



An Impact Assessment Report of the Integrated Village Development Program II



Implemented by Himmotthan



Study Conducted by

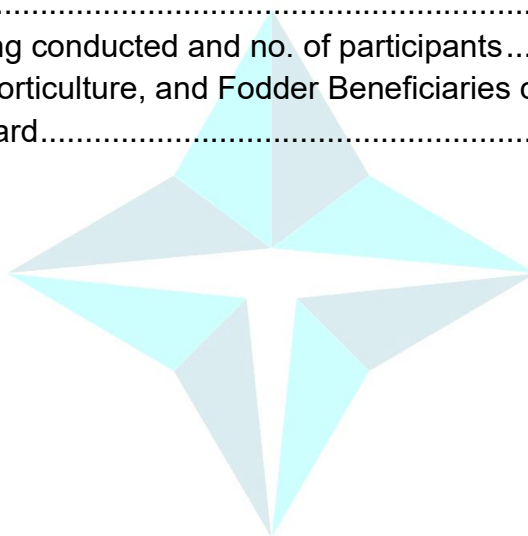


Social Audit Network
2024 – 2025

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TITAN
COMPANY

1. Background

The Integrated Village Development Program (IVDP) aims to uplift rural and underprivileged communities by addressing key socio-economic challenges. The programme follows an integrated approach to enhance villagers' lives by leveraging local resources.

Covering 60 villages in three blocks of Tehri district (Chamba, Jaripani, and Thauldhar), the programme focuses on livelihood improvement, water resource development, agricultural innovation, health interventions, and economic growth. Activities are tailored based on village-specific needs from baseline surveys.

Implemented by TITAN in collaboration with the Himmotthan Foundation, IVDP emphasises sustainable development through water management, livelihood enhancement, education, health, community strengthening, and environmental sustainability. It aims to create resilient, self-sustaining communities while preserving the region's cultural and ecological heritage.

The key components of the programme are:



2. Need for the Programme

The need for the Integrated Village Development Programme (IVDP) in Uttarakhand arose from the distinct socio-economic challenges of the region, including its hilly terrain, scattered population, and limited access to basic services. Many rural communities struggled with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and underemployment, compounded by inadequate infrastructure and a lack of sustainable livelihood opportunities. Additional issues such as limited access to clean water leading to poor health among target beneficiaries. These challenges were exacerbated by the region's vulnerability to natural disasters like landslides and flash

floods, highlighting the need for resilient systems to withstand environmental shocks. Through a holistic approach, the IVDP sought to empower local communities, promote self-sufficiency, and enhance the quality of life, ultimately fostering sustainable development and social equity in the region.

The project began by identifying 20 villages through a baseline survey, focusing on areas with significant migration patterns that often leave women behind as men seek work elsewhere. Many families have members employed in various sectors, including hospitality, while women tend to stay home due to health issues. Some have even migrated to newly developed cities in Uttarakhand and even to countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Germany. Stories from older residents reveal their past experiences working in countries like Israel and New Zealand, primarily in hospitality roles. To address the challenges of migration, the project emphasises livelihood programs for women, many of whom own small farms yet rely on traditional single crop farming methods, primarily cultivating wheat and potatoes.

3. Objectives of the Study

Titan partnered with Himmotthan Foundation for the implementation of Integrated Village Development Programme in Uttarakhand.

Titan engaged SAN India to conduct a comprehensive impact assessment of these projects for the period of 2023-2024. The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the implementation process, measuring the achievements, and assess the relevance of the projects to the targeted communities. The primary goal is to provide insights into the effectiveness of the IVDP project and its long-term benefits to the communities served. The assessment determined the socio-economic and environmental impact on the targeted villages and evaluated the sustainability of the project's benefits, offering recommendations for future similar interventions.

4. Methodology & Scope

The SAN team comprising of Ms. Latha Suresh and Marie Banu, Social Auditors of SAN India conducted the field visits to various locations as part of the assessment process.

The team employed a multifaceted approach to ensure a thorough evaluation of the project. An initial virtual call with the implementing partners' teams were held to finalise the plan and timelines for these consultations.

The team visited 7 villages (Jaripani, Bhavan, Chalieich, Chopriyal Gaon, Kith, Sabli, Bhamorikhal, Sinwalipatal, and Jhakogi) and held consultations with project beneficiaries to assess their involvement, the project's effectiveness, and its impact on their daily lives. Observation of NRM activities and review of secondary data was also done as part of the study.

A participatory methodology was adopted to gather information from school children and teachers to review the entry level programmes.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Discussions with five stakeholder groups across villages. These discussions, guided by a FGD questionnaire, provided qualitative insights into the project's implementation and outcomes.

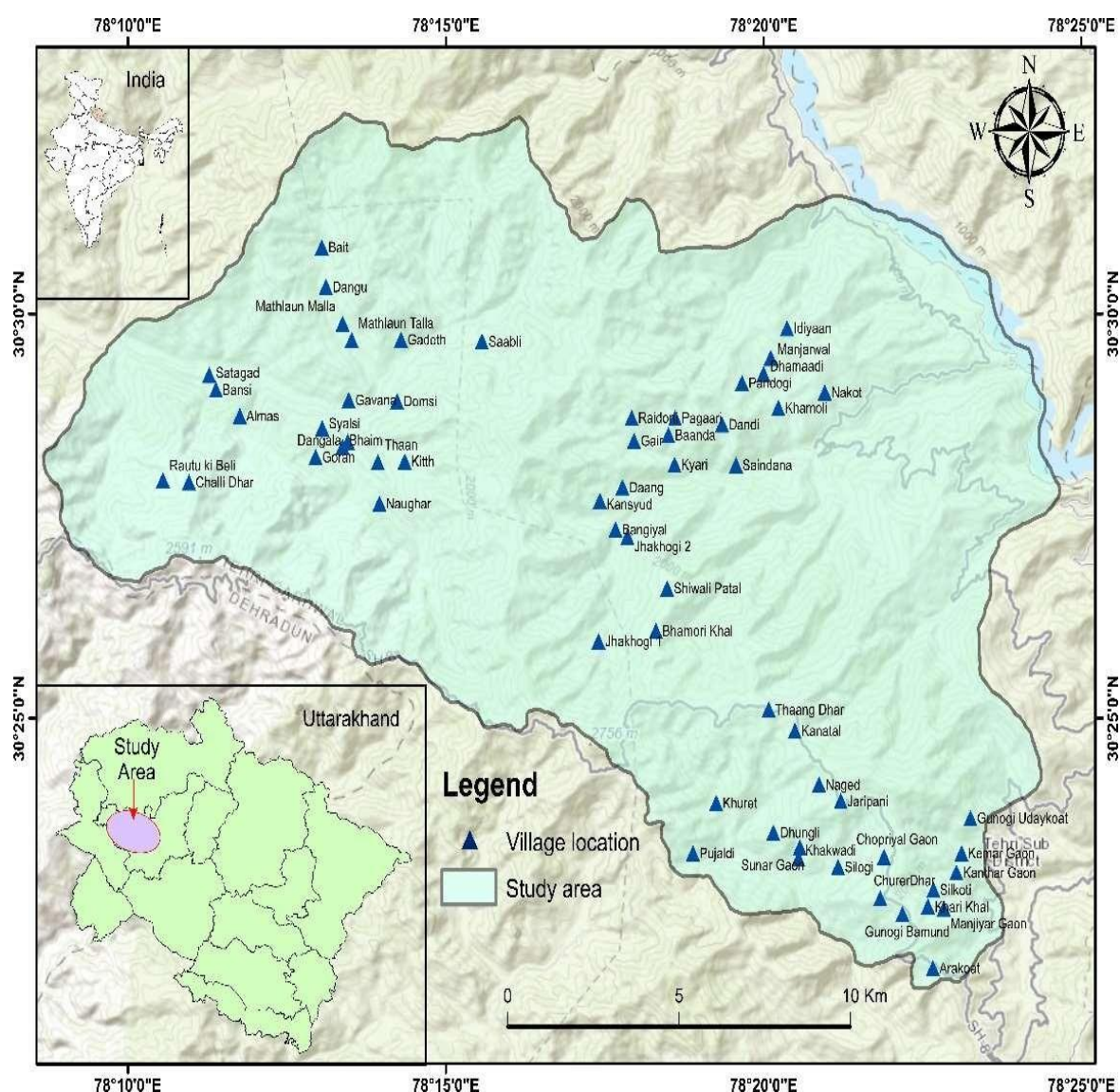
Direct Interviews: In-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including project implementers, beneficiaries, farmers, villagers, and experts, were done to gain a detailed understanding of the project's achievements and challenges.

Observation: Observation of the NRM activities and the management of the water resource areas was done to assess the changes and improvements in the area. The shifts in agricultural practices and productivity were done to understand the project's impact on farming methods and outputs.

The scope of the study is for the period 2023-2024.



5. Geographical coverage



The Integrated Village Development Project specifically targeted 60 villages in the **Thauldar, Jaripani, and Bhawan clusters** of Tehri district, focusing on strengthening rural communities, particularly women, and improving livelihoods.

6. Stakeholders

Details of stakeholders consulted	Villages visited	Nos.	Methodology
Farmers (NRM beneficiaries)	Saabli	3	Direct Interview
Orchard beneficiaries		3	Direct Interview

Women SHG members	Kith Siwali Pathak Chalieich, Jhakogi	19 14 45	Focused Group Discussion
Water User Group members	Chalieich, Jhakogi	11	Focused Group Discussion
Suvidha Kendra	Bamorikhal	3	Direct Interview
E-seva centre	Bamorikhal	2	Direct Interview
Dairy centre	Bamorikhal	1	Direct Interview
School Playground	Jaripani and Bhavan	2	Observation and Interview

7. Report on Performance

The Integrated Village Development Programme (IVDP) is a comprehensive initiative designed to promote holistic development in rural communities across Uttarakhand. Implemented by **TITAN** in partnership with the **Himmothan Foundation**, the programme aims to address the multifaceted challenges faced by these communities, fostering sustainable growth and improving the overall quality of life.

The IVDP focuses on holistic development, integrating elements across several themes:

Water: Ensuring water availability and management.

Community Infrastructure in School: Library and Playground

Livelihood: Creating sustainable income sources

Micro-entrepreneurship: Encouraging small businesses.

The programme began with consultations with Gram Pradhan and villagers to discuss interventions and obtain a 'No Objection Certificate.' Baseline surveys were conducted to assess community needs, followed by the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for women to facilitate information sharing. Monthly SHG meetings addressed project components and generated demand based on local needs. Feasibility analyses and technical reports were prepared before implementing the activities, and the project concluded with thorough documentation and final reporting.

7.1. Water Natural Smart Villages

The promotion of Water Natural Smart Villages is a core component of the Integrated Village Development Program. The activities under this programme were tailored to meet community and village-level needs, focusing on mobilising the community and raising awareness about natural resources.

The programme emphasises sustainable water practices, including the construction of rainwater harvesting systems, check dams, and the promotion of water natural smart villages through participatory planning and budgeting. This ensures reliable access to clean water, essential for both domestic use and agricultural activities.

Implementation Process of the Project

- *Identification of programme area*

The Himmotthan Foundation conducted a baseline study to assess the water needs of villages across the **Thauldar, Jaripani, and Bhawan clusters**. The study involved identifying and evaluating water sources at various levels, focusing on the following key aspects:

- Discharge Levels of Water:** The study analysed trends in water discharge levels from various sources over time to determine whether a decline has occurred. Seasonal and annual variations were assessed to identify long-term patterns of reduced water availability.
- Runoff:** The extent and rate of water runoff from sources in the region was assessed to investigate the contributing factors and the effects of runoff on water conservation and soil quality.
- Irrigation Needs:** The irrigation requirements of the agricultural community were done to assess whether the available water resources in the village were adequate. Seasonal needs, crop water demands, and challenges during water shortages were considered.
- Water Sources:** The water supply systems in each village were assessed to determine whether they rely on a single source, such as a river or borewell, or multiple sources, aiming to evaluate the reliability and sustainability of water availability.

The findings indicated that most of the selected villages in **Thauldar and Jaripani clusters** lie on the ridges of the mountains, resulting in low water discharge due to high runoff. In the **Thauldar**, drinking water was a significant issue for many villages, as there was a limited perennial supply to meet their needs.

In the **Bhawan block**, despite the presence of a sufficient perennial water source, water availability was inadequate for irrigation, highlighting the need for improved water management systems.

The list of 60 villages was compiled to validate the selection process, ensuring that drinking water schemes are not implemented in areas already covered by the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), as some habitations in the project area remain unreachable by JJM. (*JJM is a government initiative aimed at providing safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections to all rural households*). Priority was given to villages with low water discharge and high runoff for interventions.

