

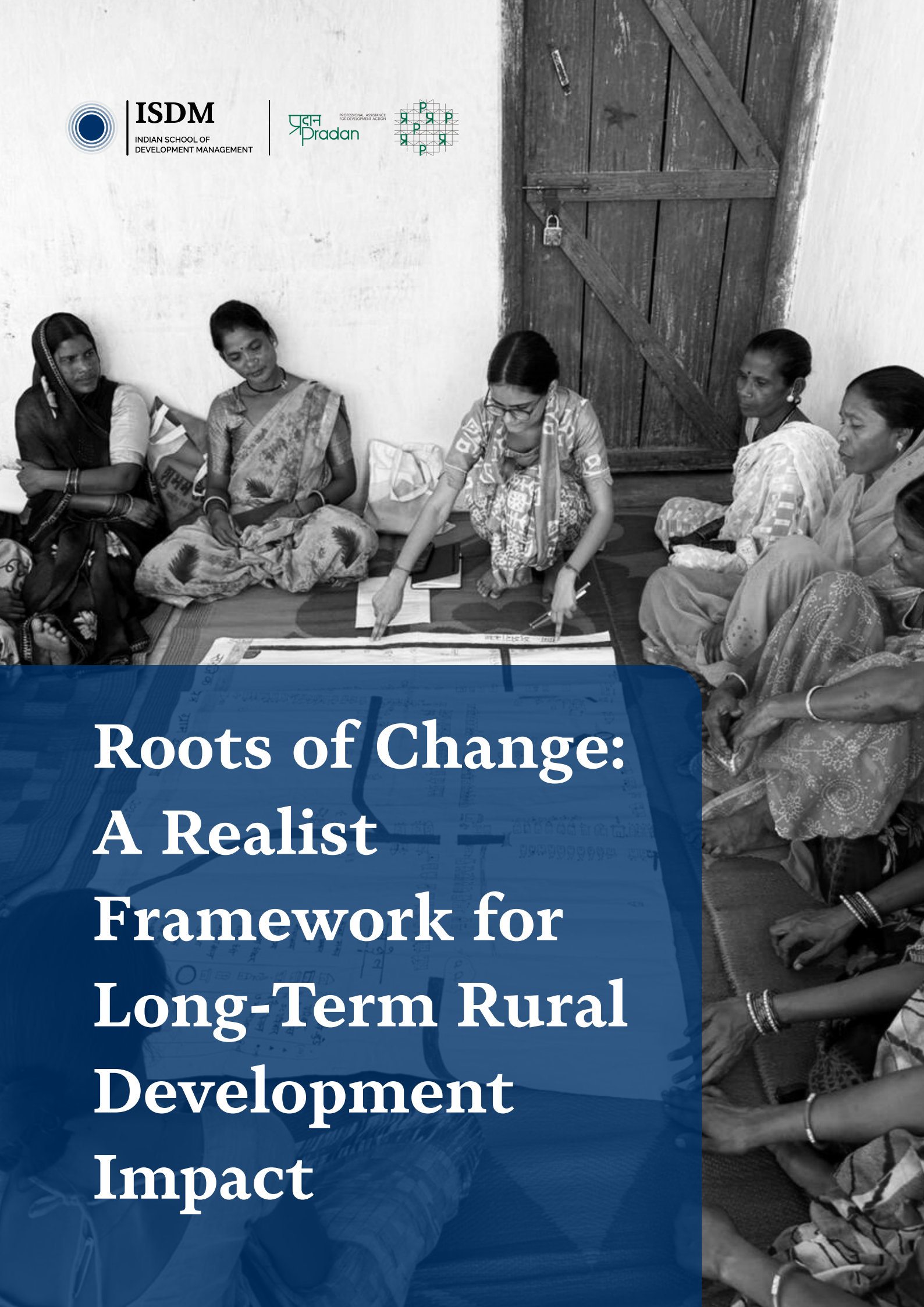


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INDIAN SCHOOL OF
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PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE
FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTION



Roots of Change: A Realist Framework for Long-Term Rural Development Impact

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This study has received ethical approval from the IRB at Goa Institute of Management. (Approval Number: BGMP082505).

List of Abbreviations

CHIRPS – Climate Hazards Centre InfraRed Precipitation with Station data
CLF – Cluster Level Federation
CMO – Context–Mechanism–Outcome (core logic of realist evaluation)
DAY-NRLM – Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission
FABDEM – Forests and Buildings Removed Digital Elevation Model
FE – Fixed Effects
FGD – Focus Group Discussion
FPO – Farmer Producer Organisation
GIS – Geographic Information System
IPT – Initial Program Theory
MGNREGA – Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (now VB–GRAM–G)
MODIS – Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer
NDVI – Normalised Difference Vegetation Index
NPO – Non-profit Organisation
P-value – Probability value
PCA – Principal Component Analysis
PMJDY – Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
PRI – Panchayati Raj Institutions
PRADAN – Professional Assistance for Development Action
RCT – Randomised Controlled Trial
RDIF – Rural Development Impact Framework
SD – Standard Deviation
SHG – Self-Help Group
SRI – System of Rice Intensification
ToC – Theory of Change
VO – Village Organisation

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Non-profit organisations (NPOs) working on rural poverty alleviation in India have historically rooted their efforts in specific geographies, building deep, long-term engagement with local communities to address complex, interlinked challenges across livelihoods, natural resources and social development. Over time, they mobilise communities, strengthen livelihoods, build institutions, engage with institutional systems and adapt their strategies in response to ecological, political and socio-economic shifts. Yet, the dominant evaluative lens in the field of rural development remains project-centric, short-term and attribution-driven. As a result, cumulative and longitudinal changes within a geography are often difficult to establish and remain analytically underexplored.



This report proposes a shift from evaluating isolated projects to assessing the long-term impact of sustained organisational engagement within a geographic area.



Social change processes are painstakingly long, slow, non-linear and path-dependent. Shifts in norms, institutional capacity, agricultural practices and collective agency develop incrementally through repeated engagement rather than through singular interventions. When organisations operate across multiple thematic domains, such as agriculture, women's collectives, natural resource management and governance convergence, the isolation of project-level outcomes obscures how these interventions interact to shape broader development trajectories.

These limitations require a shift in the central evaluative question from:

“Did this intervention produce these outcomes?”



“What defines the long-term, longitudinal effect of an organisation's work within a specific geography?”

To address this question, the report develops and applies a Rural Development Impact Framework (RDIF) grounded in realist evaluation.

Instead of treating outcomes as direct products of activities, the framework examines how interventions introduce resources into particular structural conditions, activate mechanisms and generate change across interconnected domains. It does so by unpacking sequential theories of change over the years.

The framework distinguishes between two dimensions of impact:



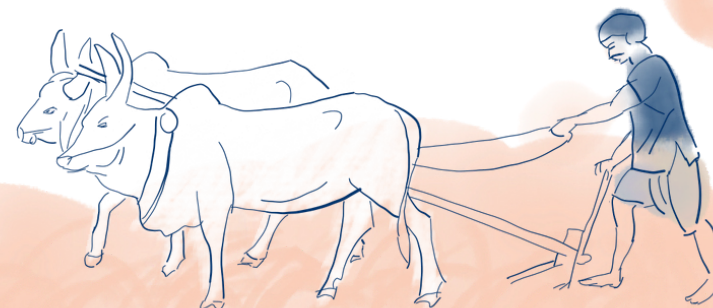
Direct Impact

Direct impact refers to observable shifts in livelihoods, such as improvements in agricultural productivity, income diversification, reduced distress migration, and increased participation in decision-making.



Generic/Indirect Impact

Generic/Indirect impact refers to contributions to institutional and systemic strengthening, including sustainable women's collectives, federation (SHG) maturity, strengthened governance engagement and sustained collective action.



The study applies this framework to PRADAN's long-term engagement in two districts: Gumla (Jharkhand) and Dhamtari (Chhattisgarh). While both geographies experienced similar thematic interventions, their trajectories differed.

The comparison highlights three core insights:



Institutional maturity deepens and stabilises change over time.



Agricultural, ecological and socio-economic conditions shape the extent to which livelihood gains can expand (there is a ceiling for development).



Sustained engagement strengthens mechanisms such as confidence and collective agency, but the depth of activation varies across contexts.

In Gumla, decades of sustained engagement in a context of evolving institutional density (both public and private institutions) enabled the creation and consolidation of collective structures, alongside durable shifts in livelihoods.



In Dhamtari, where institutional density and ecological conditions differed, change unfolded through navigation and convergence, producing different outcome patterns. Across both geographies, the refined program theory can be summarised as follows:

When sustained and adaptive interventions are introduced into villages with enabling conditions, they activate co-production channels, in which NPOs foster relationships among communities, the state, and markets.

Over time, these mechanisms reinforce one another and translate into improvements across the following: ecological and economic (yield stability), agency and human (time-use shifts, mobility of women), strategic mobility portfolio (the range of choices households make about who migrates, when, and why – shifting from distress-driven migration toward planned, strategic movement), and civic and resource governance (collective action capacity).

The report argues that long-term non-profit impact cannot be meaningfully understood through project-level attribution alone. It must be analysed as the evolving interaction between organisational engagement and structural conditions within a geography. By shifting the focus from projects to places and from narrow attribution to organisational contribution, the sector can develop a more grounded understanding of how long-term transformation takes shape.



The Problem and Conceptual Shift

NPOs in India rarely operate through a single, isolated intervention. Within a given geography, they often work simultaneously across various thematic areas. These efforts are layered and adaptive, responding to shifting ecological realities and institutional frameworks.

Yet evaluation practice continues to treat these efforts as discrete, time-bound projects.

Most evaluations are structured around funding cycles and donor accountability requirements.

They are designed to show that a specific intervention produced a specific outcome within a defined period. Indicators are aligned with outputs and short-term deliverables, and success is therefore framed in terms of attribution, *which activity led to which result*.

While administratively necessary, this approach creates a structural blind spot. It overlooks how change actually unfolds in rural contexts.

Shifts in agricultural practices, income stability, migration behaviour, women's public participation, and institutional capacity rarely result from a single intervention. Instead, they emerge gradually through repeated engagement with NPOs, government institutions, technology, and broader social change. For example, an early investment in irrigation may reduce risk, encourage experimentation, build confidence, strengthen collective organisation, and ultimately reshape engagement with governance institutions. These shifts reinforce one another over time.

The first limitation of project-centric evaluation frameworks is that they fail to

capture the gradual and cumulative nature of change in rural development. When evaluations isolate interventions within fixed project timelines, they miss how change unfolds over time.

A second limitation lies in the restricted understanding and definition of impact in project-centric frameworks. Organisational objectives in rural development often extend beyond immediate material gains. They include institutional strengthening, resilience, leadership development, and community self-sufficiency. These outcomes take time to form and even longer to stabilise.

Short-term evaluations tend to privilege visible outputs and quick results over tracking how capacities deepen over time.

This creates a paradox. Organisations may work in a geography for decades, yet the formal evaluations read like a series of disconnected project reports. In doing so, they often miss the institutional work that is harder to quantify but foundational to long-term change.

A third limitation concerns causality. Rural development contexts involve multiple actors, such as government agencies, markets, community institutions, and civil society organisations, operating simultaneously. As ecological conditions shift, administrations change, and livelihood opportunities fluctuate, drawing clean causal lines or attributing change to a single actor becomes difficult. This forces a shift from attribution (*"what fraction of impact is ours?"*) to contribution (*"were we a necessary part of the change that occurred and how?"*), relying on generative causality, pathway-level Theory of Change, and carefully constructed causal narratives.

What is the long-term effect of sustained organisational engagement within a geography?

Answering this question requires expanding the unit of analysis. Instead of focusing only on project-level outcomes, evaluation must examine organisations as systems embedded within specific places. It must consider how interventions layer over time, how structural conditions shape trajectory and how institutional capacities evolve (Bouyousfi & Sabar, 2022).

It also requires recognising two dimensions of impact (Joshi, 2019).

Direct impact refers to observable shifts in livelihoods, and these are often measurable within project cycles.

Indirect/Generic impact refers to institutional and systemic strengthening, which unfolds more slowly and is frequently underrepresented in conventional evaluation.

Both of these dimensions are important. When evaluation remains project-centric, it tends to privilege direct, short-term outputs while overlooking institutional depth and long-term contribution (Mayne, 2011). If organisations are to understand and demonstrate their value within a geography, evaluation must move beyond fragmented project summaries and adopt a different, more inclusive lens. The shift, therefore, is not only methodological. It is conceptual (de Goër de Herve, 2024).

If the long-term impact is cumulative, contextual and layered, then evaluating it requires a different conceptual framework from that used for programmatic evaluations (Mayne, 2020).

Traditional evaluation frameworks tend to treat interventions as separate units operating within bounded timelines. They assume that activities produce outputs, which produce outcomes, in a relatively linear sequence. Such models work reasonably well for short-term, tightly defined programs but are less suited to understanding decades-long engagement within complex systems and rural geographies².

NPOs that operate in a geography over extended periods rarely implement a single intervention. Instead, they introduce a sequence of interlinked initiatives that run in parallel and often overlap, evolving in response to local realities. Early work may focus on stabilising livelihoods, whereas later efforts may deepen institutional structures. Subsequent phases may emphasise governance convergence and sustainability. But these interventions do not replace one another; they layer and interact.

To understand this kind of trajectory, evaluation must move beyond linear attribution and engage with contingent causality (Beardmore et al., 2023).



Most evaluation models remain focused on linear causality working in relatively stable contexts (Benjamin et al., 2023). The result is that a central question remains insufficiently addressed. We summarise the existing approaches in Table 1.

