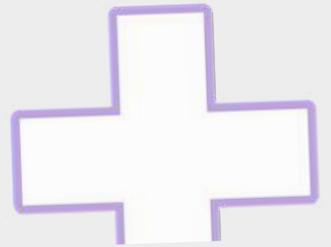


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THIRD EDITION

# NEWSLETTER



## BHARATKHAND CONSORTIUM

OF FARMERS PRODUCER  
COMPANY LIMITED

SUPPORTED BY

**Solidaridad**



## Editorial Message

***“When women farmers unite within strong institutions, they do not merely participate in agriculture they transform it.”***

As we move into the next agricultural season, this March edition is dedicated to the women who are at the heart of our fields, our families, and our food systems. Bharatkhand remains deeply committed to strengthening women-led Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and the market linkages that enable women farmers to participate confidently and equitably in modern agri-value chains.

Across our programme areas, women are not simply beneficiaries they are leaders, negotiators, and institution-builders. When women come together through strong collective platforms, they secure better access to markets, quality inputs, knowledge, and financial services. Such solidarity enhances their bargaining power, brings transparency to procurement, and builds supply chains that are both resilient and just.

This season, collaboration among women-led FPOs is more vital than ever. Shared knowledge, shared voice, and shared enterprise are the foundations upon which lasting agricultural transformation is built. Bharatkhand is proud to walk alongside these women as they reshape what it means to be a farmer in modern India.

Equally central to our mission is the adoption of regenerative agricultural practices championed by women who have long understood the intimate relationship between the soil and the community it sustains. By promoting soil health, mindful input use, and climate-resilient farming systems, these women steward both productivity and the planet for generations to come.

As we prepare for the upcoming cropping season, Bharatkhand reaffirms its commitment to strengthening women-led farmer institutions, expanding market opportunities, and equipping women farmers with the knowledge and services they need to grow sustainably and to prosper on their own terms.

Happy Reading!

**Dr. Suresh Motwani**  
**General Manager, Solidaridad**

## Women & Livelihoods

### From the Garden to the Solar Dryer

At Rakshika FPO's processing centre, women members discover how sunlight and skill can transform a tomato glut into lasting nourishment and a livelihood opportunity.

Every harvest season brings with it an abundance that the market cannot always absorb in time. Tomatoes ripen quickly, prices fall, and what was once a promise of income becomes waste left to rot in the field. It was against this familiar backdrop that a quiet but powerful demonstration unfolded at the women-run processing centre of Rakshika Women Farmer Producer Organisation one that showed how a simple technology and a determined group of women could change that story entirely.

As part of Bharatkhand's continuous field engagement with women-led FPOs, a hands-on training session on solar drying of tomatoes was conducted at the centre. The session was designed not as a lecture but as a lived experience women learning by doing, from washing to drying, step by step together.

#### Straight from the Nutrition Garden

The tomatoes used for the demonstration were not sourced from a market or brought in from afar they came directly from the nutrition garden cultivated nearby. This was a deliberate choice, reflecting Bharatkhand's belief that solutions must emerge from within the community, using what is already at hand. The women immediately recognised the produce as their own, grown with their own labour, and the session took on a deeper personal meaning.

#### The Four Steps Women Practised Together

Washing and cleaning fresh tomatoes to prepare them for processing



Cutting them into uniform pieces for even drying



Arranging the slices carefully on drying trays



Placing the trays inside the solar dryer and understanding how the process works



#### Small Technology, Big Possibility

Through this practical exercise, women gained a clear understanding of how solar drying can extend the shelf life of tomatoes, reduce post-harvest losses during peak production months, and lay the foundation for value-added products dried tomatoes, spice blends, and preserved ingredients that can be sold beyond the local market.

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What made the session especially meaningful was its simplicity. No expensive equipment, no complex machinery just sunlight, drying trays, and knowledge. For women who have long managed the household kitchen with ingenuity and care, this technique felt immediately accessible, something they could own and adapt.

