

People's Action for Rural Advancement and Sustainability (PARAS Foundation)



Annual Report Year- 2023-24



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2 From Chief Functionary's desk....

Dear Friends and Supporters,



It is with immense pride and deep gratitude that I present to you the annual report of the PARAS Foundation for the year 2023-24. This year has been one of significant growth, new challenges, and meaningful impact. I am continually inspired by the collective efforts of our organization, which have touched the lives of farmers, rural women, children, and youth across our communities.

The PARAS Foundation remains committed to our mission of fostering sustainable development through collaboration. By bringing together government bodies, NGOs, social leaders, and community stakeholders, we have worked tirelessly to address the pressing issues facing our society. Our belief in the power of unity and selfless service has been the driving force behind our initiatives, and this year, more than ever, we have seen the fruits of our collective labor.

The ongoing challenge of climate change continues to demand urgent action. We can no longer afford to stand by and watch as the effects of environmental degradation unfold. The responsibility lies with each of us to protect not only our current environment but also to safeguard the future for generations to come. Our initiatives this year have focused on practical, scalable solutions that empower communities to adapt and thrive in the face of these changes.

Another critical area of concern has been the persistent issues of violence against women, the erosion of constitutional values, child abuse, and the declining quality of education. These challenges are deep-seated and multifaceted, but they are not insurmountable. Through our programs and advocacy efforts, we have continued to push for a society where every individual can live free from fear and discrimination and where education serves as a powerful tool for transformation.

I extend my deepest thanks to every member, volunteer, and partner of the PARAS Foundation. Your dedication, resilience, and compassion have been the cornerstones of our success. Together, we have achieved incredible milestones, and I am confident that we will continue to build on these achievements in the coming years.

As we look to the future, I encourage you all to remain steadfast in your commitment to our shared vision. Let us continue to work together with the same energy, passion, and determination that have brought us this far. The road ahead may be challenging, but I have no doubt that, together, we will continue to make a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for your continued support and unwavering belief in the mission of the PARAS Foundation.

Warm regards,

AKTA SINGH

*Chief Functionary
PARAS Foundation*

3 About Organisation

The PARAS Foundation was established in 2005 under the Society Act by dedicated social workers of PANI Sansthan in the village of Jai Prabha Gram (Bhawaniyapur), Post-Pirkhauili, Block- Sohawal, Ayodhya (Faizabad). Over the years, the foundation has grown to have a significant presence in the Ayodhya district of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Our work spans various social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of society. We are deeply committed to building the capacity of communities, ensuring they are empowered to understand their situations, recognize their challenges, and face them with resilience. A key aspect of our approach is promoting local democracy, enabling communities to actively participate in decision-making processes and governance.

At PARAS Foundation, we work closely with rural women, marginal farmers, landless families, children, and teenage girls through an integrated approach to development. Our focus is on strengthening the capacities of individuals and communities, empowering them to engage effectively in their own development.

Our core thematic areas include:

- **Natural Resource Management**
- **Gender Governance**
- **Health and Nutrition**
- **Climate Change**
- **Sustainable Livelihoods**
- **Integrated Child Development**
- **Local Democracy**

Through these areas, we strive to create lasting, positive impacts on the lives of those we serve

Main Aim and Objects of Association

1. To carry-out developmental activities by focussing on socio-economically marginalized sections of society.
2. To build the capacity of farmers, labourers, rural artisans and youth and making available the necessary facilities for their development.
3. To execute health related activities for improving the community health in rural and urban areas.
4. To run livelihood enhancement activities for economic development of socio-economically poor communities.
5. To promote rural handicrafts and non-conventional energy.
6. To execute educational, legal and community education activities for educationally backward sections of society.
7. To organize and coordinate capacity building and awareness programs for Panchayat members and rural citizens for mobilization of Gram Panchayats.
8. To organize and enhance capacity of the deprived sections of society and facilitate them for advocacy on their issues entitlements and rights.
9. To conduct trainings, study and research on the various aspects of development.
10. To promote conservation of environment.
11. To establish linkages and coordination with various national and international agencies/organizations, intellectuals, learned, banks etc. (both govt. and non govt.) to mobilize required resources (grants, loans etc) for achieving the organizational objectives.

4 Working Approach

Community-Based Institutions: The PARAS Foundation acknowledges the crucial role of community participation and collective action in fostering development. We are committed to establishing and supporting community-based institutions, recognizing them as the cornerstone of sustainable success.

Community Empowerment: Empowering communities is at the heart of our approach. We believe that integrated people's development is best achieved through an empowered community where individuals possess the knowledge, skills, and resources to drive their own progress.

