



industree

Turning Forest Knowledge into Economic Security

PHILANTHROPY
Cartier

Case Study Compendium

Industree Foundation in Partnership with Cartier Philanthropy



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Abbreviations

NTFP - Non-Timber Forest Produce

MEL - Micro Enterprise Leader

MBTL - Mutual Benefit Trust Leader

MBT - Mutual Benefit Trust

BEC - Business Excellence Centre

SGS - SGS India Private Limited

FSC® - Forest Stewardship Council

Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin Act), 2025

GBV - Gender-Based Violence

SSY - Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana

6Y - You, Your Family, Your Community, Your World, Your Planet, Your Enterprise

ECG - Equity, Climate and Gender

Foreword



In forest-dependent regions of Odisha, tribal women have long engaged with Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) as part of their livelihoods. This project strengthened that engagement by establishing structured, women-owned enterprises within the sal and siali biodegradable leaf plate value chain. Organised production systems, professional infrastructure, and market linkages enabled women to participate in value chains that are more stable, efficient, and scalable.

The partnership between Industree Foundation and Cartier Philanthropy focused on building enterprise capability and leadership among women producers. Investments in governance, skills, and systems enabled women to manage operations, take on leadership roles, and engage directly with organised markets. As a result, livelihood activities transitioned into formal enterprises with clearer ownership and long-term economic potential.

A key outcome has been the establishment of women-governed enterprises linked to national and international markets. Export-compliant Business Excellence Centres, standardised procurement processes, and adherence to international food-safety standards have strengthened production quality and consistency. These interventions have resulted in more regular incomes, improved enterprise performance, and accountable, women-owned value chains.

The project also strengthened environmentally sustainable production. By expanding the sal and siali biodegradable leaf plate value chain, it supports the shift towards alternatives to single-use plastic, in line with India's broader sustainability efforts. Responsible sourcing, circular production practices, and compliance systems align traditional forest-based work with contemporary environmental standards.

Overall, the project demonstrates that women-led enterprises rooted in forest economies can operate at scale while meeting market and compliance requirements. The outcomes documented in this Case Study Compendium reflect measurable economic, environmental, and institutional change, achieved through focused investment, strong implementation, and women's leadership.

Neju George Abraham

CEO,
Industree Foundation

About Industree Foundation



Indus Tree Crafts Foundation (Industree; Industree Foundation) is a not-for-profit organisation that has been working to create organised farm and off-farm creative manufacturing enterprises, as well as an ecosystem for farmer collectives, for rural women and farmers in India and Ethiopia for over two decades. Industree has built an ecosystem that holistically tackles the root causes of poverty by accelerating the economic sustainability of women's collectives via value addition at the source of their locally available raw material resources and biodiversity. This has led to significant social gains for women, including social security, improved resilience to crises, overall stability, and positive climate action.

Having already impacted over 600,000 producers, directly and indirectly, and ensured cumulative market access of over \$60 million (USD), Industree aims to strengthen millions of producers (the majority of whom are women) to achieve a triple-bottom-line impact, i.e., economic impact (including regular work, increased income, and financial stability), social impact (improved agency and voice for women at home and in their communities, and educational opportunities for the next generation) and environmental impact (focusing on natural fiber and organic raw material value chains, building regenerative economies) including compliance standards such as SMETA certification

Industree's ecosystem-building work ensures that communities become part of local, regional, national, and mainstream value chains, having greater control over their economic security and resources. Industree's climate action and social empowerment theory of change operates at the intersection of Equity, Climate, and Gender (ECG) through the Economic Resilience lever. Industree's focus on value addition at the source has created traceable, circular value chains in regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, and non-timber forest products. The organisation has established climate-positive value chains across sectors such as banana in Tamil Nadu, bamboo (Forest Stewardship Council® certified) in Karnataka and Maharashtra, and biodegradable leaf plates in Odisha. These initiatives connect rural communities to global markets, enabling partnerships with renowned brands.

Climate change is disproportionately exacerbating vulnerabilities and risks for the most marginalised stakeholders, including smallholder farmers, women, and Indigenous communities. Our central premise is that nature-based solutions, integrating ECG as cornerstones, can transform global supply chains to foster sustainability and enhance community resilience. We believe that women and other affected communities are best placed to sustain these solutions due to their lived experiences.