The session also opened space for wider conversations on strengthening product processing at the centre, on identifying other locally available commodities that could benefit from preservation, and on how the FPO might develop a small range of processed products in the seasons ahead.

Such training sessions, modest in scale but rich in intention, are at the core of what Bharatkhand believes: that when women at the grassroots are equipped with practical knowledge and simple tools, they build not just skills but confidence and communities that are more resilient, more nourished, and more self-reliant.



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## Kachnariya Women Farmer Producer Company and Goat Farming Based Livelihood

Kachnariya Women Farmer Producer Company Limited (FPC) is a group of rural women farmers from Agar Malwa district, Madhya Pradesh. It is registered on 17 April 2025 under the Companies Act. The FPC was formed with the support of Solidaridad to help women improve their livelihoods through farming and related activities.

This initiative was started by Ms Rekha Chauhan and nine other women from nearby villages. They came together with the idea of starting their own business in an organized way. They wanted to build a women-led company where women can work together, earn income, and become financially independent.

Today, the FPC is managed by 10 women Board of Directors with 50 women shareholders. The company gives a platform to rural women to come together, learn new skills, and use their traditional knowledge especially in livestock rearing to start and grow their own businesses.



### Goat Rearing as a Livelihood Activity

One of the main activities of the FPC is goat rearing (goatry). This has been chosen because it is easy to start with, needs less investment, and gives quick rotational income throughout the year.

## The FPO Focus on-

- Working together in production
- Adding value to their products
- Improving supply and selling systems
- Connecting them to better markets



In villages, goat rearing is a very suitable activity for women because many already have experience in taking care of livestock. It does not require much more intense training and money to start and has good demand in the market for goat meat and milk.

Through goat rearing, women group thought to earn regular income by selling goats, milk, and manure.

## Objectives of Kachnariya FPC

- Enhance income of women farmers
- Promote sustainable livestock-based livelihoods
- Strengthening collective bargaining and market linkages
- Encourage women entrepreneurship in rural areas
- Doorstep business opportunity.

## Key Activities and Orientation of Board

**Formation of FPC:** Mobilizing women farmers into a registered producer company and become the part of self-sustainable community driven model.

**Capacity Building:** Training on organizational structure and functioning of FPO as an institution.

Organizational growth and compliance with documentation.

Accounts and reporting system financial decision making.

**Breed Selection:** Introduction of improved breeds for higher productivity and better management practices.

**Infrastructure Development:** Construction of goat sheds, fodder cultivation, and water facilities

**Veterinary Support:** Regular health check-ups and vaccination process.

**Collective Procurement:** Bulk purchase of feed fodder and equipment,  
Market Linkages: Direct sale of goats and goat products to local markets and individuals and traders,

## Benefits are expected in coming days

Regular income generation for women members

Reduced input costs through collective action

Improved animal health and productivity

Increased decision-making power of women

Employment opportunities at the village level

## Challenges

- Limited initial capital and access to credit
- Need for continuous training and technical support
- Market price fluctuations
- Climatic resilience and health of goat.
- Disease management and mortality control

The FPO structure helps women by aggregating production and selling goats collectively, ensuring better market prices and eliminating middlemen. It also enables access to credit, inputs, and government schemes, making the business more sustainable and profitable.

Overall, women-headed FPO goatry businesses enhance income, build entrepreneurship skills, and promote financial independence and social empowerment among rural women.

## FPOs & Value Chain

### ***Where the Village Meets the Market***

***Bharatkhand is building more than connections it is building a collective identity for rural produce, one exhibition, one handshake, and one loyal customer at a time.***

A jar of sun-dried tomatoes. A packet of hand-pounded spices. A bottle of cold-pressed oil. Each of these products carries within it, months of labour, local knowledge, and the quiet ambition of a woman farmer or rural entrepreneur who believes her goods deserve a wider world. The challenge has never been the quality of what rural producers make it has always been finding the path to the people who need it. Bharatkhand is clearing that path.

