

TSSS 2024



Stories of Resilience Building

in the Flood-Prone Regions of Assam

Case Stories documented by *Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS)* under **Global Program India**

“Transforming Lives & Building Sustainability”.

About Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS)

Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS) is a social wing of the Catholic diocese of Tezpur, statutorily established as non-profit and non political organisation rendering humanitarian service among remote-poor and marginalized people irrespective of caste, language and creed in the Diocese of Tezpur, Assam.

TSSS was established 15th October of the year 1998 and promoted by social workers like Rt. Rev. Bishop. Robert Kerketta. The Society was registered during the year 2005 vide Society Registration No. Rs/242/C/02 of 2005-2006 TSSS is also registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs, govt of India under the Foreign Contribution Act (FCRA) 1976 and under Income Tax Act vide FCRA No. 020620012 with 12A Registration-22/12A(a)/CIT/GHY-1/2011-12 .



Table of Contents



About TSSS

Director's Message

01 **Cultivating Prosperity: Bidhan Tiru's Triumph Over Agricultural Adversity** (Pg. 01)

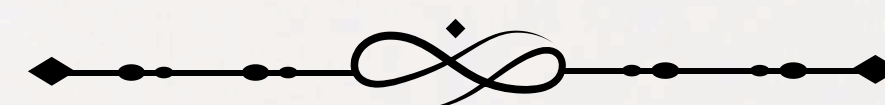
02 **Nadeswar Bora: Cultivating Resilience in Gabhuru Tonijan's Flood-Prone Landscape** (Pg. 05)

03 **Sowing Seeds of Change: SHGs Journey from meagre income to path of Sustainability** (Pg. 09)

04 **Transforming Adversity into Triumph: Mrs. Rumi Phukan's Resilient Journey in Flood-Prone Lakhimpur, Assam** (Pg. 14)

05 **Transforming Disaster Into Vigilance with Early Warning Systems** (Pg. 19)

06 **'Raised Ringwell': A Chronicle of 13/10 Grant Village's Battle Against Floods** (Pg. 23)



Director's Message



Dear Friends & Supporters,

I am delighted to share with you the remarkable progress we have made in our collaborative efforts with **Caritas India** (change as applicable) for Disaster Risk Reduction in the flood-prone areas of Lakhimpur district in Assam. Through our concerted endeavours, we have not only implemented innovative practices but also witnessed tangible positive impacts on the lives of the communities we serve.

One of the key initiatives we have undertaken is the establishment of raised ring wells, a simple yet effective solution that has significantly enhanced access to clean water, especially during the flood seasons. These wells not only serve as a vital source of drinking water but also ensure that communities have safe access to clean water for other household requirements.

Additionally, our focus on the cultivation of flood-resilient paddy seeds through convergence with **Krishi Vikas Kendra (KVK)** has yielded promising results. By promoting the adoption of resilient crop varieties, we are empowering farmers to withstand the challenges posed by recurrent floods, thereby safeguarding their livelihoods and ensuring food sufficiency even in the face of adversity.

As we continue to document these initiatives through case stories, we aim to not only showcase the positive outcomes but also inspire others to replicate and scale up such interventions in other vulnerable regions. It is through collaboration, innovation, convergence, and a shared commitment to resilience-building that we can make meaningful strides towards creating a safer and more sustainable future for all.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who has been part of this journey and contributed in your own way.

With Warm Regards,

(Fr. Biswajit Ekka)

Director

Tezpur Social Service Society



Special Thanks to Team:

Miss Nilima Xalxo: *Program Associate*

Mr. Angelus Tirkey: *Field Educator*

Mr. Gabriel Sandiguria: *Field Educator*



Cultivating Prosperity: Bidhan Tiru's Triumph Over Agricultural Adversity

Embark on Bidhan Tiru's agricultural revolution, transcending traditional challenges with innovative solutions. Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS) leads the charge in introducing flood-tolerant seeds, revolutionizing farming practices. Witness Bidhan's triumph, record-breaking harvests, and his forward-looking vision for sustainable prosperity in 2023. Follow Bidhan on his path to self-reliance, as he pioneers agricultural transformation using flood-tolerant seeds and hands-on techniques.

Traditional Struggles: A Glimpse into Bidhan's Farming Past

Mr. Bidhan Tiru, a diligent farmer from Dhekiajuli, North Lakhimpur (Assam), grappled with the entrenched challenges of traditional agricultural practices. Cultivating 16 bighas of land using conventional methods involving manual plowing, he encountered recurring setbacks due to the region's notorious floods. The unpredictable inundations submerged his crops multiple times, compelling him to re-sow seeds and exacerbating the losses he faced.

Navigating through the perils of waterlogging, Bidhan found himself ensnared in a labor-intensive and time-consuming cycle. The relentless effort required to manage his extensive land, coupled with rising labor costs, created an intricate web of challenges that hindered his agricultural progress. Despite his unwavering dedication, the traditional approach seemed to have hit a plateau, leaving Bidhan searching for a breakthrough.

The struggle for sustainable yields persisted, echoing the experiences of numerous farmers in the region. Bidhan's journey epitomized the resilience of those tilling the land against formidable odds. Little did he know that the winds of change were approaching, carrying with them the promise of innovative solutions that would redefine his farming narrative and set him on a path to unprecedented success.



The Turning Point: Tezpur Social Service Society's (TSSS) Intervention

In 2022, Bidhan Tiru's agricultural odyssey witnessed a transformative chapter with the timely intervention of the Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS). Serving as the catalyst for change, TSSS became the bridge that connected Bidhan to a realm of innovative agricultural practices. The society's committed team introduced Bidhan, along with fellow farmers Mathias and Markus, to the paradigm- shifting concept of flood-tolerant seeds.

This crucial juncture marked more than just an introduction; it was a gateway to a wealth of knowledge and modern techniques. Under Global Program TSSS facilitated a pivotal orientation with the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), where Bidhan delved into the intricacies of flood-tolerant varieties, drum seeders, and efficient bed nurseries. The collaboration with KVK meant that Bidhan was not merely embracing change; he was at the forefront of a farming revolution.

