



FRANCESCO AREZZO

President 2025-26

Presidential Message October 2025

October is Rotary's Community Economic Development Month, a time to spotlight our efforts to help communities build thriving, sustainable futures. This month's observance aligns perfectly with the Rotary core value of leadership. Leadership means empowering people to guide

own progress. That is precisely what Rotary's economic development projects aim to achieve. Take, for example, a recent initiative in southern India in which Rotary members unlocked the power of women of the Adivasi tribal groups through sewing training to earn a living and regain social inclusion. Historically, widows and abandoned women in this region lose social standing and are shunned by society or blamed for their misfortunes. Opportunities to support themselves or obtain training are minimal.

This year, the Rotary Club of Windsor Roseland, Ontario, partnered with clubs in Districts 3203 and 3234 in India — and with the Indian organization Sevalaya Trust — to provide sewing machines and training to 80 Adivasi women. They learned to stitch saree blouses, kurta tunics, and salwar suits, enabling them to support themselves and their families. Each woman received a certificate for completing the program, and the sewing-machine provider offered free long-term maintenance for the machines. The project offered vital income and dignity to women ostracized by society after widowhood.

This story is one example of Rotary leadership in action: local people guiding solutions that address their community needs. Our role is not to deliver charity or to impose outside models, but to foster self-reliance by investing in leadership, skills, and sustainable enterprise.

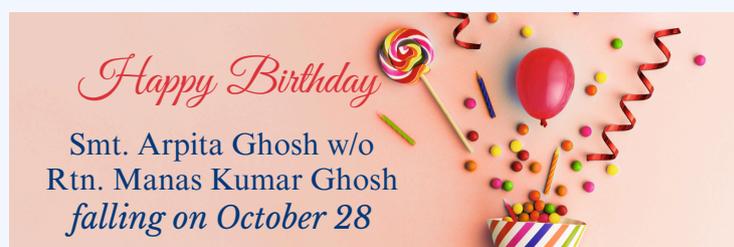
This October, I invite Rotary members worldwide to reflect on economic leadership in their communities. Who is stepping forward to lead local economic initiatives? Where is there untapped talent that could be supported with training or mentorship? How can your club catalyze opportunity through partnerships with local businesses, vocational schools, or savings groups?

Leadership is not always about being visible. Sometimes it means listening, working collaboratively, and amplifying the voices of others. That approach lies at the heart of Rotary's philosophy and our lasting impact on economic development.

By building capacity — whether through microcredit groups, vocational training workshops, or entrepreneurship programs — we enable communities to lead their own transformation. When people take ownership of their progress, change becomes sustainable.

Let us lead with good intention and provide support with heart. By nurturing local leadership, we can create opportunities that ripple through communities, empowering individuals, families, and societies.

Together, we can support economies that work for everyone and enact community development projects that last.



Remembering Late PP Rtn. Jyotishda for whom Community Service & Economic Development went hand in hand.



As far as Community Service in Dist 3291, the image of Charter Member & later an Honorary Member, Late PP Rtn Jyotish Chandra Dutta of RC Calcutta Jadavpur comes first. He was instrumental in organising an artificial limb project for handicapped in 1982. Further, he adopted villages Chowbaga, Ranigachi, Boinchitala, Gopal Nagar and Madhya Shibpur as RVC (RCC) in different years since 1983, after thorough enquiries. At RCC Chowbaga, he organised to purchase a plot of land to set up Rotary Karma Shiksha Bhawan. He also helped RCC Chowbaga to erect a bus stand and distributed books & stationeries at vocational training centre, Chowbaga and established knitting, weaving, tailoring, typing, computer and textile classes at various RCCs. Late PP rtn. Jyotishda organised to set up another RCC

at Gopal Nagar and established a full fledged clinical laboratory in 2002 at the precincts. He organised science exhibition and started adult education at RCC Chowbaga & Ranigachi in 1992. He helped to start training at RCCs in the field of

