



RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



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INTRODUCTION

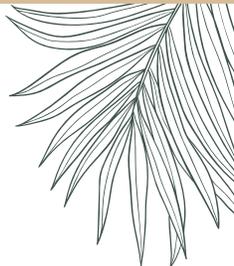
The Rural Development Council (RDC), established in 2002, is dedicated to uplifting Adivasi and Dalit communities in Tamil Nadu, with a focus on women and children at risk of social and economic marginalization.

This year, we strengthened our impact across Krishnagiri and Kanchipuram districts through initiatives in healthcare access, sustainable livelihoods, women's empowerment, and inclusive mental health care. Key programs included mobile medical units, NTFP-based livelihood training, and the Home Again project in partnership with The Banyan, promoting community-based living for individuals with mental health needs.

We are grateful to our partners, supporters, and field teams for their continued commitment. Together, we move forward in building resilient, inclusive communities.



RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL





MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADER

I am honored to present the Annual Report for the fiscal year 2024–2025, highlighting the meaningful progress and achievements of our welfare initiatives. Over the past year, our work has been dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and economic well-being of communities in the Thally and Kelamangalam blocks of Krishnagiri district.

A key priority has been empowering tribal communities by raising awareness about the commercial potential of forest produce. We provided extensive training in value addition, packaging, and marketing, while also facilitating access to relevant government schemes, all aimed at fostering sustainable livelihoods.

In parallel, we implemented a range of child-focused programs designed to support the all-round development of children, helping them thrive and reach their full potential. These efforts have led to significant outcomes, including improved access to healthcare for women and children and support for over 1,200 young women to experience safe and healthy childbirth.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our donors, government partners, healthcare professionals, grassroots organizations, and all our well-wishers. Your continued support and encouragement are instrumental in our mission and enable us to extend our impact year after year.

My deepest appreciation also goes to our board members, dedicated staff, and committed field volunteers, whose tireless efforts and passion drive the success and expansion of our programs.



With sincere gratitude
K. GOWRI
SECRETARY



ABOUT US

The Rural Development Council is a registered non-profit organization committed to the upliftment and enhancement of tribal communities, specifically focusing on the Dalit community and mentally ill patients in wallajabad, Kanchipuram district and Irular Adivasi communities in Denkanikottai, Krishnagiri district. These marginalized communities have historically lacked access to basic amenities. Our primary objective is to empower women and children within these communities, recognizing their heightened vulnerability to exploitation and the denial of basic human rights. Despite the existence of government schemes designed for their welfare, a lack of awareness often hinders their access to these initiatives. Through our initiatives, we actively work to inform and encourage them to avail themselves of the social schemes implemented for their benefit by the government.

In addition to raising awareness about government schemes, our organization conducts programs aimed at fostering sustainable development in areas such as livelihood, health, and literacy. We are dedicated to equipping these communities with the knowledge and skills needed to exercise their rights, ensuring they have equal opportunities in society. Our long-term vision extends beyond immediate improvements, aiming to bring about a transformative change in the communities we inhabit. Through our efforts, we aspire to empower them to lead fulfilling lives with the confidence to navigate and contribute effectively to society.

VISION

RDC envisions an egalitarian society where indigenous Adivasi communities and Dalits live with dignity, self-identity, & secure livelihoods. We advocate for their access to customary rights over forests and lands and the realization of human rights, particularly for children and women in socio-economic, cultural, and political spheres.

MISSION

RDC is committed to facilitate the empowerment process of the most deplorable social groups of adivasis and dalits towards establishment of Self Governance, Ownership and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, with emphasis on People Centered Sustainable Development, micro action research for evidence-based advocacy, revival of traditional knowledge and practices and, collective actions to protect forest and natural resources



Healthcare
Support



HEALTHCARE

SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Tribal Medical Officer and the Rural Development Council (RDC) have been actively involved in a variety of public health initiatives aimed at improving healthcare access and outcomes in underserved communities. One of their key missions is the elimination of Sickle Cell Anemia through school-based screening programs for children in grades 6 to 12, helping identify carriers of Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Disease. Under the RMNCH+A strategy—Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health and Nutrition—RDC provides antenatal and postnatal care, as well as care for newborns, children, and adolescents.

