thanks to *The Hans Foundation* Tulasi Prasika of Boripai(Serigumma GP, K.Singhpur Block,Rayagada district, Odisha/India), a widow & only bread earner of her family, got our support of Rs.1200 to which she added Rs.300, and bought 2 hens & 1 cock that got multiplied by more than 4 times. She has sold 3 cocks for Rs.3000 which means a lot for her financially. Earlier she used to be a subsistence farmer with but little scope of livelihood. Now poultry has supplemented her income significantly. Photo for NIRMAN courtesy Rajesh Kumar Koushalya. All rights reserved by NIRMAN (www.nirmanodisha.org).

Source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts (Feb. 2024)



Crop cutting for the indigenous 'Asanchudi' paddy in the field of Sunati Majhi(Madlakuna village,Kandhamal), under the project support of THF_INDIA (Nov. 2023). Source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts

6. Activities that proved impressive:

Most of the activities proved to be useful, effective, and logical. Farmers expressed in their own traditional terms how the line sowing/transplantation considerably reduced the cost of production but enhanced the production itself. The evaluator saw impressive vegetable fields & kitchen gardens, and met beneficiaries significantly benefited by poultry and/or goatary support. Most impressive are however the rain water harvesting structures and the convergence.

NIRMAN adopted two methods of convergence: external and internal. In external convergence, it established links with the KVK(Krushi Vigyan Kendra) whose scientists provided good support for mushroom cultivation. Similarly, the horticulture department helped the project beneficiaries get plastic vegetable trays at a highly subsidized price which proved to be very useful. As we were told at Bada Tikraguda(Kalahandi), this tray not only helped in easy transportation of the vegetables but also helped in minimizing the damage caused during transportation in conventional bags. Agricultural pumps were also arranged under convergence.

Under internal convergence, NIRMAN linked two or more projects under its implementation for the benefit of the project participants. For instance, in Kandhamal district where it implemented the SPPIF(Special Programme for Promotion of Integrated Farming in Tribal Areas) project support was mobilized from this project fund to help the THF project beneficiaries get improved goat sheds which was remarkable. On the other hand, as we saw at Bhalumaska(Rayagada) two SHGs (one supported with THF and another with Trickle Up) cooperated with each other for mutual business growth.



4 women's groups provided with training & materials for cultivation of Oyster mushroom as well as medicinal plants, in collaboration with KVK, Kalahandi (January 2025)(source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts)



Improved goat-shed at Bhaliapani(Kandhamal)

7. Activities that need review:

- In the horticultural plantation, the supply of lemon seedlings almost failed in many cases because of poor quality, centralized procurement at Bhubaneswar(that increased the duration of supply), and lack of provision for fencing. Further, instead of confining the support to only mango & lemon other feasible fruit crops could have been added.
- The community-based forest management plan formats & processes also need a review & modification given the moderate progress status. The community spirit in the project districts is not at par with that in NIRMAN's Dasapalla project area, and this makes sustainability of the community-based forest protection & management vulnerable.
- Selecting vegetable seed brands also need a review because in some cases people have complained that the seeds did not germinate well. This evaluator has separately known also how some of the indigenous paddy seeds also failed the germination test conducted by the field teams. Moreover, the reported enhancement of the production in paddy is dubious because of a number of reasons (chiefly due to want of standardized assessment); and in some cases the field teams mistook some improved paddy varieties to be indigenous as these had become conventional in many areas after decades of use.

- Providing equipment support seems to have but a low-level impact chiefly because of want of mature handling at the SHG level; so maturity of the SHG members/leaders should also be a factor while selecting the group.
- Wall paintings/writings could have been more diverse, interesting, and informative relating to the focused subjects.
- In the initial period of the project, insect traps such as yellow sticky traps were promoted but after question regarding their adverse impacts(like, the risk of beneficial insects also being trapped) was raised they were discontinued. There should be a critical review of what went well or wrong with this experiment, and if its promotion or discontinuation was logical.