Evaluation approach	Core logic/What it tries to establish	Typical data and design		Strengths	Key limitations in complex rural development contexts
Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs)	Randomly assign treatment and control groups to estimate the average treatment effect of a specific intervention.	Experimental design with baseline and endline surveys.		Strong internal validity; minimises selection bias; widely considered a “gold standard” for causal inference in development economics.	Limited external validity – results may not generalise across contexts; difficult for large-scale policies; often treats interventions as isolated “black boxes” without explaining mechanisms; expensive and difficult to run over longtime horizons.
Quasi-experimental designs (Difference-in-Differences, Regression Discontinuity, Instrumental Variables)	Use statistical techniques and observational data to approximate experimental counterfactuals.	Panel data, administrative datasets, or repeated surveys.		Useful where randomisation is infeasible; can evaluate real-world policies at scale.	Sensitive to model assumptions and data quality; causal estimates may still suffer from omitted variable bias or incorrect counterfactuals.
Natural experiments	Use external policy changes, shocks, or institutional rules that create “as-if random” exposure to an intervention.	Observational data comparing affected and unaffected groups.		Allows evaluation of policies or events that cannot be randomised.	Causal claims depend on whether exposure truly approximates random assignment; assumptions about treatment allocation are often difficult to verify.
Qualitative case studies/ethnographic studies	Examine processes, mechanisms, and contextual dynamics within a specific setting.	Interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and institutional histories.		Reveals causal pathways, institutional dynamics, and social change processes often missed by quantitative methods.	Findings may have limited statistical generalisability and be susceptible to researcher subjectivity and the selection of illustrative cases.
Participatory and narrative evaluation methods (e.g., Most Significant Change)	Collect community narratives to identify meaningful changes and interpret development outcomes from local perspectives.	Story-based documentation and participatory selection of significant outcomes.		Captures unexpected outcomes, social change, and local perceptions of impact; useful in complex programs.	Difficult to aggregate or compare across sites; causal attribution is interpretive rather than statistical.

From Project Evaluation to Geography-Level Analysis

The proposed conceptual shift, therefore, is about reframing the unit of analysis.

Instead of treating projects as discrete analytical units, we examine organisations as systems operating within geographies. A geography-level lens allows us to:



Trace the evolution of interventions over time.



Compare trajectories across different contexts.



Examine how project mechanisms are activated and reinforced.



Understand how outcomes accumulate and reshape structure.

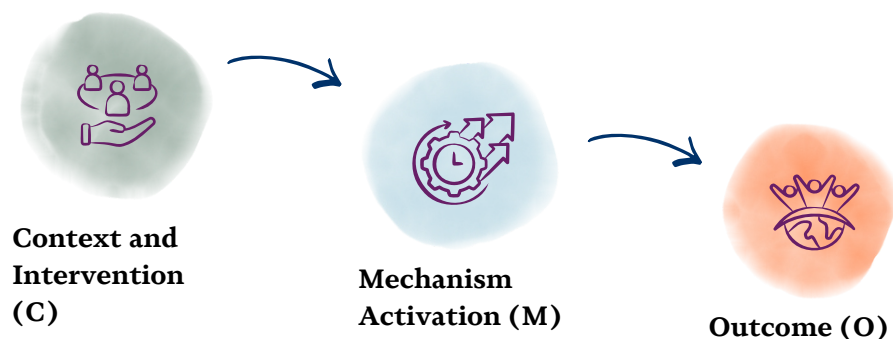
This reframing prepares the ground for the Rural Development Impact Framework, which translates this conceptual shift into practice. The next section outlines our approach to developing this framework. This is followed by the introduction of the framework, which explains how it emerged from and manifested across the two geographies studied. The final conclusion discusses the framework's implications for various ecosystem actors.



2 Our Approach

This study adopts the realist evaluation approach to conceptualise long-term impact (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Pedersen & Rieper, 2008). At its core, realist thinking starts from a simple idea that programs don't produce outcomes directly; instead, they introduce material, institutional and relational resources into a particular context. How those resources play out depends on the conditions they enter. They trigger mechanisms, such as shifts in how people think and act, which ultimately shape outcomes.

This logic can be expressed as:



This formulation shifts attention from the outcome alone to the process of reaching it (Befani & Mayne, 2014).

Rather than asking merely whether an intervention worked, a realist evaluation focuses on What worked? For whom? Under what conditions? Through which mechanisms? And why?

Such questions are particularly relevant in long-term rural development, where contexts vary across villages and evolve over time.



Each element of this C-M-O logic is explained below:

Context and Intervention

Context includes the ecological, socio-economic, institutional and political conditions within which interventions operate (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2022).

In rural geographies, biophysical conditions such as soil quality, irrigation potential and seasonal variability shape agricultural viability. Socio-economic factors such as migration patterns, land fragmentation and livelihood diversification shape risk behaviour. Institutional structures such as SHG maturity, federation density and historical engagement with governance shape collective capacity. Political-administrative dynamics, such as block-level responsiveness, shape scheme access and resource flows.

Context does not remain fixed. Interventions actively reshape the environments in which they unfold, even as those environments simultaneously shape the scope and trajectory of what interventions can achieve. For example, irrigation can expand agricultural potential, and SHGs can strengthen social cohesion.

Recognising context as dynamic is central to understanding different trajectories across geographies.

Mechanism Activation

Mechanisms are the underlying processes through which change occurs (Lemire et al., 2020). They are not directly observable but can be inferred from how individuals describe their decisions, motivations and reasoning (Handley et al., 2020).

Across sustained engagements, certain mechanisms recur: the confidence to experiment when risk is reduced; aspiration when early gains are achieved; solidarity within women's groups; trust built through repeated interaction; and collective agency emerging from shared experience.

When enabling conditions are present, these mechanisms reinforce one another, whereas when conditions are fragile, they may remain unstable.

Outcomes

Over time, outcomes are built sequentially. An increase in agricultural productivity can reduce distress migration, which in turn stabilises household income, making it easier for families to participate consistently in SHGs.

Over time, sustained SHG engagement strengthens collective agency, gradually reshaping how communities interact with and influence local governance as these changes accumulate and reinforce one another. This compounding effect cannot be adequately captured when each intervention is evaluated in isolation (Feeny et al., 2023).

They are emergent results of the activation of mechanisms within specific contexts.

Expanding on this approach and the CMO configurations (De Souza, 2013), the study was designed as follows:

How Long-Term Impact Was Studied

The RDIF is not only a conceptual model but primarily a methodological approach. While the resulting framework breaks down the visualisation of long-term impact and establishes the “WHAT”, this methodological approach outlines “HOW” to reach that visualisation. It can guide replication of the approach and adoption of the framework by other rural development organisations and evaluators.

The study unfolded in five phases as represented in Figure 1:

1 Historical Reconstruction

The starting question was not “Did the intervention work?” but “How did this place evolve?” This required constructing an institutional timeline that charted the region’s history before and during the intervention, including shifts in land relations, state policies, conflicts, infrastructure, and civic organisation. This phase ensured that later claims about impact were grounded in a realistic understanding of both the baseline trajectory and the organisation’s changing role.

2 Realist Hypothesis Building

Instead of treating indicators as endpoints to be checked, the framework proposed articulating explicit causal propositions using CMO configurations (Hounsou et al., 2025). Translating qualitative fieldwork into “if-then” statements helped establish Initial Program Theories (IPTs).

These theories were continuously refined and triangulated through multiple data sources.

3 Mixed-method evidence gathering

This phase combined evidence at various levels: (i) secondary landscape-level data such as Census tables, Mission Antyodaya scores, administrative records, and geospatial imagery; (ii) household-level survey data from carefully designed surveys that built upon the CMO hypothesis and landscape-level data; and (iii) qualitative process tracing through FGDs and interviews. This qualitative strand asked why the numbers looked the way they did, probing for mechanisms, turning points, and countervailing forces. Both qualitative and quantitative data sources were listed in Figure 1.

4 Analytical synthesis

This phase brought together all the evidence to arrive at a transparent contribution narrative. It examined how impact varied across areas with different baseline levels of institutional density, state presence, or market structures, and whether these differences aligned with the earlier CMO hypotheses.

5 Structural outcome mapping

The final phase framed the findings as systemic change rather than isolated project effects. This was done by mapping outcomes across the four quadrants of the resilience matrix: biophysical, spatial, civic, and human domains.

Figure 1: Data Types and their purpose in the study

● Data Type ● Data ● Purpose

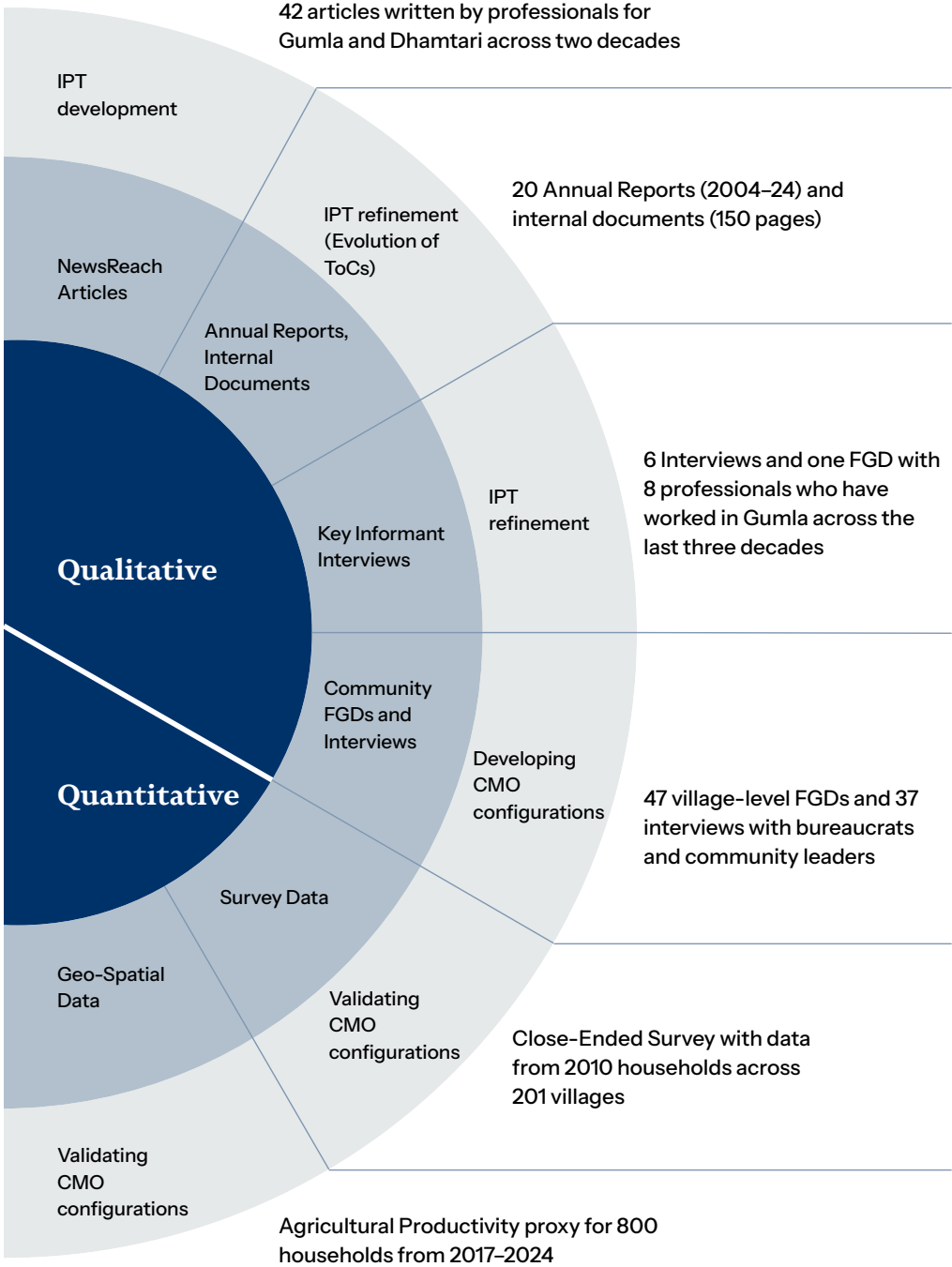


Figure 2: The Methodological Framework

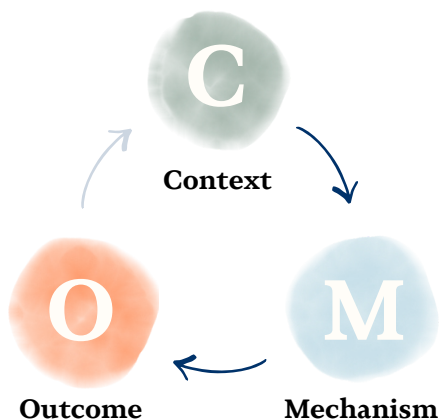


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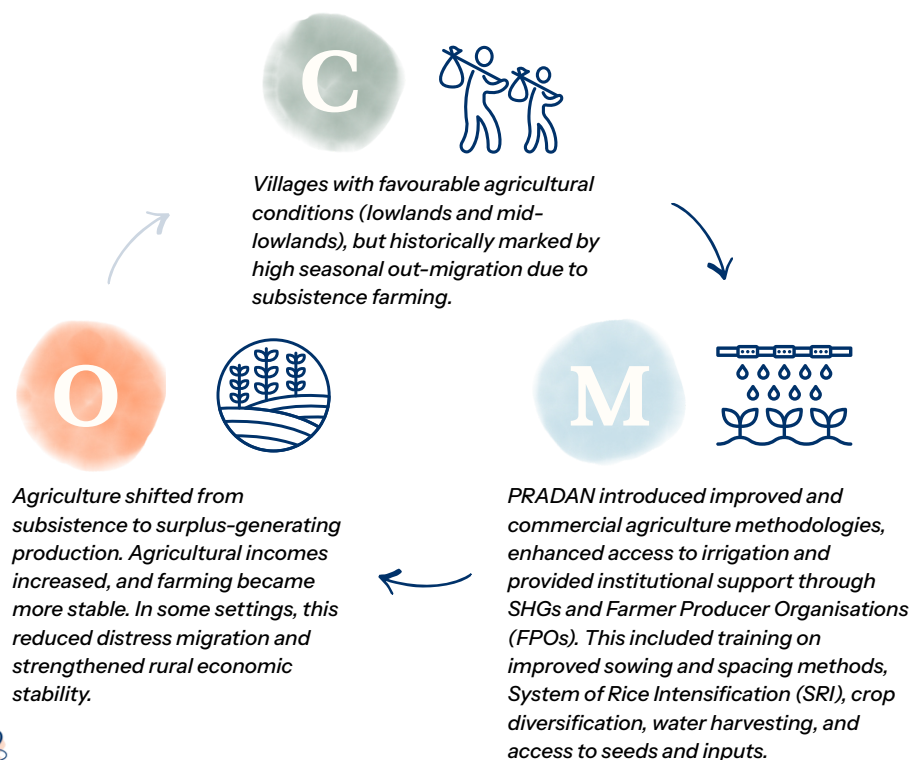
Developing Pathways of Change and Analysis of Evidence

In this chapter, we present the findings in the form of C–M–O configurations developed from the realist approach introduced in the previous chapter. Each configuration was developed inductively from the qualitative data collected in Phases 1 and 2. The IPTs generated for both Gumla and Dhamtari are presented in Annexures 3 and 4. These configurations were then translated into testable hypotheses and examined using quantitative primary and secondary data in Phases 3 and 4.

