



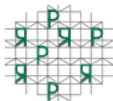
**CLIMATE CHANGE: MANAGING THE PRESENT.
GEARING UP FOR THE FUTURE.**

27-28TH SEPTEMBER 2024

A P SHINDE SYMPOSIUM HALL, NASC, PUSA, NEW DELHI



CO-CONVENED BY



SUPPORTED BY



Preface

Samagam is a multistakeholder symposium organized by PRADAN along with several partner organizations to encourage and facilitate successful collaborations and learning from collaborations across the development ecosystem. Over the years, Samagam, as a platform highlighted efforts by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Corporates and Foundations, and Government organizations and departments to form coalitions and converge efforts among themselves, to effect transformational change on a scale.

Of all the pressing issues today, climate change stands as the most existential. **Samagam 2024**, co-convened by Axis Bank Foundation and PRADAN, focusing on the theme of “**Climate Change: Managing the present. Gearing up for the future**”, aimed to facilitate dialogue and collaboration to confront the challenges of climate change and ignite collective efforts toward a sustainable future. This is the second year of Axis Bank Foundation and PRADAN coming together to facilitate Samagam. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Mission LiFE and Indian Council of Agricultural Research extended logo support to Samagam 2024. The event, held on the 27th and 28th of September 2024, gathered diverse stakeholders including development professionals, NGO representatives from across India, government officials, individuals from corporate and philanthropic institutions, community members from villages, and technical experts.

Key discussions highlighted India's rising climate risks, from extreme weather events to slow-onset disasters, as well as the severe impacts on marginalized farmers. Adaptation strategies, such as regenerative agriculture and community-led resource management, were also explored. Water management challenges, affecting both urban and rural areas, were addressed, along with success stories and collaborative solutions. Another focus was the crucial role of forests in carbon capture, emphasizing the need for forest protection and restoration efforts. Youth-led organizations presented scalable climate solutions to strengthen resilience in the Global South. The event underscored the importance of an integrated approach to climate management, calling for alignment in policy, funding, and innovation to drive impactful climate action across sectors.

This report captures, in detail, the different sessions of Samagam 2024.

Contents

Day 1: 27th September, 2024	1
Session 1: Keynote Address	3
Session 2: Big Data Report Presentation by Dr. Vishwas Chitale	9
Session 3: <i>Antim Jan</i> - Interactive Theatrical Performance	12
Session 4: Managing the Present and Preparing for the Future – Addressing the Multitude of Climate Change Issues: Mitigation vs. Adaptation	15
Session 5: Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “Regenerative Agriculture - Advancing Regenerative Agriculture to Address Climate Challenges”	18
Session 6: Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “Water and Natural Resource Management - What will it take to Address the Water Crisis?”	25
Session 7: Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “The Importance of Forests in the Realm of Climate Change Management- Forests as Nature-based Climate Solution”	31
 Day 2: 28th September, 2024	 38
Session 8: Recapitulation of Day 1 by Ms. Kuntalika Kumbhakar	39
Session 9: Special Address	40
Session 10: Solutions at Work- Sharing of some Solutions at Work by various Organizations/Startups looking to Scale Up	43
Session 11: Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “Water and Natural Resource Management - Funding for Climate Change: Adaptation and Mitigation”	48
Session 12: Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “Need for a comprehensive, integrated climate change management approach”	54



27th September, 2024

The **Samagam 2024** event began with **registration and tea**, providing participants an opportunity to network and engage in conversations before the formal proceedings commenced. Attendees gathered at the symposium hall, where the atmosphere was set for interaction and collaboration.

The official inauguration took place with a **welcome and the lighting of the ceremonial lamp**. This symbolic gesture, conducted by dignitaries present at the event, signified knowledge, enlightenment, and the collective hope for action against climate change. It was a solemn yet inspiring moment, marking the start of Samagam 2024.



Following this, the emcees, **Ms. Sarbani Bose** (Lead, Centre of Excellence-Gender Equality at Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)) and **Mr. Anoop Nautiyal** (Founder of the Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation), introduced Samagam 2024. They provided an overview of the event's objectives, structure, and vision.

Mr. Nautiyal then took the stage and delivered a thoughtful address, beginning with a discussion on the **changing rainfall patterns** and the increasing occurrence of **natural disasters**, citing the recent **tragedy in Wayanad** as an example of climate change's devastating effects. He



and highlighted **PRADAN's long-standing efforts** in improving local livelihoods and building climate resilience through collaborations with multiple stakeholders.

emphasized the urgency for policies that can mitigate such adverse effects and acknowledged the interconnectedness of **Jal, Jangal, and Jameen** (water, forests, and land), which are critical for sustainability. Mr. Nautiyal stressed that **funding and resources** are essential to effectively address climate challenges, and warned that **climate-induced migration** will likely increase, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities. He called for **collective action**, with a focus on these vulnerable populations,



Mr. Nautiyal provided an **overview of the event's activities**, informing participants that **Samagam 2024** would consist of **13 sessions, 5 panel discussions, 1 special address, and 2 presentations**—one data-based and the other, an artistic performance. The event would culminate with a summary and closing remarks. **Ms. Mohini Saha** was introduced as the timekeeper, responsible for ensuring the smooth conduct of the sessions.

A **short film** titled **“Chal Chal Chalen Saath Saath”** was screened, which encapsulated **PRADAN's mission** to enhance village well-being, lifestyle, and agriculture through environmentally sustainable solutions. The film underscored the importance of addressing climate challenges at the grassroots level and showcased PRADAN's contributions toward improving rural resilience.

Mr. Nautiyal then introduced the **Mission LiFE Vision**, a concept promoting environmentally sustainable lifestyles, which has become a key part of the **Global Climate Action Agenda**. He encouraged participants to adopt eco-friendly habits and contribute to mitigating climate change in their daily lives.

He also acknowledged the significant contributions of the **Axis Bank Foundation**, which has been a **philanthropic force** in transforming lives and livelihoods across India **since 2011**. The Foundation's role in supporting efforts towards sustainability and climate resilience was greatly appreciated.

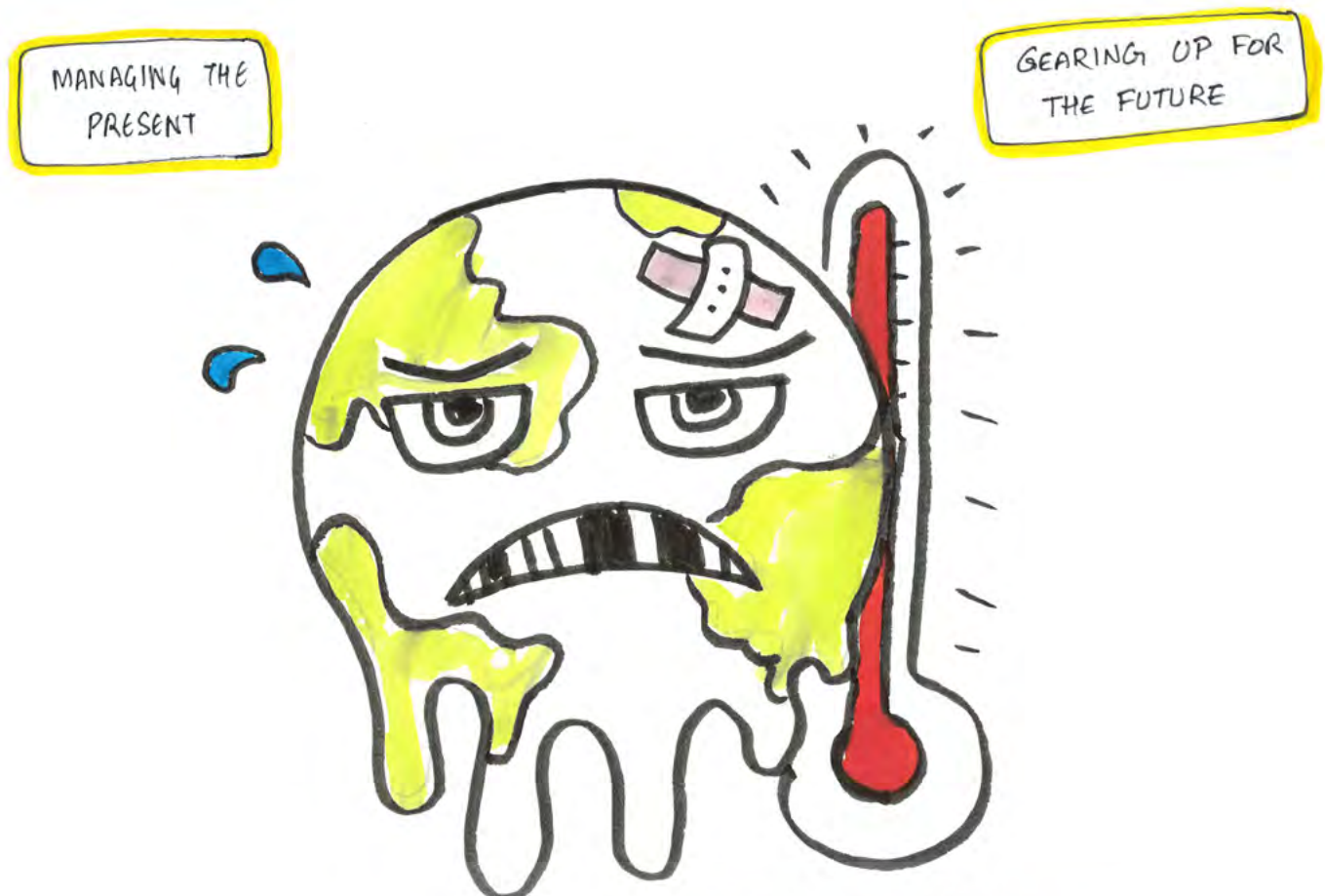
In his **closing statement**, Mr. Nautiyal left the audience with a powerful quote: **“If you want to run fast, run alone. But if you want to run far, run together.”** This message encapsulated the ethos of **collaboration** that underpinned Samagam 2024, emphasizing the importance of working together in addressing the pressing issue of climate change.

Session 1: Keynote Address

Speakers:

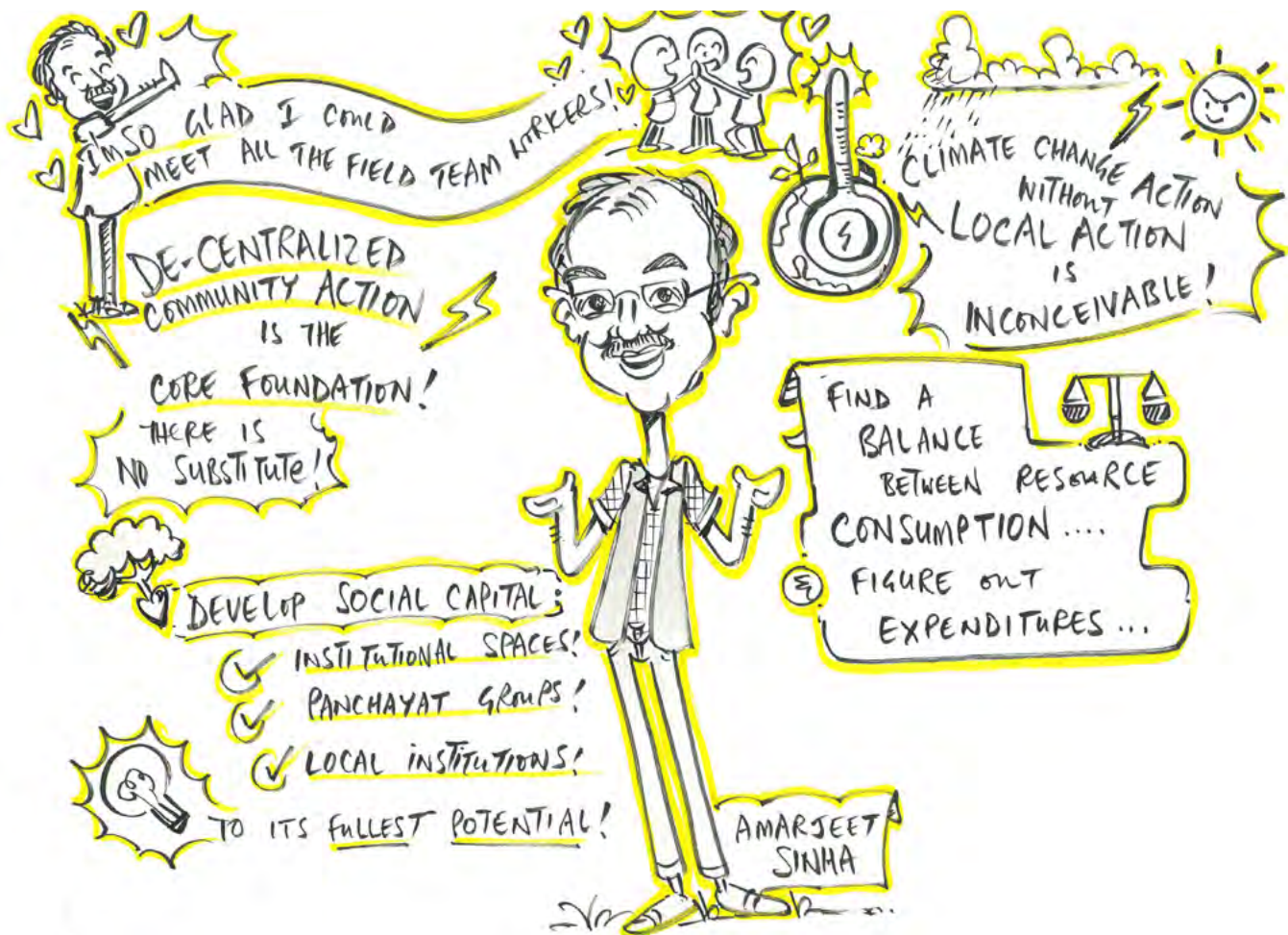
1. **Mr. Amarjeet Sinha:** Member, Private Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) and former Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India
 2. **Ms. Dhruvi Shah:** Executive Trustee and CEO (Chief Executive Officer), Axis Bank Foundation
 3. **Ms. Chami Murmu:** a Padmashree Awardee
 4. **Dr. Srikant K. Panigrahi:** Director General and Distinguished Research Fellow, Indian Institute of Sustainable Development
 5. **Dr. Sujeet Kumar Bajpayee:** Member of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) and former Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Government of India
-

During the “Samagam 2024” event, several key speakers addressed crucial topics related to climate change, community-driven development, and sustainable agricultural practices, each bringing unique insights to the discussion.



Mr. Amarjeet Sinha opened the session with a compelling argument for new thinking in addressing climate challenges. He emphasized the importance of **community-based programs**, highlighting that **decentralized community action is the bedrock of India's reform initiatives**.

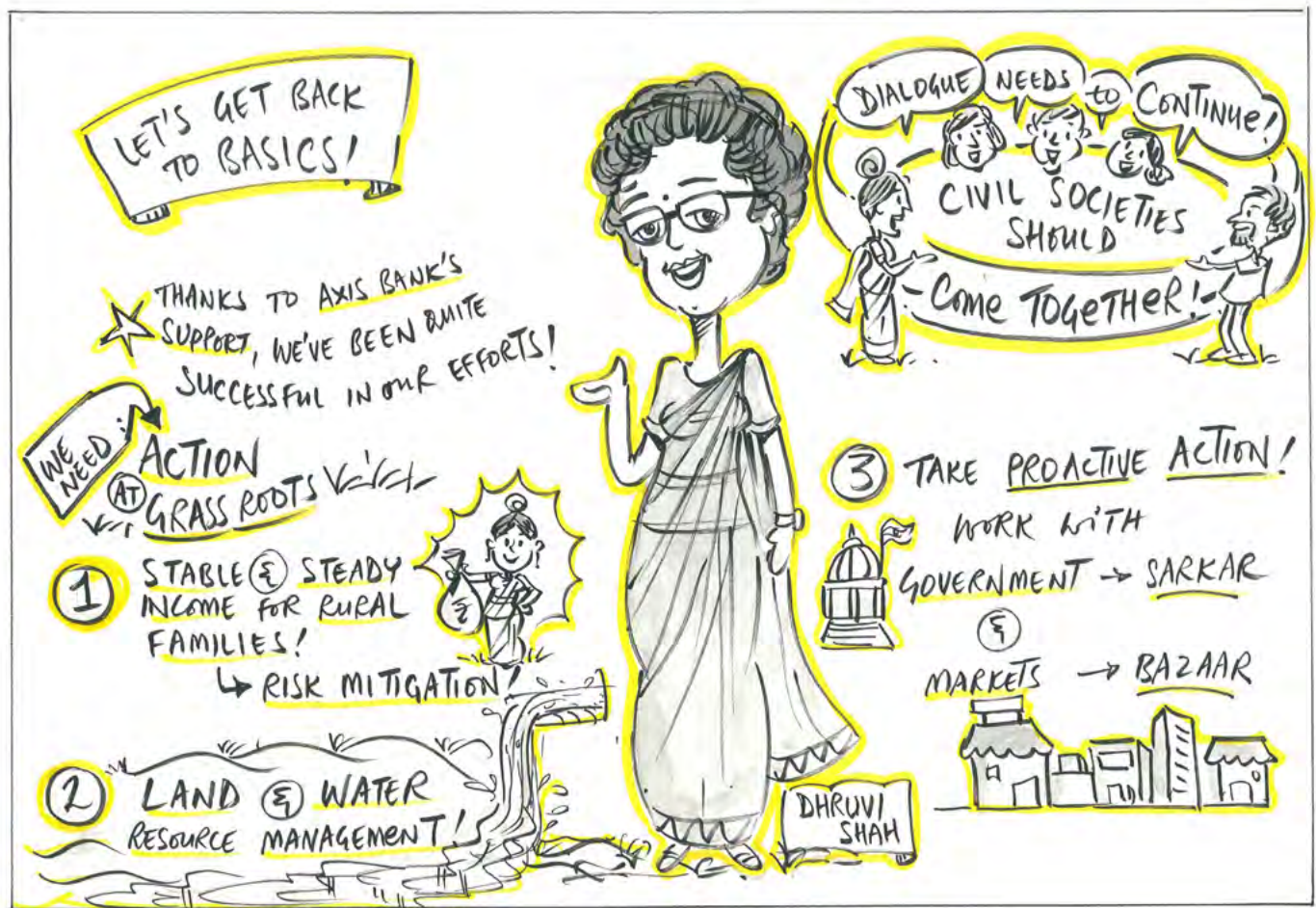
Drawing from the **Reserve Bank of India's report** published in 2023, he illustrated how states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, and Sikkim have seen improvements in human development indicators and per capita income due to their focus on decentralization. Mr. Sinha stressed the **necessity of institutional spaces for lifestyle** improvements and development, alongside a focus on green growth, human development, and nutrition. He also underscored the **critical role of local action in resolving livelihood challenges**, insisting that climate change action without local involvement is inconceivable. His speech further highlighted the **significant contribution of civil society in organizing and collaborating with local institutions to create impactful changes**. With a vision for more effective governance, he called for making the government "asarkari" (more impactful). He cited the example of **Medha** in Gorakhpur University, which works towards improving student employability, and emphasized the development of social capital through institutional spaces, Panchayat groups, and local institutions.