The organization participates in the Nikshay programme by identifying and referring suspected tuberculosis cases for detection. They also manage non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through regular screening and medication for hypertension and diabetes. RDC conducts fever camps, provides health education, and plays a vital role in delivering healthcare services to tribal communities across 125 villages. Since 2002, with support from the National Health Mission, RDC has operated a mobile medical unit staffed with doctors, medical personnel, and lab technicians to serve remote areas in the Thally and Kelamangalam blocks.

Collaborating with Primary Health Care centers, RDC offers free antenatal and postnatal health check-ups and screens community people for blood pressure, glucose, and hemoglobin levels. Through programs like the Nutrition Mela, they distribute nutritious supplements and raise awareness about government health schemes. Special medical camps, including breast and uterus screening for women, are also conducted periodically to address the broader spectrum of community health needs.

Hemoglobinopathy & Sickle Cell Screening Program – Annual Report (April 2024 – March 2025)

Operational Blocks: Thally & Kelamangalam

As part of our ongoing commitment to combat hereditary blood disorders, we conducted intensive screening and healthcare outreach across Thally and Kelamangalam blocks. The primary focus was on identifying and managing Hemoglobinopathies, including Beta Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Disease, through school-based screenings and public health interventions.

School-Based Hemoglobinopathy Screening – Thally Block

(Children aged 11–17 years)

HPLC Results:

- Total Children (Estimated): 11,000+
- Children Screened: 4,973
- NESTROFT Positive: 599
- Solubility Positive: 197
- Both Tests Positive: 73
- Samples Sent for HPLC: 869
- Borderline Beta Thalassemia Trait (BBTT): 50
- Beta Thalassemia Trait (BTT): 95
- Sickle Cell Trait (SCT): 40
- Sickle Cell Anemia: 1
- Other Variants: 8

This proactive school outreach helped in early identification and counseling of high-risk children, enabling preventive care and family screening.

| INDICATORS | THALLY BLOCK | KELAMANGALAM BLOCK |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Total OPD Consultations | 35,016 | 30,468 |
| Antenatal Care (ANC) Cases | 608 | 414 |
| Postnatal Care (PNC) Cases | 208 | 156 |
| Laboratory Tests Conducted | 30,236 | 25,476 |
| Referrals Made | 109 | 103 |
| Hemoglobin Tests (HB) | 7,396 | 5,300 |
| Fever Cases Treated | 532 | 412 |

Through integrated diagnostics and consistent follow-up, our team ensured early detection and referral, reducing health risks among vulnerable populations. This year's focused interventions have laid the groundwork for long-term management of genetic blood disorders in the region.





Livelihood support (HCLF)

LIVELIHOOD

SUPPORT INITIATIVES

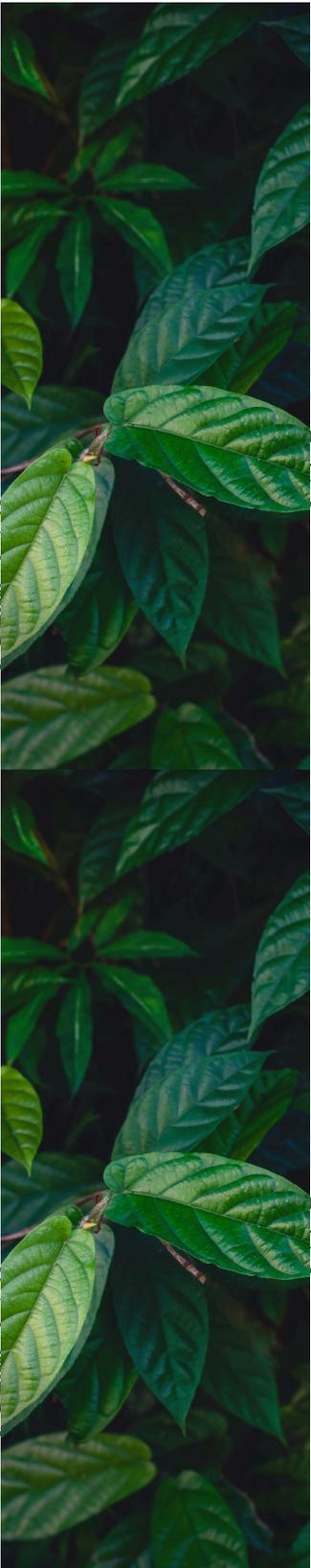
The Melagiri Tribal Enterprise has made remarkable progress in its mission to empower tribal communities and promote sustainable development. A major milestone was achieved on May 9, 2024, when a capacity-building training was conducted for staff and board members. This session, led by Mr. Karnan Kamaraj—an expert in tribal development—focused on enhancing leadership skills, organizational development, and effective project implementation. Building on this momentum, an important partnership was established on May 15 through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Forest Department of Hosur to launch the Eco-Shop, a key initiative aimed at promoting tribal products and eco-friendly practices.