Stakeholders: We understand that effective community development requires collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders. The PARAS Foundation actively engages with Gram Panchayats (GPs), local stakeholders, government entities, and other organizations to work collaboratively towards the welfare of society.

Collective Action: We champion the power of unity and collaboration. By promoting collective action, we encourage individuals and communities to come together to enhance societal well-being and drive meaningful change.

Development: Our approach to development is holistic, addressing the interconnected economic, cultural, and political issues within communities. We work towards the comprehensive development of communities, ensuring that all aspects of their growth are supported and nurtured.

Quality Education: We place a strong emphasis on quality education as a fundamental element for creating a better life and fostering an empowered community. By focusing on education, we aim to empower future generations and facilitate long-term positive change.



5 Vision:

A society living with sustainable livelihood options and has access to their right and entitlements through community action. Improving rural women and Child Education.

6 Mission

We are imaging a community action for their right to food, work, health and education.

7 Core Values

At the PARAS Foundation, our core values guide our approach to development and community engagement. These values are:

- **Respect:** We uphold respect for all individuals at every level of society, fostering an environment where everyone's dignity and contributions are valued.
- **Equality:** We are committed to promoting feelings of equality and ensuring that equal opportunities are available and accessible to all.
- **Transparency:** We believe in transparency in all our development efforts, ensuring clear communication and accountability in our work.
- **Dedication:** We are dedicated to achieving our targets and fulfilling our mission with unwavering commitment.
- **Self-Discipline:** We practice self-discipline in our actions and decisions, maintaining a high standard of professionalism and integrity.
- **Responsibility:** We take responsibility for our actions and their impact on the communities we work with, striving to be accountable and dependable.

These core values shape our work and interactions, driving us towards meaningful and sustainable development.

8 Theory of change

At the PARAS Foundation, our Theory of Change is rooted in a commitment to democratic principles and equality. We adhere to the following principles:

- **Democratic Process:** We uphold the values of democracy by ensuring that our processes and actions are transparent, inclusive, and participatory.
- **Respect and Equality:** We believe in respecting each individual without differentiation based on religion, caste, or any other identity. Our commitment to equality ensures that everyone has access to opportunities and resources.
- **Gender Equity:** We advocate for equal opportunities for all, irrespective of gender, ensuring that our initiatives are free from gender bias and promote fairness.

By aligning with these principles, we aim to create an environment where every person is valued and empowered, leading to equitable and sustainable development.

9 Organization's understanding of Constitutional Values

We recognize that Indian society is influenced by religious, caste-based, patriarchal, and capitalist structures. To address and overcome these challenges, we are dedicated to upholding the values enshrined in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. Our commitment includes:

- **Adherence to Constitutional Values:** We uphold the core values of the Indian Constitution—Socialism, Secularism, Democracy, Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, the Dignity of the Individual, and the Unity and Integrity of the Nation. These principles guide our work and reflect our dedication to creating a fair and just society.
- **Promoting Local Democracy:** We emphasize the importance of local democracy by encouraging community participation in decision-making processes. We believe that empowering local governance structures and fostering active citizen engagement are crucial for achieving sustainable and inclusive development.
- **Promoting Awareness and Sensitization:** We engage in raising awareness and sensitizing communities to foster behavioural change. Our interventions aim to align societal practices with constitutional values and promote a culture of respect and equality.
- **Feminist and Human Rights Approach:** Our approach is grounded in feminist and human rights values, advocating for gender equality and the empowerment of all individuals. This aligns with our commitment to justice and dignity for everyone.

Focus Areas:

- **Livelihood Generation and Restoration:** Enhancing economic opportunities and restoring livelihoods in rural areas.
- **Social Empowerment and Advocacy:** Empowering marginalized communities and advocating for social justice.
- **Maternal and Child Care:** Improving health and care for mothers and children.
- **Child Rights:** Protecting and promoting the rights of children.
- **Care for Persons with Disabilities:** Providing support and care for individuals with disabilities.
- **Education:** Ensuring access to quality education for all.
- **Labor Rights:** Advocating for fair labor practices and workers' rights.
- **Environmental Protection:** Safeguarding and restoring the environment.
- **Skill Development and Training:** Offering training programs to build skills and enhance employment opportunities.

Through these focus areas, we strive to advance the principles of the Constitution, foster local democracy, and work towards a more equitable and inclusive society.

10 Core Issue

The PARAS Foundation is dedicated to addressing several critical issues to foster sustainable development and empower communities. Our core focus areas include:

- **Women's Socio-Economic Rights and Empowerment:** Advocating for and enhancing the socio-economic rights of women, and promoting their empowerment through various initiatives.
- **Realization of Entitlement Services:** Ensuring that individuals and communities can access and benefit from their rightful entitlements and services.