For each CMO below, we first outline the configuration itself, followed by the qualitative evidence that informed it. We then present the corresponding hypothesis and the quantitative findings that either corroborate, refine or challenge the proposed theory.



CMO 1: Agriculture, Irrigation and Migration



Across Gumla and Dhamtari, people described a shift from single-season paddy cultivation to diversified, year-round cropping enabled by irrigation and technical support. In Gumla, PRADAN promoted both planned and commercial agriculture. The planned approach involved adopting improved practices, such as soil management and irrigation, which required greater time investment and repositioned agriculture as a primary livelihood. Commercial agriculture enabled surplus production for sale, increasing incomes and reducing reliance on migration, with some household members, especially women, staying back to manage farms. Close household-level engagement with PRADAN staff further strengthened adoption.

In Dhamtari, reliable irrigation through bunding, borewells, solar lifts and farm ponds supported crop diversification and rotation. Improved seed access via FPOs reduced input constraints. Women highlighted changes in cropping patterns, spacing and vegetable cultivation, attributing these to training and collective support systems. Respondents also articulated how crop choices and water requirements informed decisions around diversification.

If you are getting [a] good crop of paddy, then you can change the crop and grow something else. Also, if you grow paddy, then you need more water. Instead, you can grow Daals (pulses) or Til (sesame). And you can make Jaivik (organic) manure. You can make Jeevamrit, and you get training for that.
(FGD 36, Village Jhujrakasa, Dhamtari)

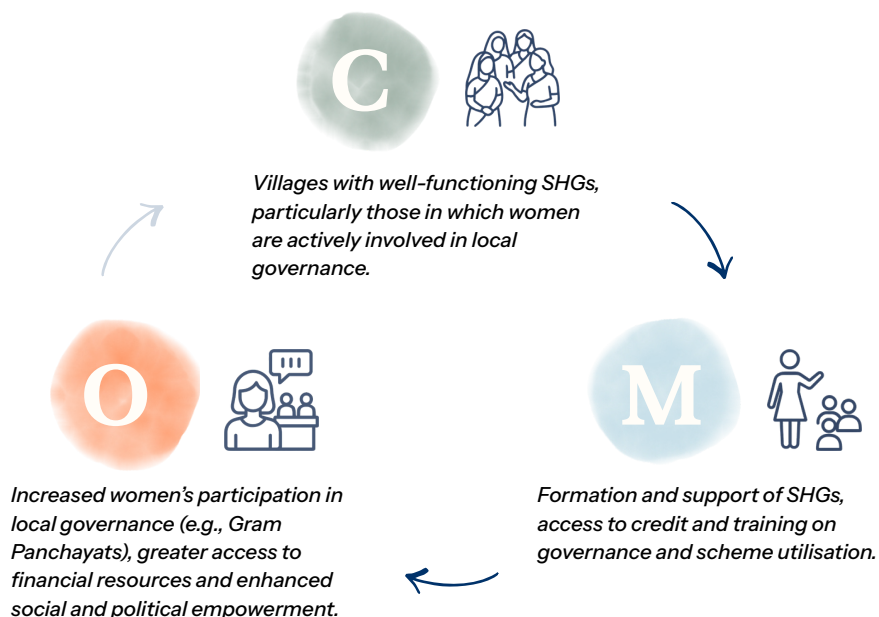
Like, now we cultivate mustard, watermelon, peas, etc., but we were initially unaware of how to farm. People from outside came in to do this kind of cropping here, but they left, and we were unfamiliar with the techniques involved. This was taught to us by the PRADAN people; they provided us with training and manure, seeds, etc. We grow these crops in our farmlands... they even provided us with training on how to make manure organically as well, and we make them too.
(FGD 1, Village Burhu, Gumla)

Earlier, when we used to plant it at home, we also used to grow them all together, whatever was there, even the seeds. Now we plant them in a row. Now we place them separately... Gourd is placed separately, Barbati is placed separately, and Chilli is placed separately. We used to plant Lady Finger and Maize together. But now we don't do it like that. We plant all of them separately, into two parts or three parts. Yes, we get higher growth. Earlier, when we used to plant them all together, their weeds and other issues used to come along with them. That used to spoil the whole thing. That much growth did not use to take place. Also, we did not know the process of sowing seeds. PRADAN told us how all of them were to be planted. They gave training for these things. We learnt, and now we are planting them in our individual homes.
(FGD 38, Village Baragumla, Dhamtari)

We coded such quotations from transcripts using descriptive codes (Gioia et al., 2012) to identify possible linkages between what IPTs expected to do and how the community confirmed or contradicted it, thereby identifying the interfaces where change mechanisms were triggered.

For instance, here it becomes: improved water access, combined with technical and institutional support, enabled agricultural intensification, which in turn altered livelihoods. [See Annexure 1 for an illustration of the coding process.]

CMO 2: SHG Strengthening, Credit Access and Women's Empowerment



Across both districts, women described SHGs as spaces that built financial literacy, collective identity, mobility and confidence. Participation expanded from savings and credit to public engagement, scheme monitoring and local governance roles.

In Gumla, qualitative accounts suggest that reduced migration allowed women to devote more time to SHGs. Loans were increasingly used for productive investments such as seeds and tools, generating repayment cycles linked to

agricultural surplus. Frequent professional engagement reinforced both agricultural and institutional processes.

In Dhamtari, SHGs were often pre-existing and supported through government programs.

Agricultural improvements here reinforced women's aspirations and collective voice, rather than reducing migration, as seasonal out-migration was not a significant concern in the region. Here, cohesion and institutional strengthening emerged through a slightly different pathway.

In the sense that pre-existing SHGs were fortified through sustained engagement and convergence with government programs. Women described transitions from economic participation to mobility, public roles and leadership identities. A woman from Kashpur reflected on how joining the SHG led to a shift from isolation and vulnerability to greater responsibility within the household and on the farm.

My life used to be going to the field from home and coming back. I never used to talk to anyone, unlike now, when I can. There was no going anywhere... When I joined the Samooh (SHG), the condition was one of utter poverty. If someone used to talk nicely, the tears would come to their eyes. I could not even talk to anyone. That was me... I took charge of the field.
(FGD 13, Village Kashpur, Dhamtari)

Right in the beginning, before joining the SHG, we did not go out of the house. After joining the SHG, we started getting to know each other. Then we started getting to know the village's Didis. We used to be limited only to home and field... Through the SHG, we have also become friends. After joining the SHG, we started feeling very happy. Initially, we used to feel as if there was nothing in the village.

But after joining the SHG, I started feeling the change, and after connecting with people, I started working and went for training outside... When we meet with people, they feel as if they are part of the family. And Bhaiyas also talk like brothers, so I feel very nice.

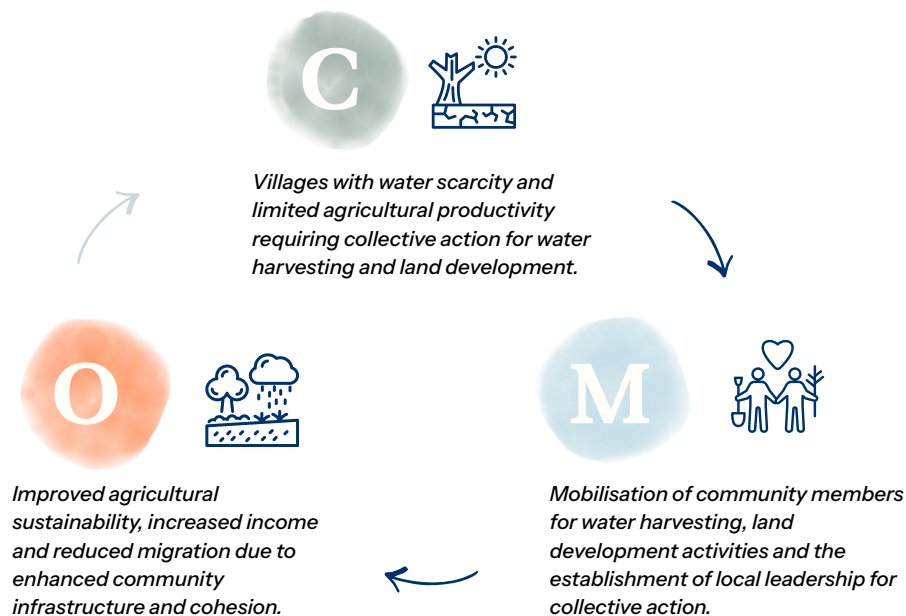
(FGD 42, Village Joratarai, Dhamtari)

All of us went together to submit [documents for job cards]. We said, 'We want work.' Even when they questioned us, we stood together... Later, after returning from the Gram Sabha, we discussed in our households and came back with decisions—some chose goat sheds, some chose poultry, some chose mango orchards, and some chose dobhas (water ponds). We raised our hands and got more work approved.

(FGD 6, Village Lohri Basia, Gumla)



CMO 3: Collective Mobilisation for Water and Land Development



In both districts, collective action was central in water-scarce settings. In Gumla, strong leadership or partnerships enabled community labour for land and water development. In Dhamtari, collective planning through Gram Sabhas and SHGs facilitated access to public works such as *dabris* (ponds). Their history of political mobilisation on land and forest rights further strengthened these mechanisms. In Chhindbharri, women described how Gram Sabha-led planning, collective land walks and direct engagement with senior officials transformed priorities around water storage into actual sanctioned work.

All the villagers together went around to see what the water source was and how we store it.

So after the intervention of the *bhaiyas* and the 'Pradhan' of the village, water is stopped along the way and stored in small ponds. (*Dabri*) that were made in the village.

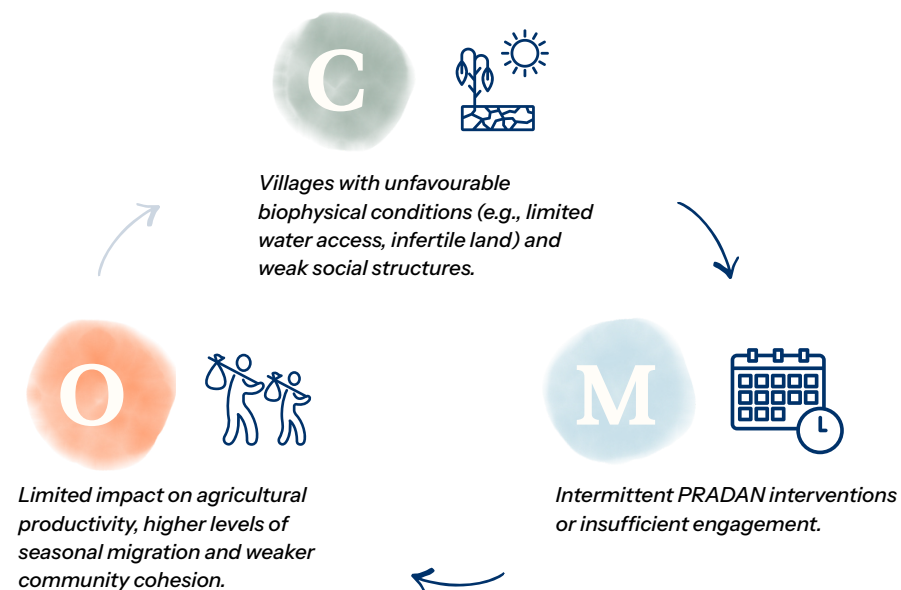
So when all these works started happening, Circle Officers, District Collectors, etc., came to visit our village. We had invited them, and they obliged. Then we told them about our work, plans, and our water-related problems. We want to make ponds in the village, so they asked us who all will participate. We said that we are all interested, so they arranged a two-day workshop here in the village. (FGD 17, Village Chhindbharri, Dhamtari)

Then a gram sabha was held, and we expressed our views and concerns on how to store water and on agriculture. All the farmers were there. Then we visited all the lands to evaluate and discuss solutions.

4 ponds. There are 2 personal ponds. Yes, it was built at that time. Before that, there was the Dharsarimand, and the pond of Samuda was deepened, and Nirmala Ghat was constructed. Also, there were no taps around. That was all that was there. Then there were small rivulets, where if there was a flow of water, then only that used to flow. And when planning was done in Chhindbharri for the first time, the department people came and did a good amount of work.

And for the personal one, it was thought that if we made that, then the government would take away the land. Then what will we do? They would not even ask for it. Then, slowly, after going there, the work began; around that place, the planning, etc., happened. Then they started making it around this place in nearby villages. Then the work continued after that. (FGD 24, Village Govindpur, Dhamtari)

CMO 4: Weak Preconditions and Limited Impact



In Gumla, impermeable rock formations in certain villages allowed only for water-constrained agriculture, sustaining migration cycles and weakening SHGs.

In Dhamtari, severe water stress and uneven cohesion produced variable outcomes: cohesive villages adapted; fragmented ones stagnated. PRADAN's mechanisms, including SRI training, seed support through FPOs, and SHG-mediated organic farming initiatives, were adopted to varying degrees across communities, often influenced by the degree of pre-existing social cohesion. For instance, in Keregao and Bhandarwadi, robust mobilisation facilitated progress despite water challenges. SHGs consolidated resources for borewell shares or pond upkeep, promoting collaborative labour that surpasses biophysical constraints.



We joined the Samooth, with everyone's cooperation, by collecting money there, and an organisation was formed. That money got collected, and that gave us strength. We have worked very hard to reach this stage. How can one keep asking for money at home? But we had to do that with our parents-in-law.
(FGD 25, Village Keregao, Dhamtari)

This demonstrates how SHG solidarity fosters internal capital and determination, transforming women from passive recipients into active investors. In contrast, Gidhawa has stagnation due to insufficient coherence. In the absence of governance engagement or support from SHGs, women identify domestic restrictions and mobility issues as obstacles.