To broaden their knowledge and build peer connections, members of the community participated in an exposure visit to the Talavadi Adivasi Munetra Sangam from May 17–18. This visit provided valuable insights into best practices and success stories in tribal enterprise development. As part of scaling up operations, essential machinery was procured on July 10 to strengthen production capabilities. A specialized training program on value-added honey products was conducted on June 18, aimed at increasing market value and income generation from local resources.

Strategic guidance continued with the visit of Mrs. Rakshmi on July 12, who provided key inputs on enterprise management, branding, and market linkages. The Melagiri Tribal Enterprise also gained visibility by participating in several high-profile exhibitions, including Agrofest, Mankani, and HCL Diwali events, showcasing their unique, handcrafted tribal products to a wider audience. With a confirmed order worth ₹23,125 from TRIFED, the acquisition of a new transport vehicle, ongoing audit evaluations, and active involvement of volunteers, the initiative is steadily progressing toward its goal of building a resilient, self-sustaining model for tribal livelihood. These efforts collectively reflect a strong commitment to community empowerment, economic independence, and long-term sustainability.



MELAGIRI NATURAL PRODUCTS

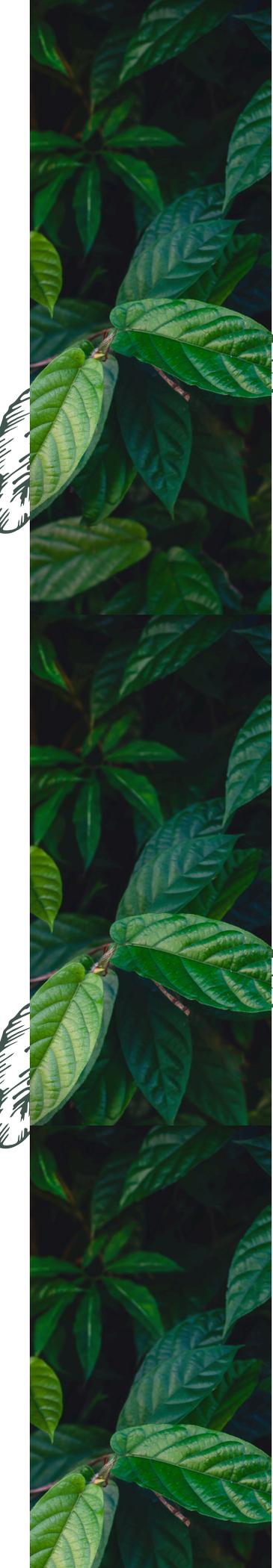


Melagiri Natural Products Private Limited (MNPPL) is a socially driven enterprise established in 2023 in Denkanikottai, located in the Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu. Supported by the HCL Foundation, Bangalore, MNPPL was initiated as part of a broader effort to foster sustainable livelihoods and community-led development. Emerging from the Thenkani Women's Federation, the company was created to empower the Irular tribal community and other marginalized farmers, transforming their grassroots initiative into a formal commercial entity committed to inclusive growth and social equity.

