

EMPOWERING GRAMSABHAS THROUGH COLLECTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A successful story of collective marketing of Jamun

Rooted in Nature, Growing for the Future.

Overview of the Initiative

The Jamun Collective Entrepreneurship Initiative in Korchi block, Gadchiroli is a powerful model of community-led development. What began in 2024 as a small experiment with one Gram Sabha and 20 farmers has grown into a multi-village enterprise involving four Gram Sabhas and 75 farmers. The initiative is built on a simple yet transformative idea—when communities pool their resources, skills, and produce, they gain power over markets that once exploited them.

Vision

To build empowered, self-reliant forest-based communities where farmers and women lead sustainable enterprises, ensure fair prices, and create a dignified, equitable livelihood.

Farmers who were previously dependent on private traders discovered they could earn far better prices by marketing collectively. In just two years:

Mission

- To strengthen Gram Sabhas as the primary institutions for collective marketing of forest produce, ensuring transparency, fairness, and maximum value for villagers.
- To promote women's leadership in community enterprises by enabling them to manage procurement, accounting, and decision-making processes.
- To eliminate exploitation by middlemen by establishing decentralized, farmer-led value chains rooted in trust, unity, and local governance.
- To diversify and scale forest-based enterprises—such as Jamun, Hirda, Tendu, and Mahua—through capacity building, fair market linkages, and sustainable harvesting practices.
- To demonstrate a replicable model of collective entrepreneurship that can inspire and strengthen other villages across the region.

Key Achievements

Two Season of Growth and Success

In 2024, the initiative began with just one Gram Sabha—Mulitepadeksha. By 2025, three more Gram Sabhas—Hitkasha, Ramsaytola, and Kolupadeksha—joined the collective effort.



Total Participated
Gram Sabha

04

Total Participated
Collectors/ Farmers

75



Strengthened Partnership within Gram Sabhas and its women and men members.

Women farmers played a significant role as collectors, and several of them emerged as leaders by taking full responsibility for managing the accounts—tracking how many crates of Jamun arrived each day, calculating the total revenue generated, and determining the exact amount to be paid to each farmer or collector.

Financial Summary

In 2024, the journey began modestly. Just one Gram Sabha with 20 farmers joined hands. Together, they sold 4,250 kg of produce, earning 2,08,084 in revenue and 54,184 in profit. The villagers were amazed to see that by cutting out middlemen, they could almost double their price—a 96% increase.

Encouraged by this success, more Gram Sabhas joined in 2025. Now, four Gram Sabhas with 75 farmers participated. Their collective effort was even more remarkable. They sold a massive 24,530 kg of produce, generating 11,43,480 in revenue and 4,57,392 in profit. This time, prices rose by 60% compared to what traders usually offered.

Emerging Voices – Women Leaders

This initiative highlights the growing leadership of women within the Gram Sabha. Women played a central role in organizing meetings, managing processes, and leading community actions. **Khileshwari Muleti**, the Gram Sabha **Netri**, emerged as a strong leader whose effective coordination and decision-making inspired wider participation of women.

Financial management was handled with care, ensuring transparent accounting and fair profit distribution based on individual contributions. **Kumaribai Jamkatan**, a senior leader from Korchi, provided consistent guidance and strategic support, strengthening the Gram Sabha's vision and direction.

While leadership capacities have significantly improved, further skill development—particularly in negotiation and enterprise closure—remains an important next step for women leaders.

Expanding the Scope of Local Governance

Initially focused on the tendu leaf trade, the Gram Sabha has gradually expanded its role to manage other Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFPs). This shift reflects enhanced institutional capacity and growing confidence in community-led governance. The Gram Sabha now functions as a broader platform for forest-based livelihoods, demonstrating a stronger, more self-reliant model of local governance.



Amhi Amchya Agrogyasathi Its efforts

The roots of this success trace back to the consistent support of Amhi Amchaya Arogyasathi (AAA). Initially, AAA worked with Gram Sabhas on Tendu Patta collection. But slowly, their efforts expanded, helping communities handle other forest produce like Hirda and Mahua. In fact, Gram Sabhas together managed 27 metric tons of Hirda (in 2023) last year and over 13 metric tons (In 2024) and 56 metric tons of Mahua (in 2025) this year—proof that collective entrepreneurship was no longer an experiment, but a growing movement.



Duration	Total Amount Earned	Invested	Investing in a Particular Venture
2024	2,08,084	30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the leadership of the Gram Sabha, investment was made at the community level in the jamun business. Collective planning and resources were used for collection, storage, primary processing and sale. The community made a combined investment of financial as well as human resources. This initiative gave a boost to local livelihoods and increased the financial autonomy of the Gram Sabha. Collective entrepreneurship strengthened the decision making, management skills and sense of responsibility of the Gram Sabha.
2025	11,43,480	30,000	

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