Empowered with newfound insights, Bidhan transitioned from traditional plowing to the adoption of cutting-edge machinery for sowing and reaping. The drum seeder, in particular, emerged as a game- changer, alleviating the burdens of labor-intensive practices. TSSS's intervention not only broadened Bidhan's horizons but also equipped him with the tools to revolutionize his farming practices. This transformative partnership set the stage for Bidhan Tiru's remarkable journey towards resilient sustainability agricultural practices.



Triumph Over Adversity: Bidhan's Record-Breaking Harvest

The saga of Bidhan Tiru's agricultural triumph reached its pinnacle as he emerged victorious over the adversities that once plagued his fields. Armed with the knowledge and techniques imparted by Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Bidhan, along with fellow farmers Mathias and Markus, ushered in a new era of prosperity in 2022.

Cultivating 7 bighas of land, Bidhan sowed the seeds of change, quite literally. Flood-tolerant varieties such as Sorna Masoori, Bahadur Sub 1, Joha, and Bora adorned his fields, resilient against the very floods that had once threatened his livelihood. The outcome was nothing short of extraordinary – a bountiful harvest of 140 mounds, translating to a remarkable 56 quintals. Bidhan's personal share amounted to 24 quintals, a stark contrast to the challenges he faced in the past.

The significance of this harvest extended beyond the sheer quantity. Bidhan utilized 4 quintals for his daughter's marriage, a testament to the newfound financial stability that this innovative approach to agriculture had afforded him. Selling an additional 5 quintals, he earned Rs. 15,000, solidifying the tangible success of his venture. Bidhan Tiru had not only triumphed over the challenges of traditional farming but had also sown the seeds of prosperity for his family through resilient, forward-thinking practices.



2023 and Beyond: Bidhan's Vision for Agricultural Transformation

As the sun rose in 2023, Bidhan Tiru stood at the cusp of a promising future, eager to build upon the triumphs of the previous year. Fueled by the success of 2022, Bidhan chose to tread a path of self-reliance. Cultivating 8 bighas with 40 kg of seeds, he embraced the teachings acquired through training and transformed his land with a hands-on approach, eschewing the use of machinery, harvesting 60 quintals of produce.

Bidhan's unwavering belief in flood-tolerant seeds and the efficiency of traditional methods amplified his confidence. By meticulously preparing a nursery bed on his own, he demonstrated that agricultural transformation could be a personal journey. The flood-tolerant seeds, coupled with manual planting, significantly reduced the burden on resources. The process became less time-consuming and more cost-effective, elevating productivity to unprecedented levels.

Looking ahead, Bidhan envisions expanding his cultivation footprint. His goal is not only personal prosperity but also to inspire neighboring farmers to embrace the paradigm shift in agriculture. With aspirations to join a Farmers Production Company, Bidhan seeks to create a ripple effect, fostering a community of forward-thinking cultivators.

His personal journey stands as a testament to the transformative power of knowledge, resilience, and a commitment to sustainable agricultural practices that transcend generations. Bidhan Tiru is not merely cultivating crops; he is sowing the seeds of a more prosperous and resilient farming community for the years to come.



Nadeswar Bora: Cultivating Resilience in Gabhuru Tonijan's Flood-Prone Landscape

Mr. Nadeswar Bora, a resilient farmer from Gabhuru Tonijan village in flood-ravaged Assam. Join him on a transformative journey through organic farming, as he shares the secrets behind his sustainable prosperity. The impact of TSSS's intervention, enhancing cultivation practices and fostering community collaboration. Discover the symbiotic relationship between resilience, sustainability, and a flourishing future in the heart of Assam's challenging agricultural landscape.

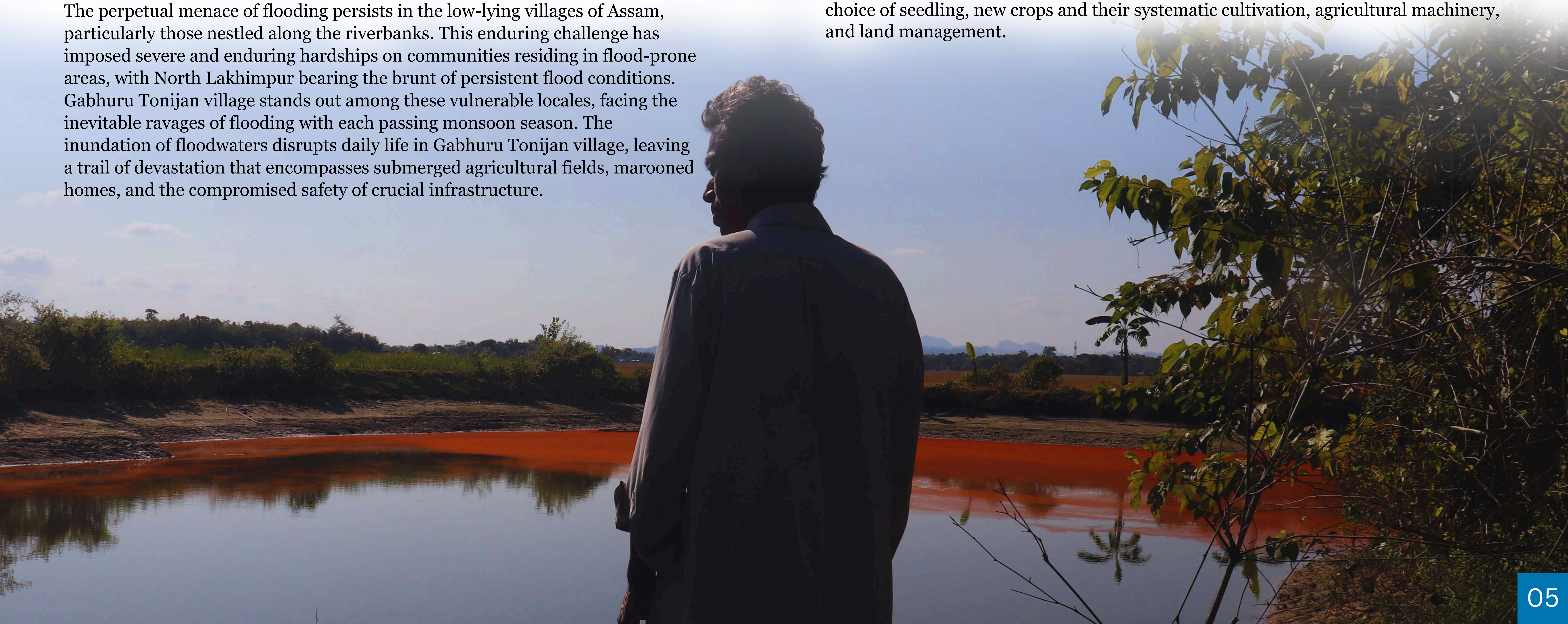
Gabhuru Tonijan Village at Assam's Flood: Overview