Industree-Cartier Philanthropy Collaboration



In the forested landscapes of Kandhamal and Nayagarh in Odisha, sal and siali leaves have long been part of everyday life. For generations, tribal women collected and stitched these leaves into plates, often earning modest, seasonal incomes through informal and fragmented markets. What they lacked was not skill or effort, but access to systems, scale, and structured opportunity.

The partnership between Industree Foundation and Cartier Philanthropy set out to change that.

Built on a shared belief in dignified work, gender equity, and environmental responsibility, the collaboration focused on transforming this traditional activity into a structured, women-led enterprise model. The goal was clear: integrate 800 rural and tribal women into a value chain that could deliver both economic independence and market relevance.

With Cartier Philanthropy's support, the shift was systemic. Export-compliant Business Excellence Centre was established to anchor design, quality control, and production planning. Decentralised units brought organised workspaces closer to communities. Transparent procurement systems



Established 02
Self-owned Enterprises



replaced informal middlemen. Digital tools strengthened traceability and accountability from forest to finished product.



Impacted 800
Marginalised Women

Gradually, fragmented forest collection evolved into coordinated production serving domestic and international markets seeking sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic. Women who once participated in seasonal, low-margin activities became part of a structured supply chain aligned with growing global demand for biodegradable products.

The impact extends beyond income. Women report greater financial stability, improved workplace conditions, stronger institutional linkages, and enhanced social recognition within their communities. The value chain is now stabilised, skilled, and market-facing, positioned for further scale and commercial consolidation.



Established 02
Mutual Benefit Trusts

Together, Industree Foundation and Cartier Philanthropy have demonstrated that when philanthropy invests in systems and long-term capability, traditional livelihoods can evolve into resilient, women-led enterprises that generate both social and business value.

Impact at a Glance

07

Women Serving as Board Members/Trustees

Women Trained as Mutual Benefit Trust Leaders

800

Women Completed 6Y Enterprise and Gender Training

6,400

Indirect Beneficiaries

800

Women Completed Hard Skills Training

100%

Women have Access to Productive Economic Resources

35%

of Average Increase in Income of Women Producers

100%

women with improved technical skills

SGS

Certified for EU Food Contact Safety

01

Export-compliant Business Excellence Centre Established

80

Women Trained as Micro Enterprise Leaders

Production Scaled from

1.8-5

LAKHS

Units per Month

639

Buyers Engaged Across **12** States

Capacity Building and Training



800

Women Producers Trained
in 6Y* & Gender

80

Micro Enterprise Leaders

07

Mutual Benefit Trust Leaders

The project adopted a comprehensive capacity-building approach designed to strengthen both technical competencies and leadership capabilities among women producers. Training extended beyond basic production skills to build a holistic enterprise mindset. Women received structured, hands-on training in leaf collection, stitching, pressing, grading, and quality control to ensure consistency and market readiness of Sal and Siali leaf plates. Alongside technical skills, the programme integrated 6Y enterprise soft skills, focusing on discipline, teamwork, productivity, communication, and problem-solving, enabling women to function effectively within organised production systems.

Recognising that economic empowerment must be accompanied by social transformation, the project also incorporated structured gender training to strengthen confidence, negotiation ability, and awareness of rights and responsibilities within households and enterprises.

The capacity-building process culminated in the formation of women-owned and women-managed Mutual Benefit Trusts. These collective institutions strengthened governance, accountability, and income security, while sustained engagement with Business Excellence Centres ensured ongoing technical support, quality assurance, and market alignment.

*6Y - Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Development Training

From Livelihoods to Leadership



Climate-Resilient Livelihoods



Natural Materials and Responsible Sourcing



Stable Income

This project enabled a structural shift in how women from forest-dependent communities engage with work, income, and decision-making. Informal, seasonal activities were reorganised into structured, women-owned enterprises with defined roles, predictable work cycles, and transparent systems. Women transitioned from fragmented livelihoods to formal value chains offering income stability and long-term agency.

At the individual level, regular work and skills training increased confidence, financial control, and participation in household decisions. Predictable incomes enabled planning for expenses, health needs, and education.