agricultural productions and provided them with seeds, saplings and fertilisers, which was a regular project of the club for several years. He started blood donation camps at Haemophilia Society and arranged for distribution of blood to the Thalassemia patients. Late PP Rtn. Jyotishda planned numerous health check up programs including awareness of detection of cervical cancer, blood donation camps, IOL operations, medical awareness programs etc. at the RCCs. He regularly collected medicines and arranged for distribution at Jadavpur Association. Opened a charitable Homeopathic clinic at the RCCs. He helped the club to organise donation of a considerable number of sewing & knitting machines for RCCs and imparting training to the RCC members. The club under the guidance of Late PP Rtn. Jyotishda, mobilised hundreds of tube wells & wells to solve water problems at the RCCs. He emphasised on cycle van distribution, low cost toilet projects, distribution of mosquito nets and gamaxin powder in villages. These apart, he also organised Piggery farm with proper training. at RCCs Organized “Swanirvar Gosthi” enabling RCCs to become self independent. Late PP Rtn. Jyotishda actively participated in “Juvenile Cancer” project with the help of Thakurpukur Cancer Hospital. With all such support and activities almost solely made these RCCs self-sufficient in their daily lives. In other words, the contribution of Late PP Rtn. Jyotishda in Community Service is highly commendable in the Rotary District.



In recognition of his contribution to the cause of Rotary movement, Late PP Rtn. Jyotishda was awarded with a "**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**" by RI District 3291, during an Award Ceremony "**SAMMANIK**" held on June 28, 2015.

Parima Muduli, a tribal farmer from Odisha, has created a resilient, biodiverse and self-sustaining farm. Now, she is guiding others

Muduli is reviving traditional farming wisdom, restoring ecological balance, and redefining women's leadership in tribal communities.

Parima Muduli, a 39-year-old Paraja tribal woman from Kurmakote village in southern Odisha's Koraput district, has transformed her 3-acre farm into a thriving model of sustainable agriculture. She has set up vermicompost pits and bio-resource centres, rears desi poultry, and cultivates



Creeper varieties of vegetable grown by Parima Muduli

“Soil is the very basis of life,” says Parima, proudly showcasing the bio-inputs she prepares on her farm — from handikhata and nimastra to bijamruta, jimamruta, and ghanajibamruta. She has also established a Bio-Resource Centre (BRC) capable of producing up to 500 litres of bio-inputs.

“We use locally available resources like cow dung, cow urine, and leaves from plants such as neem, arakha (*Calotropis gigantea*), guava, and karanja (*Millettia pinnata*) to prepare bio-inputs,” she explains. “These not only enhance soil fertility but also cut down expenses on harmful chemical inputs.” Parima actively encourages fellow farmers to adopt such practices, offering training on both the production and application of bio-inputs. With support from the horticulture department, she also produces high-quality vermicompost, which boosts soil health and provides her with extra income from selling the surplus.

Parima cultivates a diverse array of vegetables, tubers, and pulses, including brinjal, tomato, okra, chilli, pumpkin, bottle gourd, leafy greens, Indian yam, maize, pigeon pea, and cowpea. She has conserved more than 12 native vegetable varieties, such as anca lau (bottle gourd), kali tomato, and choto kumda (small pumpkin). In addition, she has preserved several indigenous paddy varieties, including haladichudi (130-day crop, white rice), basantichudi (130-day crop, aromatic rice), kalajira (145-day crop, black paddy yielding white aromatic rice), biri dhana (110-day crop, slender white rice), and sugandha (120-day crop, white aromatic rice).

“Our native crops are resilient — they're tasty and nutritious,” says Parima, noting that hybrid varieties are often disease-prone and require costly chemical inputs. At harvest time, she carefully selects the best mature seeds for the next cropping season, storing them in earthen pots with dry neem and nirguni (*Vitex negundo*) leaves. These eco-friendly, tradition-based practices ensure seed self-sufficiency while safeguarding agrobiodiversity. In the past year alone, Parima has earned around Rs 80,000 by selling surplus vegetables and pulses in the local market.

AGROECOLOGICAL FARMING

Parima's farm is a vibrant example of integrated farming, firmly grounded in agroecological principles. She raises about 50 desi chickens that roam freely, foraging for insects, scratching the soil, and flapping their wings — all while naturally enriching soil fertility through their manure. The family consumes the eggs regularly, ensuring a steady source of protein, and sells chickens when needed. "They are like our ATM card," Parima laughs. Income from selling desi eggs and chickens brings her an additional Rs 15,000-Rs 20,000 each.