- **Climate-Informed Agriculture and Entrepreneurship:** Supporting climate-smart agricultural practices and fostering entrepreneurial opportunities that are resilient to climate change.
- **Work with Men and Boys for Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence Against Women:** Engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality and addressing violence against women.
- **Maternal, Neonatal, Child Health, Adolescent Health, and Environmental Health and Livelihood:** Improving health outcomes for mothers, newborns, children, and adolescents, while integrating environmental health into livelihood strategies.
- **Promotion of Agro-Based Livelihoods through Women Farmers:** Enhancing the livelihoods of women farmers through support for agro-based activities and sustainable practices.
- **Adolescent Development and Young People's Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights, including HIV/AIDS:** Focusing on the development and health rights of adolescents and young people, including reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention.
- **Youth Skill Development and Employment through Job Placement:** Providing skills training and job placement services to enhance employment opportunities for youth.
- **Education:** Promoting access to and quality of education for all age groups to support personal and community development.
- **Disaster Relief Work:** Offering support and relief during and after disasters to help affected communities recover and rebuild.
- **Water Saving:** Implementing strategies and practices to conserve water and promote sustainable water management.

Through these core issues, PARAS Foundation aims to drive meaningful change and build a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable society.

11 Geographical Area

The PARAS Foundation operates in the following regions of Uttar Pradesh, India:

- **Sohawal and Rudauli Blocks, Ayodhya District:** Known for its historical and religious significance, Ayodhya District presents a unique context for the Foundation's social welfare and developmental efforts.
- **Puredalai Block, Barabanki District:** This region, primarily agricultural, provides a critical focus for our initiatives aimed at enhancing agricultural practices and rural livelihoods.

These areas are strategically chosen to address various social, economic, and developmental needs, leveraging their distinct characteristics to implement targeted programs effectively.

12 Target group

The PARAS Foundation focuses its efforts on several key target groups to ensure that our initiatives address the most pressing needs of the communities we serve:

- **Small and Marginal Farmers:** Supporting farmers with limited resources to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability.
- **Women:** Empowering women through various programs to improve their socio-economic status and overall well-being.
- **Teenage Girls:** Providing targeted support and resources to teenage girls to foster their development and address their specific needs.
- **Dalit Communities:** Working to uplift and support Dalit communities, addressing issues of discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities.
- **Dropout Girls:** Engaging with girls who have dropped out of school to reintegrate them into educational and developmental programs.
- **Children:** Focusing on the health, education, and overall development of children to ensure a bright future for the next generation.
- **Landless People:** Assisting individuals and families without land to improve their livelihoods and access essential resources.

Through our work with these groups, we aim to create meaningful and sustainable change in the communities we support.

13 Major ongoing project:

- A. **Empowering Rural Women (ERW):** This initiative aims to uplift and empower women in rural areas by providing opportunities for education, skill development, and socio-economic advancement. The ERW project places a strong emphasis on:
- **Local Democracy:** Encouraging active participation of women in local governance and decision-making processes to enhance their role and influence in their communities.
 - **Addressing Women's Discrimination:** Tackling issues of gender discrimination and working towards creating an equitable environment for women.
 - **Transparency in Panchayat Operations:** Ensuring that Panchayat operations are transparent and accountable, thereby improving governance and the effective implementation of welfare schemes and entitlements.

The project is supported by the Azim Premji Foundation, which enhances its capacity to create meaningful change and foster development in rural areas.

B. **Strengthening Civil Society Organizations Towards Fostering Women Empowerment in Eastern Uttar Pradesh**

Funded by the European Union and supported by ChildFund India, this project focuses on enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The primary objectives are:

- **Advancing Women's Empowerment:** Promoting women's empowerment through various strategies, including supporting entrepreneurship and advocating for gender equality.
- **Climate-Friendly Agricultural Practices:** Encouraging sustainable agricultural practices that are resilient to climate change.
- **Linkages with Governmental Schemes:** Facilitating connections between communities and relevant governmental schemes to ensure access to resources and support.
- **Capacity Building and Advocacy:** Strengthening organizational capacities and engaging in advocacy efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality.