Inspired by NIRMAN's initiative, farmer Buti Pidisika of Tadigumma village (Rayagada dist.) used insect traps for organic pest management in his vegetable field. (source: NIRMAN's Twitter posts)

Other inputs have been provided either in table-4 or under section-11 or specific recommendations (annexure-4).

8. Extra achievements:

As mentioned in the mid-term evaluation report, whereas the project proposed demo plots in agriculture, NIRMAN took an extra initiative to convert a demo plot at Gutkapadar(Kandhamal) into an experimental plot for paddy seed diversification with an objective to assess which local variety works well in the local conditions and with a goal to produce seeds for future use. This plot still serves as a demo plot for line

transplantation, but is much more than that with 27 paddy varieties. A similar plot in the same district & under the same project but of small scale grows more 11 different local varieties of paddy collected from different districts.

At Mundibali(Kandhamal) we found a beneficiary who has added more saplings on his own to the mango plantation supported under the project. His additions are marked by wooden fencing unlike the metal net fencing supported for.

9. Shortcomings:

An important deviation was the non-implementation of proposed vermi-compost unit as it was an unbudgeted activity chiefly dependent on the government scheme, and the scheme could not provide any support (being discontinued by govt.) by the time the project started.

10. Major issues:

The project faced both external & internal issues in respect of the PIA and the donor, as described hereunder:

- ***External issues (donor):***

The project proposal took an unusually longer time to be approved by the donor as THF asked for repeated revision & modifications. The process reached a stage when it became doubtful if the proposal would ever be sanctioned. By the time it was sanctioned, many of the planned activities had lost their favorable season for the 1st project year, and this subsequently impacted the project implementation & fund utilization.

Still more painful was the loss of hope for its continuation or extension after the stipulated period as THF informed that the prevailing situations did not favour any such commitment. This was like a big blow to the good spirit with which NIRMAN implemented the project. While many competent team members lost their job, the remarkable change which the project intervention successfully brought in the socio-ecological systems became vulnerable to gradual fading without next phase follow up.

While the donor has otherwise been very cooperative, regular posts of NIRMAN on Twitter(now X) tagging THF to share some progress or interesting activity/achievement related to the project never received the donor's response in any way which is surprising because a like or encouraging response in at least few genuine cases would have been motivational for the NIRMAN team. This however has never been an issue for both sides which is good, but it does suggest a self-review at the end of the donor.

11. Recommendations:

Now that the project is over, both THF and NIRMAN should work together to consider a similar development action on a long-term basis since the overall project experience has been very positive, encouraging, motivating, and demanding also given the grassroots realities & expectations. Best practices should be promoted, expanded, and value-added further while learning from the failures and/or poor outcomes/deviations must appropriately modify the related strategies & actions.

For instance, the apprehension of this evaluator regarding the vulnerability of the unconsolidated bunds created in the rain water harvesting structures has been proven true with rain-cuts detected in some of these bunds. There was no consistent effort to minimize this vulnerability with appropriate vegetation cover (in few cases some kind of vegetation cover was ensured while in other cases it was ignored, most probably due to want of adequate clarity & guidance on the same from the concerned technical experts).

Human resources employed for the project implementation also need a consistency (more or less) in respect of the enthusiasm, self-motivation, team spirit, and commitment among the staff members. Innovative mind should be a must for the staff members of the level of Programme Officers and above, so as to save the programme execution from being just stereotype and monotonous.

As of the financial provisions, there is be sufficient provision to attract, retain, develop, and promote the high potential talents among the staff; and programmatic provisions should be suitably modified so as to be least or nil dependent on third party support (like in case of convergence with govt schemes). This means that the project must provide enough financial capacity to execute the programme efficiently, timely, and effectively without any third party support. Convergence should be a complementary activity and be used to add value to the programmatic action & achievement.

Linking the project objectives directly with two or more SDGs (and indirectly with more, if possible) alongwith a targeted reduction in the ecological(general and carbon-specific/water-specific) footprints would enhance its dignity & global implication.

On the other hand, factors that are but poorly related to the project concept or vision should not be emphasized upon either as a basis or goal. Like, if what was originally seen as distress migration has gradually emerged as a choice for higher cash income so as to meet the needs of changed lifestyle which is why the project interventions won't be able to significantly reduce the trend of out-migration despite its successful social-ecological & socio-economic impacts & achievements, then this reality must be accepted where applicable.