Operating under a unique community-owned model, MNPPL includes 200 tribal individuals and small-scale farmers as shareholders who actively engage in the company's operations and decision-making. Formally registered under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013, it functions as a not-for-profit enterprise, reinvesting its earnings into community welfare, capacity building, and sustainable development. By aligning commercial goals with social impact, MNPPL aims to serve as a replicable model for community-led economic transformation.

VISION:

Empowering Communities, Enriching Lives: Melagiri Natural Products Private Limited envisions a harmonious society where the aspirations of the marginalized, especially the Irular tribal community and farmers from other backward communities, are realized. We strive to create sustainable opportunities, foster economic growth, and nurture a spirit of inclusivity, thereby becoming a beacon of social transformation in the heart of Tamil Nadu.



MISSION:

At Melagiri Natural Products Private Limited, we are dedicated to promoting ethical and sustainable business practices while preserving the rich biodiversity of Denkanikottai, Krishnagiri district. Our mission is community empowerment by providing them with skill development, fair employment, and equitable profit-sharing opportunities, we aim to enhance their socio-economic status and create a strong foundation for their future generations and quality natural products. By leveraging traditional knowledge and modern technology, we create a range of products that not only enrich the lives of our consumers but also contribute to the economic growth of our local communities.

IMPACT OF MELAGIRI COMPANY:

- Communities can now explore various marketplaces with the support of Melagiri Company, including participation in exhibitions.
- Melagiri Company procures tribal products at rates 50% higher than middlemen.
- Employment in the region has increased by 63% during the harvesting season due to the company's operations.
- 80% of shareholders are now skilled in adding value to NTFPs.
- Household incomes have increased by 50% since the establishment of Melagiri Company.
- 60% of community members are now able to meet their basic needs independently, after given various exposure and capacity-building programs.
- Totally we have generated sale RS.3,95,154 with our small initiative
- After registering the company, the Tribal Welfare Department provided support funding for a storage unit and machinery.
- The HCL Foundation supported the initiative by providing a vehicle for marketing MNP company products.
- We are associated with TRIFED for ongoing marketing support.
- Several schools and colleges in Chennai have supported our initiative by allowing us to set up stalls on their campuses.
- We are currently supported by 100+ regular customers who consistently engage with and purchase from our initiative.



T. W. D Project

TRIBAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT PROJECT

The Tribal Welfare Development (TWD) project marked a significant beginning with its inauguration in the presence of Mr. Velmurugan, TAHDCO Manager of Krishnagiri. Following the launch, community and staff review meetings were conducted to align goals and responsibilities. A comprehensive baseline survey was completed, covering 120 tribal women beneficiaries, laying the groundwork for targeted interventions. As part of the capacity-building initiatives, tribal women were trained in honey value addition techniques to enhance the quality and market value of their produce. In parallel, the process to procure tamarind cake and packing machines was initiated to support diversified product development.

To strengthen brand visibility, an Ainthinai board was printed, and attractive, informative labels for forest-based products were designed. With the support of the Forest Department, an eco-shop was established to serve as a direct sales outlet for tribal products. The team actively participated in the Jigani exhibition in Bangalore, gaining exposure to wider markets and consumer preferences. Additionally, land was identified for setting up a future storage unit to streamline inventory and logistics. Preparations also began for participation in the upcoming Mankani exhibition in Krishnagiri to further promote the products and connect with new customer bases.

Strategic guidance continued with the visit of HCLF consultant Mrs. Rakshmi on July 12, who provided key inputs on enterprise management, branding, and market linkages. The Melagiri Tribal Enterprise also gained visibility by participating in several high-profile exhibitions, including Agrofest, Mankani, and HCL Diwali events, showcasing their unique, handcrafted tribal products to a wider audience. With a confirmed order worth ₹23,125 from TRIFED, the acquisition of a new transport vehicle, ongoing audit evaluations, and active involvement of volunteers, the initiative is steadily progressing toward its goal of building a resilient, self-sustaining model for tribal livelihood. These efforts collectively reflect a strong commitment to community empowerment, economic independence, and long-term sustainability.