The perpetual menace of flooding persists in the low-lying villages of Assam, particularly those nestled along the riverbanks. This enduring challenge has imposed severe and enduring hardships on communities residing in flood-prone areas, with North Lakhimpur bearing the brunt of persistent flood conditions. Gabhuru Tonijan village stands out among these vulnerable locales, facing the inevitable ravages of flooding with each passing monsoon season. The inundation of floodwaters disrupts daily life in Gabhuru Tonijan village, leaving a trail of devastation that encompasses submerged agricultural fields, marooned homes, and the compromised safety of crucial infrastructure.

The recurring floods have forged a cycle of adversity for the inhabitants, testing their resilience and straining their ability to rebuild in the aftermath. Efforts to address and mitigate the impact of these annual inundations remain a pressing concern for affected communities, who strive to adapt to the challenges posed by Assam's unforgiving flood-prone landscape.

Mr. Nadeswar Bora's Agricultural Journey in Gabhuru Tonijan Village

Mr. Nadeswar Bora, is a seasoned farmer and resident of Gabhuru Tonijan village, hailing from a generation of farming families. Having acquired agricultural skills from his family namely land management, harvesting techniques, machinery operation and maintenance, problem-solving, financial management, time management, environmental stewardship, resilience and innovation, Mr. Nadeswar devoted himself to full-time farming after leaving college. His journey began inspired by his parents' engagement in agriculture, and thereafter he received basic training from both the Autonomous Council and the local panchayat on technical aspects of farming namely choice of seedling, new crops and their systematic cultivation, agricultural machinery, and land management.



TSSS Resilient Agricultural Intervention: Enhancing Cultivation Practices and Community Collaboration

“In 2021, Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS) played a pivotal role in our agricultural endeavors”, narrates Mr. Bora, “by providing comprehensive training in diverse cultivation techniques such as boru, green leaves, harvesting, and sapling management. While I have accumulated significant experience over the years, these training sessions offered additional insights into the technical aspects of cultivation. The systematic and scientific nature of the training requires careful planning, although I haven't fully implemented all aspects, utilizing it more for enhanced understanding.”

The local weather's unpredictability significantly impacts our cultivation and production. Drawing from my collective experiences and combining them with a scientific understanding of cultivation practices, I strategically plant seasonal crops. Timing is crucial for successful cultivation, influencing a crop's growth and productivity. TSSS facilitated a valuable connection with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), an entity previously unknown to us. Through TSSS, we received quality training from KVK, along with essential kits, even during flood times.

In Assam, the cultivation of black rice has gained popularity due to its high nutritional value and resilience to floods. This flood-resilient superfood has boosted farm income and helped farmers adapt to the region's erratic weather and chronic floods. Black rice, with its distinct aroma and moderate flooding resilience, offers a promising solution for farmers in the Assam flood zone.

Additionally, we were provided seedlings, including Black Rice, although the anticipated 35% production did not materialize. The cautious adoption of new seedlings is due to the systematic cultivation required, a process that takes time. Traditional paddy cultivation, such as Ranjit and Mansoori, typically yields around 20 quintals per bigha.

Before TSSS's intervention, farmers in the area operated independently. However, post- training, a sense of community building emerged as farmers began learning from each other. TSSS further facilitated connections with various departments and agricultural organizations, providing us with a valuable edge in refining our cultivation practices. I anticipate continued improvements in crop yield over the next 20-30 years.



Beyond agriculture, TSSS has broadened our horizons by offering training on constructing flood-resilient houses. This dual focus aims to safeguard both our cultivation efforts and our families during flood times, demonstrating TSSS's holistic approach to community development.

Transformative Impact of TSSS Training on Agricultural Community

The most significant impact within my farming community is evident after receiving training from Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS) namely, flood resilient farming, and organic based farming. The farmers, inspired by the knowledge gained, are now actively engaged in learning, with me serving as a source of inspiration. The community has expanded its involvement in cultivation, boasting 10 full-time farmers, including women's groups dedicated to agricultural pursuits.

Another positive outcome following TSSS training is the increased visibility of my agricultural practices among students and teachers from nearby schools. Specifically, the focus on organic practices has drawn interest, leading to students' visits for exposure. This recognition has provided a morale boost to my farming career.

Armed with a wealth of experiences and theoretical insights into cultivation, I now feel confident in training fellow farmers to enhance their yields. Paddy cultivation, along with other crops like potatoes and green leaves, is a skill I am eager to share. Additionally, my expertise in organic farming, acquired over the years, allows me to guide others in utilizing it productively.

Organic Farming Triumphs: A Journey of Prosperity and Environmental Care

For me, 'organic farming' serves as a means to care for the environment, avoiding the depletion of the soil's natural fertility caused by excessive use of Agri-products. While recognizing the harmful effects of excessive fertilisers used by some farmers, I prioritise providing my family with healthy produce from my home consumption-oriented harvest.