Annexure-4 provides a modified reproduction of specific-recommendations of the mid-term evaluation by this evaluator so as to guide the future proposals of NIRMAN having similarity with the project of the present concern.

12. Conclusion:

The overall impression of the mid-term evaluation that it has been impressive, effective, and promising in many ways stands valid till today. As we could see, the under-achievements & failures occupy a minor place in the overall progress, and the Project Coordinator's plans by the time of the mid-term evaluation to meet the overall targets to the maximum possible extent by the end of the project in 2025 seem to be more or less successful which is remarkable.

That the PIA did not claim 100% achievement against each & every target or component adds to the credibility of its final progress report because this is realistic. What is interesting is that in a few cases a positive deviation has been reported, i.e. exceeding (even if minor) the target which is another aspect of the implementational reality.

The beauty of the overall project implementation lies in the internal & external convergence, in the confidence & expectations generated, in the assets created, and in the community sensitization established. As we saw in the Kalahandi district, there were other players in the field who had made lot of investments, but without a proper or regular follow up whereas this project created impacts despite its limited investments because of a regular follow up which is important.

The overall project experience has enough positivity to motivate the donor, the PIA(NIRMAN), and the target communities to think of a long-term continuation for reaching the best phase of its impacts; and it would be great if The Hans Foundation can explore scopes for such continuation or modified extension at its earliest so that the work effectively starts before the links become dormant, the expectations dead, and the local ecosystem unfavorable.

Annexure-1

Overall project target vs achievement by 15th March 2025(programmatic) with remarks

Objective-wise planned activities	Unit	Mid-term evaluation (as on 13 October 2024)				End-term evaluation (as received on 15 March 2025)			
		Total targets (all districts)	Total achievements (all districts till 13 Oct'24)	%age of deviation (if any, all districts)	Remarks of NIRMAN	Total achievements (all districts till mid-March 2025)	Deviation (all districts)	%age of deviation (if any, all districts)	Remarks of NIRMAN
Objective 1:									
Sustainable farming practices adopted by 90% of the targeted population with improved farming techniques, crop diversity and 50% increase in agricultural productivity within 3 years of project period									
Developing Demonstration Plots (18)	Demo Plots	18	12	33.33		12	6	33.33	1 st year agricultural season was over by the time the project was sanctioned, which is why target for the year-1(6 Demo plots) could not be implemented.
Enhancing paddy production (SRI)(1800 HHs)	HHs	1800	1617	10.16		1631	169	9.38	As compared to the status by mid-term evaluation, 14 more farmers were added in

									the Rabi season for paddy cultivation.
Promotion of mixed farming and ecological agricultural practices (1700HHs)	HHs	1700	1627	4.29		1627	73	4.29	The short fall is primarily due to the missing targets in the year-1.
Promotion of vegetable production (1200 HHs)	HHs	1350	750	44.44	Each district remaining 50 farmers will be involved in the rabi season	900	450	33.33	150 HHs added in the Rabi season. During 1 st year the rainfed vegetable production season was over by the time the project was sanctioned, so 450 HHs could not be covered.
Support for vermi compost unit(linked with vegetable cultivation) (90 HHs)	HHs	0	0	100.00		0	0	0	The scheme support for vermin compost unit was not available with any line department by the time the project began to be implemented.
Promotion of kitchen garden with women farmers (3500 HHs)	HHs	3500	3160	9.71	The remaining 340 farmers will be involved in the rabi season.	3500	3500	0	340 HHs were added as planned in the Rabi season with 100% achievement.
Horticulture promotion- 400 HHs	HHs	400	400	0	Till Oct-2024 100% achievement	0	0	0	100% achievement
Promotion of Goatary (450 HHs)	HHs	450	344	23.56	Planned for the 4th quarter	444	06	1.33	100 HHs added in Feb-2025 (4 th quarter)