Through these efforts, the project aims to create a supportive environment for women's empowerment and contribute to the overall development of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

14 Outcome of the year

Over the past year, the PARAS Foundation has achieved remarkable outcomes through its major projects, reflecting its commitment to community development and empowerment. The ****Empowering Rural Women (ERW)**** project has significantly impacted rural communities by fostering women's active participation in local governance. This initiative has empowered women to take on leadership roles and influence decision-making processes, enhancing their social and political presence. The project has effectively addressed gender discrimination by providing women with the tools and support needed to challenge and overcome systemic barriers. Moreover, it has focused on improving transparency and accountability in Panchayat operations, which has led to better governance and more effective implementation of welfare schemes and entitlements. With the invaluable support of the Azim Premji Foundation, the ERW project has not only uplifted women but also contributed to creating a more equitable environment for socio-economic advancement. Concurrently, the ****Strengthening Civil Society Organizations towards Fostering Women Empowerment in Eastern Uttar Pradesh**** project, funded by the European Union and supported by ChildFund India, has made substantial progress in enhancing the capacities of local civil society organizations. This project has successfully advanced

women's empowerment through various means, including promoting entrepreneurship, advocating for gender equality, and supporting climate-friendly agricultural practices. By facilitating stronger linkages with governmental schemes, the project has ensured that communities have better access to essential resources and support. Additionally, it has focused on capacity building and advocacy to foster a supportive environment for women's rights and gender equality. Collectively, these projects have not only addressed critical issues such as gender discrimination, governance, and agricultural sustainability but also contributed to the overall development and empowerment of communities in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, demonstrating the PARAS Foundation's dedication to creating meaningful and lasting change.

15 Demography:

Total District: 02
Total Block: 03
Total No. of G.P: 62
Total family covered: 36912
Total Advocacy Group formed: 01
Total hamlets level Collectives: 82
Total Farmer Group formed: 69
Total Farmers Producer Company (FPO/FPC): 01
Total family linked with Farmers group: 1511
Total Nari Sangh – 10
Total family linked with Nari Sangh- 2473
Total covered children under School education: 155

16 Climate informed agriculture, entrepreneurship and Promotion of agro based livelihood through women famers.

During the year 2023-24, PARAS Foundation facilitated our target families through a series of impactful agricultural schemes and initiatives designed to enhance rural livelihoods and promote sustainable farming practices. Through the implementation of key programs such as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Kisan Credit Card (KCC), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), and the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan), we reached 218 farmer families, providing them with essential financial support and resources to improve their agricultural productivity. Additionally, the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) played a crucial role in empowering farmers by enabling the installation of solar pumps, which not only reduced their reliance on traditional energy sources but also contributed to significant carbon savings. Our efforts extended to providing seed subsidies, soil testing, and subsidies for agricultural tools and machinery, all of which equipped farmers with the necessary tools and knowledge to optimize their farming practices.

As a result of these initiatives, 67 families successfully adopted multi-layer vegetable production, significantly boosting their agricultural output and food security. The adoption of rice intensification techniques led to the efficient use of 97.5 acres of land, while 714 families integrated composting practices and 421 families adopted green manuring, both of which enhanced soil fertility and sustainability. The positive economic impact of our efforts was evident as 967 families saw their average income rise by Rs. 2813 through strategic adjustments to cropping seasons. Additionally, 312 families adopted intercropping systems, diversifying their income sources and building resilience against economic fluctuations.

In flood-affected regions, we supported 153 farmer families by providing paddy for the fourth time, aiding in their recovery and ensuring the continuity of their farming activities. A major environmental achievement was the reduction of crop burning, with 1838 farmers eliminating this practice across 903 acres of farmland by adopting sugarcane mulching techniques. This not only improved soil moisture retention but also significantly reduced carbon emissions, aligning with our commitment to sustainable agriculture. Collectively, these efforts led to the conservation of an impressive 1.97 million cubic meters of water in agriculture through various water-saving techniques. The reduction in carbon emissions, coupled with the adoption of solar energy and sustainable

practices, underscores the success of our holistic approach to climate-informed agriculture, which has not only improved the livelihoods of thousands of families but also set a benchmark for sustainable and resilient farming practices that can be replicated across diverse regions, contributing to broader goals of climate resilience, food security, rural prosperity, and environmental sustainability.

17 Women socio economic right & Empowerment

PARAS Foundation has made significant progress in its Empowerment of Rural Women (ERW) project, benefitting 2,473 women across 10 Gram Panchayats in Rudauli Block, Ayodhya district. The project focused on enhancing the functioning of local governance (PRI) to address key issues such as reducing domestic violence, increasing women's participation in open Gram Sabha meetings, ensuring the regular operation of PDS shops, facilitating entitlement realization for welfare schemes, improving healthcare services, and promoting the MNREGA scheme in villages. Among the notable achievements were the issuance of 127 job cards to women under MNREGA, the successful resolution of 5 domestic violence cases, and the active involvement of 18 Nari Sangh leaders in monitoring Mid-Day Meal (MDM) and Public Distribution System (PDS) schemes. The project also led to a 13% increase in women's participation in open Gram Sabha meetings, the regular participation of 50 Nari Sangh leaders in Village Health and Nutrition Day (VHND) events for quality assurance, and 308 women submitting written demand letters to Pradhans for work in MNREGA. Additionally, the involvement of an MLA in Nari Sangh events and meetings, along with the consistent organization of Nari Sangh meetings, underscores the project's impact. These accomplishments highlight PARAS Foundation's dedication to empowering women and promoting effective local governance.