Commencing my agricultural journey in 2012, my dedication to organic farming has proven more lucrative compared to traditional methods. Each year, I witness a steady increase in earnings. In the initial year, I sold 40 quintals at Rs. 800/-, yielding a profit of Rs. 32,000/. Presently, my annual income solely from agriculture exceeds Rs. 2 lakhs, complemented by additional revenue streams. The intervention of TSSS has opened new avenues for excellence in cultivation, allowing me to fulfil educational aspirations for my children, with one already a graduate and another in the Indian Army since 2018—a moment of immense pride.

Mr. Bora's Agricultural Philosophy and Sustainable Practices

In my agricultural journey, the core of my success is deeply rooted in the embrace of sustainable and organic farming practices. I hold a profound belief in the essential harmony between agricultural productivity and environmental preservation, a belief that has fundamentally shaped my approach to cultivation. I consciously choose organic ingredients like cow dung and vermicomposting, steering clear of agri-products that could compromise the natural fertility of the soil. This deliberate decision is not just a reflection of my commitment to environmental care but also a dedication to ensuring the production of wholesome, organic crops for the consumption of my family. Looking beyond the immediate benefits, I keenly recognize the far-reaching impact of my choices, playing a role in safeguarding the land for the prosperity of future generations

My agricultural journey is a testament to the symbiotic relationship between resilience, sustainability, and prosperity. Adapting to the challenges presented by the climate and wholeheartedly embracing organic farming practices, I not only secure the well-being of my family but also make meaningful contributions to the broader agricultural community. My dedication, coupled with the invaluable support from organizations like TSSS and KVK, serves as a living example of the transformative power embedded in sustainable agriculture. Through this journey, I have become a steward of a resilient and thriving farming ecosystem, despite the unpredictable flood in this region.

I want my story to be an inspiration for those navigating the intricate landscapes of agricultural pursuits, a demonstration that with unwavering resilience and a steadfast commitment to sustainable practices, one can cultivate not just crops but also a sustainable and flourishing future.



Sowing Seeds of Change: SHGs Journey from meagre income to path of Sustainability

Here's 'Sowing Seeds of Change' with Panchajainya Mohila Self-Help-Group(SHG) inspiring journey from meager income to sustainability. Overcoming challenges, the resilient ten-member group, supported by TSSS, transformed through entrepreneurship and a handloom renaissance. Their creations not only ensure self-sufficiency but also foster community growth. Join this empowering narrative of perseverance, skill development, and sustainability commitment, encapsulated in TSSS's catalytic intervention, as they sow seeds of positive change in their community.



Panchajainya Mohila's SHGs Humble Beginning

In 2011, our group “Panchajainya Mohila”, initially consisting of just five members, was formed with the goal of making a positive impact on our lives and becoming self-reliant providers for our families. Despite facing challenges in mobilizing funds to sustain our group, our determination and entrepreneurial spirit prevailed.

Efforts to secure financial support from government bodies proved futile, leaving us to navigate our journey independently. Undeterred, our dynamic and hardworking team of five steadily grew to ten members. Recognizing our financial constraints, we ventured into various initiatives to generate income.

We embarked on small projects such as offering catering services at weddings for a modest fee of Rs. 20/-, a stark contrast to the Rs. 1000/- charged by others. Additionally, we set up stalls during puppet shows, earning around Rs. 8000/-. Our resourcefulness extended to winning Rs. 20,000/- in a lottery and collectively participating in manual labor.

Undeterred by the challenges of cultivating crops like potatoes, mustard seeds, and paddy, we faced the physical demands head-on. Despite the hurdles, our commitment remained unwavering. Each member contributed Rs. 10/- monthly as an initial deposit, even though the returns were modest. These humble beginnings and collective efforts fueled our perseverance, driving us forward.



TSSS Intervention-Nurturing Growth and Innovation

In 2021, everything changed for us as up Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS) began its intervention. Their impact was like a spark that set off a chain of events, completely reshaping our path forward.

TSSS kicked off our association with eye-opening awareness programs, opening our minds to new possibilities for sustainable livelihoods. As active participants, we soaked up knowledge, discovering opportunities we hadn't seen before. The awareness programs set the stage, and TSSS continued to back us by organizing thorough training sessions covering various ways to make a living.

A major breakthrough occurred when TSSS connected us with the Agricultural department. They not only recognized our potential but also provided us with seedlings for cultivation after evaluating our work. While this support was impactful, it unfortunately didn't last long. Despite the setback, the experience showed us the potential for growth and sustainability.

At the same time, TSSS expanded our network by introducing us to Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), a crucial association in our journey. KVK offered priceless technical assistance and tools at discounted rates, pushing our agricultural efforts ahead. Despite facing challenges like limited production, the innovations from TSSS and KVK laid the groundwork for a more self-sufficient and sustainable approach to our work.

But the collaboration didn't end there. Undeterred by challenges, TSSS also linked us with NABARD, aiming for a goatery and handloom project. Although the project didn't take off in our area, the mere opportunity showcased TSSS's dedication to exploring various paths for our growth.

The TSSS intervention wasn't just a set of programs; it was a complete strategy that armed us with knowledge, connected us to essential resources, and fueled our spirit of innovation. Through their unwavering support, TSSS became the cornerstone of our journey toward sustainability and self-empowerment.



Handloom Renaissance: 'Weaving Dreams into Reality'

In the early months of 2023, our journey reached a pivotal juncture as TSSS unveiled a new chapter focused on handloom. This was not just about learning a craft; it was a journey of rediscovery and empowerment that would redefine the way we approached our livelihoods.

TSSS initiated this phase by providing us with extensive training in handloom techniques. The initial stages were marked by an infusion of technical know-how and the provision of essential materials. As we delved into this less labor-intensive craft, a realization dawned – handlooms offered a unique opportunity for us women to engage in meaningful work at any time of the day, aligning perfectly with the demands of our households.