At the enterprise level, informal production was replaced by standardised processes, quality controls, and compliance systems aligned with market requirements. Women assumed operational and leadership roles, improving efficiency and buyer trust.

Environmentally, the project strengthened biodegradable leaf plate value chains, promoting alternatives to single-use plastic through responsible sourcing, circular practices, and traceability. Together, these outcomes demonstrate how investment in women's ownership, skills, and systems can build resilient, climate-positive enterprises grounded in equity and leadership.

Voices of **Change**





Manju Majhi Leaf Collector



My name is Manju Majhi, and I work as a leaf collector. Earlier, my livelihood depended entirely on seasonal forest-based work. My income changed with the seasons and the availability of forest produce. Some months, I earned enough to manage household expenses, while in others, earnings were very low. This uncertainty made it difficult to plan for daily needs, and health-related expenses added further pressure on my family.

After joining Industree, I became part of the NTFP value chain, which brought a significant change to my working life. Through this association, I moved from irregular, seasonal collection to more structured and regular work. This shift reduced my dependence on uncertain forest produce availability and helped me earn a more predictable income.

With stable work, managing household expenses has become easier. I can plan better for daily needs and feel more secure when unexpected costs arise. Regular income has brought relief and stability to my household, especially during times when earlier I would have struggled.

What gives me particular pride is knowing that the work I do reaches far beyond my village. The products I help prepare travel to markets outside our region, connecting my efforts to a much larger system. This knowledge has given my work meaning and purpose.

Today, I feel more confident and secure in my livelihood. Being part of Industree has allowed me to achieve stability. My work now supports my family with consistency and dignity, and it has given me a renewed sense of purpose and belonging.

Maseli Kanhar Leaf Collector



My name is Maseli Kanhar, and I work as a leaf collector. For most of my life, my livelihood depended on seasonal forest work. My income changed with the availability of leaves and demand for stitched leaves, and because of this uncertainty, saving money or planning for the future was never possible. Whatever I earned went directly towards daily household needs.

This insecurity led to long-term goals, especially education, being often set aside. Meeting immediate expenses always came first, and thinking beyond the present felt difficult.

After joining the NTFP enterprise supported by Industree, my situation began to change. I started receiving regular work and steady earnings, something I had never experienced before. For the first time in my life, I was able to save money, even if only a small amount at first. This shift gave me confidence and a sense of control over my life.

Today, my income supports my grandson's education, and this gives me deep satisfaction. Knowing that I can contribute to his future has changed how I think about my own work and purpose. I now plan my expenses more carefully and think ahead with hope rather than worry.

This journey has taught me the value of predictable work. It has allowed me to move beyond survival and begin planning for the future. Through my association with Industree, I have gained not only income but also confidence, stability, and peace of mind.

Janaki Dalabehera Leaf Collector



My name is Janaki Dalabehera, and I work as a leaf collector. I joined the NTFP unit with a simple intention to take a more active role in supporting my family. For a long time, my contribution remained limited, not because of a lack of effort, but because my income was uncertain. Depending on others for daily expenses often made me feel invisible in financial decisions at home.

With Industree's support, my work became more regular, and with that came consistent earnings. This change altered my daily life in small but meaningful ways. I began contributing steadily to household needs and supporting my children's education. Managing these responsibilities gave me confidence and a sense of ownership over my role in the family.

What changed most was how I saw myself. Being able to earn regularly allowed me to participate in decisions with clarity and confidence. I no longer hesitate to speak about expenses or plans, because I know I am contributing equally. This financial participation has reshaped my identity within the household from someone who depended on others to someone who shares responsibility.

Today, I take pride in being an equal contributor. My work has strengthened my independence and given me confidence in my own abilities. These changes may not be dramatic, but they have brought balance, respect, and quiet strength into my life.

Sasmita Digal Leaf Collector



My name is Sasmita Digal, and I work as a leaf collector. I learnt leaf stitching at a very young age, similar to other girls and women in my community do. For years, this skill was part of my everyday life, but it was never seen as dignified/respectable, real work or a source of income. It was something we did quietly, without recognition or value.