18 Facilitation to women child health.

Our organization has been deeply engaged in enhancing women and child health, with a specific focus on maternal health for women aged 15 to 49. We have concentrated our efforts on several key areas: early pregnancy registration, ensuring three complete Antenatal Care (ANC) visits, identifying and referring high-risk pregnancies, promoting birth preparedness and spacing, facilitating safe deliveries, providing Postnatal Care (PNC), and tracking maternal deaths. Additionally, we have worked to increase access to Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) benefits. Our results have been highly promising: we achieved 100% pregnancy registration in Anganwadi Centers (AWCs), with 95% of pregnant women completing all ANC visits. We identified and referred eight high-risk cases for specialized care, and 96% of deliveries occurred in hospitals, ensuring safer birthing conditions. Furthermore, 218 women have benefited from the JSY scheme, significantly improving maternal and child health outcomes in our target communities.

19 Maternal, Neonatal, Child Health

In the domain of Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health, our organization has provided comprehensive support to the community. For children aged 0 to 6 years, we have focused on ensuring complete immunization, monitoring growth, de-worming, and referring severely underweight children for appropriate care. We have also promoted immediate and exclusive breastfeeding, provided supplementary nutrition, and managed cases of diarrhea and pneumonia. Additionally, we have prioritized the care of low birth weight (LBW) babies and established a robust system for tracking under-5 deaths. Our efforts have led to a commendable 90% completion rate for immunization within the designated time schedule. We distributed 317 de-worming kits, referred nine underweight children for specialized care, and identified and referred 12 cases of diarrhea to hospitals for timely treatment.

In Adolescent Health, targeting individuals aged 15 to 19 years, we have implemented various initiatives, including tracking and addressing anemia cases, providing iron and folic acid (IFA) supplements, and promoting menstrual

hygiene practices. We have also advocated for the delayed age of marriage. Notably, our workers have distributed iron tablets to 78 adolescents suffering from anaemia, provided 416 de-worming kits, and engaged 482 adolescents in hygiene meetings, enhancing their knowledge and practices. Importantly, no cases of underage marriage have been identified within our target population. These achievements underscore our commitment to promoting the health and well-being of mothers, neonates, children, and adolescents in the communities we serve.

20 Realization of entitlements services

Our organization has successfully collaborated with various government schemes to promote sustainable agriculture and enhance farming practices. Through these partnerships, we have conducted soil testing for 378 samples, enabling farmers to make informed decisions on soil nutrient management. We have mobilized subsidized hybrid paddy seeds (82 kg) and wheat seeds (1730 kg) from the agriculture department, supporting the adoption of improved seed varieties. In collaboration with the horticulture department, we established a permanent pit Vermi composting unit to facilitate organic waste management and improve soil fertility. We also distributed seeds of bottle gourd (0.5 kg), bitter melon (1.5 kg), and garlic (150 kg), promoting crop diversification and income opportunities for farmers. The agriculture department supported our irrigation efforts by providing 13 solar pumps, while the horticulture department installed 3 drip systems and one sprinkler system, ensuring efficient water management. Additionally, we received 67 vegetable carry trays for safe produce transportation and 580 decomposer kits for sustainable waste management. Our organization also conducted five batches of agriculture training sessions, introducing innovative techniques to farmers.

In terms of welfare schemes, we facilitated access to several benefits for the community, including 39 Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) housing units, 22 new ration cards under the Public Distribution System (PDS), 61 pensions (for old age, widows, and divyang), 99 Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Scheme benefits, 274 labor registrations under the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act, and 125 Ayushman Bharat cards. These collaborations with government schemes have significantly advanced agricultural practices and improved the well-being of farmers and community members in our target areas.

21 Environmental health:

Our organization has been dedicated to promoting environmental health through a variety of impactful initiatives. We have made significant strides in enhancing self-sufficiency and nutrition by successfully establishing kitchen gardens for 530 families. These gardens enable families to grow their own fresh vegetables and herbs, contributing to improved nutrition and reduced dependency on external food sources.

