



Personal Development

Social Development

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Samriddhi

STORIES OF
SUSTAINABILITY



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Celebration of Villages....

Recognition of work done well is really the reward that most people cherish and appreciate. So when Mission Samriddhi wanted to reward Gram Panchayats for a job well done, the mode was to recognize them as such, but in front of a large audience. Therefore, in 2019 we set about examining the work done by Gram Panchayats in Yavatmal district in the fields of natural resource management, livelihood, their holistic approach to MGNREGA and empowerment of the community.

It was (and still is) an endeavour to acknowledge and appreciate rural transformation, and the march

of these Gram Panchayats towards sufficiency, resilience and prosperity. It was a celebration of the spirit of rural India. This is designed to be taken across to all the states of India, based on the additions and advances in the criteria we utilize to evaluate progress of these Gram Panchayats. We propose to move beyond the districts of Yavatmal and Wardha to all the clusters that we work in currently.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strong Communities – Constitution Awareness

Our Constitution starts with the words “We, the people...”, which simultaneously puts the onus of understanding and upholding its tenets on us, the citizens of India. However, understanding its nuances, especially our rights, duties and responsibilities, and making them relatable to everyday life was never an easy task. This was found to be one of the shortcomings in our outreach to rural India. Constitutional education is an essential building block as it shapes mind-sets, abilities and skills of citizens towards nation building.

Mission Samriddhi partnered with organizations like We The People Abhiyaan and made understanding of our Constitution as one of the cornerstones of Personal Development. This initiative is built on our belief and experience that when citizens are

empowered, they are able to exercise their agency, find solutions to their problems and act as powerful advocates for development, their own and for others. To quote Bimla, an ex-sarpanch from Betul district, “I have been a Sarpanch of my village for five years. I would interact with the government officials during my tenure and they would easily deny taking our complaints and concerns. I never thought that Constitution can help us in this regard. I am feeling confident now since I know the rights given by the Constitution and I will use them while giving applications to the authorities.” The queries of the participants only serve to deepen the understanding of the overall thrust of our Constitution.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Seeing is Believing and Self-belief brings about Change

We have often heard the term “Seeing is Believing” and most of us have also experienced and cherished the joy of visiting a new place to explore, discover, learn and enjoy. The concept of Samriddhi Yatra evolved when a group of Panchayat representatives were taken on an experiential tour of the legendary Model villages - Hiware Bazaar and Ralegan Siddhi - to listen, converse, observe, understand and together as a group, visualise the process of change for their own villages. The Samriddhi Yatra provides an opportunity to observe for oneself and uncover the process behind sustainable development.

Samriddhi Yatra and the UnMukt workshop are experiential learning interventions designed by Mission Samriddhi to inspire, visualise dreams,

challenge limiting beliefs, deliberate best practices, prioritise existing problems and come up with solutions – interventions to empower Gram Panchayats to chart their own destiny and take ownership for their prosperity.

Groups from Panchayats in Jammu and Sonbhadra (UP) have been taken on Samriddhi Yatra to Gram Panchayats of Kerala. Learning from the good practises of Eraviperoor Gram Panchayat in Kerala, communities from Sonbhadra who travelled on the Samriddhi Yatra have been inspired to recycle plastic, raise Own Source Revenue and improve the conditions of their Anganwaadis and schools.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Rooting out An Evil – Child Marriage

Child marriage is an ancient evil that is unfortunately still prevalent in India. Young girls in their teens are married off, sometimes even to elderly men, in a bid to reduce these “liabilities”. Apart from these, social norms, perceived low status of girls, poverty, lack of education, and safety concerns about girl children ensure the continuance of this evil. Girls who marry early often become pregnant while they are still children themselves, with great risks for their own well-being and that of their babies.

The Shanti Self Help Group in Sonbhadra took it upon themselves to root out this evil, given that it often fell to the mothers to get their underage daughters to agree to such marriages. Sessions were held with the mothers in the villages, and then with both parents, pointing out the overwhelming negatives in such underage marriages, including early pregnancy and its associated complications for the health of their daughter. Laws regarding child marriages have been made more stringent, and the active cooperation of the Police has put a further damper on this practice.

Banning the Bane – the fight against Alcoholism

Alcohol has been the root-cause of family strife since time immemorial. These stories were repeated in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh, and would have continued, if it were not for the pioneering work of the Shanti Self Help Group. They came together in Nawdihwa hamlet after an intoxicated husband beat his wife to death. That incident made the SHG members take an oath to ban the production, sale and consumption of alcohol in their neighbourhood.