Promotion of backyard poultry (1200 HHs)	HHs	1200	891	25.75	Planned for 4th quarter	1091	109	9.08	200 HHs were added in Feb-2025 (4 th quarter). The shortfall in achievement was primarily because due to a short period of time it was not possible to cover the target in the 1 st year properly.
Support for mushroom cultivation, for the ultravulnerable (30 HHs)	HHs	20	13	35.00	Planned for the 3rd quarter	23	7	23.33	The shortfall in achievement was primarily because due to a short period of time it was not possible to cover the target in the 1 st year properly.
Farm mechanization (mechanical hand tools like Weeder, Sprayer, Trench Hoe and other hand tools) through group sharing/SHG.(45 groups)	Farme r's group /SHG	45	45	0.00	100% achievement	45	45	0	100% achievement
Access to irrigation pump set through group sharing/SHG. (18 groups)	SHG	18	7	61.11	Planned for 3rd quarter	13	5	27.77	6 no's SHG groups added in the 3 rd and 4 th quarters. The shortfall in achievement was primarily because due to a short period of time it was not possible to cover the target in the 1 st year properly.
Supervising/analyzing Baseline /Endline	Perso n Day	24	12	50.00	Planned for 4th quarter				Will be utilized in 4 th quarter

Coordinating & finalizing HH based livelihood planning	Person Day	12	0	100.00		12	0	100	No fund utilization
Conducting mid-term evaluation and end term evaluation (by donor)	Month	-	-	Not applicable	Mid-term evaluation already carried out by the donor independently	-	-	-	
Mid term/End term evaluation (by NIRMAN)	Lump sum	-	-		Mid-term evaluation completed by NIRMAN; end term evaluation to be done at the end of the project.	-	-	-	End-term evaluation completed by NIRMAN
Identification, Documentation, and Dissemination of best practices (2)	Lump sum	3	1	66.67	1 completed in 03 districts	2	1	33.33	Documentation for year-1 could not be done.
Objective 2:									
Natural resources like land, rainwater and forest conserved, managed and governed sustainably increasing household income and consumption from these									
Building rain water management structure with soil conservation measures (900 acres)	Acres	900	434.5	51.66	Remaining approved 336 acres of year – 3 will be completed in 4th quarter	770.5	130.5	13.61	During the 4 th quarter 336 acres' RWHS have been completed as planned. The shortfall in achievement was primarily because due

					out of targeted of 3 years budget				to a short period of time it was not possible to cover the target in the 1 st year properly causing a deviation of 130.5 acres that year. The donor did not agree to reallocate the unspent fund for these 130.5 acres in the subsequent years.
Forest Management Plan (50 villages=50 plans)	Village	50	20	60	Planned for 3rd and 4th quarters	40	10	20	10 village management plans added in the 4 th quarter. The shortfall in achievement was primarily because due to a short period of time it was not possible to cover the target in the 1 st year properly causing a deviation of 10 management plans that year. The donor did not agree to reallocate the unspent fund for these 10 plans in the subsequent years.
Objective 3:									
The capacity of 40% of leaders from community institutions and groups enhanced on livelihood skills, entitlements and enterprise building									

Project orientation meeting for partner staff and field organizers (3)	Event	1	1	0.00		1	1	0.00	100% achievement
2 days trainers' training to project staff and leading farmers on improved methods (SRI and SMI) farming. (9)	Event	9	9	0.00		9	9	0.00	100% achievement
1 day trainers' training to staff and women farmers on kitchen gardening and nutrition education (9)	Event	9	9	0.00		9	9	0.00	100% achievement
2 days training programme for project staff and SHG leaders on group based enterprise promotion, on collective marketing/establishment market place/Haat etc (9)	Event	9	9	0.00		9	9	0.00	100% achievement
Two days trainers' training to project staff and SHG leaders on livestock management (goatary, backyard poultry) (9)	Event	9	6	33.33	Planned for 3rd quarter	9	0	0	100% achievement. 03 trainings already completed as planned in the 3 rd quarter.
Exposure visits for SHG members and Livestock rearers, to successful SHGs and livestock rearing sites(and other project relevant matters) for cross learning. ((9)	Visit	9	6	33.33	Planned for 3rd quarter	9	0	0	100% achievement. 03 exposures already completed as planned in the 3 rd quarter.
1 day training of farmers' producer group members and project staff on objectives, governance, role and responsibilities, record keeping, (with subsequent	Event	9	6	33.33	Planned for 3rd quarter	9	0	0	100% achievement. 03 trainings already completed as planned in the 3 rd quarter.