I joined the NTFP enterprise supported by Industree because I was looking for financial stability and a way to make use of what I already knew. Through structured training, I strengthened my technical skills and learnt to work with greater care and consistency. I also gained awareness about my rights, responsibilities, and role within the enterprise, things I had never been exposed to before.

This experience changed how I viewed my own abilities. A skill that once felt ordinary began to hold real value within a structured value chain. My work was no longer invisible. It became organised, recognised, and fairly compensated.

Today, I earn a steady seasonal income, which supports my household and allows me to plan better for my needs. More importantly, I feel a sense of pride in my work. What I learnt as a young girl has now become a meaningful livelihood.

My journey has shown me that opportunity can transform traditional knowledge into dignity and income. Being part of Industree has helped me recognise the value of my skills and my place within a larger system of work and growth.

Suna Behera Stick Remover



My name is Suna Behera. For many years, I worked as a domestic helper, putting in long hours with very little rest. The wages were irregular, and there was always uncertainty—some days I was paid, some days I was not. While this work helped me meet immediate household needs, it did not offer security, predictability, or any opportunity to plan for the future. The physical strain was high, and there was no assurance of stability.

I decided to join the NTFP unit at Industree. After joining, I received structured training, guidance and began working in an organised production environment. This shift brought a major change in my daily life. For the first time, I experienced fixed working hours, a clear role, and timely payments.

Working alongside other women in a collective setting gave me confidence and a sense of belonging. I was no longer working alone or in isolation. Over time, I developed the skills required for my role as a stick remover, and I began to value the discipline and structure that this work provided.

The most important change for me has been certainty. I now know when I will work and when I will get paid. This predictability has reduced stress and allowed me to plan my days and manage my household responsibilities better. I feel more in control of my livelihood.

Today, I appreciate the stability and respect that come with being part of an enterprise. This work has given me peace of mind and confidence about the future. I may not speak of big changes, but for me, this steady income and predictable work have brought dignity and balance into my life.

Anita Nayak, Leaf Stitcher



My name is Anita Nayak. I am 37 years old and live in Sunapanga village of Balliguda block with my family. For many years, my life revolved around household responsibilities. Although I carried aspirations for my children and a strong desire to contribute, the absence of independent income limited my role in financial decisions. We were depended entirely on my husband's earnings as a driver.

My journey changed in 2024 when I joined Industree, after being introduced by a neighbour. I joined as a leaf stitcher and received training in hard and soft skills. Before this, I had never operated a sewing machine. Through training, I learnt stitching, independent machine operation, and minor repairs, which helped me begin working confidently at the unit.

Earlier, I had no personal income. Today, I earn between ₹5,000 and ₹6,000 per month, bringing stability to my household. With this income, I support my children's education, and have enrolled my son and daughter in tuition. In March 2025, I paid ₹20,000 from my own earnings towards my sons college fees. It was the largest contribution I had ever made independently and one of the happiest moments of my life.

Economic independence has strengthened my position within my family. I now participate actively in household decisions. My husband and in-laws respect my contribution, and my children look to me equally for support.

My elder son aspires to become a government schoolteacher, and my greatest dream is to support all my children in achieving their ambitions. Today, my income has given me confidence, self-respect, and a strong sense of identity. I am no longer only managing household chores; I am shaping my children's future with my own hands.

Kadambini Nayak Leaf Stitcher



My name is Kadambini Nayak. I am 35 years old and live in Sunapanga village with my family of five. Before joining Industree, my husband was the only earning member in our household and there was no real financial security; every decision depended on a single income.

I was introduced to Industree through the cluster coordinator and joined the producer group in 2023. Soon after joining, I received training that helped me build technical skills and confidence. Before this, I had never worked outside my home or earned independently. The training gave me the courage to step into a new role and see myself as a contributor.

Today, I earn between ₹5,500 and ₹6,000 per month, which has brought stability to my family. With this regular income, I contribute directly to household expenses and provide better food, clothing, and basic comforts for my children.

Earning my own income has changed how I am viewed within my family and community. My opinions are now valued, and I am consulted in family decisions. I have opened fixed deposit accounts and Sukanya Samriddhi accounts for my children, ensuring savings for their future education and well-being.