- The baseline survey was followed by meetings with the Gram Pradhan (village head) and other key stakeholders at the village level, including local residents, farmers, and community leaders, to gather their insights and perspectives. These interactions helped identify specific needs, prioritise issues, and ensure the proposed interventions were aligned with the community's requirements and expectations.
- A pre-feasibility study was conducted to assess the baseline conditions of the village, and evaluate the technical, financial, and environmental feasibility of the potential interventions, ensuring their suitability for addressing the village's specific challenges.
- To facilitate communication and connect with community members, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Water User Groups (WUG) were formed. The entire village was then engaged in discussions regarding the activities proposed by these groups.
- After completing the social engagement phase, both technical and non-technical surveys were conducted to develop an implementation plan based on community demands.
- A proposal or 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC) meeting was held, which included the participation of SHGs, WUGs, Mahila Mangal Dal, and other active groups in the village.
- Technical reports were prepared using the 'J Form' and shared with the community for approval, followed by a signature process involving committee members.
- The project implementation began under the supervision of the committee, with support from the Himmotthan staff.
- The project concluded with a formal handover, comprehensive documentation, and the submission of final reports to Titan.

Spring shed Management employs methods like hydrogeology and water quality assessment to promote long-term sustainability, focusing on water conservation and harvesting surplus monsoon runoff to recharge groundwater reservoirs. It also mitigates land degradation caused by water erosion, which can lead to soil displacement, landslides, and damage to vegetation and agricultural land.

Under the spring shed intervention, several measures were carried out to enhance water retention and recharge.

- **Trenches**, which are shallow, linear excavations, were created to capture runoff, reduce soil erosion, and promote groundwater recharge.
- **Water percolation tanks** were constructed as reservoirs to store rainwater, allowing it to gradually seep into the ground and replenish aquifers.
- **Loose boulders check dams**, made of stacked stones, were built across streams or gullies to slow water flow, prevent soil erosion, and enhance groundwater recharge.

Additionally, strategic **plantations of trees and shrubs** were carried out to stabilise soil, improve biodiversity, and contribute to groundwater retention through enhanced vegetative cover.

The above techniques were employed to improve water infiltration, increase spring discharge, and reduce the risk of landslides. The design of these interventions was customised to suit the local topography and soil type, drawing on the expertise of the Himmotthan team, which included geologists, civil engineers, and social mobilisers.

Catchment area protection

Catchment area protection is a critical component of natural resource management, particularly in the context of Spring Shed Management in Uttarakhand. This scientific initiative focuses on preserving and restoring the water sources in the region, where natural springs have been significantly depleted due to reduced rainfall, climate change, and increasing water demands. The aim is to ensure a sustainable and reliable water supply from these springs, which are vital for local communities and agriculture.

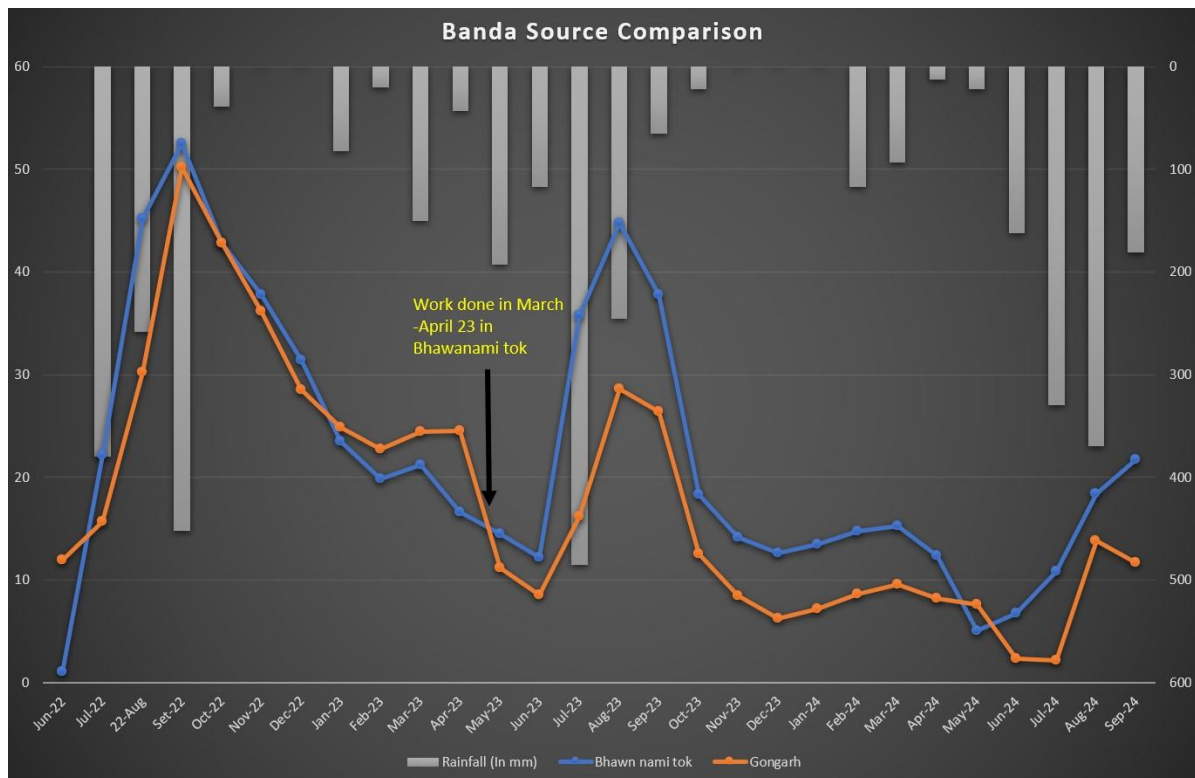
Comparative Analysis

Ensuring **water sustainability** in spring-fed regions requires an in-depth understanding of catchment area dynamics and targeted interventions. A comparative analysis of treated and untreated springs reveals the transformative impact of catchment area treatments, showcasing how recharge structures can significantly enhance water discharge, particularly during lean seasons.

Prior to the intervention, the discharge of both springs was almost identical, with the treated springs showing very low and inconsistent flows. After recharge structures were provided in the catchment areas, the treated springs displayed a notable and sustained improvement in water discharge levels.

The following graphs evaluate the springs with similar geological and topographical features, demonstrating how interventions not only improve water availability but also empower communities to develop robust water management systems with government support.

Figure 1: Hydrographs Comparison Treated Vs Untreated Springs (Source:

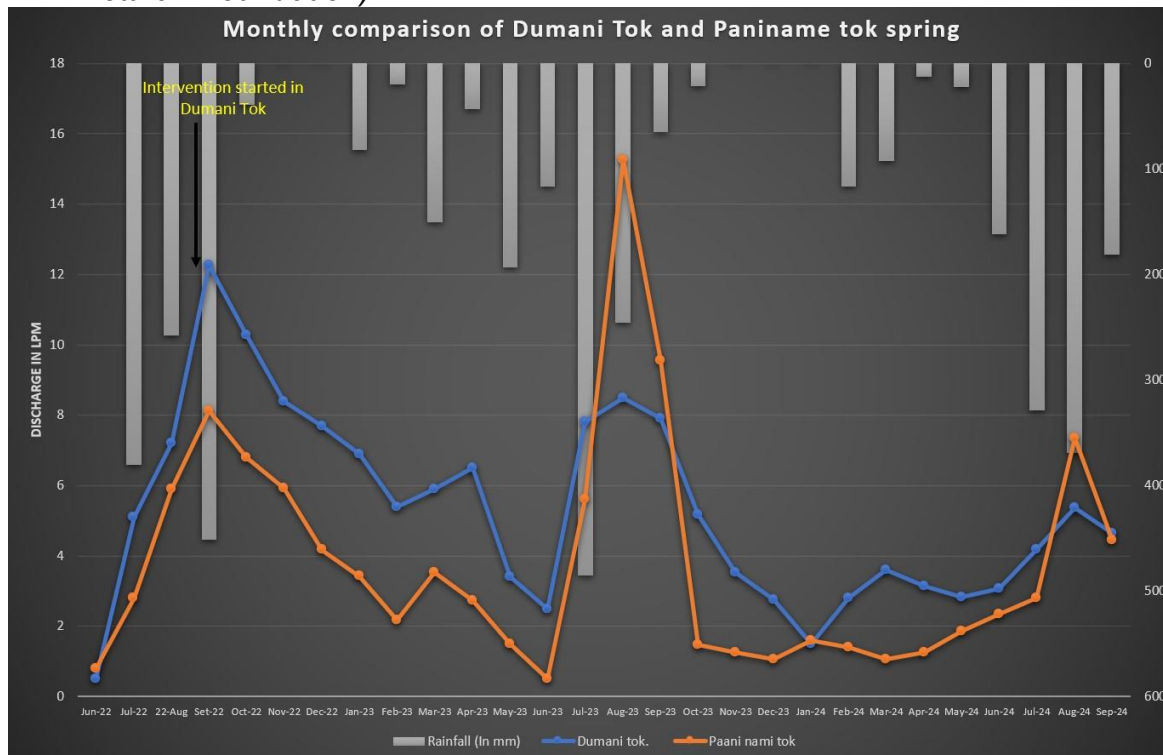


Himmotthan Foundation)

Bars denotes rainfall while blue lines are intervened springs and orange lines are control springs. Arrow shows the time of intervention in the springs. Being nearby area rainfall pattern was considered same

The spring in Bhawanami Tok initially had a lower discharge compared to Gongarh Spring. Post intervention, 40% more discharge has been recorded in Bhawanami Tok. Gongarh Spring experienced a decline in lean season flows, dropping below its initial recorded discharge.

Figure 2: Monthly comparison of Dumani Tok and Paniname Tok spring (Source: Himmotthan Foundation)



Dumani Tok Spring maintained its base flow during dry periods (e.g., September 2022 and August 2023), taking longer to show rainfall impacts.

This contrasts with the untreated spring, which exhibited sudden spikes in discharge due to the lack of runoff control structures, as evidenced by the peaks in August 2023 and August 2024.

The increased base flow during typically water-scarce periods underscores the effectiveness of the recharge structures in sustaining spring discharge. These structures likely facilitated the gradual capture and release of rainwater, enhancing groundwater recharge and ensuring a stable flow during dry seasons. This intervention not only improved water availability but also enabled the community to plan infrastructure, such as a new tank and pipeline system, with support from government departments.

One of the key methods employed by Himmotthan Foundation, was the construction of **recharge ponds**, known locally as *chaals* or *khals*. These ponds are strategically placed in the catchment areas to capture surface runoff, which is otherwise lost. By storing rainwater and surface water during the monsoon, recharge ponds enhance groundwater infiltration, allowing the water to gradually seep into the underground aquifers. This process not only replenishes the groundwater table but also supports the natural recharge of springs, especially in the middle mountain regions where many of these springs originate.

Through these efforts, the project aims to restore the natural water cycle, improve water availability, and ensure that local communities have sufficient water resources for drinking, irrigation, and other essential needs.

In villages with only a single water source, the source was connected to a nearby water source, typically located at a higher elevated region. This connection facilitated the transport of water to storage tanks, which are then connected through **pipelines** to all households in the village.

Rainwater storage tanks with a capacity of 7,500 litres were also provided to the households to access water during the summer months (March to May).

For villages lacking adequate water for irrigation, **community water storage tanks** with a capacity of 20 kilolitres were constructed near the fields. These tanks collect water from the source through High density polyethylene (HDPE) pipelines, allowing it to be used for irrigation via drip systems during the farming season.

Table 1: Details of NRM activities implemented during 2023-2024

Activities	Bhavan	Jaripani	Thaulda r	Grand Total
Irrigation Pipeline (Mtr)	8,790	0	0	8,790
Irrigation Storage tanks (No.)	13	1	0	14
Drinking Pipeline (Mtr)	0	2,746	2,864	5,610
Drinking Storage tanks (No.)	0	2	2	4
RWHT (No.)	8	13	0	21
Chain fencing	0	13	2	15
Trenches	1,741	5,134	2,194	9,078
LB Check dams	41	37	3	81
Chal/Khal	12	28	159	199

Village-level meetings were held in 21 villages and 44 **water user groups** (WUG) were formed; 23 WUG during 2022-2023 and 11 WUG during 2023-2024.

Approximately 83 hectares have been covered under catchment treatment during 2023-2024.

Recharge ponds and 9,078 trenches were provided in mountainous regions, and 81 check dams were constructed across various sites.

Catchment treatment has been completed in the identified programme areas. Drinking Water supply schemes have been completed in Jhakogi, Sarkhet Kansur, Kakwadi, and Pujaldi. 13 individual rainwater harvesting tanks were constructed in Jaripani Cluster (Aarakot, Naged, and Chopriyal gaon) and 8 in Bhavan cluster (Rotoukibeli village) during the year 2023-2024. In Jakogi, where there is no water

source, the 7,500-liter community reservoir water tank meets the needs of 22 families. Given the decreasing spring discharge in dry seasons and the community's reliance on springs for drinking water, these activities ensure water sustainability.