Initially, mastering the intricacies of traditional hand looming proved to be a challenge. With just one traditional weaving machine at our disposal, the production of traditional attire was limited. However, undeterred by these constraints, our team of ten embarked on a journey of skill development. Regular training sessions organised by TSSS became our guiding light, helping us hone our craft and navigate the nuances of traditional weaving.

The process of crafting a complete 'Gamocha' took three days, with additional time dedicated to incorporating intricate designs. Given our current setup, production was constrained by the capacity of a single weaving machine, elongating the time required for one person to produce a final product. Despite these challenges, our dedication remained unwavering.

To date, our efforts have resulted in the creation of over 100 pieces of traditional attire. These products, adorned with designs varying in sizes, have found their way to the market. Selling at prices ranging from Rs. 250 to Rs. 500, with larger designs fetching even more at Rs. 1500, our handwoven creations have become a source of pride and a testament to our newfound skills.



Embarking on Sustainability

Through consistent training and programs, we have acquired the skills and confidence needed to progress on our sustainability journey through self-empowerment. In the past, our efforts lacked direction, and we worked without a clear vision for sustainability. However, the training has equipped us to surpass our previous efforts. We now believe we can enhance our investments, ensuring better provision for our families.

Recognizing that committing ourselves to the work is essential for elevating our standard of living and establishing a sustainable income source, we have found support from various departments within TSSS. Our newfound abilities enable us to financially support our family members. Moreover, our Self-Help Group (SHG) lends out deposits at low interest rates (2% or 3%), benefiting others in the community and fostering the growth of SHGs.

As an 'Panchajainya Mohila' SHG, we take pride in facilitating the success of Matric students in the entire village, appreciating and honoring them with our locally produced 'Gamocha.' Our team has gained admiration from other women in the village who express inspiration and a desire to join our group. While other SHGs exist, they struggle to function effectively, and although they wish to join us, we have decided not to expand beyond our current 10-member group. Within this limited size, we foster a sense of unity, considering ourselves a close-knit family.

With support from TSSS, our SHG is poised to venture into sericulture, adding another income stream that will further benefit our group. This newfound financial independence allows us to manage most of our expenses independently, ensuring the well-being of our families.



Transforming Adversity into Triumph: Mrs. Rumi Phukan's Resilient Journey in Flood-Prone Lakhimpur, Assam

Here's Mrs. Rumi Phukan's transformative journey in flood-prone Assam. Evolving from disaster victim to community leader, Caritas India through TSSS empowers her with sustainable solutions amid recurrent floods. In 2021, she ascends, embracing entrepreneurship, disaster risk reduction, and community building. Mrs. Phukan's visionary resilience fortifies her community, transcending personal triumph against annual floods. Explore her strategic initiatives, from stilt houses to the Jyotimoi Producer Group, shaping a resilient oasis. Witness her inspiring journey as she charts a course towards a future filled with better days for Lakhimpur, Assam.



The Perpetual Challenge: A Historical Overview of Assam's Frequent Floods

Assam, a region steeped in history, has endured the relentless onslaught of recurring floods, creating a saga of perpetual challenges for its resilient inhabitants. The annals of Assam's past are marked by watershed events, with devastating floods and earthquakes becoming poignant chapters in its narrative. While such calamities were not unknown, the frequency and intensity escalated significantly after the earthquake events of the 1950s. The years following witnessed a harrowing series of catastrophic floods in 1954, 1962, 1972, 1977, 1984, 1988, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2012, and, more recently, in 2019 and 2020.

The year 2022 cast a dark shadow over Assam, with floods affecting approximately 5.5 million people across 32 out of 35 districts. The toll was not merely measured in numbers; it encompassed the erosion of homes, livelihoods, and the displacement of communities. Amidst this backdrop, the Ranganadi River snaked its way through the village of Panchnoi, nestled in Lakhimpur District, creating an annual spectacle of vulnerability. For the inhabitants of Panchnoi village, this perennial challenge meant a yearly struggle against the rising tides, where homes, fields, and lives were at the mercy of nature's unpredictable fury.

Mrs. Rumi Phukan 'A Homemaker'

Mrs. Rumi Phukan, a homemaker in Panchnoi, a flood-prone village along the Ranganadi River in Lakhimpur District, Assam, faces the perennial threat of inundation. Located under Dejoor Grama Panchayat, her household includes her husband, Pradip Phukan, and their two sons, Lakhyaraj and Dhurbaraj. Living on the precipice of yearly floods, the family grapples with the constant vulnerability posed by the river, emphasizing the challenges endured by the community.



Caritas India: A Ray of Hope Amidst Desolation

In the midst of the desolation caused by recurrent floods, Caritas India through TSSS, emerged as a transformative force, a beacon of hope illuminating the lives of those grappling with adversity. Mrs. Rumi Phukan's encounter with TSSS in 2017 marked a pivotal moment in her journey, transcending beyond the mere provision of relief aid. The organization not only extended a helping hand with immediate necessities, such as cash support of Rs. 2000/- and essential wash kits but went a step further, offering a lifeline for sustainable recovery.

Caritas India's intervention was a holistic approach that empowered communities to rebuild and fortify against the cyclic onslaught of nature. Mrs. Phukan's recollection of those crucial moments vividly portrays the transition from a recipient of aid to an empowered entrepreneur.

Beyond the tangible support, TSSS supported by Caritas India provided invaluable technical guidance on preparedness and sustainability, sowing the seeds of resilience in the fertile soil of Mrs. Phukan's determination.



Empowering Resilience: Mrs. Rumi Phukan's Ascension

In the crucible of adversity, Mrs. Rumi Phukan's ascension towards resilience began to unfold in 2021, marking a transformative chapter in her life. Fueled by newfound knowledge and supported by the dedicated TSSS staff, Mrs. Phukan actively immersed herself in global program activities. The engagement took shape through participation in training sessions on Task Forces and coordination meetings with various stakeholders, igniting a renewed sense of purpose and strength.

Her journey exemplifies a metamorphosis from a victim of circumstance to a proactive force, leading the charge in her village. Cultivating crops and embracing goat farming, Mrs. Phukan became a living testament to resilience and entrepreneurship.