Nothing goes to waste on Parima's farm. Crop residues find new purpose — paddy straw, for instance, is used to cultivate mushrooms, and the spent compost is returned to the fields as manure, completing a sustainable farming cycle. Last year, she harvested around 100 kg of oyster mushrooms during the winter and monsoon seasons, most of which was enjoyed by her family.

Parima has planted more than 50 horticultural trees, including mango, drumstick, and papaya, across her farm. In the spaces between them, she cultivates maize and finger millet through an intercropping system. This plot blends vegetables, horticultural crops, and leafy greens, supported by an inbuilt water dugout that sustains year-round productivity and ensures food security.

EMPOWERING OTHER SMALL-SCALE FARMERS

Parima has completed a Training of Trainers programme with PRAGATI, a local non-profit in Koraput district, and has received technical guidance from experts at the Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN), which works with rainfed farmers in Odisha. By blending traditional wisdom with scientific methods, she has created a resilient, biodiverse, and self-sustaining farm. Now a Master Trainer, Parima has shared her expertise with more than 30 farmers in Kurmakote village, inspiring them to embrace sustainable farming practices.

Her farm also serves as a vibrant training ground, where she regularly conducts Farmer Field School (FFS) sessions, mentoring dozens of farmers — especially women — on ecological techniques and self-reliant farming. "I am proud of my wife. Her leadership has inspired many farmers in our village to shift toward an agroecological model," says her husband, Madhu Muduli. Parima's commitment reaches well beyond her own fields — she distributes organic inputs to neighbouring farmers and guides them in adopting organic seed treatment methods, fostering a community-wide transition to sustainable agriculture.

Her work strengthens local food systems, improves rural livelihoods, and underscores the vital role of tribal women as drivers of ecological transformation. As the Master Trainer of the Khadia Thakura Farmer Field School (FFS) under the Green Evolution Programme, supported by Welthungerhilfe India (WHH India), she has transformed her 3-acre farm into a living model of sustainable agriculture, ecological innovation, and community empowerment.

THE GREEN EVOLUTION PROGRAMME

The Green Evolution Programme, implemented by local non-profits and supported by Welthungerhilfe India, focuses on strengthening agroecological food systems in Odisha's Koraput district and Jharkhand's Deoghar district. "We are promoting agroecological and inclusive farming practices to ensure nutritional security and food sovereignty among small-scale rainfed farmers," says Sunil Ranjan Thanapati, Programme Manager at WASSAN, the knowledge management and technical support partner for the initiative in both states.

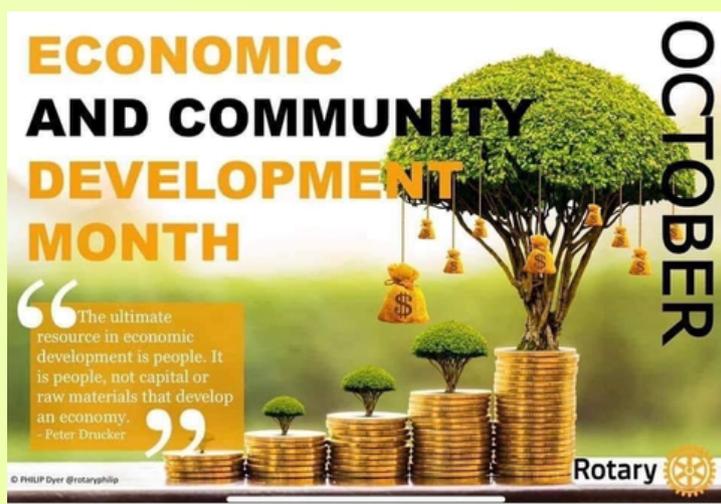
Adopting a landscape approach, the programme integrates agriculture and allied production systems, natural resource management, and community-led governance to build productive, ecologically sound, and socially equitable food systems. Although rich in agrobiodiversity, both Koraput and Deoghar face persistent challenges of food insecurity, poverty, and climate vulnerability. The programme addresses these by blending indigenous knowledge with innovative, sustainable farming techniques to create resilient, self-reliant food systems.

India is home to over 104 million tribal people, many of whom live in and around biodiversity hotspots. "For generations, tribal communities have safeguarded their traditional food cultures and agricultural knowledge systems," says Dinesh Balam, associate director at WASSAN, Bhubaneswar. In the face of climate change, he stresses the importance of embracing nature-based solutions to build climate-resilient and regenerative food systems — deeply rooted in both tribal traditions and transformative approaches. Balam also serves as National Coordinator for the Coalition for Food Systems Transformation in India (CoFTI), a multi-stakeholder platform advocating for indigenous and tribal food cultures, forest knowledge, and agroecology.