review & updation training next years) (9)									
Capacity building training of PRI members (2 days) (9)	Event	9	9	0.00		9	9	0.00	100% achievement
1 day training on Convergence Programme (3)	Event	3	3	0.00		3	3	0.00	100% achievement
Capacity building training on gender and developing gender strategy for staff and cadre/CBO leaders (1 day) (9)	Training	6	6	0.00	Planned for 4th quarter	9	0	0	100% achievement covering the plan for the 4 th quarter.
Village level wall paintings/writings (120)	Wall paintings	120	120	0.00		120	120	0	100% achievement
Developing IEC materials for nutrition education and other relevant project themes (each 5000 copies) (2)	Publication	2	1	50.00		2	3		Utilized
Mobilisation & Promotion/strengthening of FPOs (3)	FPO	9	4	55.5	Planned for 3rd quarter	6	3	33.33	Due to absence of FPO in the Th. Rampur Block of Kalahandi, the activity could not carried out for that district.
Development of annual business development plan of the FPOs (3)	FPO	3	0	100.00	Planned for 3rd quarter	3	2	33.33	Will be Utilized by 31 st March-2025
Market study (3)	FPO	3	3	0.00		3	3	0.00	-
Overall figures	Unit	11389	9463	33.33					

Annexure-2

3-years' district-wise project target vs achievement (programmatic)

Objective- 1:

Sl. No	Planned activities	Project-total		District-wise data					
		Total Targeted units(HHs/area/nos.)	Achievement units	Targeted units	Achievement units	Targeted units	Achievement units	Targeted units	Achievement units
				Kalahandi	Kalahandi	Kandhamal	Kandhamal	Rayagada	Rayagada
1	Enhancing paddy production (Indigenous variety)	1800	1617	500	443	650	637	650	537
2	Mixed cropping	1700	1627	500	493	500	489	700	645
3	Special vegetables production	1200	900	400	340	400	300	400	260
4	Kitchen Garden promotion (0.1) acre model	3500	3500	1114	1114	1168	1168	1218	1218
5	Horticulture Promotion	400	400	140	135	130	133	130	132
6	Demo Plots Develop	18	12	6	4	6	4	6	4
7	Goatary Promotion	450	445	150	133	150	157	150	155
8	Backyard Poultry Promotion	1200	1092	300	320	450	339	450	433
9	Mushroom Production	30	23	10	11	10	5	10	7
10	Farm mechanization	45	45	15	15	15	15	15	15
11	Access to irrigation pump set through group sharing	18	13	5	4	6	4	7	5
12	Wall Painting	120	120	40	40	40	40	40	40

Objective-2:

Sl. No	Planned activities	Project-total		District-wise data					
		Total Targeted units(HHs/area /nos.)	Achievement units	Targeted units	Achievement units	Targeted units	Achievement units	Targeted units	Achievement units
				Kalahandi	Kalahandi	Kandhamal	Kandhamal	Rayagada	Rayagada
1	Building community-based rain water harvesting structures (with soil conservation measures)	900 Acres	701 Acres	400	261	400	388	100	52
2	Facilitating preparation of CFR management plans	50 villages	40 CFR villages	20	16	20	17	10	7

Objective-3:

Sl. No	Planned activities	Project-total		District-wise data					
		Total Targeted units(HHs/area /nos.)	Achievement units	Targeted units	Achievement units	Targeted units	Achievement units	Targeted units	Achievement units
				Kalahandi	Kalahandi	Kandhamal	Kandhamal	Rayagada	Rayagada
1	2 days trainers' training to project staffs and leading farmers on improve methods (SRI and SMI) of farming.	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	1 day trainers' training to staff and women farmers on kitchen gardening and nutrition management	9	9	3	3	3	3	3	3