Working as a collective marketing platform, Bharatkhand connects products made by rural Farmer Producer Organisations and local entrepreneurs with markets that match their scale, their values, and their aspirations. The platform functions not as a middleman who takes a cut, but as a bridge built from trust, networks, and a genuine understanding of what rural producers can offer.



**Quality was never the problem. The gap was always between where the product was made and where it needed to be seen.**

## **Linking Producers to Buyers**

Across its programme areas, Bharatkhand has been steadily building market linkages that connect FPOs and rural entrepreneurs with retailers, bulk buyers, and institutional purchasers. These are not one-time transactions they are relationships designed to create consistent, reliable demand for locally produced goods. For an FPO woman member who processes pickles or dried produce in small batches, a stable buyer is transformative: it means she can plan, invest, and grow with confidence.



## **Taking Products to the People**

Beyond bulk linkages, Bharatkhand understands that rural products must also build a face and a story. Through small exhibitions, community gatherings, local events, and institutional programmes, producers are given a platform to display their goods directly to consumers to explain how something was made, what went into it, and why it matters that it was made locally.

## **How Bharatkhand Promotes Rural Produce**

- Bulk and retail linkages with buyers and institutional purchasers
- Small exhibitions and product display events for direct consumer access
- Community gatherings and local platforms for word-of-mouth growth
- Organic, network-based marketing through FPO and community channels
- Direct producer-buyer engagement sessions for feedback and preference-mapping

## Authenticity as a Competitive Edge

At the heart of this initiative is a conviction that locally processed, traditionally prepared, small-batch products hold a distinct value in today's market. Consumers increasingly seek food that is honest in its origins and human in its making. Bharatkhand's marketing approach leans into this not with mass advertising, but with organic growth through community networks, personal endorsements, and the irreplaceable credibility of a producer who stands behind her product.

The goal is larger than any single sale. By weaving FPOs and rural entrepreneurs into the value chain as active, visible participants not just suppliers Bharatkhand is helping build a collective identity for rural produce. An identity rooted in place, in practice, and in the people who have farmed and processed these goods for generations. As that identity strengthens, so does the market confidence of the women and communities who create it.



## Special Feature

### How Bharatkhand Strengthens Farmer-Owned Value Chains

Smallholder farmers often face challenges in accessing reliable markets, receiving fair prices, and meeting quality requirements of organised buyers. Bharatkhand addresses these challenges by building strong, farmer-owned value chains where Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) play a central role in aggregation, quality assurance, and market engagement.

Aggregation through FPOs is the first step in this model. By bringing together produce from multiple farmers, FPOs create consolidated and market-ready volumes. This collective approach reduces dependence on intermediaries and improves farmers' bargaining power in the marketplace.

Ensuring quality and traceability is another important component. Bharatkhand supports FPOs in adopting standardised production practices, grading systems, and record-keeping mechanisms. These systems help maintain consistent quality while enabling buyers to trace produce back to its source, strengthening transparency and trust within the supply chain.

A key strength of the Bharatkhand model lies in building direct market linkages with processors, agri-business companies, and institutional buyers. By facilitating organised procurement systems, the platform ensures transparent pricing, timely payments, and long-term partnerships that benefit both farmers and industry.

The use of digital advisory tools further strengthens these value chains. Through mobile-based updates and communication platforms, farmers receive timely information on crop management practices, weather advisories, and market insights. This enables them to make informed decisions at every stage of the cropping cycle.

In addition, Bharatkhand Krishi Bazaar supports farmers by ensuring access to quality inputs, bio-inputs, and scientific advisory services through FPO-managed centres. These centres serve as important hubs for knowledge sharing, input distribution, and farmer engagement.

