



Digital is more than value chain; it is most of all essential of any value chain. Today no value chain is complete without digital integration. Digital is a language, an essential infra, a necessary public infrastructure; and a centrifugal value chain to deliver all values through any value chain.

Osama Manzar, Founder-Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation

Ms. Chayarani Malakar: A Rural Entrepreneur Leading Change

Chayarani, a member of a SHG, expanded her business by selling hand-woven gamochas and mekhela chadars made by local women entrepreneurs. Observing her community's challenges, such as limited access to information services and markets, she connected with DEF. With DEF's training, she **integrated digital services into her business**, providing digital and financial literacy courses and market linkages.

In 2024, she secured a ₹200,000 loan under the Chief Minister Atmanirbhar Abhiyan scheme, **investing in her enterprise** to support rural women in the handloom industry. From earning mthly ₹3000 to now ₹30,000 Chayarani's story highlights how rural women can **break traditional barriers and become successful entrepreneurs with the right support.**



Digital Tools at the Core of Growth: Udyamini SkillBot & Mera App

More than 2,800 RWEs have engaged with tools like SkillBot for capacity building and Mera App for accessing government schemes. These platforms make knowledge accessible in local languages and offer self-paced learning on marketing, budgeting, and legal registration.

Inclusion of these platforms has led to faster business formalization, increased awareness, and digital confidence among first-time smartphone users in rural areas.

Exhibiting Confidence: RWEs Take the Spotlight at Trade Fairs

Over the past few months, Udyamini-supported women participated in **10+ exhibitions and fairs** across Assam and West Bengal. From showcasing products to interacting with real customers, these events provided **real market feedback and brand visibility.**

Collectively, RWEs recorded earnings of over **₹10 lakh**, many experiencing their **first-ever direct sales** outside their communities. These exhibitions, made possible through ecosystem partnerships, also built connections for future orders and collaborations.





Overview of Activities

Grassroots Tea Corporation (GTC) value chain reached **884 women** small tea growers (STGs) across **36 villages** in **Rongmongve**, Nilip, and Bokajan blocks. This quarter, **34** focus group discussions (FGDs) were held, resulting in the formation of **18** new clusters and the onboarding of **210** new Rural Women Entrepreneurs (RWEs).

With this, the number of active RWEs has grown to **858 across 75 functioning clusters**. These milestones highlight GTC's commitment to empowering women-led handcrafted tea enterprises.



Training and Capacity Building

In partnership with **Sagar Infotech**, five GTC value chain staff were trained on the **Karbi Tea digital app**. These individuals now support RWEs in using the app to track cultivation, processing, and expenses—enabling better quality control and transparency.

Focused sessions also introduced composting techniques, **organic pest control**, and regenerative agriculture to **enhance productivity** while preserving the environment. RWEs received field-based exposure to **NADEP** compost structures and other sustainable practices.



In Focus: A Story of Change

Jonaki Terangpi, from **Vophong Engjai** in **Rongmongve**, has become a symbol of grassroots transformation. Once dependent on her husband for all financial decisions, Jonaki is now leading a **12-member women's group** that runs a handcrafted green tea unit.

She has also implemented **organic composting** and **natural pest control**, maintaining land for **chemical-free cultivation**. Her success has sparked inspiration and independence among other women in her village.



Events and Celebrations

GTC value chain marked International Women's Day with 20 RWEs in Bangso Tisso, Nilip Block. The celebration focused on financial independence, leadership, and skill development.

The Annual Program Review Meeting was held in Golaghat on March 19–20, 2025. It served as a platform for reflection, strategy planning, and cross-team knowledge sharing—cementing our next phase of growth.

SwitchON Udyamini supporting RWE's reach financial independence through agriculture and allied actives



Regional Buyer–Seller Success

In Feb–Mar 2025, **SwitchON** hosted 2 major Buyer–Seller Meets in Nadia and Bankura, connecting **140+ RWEs** to renowned buyers like **Big Basket, Farmers Pride, and Biswa Bangla**.

These events led to **9 LOIs** and **₹2.55 Cr** in sales. RWEs showcased products ranging from millet mixes to tasar silk, with real-time buyer feedback on pricing, packaging, and quality—turning local talent into national suppliers.



Training to Transformation

More than **150 RWEs** attended advanced training sessions across both districts. From business model mapping and digital invoicing to **market surveys** and **eco-friendly dyeing**, these sessions built real skills.

In **Bankura**, RWEs mastered CAD tools and **sal-leaf** plate making. In **Nadia**, workshops on branding and accounting helped elevate women-led ventures toward formality and **financial strength**.



Sulochana's Story of Change

Sulochana Hansda from Garurbasa, Purulia, once struggled with market access. After training in millet farming and processing, she secured large orders at **Saras Mela** and international fairs. With doubled income, she now mentors other RWEs.

Her journey from marginal farming to market leader proves that skills, support, and access truly transform rural lives.



What's Next: April & Beyond

April will see on-ground handloom training in **Patrasayer**, millet innovation labs, and exposure visits to top producer units. A special focus will be placed on Udyam registration and digital tools to formalize RWEs.

With plans for expanding credit access, value-chain collaborations, and sustainable branding, SwitchON value chain is powering the next wave of rural women entrepreneurs.