The water augmentation initiatives – pipelines and household tap connection - aim to improve water supply for families living in hilly areas facing water scarcity. Interventions include pipeline connections, rainwater harvesting tanks, and storage tank facilities.

Community funds were sourced to replace a pipeline in Gandyaldu Tok. Similarly, in Kakwadi village, a damaged pipeline was repaired, and a new pipeline project was initiated in Sarkhet with community support.

The **Individual Irrigation Scheme** in Jaripani Village of Chamba block, promotes precision irrigation, enabling better water utilisation for crop cultivation and improved yields. A 20 KL **Low-Density Polyethylene (LDPE) tank** has been provided for timely irrigation of vegetable crops, with farmers contributing 20% of the cost. In the management of older water systems, a water augmentation scheme was implemented in Saod Kantal village, where 550 meters of GI pipeline was repaired during 2023-2024.

For areas lacking a reliable water source, **rainwater harvesting** is adopted as a vital strategy. Each family is provided with a 7,500-liter rainwater tank, which necessitates a 25% community contribution. This rainwater collection tank ensures steady supply of water during the rainy season. The 7,500 liters of stored rainwater can sustain a family for approximately three months, particularly during the summer months from April to June.

The rainwater tank also includes effective filtration methods, utilising sand, gravel, and pebbles to maintain water quality. The harvested rainwater is primarily utilised for kitchen gardening and domestic needs, such as washing clothes and utensils. Residents have reported no issues with insects or contamination, ensuring that the water remains safe for household use.

7.2. Chain fencing

In hilly areas, animals entering farms pose a significant challenge to agricultural activities. Livestock like goats and cattle, as well as wild animals such as monkeys, boars, pigs and cattle often stray into farmlands, causing extensive damage to crop. The steep and uneven terrain of these regions makes it difficult to monitor and prevent such intrusions effectively.

To address this, chain fencing is widely used as a reliable solution. Chain fencing is a practical and durable solution for securing agricultural spaces and promoting efficient farming practices. Proper fencing is particularly vital in hilly areas, where farming resources are limited, and crop losses can severely impact livelihoods. It serves as a

sturdy barrier that prevents animals from accessing farmland, protecting crops and ensuring better yields. Additionally, fencing helps reduce soil erosion caused by animal movements and maintains the ecological balance by keeping wild animals within their natural habitats.

Prior to IVDP, women and local farmers were engaged in traditional farming and focused on a limited range of crops. With the chain fencing support, they are now diversifying their agricultural practices, leading to significant income growth. 15 farms owned by individuals and the community have been secured by chain fencing.

"Thanks to the chain fencing provided by Himmotthan, my crops are now safe from animals. Earlier, I struggled with frequent attacks by cattle and wild pigs, which destroyed my entire harvest. This fencing has given me peace of mind and the ability to focus on farming without constant worry. It has truly transformed the way I work on my land." – Pundur, Farmer

"The chain fencing activity has been the most beneficial. We had constant issues with wild pigs and other animals coming from various directions, damaging our crops. The chain fencing has resolved that problem now.

While the fence material was provided by Himmotthan, the whole village came together to help set up the fencing. It took us about 15-20 days to complete the entire process and I believe this fencing will last for 25-30 years, providing long-term benefits to all of us.

Now, as people see the benefits, more villagers are getting involved in agriculture. They're noticing how we're protecting our crops and starting to plant their own gardens. This has really encouraged a shift toward cash crops, and many are getting attracted to this way of farming." – Farmer, Sinwali Patal

7.3. Self Help Group programme

The IVDP promotes the formation and strengthening of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and water user groups, fostering collective empowerment and encouraging community participation in decision-making processes. Revolving funds has been a fundamental element of the SHG efforts, enabling members to shift from relying on high-interest loans from outsiders to inter-lending within the group at just 1% interest. The SHGs also promotes gender equality and community engagement, fostering collaboration with men and youth in various projects, particularly in water conservation related activities.

Recognising the importance of water in their lives, women emphasise their desire to enhance their understanding of water management practices and are also members of Water User Groups.

Table 2: Details of SHG and WUG clusterwise

Cluster	No. of Water User Groups	No. of WUG members	Number of SHGs	No. of women SHGs members
Bhavan	21	207	78	805
Jaripani	14	1,029	109	108
Thauldar	15	138	59	542
Grand Total	50	1,374	246	1,455

Women have actively participated in establishing SHGs, with an average of 6 members in each group. They focus on activities such as poultry farming, milk production, and community engagement.

There is an average of 27 members in each **Water user group** which function like a SHG where funds are collected from farmers and saved in a bank account. The funds are utilised for repairs and maintenance of water infrastructure provided in the villages.

"In the beginning, women were hesitant to even sit in the middle of the meetings, but now I see a tremendous change in their confidence. Through community efforts, we trained them to express themselves and manage their work effectively. We fixed regular meeting dates, discussed their progress, and ensured open communication—building a relationship of trust where they feel comfortable sharing everything with us.

We provided skills development and bookkeeping training, teaching them how to maintain their registers and records. Additionally, we organised an animal health camp to equip them with practical knowledge. Earlier, they lacked the confidence and ability to speak openly, but today, they are empowered to voice their thoughts and manage their roles independently. Seeing this transformation is truly rewarding." Mr. Debra, Himmotthan Foundation

Income generation programmes of SHGs

Income-generating programs (IGPs) for Self-Help Group (SHG) members in Uttarakhand are driving socio-economic transformation by leveraging local resources and skills.

Poultry farming is gaining popularity, with families reporting earnings of ₹2,000 to ₹4,000 per month from this venture. The demand for local chickens, particularly from tourists, is high, with income ranging from ₹25,000 to ₹26,000. Eggs from local hens sell for approximately ₹25-26 each. Families are provided with small poultry sets and also receive free chicks from the government.

SHGs have facilitated access to loans for purchasing livestock, offering ₹25,000 for cows, ₹20,000 for buffaloes, and ₹15,000 for goats, enabling members to engage in **dairy farming** and ghee production. Traditionally, local culture that discouraged **milk sales** are now in favour of selling ghee. In Thauldhar cluster, the community has a cultural preference for selling ghee instead of milk. Specifically, 28 goats were allocated to 6 beneficiaries in Thauldhar, 32 goats were provided to 4 beneficiaries in Jaripani, and 5 cattle were distributed to 5 farmers in Jaripani. This

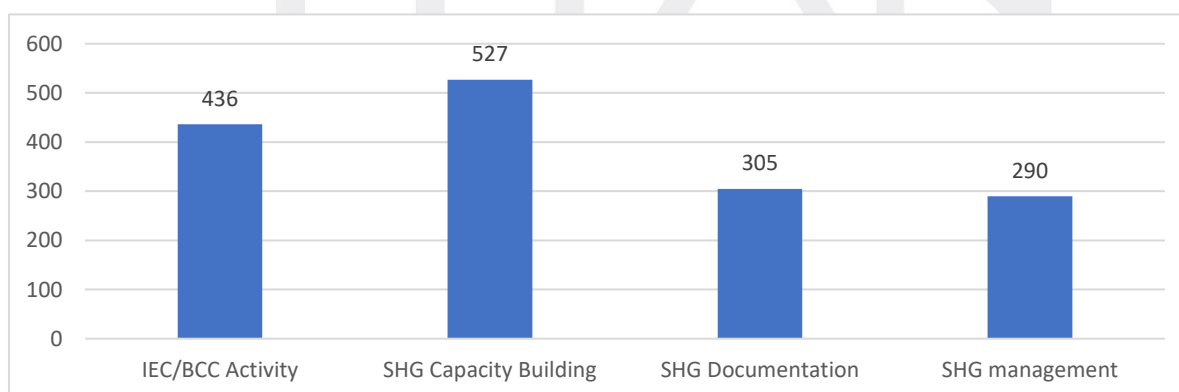
"I underwent training in paneer making in 2022, which opened up new opportunities for me. Using a loan from my SHG, I purchased a cow and started making and selling paneer. This additional income has been a great support, helping me manage my household needs and improving my family's financial stability. I am grateful for the training and support that empowered me to take this step." – Rukmini Devi

initiative encouraged SHGs to sell ghee and also introduced **value-added products** like ginger-garlic paste and pickles.

In the Thauldhar cluster, a **sewing centre** has been established, offering training for 30 young women. Himmotthan Foundation successfully conducted **training sessions for SHG members** aimed at capacity building and group management for a cumulative number of 1558 members in the Thauldhar, Bhawan, and Jaripani clusters.

To enhance financial literacy, a technical expert from the CRISIL Foundation provided specialised **training for women on financial inclusion and management**. Monthly Board of Directors (BOD) meetings were held in the Jaripani and Bhawan clusters, focusing on various business activities, including dairy farming, feed units, Common Service Centres, Community Facility Centres, and fruit nurseries.

Figure 3: Details of training conducted and no. of participants



Improved financial literacy has empowered women, many of whom previously struggled with basic skills, to maintain financial records and handle transactions independently, boosting their confidence. Timely support from the group has proven invaluable; for instance, when one member urgently needed ₹20,000 for her injured

husband, the group provided a quick loan that would have been difficult to secure from banks, with flexible repayment options based on her farming income.

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) convened in Bhawan and Jaripani blocks facilitated the distribution of dividends from various enterprises to shareholders.

"We are very grateful for the support Himmotthan has provided to our village. The improvements in water supply and the training in managing our finances have made a big difference. I now know how to maintain a savings register and track our group's finances. The loan facility through the SIG has also helped us manage better, and we can now plan for the future. Himmotthan has truly empowered us, and we are hopeful about our progress. The goat and chicken sheds are also a big help for our livelihood." — **Samiti Devi**, Water Security Officer

To encourage communities to adopt healthy and positive behaviours, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) and Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) strategies are employed. These approaches aim to promote changes in knowledge, attitudes, norms, beliefs, and behaviours through interactive processes and tailored messaging.

"Before Himmotthan came into our village, there were no savings groups, and we faced many difficulties. Now, with the Self-Help Groups (SIG), we have learned to save and manage our finances. We have also received training in maintaining registers and understanding the importance of savings. The impact of this training is visible in our daily lives. We now have water supply systems in place, thanks to Himmotthan, which has alleviated many of our water problems. The water supply has made life much easier, and we get water for most of the year, unlike before, when we had to travel long distances during the summer." WUG Member

Young Women Groups

To empower youth, eight groups of young women were formed across the Jaripani, Bhawan, and Thauldhar clusters, consisting of 68 members. These groups organised monthly meetings to facilitate knowledge sharing, with two groups receiving sewing machines to support their initiatives.

7.4. Community Infrastructure

Community infrastructure plays a pivotal role in enhancing educational and recreational opportunities, particularly in rural areas. As part of the program, a strong

focus on sports and education has fostered skill development and provided students with platforms to excel. Infrastructure improvements, such as **upgraded sports fields** and new facilities, have not only enhanced safety but also empowered students to participate in competitive events at higher levels. These initiatives, **supported by career counselling workshops** and school collaborations, highlight the importance of integrated development approaches.

Sports and education are important components of the project, aimed at enhancing students' skills and providing them with better platforms. Village-level sports competitions were organised across the three clusters, with 224 students participating in activities like volleyball, kabaddi, high jump, and long jump.

Six schools—GIC Chapradhar, GIC Nagrajadhar, High School Sungaon, Saraswati Vidya Mandir Bhawan, GIC Banda, and GIC School of Thauldhar—were provided infrastructure, including the establishment of **badminton and volleyball courts and chain fencing**.

The improvements made to the sports field by Himmotthan Foundation have significantly contributed to enabling students to participate in state-level competitions. With the upgraded facilities, the volleyball team advanced through the block and district levels, with four girls from the district being selected to compete at the state level. This achievement reflects the hard work and commitment of both the students and the staff involved.

The support from schools such as Rajki Intercollege Bhawan, Nakush, Matlau, and Thaan has created more opportunities for students within the block. However, continued collaboration with the social policy team and school leadership will be essential, especially given the challenges some schools are facing due to closures

"Before the upgrades, the field was unsafe and difficult to use. Now, with the new facilities, the kids are not only playing but excelling. We are seeing a greater interest in sports, particularly among girls who previously didn't have the opportunity to participate. The changes have brought a sense of pride and motivation to everyone involved. The students are more eager than ever to compete, and we're excited to witness their growth." – School Teacher

and budget constraints.

Before the upgrades, the sports field was rough, dusty, and posed safety risks for students. The steep hillside made retrieving balls difficult, and the lack of proper facilities hindered the overall playing experience. Thanks to the installation of safety mats, boundary barriers, and the levelling off the field, students now have a safe and professional space to train. This transformation has not only improved the physical environment but also positively impacted the students' confidence and enthusiasm for sports.

Four **Career counselling workshops** were conducted at schools in all three clusters, benefiting 256 students. Students from 3 inter colleges and 1 Degree college were the beneficiaries. Besides, girls' youth club members also participated. Resource persons from different fields were invited as main speakers.