Ensuring the safety of drinking water sources is a critical priority for us. We have worked closely with the community to clean and maintain 103 water sources, thereby providing access to clean and safe drinking water, which is essential for preventing waterborne diseases and promoting overall health.

Recognizing the importance of ecosystem preservation, we have conducted extensive tree plantation drives in collaboration with the forest department, resulting in the successful planting of 31,400 trees. This large-scale reforestation effort not only helps in combating climate change but also enhances biodiversity and supports local wildlife habitats.

In addition to these efforts, we have focused on effective garbage management by encouraging 73 families to prepare shock pits for proper waste disposal. This initiative helps in managing household waste more effectively and improves water management practices, thus reducing environmental pollution.

Our commitment to reducing air pollution is evident in our success in preventing 1,237 farmers from engaging in harmful farm burning practices. By discouraging this practice, we have mitigated significant air pollution and contributed to better air quality in our target areas.

Finally, we have emphasized the importance of improving soil health through sustainable agricultural practices. Our efforts in promoting these practices have benefited numerous farmers, leading to healthier soils and more productive farming.

These collective achievements reflect our ongoing dedication to promoting environmental health and sustainability, demonstrating our comprehensive approach to addressing various environmental challenges and improving the quality of life for the communities.

22 Better education better life!

Support to Poor Families: Our school has made significant strides in supporting poor families. We currently enroll 74 girls out of a total of 156 students, with 8 dedicated female teachers facilitating their education. The monthly fees collected amount to ₹53,700, while monthly expenses are ₹53,500. Additionally, we provide free education and transportation to 13 students, ensuring they have access to quality learning opportunities despite financial constraints.

Vocational Training: We are committed to empowering students with practical skills through our vocational training programs. Our curriculum includes training in traditional crafts such as Silai (Sewing), Kadhai (embroidery), and Bunai (knitting). These programs are designed to equip students with valuable skills that are in demand, promoting self-sufficiency and economic independence. This initiative not only enhances their ability to contribute to their households and communities but also opens doors to potential entrepreneurial opportunities in the future.

Free Transportation to Students: In partnership with the LIC Foundation, we offer free transportation to students through a dedicated school bus service. This initiative ensures that all students, particularly those from remote or underprivileged areas, have reliable and safe access to education. By significantly reducing the financial burden on families, the transportation service promotes higher attendance rates and better educational outcomes.

Support for Divyang Students: Our commitment to inclusive education is reflected in our support for divyang (differently-abled) students. We currently provide full coverage of school fees and free transportation for 7 divyang students, ensuring they receive the support needed to thrive academically and socially. The transportation service, supported by the LIC Foundation, guarantees safe and comfortable travel to and from school. By offering this comprehensive support, we aim to remove barriers to education and create an environment where every student, regardless of physical abilities, has the opportunity to succeed.

23 Capacity building of community

PARAS Foundation is dedicated to community development through comprehensive capacity building initiatives. Our efforts have included a range of training programs designed to empower farmers, Nari Sangh leaders, women, and adolescent girls.

For farmers, we organized 320 online training sessions focused on advanced agricultural techniques, water-saving practices, water resource management, tree plantation, and market assessment. These sessions saw participation from 7,350 farmers, with 1,113 successfully adopting the new techniques. Notably, 5,015 women joined these sessions, underscoring our commitment to gender-inclusive capacity building in agriculture.

We also aimed to strengthen the leadership and management skills of Nari Sangh leaders by conducting two specialized training sessions for 120 participants. Topics included group management, record-keeping, and

leadership development. As a result, two Nari Sangh groups have launched operations and established effective record-keeping practices.

In addition, we held five training programs for rural women under the Nari Sangh initiative. These sessions covered women's rights, leadership development, Nari Sangh management, and various government schemes such as PMAY, JSY, MNREGA, PDS, MKNY, GPDP, and pension. With 122 Nari Sangh members participating, these programs have empowered women to advocate for their entitlements, including work, food, and health rights. Consequently, 1,182 women applied for different schemes, accelerating the realization of their entitlements.

For adolescent girls, we provided regular weekly training sessions to 81 participants, focusing on vocational skills, safety, and hygiene. All 81 girls completed training in beautician skills, which has enhanced their prospects for self-employment and economic independence.

Through these diverse capacity-building initiatives, PARAS Foundation is committed to empowering individuals and communities, fostering sustainable development, and enhancing the overall quality of life.

24 Extension of People's institution

PARAS Foundation is deeply committed to the extension of people's institutions as a fundamental element of our sustainable development strategy. We recognize that true and lasting empowerment occurs when individuals are equipped with the necessary skills, confidence, and control over resources, enabling them to manage their own institutions and discover innovative ways to drive progress within their communities.