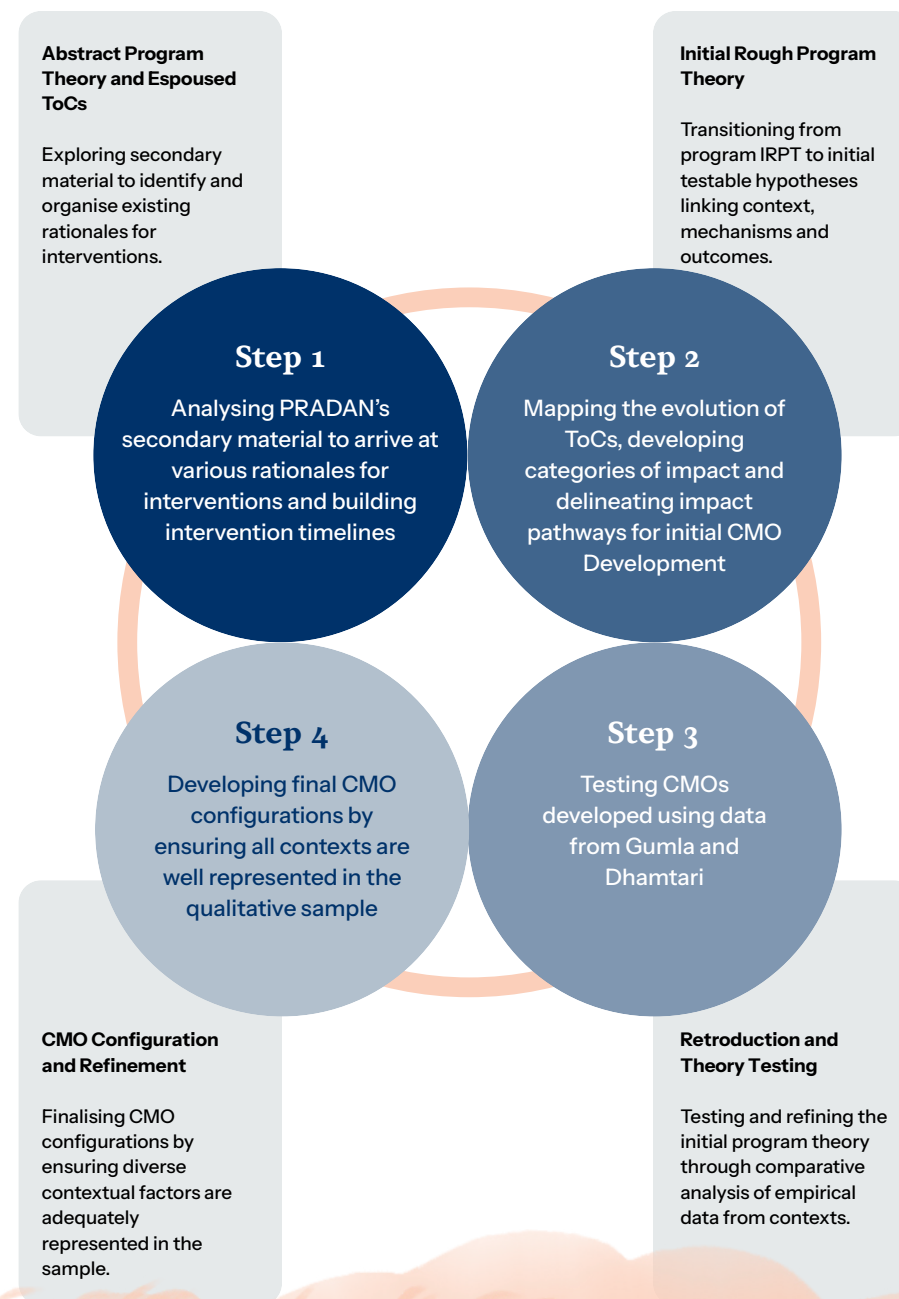


(My spouse) used to go to the shop, then had to go teach. When he had to go out, it was difficult to come to the meeting. I wanted to save money and wanted to do something. But when I wanted to do something, I could not.
(FGD 5, Village Gidhawa, Dhamtari)

While the CMOs presented above describe specific pathways through which change occurred, they do not operate independently.

Across both geographies, these configurations interacted and evolved over time. By examining them together, we refined the Initial Program Theories into a broader explanation of how PRADAN's engagement generated long-term change. Figure 3 presents this evolution from individual CMOs to an integrated program theory.

Figure 3: Analysis Process for Developing and Refining IPTs and CMO Configurations



Quantitative Analysis

CMOs were validated using primary data from 2,010 households across 201 villages (120 in Gumla, 81 in Dhamtari) through a multistage stratified sampling design. In each village, 10 households were selected using a spatial approach: two from the centre and two from each of the four directions. Data were collected through a household survey (n=2,010) and a village survey (n=201). The household survey included a detailed module for men and a shorter module for the second-oldest woman to capture gender dynamics. Village surveys were conducted with knowledgeable respondents such as local leaders. FGDs with 10-15 participants were also conducted, with informed consent obtained from all participants. The survey captured socio-economic characteristics, agricultural production, and livelihood strategies, including cultivation practices, cropping decisions, and access to credit and agricultural extension.

Recognising that agricultural potential and water availability influence the activation of mechanisms, the study used GIS-based classification of villages where PRADAN is working. Satellite data, land-use maps, and agricultural suitability indices were used to group villages into agro-ecological types (e.g., high, moderate, low potential), embedding contextual variation into the CMOs (see Annexure 2 for the sampling approach). Given the limitations of cross-sectional data and challenges such as recall bias in retrospective evaluations, GIS and secondary datasets were essential for better understanding and establishing PRADAN's varied long-term agricultural productivity outcomes across villages. The survey captured the geo-spatial coordinates of the main agricultural plot for half of the respondents. Using plot geometries, we reconstructed the proxy season-wise variable for agricultural productivity from 2017 to 2024³.

Table 2 below summarises the key CMO configurations derived from the qualitative findings and the corresponding hypotheses explored in the quantitative analysis.

CMO	Context (C)	Mechanism (M)	Outcome (O)	Hypothesis	Variables
Productive Agriculture	Water access, fertile soil, history of migration	Scientific farming and irrigation	↑ Crop surplus, ↓ migration, ↑ income	Mobilisation → ↑ agri productivity	Crop yield, irrigation (C/M); seasonal migration (O)
				Cohesion → ↑ water + agri income	Irrigation access, practice adoption (M); annual income (O)
SHGs and Empowerment	Mature SHGs, women in governance	Credit access, training	↑ Women's leadership, ↑ entitlements, ↑ empowerment	Lack of mechanisms in poor contexts yields negative outcomes	SHG presence (C); participation in PRIs (O)
				SHGs → ↑ women's empowerment	SHG participation (M); women's enterprise/farm income (O)
				SHGs → ↑ formal credit access	SHG status, credit sources (O)
Collective Action in Scarcity	Water scarcity, land degradation	Community mobilisation, local leadership	↑ Sustainability, ↓ migration, ↑ income	Mobilisation → ↑ agri productivity	Mobilisation Index (M); Net sown area (O)
				Cohesion → ↑ water + agri income	Trust index (M); water access + agri income (O)
Low-Engagement Villages	Poor resources, weak institutions	Intermittent/weak NGO presence	↓ Productivity, ↑ migration, ↓ cohesion	Lack of mechanisms in poor contexts yields negative outcomes	

↑ - Increasing
↓ - Decreasing
→ - Leading to

CMO 1 Hypotheses Tested

Agricultural productivity: PRADAN villages exhibit higher agricultural productivity than non-PRADAN villages.

Productivity and migration: Higher productivity in PRADAN villages is associated with lower seasonal out-migration.

Income effects: Households with access to irrigation and improved techniques tend to have higher annual incomes.

Quantitative Findings

Agricultural productivity

There is clear support for higher agricultural productivity in Gumla. Villages with sustained PRADAN engagement show better long-term productivity than non-PRADAN villages. These gains are most pronounced during the rabi season, particularly in areas with limited water availability, where PRADAN's water-harvesting and agronomic support prove most valuable. Seasonally, effects are positive in both kharif and rabi, with particularly pronounced gains in rabi: a 3.6 per cent higher NDVI implies an increase of about 1.6 quintals per hectare in the dry season.

This is indicative of work under adverse conditions, including water scarcity, yielding better results for households.

Data from paddy plots helps explain this further. It compares three farming methods: (i) direct seeding, (ii) nursery with System of Rice Intensification (SRI), and (iii) nursery without SRI. The results show small but positive improvements for direct seeding and nursery without SRI, indicating better crop health in PRADAN villages. However, the SRI method does not show similar improvements, which may

mean that it is harder to implement or requires more support. Since SRI was one of PRADAN's early strategies, this suggests that some practices have worked more consistently than others over time. In Dhamtari, however, there is no clear difference in productivity between PRADAN and non-PRADAN villages. This means the productivity hypothesis is supported in Gumla, but not in Dhamtari.

Productivity and migration

The data does not show a systematic relationship between higher agricultural productivity and lower seasonal migration. Migration patterns remain similar across PRADAN and non-PRADAN villages. While qualitative accounts describe reduced distress migration in some intensive villages, this relationship cannot be confirmed statistically across the sample.

Income effects

Households in PRADAN villages report higher agricultural and overall incomes in both districts, with the difference more pronounced in Gumla. These patterns align with greater access to irrigation and improved farming practices, even though the data does not track individual use of irrigation systems.

As shown in Figures 4 and 5, agricultural income per acre is consistently higher in PRADAN villages across seasons in Gumla. The largest gap is in the kharif season, where PRADAN villages earn approximately ₹31,000 per acre compared to ₹23,000 in non-PRADAN villages. Rabi income per acre is similar across both groups (around ₹3,000–3,500), while summer and horticulture contributions are negligible in both. Overall, total agricultural income per acre is higher in PRADAN villages (approximately ₹34,000) than in non-PRADAN villages (approximately ₹27,000), a difference that is statistically significant.

In Dhamtari, the pattern is reversed – non-PRADAN villages show higher income per acre than PRADAN villages across all seasons. Kharif income per acre stands at roughly ₹41,000 in non-PRADAN villages versus ₹39,000 in PRADAN villages, and total agricultural income per acre is approximately ₹50,000 in non-PRADAN villages compared to ₹47,000 in PRADAN villages. The confidence intervals for both groups overlap considerably, suggesting these differences are unlikely to be statistically significant. This contrast with

Gumla warrants closer examination – higher baseline productivity in Dhamtari may mean PRADAN's comparative advantage operates through channels other than per-acre income, such as diversification, risk reduction, or non-farm livelihoods. The strongest quantitative evidence supports increased agricultural productivity, income (especially in Gumla), and irrigation infrastructure. However, it does not support qualitative findings linking productivity with migration or social cohesion with agricultural outcomes.

Figure 4: Differences in agricultural income – Gumla

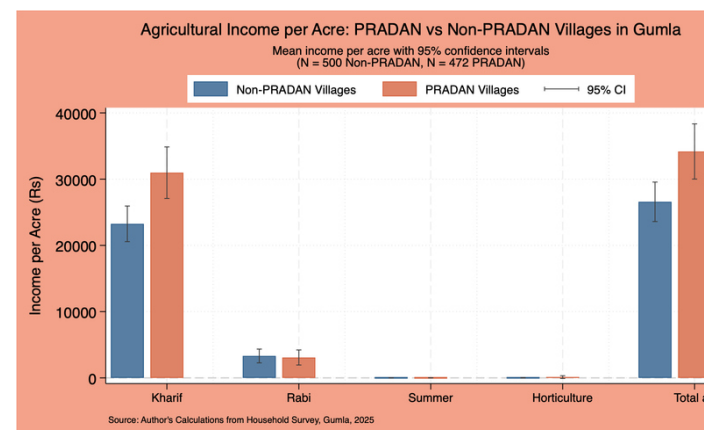
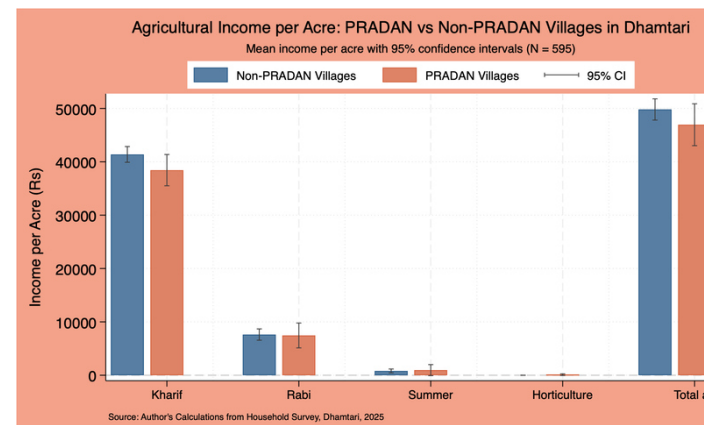


Figure 5: Differences in agricultural income – Dhamtari



CMO 2 Hypotheses Tested

Income generation

Higher income generation in PRADAN SHG villages.

Access to formal credit

Higher access to formal credit in PRADAN SHG villages.

Women empowerment

Higher female mobility and participation in PRADAN SHG villages.

Government scheme access

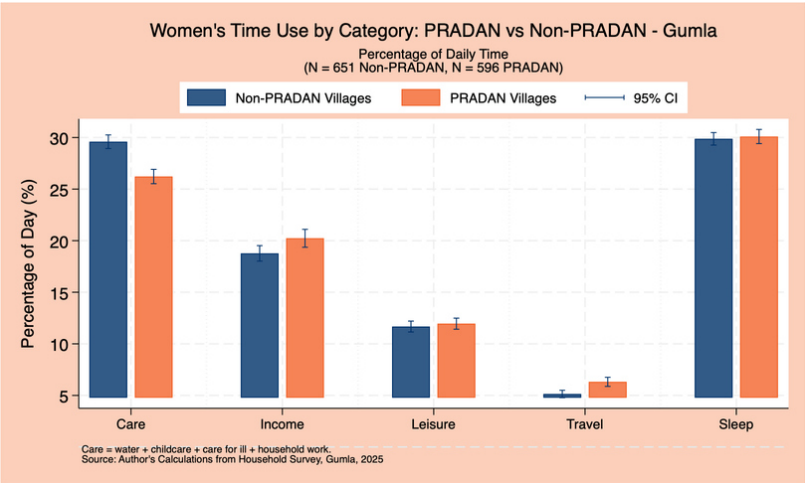
Higher receipt of government scheme entitlements.