Ms. Dhruvi Shah followed with insights into the Foundation's livelihood programs, which began in 2011. She pointed out the **need to return to the basics in tackling climate issues**, highlighting the importance of grassroots action. Following the recent **New York Climate Summit**, new discussions have emerged, and she stressed how organizations must act as enablers for change. Axis Bank Foundation has prioritized ensuring steady income for rural families,

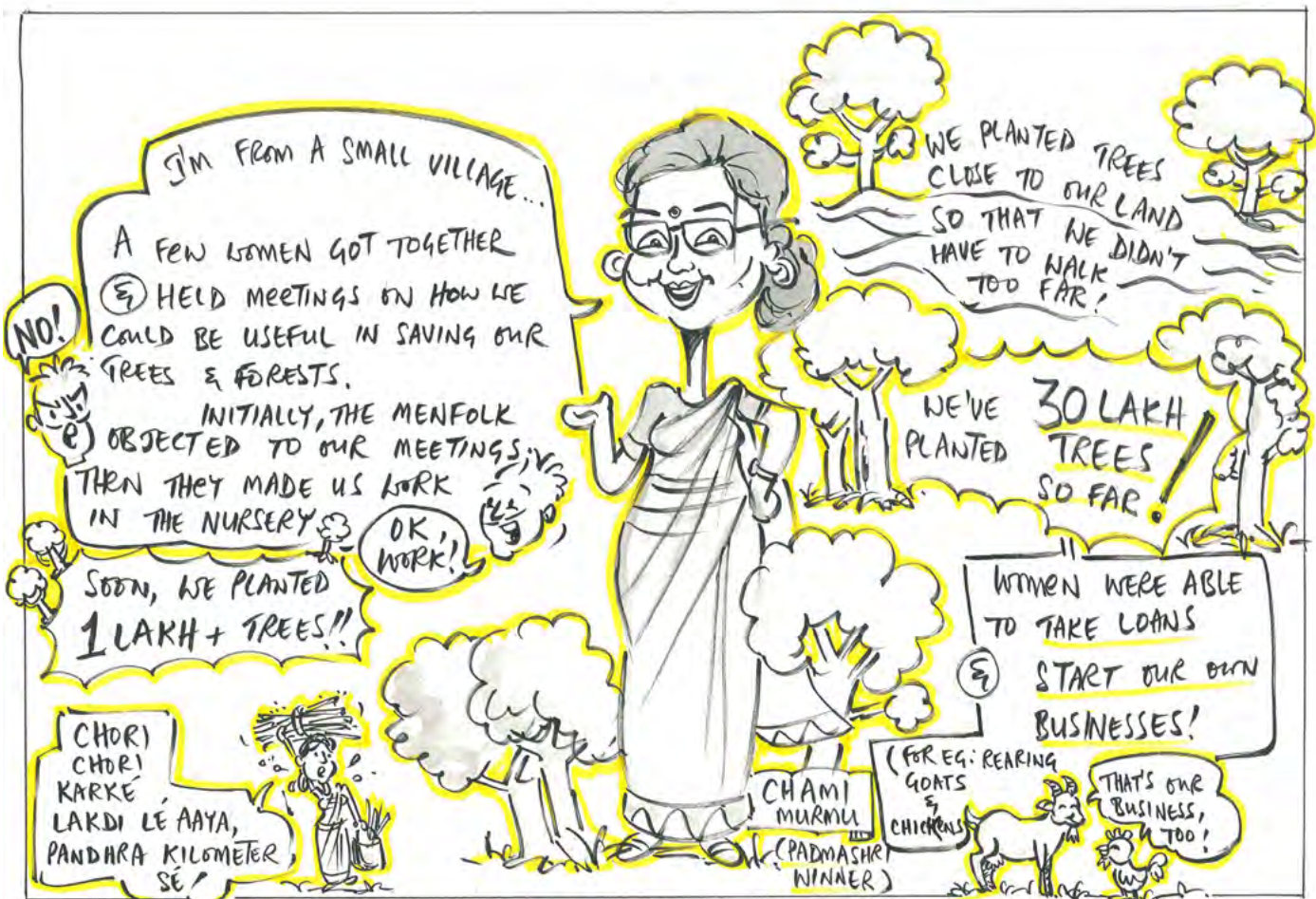
which has rekindled interest in farming. Ms. Shah further emphasized that **collaboration between the government, private sector, and civil society** is essential for sustainable change. She also mentioned the role of markets in rural areas, which can significantly contribute to **effective land and water management**. Moreover, she called for CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) to engage more effectively with the government to create lasting impacts.





Ms. Chami Murmu delivered an inspiring address, sharing her journey of overcoming significant opposition within her community to implement successful **tree plantation programs**. Despite initial resistance, she managed to bring together women and collaborate with the forest department to plant trees on barren lands. She recounted the challenges she faced, including societal perceptions that women should not work freely, and local fears that planting trees would result in **land seizures by the government**. However, her

group leased land from the CEO office and successfully planted **1 lakh trees**. She also faced opposition to planting specific tree varieties due to concerns over soil and water pollution, but through perseverance, she demonstrated the benefits within 3-5 years. The community now enjoys products like **firewood, medicinal herbs, and other resources from the trees**. Ms. Murmu's efforts have led to the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) aimed at addressing local issues such as alcohol abuse and supporting women's entrepreneurship in activities like goat and chicken rearing. She now leads **28 SHGs in Saraikela, Jharkhand**, and has facilitated access to loans for women to start their own businesses. Her goal is to plant **1 lakh trees annually**, with **30 lakh trees already planted so far**.





Dr. Srikant K. Panigrahi delivered an insightful presentation on **the pressing need to reconnect with nature**. He warned that humanity is facing an ecological crisis, with nature reaching its threshold for enduring damage. Dr. Panigrahi discussed critical issues such as **shifting ocean currents, heatwaves, and biodiversity loss**. He stressed the importance of **decentralized community waste management** and proposed the **adoption of low-cost, sustainable, and inclusive business models** to address the climate

crisis. He also highlighted India's ambition to become a **USD 30 trillion economy by 2047**, cautioning that unless development is made sustainable, could have severe environmental impacts. Focusing on **green growth, resource efficiency, and sustainable business models**, especially in rural and vulnerable communities, he urged the integration of social, environmental, and economic elements into development strategies. He referenced the **United Nation Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)**, emphasizing the need to **"Reimagine, Recreate, Redesign"** humanity's interaction with nature. Dr. Panigrahi concluded with a call for convergence among stakeholders, advocating for collaboration between governments, businesses, civil society, and communities to prioritize green growth and responsible resource consumption.

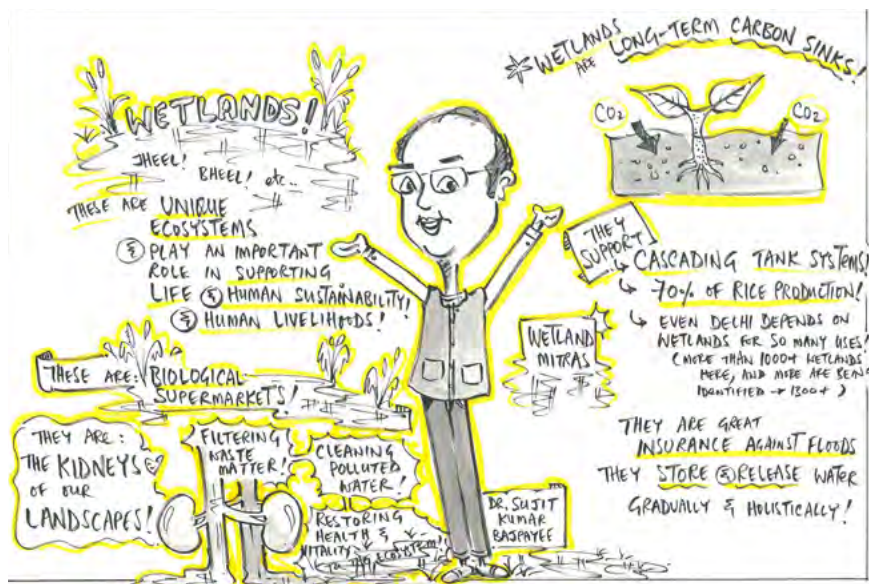




Dr. Sujit Kumar Bajpayee provided a keynote address on the **critical role of wetlands**, describing them as the “**kidneys of the landscape**.” Wetlands, he explained, are essential for filtering pollutants, supporting biodiversity, and acting as biological supermarkets for communities. In regions like Assam, wetlands provide vital flood protection, serving as natural insurance against heavy rainfall. He explained how **preserving wetlands helps reduce carbon emissions** by converting carbon into organic forms that are less harmful. Dr.

Bajpayee discussed India’s efforts in wetland conservation over the last four decades, which have placed the country among the global leaders in this domain. He highlighted **the Mission Sahbhagita**, which promotes community participation in wetland conservation through the involvement of **Wetland Mitras (friends of wetlands)**. The ‘**Amrit Dharohar Scheme**’ was another key initiative he highlighted, focusing on species conservation, promoting nature tourism, and supporting wetland-based livelihoods. The scheme also incorporates wetland carbon studies to explore how wetlands can enhance carbon sequestration. Dr. Bajpayee spoke about the **Government of India’s Wetland Conservation initiative**, which has verified **80,000 wetlands**, covering **2.3 lakh hectares**, and emphasized the importance of community involvement in these efforts. He further discussed the **creation of green skills through the Wetlands of India Portal** and its collaboration with CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) to develop wetland tourism and related livelihoods sustainably. Dr. Bajpayee’s presentation underscored the irreplaceable role of wetlands in climate resilience and sustainable development, stressing that climate change cannot be tackled without **comprehensive wetland conservation efforts**.

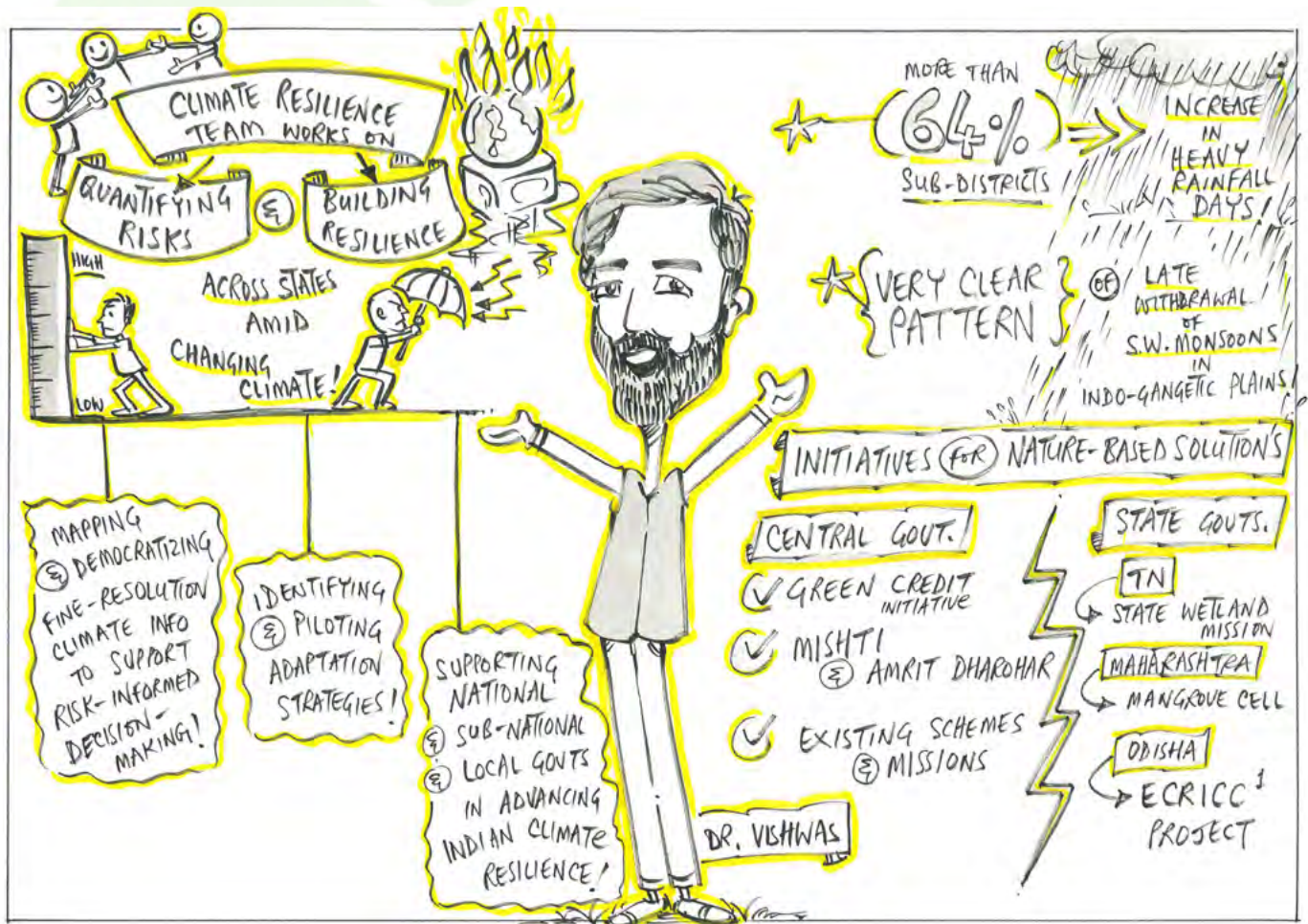
The session concluded with remarks from **Mr. Anoop Nautiyal**, who thanked the speakers and acknowledged the participation of **50 Civil Society Organization (CSO) partners** in the event. He reiterated the importance of collective action and the spirit of “**Samarpan Bhaav**” (**dedication to the cause**).



Session 2: Big Data Report Presentation

Speaker:

Dr. Vishwas Chitale: Senior Program Lead, Climate Resilience, Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW)



Dr. Vishwas Chitale delivered a comprehensive report on the **impacts of climate change** and the necessary steps to transition from climate risk to climate resilience. He began by outlining the alarming rise in global temperatures, shifts in rainfall patterns, and the increasing frequency of floods and cyclones across India. His presentation focused on the critical **climate-related risks impacting agriculture, human health, and the environment**. He explained that the rising temperatures and altered rainfall patterns have

left India highly vulnerable to extreme weather events. Over **100 crore Indians** are now regularly exposed to heatwaves, with significant impacts on both urban and rural populations. Dr. Chitale highlighted that these changes in agricultural productivity and human health have

become particularly evident over the past three decades, underlining the urgent need for **specialized climate resilience teams to address these growing challenges.**

Dr. Chitale next presented a detailed study on the monsoon, showing significant **changes in rainfall patterns through rainfall maps.** He discussed how the **delayed onset and withdrawal of the monsoon** season have directly impacted agricultural planning and cropping calendars. Specific attention was given to Maharashtra, where both total rainfall and the number of heavy rainfall days have increased. Dr. Chitale emphasized that **40%** of India's population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods, with **50%** of Indian agriculture being rainfed. The **irregular monsoon patterns**, therefore, have severe consequences for this vital sector, affecting not just food production but also the economic stability of millions of farmers.

Continuing with agriculture, Dr. Chitale stressed the importance of **organic farming** as a sustainable solution to climate change. He addressed how farmers must adapt their **cropping calendars** to match the new realities of changing rainfall patterns and temperature shifts, ensuring that agricultural practices remain resilient despite these challenges. Organic farming, according to Dr. Chitale, offers a **pathway to reduce dependency on chemical inputs** while improving soil health and biodiversity, both of which are essential in the face of unpredictable climatic conditions.

Dr. Chitale also explored the distinct challenges posed by climate change to urban areas, where seasonal extremes are becoming more frequent. Cities are experiencing extreme heat during summers, urban flooding during the monsoon season, and increasing air pollution during winters. These environmental pressures are compounded by **rising energy demands, as cities become hotspots for energy consumption during heatwaves.** Dr. Chitale introduced the concept of using web-based toolkits to assess the cost-benefit ratios of different interventions designed to **combat urban climate challenges**, such as air pollution and flooding. These evaluations, he explained, are critical for developing effective and cost-efficient urban climate resilience strategies.

A significant portion of Dr. Chitale's presentation was dedicated to **nature-based solutions** and their role in addressing climate challenges. He advocated for the adoption of **green infrastructure, ecosystem-based approaches, and local adaptation measures** that communities and policymakers can implement to build climate resilience. These nature-based solutions, he argued, should align with both global climate targets and national policies. Dr. Chitale highlighted several government initiatives, such as the **Green Credit Initiative and Tamil Nadu's State Wetland Mission**, which support environmental conservation and build resilience. He emphasized that for these initiatives to be truly effective, they need to be integrated into local-level actions that engage communities directly in conservation efforts.

Dr. Chitale then showcased several success stories of **community-driven efforts across India** that are already contributing to building climate resilience. His presentation featured examples of communities restoring degraded landscapes, managing water resources sustainably, and adopting climate-resilient agricultural practices. These localized actions are key to addressing climate challenges on the ground. However, he cautioned that without continued and concerted action, **India could face an economic loss of up to USD 7 billion by 2030 due to**

the increasing risks associated with climate change.

The session concluded with a media presentation titled “**Face of Climate,**” a short film that vividly illustrated the real-life impacts of climate change on various communities across India. The film not only portrayed the devastating effects of extreme weather events but also highlighted the grassroots efforts that are driving meaningful change and fostering resilience in the face of these climatic challenges.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Chitale underscored the importance of establishing a **robust policy framework** that incorporates nature-based solutions at both the national and state levels. He reiterated the significance of initiatives such as the **Green Credit Initiative and the Tamil Nadu State Wetland Mission**, which serve as guiding examples of how states can work toward achieving climate resilience. His presentation emphasized the need for collaborative efforts from both the government and local communities to ensure sustainable development and long-term climate resilience for India.

Session 3: Antim Jan - Interactive Theatrical Performance

Concept and Design:
Ms. Jaya Iyer

Performance by:
Jokers for Justice



Session 3 of the event featured a highly engaging and thought-provoking interactive theatrical performance titled “**Antim Jan**” (**The Last Person**), directed by **Ms. Jaya Iyer**. The performance centered around the **theme of climate change and its severe impact on small and marginal farmers**, with a particular focus on critical environmental issues such as **water, soil, forests, and energy resources**. The play stood out for its creative and participatory format, which not only involved the audience but also encouraged reflection on the current climate crisis. Performers **Ankush, Dimple, Ekta, Tanishka, Priya, Vidhan, Pakhi, Pihu, Sachin, Sunny, Vanshika, and Zubair** brought the issues to life on stage, transforming abstract environmental challenges into tangible, emotional experiences for the audience.

The session began with a unique interactive activity designed to engage the audience from the

start. The performers led an introductory segment titled “*Hawa Chali, Hawa Chali*,” which set the tone for the performance by emphasizing the theme of **environmental shifts and climate changes**. During this activity, the performers posed questions to the audience, such as “**Who had breakfast today?**”, “**Who is engaged in agriculture?**”, and “**Have you noticed changes in seasonal patterns?**”. These questions aimed to connect the audience with the realities of small and marginal farmers who are often the most affected by climate-driven changes. This interaction seamlessly bridged the gap between the everyday lives of the audience and the struggles faced by rural farmers, fostering a deep emotional connection and heightened awareness.

The core of the session was the **participatory theatrical performance**, which vividly depicted the hardships experienced by rural communities due to climate change. The play unfolded through multiple scenes that showcased agricultural fields, village life, and natural disasters. The first major theme explored was agriculture and livelihoods. The performance illustrated how **erratic rainfall and shifting seasons have drastically altered crop patterns**, thereby affecting the livelihoods of farmers. This part of the play highlighted the vulnerability of rural communities that depend on stable environmental conditions for survival. The second theme, **environmental degradation**, portrayed the devastating effects of river drainage, drought, and deforestation. The performers underscored the depletion of natural resources and highlighted the role of industrialization and urban expansion in worsening water scarcity and reducing forest cover. These scenes drove home the point that environmental degradation is not an abstract issue but a tangible threat to the survival of communities reliant on the land.



The play also portrayed the numerous challenges faced by villagers as a result of climate change. It emphasized how water shortages, soil degradation, and lack of access to clean energy sources perpetuate **cycles of poverty** and crisis for rural populations. The performers vividly depicted the deteriorating quality of life for farmers and their families, making an emotional connection with the audience. This portrayal served as a powerful reminder of the **human cost of climate change**, leaving the audience deeply moved by the plight of the farmers.

A pivotal aspect of the performance was its **focus on citizen responsibility** and the social impact of climate change. In a participatory segment, the performers illustrated how citizens are both victims and contributors to environmental degradation. The play urged the audience to reflect on their own role in the climate crisis, **questioning the social responsibility** of every individual. The characters in the performance demonstrated how people get trapped in a vicious cycle of environmental degradation, showing how climate disasters like **floods, droughts, and deforestation** affect both rural and urban populations. The interactive nature of the performance reached its climax in the closing scene, where ropes held by the audience symbolized the interconnectedness of humanity in the climate crisis. This symbolic gesture demonstrated that every person is responsible for the current environmental situation, but also that collective action can lead to meaningful solutions.

Key symbolism used throughout the play deepened its impact. **The performance was framed as a “Mirror of Reality,” reflecting the harsh truths of climate change and its disastrous consequences.** This approach encouraged the audience to introspect and contemplate their role in the crisis. Additionally, the use of **ropes and nets** in the final segment symbolized the **interconnectedness of society in climate change**. The ropes visually demonstrated that the actions of each individual can either contribute to the problem or help resolve it, reinforcing the theme of shared responsibility.