Grameen Sahara Value Chain Joins as New Partner

February–March 2025 ushered in a new beginning for the Handloom Value Chain as Grameen Sahara Value Chain officially joined as the new implementing partner in the Udyamini Program. Field activities restarted in Assam’s **Kamrup** and **Goalpara** districts, aiming to reconnect with Rural Women Entrepreneurs (RWEs) who had experienced temporary program disruption.

To reinforce this transition, under the supervision of the **Project Manager, Nilav J. Gohain** new appointments were made— **Mandeep Baishya** as District Coordinator in Goalpara, and **Indrajit Kalita** in Kamrup. Their combined experience brings both strategic insight and local familiarity to the ground execution.

Grameen Sahara Value Chain immediately set the tone by **prioritizing field engagement and community trust-building**. These efforts signal not just a restart, but a stronger foundation for empowering women entrepreneurs through deeper partnerships and decentralized leadership.

Building Gender-Inclusive Leadership

A foundational online workshop on **gender inclusion** was conducted with Udyamini and Grameen Sahara teams. The training covered gender-sensitive entrepreneurship, communication strategies, and inclusive program design. The outcome?

Greater gender sensitivity among staff and more equitable implementation. This step ensures that the program truly centers the needs and voices of rural women at every stage of planning and delivery.



Reorienting RWEs for the Road Ahead

In **Chhayagaon, Assam**, a critical orientation meet with RWE leaders was held to explain the organizational transition. It created space for honest dialogue about previous challenges and future support plans.

An exposure visit to **Grameen Silk Producer Company** followed, inspiring RWEs with a working model of collective success. These engagements boosted confidence and prepared the ground for a series of field-level follow-ups across **Kamrup** and **Goalpara**.



TGT Udyamini Empowering RWE through Livestock Livelihood



Strengthening Linkages and Scaling Impact

March saw the beginning of local product sales by RWEs, supported by Grameen Sahara's outreach teams. Efforts are underway to connect entrepreneurs with institutional buyers and technical agencies.

In April, manuals will be distributed, baseline surveys will begin, and RWE groups will be formed. Community Resource Persons will support village implementation, ensuring the next phase drives real, scalable outcomes.



Empowering Through Exposure

In February 2025, the TGT2.0 North East team from Assam undertook a three-day exposure visit to The Goat Trust Value Chain Head Office in Lucknow. The visit aimed to enhance awareness of scalable models in the small livestock value chain. Pashu Sakhis, CLMs, and PMs interacted with experts, studied rural innovations, and explored packaging, pricing, and customer engagement strategies at the Swablambi Mahila Producer Company. The exposure visit inspired participants to replicate successful models in Assam, laying the groundwork for community-driven livestock-based enterprises with long-term impact.



Livestock Training for Women Entrepreneurs

In March 2025, TGT2.0 held a five-day training in Kamrup and Goalpara for 100 Rural Women Entrepreneurs (RWEs). The sessions focused on livestock production, preventive health, improved breeding, and business management.

RWEs also learned about government schemes and financial tools to help them launch viable goat-based enterprises.

Marketing strategies and practical planning exercises boosted their confidence and readiness.

The training received positive feedback from local leaders for its hands-on approach and its role in promoting sustainable livelihoods for women in the livestock sector.



Looking Ahead: Tools & Replication

Following the exposure visit and training programs, TGT2.0 will distribute printed livestock modules across Assam to support local implementation.

In April, village-level mentoring and demo sessions will begin, led by trained field facilitators. These sessions aim to guide women in setting up goat-rearing micro-enterprises.

The team's goal is to help launch 20 new businesses by May, creating pathways for women to build resilient and self-sustaining rural livelihoods.

Vrutti- Handholding Partners in MEL

Strengthening Partnerships & Tracking Progress

Between February and March 2025, Vrutti Value Chain MEL team finalized output indicators with all Udyamini Value Chain partners—DEF, TGT, GTC, and SwitchON—tailored for each program’s context.

This milestone ensures consistent progress tracking and impact measurement across diverse geographies. Grameen Sahara officially joined the program, and Vrutti is supporting their alignment within the broader MEL system to ensure smooth data integration and continued reporting accuracy.

The collaborative approach has laid the foundation for a robust, long-term evaluation framework that empowers both partners and grassroots leaders.

Dashboard Milestone & Data Innovation

As of 19th February 2025, partner-specific indicators were submitted to Vrutti Value Chain Data Science Team to develop the Udyamini Monitoring Dashboard—a modular and interactive platform designed to give partners real-time insights. Key features include tracking of trainings delivered, enterprises formed, and jobs created, alongside deeper metrics around income growth and women’s empowerment.

The dashboard will also feature drill-down partner views, narrative case studies, and trend analysis for strategic planning. Built on Udyamini’s Theory of Change, this dashboard aims to bridge quantitative results with qualitative change, providing evidence to strengthen both policy influence and field-level execution.

What’s Next: Grounding Data in Stories

April 2025 will see the release of the beta version of the dashboard to partner teams for testing and refinement. In May, Vrutti Value Chain will conduct data validation field visits in Assam and West Bengal—cross-verifying dashboards against on-ground realities.

A key emphasis moving forward is the human side of data—unpacking how income shifts, mobility, and self-confidence unfold in rural women’s lives. The goal is to ensure numbers reflect nuanced stories of transformation, and that the Udyamini ecosystem stays deeply responsive to the voices of its women entrepreneurs.