3	2 days Training programme for project staff and SHG leaders on group-based enterprise promotion, and collective marketing	9	9	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	2 days trainers' training for project staff and SHG leaders on livestock management	9	9	3	3	3	3	3	3
5	Exposure visits for SHG members and Livestock rearer HHs to successful SHGs	9	9	3	3	3	3	3	3
6	1 day training of farmers' producer organization members and project staff on objectives, governance,	9	8	3	2	3	3	3	3
7	2 days Capacity building training for PRI members	9	9	3	3	3	3	3	3
8	1 day training to staff and community leaders on convergence	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
9	Capacity building training on gender and developing gender strategy f	9	9	3	3	3	3	3	3
10	Village level wall paintings/writings on project themes	120 villages	120 villages	40	40	40	40	40	40
11	Mobilization & promotion strengthening of FPOs	9	6	3	0	3	3	3	3

Annexure-3

Financial achievements (total 3 years)

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION	NIRMAN	
PROJECT NAME	STRENGTHENING LIVELIHOOD SECURITY OF MARGINALIZED TRIBAL AND FOREST DWELLING COMMUNITIES IN POOR TRIBAL REGIONS OF ODISHA	
ENTIRE PROJECT PERIOD	1st November 2022 to 31st March 2025	
Budget Categories	Total Approved Budget	Actual Expenditure
I. PERSONNEL (Salaries)		
Programme Facilitator State Level [01]	13,58,955.00	12,50,890.00
Programme Facilitator District Level [03]	31,26,876.00	29,24,028.00
Programme Facilitator Cluster Level [06]	36,99,600.00	34,08,697.00
Executive Director (part salary)	6,78,260.00	6,32,995.00
Accountant [01]	9,71,148.00	8,75,565.00
Programme Organiser [12]	30,19,980.00	27,97,855.00
TOTAL PERSONNEL	1,28,54,819.00	1,18,90,030.00

II. TRAVEL, PER DIEM & LOCAL TRANSPORT		
Field travel of field staff	7,70,750.00	7,22,233.00
Field travel(HO programme monitoring staff)	4,35,000.00	3,94,161.00
Field travel:Consultant(s) (excluding evaluation)	2,17,500.00	1,88,530.00
TOTAL TRAVEL, PER DIEM & LOCAL TRANSPORT	14,23,250.00	13,04,924.00
III. DIRECT COSTS FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
Project orientation meeting for partner staff and field organizers	70,000.00	52,553.00
2 days trainers' training to project staff and leading farmers on improved methods (SRI and SMI) farming.	3,00,000.00	2,93,195.00
1 day trainers' training to staff and women farmers on kitchen gardening and nutrition education	2,70,000.00	2,58,035.00
2 days training programme for project staff and SHG leaders on group based enterprise promotion, on collective marketing/establishment market place/Haat etc	4,50,000.00	4,35,709.00
Two days trainers' training to project staff and SHG leaders on livestock management (goatary, backyard poultry)	4,50,000.00	4,35,107.00
Exposure visits for SHG members and Livestock rearers, to successful SHGs and livestock rearing sites(and other project relevant matters) for cross learning.	6,30,000.00	5,92,808.00

1 day training of farmers' producer group members and project staff on objectives, governance, role and responsibilities, record keeping, (with subsequent review & updation training next years)	2,70,000.00	2,24,077.00
Capacity building training of PRI members(2 days)	4,50,000.00	4,44,429.00
1 day training on Convergence Programme	90,000.00	79,114.00
Capacity building on gender and developing gender strategy for staff and cadre/CBO leaders (1 day)	2,70,000.00	2,56,878.00
Village level wall paintings/writings	2,40,000.00	2,40,000.00
Developing IEC materials for nutrition education and other relevant project themes (each 5000 copies)	60,000.00	59,870.00
Mobilisation & Promotion/strengthening of FPOs	1,50,000.00	49,745.00
Development of annual business development plan of the FPOs	1,20,000.00	79,775.00
Market study	1,80,000.00	1,69,000.00
Developing Demonstration Plots (18)	1,80,000.00	1,19,672.00
Enhancing paddy production (SRI)(1800 HHs)	9,00,000.00	7,34,933.00
Promotion of mixed farming and ecological agricultural practices (1700HHs)	8,50,000.00	6,41,401.00
Promotion of vegetable production	6,00,000.00	4,49,950.00