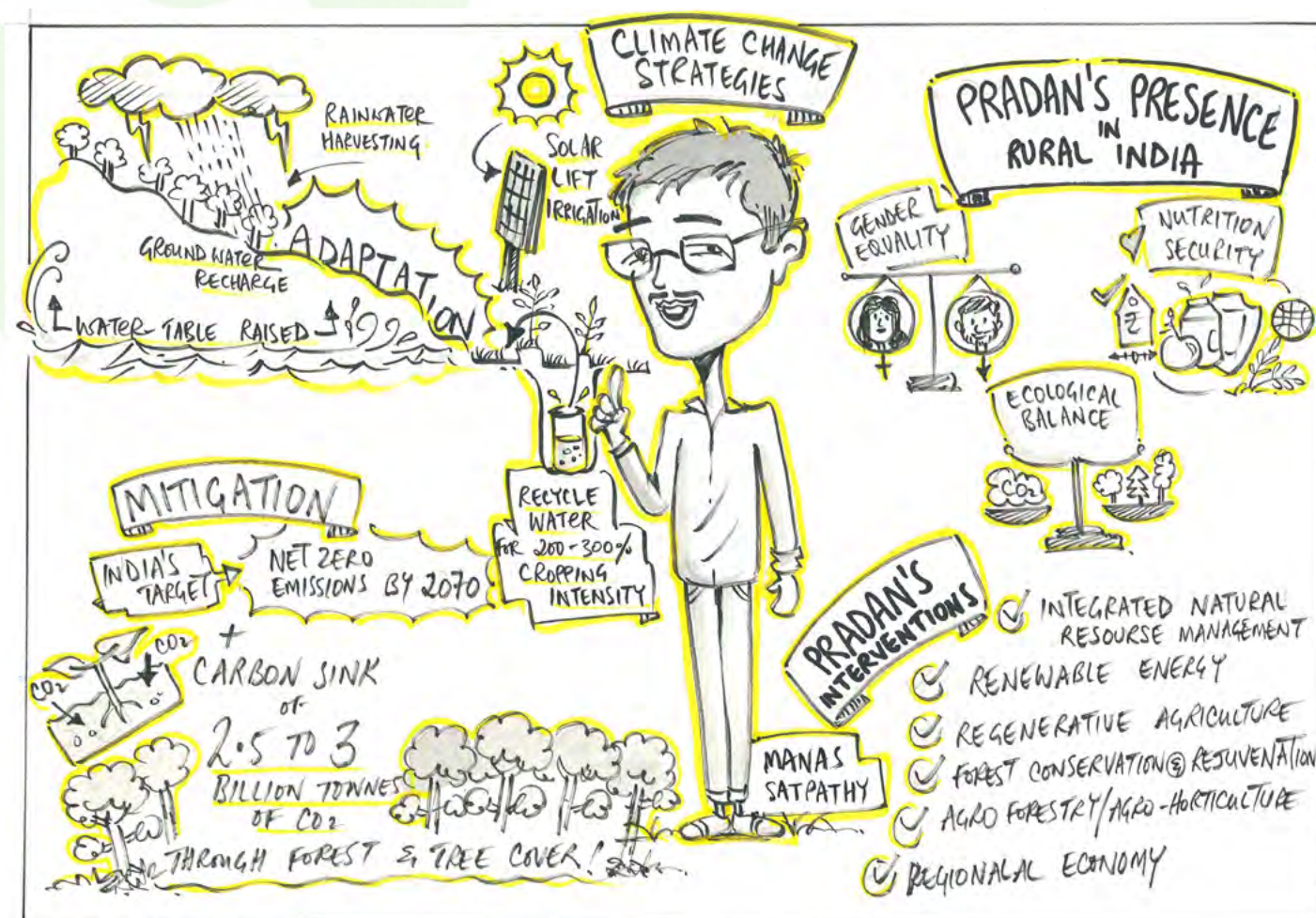
The performance concluded with a powerful reminder that the **future of the planet is in the hands of its citizens**. The interactive format of the play left a lasting impression on the audience, who felt the weight of responsibility and recognized the urgent need for action to mitigate the impacts of climate change. By the end of the session, participants were left with a renewed sense of urgency to take steps to protect the environment and support vulnerable communities, such as the small and marginal farmers depicted in the play.

The performance, with its emotional depth and engaging format, was one of the most impactful activities of the event, leaving a lasting impression on all who participated.

Session 4: Managing the Present and Preparing for the Future – Addressing the Multitude of Climate Change Issues: Mitigation vs. Adaptation

Speaker:

Mr. Manas Kumar Satpathy: Lead, Centre of Excellence, Climate Action, PRADAN



The session, led by **Mr. Manas Kumar Satpathy**, focused on strategies for addressing the challenges posed by climate change, particularly in the context of India's rural communities. Mr. Satpathy opened by discussing the global and local impacts of climate change, emphasizing that rural areas, which depend heavily on natural resources and agriculture, are particularly vulnerable. Climate shifts have led to **unpredictable crop yields, water scarcity, and soil degradation** in these communities. He stressed that **climate change is a multifaceted issue, requiring both mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (responding to the effects of climate impacts) strategies to ensure sustainable development for marginalized and vulnerable populations.**



Mr. Satpathy introduced several key strategies to address these challenges. First, he highlighted the transition to renewable energy, with a special focus on the **adoption of solar energy** to reduce dependence on non-renewable resources. He also emphasized the importance of **regenerative agriculture**, which restores soil health while ensuring productivity, and sustainable forest management, which **conserves forests while improving rural livelihoods**. These strategies, he explained, are critical in building resilience and supporting rural communities in adapting to climate shifts.

A significant portion of the presentation was devoted to the role of **MGNREGS** (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) in supporting farmers and communities. Mr. Satpathy noted that MGNREGS serves as a **safety net**, offering employment opportunities through projects focused on natural resource management, which **helps farmers adapt to changing climatic conditions**. Additionally, he discussed **India's climate goals**, particularly the target to achieve **net-zero emissions by 2070**. While ambitious, these goals face challenges, especially in terms of budgetary constraints and the marginalization of rural areas, which are already facing resource crises exacerbated by climate change.

Mr. Satpathy then shifted to PRADAN's climate action initiatives, which align with several **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), including poverty alleviation, zero hunger, gender equality, clean energy, reduced inequalities, climate action, life on land, and fostering partnerships for sustainable development. He outlined **PRADAN's key interventions**, such as promoting **agroforestry**, installing **solar panels** in rural communities, and empowering **marginalized groups**. PRADAN's mission aims to empower these communities by ensuring **gender equality, nutritional security, and ecological balance** through sustainable practices. Building community capacity to tackle climate issues is a central element of PRADAN's strategy, as it helps local populations address climate challenges directly.

Collaboration was a key theme in Mr. Satpathy's presentation. He stressed that tackling climate change requires a convergence of efforts from governments, corporates, research institutions, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). He pointed out **that no single organization can combat climate challenges alone**. A collaborative approach that combines community initiatives, government support, and corporate partnerships is necessary to create effective solutions. PRADAN's **3Cs approach—Community Initiatives, Convergence, and Collaboration**—was presented as central to their climate strategy. This approach involves empowering local communities to take ownership of climate actions, bringing together various sectors to work collaboratively, and engaging multiple actors to drive climate action at scale.

Mr. Satpathy also highlighted key adaptation and mitigation measures, including emission reduction through renewable energy and forest conservation, biodiversity protection through reforestation and ecosystem management, rainwater harvesting to mitigate water scarcity, and

agroforestry to improve soil health and mitigate the impacts of climate change. He shared the positive outcomes of **regenerative agriculture practices**, noting that while crop yields remained stable, soil health showed significant improvement. Additionally, he noted that products grown through regenerative methods were observed to have **better taste and quality**.

In the area of forest management, PRADAN's initiatives include partnerships with governments and CSOs to promote **sustainable forestry practices**. Mr. Satpathy highlighted seed ball technology as an innovative approach in reforestation efforts. He presented a case study from **Kanriyar village in West Bengal**, where PRADAN's interventions led to improvements in both **single-cropped and double-cropped farming systems**. These localized solutions demonstrated the importance of community-led initiatives in combating the effects of climate change.

In conclusion, Mr. Satpathy reiterated the importance of building community capacity to address climate change, calling it a **non-negotiable aspect of PRADAN's strategy**. He stressed that climate change is not a distant threat; it is happening now and requires immediate and coordinated action at the local, national, and global levels.

Session 5: Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “Regenerative Agriculture - Advancing Regenerative Agriculture to Address Climate Challenges”

Moderator:

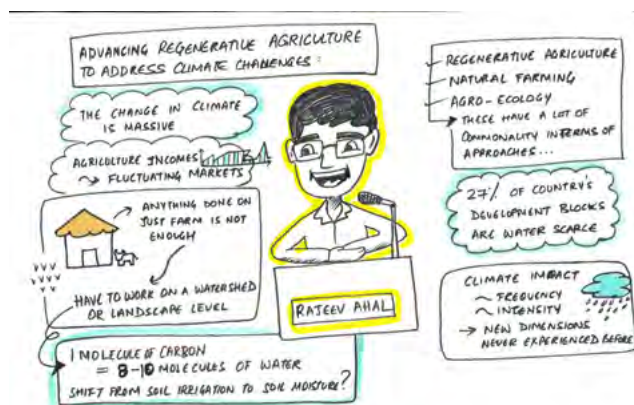
Mr. Rajeev Ahal: Director, Natural Resource Management and Agroecology, GIZ India

Panelists:

1. **Ms. Babita Devi:** Farmer and BRC (Bio-Resource Centre) Entrepreneur, Jainamore, Jharkhand
2. **Mr. Subhash Sharma:** Farmer and Trainer on Natural Farming, Yavatmal, Maharashtra
3. **Mr. Soumik Banerjee:** Expert in Natural Farming, Madhya Pradesh
4. **Ms. Kavitha Kuruganti:** Co-Convenor, Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA - Kisan Swaraj) and steering committee member, National Coalition for Natural Farming (NCNF)
5. **Dr. Gagnesh Sharma:** Director, National Centre for Organic and Natural Farming (NCONF), Ghaziabad, Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India



The **Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on Regenerative Agriculture** focused on “**Advancing Regenerative Agriculture to Address Climate Challenges**”. The session was moderated by **Mr. Rajeev Ahal**. He began by addressing the **increasing severity and diversity of climate change impacts**, which not only affect agricultural practices but also have broader implications for **watersheds and landscapes**. He introduced regenerative agriculture, natural farming, and agroecology as approaches that can help tackle climate challenges. Key points highlighted were the close link between agriculture and **market fluctuations** affecting farmers’ incomes and the importance of water management at the watershed and landscape levels. Mr. Ahal pointed out that **27%** of India’s development blocks already face water scarcity, emphasizing the **urgency of resource management**.





Ms. Babita Devi responded to a question about how **regenerative farming** had impacted her family's needs. She noted that, while regenerative farming was not widely accepted at first, it has since become integral to her farming practice, allowing for **improved crop storage and soil health**. Her family's overall health and farm productivity have also improved as a result of **sustainable practices**.

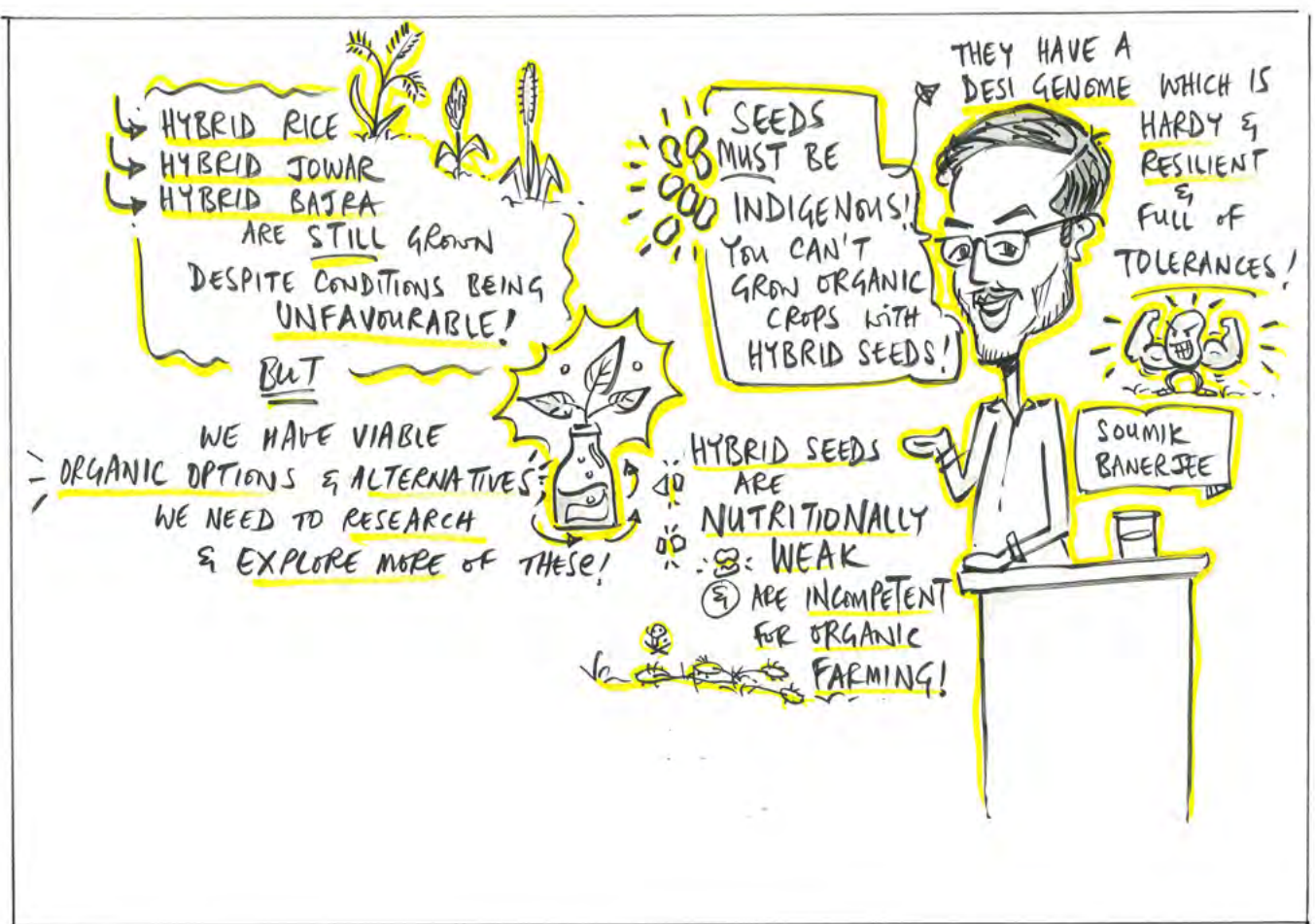


Mr. Subhash Sharma discussed the impact of climate change on regenerative farming. He emphasized the importance of aligning agricultural practices with nature and the climate, noting that **regenerative farming** must be **integrated with soil, water, and environmental considerations**. He outlined three key principles for sustainable farming: **Mutual Complementarity, Balance, and Self-reliance**. Mr. Sharma also stressed the importance of water conservation, suggesting that farm temperature and groundwater levels must be controlled for successful farming.

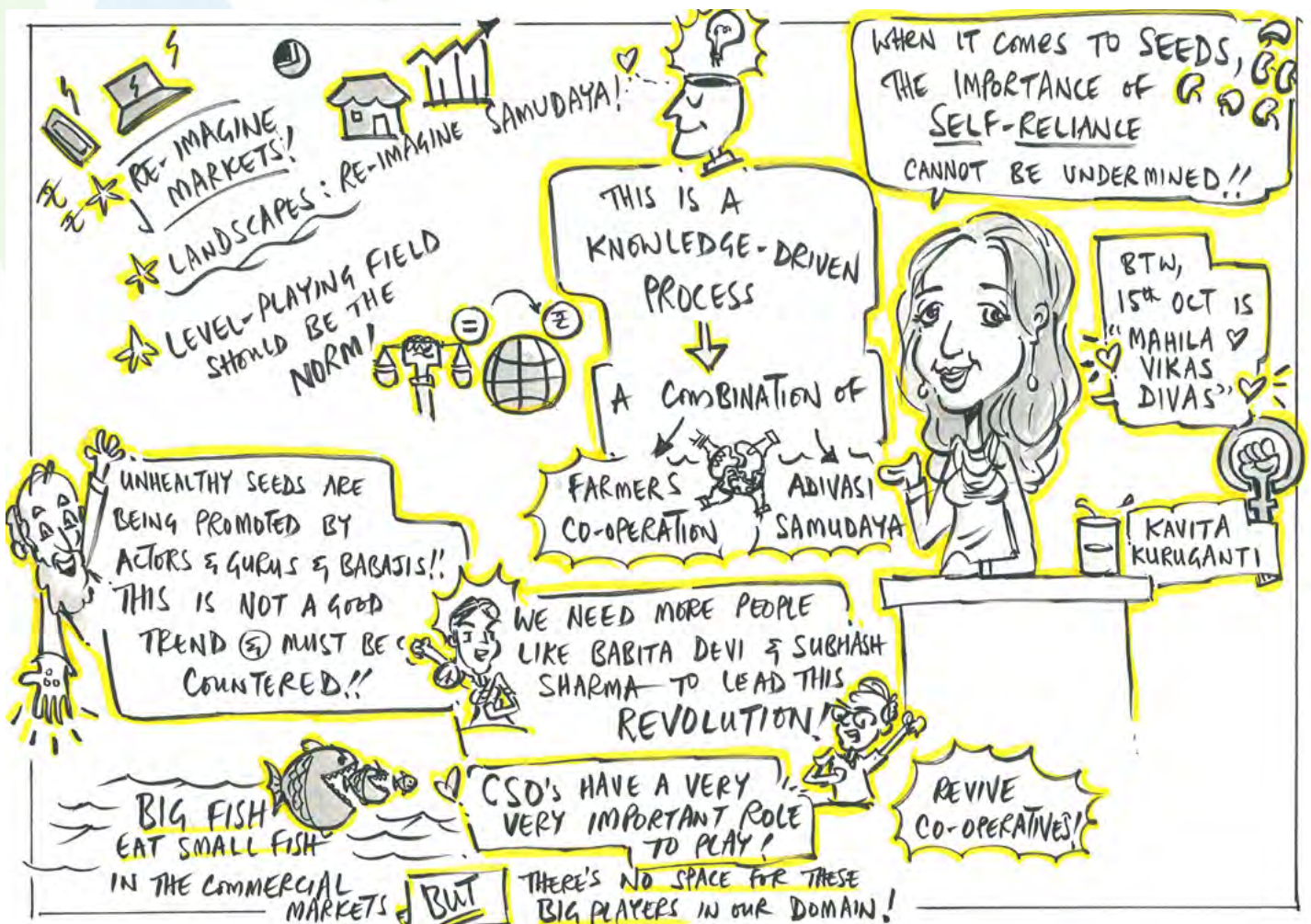




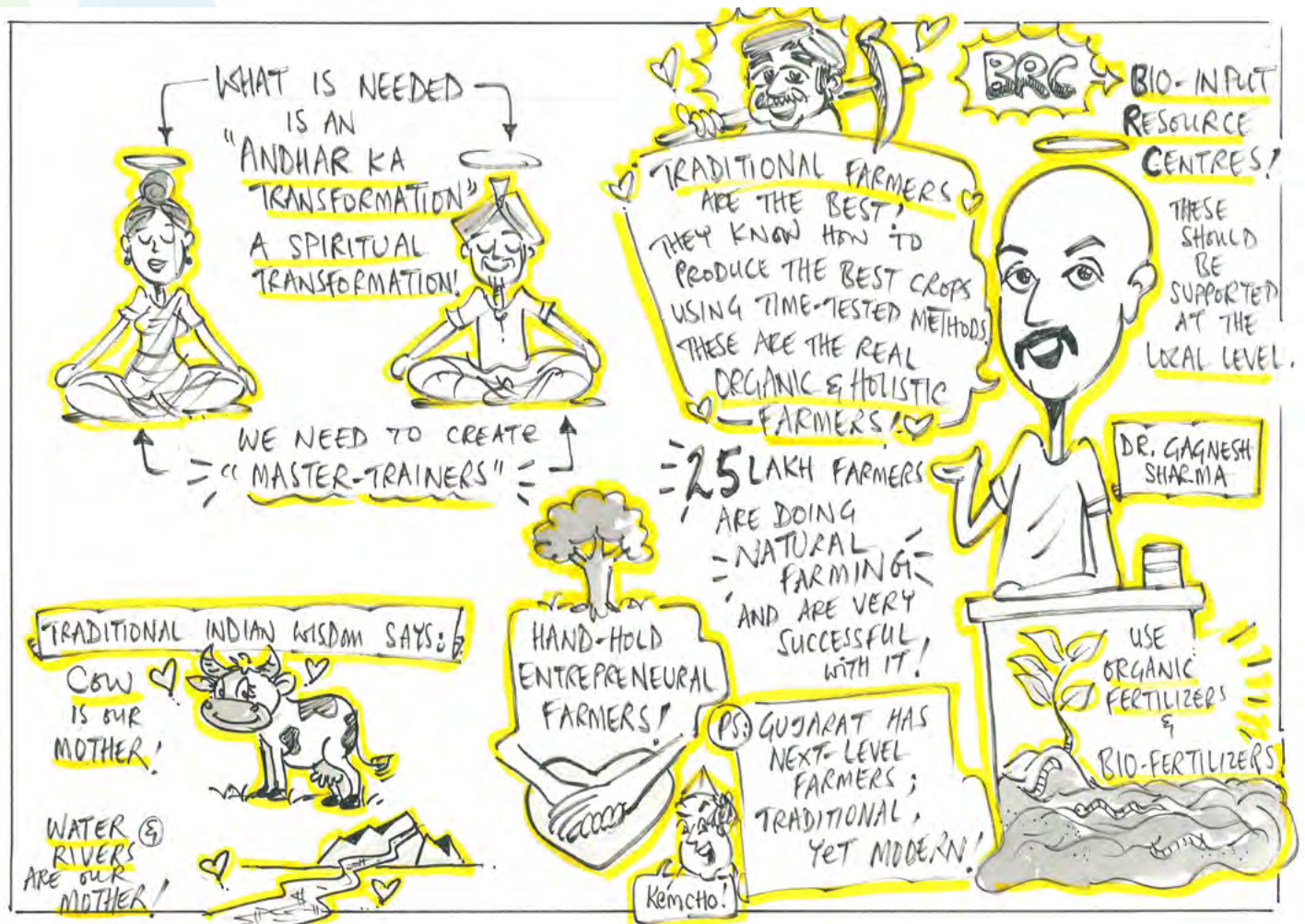
Mr. Soumik Banerjee discussed the need to promote the use of **indigenous seeds**, which are more **resilient to stress and varying terrains**. He pointed out that hybrid seeds require more inputs, have lower nutritional value, and lack climatic resilience. Mr. Banerjee advocated for the establishment of **seed banks** to support farmers in using pest-resistant and adaptive indigenous seeds like **Mansuri Paddy** and **Pankaj Paddy**.