Testimonial from School Students on Sports Facilities

"We are extremely grateful for the newly constructed volleyball court and sports facilities in our school. Before the improvements, the ground was not in good condition, and there were concerns about safety while playing. However, with the recent upgrades, the court is much better, safer, and enjoyable. Now, we can play volleyball, Kabaddi, and participate in athletics without worrying about getting hurt.

Our teachers have been very supportive of our involvement in sports, encouraging us to maintain a balance between studies and physical activities. Playing sports not only helps us stay fit but also boosts our confidence.

We are excited to share that some of us have been selected for district and state-level sports competitions. The opportunity to pursue sports at a higher level has also opened doors for us in terms of scholarships and college admissions through the sports quota. It is inspiring to know that excelling in sports can also lead to career opportunities, such as joining the police force directly through the sports achievements, including in the Olympics."

Table 3: Details of Career Camps conducted

S.N.	Name of Institution	Name of cluster	Nos. of participants
1	Government Inter College Chapradhar	Jadipani	90
2	Government Inter College Jaripani	Jadipani	90
3	Government Inter College Bangiyal	Thauldhar	80
4	Government Degree College Thatyur	Bhawan	55

7.5. Digital Learning Centres

The Digital Learning Centre is an initiative aimed at providing young girls with essential computer skills and enhancing their digital literacy. This project emerged from recognizing the difficulties young women face in traveling to distant cities like Chamba for computer training.

It addresses challenges related to unequal access to education, employment opportunities, and personal development for the educated youth (class 3 to 12) in the programme areas. It supports continued higher education through tutoring and career

counselling and also provides leadership skills and personality development training to strengthen students' self-esteem.

The Digital Learning Centre has proven to be an invaluable resource for the community. It has successfully empowered these young individuals, giving them the skills and confidence to pursue further education and career opportunities. The centre not only teaches technical skills but also provides a supportive environment for personal development, helping these young women feel confident in their future and better equipped to contribute to their communities.

Table 4: Digital Learning centre details

Location	Module	Male trainees	Female trainees	Resource person name
Thatuyr Jounpur, Bhavan Block (2023-2024)	Run by Jamte SRC	14	14	Lucky Kohali Ashish Rangarh
Jaripani Block (2022-2023)	Run by Him Vikas SRC	06	15	Nikita

A Digital Learning Centre was opened in the Jaripani cluster under the Him Vikas Self-Reliant Cooperative. Recognising the need for computer education and preparation for higher studies, another Digital Learning Centre was subsequently opened in the Bhawan cluster under the Jamte Self-Reliant Cooperative during 2023-2024 benefiting 28 students.

Beyond computer training, the centre also serves as a hub for self-improvement, with resources available for students preparing for competitive exams such as civil services or engineering entrance exams. 65 books were procured for Digital learning Centre in Jaripani cluster under **Library Support**. Most of the books were related to competitive examinations. Girls Youth club members are the main beneficiaries, besides youth and children from other villages.

Nikita, the dedicated tutor at the centre, has been teaching for over a year and is currently pursuing her graduation. She specialises in key computer skills like MS Office, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, and HTML. The students, mostly aged between 15 and 20 years, come from surrounding villages and have completed their schooling or are continuing with their graduation. Each student receives a six-month course in which they are trained in typing (both English and Hindi), followed by practical lessons in PowerPoint and other essential digital skills.

The centre operates in shifts from 10 AM to 5 PM, with each student receiving one hour of dedicated training. The fee for the program is affordable at 500 rupees per month, ensuring that even those from modest backgrounds can access the resources they need to grow.

7.6. Livelihood Enhancement:

IVDP supports sustainable agriculture, horticulture, and livestock-based enterprises, helping communities increase their income-generating capacities. Initiatives include training in modern agricultural practices, empowering local farmers and entrepreneurs.

Table 5: Details of livelihood activities

Activity	No. of Beneficiaries			Grand Total
	Bhavan	Jaripani	Thauldar	
Bee Keeping			50	50
Seeds			28	28
Dairy Products		5		5
Goatery	10	10	10	30
Fruit Orchard	8	6	7	21
Poultry	5	5	2	12
Dairy	77	5		82

The Himmotthan Foundation provides crucial support for women in the community by offering resources such as **building cow sheds** and improving fodder management, which helps reduce waste.

Table 6: Details of beneficiaries blockwise

Sl.	Jaripani		Thouldhar		Jounpur	
	Name	Village	Name	Village	Name	Village
1	Rekha Devi	Jaripani	Muni Devi	Devi Dhar Barnu	Noughar	Chandma Devi
2	Anita Devi	Jaripani	Anjli Devi	Siwanli Patal	Mathloun	Sangita Devi
3	Mamta Devi	Arakot	Soban Dei	Kansyud	Almas	Santoshi Panwar
4	Darshani Devi	Silogi	Kala Devi	Pagari	Kith	Shanti Devi
5	Vimala Devi	Saukduli	Bharoshi Devi	Idiyaan		
6			Ashrafi Devi	Idiyaan		

Women also contribute to their livelihoods by collecting flowers from the forest. Many women reported earning around ₹10,000 monthly, with income fluctuating seasonally due to agriculture, as they engage in both farming and livestock rearing.

Beekeeping, a traditional employment source in the hills, has been declining due to climate change and a lack of technical knowledge. Recognising this, the project intervened to promote beekeeping by providing training to farmers on technical

aspects. Around 110 beneficiaries received training in beekeeping across different villages in the Thauldhar cluster, including Pagari, Kansyud, Banda, Bagi, and Raudoni. Additionally, bee boxes were distributed to 50 beneficiaries to further promote the honey value chain in the Thauldhar cluster.

In the Bhawan Cluster, villages like Sabli and Khet have been selected for various activities. During the induction phase, community members were informed about the livelihood and water natural smart village programmes. Meetings were held with women, local panchayats, and community members to define their roles. Regular follow-ups and monitoring addressed the challenges women face, particularly concerning agricultural labour.

7.7. Agriculture-Horticulture-NTFP Promotion

Agriculture and input support for farmers have always been a top priority for Himmotthan Foundation given the community's heavy reliance on agriculture. Community members were introduced to multi-cropping techniques focusing on cash crops. Training sessions led by agricultural experts covered the cultivation of a variety of vegetables, including potatoes, cauliflower, garlic, ginger, coriander, and chillies.

Orchard farming involves significant personal investment, community collaboration, and reliance on organic practices. Farmers have diversified their crops, growing kiwis, oranges (local Narangi variety), peaches, apples, and vegetables like cabbage, coriander, and capsicum, using organic methods such as mustard and apricot husk compost to enrich the soil. Although initial yields were modest, with the first kiwi harvest producing 50 kg, farmers expect output to double in the following year, with the local market price reaching ₹300/kg.

Himmotthan staff continuously worked to identify the most suitable beneficiaries for agro-horticulture project support. As part of this initiative, 21 new peach orchards (Red June variety), totalling 1,200 plants, were established across three clusters. Additionally, 870 peach plants and 450 apple plants in existing orchards were trained and pruned under the orchard maintenance activity. Each cluster received an orchard tool kit for ongoing maintenance.

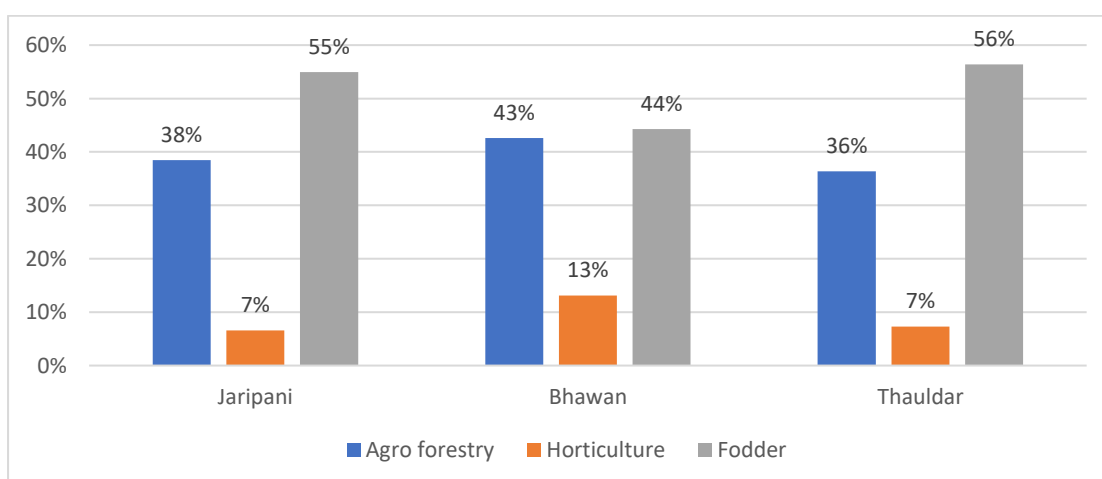
A JAMTE fruit nursery was established in the Bhawan cluster to produce high-quality planting materials for walnuts and apples, catering to the demand of local farmers. This year, 2,200 walnut rootstocks and 2,500 apple rootstocks were grafted with improved variety scions—CITH series for walnuts, and Redlum Gala, Jeromine, and King Roat for apples. Around one quintal of walnut seeds was sown in the nursery to grow rootstocks for the following year.

To combat fodder scarcity in winter, plantation efforts included planting fodder trees such as oak, mulberry, bhimal, guriyal, khadik, ginnie, napier, and other local grasses across 6 hectares in all three clusters, resulting in the planting of 2,560 trees.

Table 7: Details of Agro-forestry, Horticulture, and Fodder beneficiaries

Cluster	Villages	Agro forestry Beneficiaries	Horticulture beneficiaries	Fodder beneficiaries
Jaripani	Jaripani		4	
	Thangdhar		1	22
	Khadikhal	35	1	28
Bhawan	Gawana		1	27
	Naughar		2	
	Kith	26	2	
	Mathlaun Talla		1	
	Domasi		2	
Thauldar	Bhamorikhal		1	
	Sinwalipatal		1	
	Jhakogi (Langhu)		3	34
	Kansyud		1	28
	Jhakogi II		2	
	Banda	28		
	Pagari	12		
TOTAL		101	22	139

Figure 4: Agro-forestry, Horticulture, and Fodder Beneficiaries clusterwise



To promote spice cultivation in the lower belt of Thauldhar, which has great potential for such production, one quintal of turmeric seed and 10 kilograms of local variety coriander **seed** were distributed to 50 farmers in Majurwal and Idiyan villages. Additionally, 250 Kagzi lime plants were distributed to 26 farmers in the Thauldhar cluster with support from the Horticulture Department.

Government subsidies play a crucial role in supporting these ventures, alleviating financial burdens. However, challenges like crop loss from wild animals have made chain fencing essential, which the community set up collaboratively to reduce costs.

Five power weeders and one wheat flour mill were procured with an 80% subsidy from the Agriculture Department and distributed to farmers. 10% was supported by IVDP and the rest was borne by the community.

7.8. Livestock & Livestock Based Enterprise Promotion

Addressing malnutrition and improving healthcare access are critical components of IVDP, hence focus was given to creating livestock enterprises, by providing loans for purchasing cattle. Health camps for livestock were also organised.

Interventions during 2023-2024 led to the construction of 16 cattle sheds, 30 goat sheds, and 12 poultry sheds in the Jaripani, Bhawan, and Thauldhar clusters. To further promote livestock rearing, the project purchased 60 goats and 5 cattle for distribution to farmers in Jaripani and Thauldhar clusters. A backyard poultry unit was established in both the Jaripani and Bhawan clusters to encourage poultry farming among small landholding farmers.

Collaboration with the Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Departments ensured proper livestock care. 19 animal health camps were organised in the Bhawan, Jaripani, and Thauldhar clusters, benefiting a total of 715 animals (251 in Bhawan, 247 in Jaripani, and 217 in Thauldhar) and treating 540 animals overall. The effectiveness of these camps was approximately 75.5%.

In Thauldhar cluster, the community has a cultural preference for selling ghee instead of milk. Specifically, 28 goats were allocated to 6 beneficiaries in Thauldhar, 32 goats were provided to 4 beneficiaries in Jaripani, and 5 cattle were distributed to 5 farmers in Jaripani.

This structured approach has empowered the community through sustainable livestock and agricultural practices, improving livelihoods and addressing nutritional needs.

7.9. Rural Enterprise Promotion

Cooperatives, which are businesses owned and controlled by their members, play a vital role in rural development. Unlike traditional businesses that seek profits for investors, cooperatives operate for the benefit of their members.

Institutional support for rural enterprises operated by Self-Help Group (SHG) members was provided through a combination of outsourced technical resources and federation staff. During the quarter, a total of 726 monthly meetings were conducted across all three clusters, where members were educated on increasing their business savings,

developing leadership qualities, and understanding their potential contributions to various businesses of the Self-Reliant Cooperative (SRC).