E. C. R. C

EMERGENCY CARE

AND RECOVERY CENTRE (ECRC)

The Krishnagiri Emergency Care and Recovery Centre (ECRC) provides multidisciplinary, person-centered hospital-based care for homeless individuals experiencing mental health challenges, supporting their recovery and transition into stable housing and community living where they can lead meaningful lives. The initiative is a collaborative effort between The Banyan, National Health Mission funded by APF. 2. Located at the Old Government Hospital in Krishnagiri, the ECRC is a 20-bed facility that offers psychosocial care. The centre was officially inaugurated on July 3rd by Ms. K.M. Sarayu, IAS, District Collector of Krishnagiri.

The Krishnagiri ECRC team conducted 313 street outreach efforts and 42 Critical Time Interventions. Clients received training in yoga, health education, art and dance therapy, reading, gauze pad making, and culinary arts. The team celebrated national and cultural festivals with clients and organized outings to parks, temples, churches, and movies.

With the District Collector's support, five clients were reunited with their families. In total, 23 clients have been successfully reintegrated, with ongoing follow-up support.

FUNCTIONS OF ECRC

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Outreach | 313 |
| 2. | C.T.I | 42 |
| 3. | Community Sensitisation Program | 8 |
| 4. | Reintegration | 23 |

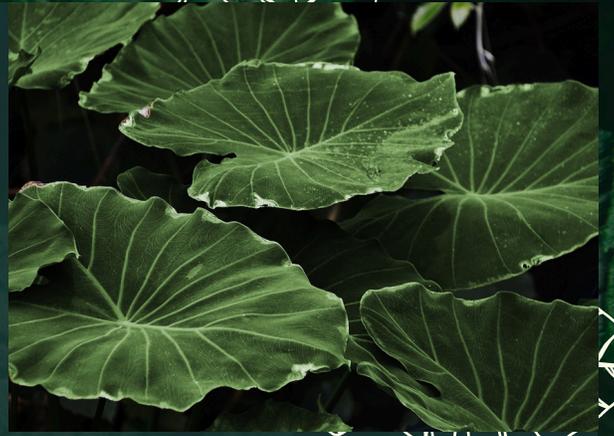




*Home
Again*

HOME AGAIN PROJECT

We are proud to partner with The Banyan in implementing the Home Again program in Kanchipuram district, an innovative and rights-based model designed to support individuals with mental health conditions to live independently within community settings. Together, we are redefining mental health care by shifting from institutionalization to inclusion, dignity, and autonomy.



Home Again offers a community-integrated, shared housing solution for persons recovering from psychosocial disabilities. Through this model, residents live in small groups, receive on-site clinical and psychosocial support, and participate in daily routines and decision-making—just like any other member of the community.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Inclusive Living:** Enabled community-based housing for individuals with mental health conditions, promoting independence and dignity.
- **Holistic Care:** Provided on-site clinical, psychosocial, and livelihood support to aid recovery and reintegration.
- **Women's Empowerment:** Supported several women in rebuilding their lives after long-term institutionalization or homelessness.
- **Community Integration:** Fostered local acceptance and reduced stigma through consistent community engagement.
- **Sustainable Impact:** Improved quality of life and long-term stability for residents within their community environments.



Care
project



CARE

PROJECT

- **Educational Support:** The project successfully supported the educational needs of 52 students from economically disadvantaged families.
- **New Enrollments:** After evaluating their financial and family circumstances, 15 new students were registered to receive educational assistance.
- **Parents' Meeting:** A meeting was organized to guide parents on procedures for withdrawing funds from the post office and making school payments. The session also emphasized the importance of active and responsible parenting. Approximately 40 parents attended.
- **Food Aid:** Two families facing severe financial hardship received food rations valued at Rs. 1,500 each.
- **Family Counseling:** At the mother's request, a counseling session was held with John's family. The single mother, dealing with the health issues of her differently-abled elder son, was also struggling with her younger son's (John's) behavior. Through mediated dialogue, both mother and son shared their concerns and reached a mutual understanding to work on resolving their issues.
- **Donor Visit:** A representative from Greijdanus, the funding organization, visited the project to better understand its impact and the living conditions of the beneficiary families. Additionally, four students from the organization visited the site to personally witness the positive changes brought about by the program in the lives of the students and their families.