"Women once held deep knowledge of livestock, seeds, crops, and storage. But as agriculture became market-oriented and male-dominated, their role was reduced to that of labourers," observes Anshuman Das, who works on sustainable food systems at Welthungerhilfe India.

Parima Muduli from southern Odisha proves that when women farmers are supported and empowered, they can become powerful agents of change, driving positive impacts for their communities and contributing significantly to India's economy.

By: Babulu Bagarti :: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in>



Minutes of the 2158TH RCM of RC Calcutta Jadavpur held on September 18, 2025, Thursday at Casa Broadway, Kolkata at 6.30 PM.

- President Rtn. Sudipta Kundu called the meeting to order and welcomed all the members present.
- National Anthem was led by PP Rtn. (Dr.) Partha Pratim Roy and joined by all.
- Upon request of President Rtn. Sudipta, PP Rtn. (Dr.) Chitra Mandal talked briefly about the mental health workshop carried out in Jadavpur University where nearly 105 caregivers were present and shared their experiences and also were given hands-on training for different critical areas of their services.
- Next, President Rtn. Sudipta talked about another newly launched project at Sarenga Village, of Bankura District. Two vocational training courses on cosmetology (beautician) and tailoring have been going on with 10 girls enrolled for each course.
- Further, President Rtn. Sudipta announced a few upcoming projects and requested the members to make it convenient to participate.
 - i) On September 20, 2025, there would be a plastic cleaning program on the occasion of International Coastal Cleanup Day at Gangasagar Island in association with Department of Environmental Sciences and Nature Club of the University of Calcutta.
 - ii) On September 24, 2025 there would be an awareness program on Thalassemia and a slogan writing competition on “Save Nature Save Earth” at Baruipur High School..
 - iii) On September 25, 2025, an awareness program is scheduled on nutrition and ‘Shobdojobdo Competition’ at Santoshpur Rishi Aurobindo Balika Vidyapith, where there would be a cultural program will be organised. Members from RC Calcutta Jadavpur will be present as judges, for selection of best performers and also the club would sponsor the prizes for the events.
 - iv) On September 27, 2025, the club would be taking part in distributing new dresses to nearly 100 kids in Sundarbans for upcoming Puja celebration in association with “Kheya” organization.
- Next, President Rtn. Sudipta invited PP Rtn. Partha Sarathi Sarkar to update the members about LBC. PP Rtn. Partha Sarathi informed that Zee TV will be sponsoring a stall for the cause at Madox Square, for portraying LBC initiatives and RC Calcutta Jadavpur will be getting a 3-hour slot for the members to be present and showcase the club’s involvement for this great project.

The stall would most likely be visited by LBC Brand Ambassador Ms. Rituparna Sengupta and other celebrities.

- President Rtn. Sudipta informed about some donations by our members and spouses-
 - i) Rs.2,000/- by Rtn. (Dr.) Emili Banerjee on the occasion of birthday of her spouse, Dr. Koutilya Bhattacharyya, ii) Rs.10,000/- by PP Rtn. (Dr.) Chitra Mandal on the occasion her birthday designated for literacy projects, iii) Rs.10,000/- by Ms. Debjani Kundu, his spouse on the occasion her birthday, iv) Rs. 10,000/- by himself for the “Puja Dress Distribution” project at Sundarbans.
- Secretary Rtn. (Dr.) Saiful Anam Mir conducted the club business and extended birthday greetings to Rtn. Sourav Ghoshal falling on September 25, Rtn. Koyeli Dutt falling on September 30, Smt. Sephali Chakraborty, w/o PP Rtn. Swapan Chakraborty falling on October 4, Smt. Rimpa Mazumder, w/o Rtn. (Dr.) Arunava Das falling on October 4 and Rtn. Manab Paul falling on October 13. He also extended anniversary greetings to Honorary Member Rtn. (Dr.) Arup Ratan Dutta and Dr. Soma Dutta falling on October 8.
- Minutes of the 2157th meeting, was confirmed by the members present and the meeting was concluded, with thanks to the attendees.

