

## Midline Study of a Local Economic Activation (LEA) Project

HDFC Bank CSR has undertaken the initiative to support a non-profit organization in implementing a Local Economic Development project across multiple Indian states, including Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Punjab, and West Bengal. The primary objective of this project is to facilitate the formation of collectives, comprising beneficiaries such as farmers and women, and eventually register them as producer organizations (POs).

Under the Local Economic Activation (LEA) project, the Social and Transformative Rural Economic Empowerment (STREE) program was implemented to establish collectives of the above-mentioned beneficiaries. Over time, these POs will be empowered to reduce input costs and access improved market opportunities, thus leading to increased incomes.

The STREE project is being implemented in stages and is expected to conclude in approximately four years. In the year since its inception, the project has successfully registered 120 FPOs across the six Indian states mentioned earlier.

Sambodhi will conduct a baseline assessment and capture information from the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the FPOs functioning under three Indian states: Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Punjab to assess the values for key indicators against which the outcome of the intervention can be assessed after the completion of the project.

Sambodhi has adopted a mixed-method approach for the midline assessment. The quasi-experimental design involves identifying FPO members and non-members from all three states currently covered under the program. A total of 520 households have been interviewed (260 member households and 260 non-member households) across the three states.

Sambodhi has also undertaken an assessment of the crucial implementation processes of this project by GT for the Midline Study. This involves studying the processes in place to manage and track the components and coming up with suggestions for the roll-out of activities. Along with the activities undertaken with the collaboration of GT, the functioning of FPOs is also being monitored since they are tools for project implementation, and understanding them will further help streamline those for better achievements.