As an active member of the Disaster Risk Reduction committee, Mrs. Phukan demonstrated an unwavering commitment to learning and collaboration. Attending meetings and training sessions facilitated by BMZ global programs, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), and Veterinary and Block, she solidified her role as a key figure in the ongoing battle against the recurring floods in Lakhimpur, Assam. Mrs. Rumi Phukan's ascension is not just a personal triumph; it's a testament to the transformative power of resilience when coupled with knowledge and community engagement.

A Resilient Oasis: Building Infrastructure and Community

Mrs. Rumi Phukan's remarkable journey transcends mere resilience; it extends to the creation of a sanctuary amidst the perennial challenges. With the income generated from her ventures, she became a builder of not just businesses but also crucial resilient infrastructure that fortified her community. A strategic focus on creating resilience infrastructure became the hallmark of her transformative efforts.

The 'stilt house' she erected stands as a symbol of foresight, strategically stocked with essentials—rice, water gourds, potatoes, a wooden almirah with vital documents, a bed, warm clothes, mosquito nets, and fodder for goats. This elevated haven ensures Mrs. Phukan's preparedness for the annual flood onslaught, providing a safe refuge for months. Beyond personal fortifications, she extended her influence on the community by founding the Jyotimoi Producer Group.

Established in 2019 with ten members, this collective initiative has now grown to include 40 members. In a significant stride, Mrs. Phukan secured a substantial loan of 2 lakh for the group's business endeavors in 2019. The group serves not just as an economic entity but a support system, embodying the collective resilience of the community. Mrs. Rumi Phukan's visionary approach demonstrates that resilience is not an individual pursuit; it's a communal endeavor, where infrastructure and community support intertwine to withstand the recurrent challenges posed by the unforgiving floods of Lakhimpur, Assam.



To a Future Filled with Better Days

In the face of adversity, Mrs. Rumi Phukan's indomitable spirit radiates a beacon of hope, illuminating a path toward a future filled with better days for herself and the community she holds dear. Undeterred by the relentless challenges posed by the recurring floods in Lakhimpur, Assam, Mrs. Phukan embraces the philosophy that 'drastic times demand drastic remedies'. Her journey unfolds as a testament to the transformative power of resilience, community engagement, and unwavering determination.

In Mrs. Phukan's own words, "Tough times do teach us tough lessons." It is within this crucible of hardship that she recognizes the profound opportunity for personal and communal growth. Her journey, initiated by a simple idea and propelled by decisive actions, signifies the first step toward positive change. Mrs. Phukan's commitment extends beyond personal betterment; it resonates with a larger purpose—to uplift her community from the shackles of vulnerability.

For Mrs. Phukan, the essence of progress lies not only in overcoming challenges but in the collective evolution of individuals within the community. She contemplates, "What counts most is what I am becoming. Am I becoming better for myself or my community members?" This introspective question encapsulates the heart of her mission: the pursuit of a shared destiny where personal growth harmonizes with the well-being of the entire community.

As Mrs. Phukan stands at the forefront of resilience, her visionary approach and entrepreneurial spirit continue to inspire. The infrastructure she builds, both in terms of physical structures and community support networks, symbolizes a fortified foundation for the future. Through her actions, she not only navigates the annual flood onslaught with preparedness but also lays the groundwork for a community that stands united in the face of adversity—a community poised for a future brimming with hope, prosperity, and, indeed, better days.



Transforming Disaster Into Vigilance with Early Warning Systems

Meet Manik Borah, the task force member of Panch Noi, and witness the evolution from skepticism to saving livestock. Explore the community-wide movement as volunteers, with the support of Global Program, become proactive educators, armed with lifesaving equipment's (megaphones, life jackets etc.). This is a story of triumph, where dedicated individuals transform overlooked sirens into guardians of life, heralding a future where disasters are met with preparedness, not despair.