Support for vermi compost unit(linked with vegetable cultivation)	-	-
Promotion of kitchen garden with women farmers	8,75,000.00	8,74,880.00
Horticulture promotion- 400 HHs	8,00,000.00	7,91,328.00
Promotion of Goatary	27,00,000.00	26,70,000.00
Promotion of backyard poultry	14,40,000.00	13,23,600.00
Support for mushroom cultivation, for the ultravulnerable	3,15,000.00	2,41,500.00
Farm mechanisation (mechanical hand tools like Weeder, Sprayer, Trench Hoe and other hand tools) through group sharing/SHG.(45 groups)	2,25,000.00	2,21,250.00
Access to irrigation pump set through group sharing/SHG.(18 groups)	1,80,000.00	1,30,000.00
Building rain water management structure with soil conservation measures	45,00,000.00	35,02,705.00
Forest Management Plan	5,00,000.00	3,78,649.00
Hiring diverse technical support for project implementation and value added services	10,44,000.00	8,67,000.00
Supervising/analysing Baseline /Endline	1,44,000.00	1,44,000.00
Coordinating & finalizing HH based livelihood planning	72,000.00	-
Mid term/End term evaluation	1,20,000.00	69,252.00
Identification, Documentation, and Dissemination of best practices	1,50,000.00	1,00,000.00
MIS-related set up at headquarters	-	-

Laptop, printer, and accessories	1,71,000.00	1,65,014.00
Purchase of two wheelers	2,40,000.00	1,78,314.00
Furniture & Fixture	60,000.00	58,096.00
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	2,00,66,000.00	1,73,31,839.00
IV: OTHER DIRECT COSTS		
Monthly Progress Review meeting [3 Field offices]	2,17,500.00	1,78,945.00
Quarterly Progress Review Meeting	1,20,000.00	87,461.00
Office Rent, Electricity, Water & Sanitation, Internet Charges	5,20,800.00	4,46,026.00
Newspaper, Periodical and Other Consumables	26,100.00	20,353.00
Printing, Stationery, Telephone & Postage	58,000.00	52,600.00
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS	9,42,400.00	7,85,385.00
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	3,52,86,469.00	3,13,12,178.00
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS	27,86,040.00	24,15,197.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,80,72,509.00	3,37,27,375.00
COST SHARE	Total Cost Share	
CONTRIBUTION FROM OTHER DONOR(S)	87,03,720.00	81,00,873.00
Total Grant Receipts		3,37,27,375.00

Annexure-4

Specific recommendations (modified) of the mid-term evaluation

- NIRMAN needs to critically review the deviations in programmatic as well as financial achievements so as to make concrete plans for meeting the targets effectively in the future proposals.
- The project action deserves to be continued for another 5 years, if possible or reconsidered, so as to consolidate, concretize, sustain, and strengthen the initiatives undertaken.
- To be truly effective, each plantation (horticulture) should be planned for minimum 1.5 acres; and suitable intercropping should be made a must there. Instead of a monoculture (mango, for ex.), mixed fruit plantation (of hardy species) may be considered depending upon the local feasibility. Seedlings/saplings must be very healthy & robust, and should reach the plantation fields preferably with 24 hrs under proper shade & care.
- HHs-based participatory livelihood planning is very useful for a formalized identification of who needs what and can afford/manage what. This should be an essential component of the next phase of the project, if approved.
- As the beneficiaries have expressed interest for simultaneous support of goatary & poultry (which is not unreasonable given the longer time taken in goatary for financial returns), ample scope should be created for that provided the beneficiaries are ready to contribute their share money for both.
- Convergence activities must not form a part of the budgeted activities or MEAL plan because of the uncertainty in the timely release of the govt grant which was found to create not only an impasse in some cases (as happened in case of the proposed vermi-compost pits) but also confusion & suspicion among the beneficiaries (as found with the SHG members at Gutkapadar who received a pump-set under convergence but contributing their share money). It should be a complementary or supplementary activity only.
- The support for kitchen garden and vegetable cultivation has motivated the beneficiaries to such an extent that they look for seasonal as well as more diverse seed support instead of being one-time and few varieties. This too can be considered according to the local ecological feasibility (like, if beneficiaries can arrange irrigation for the summer crop, then seeds may be chosen accordingly; if they can't, varieties requiring least water may be considered). Where the surplus production is of a marketable quantity, the local FPO or PG can facilitate/arrange adequate & affordable to & fro transportation facility (charges to be shared by the beneficiaries) to the nearest town if that takes an hour or so for one-side journey.