Common Service Centre

Under the Integrated Rural Development Project, two cooperatives were formed: Him Vikas Swayat Sehkarita in the Jaripani cluster and Jamti Swayat Sehkarita in the Bhawan cluster. These cooperatives manage various enterprises aimed at income generation, including dairy, community facility centres (CFC), feed units, vegetable marketing, common service centres (CSC), public utility centres (PUC), and tourism initiatives.

The **Common Service Centre** streamlines access to government schemes and facilitates financial transactions and agricultural operations. It provides a range of digital services, including bill payments, tax filing, Aadhaar-related assistance, and document registration. This initiative ensures that people in rural areas do not have to travel far for these services, saving them time and money.

Additionally, the centre offers **Banking Support and Cash Withdrawal Services**. On non-banking days, such as Wednesdays when local banks are closed, the centre provides cash withdrawal services to ensure that customers never run out of funds when they need them most. It also manages bank interactions for customers, handling everything from transactions to documentation.

The Common Service Centre, operational since 2020, serves as a digital hub for rural communities, providing essential services like document verification, financial transactions, and awareness about online frauds. The centre has become an integral part of the local economy, facilitating processes such as tax payments, policy purchases, and more. Amit Negi and Rita Ramola, two key staff members at the centre, have been instrumental in its smooth operation.

One of the significant achievements of the centre is the increased awareness regarding online frauds and the importance of secure documentation. They emphasise ensuring that customers do not leave personal documents, like Aadhaar cards, in unauthorised hands to avoid fraud. The centre also helps individuals with various services such as photocopying, tax payments, and managing financial transactions like bank transfers.

The average daily transactions range from small payments (such as for Xerox services) to larger amounts for tax or policy payments. The centre processes both direct payments and bank transfers, ensuring that farmers and local vendors receive timely payments for their goods. For instance, transactions in the local vegetable market often range between ₹10,000 to ₹25,000, with funds being transferred to farmers' accounts after a few days.

The Common Service Centre is also playing a vital role in ensuring that rural residents can engage with digital platforms in a secure manner, providing them with both service access and the necessary education to avoid digital fraud. Through its operations, it is

bridging the gap between rural and urban services, making financial transactions easier and more transparent for the community.

This centre reflects the positive impact of digital services in rural areas, creating a secure and convenient way for people to access a variety of services, while also ensuring that they are educated about potential risks in the digital space.

Unable to find a nearby bank, my driver, a local from the area, stopped here and asked me to withdraw money. I received my cash within five minutes. – a tourist

Community Facility Centre

In collaboration with the Federation and the local Mandi, the **Community Facility Centre** (Krishi Suvidha Kendra) manages **Vegetable Market Operations**. Farmers can submit their produce, and the centre meticulously records the transactions. Payments are processed within 2-4 days via bank transfers, ensuring prompt compensation for farmers.

"Selling my vegetables at a reasonable price in the local market has made a big difference in my life. Earlier, I had to travel all the way to Dehradun, and the road access was difficult. Now, I check the mandi rates and plan my harvest accordingly. In one season, which is every three months, I earn around ₹10,000. This income helps me manage my household expenses during the winter months. I need ₹5,000 every month to feed my cattle, and the vegetable earnings are a big help in meeting these needs." – Devi Nautiyal, Ganga SHG, Kith

Moreover, since the government's mandate of digitisation, the centre has taken active steps to educate people on safe practices, advising them to safeguard their identity documents and raising awareness about online fraud.

While the centre has made considerable strides, it aims to expand its services, including Aadhaar correction and other documentation support. The centre remains committed to working closely with government authorities to secure the necessary permissions and enhance its offerings.

The **dairy unit** in Chamba operates a milk collection and processing centre that serves the community by providing fresh milk and dairy products. Each day, the centre collects between 250-300 litres of milk, with the capacity to process up to 500

"In our vegetable business, pricing is always based on quality. We buy produce locally, often around Rs. 18-22 per kilogram. In the market, higher-quality vegetables can sell at Rs. 22, while the regular quality goes for Rs. 20. We stay updated with daily market rates through messages from our sources, which keeps us competitive and informed.

Transparency is key for us. Every sale goes through an auction process, with board members participating to maintain accountability. The highest bidder sets the price, though rates can fluctuate depending on demand. We send our produce weekly, and the Dev Bhoomi Transport Company handles our deliveries. This system allows us to record and track every delivery precisely—our latest shipment included spinach, coconut, and coriander seeds, totalling Rs. 1,70,000, which we transferred to Him Vikas Federation' account to keep everything transparent and organised.

For local buyers, we offer cash transactions and keep detailed records, ensuring that all transactions are transparent and traceable. This system strengthens our community trust and keeps our operations smooth. I am proud of how we've built a process that is fair, straightforward, and reliable for both our customers and our community partners."

- Dharampoy

litres. The centre has around ten collection points across nearby villages, from which milk is gathered daily. These centres ensure a steady supply, supporting a network of approximately 7-8 regular farmers who bring in milk.

Of the collected milk, about 150-200 litres are sold fresh at the main sales point in Chamba. The remaining milk is processed into value-added products, including curd, ghee, paneer, butter, and *matha* (a traditional buttermilk drink). This allows the dairy to maximise resources and diversify its offerings to the community.

Milk quality is a priority, and the price varies depending on quality, incentivising farmers to bring in higher-quality milk. The average procurement price is around Rs. 37-38 per litre, with an additional collection charge of Rs. 2, bringing the cost to approximately Rs. 41 per litre. The milk is sold at Rs. 56 per litre, yielding a modest profit that contributes to the centres' operations and supports the local federation managing the unit.

The unit operates year-round with a small team that includes Dhanibir, who oversees the production of dairy products. Due to the workload, taking time off is challenging, as the centre operates continuously to meet community needs. Payments to farmers are made monthly, ensuring a steady income for local suppliers and helping the community thrive.

8. Evaluation of Impact using REESS framework

8.1. Relevance

The IVDP program in Uttarakhand is deeply relevant to the unique challenges faced by marginalized farmers and rural communities in the project area. In addition to addressing the immediate needs of these communities, the program also targets long-term socio-economic resilience.

Water Scarcity and Irrigation Access: The IVDP's focus on improving water access, including initiatives like rainwater harvesting and sustainable water recharge methods, is crucial. It addresses the chronic water scarcity faced by farmers, particularly women, who bear the brunt of fetching water from distant sources. The program's interventions aim to provide more reliable and equitable water sources for agricultural and domestic use, enabling farmers to diversify crops and increase productivity year-round.

Agricultural Diversification and Resilience: The program directly responds to the issue of monoculture and limited cropping patterns by promoting crop diversification and providing training in modern, climate-resilient farming techniques. This improves food security, income stability, and environmental sustainability, helping farmers reduce dependency on a single crop, thereby safeguarding livelihoods.

Empowering Women and Reducing Gender Inequality: Given that the majority of households in the area are headed by women due to male migration, the IVDP's focus on women's empowerment is highly relevant. By enhancing women's access to financial resources, skills development, and leadership training, the program empowers them to take on roles that contribute to household income and community development. Additionally, by providing women with opportunities to engage in economic activities such as dairy farming, vegetable cultivation, and entrepreneurship, the program helps reduce the gender gap in rural livelihoods.

"I underwent training in paneer making in 2022, which opened up new opportunities for me. Using a loan from my SHG, I purchased a cow and started making and selling paneer. This additional income has been a great support, helping me manage my household needs and improving my family's financial stability. I am grateful for the training and support that empowered me to take this step." – Rukmini Devi

Migration and Employment Opportunities: Migration due to the lack of local employment opportunities is a major concern. The IVDP addresses this by promoting income-generating activities, such as agriculture and small-scale enterprises, that reduce the economic necessity for migration. By creating a more self-sufficient and diversified local economy, the program helps retain youth and men in their villages, while also improving the overall economic landscape of the area.

Social Infrastructure and Education: The program also addresses the lack of essential infrastructure, particularly in schools. By promoting sports facilities, digital learning centres, and community libraries, the program helps improve educational access and engagement. These interventions foster a more vibrant, inclusive school culture that enhances both physical and academic development for rural children, creating a stronger foundation for future generations.

Community Cohesion and Local Governance: Strengthening community cohesion and local governance is a core aspect of the IVDP. The program helps build capacity within local governance structures like panchayats and self-help groups (SHGs) to effectively manage resources, plan development activities, and sustain the program's impact. By fostering collective ownership and responsibility through community participation, the IVDP ensures that the benefits of development interventions are sustained long-term.

Health and Well-being: In addition to the focus on economic empowerment, the IVDP addresses the community's health needs by improving access to clean water, sanitation, and basic healthcare services. This holistic approach ensures that the overall well-being of the community is enhanced, providing a healthier environment in which families can thrive.

Improved Financial Literacy and access to credit: A critical aspect of the program is increasing financial literacy and access to credit for rural women and farmers. The IVDP's initiatives help women establish bank accounts, gain awareness about savings, and access loans or insurance for farming and entrepreneurial activities. These steps improve financial independence and resilience, which is crucial for long-term sustainability in rural areas.

"Before joining the self-help group initiated by IVDP, I felt alone managing both my home and the fields while my husband worked outside the village. Now, I have a network of women who share resources, and we support each other. Through the SHG, I've learned financial management and how to grow my savings—this has given me a sense of independence I never imagined." **Women SHG Federation Member**

Sustainable Livelihoods through Producer Organizations: The establishment of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and other cooperative models ensures that farmers, especially women, are able to sell their produce at fair prices, access markets more effectively, and share resources for better productivity. This is a major step in reducing dependency on middlemen and ensuring that the economic benefits of agriculture remain within the local community.

Environmental Sustainability: The IVDP emphasizes environmental sustainability through sustainable agricultural practices, water conservation, and biodiversity preservation. By promoting practices such as organic farming, agroforestry, and soil conservation, the program ensures that rural communities can rely on natural

resources without depleting them, contributing to both ecological balance and long-term agricultural productivity.

The IVDP's integrated approach to village development is highly relevant, addressing both immediate and long-term needs in the region. The programme's integrated approach to village development—encompassing health, education, agriculture, and infrastructure—was essential in creating sustainable impact. The program creates a holistic and sustainable model for rural development that focuses on improving the lives of marginalized communities, particularly women, and ensuring their active participation in the development process. Prior to the Foundation's intervention, no holistic development activities existed, and local governance bodies, such as the panchayats, were unaware of the community's evolving needs.

“When we commenced our work in the villages, we were welcomed warmly, though some scepticism was natural. The villages, deeply rooted in traditional practices and cultural values, offered both opportunities and challenges. One of the main issues was water scarcity—pipelines were nearly dry during lean seasons. Through patient, trust-based collaboration, we worked alongside villagers to develop sustainable water solutions and witnessed remarkable progress.

With close community engagement, we helped construct staggered trenches and check dams, with local residents, especially women, actively participating. These initiatives brought back springs once thought lost, securing critical water access and blending traditional and modern practices. We also established water user groups for long-term upkeep, and the community took ownership, maintaining the systems with admirable dedication.

A memorable moment was seeing traditional rituals revived, such as a new bride offering prayers at the spring, symbolising a renewed environmental connection. This balance of tradition and progress reflects the community's resilience. When we introduced crop-protecting chain fencing, initial doubts soon turned to community-wide interest as results became visible.

8.2. Effectiveness

The **Springshed Program** implemented by the Himmotthan Foundation has proven to be highly effective in improving both environmental and social outcomes in the rural communities of Uttarakhand, where water scarcity and inadequate infrastructure have long been challenges. The program's effectiveness was evaluated through a variety of indicators, reflecting both immediate and long-term benefits for the communities.

Improved water access and security: The Natural Smart Villages Initiative

has brought transformative changes to 60 villages, ensuring better access to clean and reliable water. This initiative has helped enhance water security, particularly by addressing seasonal water scarcity. Recharge structures, such as trenches and dams, have played a critical role in maintaining a consistent spring discharge, even in typically dry periods. These structures have improved the volume of water available, with increased base flow and groundwater recharge during water-scarce months, ensuring a year-round water supply. As a result, villagers now have more reliable water sources for both domestic and agricultural use.

Water retention and groundwater recharge: Catchment area treatment has led to significant improvements in water retention and groundwater levels. Prior to the intervention, only 2–3% of water remained in wells, and streams often dried up during the summer. Post-intervention, water levels in wells have increased by 30–35% within the first year, ensuring consistent water availability. Additionally, new tanks and pipelines have been constructed to store excess water, further enhancing the supply. These improvements have increased drinking water security, agricultural sustainability, and reduced the dependency on distant water sources, thus reducing the labour-intensive task of fetching water, especially for women.

"The lack of consistent water availability restricted our choices and kept our income and productivity low. With the water harvesting and irrigation support provided by Himmotthan, everything changed. Now, our fields are nourished, enabling us to grow multiple crops like vegetables, and even fruits alongside our traditional paddy. This diversification has not only increased our income but also strengthened our resilience to market fluctuations and climate challenges.