Together, these interventions are helping transform fragmented agricultural production systems into organised, market-aligned value chains ensuring that farmers not only produce more, but also participate more effectively in modern agricultural markets.

## Knowledge Section

### Key Crop Management Practices for Rabi Harvest and Next Season Preparation

As the Rabi season approaches the harvesting stage, careful crop management and timely planning for the next cropping cycle become essential. Proper harvesting practices, post-harvest handling, and soil preparation not only protect the current yield but also help farmers prepare their fields for the upcoming season in a sustainable and cost-effective manner.

#### 1. Proper Harvesting Practices

Harvesting should be carried out at the right maturity stage to ensure good grain quality and maximum yield. Crops such as mustard, wheat, and pulses should be harvested when grains are fully mature and moisture levels are suitable. Timely harvesting helps avoid losses caused by lodging, shattering, or unexpected weather changes.

#### 2. Post-Harvest Handling and Storage

After harvesting, proper drying, cleaning, and grading of produce are essential to maintain quality. Farmers should ensure that grains are adequately dried before storage to prevent moisture damage and pest infestation. Using clean storage spaces and proper packaging materials helps preserve quality and improve market value.

#### 3. Seed Selection for the Next Crop

Selecting high-quality seeds from healthy plants is important for ensuring better crop performance in the next season. Farmers are encouraged to choose seeds from disease-free plants with good yield characteristics. Certified seeds or seeds recommended by agricultural experts can further improve productivity and crop resilience.

#### 4. Soil Health Management

Maintaining soil fertility is critical for sustainable farming. Farmers should consider practices such as soil testing, balanced nutrient management, crop rotation, and incorporation of organic matter. These practices improve soil structure, enhance nutrient availability, and support long-term productivity.

#### 5. Use of Bio-Inputs and Natural Solutions

The use of bio-fertilisers, vermicompost, and natural pest management solutions can help reduce cultivation costs while improving soil health. Bio-inputs support beneficial microorganisms in the soil and reduce dependence on chemical inputs, contributing to more resilient and environmentally friendly farming systems.

## Strengthening the Mustard Supply Chain: Bharat Sarson Sammellan Takes Centre Stage

***Mandsaur's landmark conclave signals a coordinated push to build a resilient, farmer-to-refinery mustard value chain***

India imports over 55% of its edible oil a vulnerability that costs the nation billions and leaves farmers disconnected from the full value of what they grow. The first Bharat Sarson Sammellan, held at Village Kanghatti in Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh, took a decisive step toward closing that gap.

At its core, the Sammellan was a supply chain event. It brought every critical link of the mustard value chain into one room farmers, input providers, technical experts, government authorities, and major industry buyers creating the kind of end-to-end alignment that sustainable supply chains are built on.

### **Farmers as the Foundation**

Over 1,500 mustard growers participated. For any supply chain to work, it must begin at the farm gate and the Sammellan invested heavily in equipping farmers with the knowledge to produce consistently and sustainably. Experts guided participants on crop rotation, soil testing, residue management, and regenerative practices that improve both yield quality and long-term land productivity. Improved seed varieties and bio-inputs on display offered farmers practical pathways to supply higher-grade mustard to the market.





## Industry Commitment at the Buying End

Equally significant was the participation of Adani Wilmar Limited, Louis Dreyfus Company, and VVF Limited three of the most influential players in India's edible oil and oilseed processing industry. Their presence was not ceremonial. These companies engaged directly with farmers on quality standards, procurement processes, and value addition opportunities, signalling a readiness to absorb increased domestic mustard production at scale. When buyers and growers share the same platform, supply chain gaps begin to close.

A Chain Built to Last

What the Bharat Sarson Sammellan demonstrated is that supply chain strengthening is not just a logistics challenge it is a relationship-building exercise. By connecting producers with processors, knowledge with practice, and local agriculture with national demand, the Sammellan has laid a replicable model for how India's mustard supply chain can be deepened, district by district.

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