DASRA

PROJECT

Unrestricted funding from Dasra has been instrumental in strengthening RDC's organizational foundation and driving long-term impact. It has enabled RDC to cover essential operational costs such as staff salaries, administrative overheads, and infrastructure, ensuring smooth day-to-day functioning. The support has also facilitated the hiring of skilled project staff and specialized talent, enhancing the organization's strategic direction and program execution.

Additionally, RDC has been able to upgrade and streamline internal systems across finance, monitoring and evaluation, and governance—critical for transparency, efficiency, and scaling impact. The flexibility of unrestricted funding has empowered RDC to bridge funding gaps between restricted grants without disruption.

It has also supported the strengthening of RDC's fundraising and communications strategy, enabling the organization to build new partnerships and amplify its voice in the development space. Dasra's support has empowered RDC to be more agile, responsive, and mission-focused, accelerating its journey towards systemic and sustainable change.

CONCLUSION

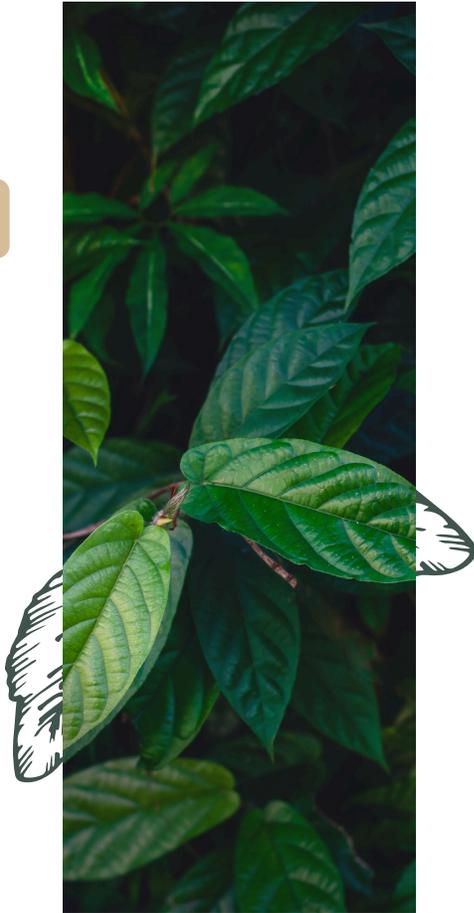
Over the past year, RDC has made meaningful strides in empowering tribal and marginalized communities through a wide range of targeted initiatives—from healthcare outreach and livelihood development to women’s entrepreneurship and market linkages. Programs like the Tribal Welfare Department (TWD) initiative and the HCLF Livelihood Project have laid a strong foundation for sustainable development, equipping tribal women with skills in processing and marketing non-timber forest products, facilitating the launch of eco-shops, and promoting income generation through strategic exhibitions and partnerships. Similarly, healthcare programs under the RMNCH+A strategy, Nikshay, and the Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission have brought essential services to remote villages, improving health outcomes and awareness across 125 tribal settlements.

These achievements have only been possible due to the unwavering support of our donor agencies—including HCL Foundation, MEM Foundation, National Health Mission, ACT, RIST, and others—whose contributions have enabled RDC to overcome geographic isolation and bring tribal voices to the attention of policymakers and officials. While the pace of progress is necessarily slow—due to low literacy levels, limited infrastructure, and the lingering socioeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic—RDC has continued to witness positive change on the ground.

The road ahead requires sustained collaboration, continued donor engagement, and a deepened commitment to inclusive development. As we look to the future, RDC reaffirms its dedication to empowering Adivasi and Dalit communities, ensuring they are not just participants in development but leaders in shaping their own futures. Together, with persistence and partnership, we can transform these efforts into lasting impact.



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THANK YOU



RDC

RURAL DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL



2024 - 2025