The transformation has been profound—not just for our farm but for our family. We've reduced dependency on external markets, improved our nutrition, and built a more sustainable future. Thanks to Himmotthan, water has truly become the lifeblood of our farm." **Sheetal, Farmer, Sinwali Patal**

Monitoring the performance of recharge structures: Field visits and assessments of the recharge structures confirmed their effectiveness in managing water and promoting soil moisture. Key indicators of their success include:

- **Sedimentation within structures:** Showing successful water inflow and deposition of sediments, which reflects water capture.
- **Moisture retention:** Indicating the ability of the structures to preserve soil moisture, critical for percolation into deeper layers and aquifers.
- **Mud cracks:** These reflect the natural wetting and drying cycles of soil, demonstrating active water management even during dry spells.

These findings highlight the program's success in replenishing aquifers, improving water security, and fostering long-term sustainability in the region.

Chain Fencing and agricultural productivity: The implementation of **chain fencing** has had a significant positive impact on agricultural productivity. By preventing wild animal intrusion, the fencing has reduced the risks to crops, thereby allowing farmers, particularly women, to focus more on cultivating crops rather than constantly protecting them from animals. This reduction in crop damage has improved land productivity and soil conservation. The fencing has also fostered a sense of community cooperation, as local farmers are actively involved in maintaining the fences, which in turn

*"Before the chain fencing, protecting our crops from stray animals was a constant struggle. We lost a significant portion of our hard work to damage each season. Thanks to the fencing support, our farm is now secure, and we can focus on cultivating without fear. This simple intervention has not just protected our crops but also restored our peace of mind and confidence in farming." - **Makhani, Sinwali Patal***

strengthens social cohesion.

The **sense of collective ownership** and community participation in maintaining these fences has contributed to more efficient farming practices. Women farmers have especially benefitted, as they now have the confidence to harvest and protect their crops without fear of loss due to animal intrusion. This, in turn, has led to a significant boost in agricultural activities and community engagement.

Training and diversification of farming practices: Training programs in agriculture and horticulture have resulted in increased crop productivity, better land use, and diversification of farming practices in the region. Farmers are now able to explore new crops and more sustainable farming techniques, which has positively impacted both their income and food security. Additionally, the promotion of **Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)** has created alternative livelihoods, further reducing the dependency on conventional agriculture and enhancing the environmental sustainability of the region.

*"Thanks to IVDP, I was introduced to modern farming techniques. I used to rely on traditional methods and barely produced enough to sell. Now, with their support and guidance, I grow a variety of vegetables and use new equipment with subsidies they helped me access. Farming has become profitable and fulfilling." - **Farmer, Khet Village***

Livestock-based enterprises and economic growth: The promotion of **livestock-based enterprises**, including dairy farming and small-scale processing of value-added products, has provided stable incomes for many rural households, particularly women. These enterprises have opened new market access opportunities, leading to increased economic resilience in the region. Women-led rural enterprises have become a driving force for local development, enhancing income stability and empowering women to diversify their sources of livelihood. By fostering self-reliance, these enterprises have contributed to long-term economic growth in the rural areas.

"Learning to create value-added products has transformed our lives. What started as a skill has now become a livelihood, helping us support our families and dream bigger. With these enterprises, we are no longer just seasonal workers—we are entrepreneurs, creating opportunities and driving change in our community."-Banaswathi, Kith village

Sports Infrastructure and school engagement: The provision of **sports infrastructure** in rural schools has had a profound impact on children's physical and mental well-being. It has encouraged greater participation in physical activities and promoted teamwork, leadership, and discipline, skills that extend beyond the sports field and contribute to academic achievement. The excitement generated by these activities has created a more vibrant school culture, which has not only increased school enrolment but also reduced dropout rates. This infrastructure has made schools more attractive to both students and parents, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

"Introducing sports infrastructure like badminton field with fencing in our school has been a game-changer. It's incredible to see the children so enthusiastic and engaged, not just in sports but also in their studies. The playground has become a space where talents are nurtured, confidence is built, and teamwork is learned. It has truly transformed the energy and spirit of our school."- School Teacher, Jaripani

Common Service Centres (CSCs): The **Common Service Centres** have bridged the gap between rural communities and essential services. By providing access to government schemes, Aadhaar assistance, bill payments, and other services, the CSCs have enhanced convenience and reduced travel costs for villagers. These

"With the Common Service Centre in our village, life has become much easier. I can now access government schemes, withdraw money, and settle my bills without traveling far. Plus, the cooperative payments are clear and timely, making it so much simpler to focus on growing and supplying vegetables. It's a huge relief for us farmers!"

centres have also helped streamline financial operations for local cooperatives by ensuring timely and transparent payments. The CSCs have made essential services more accessible, particularly in remote areas, and have empowered villagers to take advantage of available government support.

Water User Groups and Community Capacity Building: The formation of **water user groups (WUGs)** has created platforms for villagers to address water management issues collectively. Through training and capacity-building programs, these groups have gained the skills needed to manage water resources efficiently, ensuring that the benefits of water conservation initiatives are sustained long-term. Additionally, **Self-Help Group (SHG)** women have been trained to create income-generating activities, benefiting both individual members and the broader community. This holistic approach to community development strengthens local governance and fosters a culture of collaboration and sustainability.

"I have learned a lot through the training Himmotthan provided. Initially, I didn't know how to save, manage a register, or even introduce myself properly in meetings. Now, I feel empowered. I've learned how to maintain a savings account, and our group has come together to make decisions. These changes have made a significant difference to our daily lives. I am now considering opening a small shop to improve my family's income, and Himmotthan support will help me in this." — Naksing, Farmer

The IVDP program's approach to integrated village development, which combines environmental conservation, economic empowerment, and social cohesion, has proven highly effective. The impact of its interventions—ranging from water security and agricultural improvements to economic resilience and women's empowerment—has been transformative for rural communities in Uttarakhand. The program's focus on sustainable practices, community participation, and capacity building has contributed to long-lasting, positive changes in the region.

8.3. Efficiency

The **IVDP program** demonstrates high efficiency through effective resource utilization, time management, and streamlined operations, ensuring that the program's interventions yield maximum impact while minimizing costs. Key aspects contributing to this efficiency include the use of local resources, strong adherence to project timelines, and active community engagement in project implementation.

Resource Utilization: A significant portion of **local manpower and materials** was utilized for infrastructure development and other key projects, including the construction of recharge structures, water tanks, and other water conservation initiatives. By relying on local labour and resources, the program not only minimized external costs but also contributed to the community's ownership and involvement in the process. This approach fostered a sense of collective responsibility and further ensured that the projects were aligned with the local needs and capabilities.

Timeliness of Implementation: The timely implementation of critical interventions, especially the **springshed program**, played a crucial role in ensuring that water management measures were completed before the onset of the monsoon season. Adherence to project deadlines allowed the Himmotthan team to successfully install water conservation infrastructure and engage with the community in a timely manner. This strategic timing resulted in improved water availability and enhanced soil conservation, which are essential for sustaining agricultural activities and community livelihoods. Meeting deadlines also helped establish trust between the Himmotthan team and the villagers, fostering collaboration for long-term sustainability.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The program's efficiency was further strengthened by robust monitoring and evaluation systems, including regular audits such as **FRLST** (Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions) and ongoing assessments. These systems allowed the program to track progress effectively, ensuring compliance while remaining flexible to adapt to the evolving needs and priorities of the communities. By keeping the program responsive and adaptable, the team was able to make data-driven decisions and optimize resource allocation to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

Community involvement and local solutions: A key element of the program's efficiency was the active community involvement throughout the implementation process. Under the guidance of Mr. Vargish, a geologist, the team assessed local water recharge solutions and introduced rainwater harvesting initiatives in the spring shed areas. This intervention resulted in increased water levels and better access for Palli village, which consists of eight families. The introduction of fruit trees, local vegetation, and the construction of contour trenches helped reduce soil erosion while enhancing water retention, further promoting sustainability. The community's active participation in the construction of these interventions and their compensation for labor also contributed to the overall efficiency of the program.

"Our work in Palli village exemplifies the power of community-driven solutions. By combining scientific expertise with local participation, we not only improved water availability but also strengthened the ecosystem with sustainable practices like fruit tree planting and contour trenching. It's rewarding to see the villagers take ownership, ensuring long-term benefits for their families and the environment." – Himmotthan Team

Output-Outcome Ratio: The program demonstrated an impressive **output-outcome ratio**, ensuring that infrastructure outputs, such as wells or water tanks, directly led to improved living conditions. For instance, one water tank now serves **22 households** efficiently, providing clean and reliable water access. This efficient use of infrastructure has greatly improved the quality of life for rural families and ensured the sustainability of water resources in the long term. Additionally, the program's ability to quickly respond to **emerging needs**, such as droughts or health crises, through the creation of **water user groups** has further showcased its flexibility and responsiveness.

Sports Infrastructure: The development of **sports infrastructure** in rural schools has been an efficient way to encourage physical activity, improve student engagement, and promote skills like teamwork and leadership. These activities have not only

"The new sports area has become the heart of our school activities. Students eagerly participate in games, practice sessions, and inter-school competitions. It's more than just a playground—it's where they learn teamwork, build confidence, and discover their potential, making every minute spent here invaluable for their overall growth." – School Sports Coordinator, Bhavan

enhanced **health outcomes** but also improved **educational outcomes**, as students with access to sports facilities are more motivated to attend school and participate in school activities. The infrastructure has proven to be a cost-effective means of engaging children and fostering positive school culture.

Chain fencing for agricultural protection: The introduction of **chain fencing** to protect agricultural land has been highly efficient, providing a durable and low-maintenance solution for preventing animal attacks. This intervention has allowed farmers to focus on productive farming practices without constantly worrying about crop damage. The shared responsibility for maintaining the fencing has also fostered greater **community involvement**, with local farmers working together to ensure the integrity of the fences. This sense of ownership and cooperation has further contributed to the **success of agricultural practices** in the three blocks, improving overall productivity and reducing the cost of land protection.

"With the chain fencing in place, we no longer have to spend sleepless nights guarding our crops from animals. It has saved us countless hours and allowed us to focus more on improving our farming practices. The peace of mind it brings is immeasurable, and the increased yield speaks for itself." – Baldev, Sinwali Patal

The IVDP program has effectively demonstrated efficiency through its strategic use of local resources, timely execution of interventions, and strong community participation. The program's ability to achieve significant outcomes with

optimized resource use and minimal costs highlights its success in addressing the needs of rural communities while promoting long-term sustainability. From water conservation and agricultural protection to promoting sports and education, the program has created a lasting impact on the communities in Uttarakhand.

8.4. Sustainability

The IVDP programme was designed with a clear focus on sustainability, ensuring that the benefits extend far beyond the initial interventions and provide long-term positive impacts on communities. The program takes a multi-dimensional approach to sustainability, addressing environmental, economic, and social dimensions to create a resilient, self-reliant community.

Environmental Sustainability:

The foundation of the program's environmental sustainability lies in the spring shed management measures, including the installation of trenches, check dams, and recharge ponds. These structures manage water flow, reduce soil erosion, and enhance groundwater levels, ensuring a sustained water supply for the region.

Vegetative measures: Plantations are introduced to enhance biodiversity, provide fuel and fodder, and offer shade, all of which reduce water loss during plant growth stages and maintain water retention in the soil. These actions contribute directly to the overall sustainability of water resources in the region.

Land and water management practices: By promoting sustainable agricultural practices such as water conservation and runoff reduction, the program enhances agricultural productivity and reduces dependency on external water sources, making the community more resilient to climate change and droughts.

"Thanks to the sustainable water management practices introduced, I can now cultivate my land not just during the monsoon but all year round. Farming twice a year has significantly improved my family's income and brought stability to our lives." – Jagpal Singh, Farmer, Sinwali Patal

Economic Sustainability:

The program encourages the development of **local economic opportunities** and **self-reliance**. By supporting the formation of **self-help groups (SHGs)** and small-scale businesses, the program fosters local entrepreneurship and reduces the community's dependency on external markets.

Local industries: The program has promoted **cottage industries** such as **panner making, dairy farming**, and vegetable sales helping create local jobs and boosting income stability. This economic empowerment fosters **self-sufficiency**, as communities become less reliant on outside resources.

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs): Although establishing a producer company was challenging, it has significantly empowered farmers. By enabling **direct sales** through FPOs, farmers can now bypass middlemen, securing **fairer prices** for their products and enhancing economic viability in the region. This system helps ensure **better returns** for local produce, promoting a fairer and more sustainable local economy.

Social Sustainability:

The IVDP program fosters **community cohesion** by emphasizing **collective ownership** of development projects. The program prioritizes **social inclusion**, especially by engaging **women** and **marginalized groups** in income-generating activities and **resource management**.