Through my work, I have also learnt the importance of gender equality, financial planning, and long-term savings. I have purchased household assets using my income and regularly set aside money for future needs. This financial discipline has given me confidence and peace of mind.

Looking ahead, I want to become a highly skilled sewing machine operator and learn advanced stitching techniques. Through Industree, I have moved from dependency to decision-making and from uncertainty to stability.

Jinanti Badeth Accounts Assistant



My name is Jinanti Badeth. I am 23 years old and come from Tikamala village in Tumudibandha block of Kandhamal district. I live with my parents and siblings in a family of six. My journey with Industree began in September 2023, when I was introduced to the organisation by the cluster coordinator during a period of financial hardship and interrupted education.

Before joining Industree, I had completed my Class 10 but was forced to drop out for a year due to my family's poor financial condition. During the COVID period, I worked as a daily wage labourer, earning around ₹400 per day and saving whatever I could to continue my studies. Despite these efforts, education remained uncertain, and my family depended largely on seasonal work and NTFP collection.

After joining Industree, I began working in accounts and finance, initially part-time while studying. Today, I manage accounts for two units and earn around ₹9,000 per month. This income enabled me to complete my +2 as a college topper and pursue graduation in Commerce.

My earnings support both my education and my family. I pay my siblings' school and college fees, and manage household expenses. Earlier, I depended on my parents; today, my family depends on me.

Through Industree, I have developed professional skills in financial management, reporting, procurement, and presentations, along with confidence gained through gender and leadership training. I now save for my education and aspire to become an assistant professor, continuing to support my family and community.

Kalpana Barishalye Warehouse & Unit In-charge



My name is Kalpana Barishalye, and I am 25 years old from Panchagaon village. When the unit was first set up near our village, many of us were not informed about the opportunity. One day, a representative visited and encouraged me to see the unit. I decided to go, and that visit became the beginning of change in my life.

I have been working with Industree for four years. I began with simple tasks, first in leaf pressing and later in stitching. As my skills improved, I took on more responsibility and started organising work for others. At one stage, I coordinated work for 15 people. Today, I work as the warehouse and unit in-charge, overseeing operations and coordinating work for nearly 50 people.

Before joining the unit, I was not working. Today, I earn regularly and manage my own expenses independently. This financial independence has given me confidence and security and strengthened my role both at work and at home. Through my work, I have learnt many professional skills. I can operate a computer, communicate clearly and respectfully, and recruit, organise, and manage teams. Managing a large workforce has taught me leadership, planning, and accountability.

The changes are visible at home as well. Earlier, people believed only sons could do few things that daughters could not. Today, that thinking has changed. My family now believes daughters can do everything sons can, and sometimes more. With my earnings, I have travelled outside my village, built a house with my own money, bought a mobile phone, and manage family expenses confidently.

Champi Guru Production In-charge



My name is Champi Guru. I am 21 years old and I come from Panchagaon village. My journey with Industree began four years ago, when a representative from Industree Foundation visited our village.

This was my first job, starting with a monthly salary of ₹5,000. I joined as a Quality Check (QC) in-charge, where I learnt the basics of production standards, discipline, and responsibility. Over time, as I gained experience and confidence, my role evolved. Today, I work as a production in-charge, managing operations and overseeing work at the unit. My current salary is ₹16,800 per month, a growth that reflects my learning and commitment over the years.

Through my role, I learnt how to communicate with people, and take responsibility for the work. When I first started working, my family was hesitant and unsure. But as they saw me earning, growing, and handling responsibilities, their hesitation turned into pride. Today, my family fully supports my work and encourages me to move forward.

Stepping into work also opened up my world. For the first time, I began travelling outside my village, interacting with new people, and understanding life beyond my home.

With my earnings, I have been able to buy a phone for myself, purchase household items, and contribute financially to my family. I aspire to build a house of my own. Earning has given me not only financial security, but also clarity about where I want my life to go.

Industree has given me more than a job, it has grown me into a young professional with responsibility, confidence, and ambition. Today, I look ahead with hope and determination, knowing that I have the skills and experience to shape my own future.