A key initiative in this regard is the establishment of Nari Sanghs, which are women's collectives operating at both village and block levels. These groups provide a crucial platform for women to come together, share their concerns, advocate for their rights, and assert their entitlements. By participating in Nari Sanghs, women are empowered to actively engage in decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities, contributing to greater gender equality and social justice. These collectives are instrumental in fostering a sense of community solidarity, creating a supportive environment where women can collectively work toward overcoming challenges and achieving meaningful empowerment.

In addition to Nari Sanghs, PARAS Foundation has also established Farmer Resource Centres (FRCs), Block Resource Centres (BRCs), and Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs) to serve the agricultural community at the village level. These centres act as vital hubs where farmers can access essential agricultural inputs, technologies, and knowledge to adopt sustainable farming practices. By providing resources such as high-quality seeds, organic fertilizers, and efficient irrigation techniques, the Farmer Resource Centres enable farmers to significantly enhance their productivity, make optimal use of available resources, and implement environmentally friendly agricultural methods. The BRCs, in particular, play a critical role in supporting communities with entitlement realization, ensuring that individuals are aware of and can access the government schemes and benefits they are entitled to. This includes assistance with documentation, application processes, and follow-ups, thereby bridging the gap between policy and practice at the grassroots level.

Beyond resource provision, these centres also serve as platforms for capacity building, fostering collaboration, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and best practices among farmers, which is critical for the ongoing development and sustainability of their agricultural enterprises. Through the strategic extension of community-based organizations (CBOs) like Nari Sanghs, Farmer Resource Centres, and Block Resource Centres, PARAS Foundation is laying the groundwork for the creation of sustainable structures that ensure the long-term success of our development initiatives. We firmly believe that by empowering individuals and communities with the skills, resources, and ownership necessary to manage these institutions, we are

fostering self-reliance, resilience, and the capacity to navigate and overcome future challenges. This approach not only enhances the immediate impact of our interventions but also supports the creation of enduring pathways toward progress, prosperity, and social equity within the communities we serve.

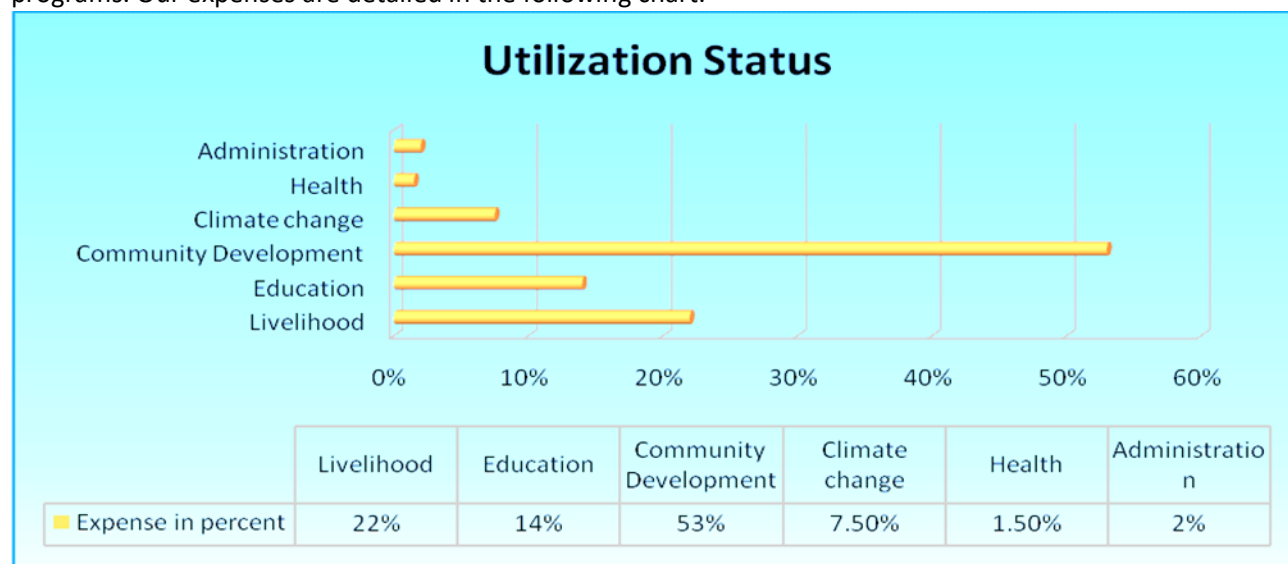
25 Accountability and Transparency

At PARAS Foundation, we prioritize accountability and transparency as the cornerstones of our financial operations. Upholding the highest standards of integrity and openness is crucial to building and maintaining trust with our stakeholders. Our commitment to these principles is reflected in the following key practices:

- A. **Internal Audit:** To ensure financial integrity, PARAS Foundation engages an independent, external agency to conduct regular internal audits. These audits thoroughly assess our compliance with all relevant regulations, identify areas for potential improvement, and provide actionable recommendations to enhance our financial management processes. The insights gained from these audits help us to continuously refine our practices and maintain a strong foundation of financial responsibility.
- B. **Budgeting and Control:** We maintain a rigorous budgeting and control system, essential for the effective management of our financial resources. Each activity and project within the foundation has a dedicated budget, which is meticulously prepared and submitted separately to our donors as required. Our senior management and finance teams closely monitor these budgets, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and that we remain in strict compliance with our financial plans. This diligent oversight helps us to achieve our organizational goals while maintaining fiscal discipline.
- C. **Reporting:** Timely and accurate financial reporting is central to our commitment to transparency. Each month, we conduct comprehensive reviews of our financial reports to identify any discrepancies or inconsistencies. This regular review process is critical in maintaining the accuracy of our financial records and allows us to make informed decisions based on reliable data. By ensuring that our reports are both precise and timely, we can effectively communicate our financial status to stakeholders and reinforce our dedication to transparency.
- D. **Donor Compliance:** Meeting the reporting and compliance requirements of our donors is a priority at PARAS Foundation. We ensure that all financial transactions and activities are aligned with the specific guidelines and regulations set forth by our funding partners. This commitment not only fosters transparency but also strengthens our partnerships with donors, reinforcing their confidence in our ability to responsibly manage the resources they provide.
- E. **Stakeholder Engagement:** We actively engage with our stakeholders, including donors, beneficiaries, and the broader community, to promote transparency and accountability. By providing regular updates on our financial performance, impact assessments, and resource utilization, we ensure that our stakeholders are well-informed about our operations. We also encourage feedback and are committed to addressing any concerns regarding our financial practices. This open dialogue helps to build trust and ensures that our stakeholders remain confident in our financial stewardship.
- F. **Commitment to Continuous Improvement:** PARAS Foundation remains dedicated to upholding the highest standards of accountability and transparency. We continuously strive to improve our financial management processes, strengthen internal controls, and ensure the responsible and transparent utilization of resources. By doing so, we aim to build and maintain the trust of our stakeholders as we work towards achieving our mission of creating positive social change.

26 Financial Performance and Status:

For the financial year 2023-24, PARAS Foundation successfully mobilized a total of Rs. 35,41,485.10 from various sources, including donations, grants, and other funding streams. These funds have been strategically allocated across different sectors to maximize impact and ensure the effective implementation of our programs. Our expenses are detailed in the following chart.



27 Our visitors

Throughout the year, PARAS Foundation had the privilege of hosting esteemed visitors from various organizations and institutions. These visits offered valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and partnership strengthening. We are deeply grateful for the support and guidance received from these individuals and organizations. Notable visitors include:

Representatives from Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore: Representatives from the Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore, visited to explore collaboration and share best practices in rural development and education. This visit strengthened our efforts to provide quality education and promote gender equity in rural communities.

Deputy Director of Agriculture, Ayodhya: The visit from the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Ayodhya, provided valuable insights into agricultural practices and policies. This visit helped us align our initiatives with government strategies and deepen our collaboration with the agriculture department.

Program Officer from ChildFund India: The visit by the Program Officer from ChildFund India facilitated the exchange of ideas on climate change and organizational capacity strengthening. This visit enhanced our understanding of climate-friendly agricultural approaches and reinforced our commitment to empowering women in the communities.

Scientist from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Masaudha: The visit by a scientist from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Masaudha, brought expertise in agricultural research and extension services. This interaction allowed us to exchange knowledge on innovative farming techniques and enhance our training programs for farmers.

Additional Development Officer - Agriculture: The visit by the Additional Development Officer from the Agriculture department underscored the government's recognition of our work. This visit allowed us to discuss future collaborations and explore further support for promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Chief Manager Finance from PANI Sansthan: The visit by the Chief Manager Finance from PANI Sansthan highlighted the importance of finance management and administration. This visit facilitated discussions on finance-related initiatives and strengthened our efforts in promoting sustainable financial management practices.

These visits from esteemed individuals and organizations have been instrumental in shaping our programs, fostering collaborations, and advancing our mission of empowering communities. We are thankful for their support and look forward to continued engagement in the future.

28 Photographs







AKTA SINGH
SECRETARY
01/05/2024
PARAS FOUNDATION