Self-Help Groups and Water User Committees: Communities, particularly in **Sinwali Patal**, formed **SHGs** focused on savings and income-generating projects. The members of these SHGs have developed a strong sense of ownership over the projects, such as **water user committees** that now can maintain check dams and ponds. This local management is essential for the long-term sustainability of the program as **external support diminishes** over time.

Women's empowerment: The program actively works to **raise awareness** among women about their contributions and strengthens their **collective voice**. As women gain more autonomy and involvement in **financial planning** and **resource management**, they become catalysts for change within the community, ensuring the sustainability of both water resources and livelihood activities.

Infrastructure resilience:

The program ensures the **long-term resilience of infrastructure** by constructing facilities designed to withstand **climate-related challenges**, such as floods and droughts. Sustainable building practices are prioritized:

Schools, Sports Fields, and Water Systems: These facilities are constructed using **sustainable materials**, ensuring that they last for many years. For example, **community structures** are built to last up to **15 years**, and **school basketball courts** are designed with a **5-year lifespan**, ensuring that the infrastructure remains functional for generations.

*"Our school received sports infrastructure support from the IVDP project. This has not only improved the environment for our students but has also motivated our teachers to stay and continue educating in this remote area. Our students feel proud to be part of a well-supported school." **School Principal, Jaripani***

Low-maintenance infrastructure: The program emphasizes **low-maintenance infrastructure**, ensuring that **recurring costs** are minimal. This approach guarantees that infrastructure is sustainable and easily managed by the community over time.

*"Before the IVDP team arrived, our community faced numerous challenges, from lack of water to limited agriculture support. With their help, we now have better irrigation, and women in our community are part of self-help groups, learning to manage our resources together. It's been life-changing to have support for sustainable farming, which we never considered before." **Sabli Village Resident:***

Integration of local knowledge and cultural practices:

A key element of the program's sustainability strategy is the **integration of local traditions and cultural practices**. By incorporating **traditional knowledge** into development initiatives, the program aligns with the community's values and ensures that interventions are culturally relevant and accepted. This integration helps maintain the **community's identity** while simultaneously improving its resilience and ability to sustain development.

During the capacity building program for dairy related products, the villagers from Jaripani block expressed their views that their community does not engage in selling milk as it was against their community beliefs. But ghee which was clarified butter was a product that they were allowed to sell. We did not want to interfere with their belief system; hence, these villagers were taught on how to produce good quality ghee, package them, and to sell them. – Himmotthan team member

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):

The IVDP program employed a robust **monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** systems to track the **effectiveness** and **impact** of its activities. Continuous feedback mechanisms enabled the program to adapt and improve based on lessons learned.

Community-Based Institutions: Institutions like **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** and **water user groups** play a central role in **resource management, financial planning, and community development**. Their active participation ensures that the benefits of the program are maintained over time, with the community continuing to monitor and adjust strategies for sustainability.

"We've come a long way from relying on external support. Now, with the water user committees taking charge of the check dams and ponds, and our producer company helping us sell directly through the FPO, we are not only securing better prices but also building a future where our community thrives independently." – SHG Member

The IVDP program exemplifies sustainability through its integrated approach to environmental, economic, and social resilience. By ensuring community ownership, promoting local resource management, and integrating sustainable practices, the program is set to continue its positive impact for generations to come. The active participation of the community, especially women and marginalized groups, coupled with the establishment of self-sustaining systems, ensures that the program's outcomes are durable, scalable, and adaptable to future challenges.

8.5. Social Impact

The **IVDP programme** has had a profound and transformative **social impact** on rural communities, addressing critical challenges and fostering sustainable development across multiple facets of life. The key outcomes of the program include improvements in **water security, women's empowerment, education, economic independence, social equity, and environmental sustainability**, which collectively enhance the **quality of life** for rural residents.

Water Security and Accessibility:

A central achievement of the programme is the **improvement in water security**, with the establishment of **tanks, pipelines, and spring-fed systems** to provide a consistent and reliable water supply. Prior to the programme, villages faced severe water shortages, with some going without water for **three months a year**. Now, households in the programme's reach benefit from **24/7 water supply**, with a direct connection to their homes and a stand post for easy access.

Impact: This transformation has dramatically improved **daily life**, reducing the burden on women who previously had to **travel long distances** to collect water. Enhanced water availability has also led to increased **agricultural productivity** and better health outcomes, contributing to overall **community well-being**.

“When Himmotthan team arrived in June 2022 and conducted the baseline survey, they truly listened to our concerns about water scarcity and the drying up of our traditional springs. This issue had been a major challenge for us, deeply affecting our agriculture and daily lives, as water is essential at every stage of farming. Together, we identified natural water sources like the Changer spring and discussed solutions to address the severe water shortages we face during summer.

With the help of the technical team led by Mr. Vargish, we implemented rainwater recharge activities for the Pejal spring. The results have been remarkable—water levels have increased, and our village of Palli, with its eight families, now has much better access to water. The installation of a plastic pipe system has made it so much easier to bring water into our homes and fields.

The efforts made by Himmotthan, including planting fruit trees, creating contour trenches, and adding grass to prevent soil erosion, have truly transformed our land. These steps have not only conserved water but also stabilised our soil.

“The technical team's guidance on proper trenching methods ensured that the structures are both safe and effective. We, as a community, were proud to play an active role in this work. Labourers received fair payment for their efforts, calculated carefully by our committee, led by Shri Sogand Singh Pawar. This collaboration has not only improved water security for all of us but also strengthened our resilience, trust, and unity as a community.” Pawar, Sinwali Patal

Empowering Women and Marginalized Groups:

The programme prioritizes **women's empowerment**, offering them access to **income-generating activities**, **credit facilities**, and **vocational training**. These efforts have **improved women's financial independence**, strengthened their **social status**, and enhanced their **decision-making power** within households and communities.

“With the guidance and training from Himmotthan, I feel more confident in managing the farm and our finances. We can grow vegetables, and with the new goat shed, my husband and I can care for our livestock better. Himmotthan has shown us the importance of water conservation and its impact on our daily lives. The Self-Help Groups have helped us financially, and we are now exploring other opportunities like starting a small business.”— Pulan, Farmer and Goat Owner

Social Equity: The program emphasizes **gender equality** and **social inclusion**, ensuring that women and marginalized groups, including **Scheduled Castes** and **Scheduled Tribes**, have access to education, skill-building, and leadership opportunities. This leads to reduced **gender disparities** and promotes

*"In the past, our villages were overlooked because of our location and social status. The IVDP changed that, bringing resources directly to us. They helped with land reclamation after floods, provided water pipelines, and encouraged our community to come together for a better future. The changes are visible everywhere, and people have hope again." **Village Elder:***

greater **social justice** across the community.

Women-led Enterprises: The rise of **women-run rural enterprises** has sparked **economic growth** and **social empowerment**. These businesses, which focus primarily on **agriculture** and **food processing**, promote **sustainable practices** and preserve **regional heritage**. They directly benefit **households** by improving **income levels**, enhancing **healthcare** access, and fostering overall **community welfare**. Additionally, these businesses challenge traditional gender roles, inspiring others to pursue **entrepreneurship**.

*"Running my own vegetable business and being involved in dairy farming has given me both financial independence and the confidence to make decisions that benefit my family and community. By focusing on sustainable practices, I'm not just growing my business, but also empowering other women to break free from traditional norms and realize their potential. This journey has allowed me to contribute to my village's growth while ensuring a better future for my family." – **Kavita Devi, Chaliench village, Jagogi***

Local employment and Rural-to-Urban migration:

The programme has played a key role in addressing **rural-to-urban migration** by generating **local employment** and creating **livelihood opportunities** within the village. This has allowed families to remain together and preserved the integrity of traditional village structures, reducing the **social disruptions** caused by migration.

Local job creation: By creating economic opportunities locally, the programme helps families stay in their home villages, ensuring they do not need to migrate to cities for work. This has also helped **reduce poverty** and **improve the standard of living** for rural residents.

Community cohesion and social unity:

The programme has fostered **community cohesion** by promoting **collective participation** in development activities. Through initiatives such as shared **responsibility for maintaining water systems** and **chain fencing** for agricultural

protection, residents have developed a sense of **ownership** and **cooperation**, strengthening social bonds.

"With the chain fencing in place, I can now focus more on improving my farming practices, like diversifying crops and conserving soil. The shared responsibility for maintaining the fences has brought our community together, fostering cooperation and a sense of ownership. This has not only improved our farming outcomes but also strengthened our bonds as a community, helping us grow together." – Bhavan Singh, Farmer

Impact on Farming: Shared responsibility for maintaining fencing and other agricultural infrastructure has helped improve **crop diversification**, **soil conservation**, and **resource management**. This, in turn, has led to better agricultural outcomes, further enhancing community cooperation and overall success.

Inclusive Development and Social Equity:

The programme places strong emphasis on **inclusive development** by ensuring that **all members of the community** participate in decision-making processes. This **equitable approach** fosters a sense of **shared ownership** and ensures **access to resources and opportunities** for marginalized groups.

Impact on caste and gender-based discrimination: The programme actively works to **address inequalities** and promote **social equity**, offering opportunities to those previously excluded from mainstream development efforts. It helps challenge the traditional norms of **caste** and **gender-based discrimination**, creating a more **inclusive** and **just society**.

Promotion of sports and educational outcomes:

The programme also emphasizes the importance of **sports** in promoting **physical and mental well-being**, particularly for **school-going children**. By providing **sports infrastructure**, the programme not only encourages **teamwork**, **discipline**, and **leadership** skills but also strengthens **community ties** through **inter-school events**.

Impact on school enrolment: The creation of **sports facilities** has made schools more attractive to both students and parents, leading to increased **enrolment rates** and **reduced dropout rates**. Schools with strong sports programs often gain a better **reputation**, drawing in more students and improving **educational access** for rural children.

"Providing sports infrastructure has transformed our school environment, making it a place where children not only excel academically but also develop important life skills like teamwork, leadership, and discipline. It has brought the community together, encouraged healthy competition, and inspired many of our students to dream bigger, even pursuing careers in sports. The improved facilities have also played a key role in increasing school enrolment, as parents are more eager to send their children to a school that offers holistic development opportunities." – School Principal, Bhavan

Economic benefits for farmers:

The impact on **farmers** has been significant, particularly through the creation of a **Federation** that allows farmers to sell their produce without incurring **commission charges** typically deducted by Mandis. The **Community Service Centre** ensures **transparent payments**, guaranteeing fair treatment and no unfair deductions.

"Through the Federation, I no longer have to worry about commission charges or unfair deductions from my earnings. The Community Service Centre ensures that my produce is properly recorded, and I receive transparent payments on time. Knowing that the Federation shares its profits with us at the end of the year makes a huge difference, and it helps us all grow together as a community of farmers." – Arvind Singh, Chaliench

Profit Sharing: At the end of each year, the Federation shares its **profits** with its members, benefiting over **1,000 farmers** across **20 villages**. This system ensures that the financial benefits are directly reinvested into the community, further strengthening the local economy.

Environmental Sustainability:

The **IVDP programme** also has a significant impact on **environmental sustainability**, promoting practices such as **moisture conservation**, **runoff reduction**, **biodiversity preservation**, and **groundwater recharge**. These activities help create a healthier **ecosystem**, supporting **agricultural productivity** and **environmental protection** simultaneously.

The IVDP programme has made profound contributions to social impact in rural communities. It has transformed water security, empowered women, created local employment, and promoted inclusive development. By fostering community cohesion, encouraging gender equality, and driving economic growth, the programme has not only addressed immediate challenges but also paved the way for long-term social and environmental sustainability.

"I work as a teacher here in our village. Our community has greatly benefited from the support of the Himmotthan Society. The Himmotthan team has been a key force in bringing sustainable changes, and their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

One of the most impactful contributions was the installation of chain fencing. This has provided us with crucial protection for our crops from wild animals, helping to ensure food security and reducing crop damage. Everyone here can see the benefits this has brought in preserving our agricultural yield, which was previously at risk from intruding animals.

Our village now has a well-organised water user group that oversees all water-related activities, including the maintenance of irrigation tanks. This structure has been essential in managing our water resources effectively, ensuring that we have a steady water supply for agriculture even during dry seasons. Additionally, the Himmotthan Society has provided essential training to enhance our banking and financial literacy. Many of us were unfamiliar with basic banking processes, but with their guidance, we've become adept at managing savings, inter-loaning within our self-help groups, and even understanding banking documentation like passbooks. This financial empowerment has opened up new possibilities for growth in our community.

Our self-help groups now hold regular meetings, where we collectively save money and manage small loans. These funds have become a safety net for many families, allowing us to invest in agriculture and livestock, ultimately improving our livelihood.