Ipsita Singh Trainer



My name is Ipsita Singh. I am 26 years old from K. Nuagaon village. During the COVID period, a woman from my village told me about work opportunities in Baliguda. I decided to go with her, not knowing that this decision would change the direction of my life.

During the COVID period, I first received online training, and through the same connection, I came to know about Industree.

In 2022, I formally joined the organisation as a trainer, where I trained women on 6Y, gender awareness, GBV, and hard skills. As my responsibilities grew, so did my learning. Today, my role spans field and office work. I engage with women producers, support surveys and leaf procurement, and handle documentation, registers, bills, and basic Excel tasks.

When I joined Industree in 2022, I earned ₹6,000 per month. Today, I earn ₹12,000 per month. This income represents stability, independence, and dignity. I manage my expenses responsibly and contribute consistently to my household.

Through this journey, I have learnt skills I never imagined. I can speak confidently in groups, conduct meetings, communicate effectively, speak Hindi, travel independently, ride a scooter, manage time, and balance responsibilities. Earning has changed how others see me as well. My family respects my opinions and proudly says, "Our daughter works at Industree." I support household needs, rent, and my aunt's medical expenses. With my earnings, I bought a mobile phone and a scooter.

Today, I am treated as a son in my household and plan to build a house for my mother and aunt while working towards buying a car.

Rashmi Rani Pradhan Trainer



My name is Rashmi Rani Pradhan. I am 27 years old. Before joining Industree, I had limited exposure to work opportunities and very little confidence in myself.

I came to know about Industree through a meeting organised in my village. During the meeting, I learnt about the work opportunities and decided to pursue them. After joining, I received structured training that helped me understand my work better and improve my skills. This training helped me gain clarity, confidence, and the ability to take responsibility for my role.

Through training, my skills have improved, and so has my confidence. I am now able to communicate better, manage my work independently, and understand how to perform my responsibilities effectively. Having a regular job has given me a sense of stability and purpose.

It's been three years since I have been associated with Industree, and today, I earn around ₹10,000 per month, which has been a significant change in my life. Earlier, I was not earning any income. This income has brought visible changes in my family life. I recharge my phone, pay my child's school fees, and manage daily household expenses on my own. Earlier, my husband had to manage EMIs alone; now, I support him financially, and our household responsibilities are shared more equally.

Being part of Industree has also expanded my thinking. I have started planning for the future and saving from my earnings. I now understand the importance of investing my income wisely. Industree has given me not just a source of income, but an identity as a working woman. I aspire to buy a scooty for myself in the near future.

Pankajini Behera Data Entry Operator



My name is Pankajini Behera, and I am 21 years old from Panchagaon village. Before joining Industree, I knew little about the organisation. In my village, many women used to go there for work. I first learnt about Industree through my brother, who encouraged me to explore the opportunity.

I have been working with Industree for the past one year. When I first joined, I was assigned data entry work, where I learnt how records are maintained and how information is organised accurately. Over time, my role expanded, and today I also handle stock entry for the Daspalla unit. This shift in responsibility has helped me better understand operations and take ownership of my work.

When I joined, I earned ₹7,000 per month. Today, my income has increased to ₹8,500 per month. This regular income has allowed me to manage my own expenses independently and contribute to my household. For the first time, I feel financially responsible and self-reliant.

Through my association with Industree, I have also learnt about gender equality concepts, which helped me better understand the value of women's participation in work.

My family is very happy that I am working and earning. Their trust and encouragement motivate me to work sincerely and grow further. With my earnings, I bought a new mobile phone, and I continue to support my family financially.

Looking ahead, I want to continue working with Industree, perform well, and grow into a better position with greater responsibility. This job has given me a strong start to my working life, and I am determined to build a stable and meaningful future through consistent learning and hard work.

Usharani Pradhan Micro Enterprise Leader



My name is Usharani Pradhan. I am 37 years old and live in Lodhapanga village. My journey with Industree began when a field coordinator visited our village and spoke to me about an opportunity. At that time, I did not fully understand the role, but I decided to try.

I have been working with Industree for the past three years. When I first joined, I started as a producer, learning the basics of leaf collection and handling. As I gained experience, my role evolved. Today, I work as a Micro Enterprise Leader, supporting unit activities and working closely with women across multiple villages.