Ms. Kavitha Kuruganti highlighted the fact that **regenerative agriculture** is a **knowledge-driven process**, especially suited to tribal communities that naturally mitigate climate challenges. She emphasized the importance of horizontal learning—where farmers teach other farmers—and stressed that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in enabling **collaborative learning** and **promoting cooperatives** to scale up regenerative practices.



Dr. Gagnesh Sharma addressed the challenge of **balancing regenerative agriculture with modern farming practices**. He noted that, despite challenges with seed availability, natural farming has seen success among the **25 lakh farmers** practicing it. He advocated for the promotion of **Bio-Resource Centres (BRCs)** to support farmers through training and capacity building. Dr. Sharma also emphasized the need for greater attention to soil health, erosion prevention, and the **integration of organic manures**.



When asked how more farmers can be encouraged to adopt regenerative agriculture,

- **Ms. Babita Devi** explained that while there was initial hesitation, the practical results of regenerative farming, such as **improved soil health and water conservation**, have motivated many farmers, particularly women, to adopt these sustainable practices.
- **Mr. Subhash Sharma** highlighted the low cost and high benefits of regenerative agriculture, particularly when **partnerships between farmers and agricultural institutions** like those in Karnataka are in place. He emphasized the long-term productivity and ecological balance fostered by regenerative farming.
- **Mr. Soumik Banerjee** discussed the revival and distribution of traditional seeds, advocating for local seed distribution and the effectiveness of the **System of Rice Intensification (SRI)** technique, which can yield good produce using less quantity of indigenous seeds.
- **Ms. Kavitha Kuruganti** emphasized the importance of **self-reliance** among farmers and the role of small-scale markets in promoting regenerative agriculture. She highlighted the role of CSOs, startups, and institutions in enabling farmers, particularly tribal communities, to adopt these practices.
- **Dr. Gagnesh Sharma** shared his experience with Bio-Resource Centres (BRCs), acknowledging the challenges related to seed availability but emphasizing their importance in capacity building and quality assurance for farmers. He called for greater **integration of local inputs** and the **involvement of Krishi Vigyan Kendras** in engaging unemployed youth in these initiatives.

Conclusion

Mr. Rajeev Ahal concluded the session by **reflecting on the impact of the Green Revolution**, which led to **overproduction** of certain crops while **underproducing** others, necessitating a rethink of agricultural practices. He emphasized the importance of **diverse approaches and grassroots knowledge in advancing regenerative agriculture**. He urged both government and non-government actors to collaborate and find points of consensus to enhance **grain security** and sustainability in India.

Session 6: Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “Water and Natural Resource Management- What will it take to Address the Water Crisis?”

Moderator:

Ms. Anantika Singh: Strategy and Partnerships Head, Hindustan Unilever Foundation

Panelists:

1. **Dr. Gopal Kumar:** Researcher, International Water Management Institute, India
2. **Ms. Naseem Shaikh:** Associate Director of Programs, Swayam Shikshan Prayog
3. **Mr. Basant Yadav:** President, Sahbhagi Samaj Sevi Sansthan, Charama, Chhattisgarh
4. **Mr. Nirat Bhatnagar:** Senior Advisor, Dalberg

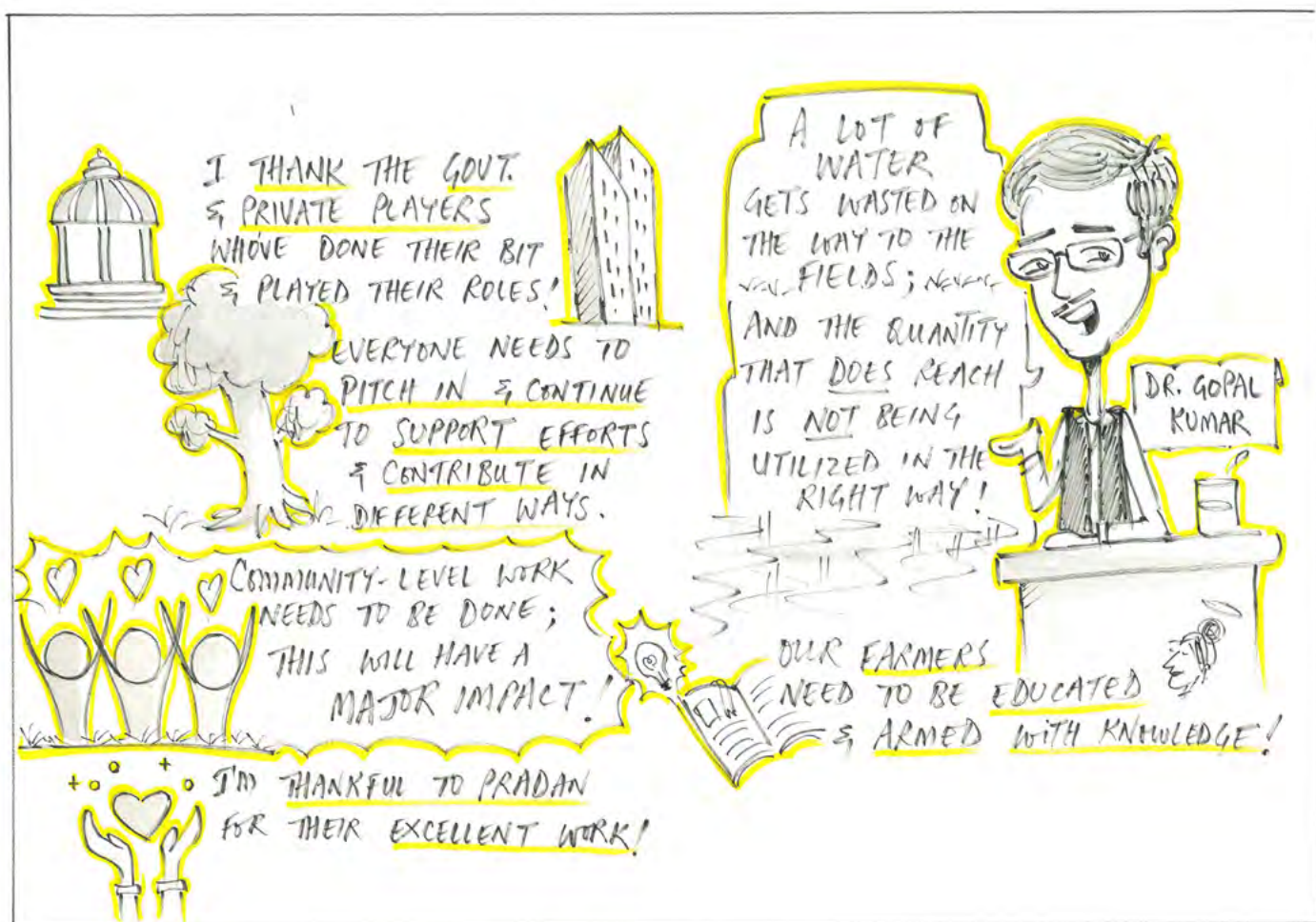


The “Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on Water and Natural Resource Management” focused on the theme of “Addressing the Water Crisis”. The session began with **Ms. Anantika Singh** highlighting the global concern around water scarcity, emphasizing how **climate change** is intrinsically linked to water crises. She stressed the significance of water for livelihoods, noting that **India’s agriculture** consumes the bulk of its water resources. With **18% of India’s population** relying on just **4% of global water resources**, the question was posed: **What will it take to address the water crisis?**

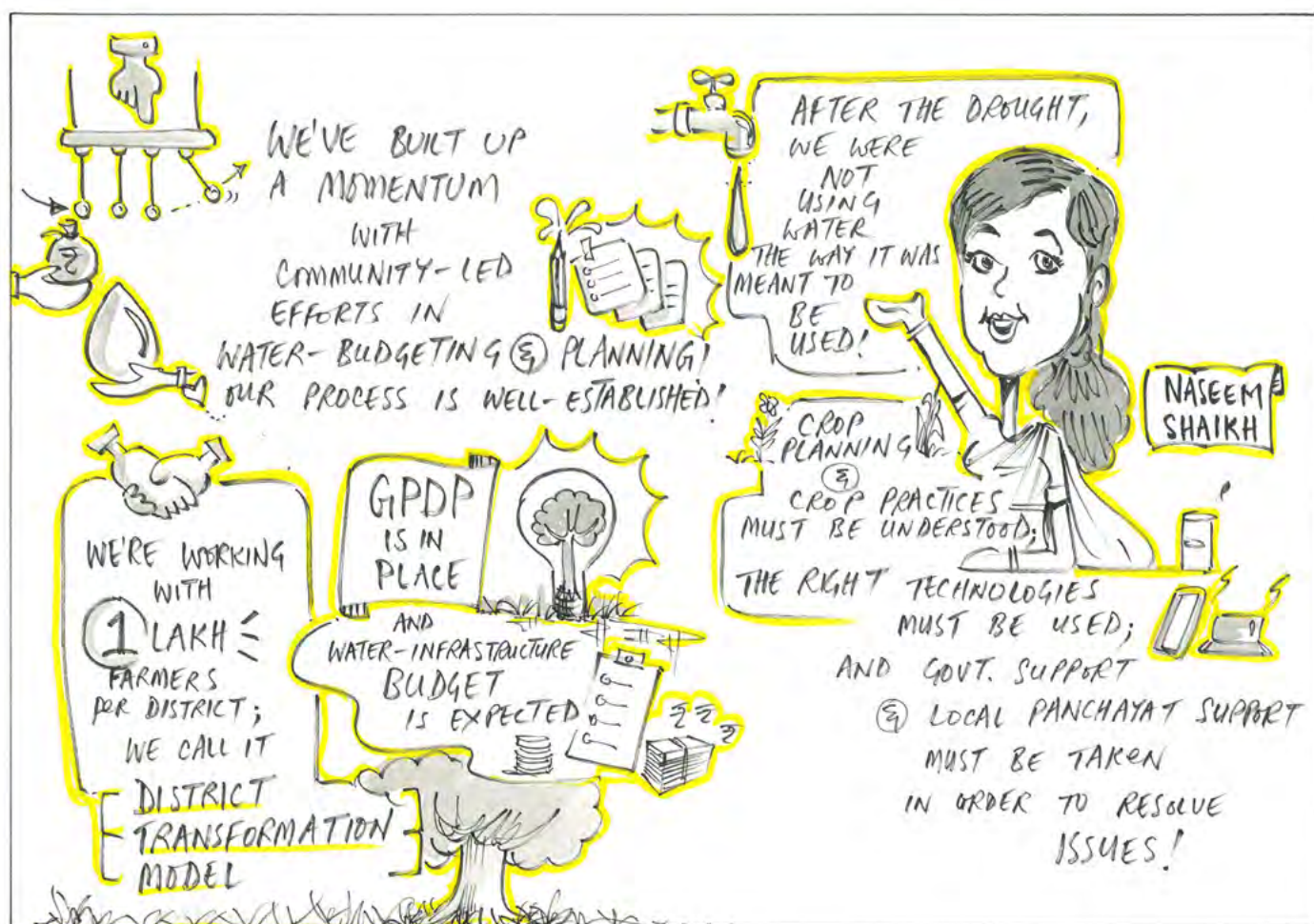


Dr. Gopal Kumar explained that one of the biggest challenges is the **depletion of groundwater**, which constitutes a significant portion of India's consumable water. Infrastructure for irrigation may exist, but it's not always practical for all areas. He emphasized that **sediment buildup** and **silt deposition** in dams reduce their capacity, further worsening the water storage situation. **Watershed management and groundwater recharge** are necessary solutions,

but progress has been slow. Dr. Kumar also pointed out the lack of **river basin authorities** and the under-valuation of groundwater recharge, which results in unchecked extraction. He shared how CSOs are mobilizing communities to acquire land for water recharge initiatives, adapting different techniques to counter these challenges.



Ms. Naseem Shaikh spoke on the water crisis in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, where erratic rainfall and low water retention have led to acute water shortages. The plateau terrain in the region contributes to the low retention, and although the Western Maharashtra rivers support sugarcane farming, this crop is unsuitable for water-scarce areas. Ms. Shaikh recounted the severe drought from 2012 to 2015, which exposed the dire need for water retention structures and alternative cropping patterns. Through the efforts of her organization, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, they introduced water-efficient crops and technology-driven methods to improve crop production. They worked closely with local communities and Panchayats to implement water conservation techniques and develop watershed structures. Women were trained to lead water security initiatives, and the district administration even adopted the organization's plan for district-wide transformation. By focusing on crop management, they were able to conserve 74 billion cubic liters of water.



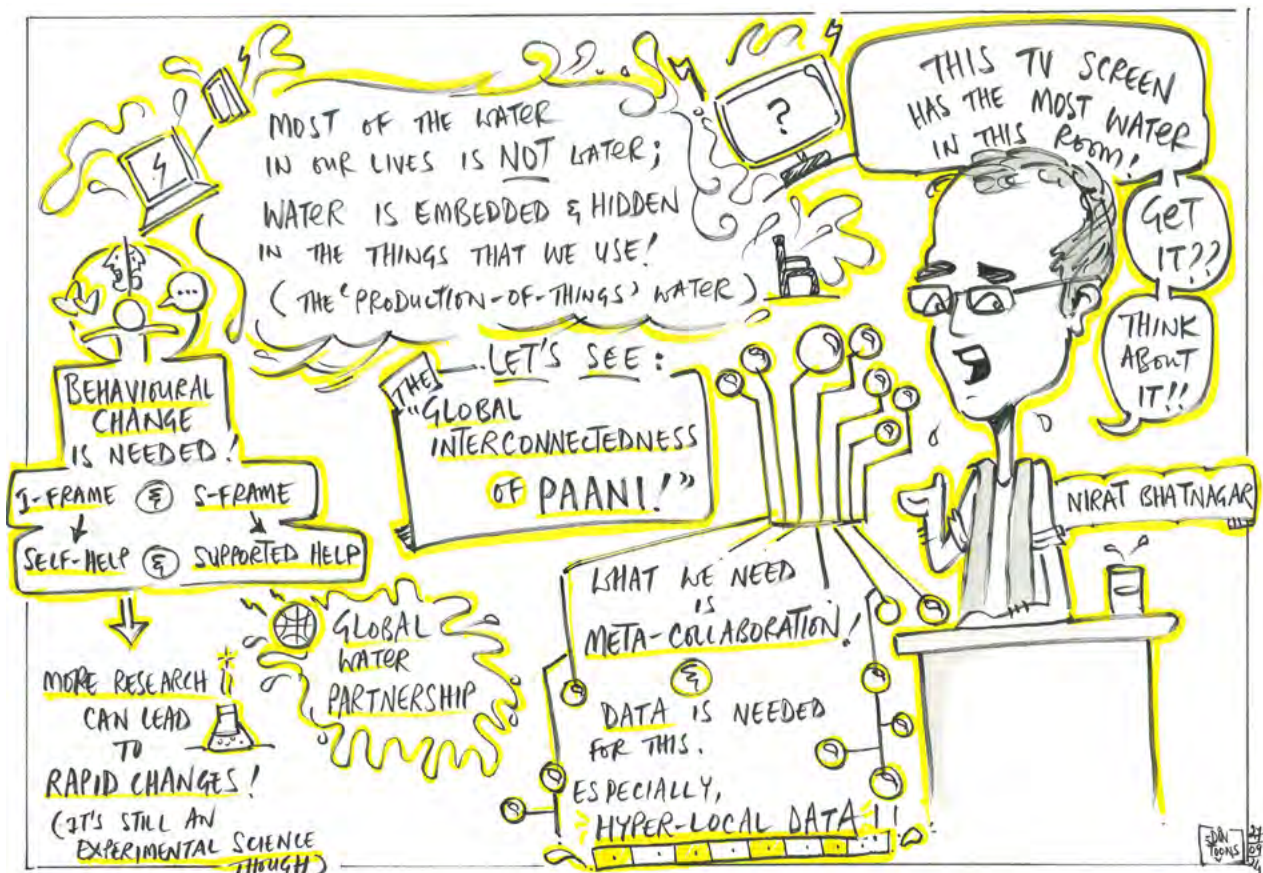
Mr. Basant Yadav highlighted the importance of **partnerships between government, NGOs, and CSOs** in addressing water challenges. He explained how **MGNREGA** and **Janpad-level training** helped grassroots workers understand water management and natural farming techniques. In **Chhattisgarh**, multiple CSOs have collaborated to implement projects on **water catchment, fishery development, and tree plantation**, all aimed at conserving water resources and increasing agricultural productivity. He stressed that **tree plantation** on mountain slopes is crucial to capturing and conserving rainwater. Mr. Yadav also emphasized the need for **community-driven efforts** to ensure long-term water security.





Mr. Nirat Bhatnagar emphasized that addressing the water crisis requires a **collaborative approach** that includes diverse stakeholders such as industries, local communities, and governments. He pointed out that **sectors like textile and electronics manufacturing consume large amounts of water, and behavioral change at the community and industry levels is crucial for water conservation**. Collaboration needs to extend beyond local actors; **global partnerships** like the **Triveni Water Institute** are vital to bringing in expertise and resources for long-term solutions.

Mr. Bhatnagar underscored the need for **hyper-local data** to drive **data-driven solutions** and **meta collaboration**. Behavior change is not just about convincing people but involves creating conditions where people can **self-regulate** their water use. He also explained that innovations are often **diffused** in rural areas when farmers adopt practices based on what they see their neighbors doing. He advocated for more research on **sustainable agriculture** and **water conservation**, as these areas are still experimental but hold promise for large-scale adoption. Additionally, **hidden water usage** in everyday products like **textiles** and **electronics** must be acknowledged, and consumers should understand the **interconnectedness of water** with their daily lives.



Conclusion

Ms. Anantika concluded that solving India's water crisis requires a **multi-pronged approach**, involving **policy reform, community engagement, technological innovation, and collaboration** between various stakeholders. **Behavioral change**, both at the community and industry levels, was seen as key to ensuring **sustainable water usage**. The panelists unanimously agreed that **collaborative governance models**, supported by **ground-level interventions**, could pave the way for **water security** in India, especially in its rural and agrarian communities.

