



Ishok Youth Group

Stopping Floods, One Weed at a Time

In Manipur, the Brozenkong river winds its way through scenic villages, sustaining generations of farmers and fishermen. It is their lifeline and a force of destruction. Every year, monsoon rains swell its waters, flooding homes, washing away crops, and leaving devastation in its wake. For decades, the people endured. Then, a small but determined group decided to act.

Ishok Youth Club, a self-mobilised group of 20 youth, refused to accept flooding as inevitable. In 2024, they took matters into their own hands, determined to break the cycle of destruction. They found that phoom (floating grass) and plastic waste was clogging the river, preventing water from flowing freely. So, when the rains came, the blocked water had nowhere to go but into their villages.

Their solution was as simple as it was powerful: **clean the river.**

With Saarathi support, they cleared a 1.2 km stretch of the river in **less than 10 days** in August 2024. The next time it rained, the villages remained safe.

Encouraged by their success, they launched Phase Two to clean up 3.5 km in just 20 days. With **Saarathi support of Rs. 246,700** this initiative has prevented flooding for over **8000 people across 10 villages.**

But their ingenuity didn't stop there. They are giving new life to the discarded phoom, repurposing it as fodder for cattle and natural manure for local farmers. What was once a cause of destruction has now become a source of sustenance.

Saarathi members have been supporting the group with hiring boats and filling resource gaps. Ishok Club continues to scale its work. Together, they have taken their initiative to the local authorities as a model for flood prevention, proving that community-led action could be not only effective but also more efficient than costly top-down projects.

Moral of the story?

No one understands a crisis better than those who endure it. By listening to communities and supporting their resourcefulness, we can drive real change.

Ishok Club's story is a testament to the power of collective action, resilience, and a belief that no problem is too big when a community stands together.