Quantitative Findings

Income generation

In Gumla, higher agricultural incomes in PRADAN villages are accompanied by a clear shift in women's time use toward income-generating work. Women spend less time on unpaid care and slightly more on paid or livelihood activities.

Figure 6: Women's Time Use Analysis - Gumla

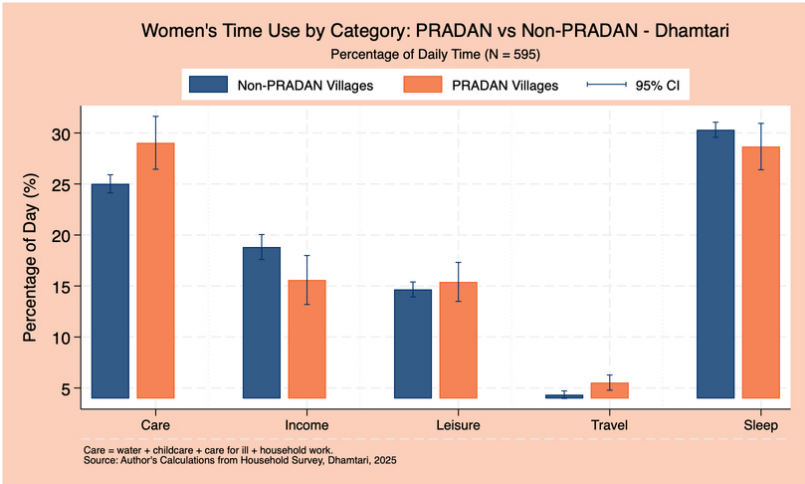


This supports the idea that SHG participation and agricultural improvements reinforce each other, enabling women to engage more directly in income generation.

In Dhamtari, although both total and agricultural incomes are higher in PRADAN villages, women's time spent on income-generating work does not increase, suggesting the income gains are driven by factors other than increased female labour participation. Instead, women spend slightly more time on unpaid care (29–30% vs 26%) and slightly less time on paid work (14–15% vs 18%). At the same time, leisure increases marginally, and time spent on travel and daily tasks remains unchanged. This suggests that income gains here are likely driven by male labour, improved cropping or mechanisation, rather than increased female labour participation.

Overall, in Gumla, income gains align with women's economic participation, whereas in Dhamtari, the gains coexist with persistent care burdens.

Figure 7: Women's Time Use Analysis - Dhamtari



Access to Formal Credit:

The available data does not allow confirmation or rejection of higher formal credit access linked specifically to PRADAN SHGs.

Overall, there is support for strengthened income cycles in SHG-intensive villages, particularly in Gumla. However, the specific link to formal credit expansion cannot be confirmed.

Women's Empowerment:

To capture women's empowerment comprehensively, we constructed five indices spanning different dimensions, from access to resources and mobility to confidence and decision-making power (see Annexure 5).

In Gumla, women in PRADAN villages score consistently higher across all five dimensions, and all differences are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. PRADAN village women score approximately 0.10 to 0.15 standard deviations above the overall mean, while non-PRADAN village women score roughly

0.10 to 0.15 standard deviations below it. The gaps are relatively uniform across dimensions - Resource Access, Self-Efficacy, Household Influence, Structural Decision-making, and Mobility Autonomy all show similar-sized differences of approximately 0.20 to 0.25 standard deviations between the two groups. Notably, the confidence intervals are tight and do not overlap, lending confidence to these findings despite the modest effect sizes.

In Dhamtari, the pattern is more uneven and warrants cautious interpretation. PRADAN villages show significantly higher Resource Access (+0.27 SD, $p = 0.007$) and Household Influence and Structural Decision-making (+0.24 SD, $p = 0.019$). However, Self-Efficacy and Mobility Autonomy show no significant differences. Wide confidence intervals, driven by the smaller PRADAN sample ($N = 82$ vs. $N = 462$), limit precision. Overall, PRADAN's presence appears associated with gains in resource access and household decision-making, but not yet with personal confidence or freedom of movement, which may require longer exposure or different intervention pathways.

Figure 8: Women's Empowerment Indices - Gumla

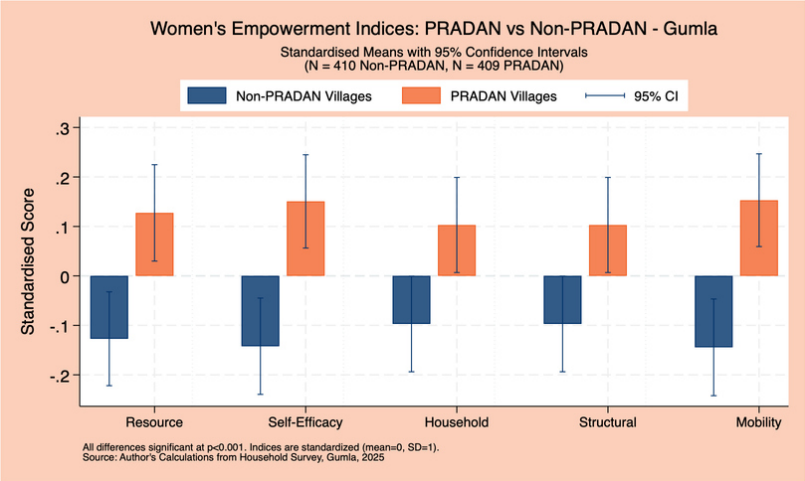
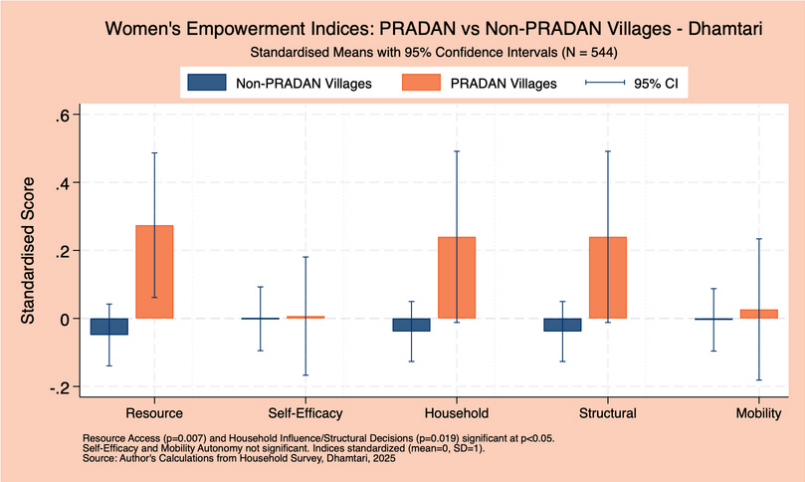


Figure 9: Women's Empowerment Indices - Dhamtari



Access to Government Schemes:

The data does not allow confirmation of receipt of higher entitlements specifically linked to PRADAN SHGs.

In summary, the strongest and most consistent quantitative support across districts relates to women's empowerment. The SHG-governance mechanism is particularly robust in Gumla, with partial but meaningful support in Dhamtari.

CMO 3 Hypotheses Tested

Community mobilisation and crop acreage: Villages with successful mobilisation for water harvesting and land development will show higher crop acreage.

Community cohesion and outcomes: Stronger community cohesion will be positively associated with better water access and agricultural income in water-scarce villages.

Quantitative Findings

Community mobilisation and crop acreage:

PRADAN villages show a much higher presence of water-harvesting infrastructure, especially lift-irrigation systems, indicating strong community mobilisation and investment in irrigation. However, this has not translated into a significant increase in the total cultivated area, suggesting that gains are coming more from improving existing land than from expanding it.

Evidence from plot-level analysis supports this. In rainfed plots, PRADAN villages show a difference of more than one quintal per hectare, indicating better resilience to rainfall variability, likely due to water harvesting and improved moisture management. In contrast, for irrigated plots, the differences are smaller, suggesting that the biggest gains occur where constraints are highest.

In Dhamtari, there is no clear evidence of higher productivity in PRADAN villages; if anything, productivity appears slightly lower. This may be because the organisation initially worked in more constrained villages, and these baseline disadvantages persist.⁴

Additionally, PRADAN's presence in Dhamtari is more recent and productivity gains may take longer to emerge.

Community cohesion and outcomes:

The evidence does not clearly support a simple relationship between higher trust and better agricultural outcomes. Reported generalised trust is not higher in PRADAN villages, although extreme forms of social exclusion appear lower. Irrigation and income outcomes are stronger in PRADAN areas, but these improvements do not correspond neatly with higher measured trust. Thus, this hypothesis is not supported in a straightforward manner.

Overall, there is strong support for the infrastructure creation component of mobilisation. However, the link to expanded cultivated areas or measurable cohesion indicators is not clearly supported.

CMO 4 Quantitative Findings

The quantitative results align with these patterns: productivity gains are concentrated in intensive areas (especially in Gumla), while migration patterns and cohesion indicators do not shift significantly in weaker contexts.

Additionally, fieldwork in non-PRADAN villages revealed functioning SHGs under DAY-NRLM saturation approaches, though often less active in financial transactions, meeting regularity, and leadership depth than in intensive PRADAN sites in Gumla. In Dhamtari, some non-PRADAN villages showed relatively active SHGs due to prior mobilisation and state convergence.

Quantitatively, many social changes, such as rising age at marriage and greater participation of women in the labour force, occur across all village categories, suggesting broader state-level shifts alongside organisational contributions.

In summary, the evidence best supports hypotheses that tie intensive PRADAN engagement to

(i) higher long-run agricultural productivity and incomes in Gumla;

(ii) significant improvements in women's empowerment across multiple dimensions, especially in Gumla; and

(iii) the creation of heavy, community-managed irrigation infrastructure in intensive villages.

Hypotheses that require explicit links between productivity and migration, cohesion and water outcomes, or SHGs and formal credit or scheme uptake cannot be confirmed or refuted with the current data. Future longitudinal panel data on household-level migration decisions and credit transactions would be needed to test these relationships rigorously.



4

The Rural Development Impact Framework



The analysis in the previous chapter examined PRADAN's long-term work in two of its oldest intervention regions, Gumla and Dhamtari, through a set of C-M-O configurations. Together, these findings move us beyond assessing discrete projects and toward understanding how sustained engagement within a geography shapes trajectories of change over time.

If the unit of analysis shifts from individual interventions to long-term transformation within a region, a different lens becomes necessary. A list of indicators is no longer sufficient.

What is required is a way of seeing how change unfolds within a system—how structures interact, how processes evolve, and how outcomes accumulate and stabilise over time.

The framework in Figure 10 illustrates how long-term rural development interventions contribute to systems change by operating within a structural field, transforming structures and processes, and ultimately reshaping resilience outcomes. It has three main blocks: Structural Field, Transforming Structures and Processes, and Resilience Matrix, linked by an explicit pathway of systems change.

Rural Development Impact Framework

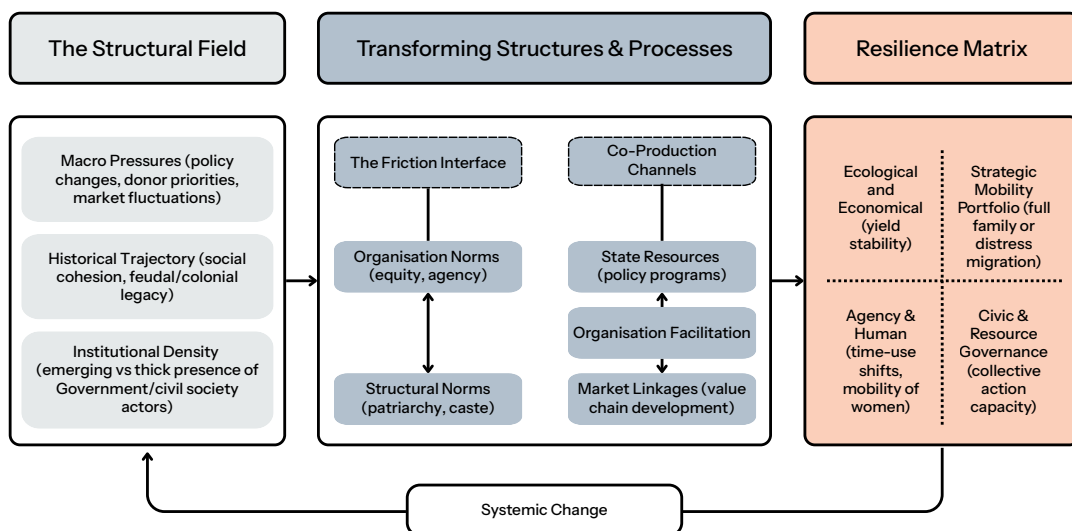


Figure 10: RDIF

Structural Field

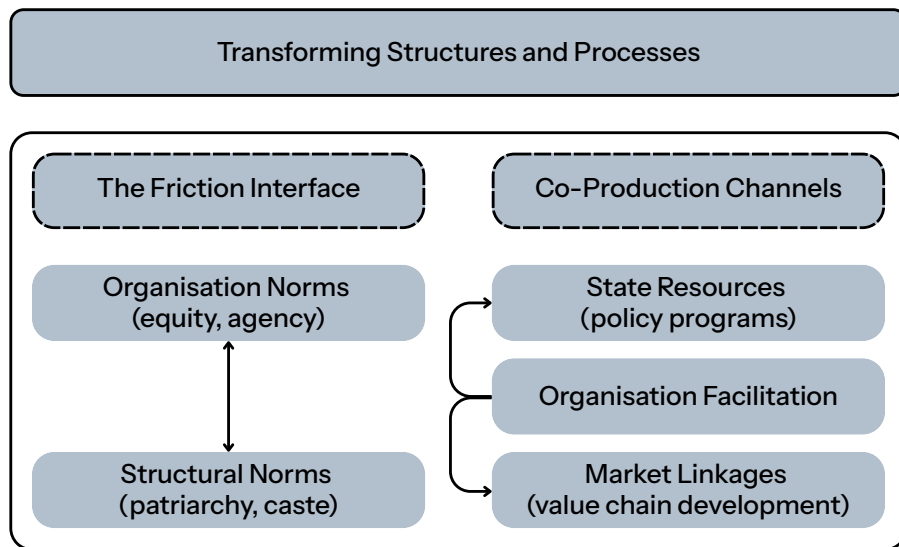
The left-hand block, the structural field, describes the deep context in which any rural program is embedded. It consists of:

Macro pressures, which include policy shifts, donor priorities and market fluctuations. These set the outer envelope of what is possible; for example, donor priorities in an era, policy focus, market opportunities or changing incentives for farmers.