Session 7: Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “The Importance of Forests in the Realm of Climate Change Management- Forests as Nature-based Climate Solution”

Moderator:

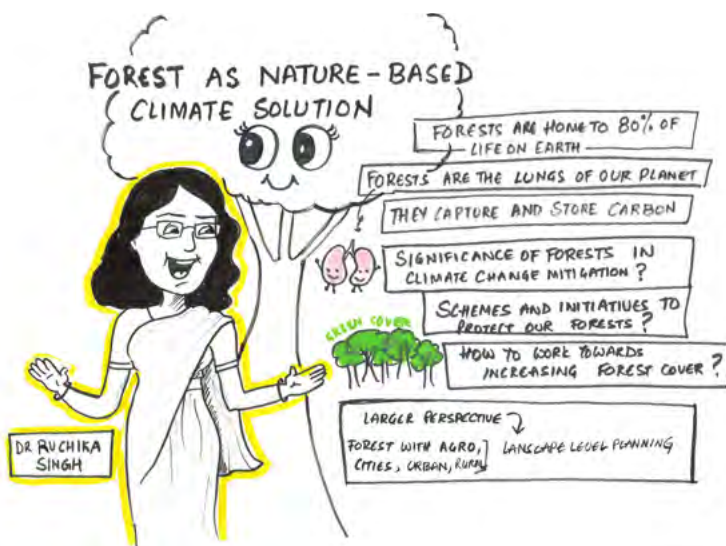
Dr. Ruchika Singh: Executive Program Director, Food, Land, and Water, WRI-India

Panelists:

1. **Ms. Sarojini Oraon:** Community Representative, Jharkhand
2. **Mr. Chetan Jha:** Director of Operations, Foundation for Ecological Security
3. **Mr. K.B. Singh:** Inspector General of Forests, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India
4. **Ms. Nidhi Nath Srinivas:** Senior Program Officer, Agricultural and Global Development, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
5. **Mr. R.K. Singh:** Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Chhattisgarh



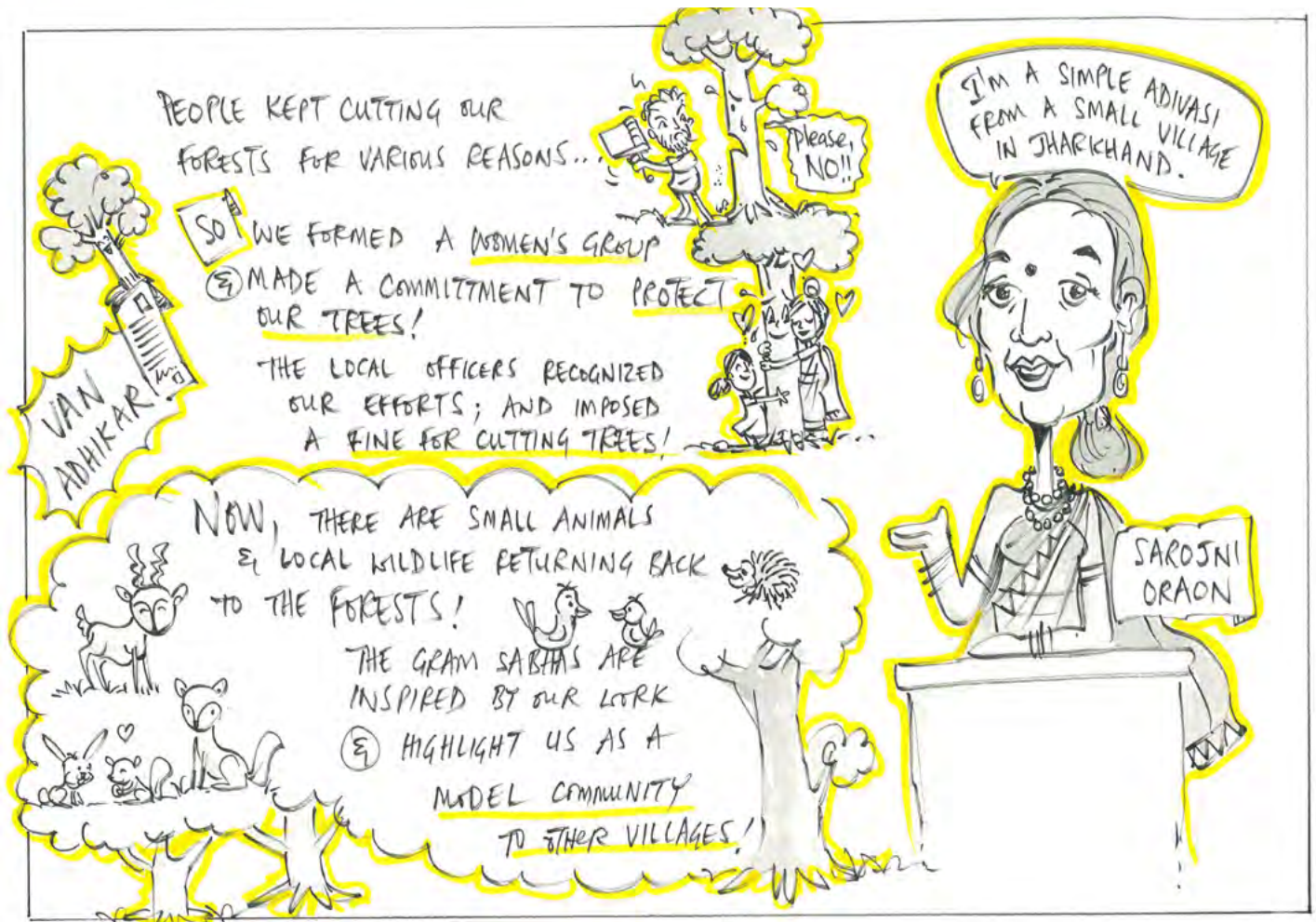
The “Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on Importance of Forests in the Realm of Climate Change Management” focused on the theme of “Forests as Nature-based Climate Solution.” The session on the role of forests as a **nature-based solution for climate change management** was moderated by **Dr. Ruchika Singh**, who emphasized the need for effective planning and management of forests. She introduced the session by stating that **forests are the lungs of our planet and are home to 80% of life on Earth**. This vital role underscores the significance of forests in climate change mitigation, as they absorb carbon dioxide and provide essential ecosystem services.





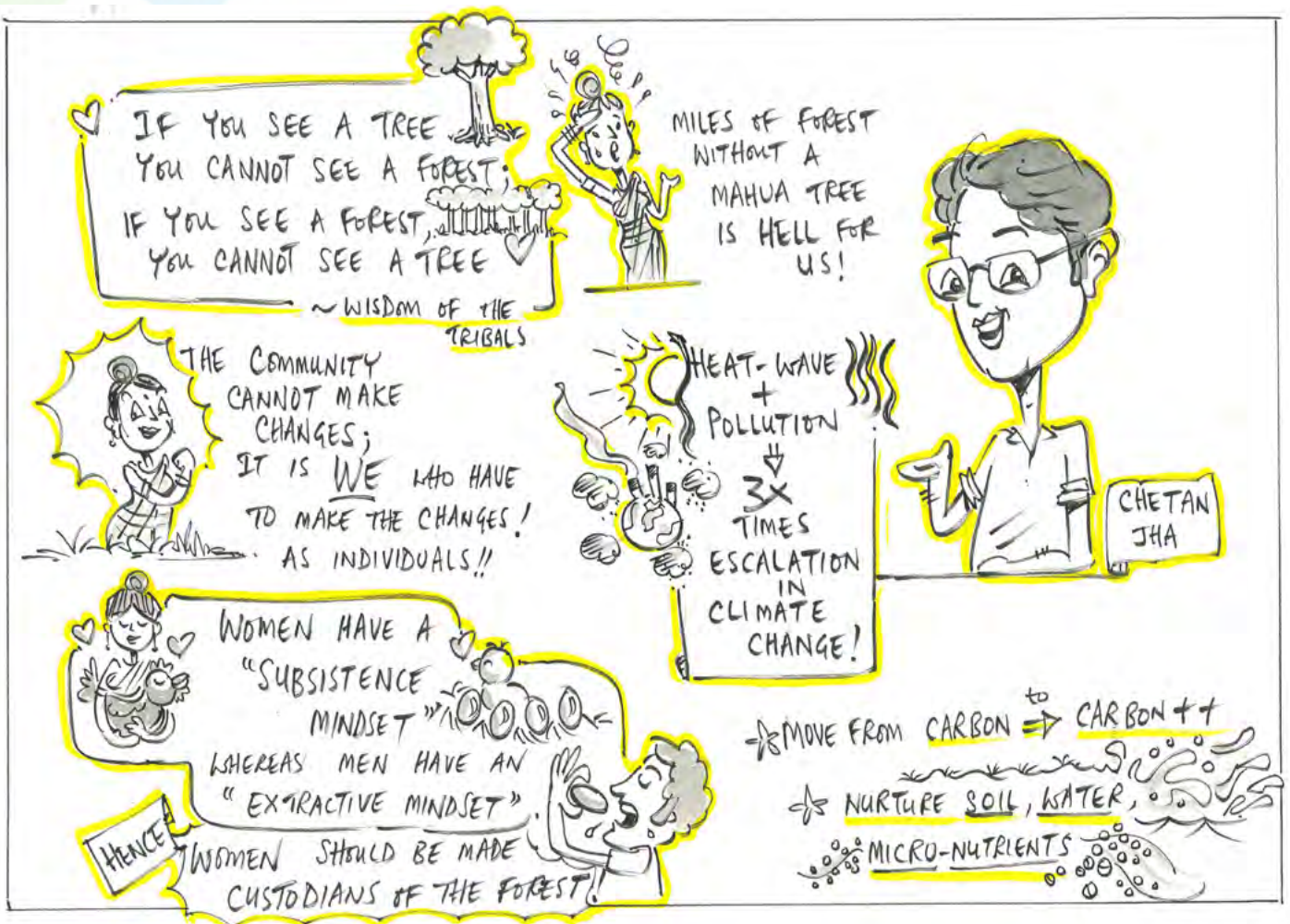
Ms. Sarojini Oraon, representing a tribal community from Jharkhand, shared her experience in **forest conservation**. She described how her village once had vast forests, which have now significantly reduced due to **illegal logging and exploitation**. In response, she and other women in her community formed a group to protect the remaining trees. **Their efforts gained recognition from local authorities, who imposed fines on those cutting trees illegally.** The Gram Sabha now promotes their

village as a **model** for other communities, inspiring more involvement in **forest protection**. Ms. Oraon also received **forest rights in 2023**, which empowered her to apply **traditional methods for tree planting and restoring wildlife**. She called for more support from the government and NGOs to improve forest infrastructure, such as building check dams and improving vegetation to enhance livelihoods.



Mr. Chetan Jha discussed the challenges of working in forest landscapes, particularly with regard to governance and ensuring accessibility and usage rights for local communities. He emphasized the importance of **recognizing people's rights to forests**, noting that communities, particularly women, have the creativity and capacity to bring about meaningful change. **Forests must be viewed as part of broader landscapes** where forests, rivers, water, and soil are all interconnected.

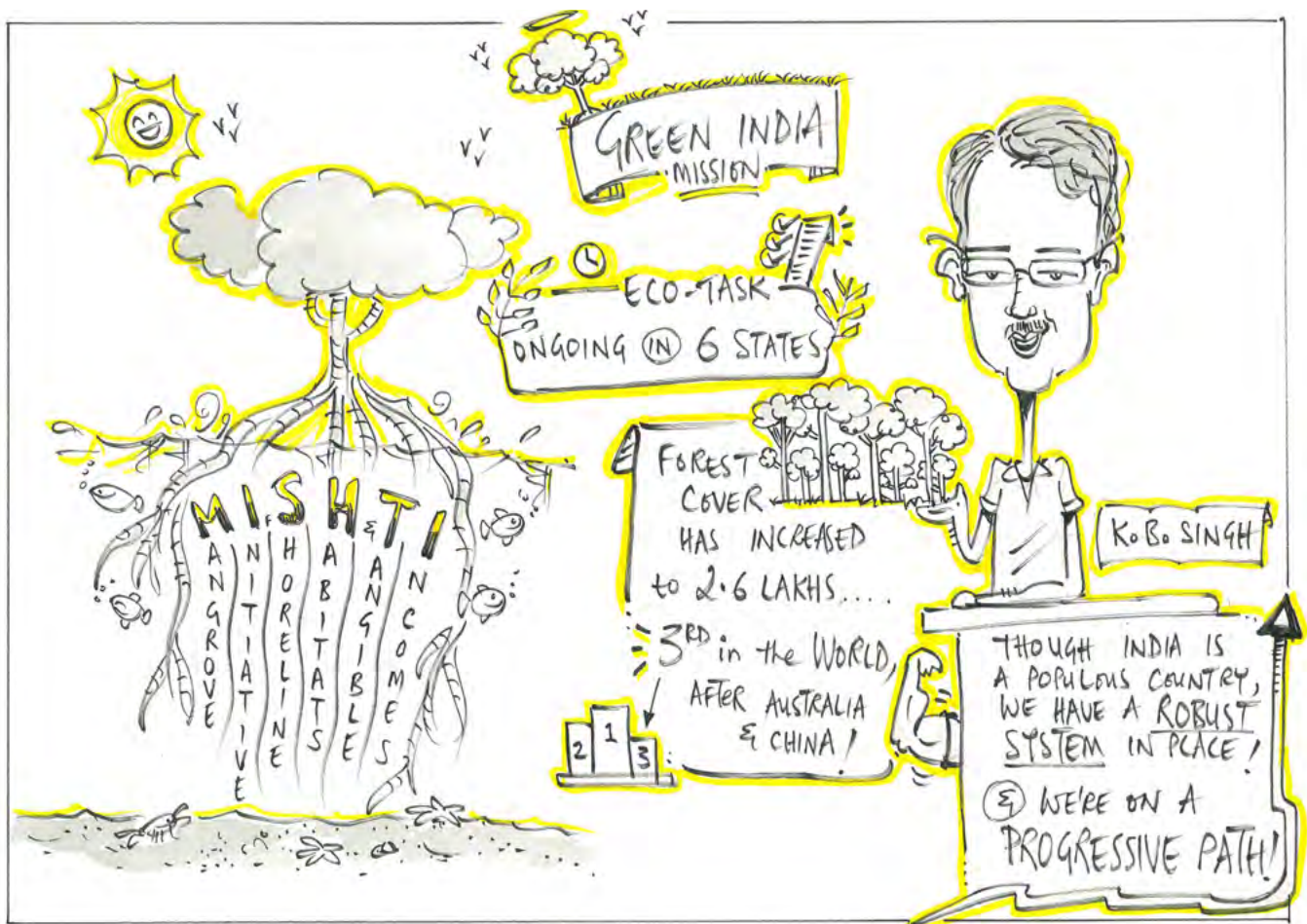
Cultural rights of forest dwellers should be ensured and preserved. Mr. Jha highlighted the urgent need to address climatic factors like **heat waves**, which are increasingly affecting forest growth. He argued for **a shift from focusing solely on carbon sequestration to a carbon++ approach**, encompassing soil and water management for ecosystem resilience.



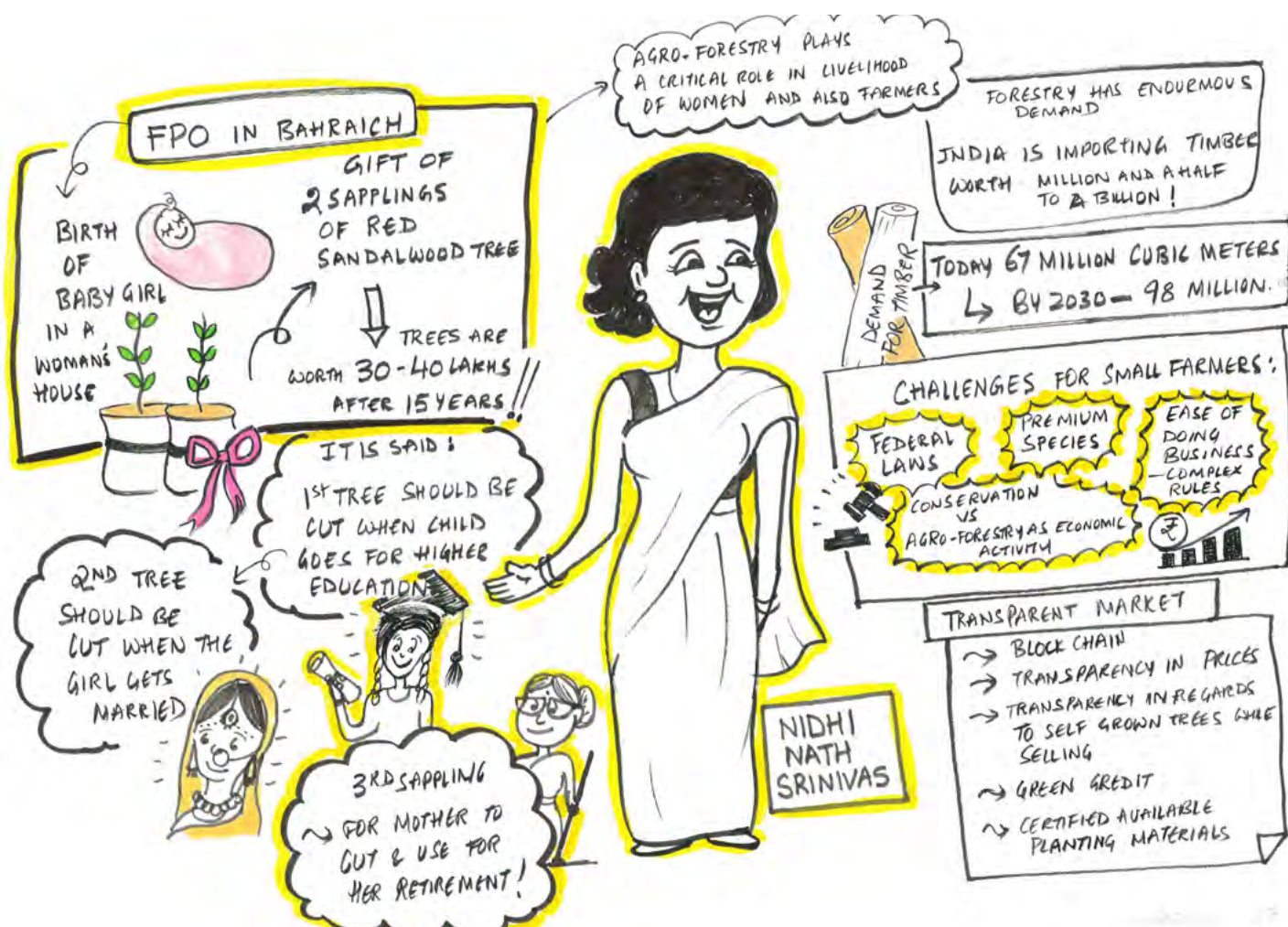


Mr. K.B. Singh provided an overview of government policies aimed at safeguarding forests. He cited the **Forest Survey of India**, which reports that India has **71.5 million hectares of forest cover**, accounting for **21.71%** of the country's total area. However, only 3% of this is classified as dense virgin forests, while the rest needs significant work to improve its quality. Key government initiatives include the **Nagar Van Scheme**, **Mangrove Conservation Scheme**, **Green**

India Mission, and the **Wildlife Green Habitat Mission**. Programs like *Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam*, which encourages tree planting on World Environment Day, and efforts to increase India's forest cover, modeled after successes in **China** and **Australia**, were highlighted. Mr. Singh stressed the importance of a landscape approach to forest management and called for **merging departments to tackle water, livelihood, and forest issues holistically**. He also mentioned the **importance of Mangrove forests**, particularly in innovative efforts in the **Rann of Kutch**, and underscored the need for long-term community involvement, as it takes thousands of years to restore forests.