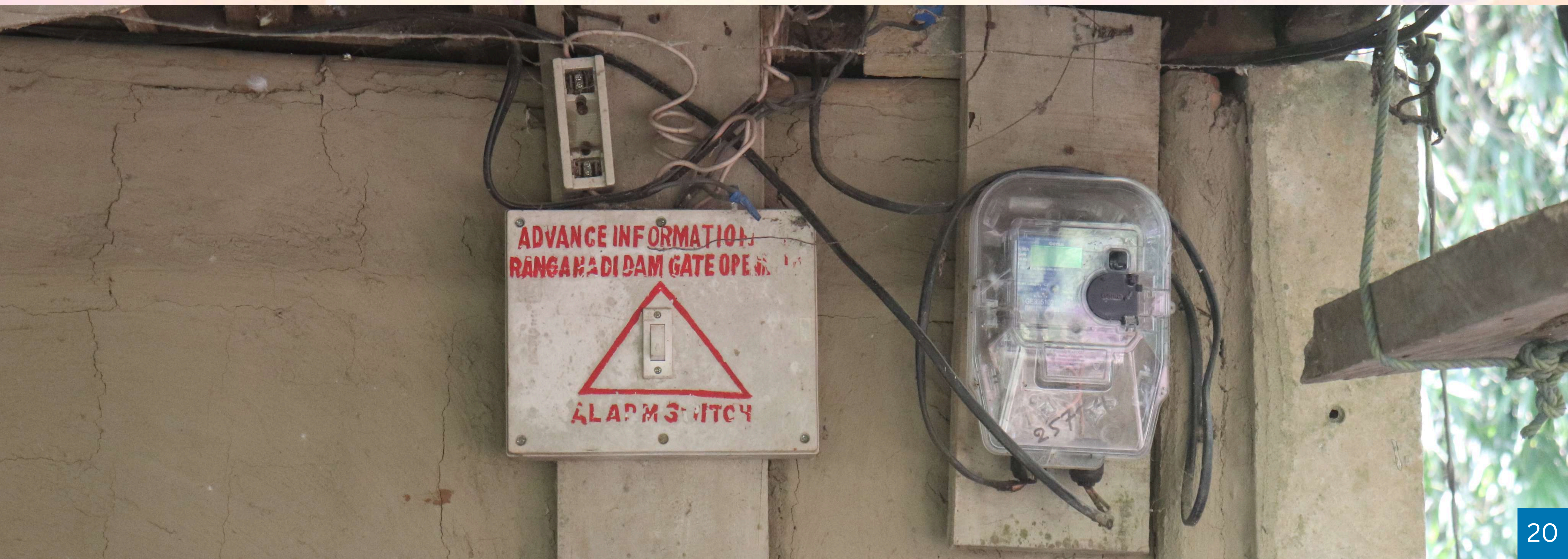


A Lifesaving Symphony of 13 Sirens

Early warning systems play a pivotal role in safeguarding communities by detecting and alerting them to potential disasters, allowing for timely action that can save lives and minimize the impact of calamities. Recognizing the critical importance of such systems, NEEPCO Hydro Power Plant took proactive measures to address the vulnerability of at-risk communities along the Ranganadi River.

In a strategic move, NEEPCO installed a network of 13 sirens along the riverbanks, of which one specifically designated for the BMZ Project village, Panch Noi. These sirens serve as an early warning system, sounding an alarm and providing crucial information to the community a substantial 3-4 hours before water release from the Ranganadi Dam. The auditory reach of the siren extends up to 3km, ensuring widespread coverage.

Integral to the success of this initiative, volunteers underwent comprehensive training sessions dos' and don'ts of sirens, how to operate the sirens, rules of regulation of siren operation, dissemination of information, conducted by NEEPCO and ASDMA, equipping them with the necessary skills to operate the sirens effectively. These volunteers receive yearly remuneration for their vital role, further emphasizing the commitment to community safety and disaster preparedness. The installation of these sirens stands as a testament to the proactive measures taken by NEEPCO Hydro Power Plant, transforming potential disaster scenarios into opportunities for timely intervention and, ultimately, the preservation of lives.





Panch Noi's Guardian: Manik Borah and the Power of Timely Alerts

Meet Manik Borah, a resident, volunteer, and proactive member of Task Force Member under Global Program, Panch Noi. Assigned the critical role of operating one of the 13 sirens, Manik became the guardian of his community's safety, providing timely alerts up to 3km away, four hours before water release from the dam.

In the intricate web of disaster response, Manik Borah detailed the choreography of the siren operation. As messages cascaded from NEEPCO to district control rooms, circling through offices and police stations, the final act unfolded in the hands of village headmen and dedicated volunteers like Manik. The siren, ringing for 16-20 seconds, echoed the urgency, its repetition mirroring the number of dam gates opened.

A Symphony of Resilience from Skepticism to Saving Livestock

In the face of initial skepticism, the installation of the sirens emerged as a transformative journey for the community along the Ranganadi River. Initially perceived as mere switches to flip upon message received, the perception shifted dramatically with the implementation of BMZ's Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives. Generally, people viewed it as nothing more than switches to be flipped when necessary. Manik Borah, the guardian of Panch Noi, vividly recalls this evolution—from ignorance to active community involvement.

The impact of the sirens went beyond just alerting; it became a lifeline for the villagers. After their installation, the community not only saved crucial time in responding to potential disasters but also achieved a remarkable feat—safeguarding 80% of their livestock. The alarms provided vital moments for swift action, enabling residents to move livestock to safety zones well in advance.

The Epitome of Preparedness Manik Borah's Journey

Manik Borah's unwavering commitment to disaster preparedness goes beyond his pivotal role in siren operation, positioning him as a linchpin in his community's safety. Trained as an active task force member through workshops facilitated by the BMZ Global Program, Manik emerged as a leader, taking the initiative to educate fellow residents.

His dedication extends even further, reaching into his own family, where he ensures that they are well-versed in disaster response protocols. Manik's journey serves as the epitome of preparedness, embodying not only proactive involvement but also a selfless commitment to empowering those around him. By leading educational efforts and fostering a culture of preparedness within his community and family, Manik exemplifies the transformative impact of individuals dedicated to building resilient and informed societies in the face of potential disasters.

Cascading Awareness From Ignorance to Empowerment

At the onset, volunteers, including Manik, downplayed the significance of the sirens, viewing them as mere switches. However, a transformative shift occurred as they transitioned from passive operators to proactive educators. Crucial training sessions with SDRF, NDRF, and the Fire Department served as catalysts, sparking a cascading awareness throughout the community.

This newfound knowledge propelled villagers into active participation in disaster preparedness programs, changing their perspective from ignorance to empowerment. The volunteers, once underestimating the sirens' impact, evolved into advocates for community resilience. The engagement with emergency response entities not only elevated their understanding but also empowered them to disseminate vital information effectively.

The Present: Megaphones, Life Jackets, and Vigilance

In the present day, task force members of Panch Noi stand as vigilant sentinels, equipped with megaphones, and adorned in life jackets, ready to disseminate crucial information in the aftermath of siren alerts. What began as a technological installation has organically evolved into a robust community-wide movement. Each task force member now assumes a vital role in ensuring the safety and preparedness of Panch Noi, demonstrating a collective commitment to the well-being of the community.

This contemporary narrative is a tale of triumph over adversity, with the NEEPCO Hydro Power Plant's early warning system at its core. Spearheaded by dedicated individuals like Manik Borah, this initiative transcends a mere success story; it emerges as a beacon of hope for communities grappling with the capricious forces of nature.

Through their shared resilience and unwavering dedication, the once-overlooked sirens have been transformed into guardians of life, heralding a future where communities respond to disasters with preparedness and resilience, rather than succumbing to despair. This ongoing commitment of the task force members symbolizes the enduring impact of proactive disaster preparedness, reinforcing the notion that collective efforts can indeed mitigate the impact of natural calamities and foster a culture of safety and resilience within vulnerable communities.