The historical trajectory encompasses the legacies of colonial rule, feudal control and patterns of social cohesion or conflict. These legacies shape who holds power, whom people trust, and which institutions are seen as legitimate.

Institutional density refers to the depth and spread of formal and informal institutions within an area, ranging from contexts with emerging institutional presence to those with a well-established network of government programs, civil society organisations, and market systems. This distinction is important because the same NGO strategy may operate differently across contexts, playing a complementary role while institutional systems are still evolving and focusing on convergence and collaboration when multiple systems are already in place.

Together, these elements define a structural field that is not just background “context” but an active set of forces that shape which mechanisms can fire, how quickly, and for whom. The arrow from this block into the central block, as shown in Figure 10, indicates that all subsequent “transforming structures and processes” are conditioned by this field, and, in turn, any resulting system change loops back to alter the field over time.



Transforming structures and processes

The middle block, Transforming Structures and Processes, is where interventions interact with the structural field explained above through two main mechanisms: the friction interface and co-production channels.

The friction interface

At the friction interface, NPO norms (equity, agency, participation) meet structural norms such as patriarchy, caste hierarchy and clientelism. NPOs introduce new expectations, for example, women's equal participation in SHGs or more transparent gram sabha processes, which often collide with entrenched power relations. This produces friction in the form of conflict, resistance, and negotiation. The framework treats this friction as productive: it is the arena where existing norms are contested and gradually reshaped.

Co-production channels

The second mechanism is Co-Production Channels, in which NPOs broker relationships among communities, the state, and markets. State resources refer to formal schemes, entitlements, and budgets. NPO facilitation translates these programs into access through activities such as building village institutions, preparing claims, navigating bureaucracy and monitoring implementation. Market linkages involve organised engagement with buyers, input suppliers and financial services, often mediated by NPO support. Through these channels, development outcomes are co-produced by communities, state actors and markets. In places with relatively lower institutional density, the emphasis is on creating organisations and infrastructure; in institutional thickets, it shifts toward convergence and leverage. Together, the friction interface and co-production channels form the engine of transformation, reshaping participation, decision-making and resource flows and laying the groundwork for longer-term resilience outcomes.

Resilience Matrix - Outcomes

The right-hand block, the Resilience Matrix - Outcomes, translates systems change into four interlinked outcome domains. The matrix spans both direct and indirect impact as defined earlier: the Ecological & Economic and Strategic Mobility quadrants primarily capture direct impact, while the Agency & Human and Civic & Resource Governance quadrants reflect indirect/generic impact.

Resilience Matrix

Ecological and economic (yield stability)

This quadrant captures biophysical and livelihood resilience, including yield stability, diversification, and the buffering effects of improved water and soil systems. It reflects how infrastructural investments and climate-smart practices, often brokered through co-production channels, reduce vulnerability to shocks.

Strategic mobility portfolio (full family seasonal migration, distress migration)

This quadrant recognises that mobility is not simply "bad" migration versus "good" staying. Instead, households manage portfolios of seasonal work, education-linked migration, and local livelihoods. A more resilient system is one where migration is strategic rather than distress-driven, reflecting improved capabilities and options.

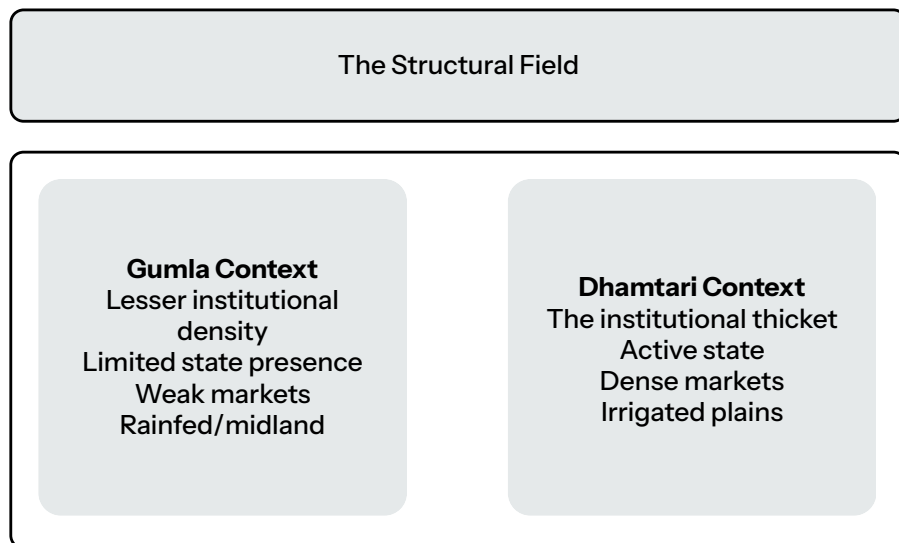
Agency and human (time-use shifts, mobility of women)

Here, the focus is on individual and collective agency: changes in women's control over time, mobility, aspirations, and decision-making. These outcomes are directly linked to the friction between gender and caste norms and NPO norms around equity.

Civic and resource governance (collective action capacity)

This domain covers communities' ability to manage commons, negotiate with the state, resolve conflicts, and make collective decisions. It expresses the long-term effect of both friction (more inclusive, contested politics) and co-production (routine engagement with administrative systems).

Overall, the framework operates not as a simple program logic but as a realist causal architecture that links structural conditions, mechanisms, and multi-dimensional resilience outcomes over the long term.



Illustrating the framework

In the illustration above, we see how the generic RDI framework manifests in the context of PRADAN's interventions in Gumla and Dhamtari. It shows how the generic categories of structural field, friction interface, co-production channels, and resilience outcomes play out differently in places with lower institutional density (Gumla) and an institutional thicket (Dhamtari) and why impact therefore takes distinct forms in each.

In the generic RDIF, the structural field comprises macro pressures, historical trajectories and institutional density.

In the applied diagram, this is specified as **Gumla context - lower institutional density:**

In the early 1990s, when PRADAN first entered Gumla, it was characterised by a limited state presence, weak markets, and predominantly rainfed, subsistence agriculture.

Thus, PRADAN enters a landscape with few public institutions, limited infrastructure and a history of underdevelopment.

Dhamtari context – the institutional thicket:

In Dhamtari, PRADAN entered a context in which large-scale rural development programmes, such as the DAY-NRLM and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, were already operational. The state was already active, with established irrigation systems, functioning markets, and multiple line departments and private actors. Here, the challenge was not institutional absence, but unequal access and administrative complexity. From the outset, PRADAN had to navigate a dense institutional landscape that differed significantly from the entry conditions in Gumla.

This first move operationalises the RDIF's idea of institutional density: Gumla sits toward the "emerging" end of the spectrum, Dhamtari toward the "thick" end. Because the structural field conditions that make mechanisms feasible, the rest of the diagram essentially answers: what does PRADAN do with emerging institutional conditions, and what does it do with a thicket?

Transforming structures and processes

Friction Interface

The RDIF identifies a friction interface where NPO norms (equity, agency) encounter structural norms (patriarchy, caste), generating productive conflict.

In Gumla, we articulate this mechanism as **creation and mobilisation** that entailed:

Gumla Mechanism
Creation and Mobilisation
The spark: Building institutions from scratch
Key dynamic: High friction

Given the history of underdevelopment, PRADAN began by building institutions from scratch, such as water user associations and, later, SHGs and co-operatives. The mechanism generated high friction, as new village institutions and women's groups disrupted entrenched religious and communal factions. In the initial years, PRADAN had to navigate the fragmented villages very carefully, as it focused on creating platforms at the community level rather than the household level. In other words, the friction interface here was about creating new organisational forms.

On the other hand, in Dhamtari, the initial mechanism was **facilitation and leverage** that entailed:

Dhamtari Mechanism
Facilitation and leverage
The spark: Navigating existing bureaucracy
Key dynamic: Strategic linkage

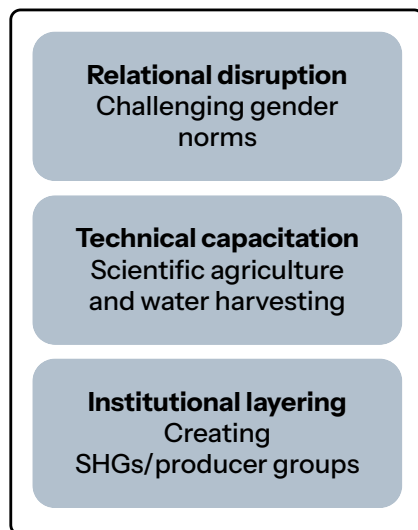
The first dynamic centred on helping communities navigate bureaucracy and access existing government schemes.

The second dynamic was strategic linkage, where PRADAN facilitated communities' engagement with state systems rather than substituting for them. While this dynamic eventually emerged in Gumla as well, it became a defining feature in Dhamtari because the work began with this approach from the outset.

In contrast, Gumla reached this stage incrementally, after a decade of institution creation and community mobilisation. Here, friction emerged around access, targeting, and voice within already-functioning systems such as panchayats, irrigation structures, and markets, rather than around the basic existence of institutions.

Thus, the application makes explicit what the generic RDIF implies: the same NPO norms generate different mechanism types depending on structural density, 'creation' in lower institutional density, 'navigation' in thickets.

We further break down the mechanisms below into specific activities undertaken by PRADAN that are sustained over a long period of time, such as "Relational Disruption", "Technical Capacitation", and "Institutional Layering" as illustrated on the next page.



Relational disruption: challenging gender norms

PRADAN's insistence on women-centred groups, joint decision-making, and public roles unsettles patriarchal practice in both locations. By foregrounding women as the main actors in development processes, PRADAN's approach creates friction within communities, which, in the long run, enables women to access a range of resources and enhances their mobility. However, this is observable to a large extent in Gumla but only to a limited extent in Dhamtari, reflecting the challenges of working in contexts where the primary role is to navigate existing institutions rather than build new ones.

Technical capacitation: scientific agriculture and water harvesting

Introduction of improved agronomy, water-harvesting designs, and planning tools strengthens farmers' capacity to use ecological resources more productively and reliably.

This underpins later ecological and economic resilience achieved in Gumla. The initial interventions all focused on strengthening water resource availability in Kharif, as that was the only period when most people were in the village. These interventions, geared toward demonstrating the generation of meaningful agricultural surplus through scientific practices such as paddy plantation, helped build initial trust. In Dhamtari, we did not observe this directly. While in some cases we observed that PRADAN had worked directly with households on certain aspects of improving agricultural productivity, it was mostly through better implementation of already functioning government programs.

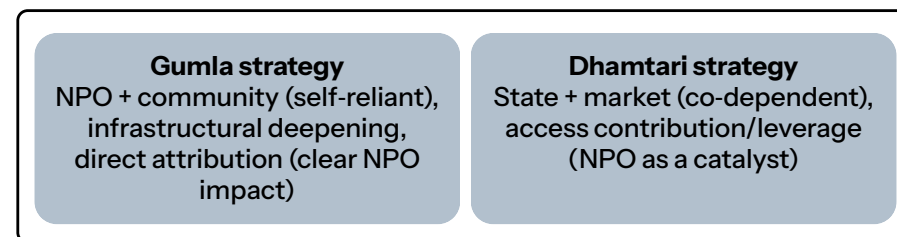
Institutional layering: creating SHGs/producer groups

Institutions are not one-off creations but are built in layers: SHGs, village organisations, producer groups, and federations. This layering thickens local civic infrastructure and shapes access to state programmes and markets. In Gumla, this was a core area of work from the beginning; in Dhamtari, it largely complemented NRLM by expanding its reach and helping achieve program targets.

While these strategies were adopted in both regions, their extent was conditioned by the structural field. In Gumla, they matured over time, whereas in Dhamtari, their reach remained more fragmented. As the framework suggests, these mechanisms can also generate periodic shifts in the structural field itself.

Co-production channels:

The generic RDIF describes co-production channels (state resources, NPO facilitation, and market linkages) as the routes through which NPOs help communities co-produce development outcomes with external systems. In the applied diagram, this becomes two contrasting strategies.



Gumla strategy: NPO + community (self-reliant)

Emphasis on infrastructural deepening: building or rehabilitating check dams, lift-irrigation systems, horticultural interventions, and other common infrastructure.

Impact characterised as direct contribution: the community-institution-building architecture was developed primarily through PRADAN's sustained presence and facilitation.

In RDIF language, PRADAN and the community together temporarily substitute for state and market actors, building a platform that may later be absorbed into or complemented by state and market systems.

Dhamtari strategy: State + market (co-dependent)

Emphasis on access and contribution/leverage: PRADAN's role is to aggregate demand, improve design quality and press for convergence, so that existing public and private resources flow more reliably to marginalised farmers.

Impact is framed as catalytic rather than directly attributable: This is co-production in the strict sense. The organisation's value lies in reorganising relationships among actors who were already present, not in filling a vacuum.

By placing these strategies under the 'Co-Production Channels' header, the diagram ties the abstract RDIF idea directly to field practice, showing that co-production can mean building substitute structures in areas with lower institutional density and brokering convergence in thickets.

Resilience matrix - Gumla

In Gumla, the RDIF's resilience matrix emerges as a largely affirmative story of impact; village actors supported by PRADAN have had to create much of the local development architecture from the ground up.

Ecological and Economic

On the ecological and economic fronts, decades of infrastructural deepening, particularly water-harvesting and lift-irrigation structures, combined with sustained technical capacity-building in scientific agriculture, have produced clear effects on water availability, cropping intensity and yield stability. Satellite imagery and village-level data indicate greener landscapes, more reliable double-cropping, and reduced exposure to intra-season rainfall shocks compared to earlier rainfed, low-productivity conditions.

Agency and Human

These material shifts interact closely with changes in the agency and human domain. As institutions such as SHGs, water-user collectives, and producer groups have taken root, women's time-use, mobility, and voice in decision-making have visibly expanded. The friction at the interface in Gumla has been intense, with PRADAN's equity-oriented norms repeatedly colliding with entrenched feudal and patriarchal arrangements, but much of this friction has been productive, enabling women to participate more actively in public spaces, planning processes, and livelihood decisions.