13. Further, construction of adequate number of zero energy cold storage (Zero Energy Cooling Chamber or ZECC) should be essentially done as a complementary activity for areas where the surplus production (collective or individual) is high by reaching the market is not always possible or otherwise there is a vulnerability of distress sale.
14. Support for the ultra-vulnerable should not only be increased number wise (because in tribal areas there are many needy widows some of whom are quite young), but also should be made flexible with locally feasible options instead of sticking to mushroom cultivation only. Further, the learning from support for mushroom cultivation, which suggests that the ultrapoor people often lack enough land for paddy cultivation so as to ensure the required availability of straw for the mushroom cultivation thereby not being capable to initiate or sustain this (mushroom) farming, must guide future proposals for such activity.
15. Farm mechanization should emphasize more on manual & low/nil maintenance equipments of diverse types. In fact, this activity should also have scope to train & equip potential individual farmers with innovative low/nil maintenance equipments such as the innovative Ecoflo Hand Pump provided these are suitable & affordable locally. Where a direct support is not possible the farmers may be provided with relevant information and linkage.
16. Small clips derived from the video documentation of best practices should be shared with the concerned stakeholder through WhatsApp groups, and case studies made during the documentation process should be circulated widely including through the media. While few case studies have been shared in the social media handles of NIRMAN, sharing through a beneficiary (or multi-stakeholder) WhatsApp group has not been attempted, as understood from the Project Coordinator
17. There is a need to increase the number of rain water harvesting structures to the maximum possible extent. The project of present concern targets RWHs in acres not numbers, but numbers are also important for the geographical spread of the potential.
18. The community forest management plans are to be done under the active facilitation of the relevant experts or resource persons, and a budget component (with feasible fund raising plan) is to be attached to the plan if the activities require investments in monetary terms.
19. Diverse training activities need to be clubbed into two or three hand-on training on themes of immediate use & interest for the target groups. Training for PRI members is not recommended. Three key themes for which the training may be organized are: ecological (like improved & ecofriendly farming techniques), economic (how to earn more through feasible entrepreneurship at HH/institution level, value addition & marketing strategies, leveraging funds from govt schemes, etc.), and institutional (running community/farmers' institutions successfully). Trainings for ecological and economic skills can be organized at Panchayat level while that for institutional skills may be organized either at cluster-level or at district-level depending upon the target people (like, for BoD members, at district-level and for SHG/PG members at cluster-level). Each training should have integrated modules and should not last for more than 1.5 days given the psychological saturation level of the target people. Relevant exposure visits should be complementary to this training, and are a must for concepts/practices that are otherwise not so easily perceived during the classroom training sessions.

20. A robust support mechanism alongwith an exit strategy is needed to promote strong FPOs. Such institutions need not be considered in case of want of local feasibility or absence of adequate support mechanism.
21. Business plans for FPOs should be very simple and member-friendly. Moreover, these are to be developed through hands-on training or workshops (if involving several FPOs at a time) or by appointing a dedicated resource person for each FPO who will sit with the members for necessary time and will not only help develop the plan but will also follow up to see how the plan is implemented. It is a pleasure to see that this recommendation of the mid-term evaluation was more or less practiced while facilitating the business plans for two FPOs, RFPCL & KFPCL which produced a practical business plan indeed.
22. New but feasible & sustainable income generation activities like Pisciculture can also be considered for the next phase programme(if any).