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OPINION

Having closely observed development initiatives in Pakyong District, I sincerely appreciate the commendable work of Citizens Foundation under HRDP–SIMANA Sikkim, supported by HDFC Parivartan, in strengthening rural livelihoods. The newly inaugurated District-Level Handloom Centre is a noteworthy initiative that promotes skill development, women-led enterprises, and sustainable income generation through tailoring, stitching, knitting, and allied activities. I extend my best wishes to the entire team for their continued efforts toward community empowerment and inclusive development in Pakyong District.

Bidhya Biswakarma,

Chairperson, Department of Cooperatives
Government of Sikkim



FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK



Wishing you a very happy and fulfilling New Year. As we begin 2026, I invite you to go through the enclosed newsletter, which brings together inspiring glimpses of our work across communities—from promoting health, hygiene, and disease prevention, to strengthening financial literacy, empowering women with livelihood skills, and honouring the vital role of farmers. These initiatives, spread across Meghalaya, Sikkim, Jharkhand, and Bihar, reflect our shared commitment with partners and communities to build resilience, awareness, and sustainable livelihoods at the grassroots. I hope this edition offers you a meaningful snapshot of our collective efforts and the impact we continue to create together.

Mr. Ganesh Reddy

Founder & CEO, Citizens Foundation | Secretary, UN GCNI

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES WITH KNOWLEDGE FOR A HEALTHIER TOMORROW AT RI BHOI, MEGHALAYA



Citizens Foundation successfully organized an **Awareness Camp on Disease Prevention and the Impact of Early**

Marriage at Ummat Village, RiBhoi, Meghalaya, with the support of SBI Foundation.

The session emphasized the importance of clean surroundings to prevent diseases like malaria and dengue, and highlighted the serious health and social consequences of early marriage for young mothers and their children. With the active participation of **123 community members**, the camp served as a meaningful platform for learning, dialogue, and collective commitment toward a healthier and safer community.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the medical professionals, community leaders, and villagers for their enthusiastic participation and support.



FINANCIAL AWARENESS TODAY, FINANCIAL SECURITY TOMORROW AT SIKKIM



HDFC Bank CSR, HRDP SIMANA Sikkim, in partnership with Citizens Foundation, successfully organized a vibrant **Financial Literacy Awareness Programme at Maney Dara Ward**. The initiative was carried out in collaboration with the **Ward Development Society, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and the Centre for Financial Literacy**.

The programme was graced by the presence of Ward Panchayat Ms. Padma Thakuri, CLF Cluster Manager Ms. Pramila Sharma, SRLM Rhenock Block officials, the HRDP-SIMANA team, HDFC Bank representatives, the WDS President, SHG members, and local community residents. The sessions simplified important government schemes such as **PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, and Atal Pension Yojana**, along with practical guidance on **saving habits, banking services, financial planning, and fraud prevention**. Together, we are fostering a **financially aware and confident community**, with a strong focus on **empowering women to make informed financial decisions**.

EMPOWERING WOMEN WITH SKILLS THAT CREATE INCOME AND INDEPENDENCE AT KHUNTI, JHARKHAND



Under the **Integrated Village Development Program (IVDP)**, supported by **Citizens Foundation and LTIMindtree Foundation**, a **Women's Tailoring and Stitching Training**

Center is being run at **Ghunsuli Panchayat Bhawan, Karra Block** to promote sustainable livelihoods and economic empowerment of rural women.

The center currently operates **two batches of 12 women each** from nearby villages, providing hands-on training in **garment cutting, machine handling, stitching, and alteration work**. Some trainees have already started taking local stitching orders, earning **supplementary income alongside training**.



The initiative is strengthening women's financial participation, reducing dependence on external tailors, and laying the foundation for **home-based tailoring enterprises**, with plans to further enhance skills and market linkages.



HONOURING THE HANDS THAT FEED THE NATION

celebrating farmers and strengthening rural livelihoods – Pakyong, Sikkim



Under the **HRDP-SIMANA Sikkim Project**, **Citizens Foundation**, with the support of **HDFC Bank Parivartan**, proudly celebrated **Kisan Diwas** on **23 December 2025** at **Lingtam, Rongli**. The programme honoured the invaluable contributions of farmers to rural livelihoods and sustainable agricultural development.