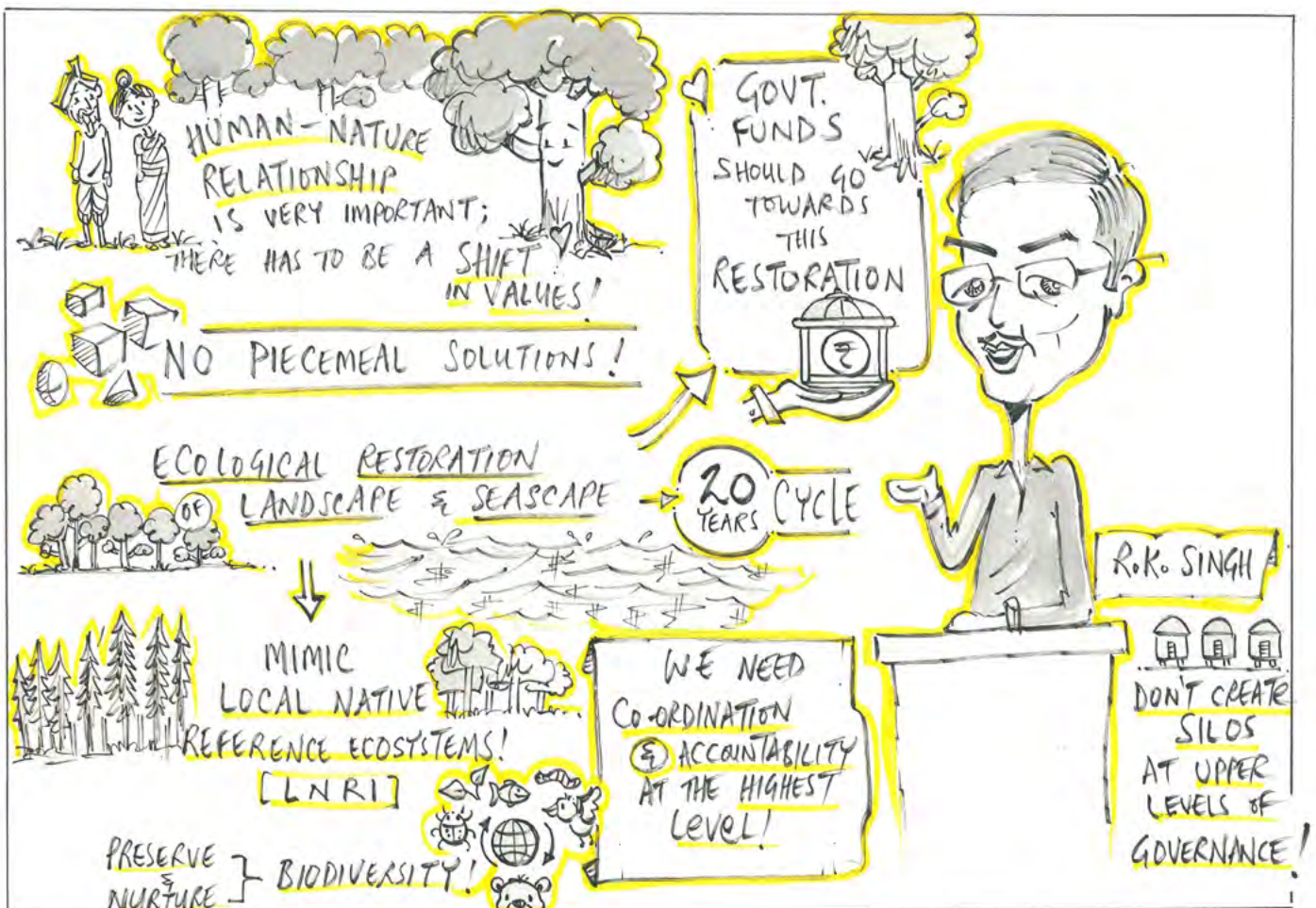
Ms. Nidhi Nath Srinivas spoke on the challenges faced by small and marginalized landholders in participating in forest conservation efforts. She shared an innovative practice where two **sandalwood trees** are given to each family upon the birth of a girl child, with the **trees maturing in 15 to 20 years**, providing potential earnings of **Rs 30 to Rs 32 lakhs**. She emphasized the need for transparent markets to ensure that small farmers can engage with agroforestry and benefit from the **green carbon credit market**. To promote forest conservation, she suggested that farmers need access to **certified planting materials and knowledge-sharing platforms** to ensure the successful growth of trees. Additionally, government financing strategies should focus on **linking small farmers to sustainable agroforestry models**, which would ensure economic and environmental benefits.





Mr. R.K. Singh discussed forests as a **natural climate solution**, emphasizing the need for adaptation and mitigation strategies, particularly in the **Global South**. He advocated for an **eco-restoration policy** that integrates government, civil society, and local communities in a comprehensive implementation framework. Mr. Singh also highlighted the importance of monitoring and policy planning, stressing that states must create policies to protect forest

dwellers' rights. He noted that **Minor Forest Produce (MFP)**, such as **medicinal plants** and other resources, are major sources of income for families, and ensuring **forest rights for tribal populations is crucial**. Mr. Singh urged for the inclusion of pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries in the green economy, leveraging medicinal plants and other forest resources. He also called for **strengthening the human-nature relationship**, which is interdependent and must be redefined to ensure sustainable coexistence.



Conclusion

Dr. Ruchika Singh concluded the session by emphasizing that forests alone cannot solve the climate crisis. Instead, a **holistic approach** involving well-planned strategies is required to address interconnected issues such as **biodiversity, cultural values, and livelihood challenges**. She highlighted the need for landscape-level planning at the Gram Sabha level and stressed the importance of **knowledge-sharing and financial support** to enable communities and stakeholders to engage in effective forest management. Dr. Singh closed the session by calling for a collaborative effort between **society, government, and markets** to sustain forests as a vital part of **climate change management**. She further added that forest fires cause huge losses, and solutions for such challenges can only be found when addressing the problem in totality. Dr. Singh closed the session by calling for a collaborative effort between society, government, and markets to sustain forests as a vital part of climate change management.

28th September, 2024



The second day of the event commenced with a warm welcome by **Mr. Anoop Nautiyal** and **Ms. Sarbani Bose**, who greeted the guests and provided a brief recap of Day 1. They also outlined the schedule and key events for Day 2. Following this, a movie titled *“Chal Chal Chalen Saath Saath”* was screened, which focused on themes related to the environment. Additionally, there was a briefing on the **Mission LiFE initiative**, which included an address by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The animated video emphasized the importance of nature conservation under the theme **“#ChooseLife”**.



Session 8: Recapitulation of Day 1

Presentation by:

Ms. Kuntalika Kumbhakar: Lead, Centre of Excellence – Nutrition, PRADAN



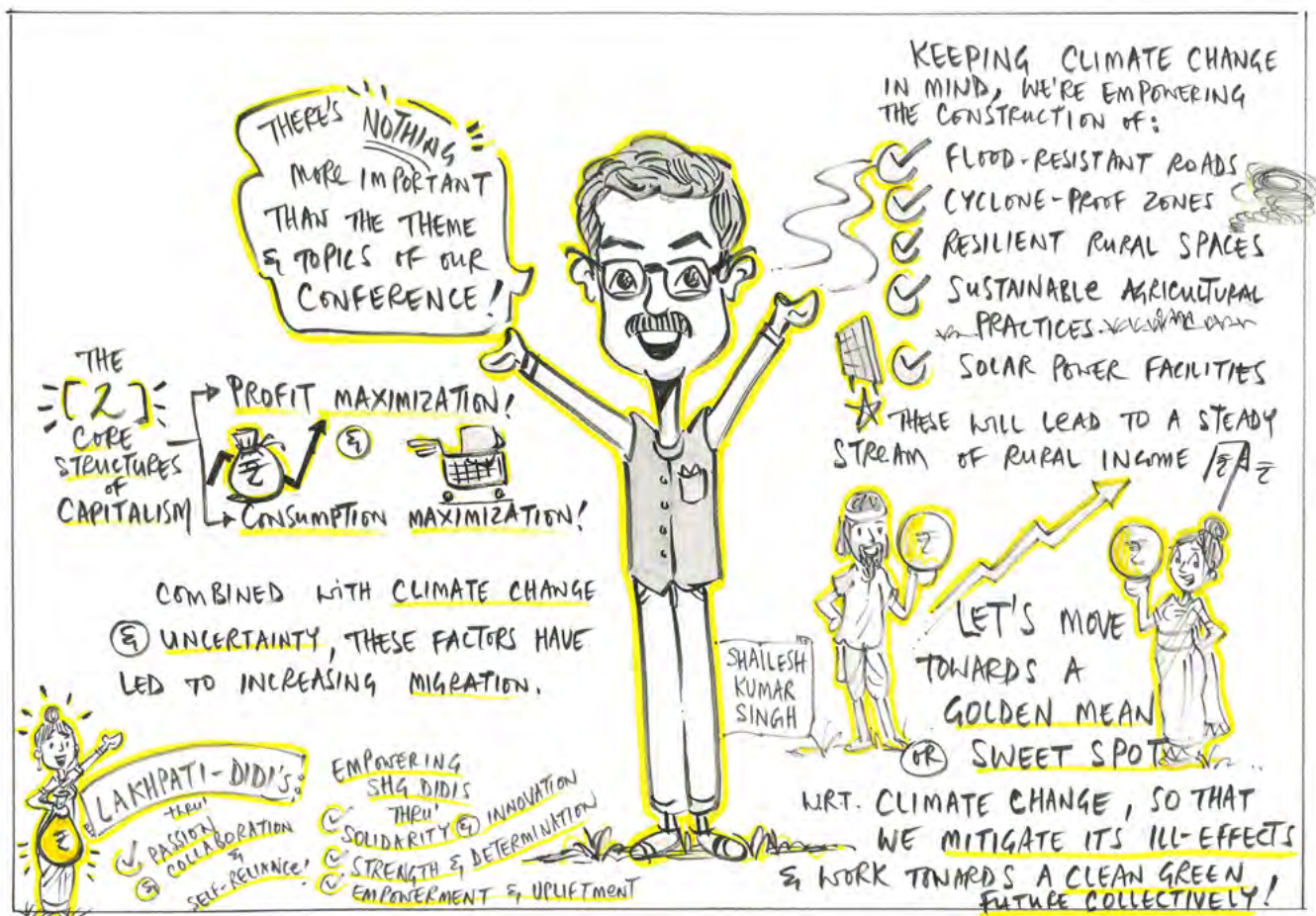
Ms. Kuntalika Kumbhakar, Lead, Centre of Excellence – Nutrition, PRADAN, took the stage to **summarize the events of Day 1**. She provided a **detailed recap** of all the sessions and included her own perspectives, reflecting on the significance of the discussions and the actions taken. Ms. Kumbhakar emphasized the **key initiatives presented by the panel members**, such as Ms. Chami Murmu's effort in planting thirty lakh saplings, which illustrated the proactive steps taken towards environmental conservation and community-driven climate action.



Session 9: Special Address

Speakers:

1. **Mr. Shailesh Kumar Singh:** Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India
2. **Dr. V. B. Patel:** Assistant Director General (Horticulture), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)



The special address by **Mr. Shailesh Kumar Singh** began with a reference to *Small is Beautiful*, a book by **E. F. Schumacher**, which critiques modern economic systems and highlights the relevance of Buddhist philosophy and economy. Mr. Singh focused on **profit and consumption maximization** and discussed how **climate change disproportionately affects marginalized communities**, especially those involved in **monocropping and rain-fed agriculture**. He also addressed the increasing migration from rural to urban areas as a direct consequence of climate **impacts on rural livelihoods**.

Mr. Singh outlined several strategies for adaptation and mitigation, emphasizing the need for collaboration between stakeholders. He mentioned that **infrastructure projects**, such as roads and houses, **should be designed to withstand climate-related disasters, including flood-proof roads and cyclone-resistant houses, under the guidance of the Ministry of Rural Development**. Renewable energy sources, particularly at the rural level, were identified as crucial for sustainable livelihoods and energy access.

Mr. Singh stressed the importance of building resilience by focusing on marginalized communities, particularly **women and youth**, for capacity building. He referenced the **Lakhpati Didi initiative**, which empowers rural women by helping them achieve sustainable livelihoods. Additionally, he discussed the **creation of Climate Action Committees**, which aim to empower local communities to help themselves through **diversified rural livelihoods and eco-friendly opportunities**. Sustainable practices, renewable energy access, and the **integration of climate change into policy frameworks**, including water conservation, soil health, and forest management, were central themes of his address.

He also highlighted the role of key government schemes like the **Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** in promoting social equity and sustainable rural development. This includes **providing training to 'farmer friends'** on practices like **multi-cropping, water conservation, and organizational farming**. Mr. Singh noted that the MGNREGS is a significant tool for building climate resilience. The scheme now incorporates technological tools like **CRISP-M** (Climate Resilient Information System and Planning) to offer **data-driven insights to local authorities**. Lastly, he emphasized that tackling climate resilience requires large-scale collaboration among government bodies, CSOs, the private sector, local communities, and international institutes. He also acknowledged the value of local wisdom held by rural communities, which should be integrated into climate adaptation strategies.



Dr. V. B. Patel provided an overview of the various agricultural institutes operating across India. He highlighted the **National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) project**, which was **initiated in 2011** to address climate variability through **region-specific technology**. This project includes risk and vulnerability assessments to tailor climate interventions across different regions. Dr. Patel noted that **600 out of 800 districts** in India are heavily involved in agriculture, and many of these regions are now transforming into **Climate Resilient Villages (CRVs)**.

Dr. Patel discussed several ongoing initiatives under the **National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture**, which aim to manage climate risks through various schemes. He elaborated on the **changing rainfall patterns** across the country, highlighting the **delayed onset of rains, spontaneous heavy rainfall, prolonged dry spells, and temperature fluctuations** between day and night, all of which are impacting crop health. The increasing frequency of heat waves and cold waves was also discussed as a critical factor affecting agriculture.

In response to these challenges, ICAR has developed **climate-resilient seed varieties**, especially in **horticulture**, which has seen increased production in India. Horticultural crops, according to Dr. Patel, are more resilient to climate and disease, require fewer pesticides, and provide high yields with minimal care. He cited examples such as **Kanchi Tapas** (a tomato variety) that is temperature resilient and has been widely adopted by farmers. Dr. Patel emphasized the importance of disseminating these technologies, such as **agro-fabrics** (mulching), to farmers and urged them to connect with ICAR to tackle challenges through collective actions. He concluded his session by encouraging more widespread use of **climate-resilient technologies** to meet the emerging climate challenges in agriculture.

These sessions provided a deep insight into the intersection of climate action, rural development, and sustainable agricultural practices. Both speakers highlighted the need for **collective action, capacity building, and large-scale collaboration** to effectively address the adverse impacts of climate change on rural communities and agriculture.



Session 10: Solutions at Work - Sharing of some Solutions at Work by various Organizations/Startups looking to Scale Up

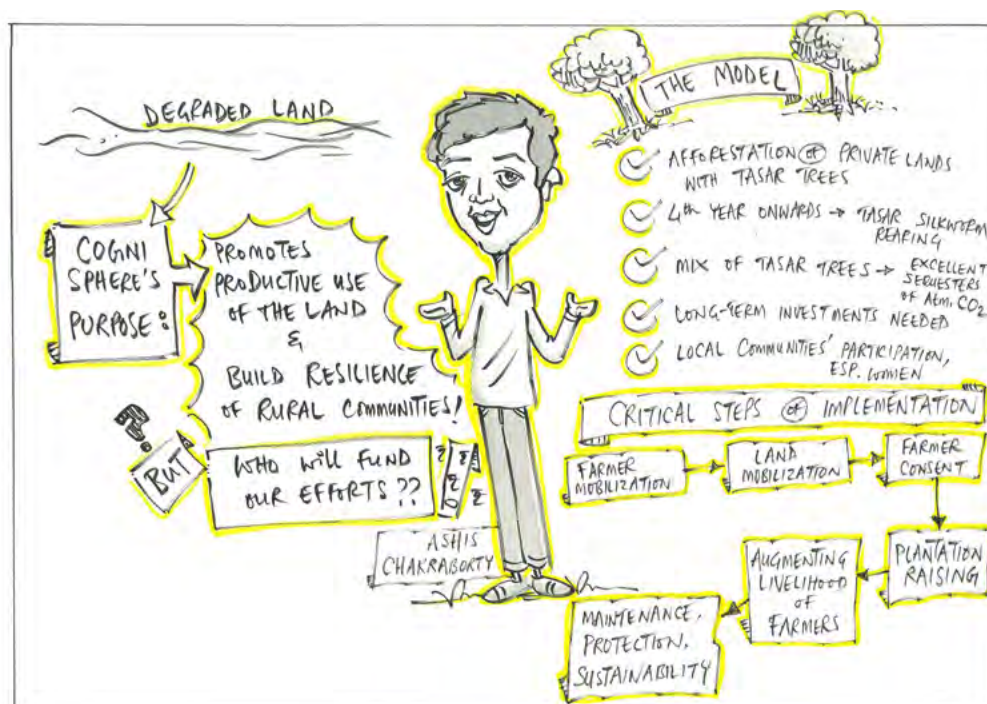
Speakers:

1. **Mr. Ashis Chakaraborty:** Programme Lead, Cognisphere Solutions Limited
2. **Lt. Col. (Retd.) Bhawesh Malhotra:** Vice-President Operations, Mati Carbon
3. **Ms. Sheeba Sen:** Founder, ALAAP
4. **Mr. Anmol Kapoor:** US-India Emerging Climate Leader
5. **Dr. Ishan Fursule:** Senior Consultant, Climate Partner Impact



Mr. Ashis Chakaraborty presented on the **Tasar Host Tree Plantation Project**, which focuses on building the resilience of rural communities, especially Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), to face climate changes. The project targets degraded lands, mainly used for rain-fed farming, which often results in distress for both humans and cattle. **The initiative promotes afforestation using Tasar host plants, crucial for sericulture (silkworm farming), aiming to revitalize the land and provide a sustainable livelihood.**

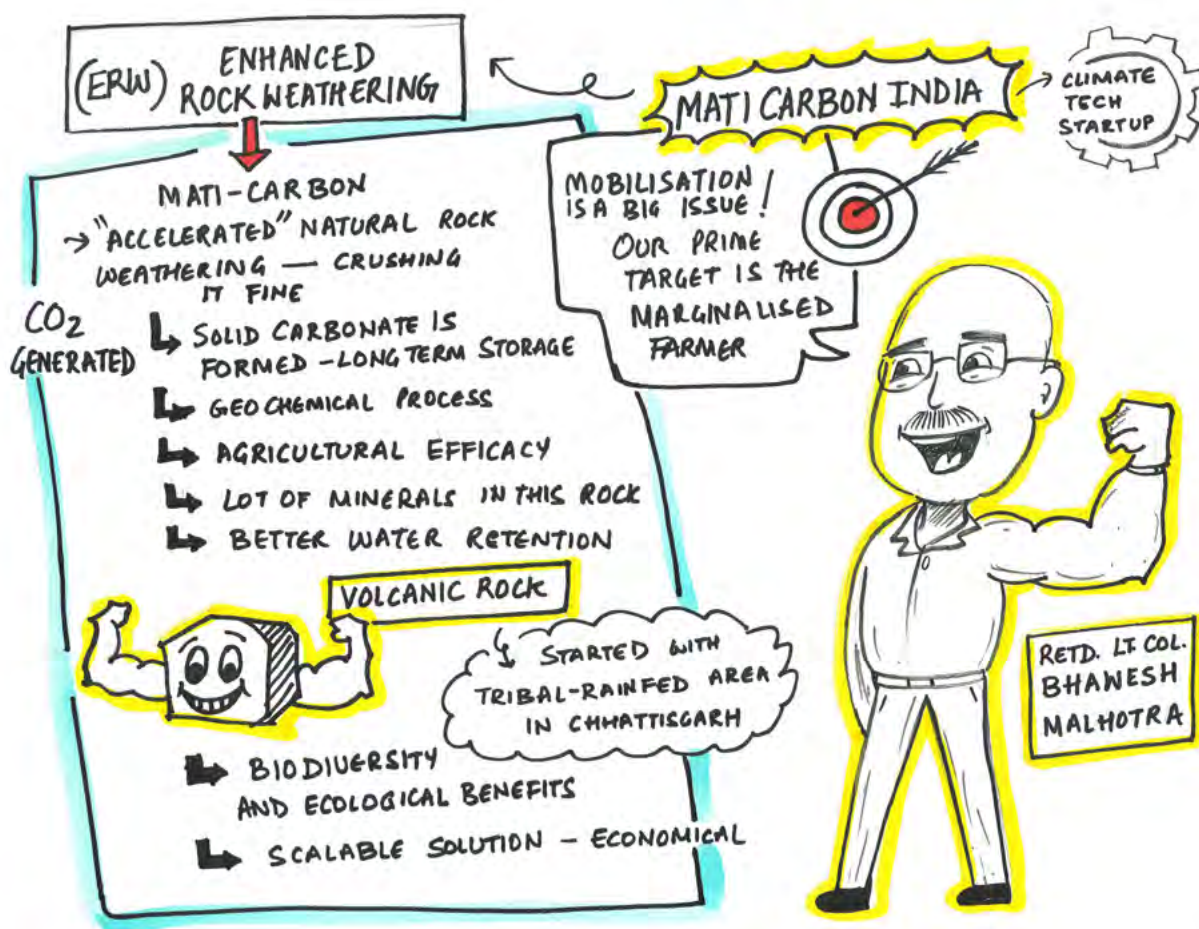
The model adopted by Cognisphere involves collaboration between farmers, investors, and the company, emphasizing community participation, especially women. Implementation includes a forest-based approach to plantation, establishing compost units, and installing solar panels. The project has seen progress in West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand.





Lt. Col. (Retd.) Bhawesh Malhotra discussed Mati Carbon India's efforts to mitigate climate change through Enhanced Rock Weathering (ERW), a geo-chemical process that accelerates the natural weathering of silicate and carbonate minerals to sequester CO₂. ERW brings several benefits, including soil nutrient enrichment (Calcium, Magnesium), improved water retention, and enhanced ecosystem resilience.