‘Raised Ringwell’: A Chronicle of 13/10 Grant Village's Battle Against Floods

Journey through the poignant tale of 13/10 Grant Village, where a daily struggle for water transcends physical challenges to become a relentless drain on time and energy. Follow the narrative of Janu Praja and the hamlet's desperate dependency on distant sources. Witness a transformative intervention in 2022—a flood-resilient revolution. Explore how a dilapidated ringwell, fortified against nature's onslaught, emerged as a symbol of triumph, altering the trajectory of a once-silenced hamlet and paving the way for a future free from the shackles of water scarcity.



The Perennial Flood Plight`

Nestled within the confines of 13/10 Grant Village, North Lakhimpur (Assam), the residents found themselves ensnared in an unending battle against the formidable forces of nature. The village, a picturesque haven surrounded by the meandering Ranganadi River, bore witness to a recurring nightmare—severe floods, a cyclical onslaught that spanned a decade. The calamity struck with relentless precision, unleashing havoc and leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

The data, meticulously gathered from village elders, leaders, and a comprehensive baseline survey, painted a grim picture of the community's struggle. In 2022, about 183 Lives were lost, and corers worth of properties lay submerged, with 110 household adversely affected, creating a pervasive sense of despair. The period from May to September, designated as early monsoon, brought forth heavy rainfall, transforming the serene water bodies into turbulent torrents. The village endured a triple assault as flash floods manifested in three distinct phases, exacerbating the already dire circumstances.

Adding to the tribulations, the NEEPCO river dam, a vital water resource, released torrents during the monsoon season, further jeopardizing the vulnerable community. The residents of 13/10 Grant Village were caught in a perpetual dance with the elements, a struggle that unfolded year after year, leaving scars etched into the fabric of their daily lives. The recurrent inundation not only posed a threat to life and property but also exacerbated the critical issue of accessing clean water—an essential lifeline now under siege.



The Daily Struggle for Water

In the neglected hamlet of 13/10 Grant Village, the sun rose each day on a community entwined in an unyielding battle for survival, where the lack of a reliable water source cast a looming shadow over their existence. The absence of a proper water supply in their immediate surroundings forced the residents into a relentless routine, where the simple act of securing water became a herculean task.

Janu Praja, a voice echoing the sentiments of the hamlet, spoke of the daily ordeal that defined their lives. The river, once a source of life, now stood as an elusive provider, requiring the villagers to embark on arduous journeys to fetch water. The neighboring villages, though sympathetic, couldn't alleviate the burden entirely, leaving the hamlet in a perpetual state of water scarcity.

For Janu and others, the struggle was not just physical but a relentless drain on time and energy. Carrying water from distant sources became an intricate part of their daily routine, an unavoidable chore that clashed with their aspirations and responsibilities. "It is hard to collect water from the river or nearby village and go to work every day," Janu expressed, encapsulating the collective frustration and exhaustion borne by the hamlet.

In this cycle of dependency on distant water sources, the hamlet faced a relentless tug-of-war between the necessities of daily life and the demanding quest for sustenance. The absence of a proper water source became not only a logistical challenge but a relentless force shaping the contours of their existence, until the intervention that would alter their trajectory—a lifeline in the form of the Raised Ringwell.





A Flood-Resilient Revolution

In the crucible of adversity, a glimmer of hope dawned upon 13/10 Grant Village in 2022, as Global Program India began a transformative intervention. At the heart of this transformation stood a dilapidated ringwell, weathered by time and neglect. Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS), under Global Program India embarked on a journey to breathe new life into this vital source of sustenance.

The once-vulnerable ringwell underwent a total transformation, its boundaries raised and fortified with the addition of five rings. This was not merely a reconstruction; it was a flood-resilient revolution that stood as a beacon of community empowerment. The cost for the reconstruction amount to Rs. 18,000/. The collaboration extended beyond monetary contributions, with the villagers actively participating in the labor and earth-filling processes, cementing a sense of ownership and shared responsibility.

As the ringwell transformed into a symbol of resilience, it bore testament to the community's collective determination to overcome the perennial threats posed by nature. The infrastructure, now fortified against the ravages of floods, became a tangible representation of the villagers' ability to adapt and triumph over adversity. The raised ringwell was no longer just a source of water; it was a living testament to the transformative power of collective action and the unwavering spirit of a community in the face of relentless challenges.

The Ripple Effect of Renewal

With the completion of the raised ringwell, an undeniable wave of transformation surged through the veins of 13/10 Grant Village, touching every aspect of its community life. The once burdensome task of fetching water, an omnipresent challenge, underwent a profound metamorphosis. No longer did the residents laboriously trek to distant rivers or neighboring villages; instead, they turned to the revitalized Raised Ringwell, now a symbol of triumph over adversity.

The impact was felt not only in the efficiency of daily tasks but in the rejuvenated spirit of the entire community. The burden that once weighed heavy on the shoulders of Mrs. Janu Praja and fellow villagers was alleviated, replaced by a newfound sense of freedom and hope. As households embraced the convenience of the raised ringwell, the ripple effect was tangible—time previously spent in the pursuit of water was now redirected towards productive endeavors, fostering economic and personal growth.

The raised ringwell became the epicenter of community life, a gathering point where not only water but stories, laughter, and a shared sense of achievement flowed freely. The once-disparate hamlet now stood united, bound by the threads of resilience and shared responsibility woven during the ringwell's reconstruction. The taskforce and diligent Anganwadi workers took on the responsibility of maintaining this lifeline, ensuring its longevity as a testament to the community's endurance and triumph.

In the broader narrative, the raised ring well radiated beyond the borders of 13/10 Grant Village, becoming a beacon of inspiration for neighboring communities grappling with similar challenges.

The chronicle echoed through the valleys, inspiring collective action and igniting a ripple effect of renewal that transcended the boundaries of water access, leaving an indelible mark on the landscape of resilience and triumph.



Contact Us

*Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS)
Bishop's House, Tezpur Dist:
Sonitpur, Assam-784001*

Email Us: *tssstezpur9@gmail.com*