The event saw active participation from **Panchayat representatives and project leadership**, reflecting strong community collaboration. An engaging **agriculture-based quiz competition** helped enhance farmers' knowledge and awareness, while the distribution of **appreciation gifts** encouraged and motivated participants. The celebration reinforced the message of continued support for farmers, highlighted key agricultural challenges, and showcased **HDFC Bank Parivartan's commitment to empowering farming communities and strengthening grassroots agriculture in Sikkim**.

BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES THROUGH CLEANLINESS, AWARENESS, AND COLLECTIVE ACTION – BANKA, BIHAR



The **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan camp**, organized by **Citizens Foundation**, was successfully conducted at the **Community Hall of Dumaria Village**, reinforcing the importance of cleanliness and preventive healthcare at the grassroots level.

The programme was formally inaugurated by the **Honorable Mukhiya** through a ribbon-cutting ceremony, marking a strong community commitment toward a cleaner and healthier village.

The camp saw active participation from **202 community members**, including **174 women and 28 men**, reflecting widespread engagement and ownership. With the support of **SBI Foundation's Sanjeevani Clinic on Wheels**, the initiative delivered key messages on sanitation, hygiene practices, and disease prevention in **Banka district, Bihar**.



Interactive sessions encouraged dialogue and practical understanding of maintaining clean surroundings and adopting healthy daily habits. The programme not only advanced the objectives of the **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** but also strengthened community awareness, responsibility, and collaboration—laying the foundation for sustainable health and well-being in Dumaria village.

CASE STUDY



DISTRICT-LEVEL HANDLOOM CENTRE, LAPTHANG VILLAGE, PAKYONG DISTRICT, SIKKIM

Project Overview: The District-Level Handloom Centre at Lapthang Village was established to strengthen rural livelihoods, preserve traditional skills, and promote women-led economic development. Implemented under the HRDP-SIMANA Sikkim Project, the centre serves as a common facility hub for tailoring, stitching, knitting, sheep wool processing, and allied vocational activities.

The initiative responds to livelihood disruptions faced by rural artisans, particularly women, during the COVID-19 pandemic, by enabling collective production, skill enhancement, and market-oriented livelihood opportunities.



Key Interventions:

- ✓ Mobilization of 24 artisans (21 women, 3 men) into the Jagriti Tailoring Group
- ✓ Skill training in garment stitching, traditional attire, school uniforms, bags, and sanitary pads
- ✓ Infrastructure development of a Ground + 1 floor Handloom Centre (FY 2024-25)
- ✓ Equipment support, including advanced sewing, embroidery, interlock, and button machines
- ✓ Seed fund support for raw material procurement and uninterrupted production
- ✓ Production linkages through government school uniform orders and private markets

Impact at a Glance:

- ✓ 24 artisans empowered, with enhanced technical and entrepreneurial skills
- ✓ Increased and diversified income opportunities through collective production
- ✓ Improved productivity and quality standards using modern equipment
- ✓ Strengthened women's economic participation and leadership within SHGs
- ✓ Reduced livelihood vulnerability and dependence on seasonal migration
- ✓ Establishment of a district-level hub for handloom and handicraft promotion

Long-Term Outcomes: The Tailoring Unit secured a government order from the Government of Sikkim for stitching school uniforms valued at approximately ₹8 lakh, marking a significant milestone in its operational growth. Beyond institutional orders, the centre is actively engaged in producing traditional attire of the Nepali, Bhutia, Lepcha, and Gurung communities, thereby contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage while creating sustainable, skill-based livelihood opportunities for women.

This achievement reflects increasing trust in the centre's quality, reliability, and production capacity, and represents a meaningful step towards women's empowerment, sustainable income generation, and inclusive livelihood development under the HRDP-SIMANA Sikkim initiative of Citizens Foundation, supported by HDFC Parivartan.

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CITIZENS FOUNDATION

Content: Knowledge Management Team

Editor: Priya Barla & Kajal Kumari

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