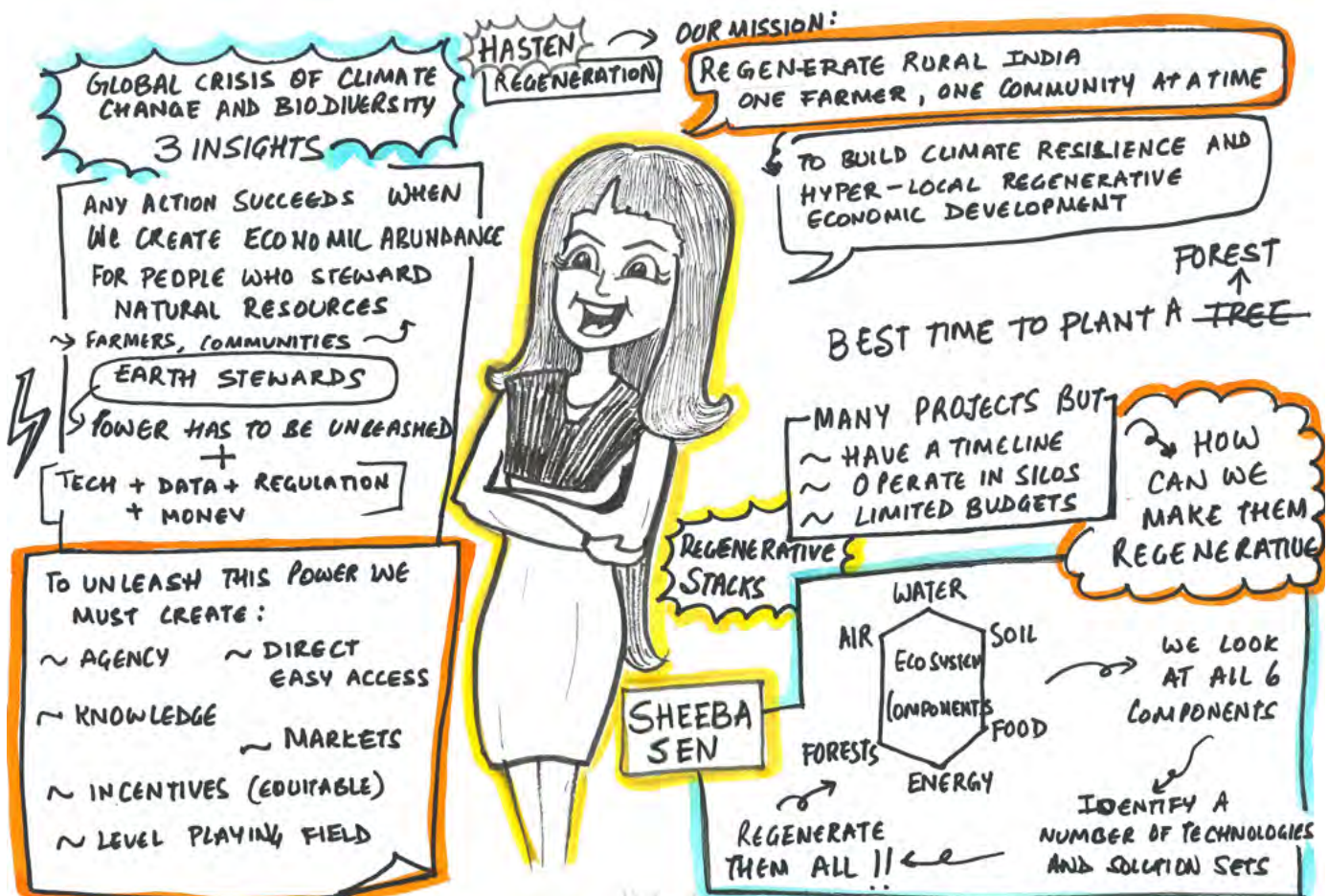
The approach focuses on **long-term carbon storage** and provides a cost-effective, scalable solution with social acceptance, particularly among smallholder farmers **with 1-4 acres of land**. The project covers multiple states, serving thousands of acres of farmland and benefiting over a thousand farmers, while **improving crop yields and reducing dependency on chemical fertilizers**.





Ms. Sheeba Sen shared her work in regenerating rural India by fostering agroforestry and ecosystem services. Her solution emphasizes planting native forests with local communities, under the philosophy of “1+1=11,” indicating the multiplicative effect of combined efforts. The project integrates water, soil, food, energy, forests, and air, using innovations like solar-powered drip irrigation and farm-level water solutions.

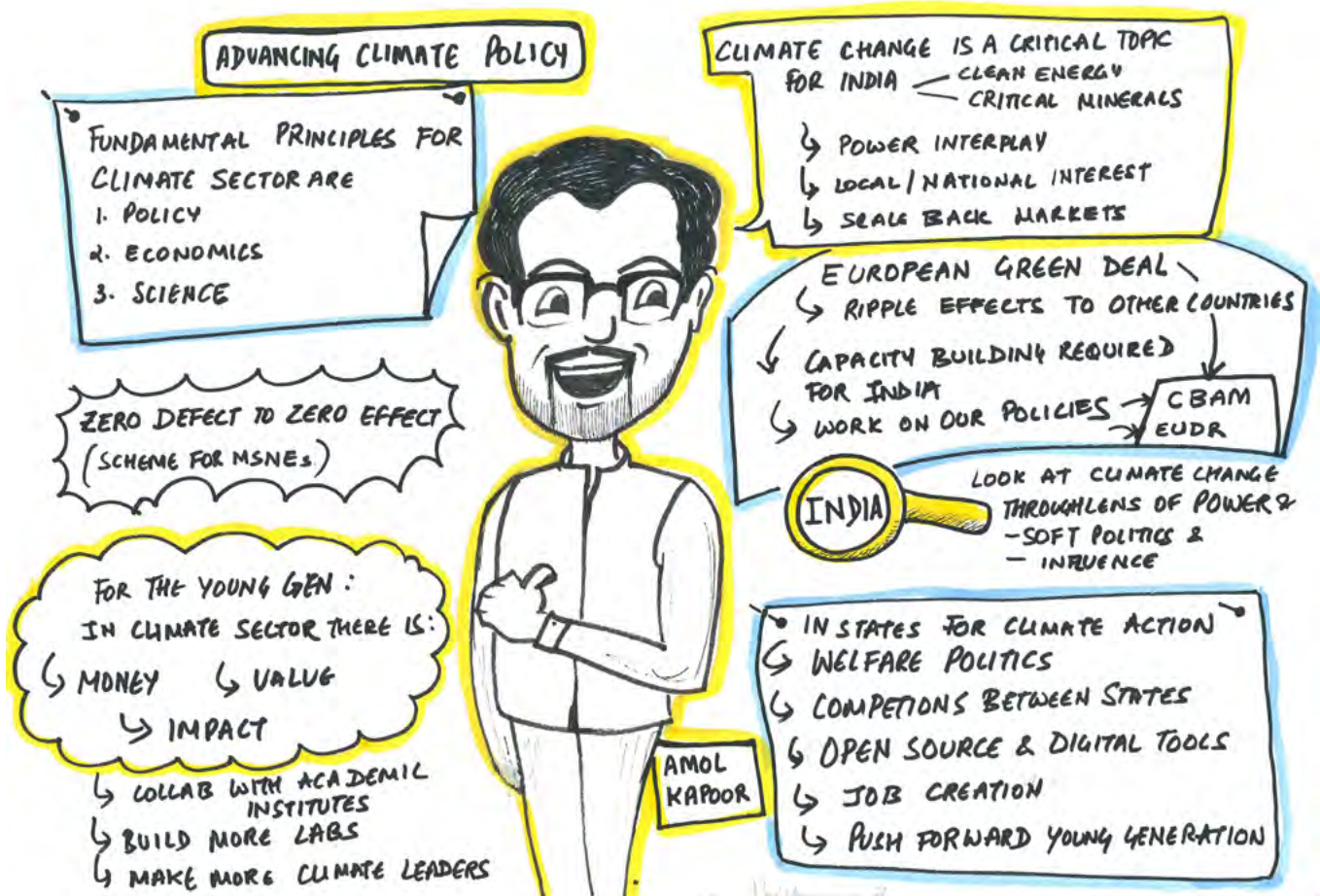
The initiative also focuses on creating economic abundance by **setting up a Regeneration Innovation Centre**, which supports community engagement in agroforestry. **The XYLO ecosystem**, a part of the project, connects rural communities with resources like **financing options**, **carbon buyers**, and **regenerative agricultural technologies**.





Mr. Anmol Kapoor spoke about the importance of clean energy and tackling climate change with innovative approaches. He discussed EU (European Union) initiatives for carbon moderation and deforestation analysis, suggesting the adoption of blockchain technology in agriculture to increase transparency and efficiency. He also highlighted policy frameworks like the “0 defect, 0 effect” MSME (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises)

policy to ensure environmental sustainability without compromising quality. Emphasizing welfare policies and collaboration with academic institutions, he envisioned creating a “Green Valley” where sustainable practices are mainstreamed, fostering new job opportunities and capacity-building initiatives.

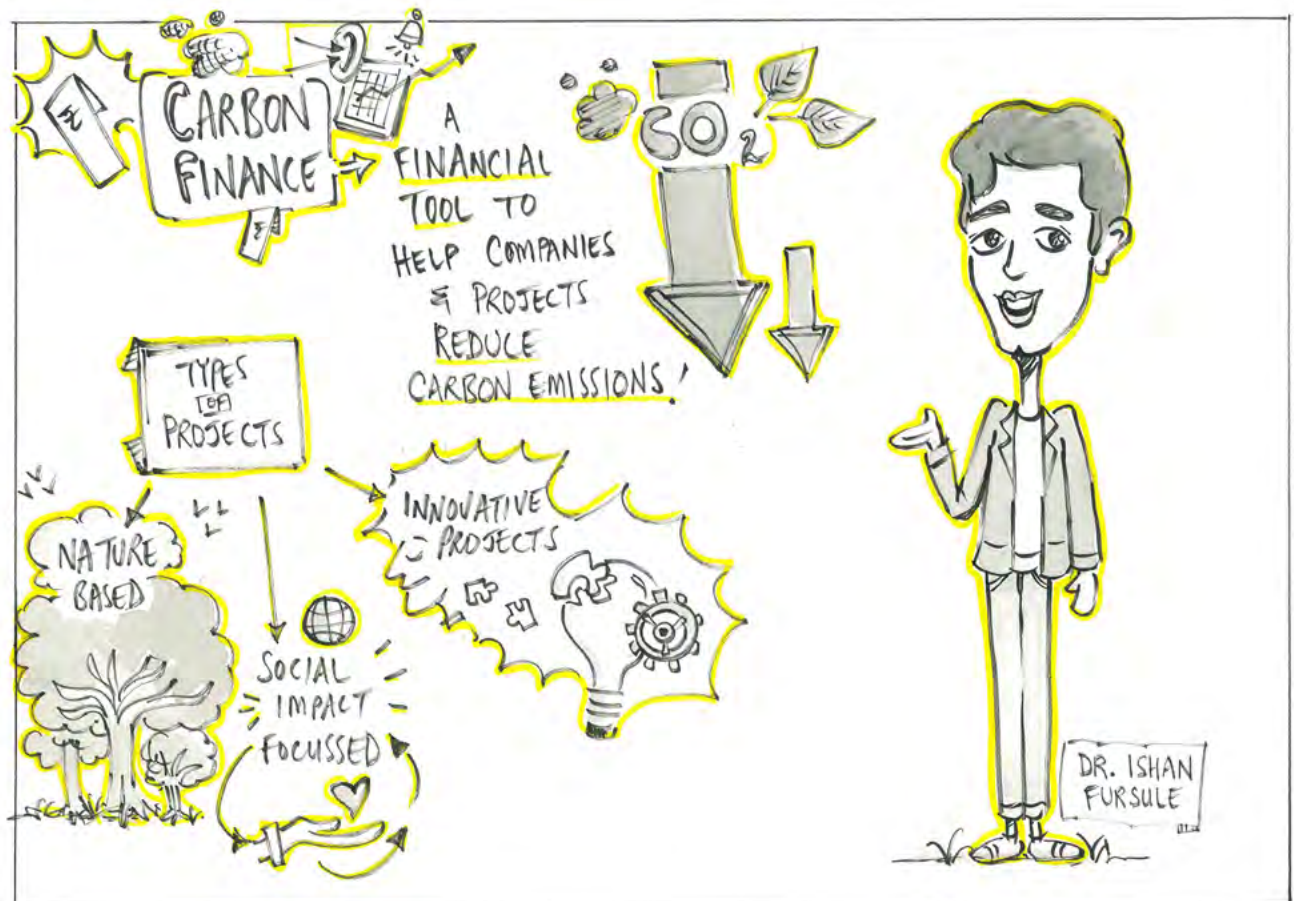




Dr. Ishan Fursule presented on the role of carbon finance in sustainability, explaining how it supports project developers in reducing carbon emissions through nature-based solutions like reforestation and soil organic carbon enhancement. His approach to carbon projects includes a structured lifecycle, starting from feasibility assessment to validation, monitoring, and reporting of carbon credits. The use of satellite imagery

and impact assessment frameworks ensures the credibility of projects. The initiatives cover various innovative areas, including plastic upcycling, biochar, and biodiversity enhancement, aiming for both environmental and social impacts across regions such as India, Rwanda, and Indonesia.

These presentations collectively offered diverse and impactful solutions to combat climate change, improve agricultural sustainability, and promote community resilience through scalable and innovative approaches.



Session 11: Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “Water and Natural Resource Management - Funding for Climate Change: Adaptation and Mitigation”

Moderator:

Mr. Shashank Rastogi: Partner and India Lead (Rural Prosperity), Bridgespan Group

Panelists:

1. **Mr. Amit Arora:** Rural Development Finance Specialist, World Bank Group
 2. **Mr. Abhinav Sen:** Vice President, Axis Bank Foundation
 3. **Mr. Binoy Menon:** Regional Manager, ITC Limited, Social Investments
 4. **Ms. Matilda Lobo:** Head, Corporate Social Responsibility, IndusInd Bank
 5. **Mr. Siddharth Bhatia:** Lead - Earth Exponential, India Climate Collaborative
-



The “Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on Water and Natural Resource Management” centered on “Funding for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation,” moderated by Mr. Shashank Rastogi of Bridgespan Group. He started the discussion with the question: “What are the current funding priorities for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and how can we align them with

local needs?” Mr. Rastogi emphasized the critical need for identifying funding priorities and overcoming challenges in securing financial resources for climate initiatives. The session highlighted key insights on funding priorities, challenges, and solutions for effective climate change adaptation and mitigation.



Mr. Amit Arora emphasized the World Bank's increasing commitment to climate finance, with a focus on leveraging investments for mitigation efforts. He noted that the Asian Development Bank has committed \$100 billion for climate finance, yet the issue lies not merely in investment amounts but in the vulnerability of regions affected by climate change. A significant portion of funding goes towards mitigation rather than adaptation.

He highlighted that money could act as a catalyst, but it cannot address the root causes on its own. The interconnected nature of climate change demands a collaborative approach, yet a lack of coordination remains a major hurdle. Current government policies do not support fund pooling, while social stock exchanges impose restrictive investment requirements. Mr. Arora suggested that a **bottom-up approach is crucial to ensure effective outcomes.**





Mr. Abhinav Sen explained that the Axis Bank Foundation focuses primarily on rural development, working closely with NGOs, climate action partners, board members, and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) team. The approach emphasizes **bridging the livelihood vulnerability gap**, recognizing the interconnectedness between different social and environmental factors. He advocated for a **place-based strategy over generalized collaborative actions**.

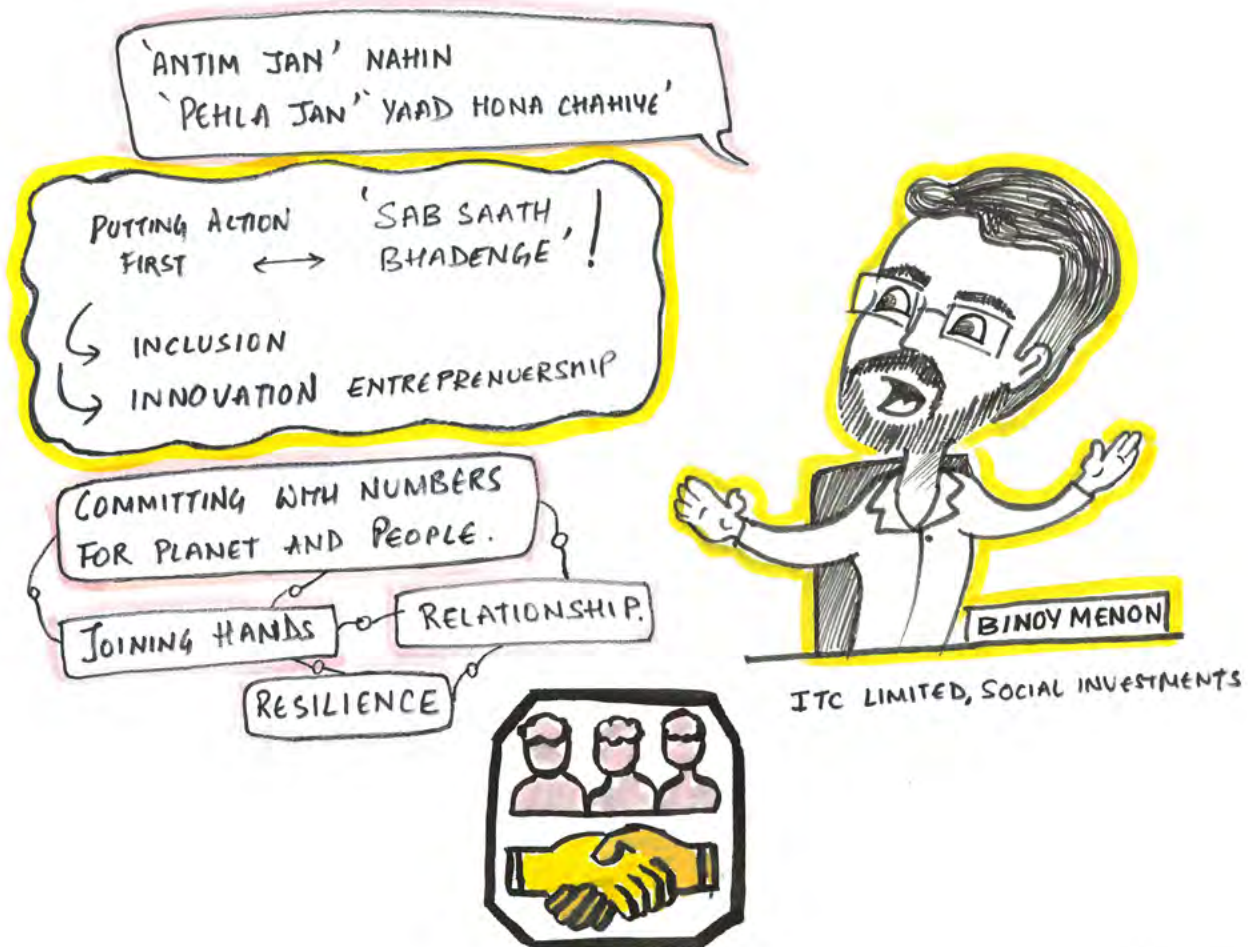
Satellite imagery technology has advanced, revealing a gap between CSR efforts and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Although they work with small and marginal farmers, medium and large farmers also need attention for sustainable livelihoods. Mr. Sen stressed the **importance of improving the water table and soil health to boost resilience**.





