

Sangtam wins first Rohini Nayyar award for transforming farmers' lives in Nagaland

The farmers who earned Rs 34,000 from four acres, now earn Rs 1,33,000



By Pratul Sharma

Updated: December 20, 2022 22:29 IST



Forty-year-old Sethrichem Sangtam gave up prospects of a cushy foreign work assignment to help transform the lives of 1,200 marginal farmers in Eastern Nagaland. He introduced them fruit growing, prompting the farmers to change from shifting farming to permanent farming.

His efforts were recognised as he became the recipient of the inaugural Rohini Nayyar Prize for outstanding contribution to rural development. He was awarded the prize by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery. The award has been instituted by the family of late Dr. Rohini Nayyar, an eminent scholar-administrator who worked on issues related to rural development. She spent two decades in Planning Commission where

she helped conceptualise NREGA and India Human Development Report.

Sangtam, recalling his efforts in building his community, said he thought education was the primary need to transform them as the area had not produced an IAS officer. “But, I realised the biggest problem was to fill their stomachs. Food was the primary concern. My community, known for headhunting, as brought heads of their enemies not so in the distant past, had to be turned around. Guns were prepared locally; they killed everything that moved.”

His painstaking efforts for the past decades bore fruits, literally. “The farmers who earned Rs 34,000 from four acres, could now earn Rs 1,33,000,” Sangtam said. He now intends to introduce cows for dairy development.

To wean away youngsters from hunting, he trained them in folk dancing. “We have also created a farmer innovation centre for sharing best practices and innovation. We also want to document local knowledge.”

Sangtam earlier went to National Law School, Bangalore, to drop out to go to New York as a member of Global Youth Advisory Panel of the UN Population Fund. He returned home in 2009 turning down an offer to work abroad.

In his remarks, Suman Bery talked about the work done at the Niti Aayog for financial inclusion for women. He credited Rohini Nayyar for some of the work started during her tenure at Planning Commission which is being taken forward.

Deepak Nayyar, Emeritus Professor of Economics, JNU, and former Vice Chancellor, Delhi University, fondly remembered the work done by his wife in rural development. “There are few awards named after women, and perhaps this is the first for rural development,” he said.

The annual prize was decided by a jury comprising Renana Jhabvala, national coordinator, SEWA, Dr. Ashok Khosla, founder of Development Alternatives, and Dr. Rajesh Tandon, founder of PRIA.

ALSO READ

Conrad Sangma, Neiphiu Rio sworn in as Meghalaya, Nagaland CMs

PM Modi to attend swearing-in of Meghalaya, Nagaland CMs on Tuesday

How sea waters turning warm halfway across the world could ruin India's best laid plans

Meghalaya MLAs to swear in today; BJP may choose Manik Saha over Pratima Bhowmik in Tripura

BJP retains Tripura, Nagaland; to support Sangma's party in Meghalaya

TAGS

Agriculture

Nagaland

[✍️ The Week is now on Telegram. Click here to join our channel \(@TheWeekmagazine\) and stay updated with the latest headlines](#)

READ MORE



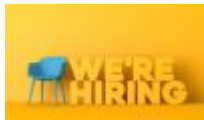
'Trump grabbed my breasts, put his hand up my skirt on flight'



PSG suspends Messi for unauthorised trip to Saudi Arabia



Tamil actor-director Manobala passes away



Connaught Plaza Restaurants to hire 2,000 people from underprivileged communities in next 3 years



Rare lunar eclipse to grace the sky on May 5 Here what to expect

EDITOR'S PICK

Exclusive: 'Modi is a PR bubble that will burst', says Mallikarjun Kharge