Through my work, I have developed strong technical knowledge of leaf grading and selection. I learnt how to separate leaves from the bunch, identify good-quality leaves, and discard damaged ones. This knowledge helps me guide other women correctly, improve quality, and reduce waste. I regularly visit villages, interact with women producers, and understand their work, challenges, and successes.

Earlier, I had no independent income. Today, I earn more than ₹5,000 per month, which has brought stability and confidence into my life. With this income, I can meet both my personal and my family's needs independently. Working with Industree has strengthened my confidence and courage. I can now speak for myself and communicate clearly. I am comfortable travelling to different villages and engaging with groups of women.

This role has helped me think beyond daily earnings. I aspire to run a small shop alongside my work to earn sustainably. Industree has given me knowledge, responsibility, and the confidence to lead. Today, I move forward with dignity, clarity, and purpose.

Products Showcase



Forest Green passed SGS lab testing for heavy metals and pesticides, meeting global export standards



Biodegradable



Sturdy and Leak-Proof



100% Food Safe*



*Free From Lead, Azo, Formaldehyde, Phthalates, Hexavalent Chromium & Heavy Metal Content



Partners in Purpose and Impact



This project stands as a testament to sustained partnership and shared purpose. Industree Foundation gratefully acknowledges Cartier Philanthropy for its strategic support and long-term commitment to women’s economic empowerment through dignified, climate-positive livelihoods.

Together with local communities, women producers, field teams, and ecosystem partners, the collaboration translated vision into practice, building enterprises that connect forest-based livelihoods to national and global markets, grounded in equity, transparency, and resilience.

The collaboration with Cartier Philanthropy successfully achieved its goal of socially and economically empowering 800 marginalised women through two self-owned NTFP enterprises in Odisha. The aggregation of 467 women in Daspalla and 427 women in Kutikia laid the foundation for community ownership, formalised through the Jivanabani and Nari Shakti Mutual Benefit Trusts.



The Way Forward



The experience in Odisha over the past three years affirms a simple but powerful insight: when women are supported with ownership, capability, and access to fair markets, forest-based livelihoods can evolve into resilient, future-ready enterprises. What began as an intervention to stabilise incomes has grown into women-led institutions that are organised, compliant, and increasingly confident in engaging with national and international markets.

Building on the outcomes and learning from this initiative, Industree Foundation proposes a focused expansion of the NTFP sal and siali leaf plate value chain in Odisha. The next phase will prioritise strengthening enterprise revenues, operational resilience, and market integration, while ensuring that growth remains inclusive, environmentally responsible, and rooted in women's ownership and leadership. The proposed approach seeks to consolidate existing gains, address structural constraints to scale, and position women-led enterprises for sustained engagement with domestic and international markets.

Key investments will address structural constraints to scale. A dedicated Leaf Aggregation Centre will enable systematic collection and storage of raw material during peak seasons, ensuring year-round supply and reducing production disruptions. In parallel, a new Production Hub equipped with mechanised stitching and pressing facilities will expand manufacturing capacity to meet growing demand for biodegradable tableware in domestic and global markets.



To sustain this growth, women producers will continue to be supported through a Production Seed Fund, enabling timely procurement and improved cash flow management. Compliance will be further institutionalised through essential registrations, licences, and standard operating procedures aligned with international standards, embedding quality, traceability, and accountability into everyday enterprise operations.

Leadership development remains central to this pathway. Targeted support for Micro Enterprise Leaders and Mutual Benefit Trust Leaders will strengthen governance and management as enterprises scale. Technology-enabled systems, including an integrated ERP platform, will support transparent, end-to-end enterprise management.

Market engagement will be deepened through strengthened national distribution networks, participation in select domestic and international trade platforms, and continued investment in product research, design, and diversification under women-owned brands.

Together, these interventions will position the value chain to achieve sustained revenue growth while delivering stable, dignified livelihoods for tribal women in Odisha. More broadly, they will reinforce a commitment to demonstrating that economic inclusion, environmental responsibility, and enterprise viability can progress together, at scale, and with lasting impact.