Strategic Mobility Portfolio

These ecological and agency gains have also reshaped household mobility strategies. With a more secure subsistence base and improved farm returns, migration increasingly appears as a strategic portfolio choice rather than distress labour. Families exercise greater control over who migrates, when and under what conditions.

Civic and Resource Governance

Finally, the civic and resource governance domain reflects the maturation of collective action. Layered institutions around water systems, SHGs, and producer organisations increasingly maintain common assets, negotiate with external agencies and resolve conflicts internally.

Resilience matrix - Dhamtari

In Dhamtari, the resilience matrix differs markedly from that in Gumla because PRADAN operates within an already dense institutional thicket of irrigation systems, markets and state programs.

Ecological and Economic

On the ecological and economic front, existing canal irrigation and higher agricultural investment mean that gains in yield stability or cropping intensity cannot be easily attributed to PRADAN's presence. The organisation undertakes relatively little direct construction, and outcomes vary across villages as multiple government schemes and private actors shape land and water use. Ecological and economic change is therefore real but difficult to attribute cleanly, with only mixed evidence of a strong PRADAN-specific effect.

Agency & Human

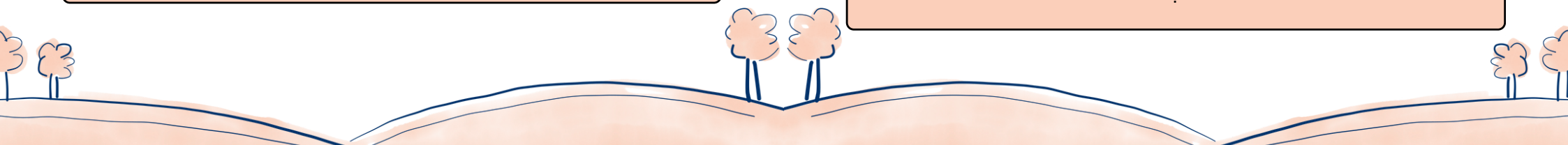
In the agency and human domains, there are visible shifts in women's confidence, participation in meetings, and comfort when interacting with officials. However, these changes remain incremental and uneven, shaped by entrenched institutional cultures in cooperatives, panchayats, and irrigation bodies that continue to privilege male and caste-based authority. The friction interface here is less about creating new spaces for women than about gradually widening openings within existing institutions.

Strategic Mobility Portfolio

These strategic mobility patterns also show persistence rather than dramatic transformation. Households diversify income through improved crop planning, market access, and participation in producer groups, but the deeper drivers of mobility, such as regional labour markets, land distribution, and non-farm aspirations, remain largely outside PRADAN's reach. Migration continues, with only limited evidence of the shift from distress to strategic migration seen in Gumla.

Civic and Resource Governance

In the civic and resource governance domain, PRADAN's influence is most evident yet subtle. Rather than creating parallel institutions, it helps communities use and reshape existing ones, gram panchayats, water-user associations and SHG federations, so that planning processes become somewhat more inclusive, funds are better targeted, and rule enforcement is more consistent. These gains are largely absorbed within existing institutions, improving their functioning while making PRADAN's contribution less visible and harder to isolate analytically.



Taken together, this pattern reflects the RDIF proposition that in dense contexts such as Dhamtari, impact occurs primarily through navigation rather than creation. The organisation's role is catalytic: it helps underserved groups understand schemes, convene meetings, broker convergence, and negotiate with officials and market actors, reshaping who can access state and market opportunities and how responsive these systems are to local priorities. Impact, therefore, tends to be subtle, relational, and institutionally distributed, visible less in large shifts in physical assets than in changed pathways of access and influence.

Overall, the RDIF and the Gumla-Dhamtari diagrams provide a realistic way of understanding long-term rural impact.



5 Conclusion and Implications for the Social Sector

The evidence from Gumla and Dhamtari points to an important shift in how non-profit impact is understood. Long-term impact cannot be meaningfully captured through fragmented project evaluations. Instead, it emerges through sustained organisational engagement that interacts with the local context over time.

Across both geographies, similar categories of interventions were introduced. These included agricultural improvement, formation and strengthening of SHGs, institutional development, and convergence with governance systems. Yet the trajectories of change differed.

In Gumla, PRADAN entered an area with emerging institutional density, characterised by limited infrastructure, minimal state presence and predominantly subsistence agriculture. Over time, the creation of local institutions, combined with investments in irrigation and scientific agriculture, contributed to gains in livelihoods and collective capacities that appeared to compound. In Dhamtari, however, PRADAN operated within an institutional thicket in which government programs, irrigation systems, and markets were already in place. Here, the organisation's role was less about creating systems and more about navigating and strengthening existing ones. As a result, outcomes were more uneven and often stabilised earlier.

These differences are not signs of inconsistency. Rather, they illustrate that change is contingent. The same categories of interventions generate different trajectories depending on the structural field in which they unfold.

Understanding How Long-Term Change Unfolds

This report does not claim that long-term engagement guarantees exponential growth. Instead, the evidence suggests a more grounded pattern of change:

Sustained interventions activate processes. These processes reinforce one another under enabling conditions. Institutional capacities deepen through repeated engagement. Structural realities of the region shape ceilings on outcomes. Stabilisation may signal system maturity rather than decline. Impact, therefore, accumulates within context.

The Rural Development Impact Framework provides a way to understand how such cumulative change unfolds.

The framework distinguishes between direct and indirect impact. Both forms of impact interact. In Gumla, for instance, improved agricultural returns strengthened participation in SHGs, while mature SHG institutions reinforced the adoption of agriculture and access to resources. By examining trajectories rather than isolated indicators, the framework enables us to see how these processes reinforce one another over time.

The framework also helps interpret patterns of stabilisation. In Gumla, agricultural productivity rises with exposure to improved practices and later plateaus. Such patterns do not necessarily signal declining program effectiveness. They may reflect ecological ceilings, market constraints or the maturation of existing systems.

Reorienting How the Sector Understands Impact

Recognising these dynamics has implications for how the sector conceptualises, funds, and evaluates long-term engagement.

Geography as the Unit of Analysis

Organisations operate within specific places rather than in isolation. Interventions interact with local ecological conditions, institutional histories, and political economies.

The comparison between Gumla and Dhamtari illustrates this clearly. Similar interventions produced different trajectories because the structural fields differed. Evaluating impact at the level of individual projects, therefore, obscures how change accumulates within a geography over time.

A geography-centred lens allows evaluators to trace how interventions layer, adapt, and reinforce one another within a place.

Stabilisation as a Meaningful Outcome

Development discourse often assumes that impact must continue growing to demonstrate effectiveness. However, the evidence suggests that stabilisation can also represent a meaningful stage of change.

In Gumla, agricultural productivity increases significantly with exposure to improved practices and later stabilises. Rather than signalling stagnation, this pattern may reflect ecological limits or the maturation of existing agricultural systems.

Evaluation frameworks, therefore, need to interpret plateau effects carefully rather than assume indefinite growth.

Contribution is More Honest than Attribution

Rural development outcomes emerge from interactions among communities, government systems, markets, and civil society organisations. In such contexts, asking “*who caused this change?*” oversimplifies reality. A more appropriate question is how sustained engagement strengthens local systems.

For example, the strengthening of SHGs in Gumla reflects not only program activities but also years of community participation, evolving leadership and interaction with government programs. Evaluating contribution provides a more realistic account of organisational value within complex development systems.

Implications for Practice

These insights carry practical implications for NPOs, funders and ecosystem actors.

For Non-profit Organisations

Organisations working within specific geographies need to document the temporal evolution of their engagement. Long-term impact rarely emerges from isolated initiatives; it develops through cumulative layers of intervention. Mapping intervention histories, therefore, becomes central to understanding organisational contribution and refining theories of change.

Monitoring systems must also capture mechanisms alongside outcomes. Agricultural yield data alone cannot explain why adoption of new practices increases or declines. Indicators related to collective learning, peer networks and institutional participation help illuminate how change occurs.

The cases also highlight the importance of sustained presence. In Gumla, the gradual layering of institutions such as SHGs, producer groups, and water-user collectives created the conditions for livelihood gains and collective action to reinforce one another over time.

At the same time, organisations must recognise that cumulative impact is shaped by context. Ecological ceilings, institutional histories, and local economies influence how far gains can extend. Evaluation frameworks, therefore, need to account for contextual variation rather than assume uniform trajectories across geographies.



For Funders

The findings highlight the limitations of short-term, attribution-centric evaluation frameworks.

Institutional development and collective capacity require sustained engagement. When funding is fragmented into short cycles, it becomes difficult for organisations to invest in processes that take time to mature.

Evaluation expectations should therefore move beyond narrow attribution. In rural contexts, outcomes are co-produced by multiple actors and systems. Assessing contribution, particularly through the strengthening of institutions and collective processes, provides a more accurate understanding of impact. Thus, area-based philanthropy that aims to create systemic social change over the long term may merit attention.

Finally, plateau effects should not be automatically interpreted as a program failure. As observed in Gumla, stabilisation may reflect system maturity rather than a decline in effectiveness.

For Ecosystem Builders and Policy Actors

At the ecosystem level, the findings point to the need for a shared conceptual vocabulary around different forms of impact. Without such clarity, long-term institutional strengthening often remains under-recognised.

Viewing change at the level of geography can also support more strategic investment decisions. Districts differ significantly in ecological potential, institutional maturity, and governance dynamics. Interventions, therefore, need to be adapted to local conditions rather than replicated uniformly.

Capturing cumulative change also requires investment in mixed-method evaluation capacity. Quantitative indicators reveal patterns, while qualitative inquiry helps interpret how and why those patterns emerge. Combining these approaches enables organisations and ecosystem actors to better understand the processes through which long-term transformation occurs.

Moving Forward

The Rural Development Impact Framework does not offer a universal formula for measuring impact. Instead, it provides a lens for understanding how sustained engagement shapes long-term change in specific places.

By linking structural conditions, mechanisms and resilience outcomes, the framework helps move evaluation beyond isolated project outputs toward a more realistic understanding of cumulative transformation.

For the social sector, adopting such a perspective represents a broader conceptual shift— from evaluating projects to understanding systems, from attribution to contribution and from short-term outputs to long-term trajectories of change.

Future work can build on this foundation by applying and refining the framework across different geographies and thematic areas. As organisations, funders and ecosystem actors engage with this approach, it offers a pathway toward a more accurate understanding and support for the long-term contributions of sustained development engagement.



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End Notes

1. Founded in 1983, PRADAN is working to reduce socio-economic inequalities in remote rural areas, especially among rural women, Dalits, and vulnerable tribal communities. We believe even the most underserved communities can drive the change they need. Working alongside these communities, PRADAN places young professionals directly in the field and partners with governments, donors, CSOs, and community institutions to unlock larger, systemic change in rural India. It has informed major state and central government programs and serves as a National Support Organisation to DAY-NRLM. Partnering with multiple stakeholders, PRADAN reaches 3.4 million households across 145 districts in 9 states (as of March 31, 2025), and aims to impact 50 million rural people by 2030.

2. Three recent reports that have attempted to ask the long-term questions are worth noting here: (i) Seva Mandir (Desai & Olofsgård, 2018); (ii) Ibtada (Cognisphere Solutions Limited, 2025); (iii) Gram Vikas (Khetan et al., 2024).

3. To measure agricultural productivity at the plot level, we computed the Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) at a monthly frequency for each plot geometry for 2017–2024. The analysis focuses on the 2017–2024 period because this is the first interval for which high-resolution (10 m) satellite imagery is consistently available to calculate plot-level NDVI with sufficient spatial precision and temporal regularity.

3. At coarser resolutions, individual plots in smallholder settings are either mixed with neighbouring land uses or suffer from substantial measurement error due to mixed pixels, making NDVI a noisy and potentially biased proxy for agricultural productivity. Using 2017–2024 data, therefore, maximises comparability across plots and time, ensures that vegetation dynamics are observed at an agronomically meaningful scale, and allows a balanced monthly panel to be constructed across all treated and comparison villages.

4. Two recent reports analyse Mission Antyodaya Data (2019) for Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Gumla ranks among the most multidimensionally deprived districts in Jharkhand (Prasanna et al., 2025), while Dhamtari falls within the lower-deprivation category of Chhattisgarh (Krishnan et al., 2024). However, the block where PRADAN is most active in Dhamtari falls in the most deprived category within the district.