Mr. Binoy Menon discussed the role of social investment in promoting sustainable development, emphasizing the need to prioritize both people and the planet. He argued that the first step should be recognizing the needs of the primary stakeholders rather than focusing only on the last person in the chain. ***Antim jan nahi, pehla jan hona chahiye*** (It should not be the last person; but rather the first person). The approach should integrate inclusion and innovation, supported by

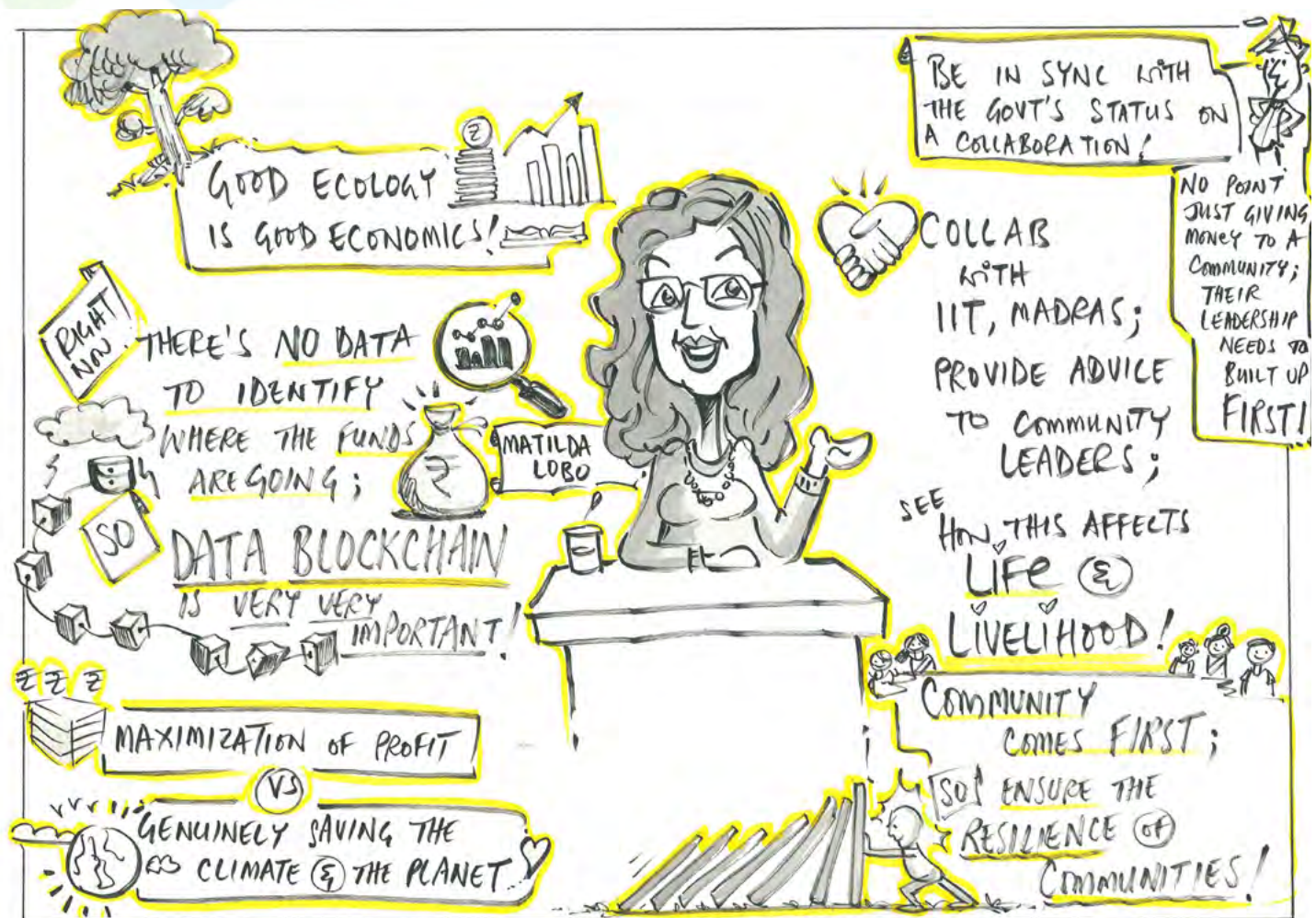
entrepreneurial initiatives. He stressed the importance of stakeholder consultations in securing funding, given the diverse perspectives of funders and stakeholders. These consultations are essential to align investments with social and environmental priorities. ***Sab Saath Badhenge*** (We all will progress together).



Ms. Matilda Lobo outlined IndusInd Bank's multi-faceted approach to environmental sustainability, which involves CSR initiatives centered on building resilience and community-focused actions. She highlighted the **need for location-specific measures to promote a sustainable environment**. The bank is also **investing in technology and leveraging local knowledge** to manage challenges such as waste and wastewater.



IndusInd Bank collaborates with academic institutions like **IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) Madras for action-based research in agroforestry**. Ms. Lobo pointed out that **data management using blockchain technology could enhance fund accessibility and allocation for mainstream development projects**. The focus is on leadership development, capacity building, administrative improvements, and **creating comprehensive logframes** for better implementation.



Mr. Siddharth Bhatia explained that a shift is occurring in the mindset of funders, driven by increasing climate vulnerability across 75% of India's districts. **An estimated budget of ₹11 lakh crore is needed annually for climate mitigation and adaptation.** He noted that while funding from philanthropists, including CSR initiatives and individual contributions, has increased, a gap remains between demonstrated models and their wider application. He advocated for **equal allocation of funds to non-agricultural sectors** and the **adoption of an evidence-based approach to research and capacity building.** He acknowledged that siloed approaches sometimes dilute the impact of funding, underscoring the need for pooling resources and fostering collaboration. Lastly, he suggested that **community engagement is critical to ensuring that data reaches the grassroots level**, leading to more meaningful and localized climate action.



Conclusion

The session concluded with an agreement on the **necessity for more coordinated efforts, pooling of funds, and innovative solutions for sustainable climate finance.** The panelists collectively called for targeted funding approaches that prioritize adaptation alongside mitigation, while also emphasizing **stakeholder inclusivity and evidence-based planning.**

Session 12:

Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on “Need for a comprehensive, integrated climate change management approach”

Moderator:

Mr. Anoop Nautiyal: Founder, Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation

Panelists:

1. **Mr. N.N. Sinha:** Former Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India
 2. **Ms. Shagun Sabarwal:** Regional Director - Asia, Co-Impact
 3. **Mr. Sameer Shisodia:** CEO, Rainmatter Foundation
 4. **Mr. Saroj Kumar Mahapatra:** Executive Director, PRADAN
-

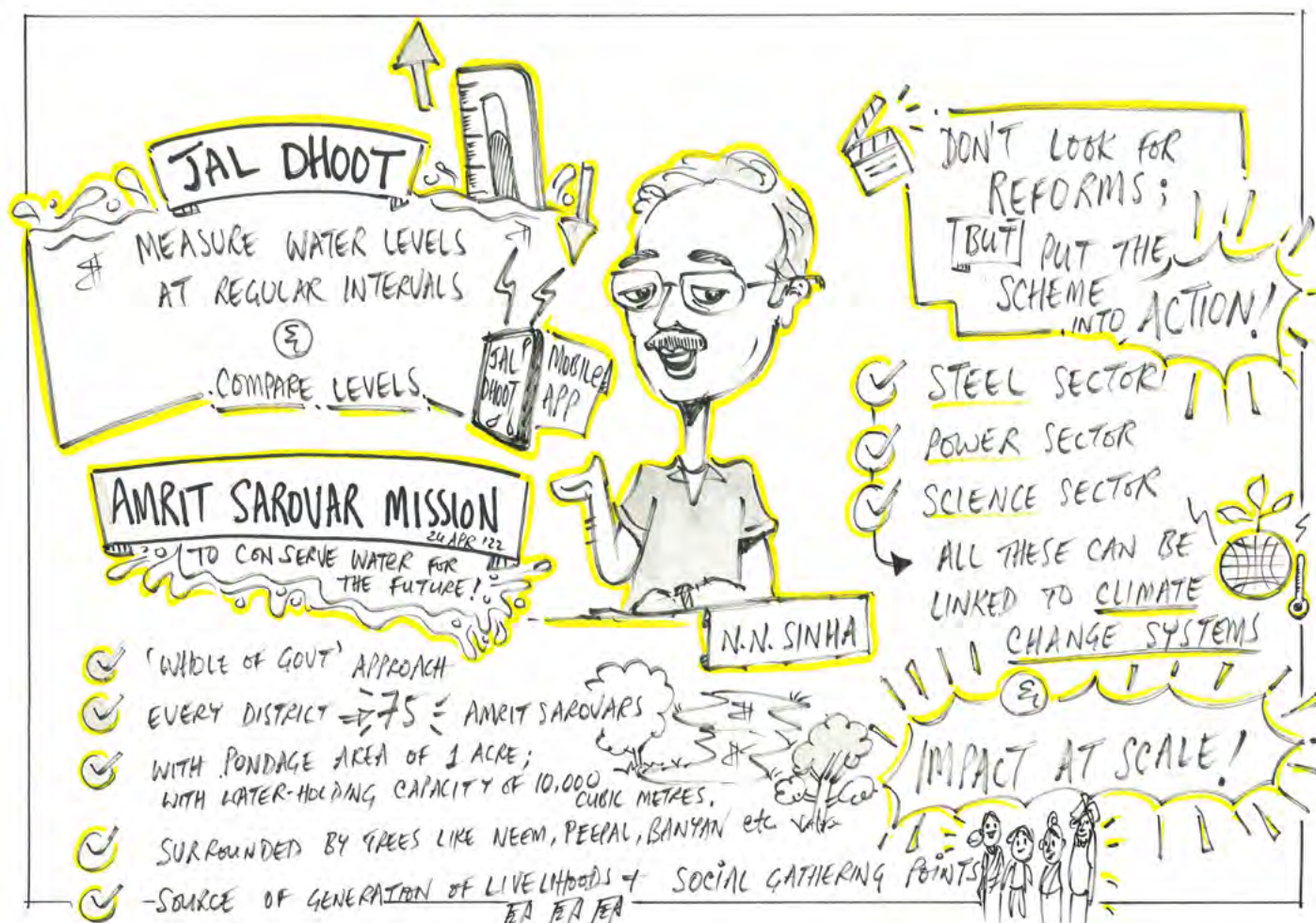
The “Multistakeholder Panel Discussion on the Need for a Comprehensive, Integrated Climate Change Management Approach” explored **crucial reforms and strategies to address climate change**, focusing on community-driven actions and collaboration among various stakeholders. The session, moderated by **Mr. Anoop Nautiyal**, began with an emphasis on the **importance of integrating sustainable practices and strengthening systems** to tackle climate challenges. The discussion highlighted the need for **cohesive approaches** to create lasting impact in climate change management.





Mr. N. N. Sinha discussed various reforms needed to address issues in rural areas, livelihoods, and climate change. He emphasized a **public system-centered approach with the utilization of digital public infrastructure** to avoid duplication of efforts across departments. The **“Jaldoot” initiative**, which monitors the water economy and measures water table levels, and the **“Amrit Sarovar Mission,”** which focuses on creating large ponds, were cited as significant programs. Mr. Sinha

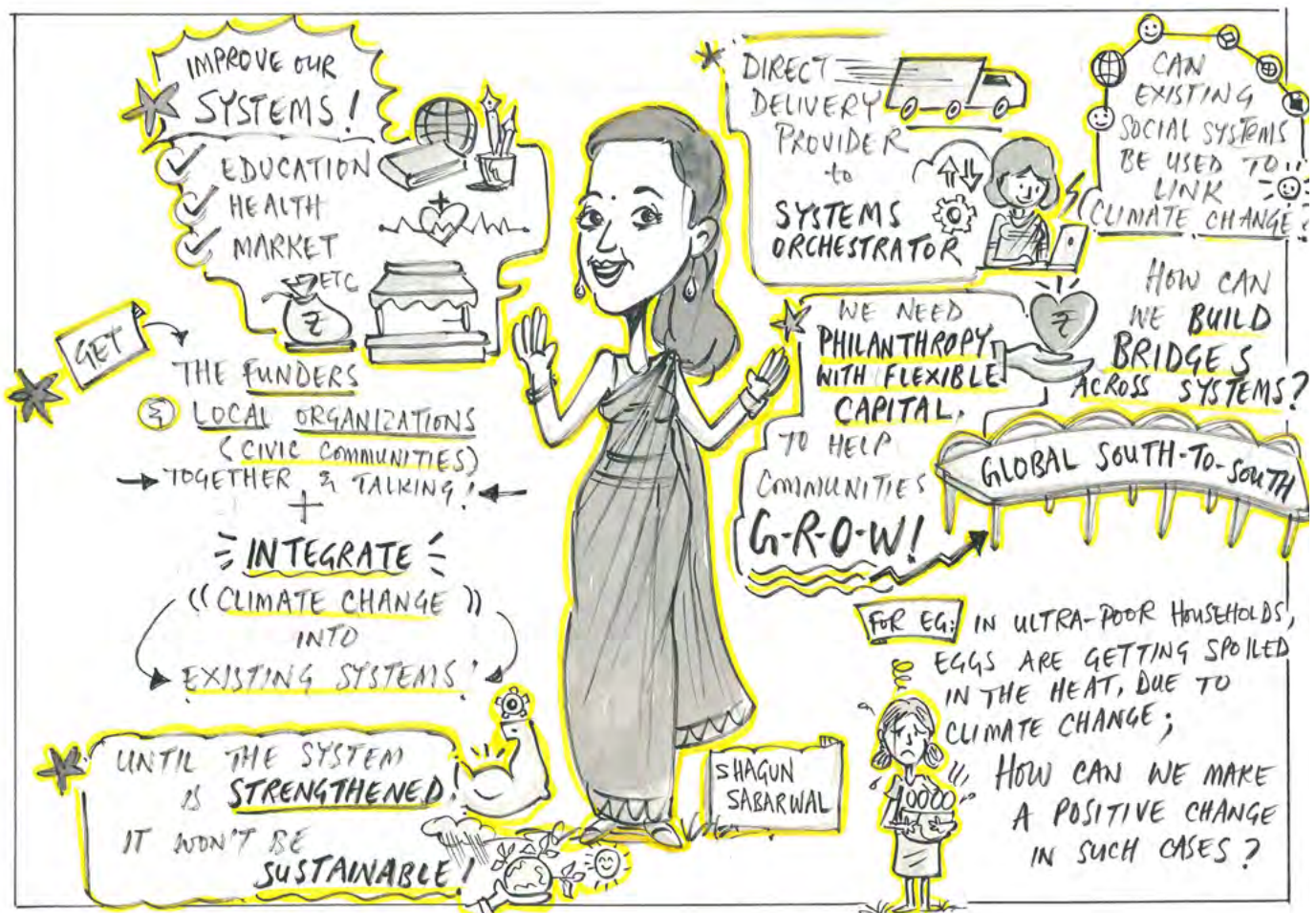
highlighted the importance of desilting these water bodies through cost-effective methods led by Gram Panchayats. He suggested that Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Panchayats should be involved in the planning of climate and livelihood projects, while Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a key role in long-term vision setting. **Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM)** activities that retain water in landscapes were also mentioned. Mr. Sinha referenced the use of biochar for decarbonizing steel production and advocated for community-level capacity building, citing the **“Baagwani Sakhi” initiative in Jharkhand** as an example of identifying and training local actors for effective climate action.





Ms. Shagun Sabarwal provided insights on what India can learn from global experiences and vice versa. She recommended **leveraging existing systems in education, health, and markets**, while emphasizing that funders and local organizations must collaborate for long-term impact. According to her, climate issues are hyperlocal, requiring adaptive measures tailored to community needs. She underscored the **role of social protection systems and**

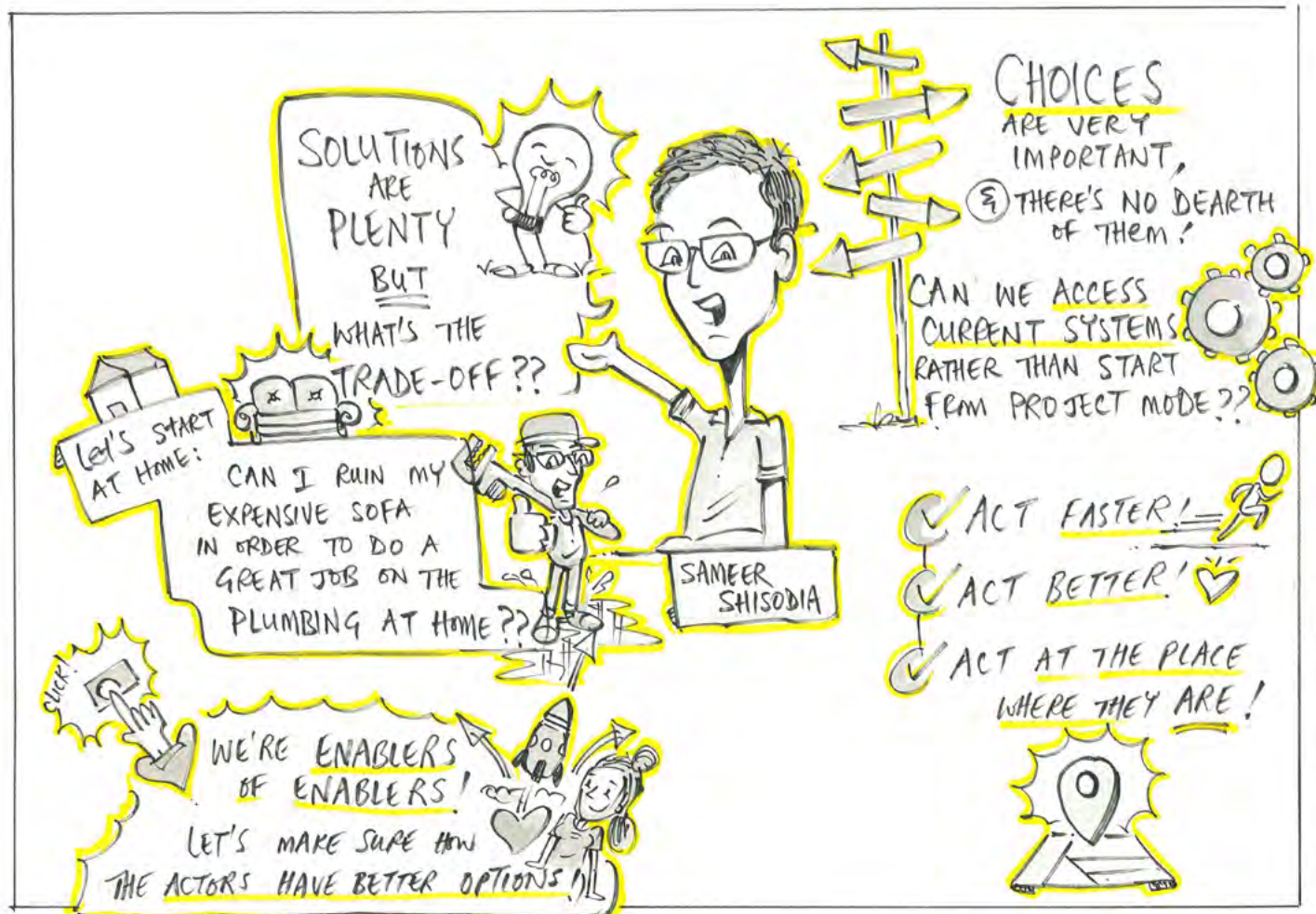
public works programs like MGNREGS in building community resilience and reducing poverty, which is closely linked to climate vulnerability. Ms. Sabarwal advocated for **sustainable, long-term funding to CSOs**, as **short-term financing undermines their effectiveness**. She stressed the importance of collaboration, noting that **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems should measure not only livelihood improvements but also system-level and organizational changes**.





Mr. Sameer Shisodia spoke about the **critical role of philanthropists in catalyzing integrated climate change management**. He emphasized the importance of establishing ownership and decentralizing decision-making to **allow communities to make choices based on their needs**. While there are various solutions available, their accessibility and relevance to local communities remain limited. He described **philanthropists as “enablers of enablers,”** pushing the boundaries

for CSOs and helping build infrastructure for climate action. Mr. Shisodia also highlighted **the need to strengthen the ecosystem through comprehensive models that deepen stakeholder engagement**. Creating enabling environments for local actors to function effectively and promoting ownership are crucial to the success of climate initiatives.





Mr. Saroj Kumar Mahapatra discussed the **role of CSOs in uniting stakeholders**, including the government, CSOs, and NGOs. He emphasized the need for community-led actions to increase resilience, particularly in farming practices and landscape management. He noted **discrepancies between Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) and actual investments**, advocating for targeted investments to close these gaps.

He supported the **“One Panchayat, One Plan” approach** and highlighted the significance of **evidence-based learning**. Mr. Mahapatra also discussed the importance of integrating traditional knowledge and modern practices under the **“Jal, Jangal, Jameen, Jan” (Water, Forest, Land, and Human Resource) framework**, aiming for a convergence approach in farming. He suggested that climate action should be framed as a **“Jan Andolan” (people’s movement)**, integrating grassroots participation in a collective effort for climate adaptation and mitigation.



Conclusion

The session concluded with moderator **Mr. Anoop Nautiyal** thanking the panelists and participants for their valuable contributions. He reiterated the **importance of large-scale partnerships, narrative strengthening, and continuous dialogue to address the complex challenges posed by climate change**. The panel underscored the need for comprehensive strategies involving targeted investments, integrated planning, and stakeholder engagement at all levels to ensure sustainable and resilient climate management.

With these reflections, the **Samagam 2024** event came to a close, marking the end of a series of discussions aimed at fostering **innovative and integrated approaches to climate change management**.

SAMAGAM - 2024
[SKETCHNOTES]
BY

SHIKHA GARG
AND
DINESH FRANCIS

Documented and designed by
Collective Thought Consultancy Services Pvt Ltd