Acknowledgements



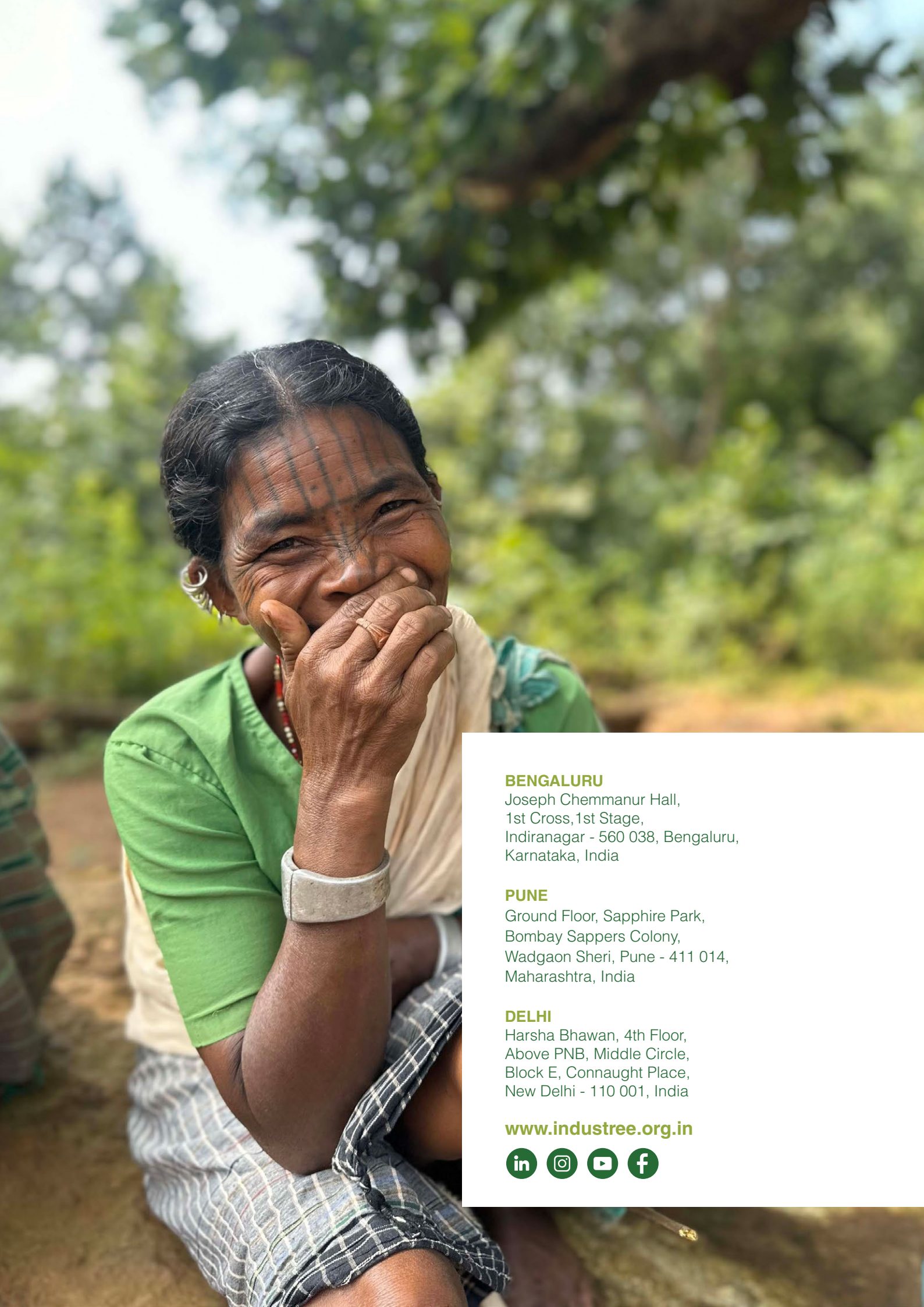
This case study compendium reflects the collective efforts of women producers whose decisions, leadership, and commitment continue to shape the NTFP biodegradable leaf plate value chain in Odisha. Their willingness to engage, learn, and build enterprises together lies at the heart of this work.

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This compendium is intended to honour the journeys of the women involved and to serve as a learning resource for partners and practitioners committed to inclusive and sustainable livelihoods.





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