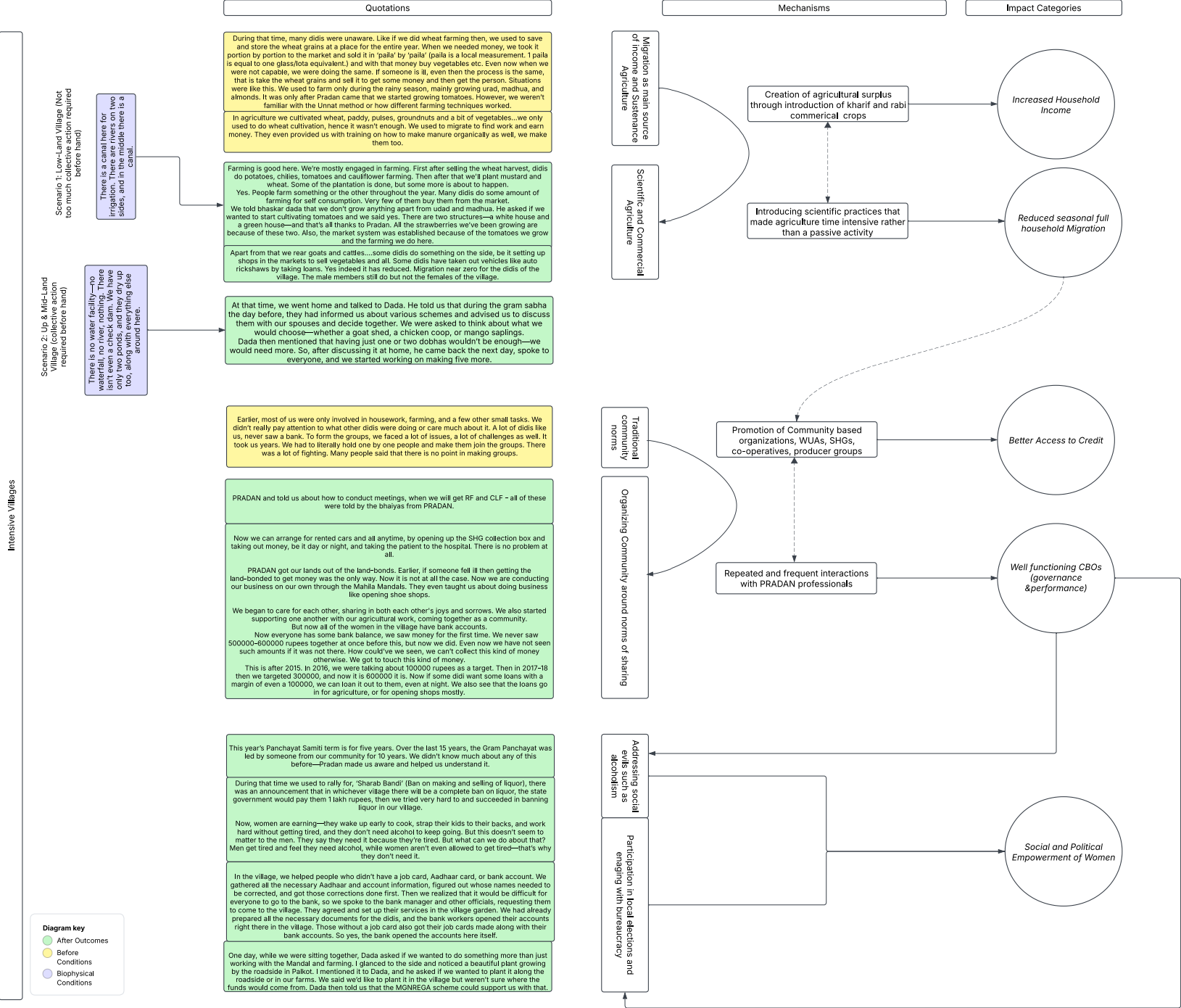
5. In designing this framework, we extend and reinterpret existing approaches in the literature – notably the sustainable livelihoods framework for the 21st century (Natarajan et al., 2021), earlier formulations of sustainable rural livelihoods (Scoones, 1998), and subsequent sustainable livelihoods approaches (Carney, 2003; van Rijn et al., 2012) – to foreground structural conditions, mechanisms, and temporally extended pathways of change.



6

Annexures

Annexure 1: Illustration of our Coding Process



Annexure 2: Sampling Procedure

Before conducting the primary surveys, we constructed a village-level agricultural suitability measure to (i) characterise baseline agro-ecological conditions across the study geography and (ii) support stratification of the sampling frame. It is difficult to determine the agricultural suitability of villages in our sample based on a single indicator. Therefore, we rely on multiple indicators derived from various datasets and construct a multidimensional or composite index. To ensure comparability, all indicators, such as rainfall and temperature, are normalised to a common scale from 0 to 1.

$$\tilde{x}_{ik} = (x_{ik} - \min(x_k)) \div (\max(x_k) - \min(x_k))$$

where:

$\tilde{x}_{ik}$ = the normalised value of the k-th indicator, for unit i village

$\min(x_k)$ = the minimum and maximum
 $\max(x_k)$ values of indicator k across all villages

Given that each indicator contributes differently to agricultural potential, it is important to assign appropriate weights when constructing the composite index. We derive these weights using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), which allows us to capture the relative importance of each indicator based on the variation it explains across the dataset. Next, we create a composite index for each village and year (2005–2022), then calculate the mean composite index for 2005–2022.

where:

$$Index_i = \sum_{k=1}^K w_k \times \tilde{x}_{ik}$$

$Index_i$ = composite index value for a village i

w_k = weight assigned to indicator k from PCA

$\tilde{x}_{ik}$ = normalised value of indicator k for unit i (village)

K = total number of indicators

Data source	Resolution (m)	Variables used	Unit
MODIS-250 Terra	250	NDVI (vegetation productivity proxy)	–
Copernicus Landcover	100	Agricultural area identification	–
CHIRPS	5566	Rainfall	mm
TerraClimate	4638.3	Runoff and temperature	mm; °C
FABDEM	30	Slope	degrees
Rural Access Index (RAI)	742	Road infrastructure/access	–
GLC FCS30D	30	Irrigated area, rainfed area, surface water	sq. km
Soil Organic Matter	250	Soil organic matter	%

Notes: NDVI is used as an indicator of agricultural productivity. MODIS refers to the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer, which is onboard the Terra satellite and provided by NASA. CHIRPS stands for Climate Hazards Centre InfraRed Precipitation with Station data, made available by the Climate Hazards Centre at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Runoff and Temperature were sourced from FABDEM, which stands for Forests and Buildings Removed Digital Elevation Model. The common time period across all the above datasets is 2005–2022.

Copernicus Landcover was used to define agricultural areas, rural access index data were sourced from organic carbon data, and data on irrigated and rainfed areas were obtained. These datasets originate from diverse sources and have varying spatial resolutions. All data were spatially aggregated to the village level using a village boundary shapefile, allowing for consistent village-level analysis.

Based on this composite index, we classify villages in Gumla and Dhamtari into four quartiles as discussed above. The village-level indicators were derived from multiple remote sensing and gridded datasets with varying spatial resolutions; all inputs were spatially aggregated to the village level using village boundary shapefiles (see Table 4.1).

Based on the four agricultural quartiles and three types of villages as classified by PRADAN, we divided the villages in Gumla and Dhamtari into 12 cells each, ensuring proportionate representation of each in our sample. We used data from Mission Antyodaya (2020) to assess variation across villages and to inform power calculations.

Distribution of Villages Block-Wise in the Sample (n=201)

District	Block	Non-PRADAN Villages	Non-Intensive PRADAN	Intensive PRADAN	Total Villages
Dhamtari	Dhamtari	20	0	0	20
	Kurud	14	0	0	14
	Magarlod	12	2	0	14
	Nagri	0	18	15	33
	Sub-Total	46	20	15	81
Gumla	Albert Ekka	9	0	0	9
	Basia	0	5	4	9
	Bharno	6	0	0	6
	Bishunpur	8	0	0	8
	Chainpur	9	0	0	9
	Dumri	8	0	0	8
	Ghagra	0	8	7	15
	Gumla	0	11	4	15
	Kamdara	0	4	2	6
	Palkot	0	8	4	12
	Raidih	0	4	6	10
	Sisai	13	0	0	13
	Sub Total	53	36	31	120

High variation (SD ~130) allows detection of meaningful differences (~50 households), with an estimated MES of 0.34–0.45. Accounting for clustering (DE = 1.45; 10 households per village, ICC = 0.05), effective sample sizes are ~69 (Gumla) and ~48 (Dhamtari). Gumla strata can detect smaller effects ($d \approx 0.34$), whereas Dhamtari can detect moderate effects ($d \geq 0.45$), thereby enabling cluster pooling for improved power. The final sample includes 201 villages (120 Gumla, 81 Dhamtari), with ~10 and ~7 villages per stratum, respectively.

Annexure 3: Evolution of Interventions in GUMLA (Jharkhand)

Year	Intervention Focus	Details
2004-05	SHG Formation	PRADAN initiated its work in Gumla by forming SHGs, starting with Sipringa in the Raidih block. The focus was on building basic financial literacy and savings habits among rural women, marking the first step toward building institutions.
2006-07	Resource Development	Water resource development was introduced, enabling improved irrigation access and helping farmers transition to more reliable farming practices. SHGs were strengthened and expanded into new villages, increasing outreach.
2008-09	Livelihood Diversification	The diversification of livelihoods began with the promotion of agriculture-based microenterprises. The introduction of the Baari-Bagaan model integrated horticulture (fruit trees), vegetables, and agroforestry to meet food, income, and environmental needs.
2010-11	Institutional Strengthening	SHGs were federated into cluster associations and informal federations, helping women access bank credit and participate in livelihood planning. Focus was placed on building leadership within community institutions.
2011-12	Agriculture & Gender Inclusion	Agriculture interventions scaled significantly. System of Rice Intensification (SRI) techniques doubled paddy yields. SHGs successfully mobilised funds (₹15 lakh) from the District Plan for irrigation infrastructure. This period also saw the beginning of PRADAN's gender inclusion efforts and women's political participation.
2013-14	Livestock-Based Livelihoods	Goat rearing and veterinary training via SHGs; improved income for women in Kamal Mahila Mandal. Goat rearing emerged as a key livelihood intervention. Community members were trained as local veterinarians (barefoot vets), creating rural service delivery models. SHG women collectively generated over ₹1 lakh in goat sales.
2015-16	Water Harvesting & Nutrition	Small irrigation structures and kitchen gardens were introduced for food security. Nutrition-sensitive interventions were introduced. Kitchen gardens were promoted to address seasonal hunger, and small irrigation structures supported year-round cultivation.
2017-18	Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM)	Deepened convergence with government; poultry and goatery scaled. PRADAN operationalised the Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) approach at scale. Asset creation through convergence with schemes like MGNREGA became a regular practice.
2018-19	Climate Smart Agriculture	Since 2016, PRADAN's solar initiative in Jharkhand has improved livelihoods, irrigation, and clean water access across 25 villages. With six micro-grids, solar pumps, and piped water systems, it reduced costs, raised incomes, and empowered communities. The project benefits 5,263 people and aligns with six key Sustainable Development Goals.
2020-21	COVID-19 Relief	Community kitchens, food support, PPE distribution, and migrant relief work through SHGs. COVID-19 response efforts included setting up community kitchens, distributing rations and PPE kits, and supporting returnee migrants. SHGs played a central role in community mobilisation and delivery.
2021-22	Food Security & Digital Inclusion	The focus shifted to stabilising livelihoods and restoring food security through kitchen gardens, goatery, and digital transactions. SHGs continued to function as platforms for convergence and economic resilience.
2023-24	Regenerative Farming & Enterprise	Ongoing focus on nature-aligned agriculture, SHG-run microenterprises, and sustainable development. PRADAN has moved towards regenerative farming practices and is actively supporting SHG-led microenterprises. The emphasis is now on scale and sustainability, with women's collectives driving local economic transformation.

Annexure 4: Evolution of Interventions in DHAMTARI (Chhattisgarh)

Year	Intervention Focus	Details
2005-06	Entry via DPRP	PRADAN entered Dhamtari through a formal partnership with the Chhattisgarh Government to implement the World Bank-supported District Poverty Reduction Project (DPRP) in the Kurud block. The work began with household surveys, poverty profiling, and SHG formation.
2006-07	SHG and Livelihood Expansion	Early livelihood planning exercises and sector-specific interventions (likely agriculture and goateries) were introduced. Emphasis was on identifying poor households and building grassroots institutions. Early asset-building efforts were introduced.
2013-14	Livelihood & Governance	PRADAN re-engaged more strategically, with efforts focusing on strengthening convergence between SHGs and local government schemes, especially around governance and planning.
2019-20	MGNREGA Convergence	MGNREGA was used for structured asset creation, with SHGs involved in identifying work priorities. This helped integrate wage work with long-term asset development, such as land bunding and farm ponds.
2021-22	Women's Nutrition & Enterprise	Nutrition-sensitive interventions, such as kitchen gardens and backyard livestock, were promoted. This year also saw increased attention to women's leadership in local institutions and economic activities.
2023-24	Livelihood Deepening	PRADAN's work in Dhamtari has moved toward deepening existing livelihoods. The focus is on improving productivity, enabling women's enterprises, and leveraging SHG platforms to integrate with public programs and financial services.

Annexure 5: Empowerment Indices

Subsection	Full Question Text	Coding Scheme	Analysis Type
Resource Access Index	1 How freely can you visit the market, health centre, or other essential places without permission?	1=Not at all allowed; 5=Completely free to go anytime	Mean
	2 How often do you attend community meetings or women's groups on your own?	1=Never; 5=Always	
	3 How informed are you about government schemes or services available to women in your area?	1=Not informed at all; 5=Very well informed	
	4 How easily can you access or save money in your name without seeking permission?	1=Not at all; 5=Completely independently	
	5 How much control do you have over how your personal income is used?	1=No control; 5=Full control	
Self-Efficacy Index	1 How confident are you to speak up during family discussions that affect your life?	1=Not confident at all; 5=Fully confident and assertive	PCA
	2 How freely can you express disagreement with family members in a respectful way?	1=Not at all; 5=Always freely	
	3 How often do others in your family involve you in important decisions?	1=Never; 5=Always	
	4 How confident are you in choosing whom to vote for without being influenced by others?	1=Not confident at all; 5=Completely confident and independent	
	5 How willing are you to attend a community or gram sabha meeting if it affects your household or village?	1=Not willing; 5=Very willing and proactive	
Structural Decisions Index	1 Who decides how the money you earn will be used?	1=Mainly husband; 2=Jointly; 3=Mainly You	Mean
	2 Who usually makes decisions about healthcare for yourself?	1=Husband/Someone Else; 2=Jointly; 3=Mainly You	
	3 Who usually makes decisions about major household purchases?	1=Husband/Someone Else → 2=Jointly → 3=Mainly You	
Mobility Index	1 Are you usually allowed to go to markets (within village)?	1=Not at all; 2=With Someone Else Only; 3=Alone	PCA
	2 Are you usually allowed to go to the health facility?	1=Not at all; 2=With Someone Else Only; 3=Alone	
	3 Are you usually allowed to go to places outside the village?	1=Not at all; 2=With Someone Else Only; 3=Alone	
Household Influence Index	1 How much influence do you feel you have in decisions about large household purchases?	1=No influence; 5=Complete authority or equal say	Mean
	2 If a financial emergency occurred, how much say would you have in deciding how to handle it?	1=No say; 5=Final say or joint final decision	
	3 How much control do you have over the household's day-to-day financial planning?	1=No control; 5=Full control	
	4 How much influence do you feel you have in setting priorities at the village or community level?	1=No influence; 5=Very strong influence and leadership role	
	5 How often do you engage in discussions about community issues (like safety, water, jobs) with others?	1=Never; 5=Very frequently and proactively	
	6 How often do you participate in collective activities to raise demands for services?	1=Never; 5=Very frequently and proactively	



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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

This is an abridged version of a detailed research report
*A methodological framework for assessing the long-term
impact of a nonprofit's work in a geography,*
available at
<https://ekam.isdm.org.in/>