*I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Himmotthan and the social auditors who have come to witness and support our progress. The entire village feels more connected and resilient thanks to the work we've achieved together, and we hope to continue this partnership to address the remaining challenges in our community." - **Junaid Ramodar***

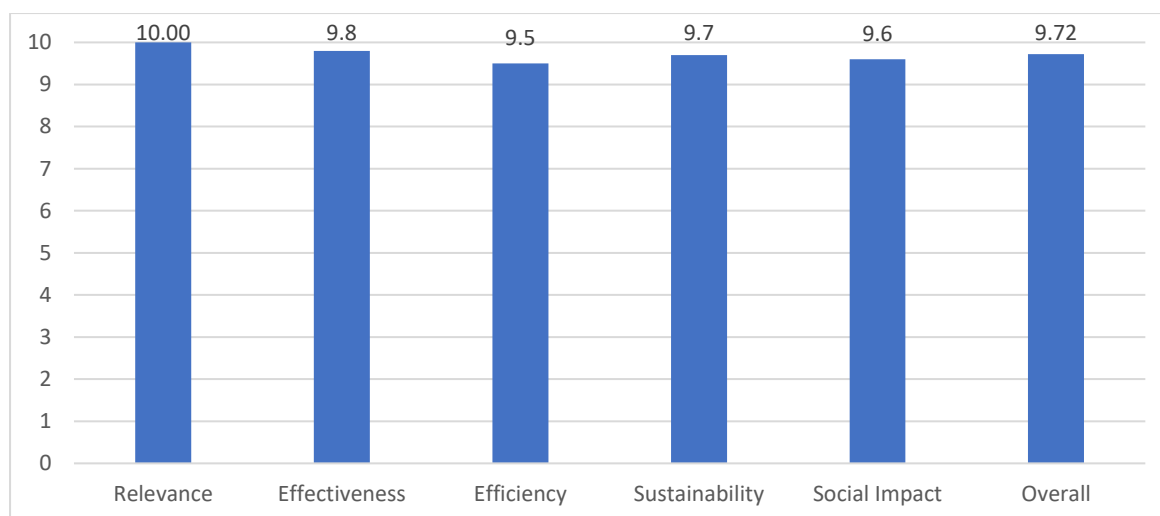
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COMPANY

Table 8: REESS Ratings

Category	Indicators	Rating
Relevance	Availability of reliable and equitable water sources for agriculture and domestic use.	10
	Promotion of crop diversification to reduce monoculture dependency.	10
	Training in climate-resilient and modern farming techniques.	10
	Access to financial resources, leadership training, and skills development for women.	10
	Participation of women in economic activities such as dairy farming, cultivation, and entrepreneurship.	10
	Promotion of income-generating activities to reduce economic migration.	10
	Development of local enterprises and small-scale businesses.	10
	Creation of sports facilities, digital learning centres, and community libraries.	10
	Improvement in educational access and school engagement.	10
	Promotion of collective ownership through community participation.	10
Effectiveness	Increased water availability through recharge structures like trenches, dams, and pipelines.	10
	Groundwater recharge and enhanced seasonal spring discharge.	10
	Soil moisture retention and evidence of percolation.	10
	Impact of chain fencing in preventing wild animal intrusions and crop damage.	10
	Increased land productivity, crop security, and reduced manual labour.	10
	Increased adoption of diversified and sustainable farming techniques.	10
	Livelihood diversification through NTFPs and new crop varieties.	10
	Increased income through dairy farming and value-added processing.	10
	Accessibility to government schemes, bill payments, and financial services.	9
	Training of community members for water management and conservation.	9
Efficiency	Use of local manpower and materials	10
	Cost minimization through local labour and resources	9
	Quality of Infrastructure (recharge structures, water tanks)	10
	Meeting project deadlines (e.g., Springshed measures before monsoons)	10
	Timely community engagement and resource deployment	10
	Regular audits and assessments (e.g., FRLST audits)	10



Category	Indicators	Rating
	Community ownership of local solutions (e.g., recharge areas, trenches)	9
	Infrastructure outcomes (e.g., water tanks for 22 households)	9
	Measurable benefits (e.g., improved water access and living conditions)	9
	Shared responsibility for maintenance and upkeep	9
Sustainability	Groundwater level enhancement	10
	Reduction of water loss and soil retention	10
	Promotion of sustainable agriculture (e.g., water conservation, runoff reduction)	10
	Formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs)	10
	Promotion of cottage industries (e.g., dairy farming, panner making)	9
	Job creation through local industries	9
	Direct sales through FPOs	10
	Shared responsibility for community resources (e.g., water systems, agriculture)	9
	Use of sustainable materials for long-lasting infrastructure	10
	Ensuring low maintenance costs for sustainability	10
Social Impact	Reduced time spent by women fetching water	10
	Increased agricultural productivity and better health outcomes	10
	Access to income-generating activities, credit facilities, and vocational training	10
	Improved financial independence, social status, and decision-making power within households	9
	Access to education, skill-building, and leadership opportunities for marginalized groups	9
	Reduction in gender disparities and promotion of social justice	9
	Growth of women-run rural enterprises (e.g., agriculture, food processing)	9
	Generation of livelihood opportunities within the village	10
	Farmers sell produce without commission charges through the Federation	10
	Improved cooperation and sense of ownership among community members	10

Figure 5: REESS Scorecard



9. SDG Alignment

The IVDP programme aligns well with multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly by addressing water access, community empowerment, and sustainable agricultural practices.

	<p>The IVDP programme seeks to improve the livelihoods of marginalised rural communities by providing access to alternative income-generating activities, training in sustainable agriculture, and introducing self-help groups (SHGs) that empower women to save and access credit. For instance, the formation of SHGs in Sinwali Patal village enables women to start small businesses like cattle rearing and vegetable farming, fostering economic self-reliance and reducing poverty.</p>
	<p>By promoting sustainable agricultural practices, the IVDP programme works to increase food security for rural families. It introduces crop diversification and water management techniques that enhance soil health and productivity. An example is the rainwater harvesting and spring recharge projects, which enable farmers to cultivate during dry seasons, thus supporting continuous food production and reducing hunger.</p>

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	<p>Good Health and Well-being is achieved in the program areas by improving water access, sanitation, and physical infrastructure. By providing clean and reliable water sources, waterborne diseases are reduced, improving overall community health contributing to healthier living conditions. Development of sports infrastructure encourages physical activity among rural school children, enhancing fitness and mental well-being.</p>
4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	<p>Improved sports facilities in schools, makes education more engaging and inclusive for the rural children and encourages higher enrolment and retention rates. The capacity-building programs, awareness campaigns, for SHG women and farmer groups provides opportunities for lifelong learning and personal growth, contributing to the broader goal of inclusive and quality education for all.</p>
5 GENDER EQUALITY 	<p>Empowering women through financial literacy and leadership training is a core objective of the IVDP programme, addressing SDG 5. Women in SHGs have gained financial independence, contributing to household income and participating in decision-making processes. A key example is the setup of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) where women sell their produce directly, bypassing intermediaries and securing fair prices for their products, which strengthens their economic standing.</p>
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	<p>A significant component of the IVDP programme is to ensure water availability and sanitation in rural areas. By establishing check dams, recharge ponds, and pipelines, the programme provides a consistent water supply to communities. For example, in Palli village, the installation of water tanks serves 33 households year-round, eliminating the need for women to trek long distances for water and improving overall hygiene and health conditions in the community.</p>
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	<p>The IVDP programme fosters local employment by creating sustainable livelihoods, from small-scale agriculture to cottage industries. Community members receive training in water management, crop cultivation, and small business operations, encouraging economic growth within the village. For instance, women trained in SHGs now run their own businesses, like dairy farming, poultry and contributing to</p>

	local economic development and providing jobs to others in the village.
	The programme addresses social inequalities by including marginalised groups, such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and by ensuring equitable access to resources and services. The SHGs foster a sense of unity among women from different backgrounds, enabling them to collectively advocate for community resources, like access to water and financial support for income-generating activities.
	The IVDP programme builds resilience to climate impacts through sustainable land management practices and water conservation. In areas prone to droughts, it introduces climate-resilient strategies like the construction of contour trenches and the planting of local vegetation to prevent soil erosion. In Sinwali Patal, for example, contour trenching prevents runoff and helps capture rainfall, enabling the community to withstand periods of low rainfall.
	The programme's springshed management initiatives, such as the creation of recharge ponds and check dams, support the restoration of local ecosystems. By preventing soil erosion and fostering biodiversity, these interventions enhance the land's productivity and sustainability. For instance, the planting of fruit trees and local vegetation not only stabilises the soil but also provides a habitat for local wildlife, thus supporting biodiversity conservation.
	Collaboration is central to the IVDP programme, as it works closely with local governance bodies, community institutions like SHGs, and other NGOs. This multi-stakeholder approach enables a shared responsibility for sustainable development. The water user committees and village panchayats contribute to maintaining water infrastructure, ensuring the continuity and sustainability of interventions.

10. Recommendations

Expand access to digital financial services	Partner with fintech companies to train SHG members in using mobile banking and digital wallets for transactions and savings. This can improve financial literacy, ensure safe savings, and make financial transactions easier and more transparent.
Diversify income-generating activities	Introduce new income-generating activities such as mushroom farming and handicraft production. Training in these areas can open additional revenue streams for families and reduce migration rates.
Develop youth-centric skill development programs	Establish skill development centres focused on trades such as carpentry, tailoring, electrical work, and digital literacy. Partnering with local businesses for internships can also create job opportunities within the community.
Strengthen partnerships with local government and NGOs	Formalise partnerships with local government bodies, especially for programs like Jal Jeevan Mission, to ensure resources reach remote areas. Explore partnerships with NGOs focusing on health, education, and infrastructure to supplement the programme's resources and expertise.
Increase awareness and access to government schemes	The CSC could also provide information on available government programs and eligibility criteria. Workshops could be conducted to help community members enrol in welfare schemes for health, education, and financial assistance. Health insurance could provide critical support, particularly for families experiencing financial crises.
Implement environmental conservation education	Conduct environmental education sessions for all age groups, focusing on water conservation, biodiversity, and sustainable agriculture. Partner with schools and SHGs to deliver these programs, fostering a community-wide conservation ethic.
Focus on infrastructure maintenance and community ownership	Develop a community-managed maintenance fund to finance the upkeep of shared infrastructure, such as wells, pipelines, and community buildings. Encourage small contributions from households to establish a sense of ownership and commitment to long-term infrastructure resilience.
Health initiatives to be integrated	The health situation in the area is concerning. Although hospitals exist, they are located far away, and ambulances take a long time to arrive. In cases of severe illness, this creates significant challenges.

	Establishing a local clinic with a doctor could greatly enhance healthcare access, but such a facility is currently unavailable. Alternatively, TITAN could partner with Hans Foundation which provides mobile healthcare in the Tehri district. The sixty villages under the IVDP program could be added to their list, ensuring that the essential aspect of health is also addressed within the program area.
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11. Conclusion

The Integrated Village Development Program (IVDP) has made a substantial and transformative impact on marginalised rural communities of the Thauldar, Jaripani, and Bhawan clusters of Tehri district in Uttarakhand. Through a comprehensive approach that integrates water security, agriculture, women's empowerment, community health, education, and infrastructure development, the programme has improved the quality of life for thousands of families in sixty villages. By addressing multiple aspects of rural life, the IVDP has laid a strong foundation for sustainable development, resilient livelihoods, and social equity.

One of the programme's most notable achievements is its success in ensuring water security, which has had far-reaching effects on community health, productivity, and timesaving, especially for women who previously shouldered the daily burden of water collection. By building water management infrastructure, IVDP has not only provided communities with reliable water access but also contributed to enhanced agricultural productivity and food security. These improvements have allowed community members to focus more on economic opportunities, educational advancement, and social activities, contributing to a holistic improvement in living standards.

The programme's emphasis on women's empowerment and income generation has also been transformative. By facilitating Self-Help Groups (SHGs), the programme has provided women with access to financial resources, skills development, and opportunities for entrepreneurship. This empowerment has translated into a more active role for women in household decision-making, financial planning, and community leadership, creating a ripple effect of positive change across social dynamics and enhancing the overall resilience of communities.

Education and skill development initiatives have further strengthened the IVDP's impact, equipping youth with knowledge, life skills, and vocational training. These efforts could lead to reduced migration rates, improved local employment opportunities, and a deeper commitment to the long-term development of the community. By building capacity within local communities, IVDP has ensured that its

impact will be sustained, with community members continuing to benefit from the skills, infrastructure, and systems put in place.

Environmental sustainability has been integral to the programme, with measures such as soil conservation, reforestation, and water conservation reinforcing the resilience of local ecosystems. By fostering community awareness and ownership of these initiatives, the IVDP has cultivated an ethos of environmental stewardship, ensuring that natural resources are protected for future generations.

The programme's success has highlighted several key lessons, including the importance of community participation, local partnerships, and adaptive management. The programme's collaborative approach with local governance bodies, NGOs, and government agencies has facilitated efficient resource use, streamlined operations, and prevented duplication of efforts. This model of community-driven, partnership-oriented development can serve as a replicable blueprint for similar programs aiming to achieve sustainable rural transformation.