Parvati and Gudiya Devi encouraged others to join their Group, and soon they had support even from members like Jokhani Devi and Hisabi Devi who saw this as the only way to escape the violence and torture at the hands of their inebriated husbands. The movement grows stronger by the day and has spread right across the district, bringing new hope to beleaguered wives.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

My Kitchen, My Garden

In rural India, women have had a propensity towards a lack of nutrition, due to the fact that they tend to eat the last in their households, or in fact, they eat whatever is left. In Wardha district, over 90% of women in rural areas were anaemic, which was due to a lack of nutritious food, rather than just an iron deficiency. This had to be tackled at twin levels – letting the woman exercise control over her nutrition and food intake, and also to provide her the means to improve these.

Most households had a small plot of land next to their homes which proved ideal for growing small amounts of vegetables and some fruits for their own consumption. Training on the utilization of these “kitchen gardens” was conducted, seed packets were distributed and the growth of these vegetables and fruits, and more importantly, their consumption was monitored on a regular basis. The women of the

house felt empowered as this initiative saw them contribute to the budget of the house by reducing or even eliminating the purchase of vegetables. The advantages of cooking and eating a wide variety of vegetables were also brought home to the participants.

Within a year, the incidence of anaemia amongst rural women in Wardha came down to less than 40%, and is continuously falling. Some of the women have even started a barter system of vegetables amongst themselves, and have also sold the surplus to further bolster the family income. The sense of ownership of these kitchen gardens is paramount, and the women share tips about increasing yields as well as new recipes, in their groups.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Ullas Library – Booking the Future

Books remain as a tenuous link to our imaginations, in this age of digital and visual media. They enable us, and especially children, to use imagination, and “see” how events might have occurred and how they might have impacted our lives at present. Books also give us precious insights to our heritage and our future. In Assam, a state which has a glorious past and rich heritage, the habit of reading books needed to be revived. The MV School at Madhya Hollongpar faced a dilemma as their students were exposed only to government text books, which hardly ever informed them of their glorious traditions and culture.

With a little help from Mission Samriddhi, the Ullas Library was set up in the school and was stacked with insightful books on literature and science, and houses several books on Assamese folklore and literature. These books provide essential reading nourishment to the children of the school in

Assamese culture, history, and its geography. The children, while reading these books, engage with ideas and imagination that are central to the culture, and they find scores of ideas to rejuvenate their minds in this library.

Surrounded by tea gardens, the school has several students whose parents work in these gardens, and the Ullas library seeks to develop a reading habit in these children, guiding them to believe in a more just future. The students have endless access to these books and can also borrow these books for leisure reading at home. Being inclusive, the library also nurtures a space that allows students to be more imaginative and forthcoming after reading and borrowing books. This initiative, with the active collaboration of the school administration will enable the students reach newer heights and attain a brighter future.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Making Teachers Learn

While Ullas Trust and Ullas Library and Science Centres are involved in improving learning outcomes for children, our Quality Learning Initiative is designed to enable teachers in government and government-run schools to improve their skills as well as learn recent developments in pedagogy. Most teachers have had just the basic teachers' training inputs just after their graduation, and work with limited resources and in an environment that does not encourage improvements or innovations.

In this scenario, we are attempting to change the mindset of the teachers also vis-à-vis the changing mentality of students, and the increasing use of

visual media. In rural India, there is always an ongoing struggle between livelihood and education, and if the education provided does not seem capable of providing a livelihood, the struggle becomes one-sided. Our initiative also looks at life skills, and skills that could be utilized for doing tasks that are remunerative. It is a long hard struggle, but we see that good teachers who use interesting methods never seem to have a dearth of students. We trust that this initiative will grow exponentially and lay the foundation for a good education amongst school students.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ullas – The Trust of Children

Ullas Trust was started in 1997 as a collaborative effort between the associates of Polaris / Intellect and the corporate, to give back to society in whatever small way. The Trust identified that children in the 9th to 12th Standards are in their most formative years wherein their future is crystallized. Children from Municipal and Government Schools need mentoring and guidance to achieve their dreams. This couldn't have been just an one-off interaction as there are multiple confusions and distractions that occur during this period. Hence, regular weekend classes, along with an Annual “Can Do” workshop meant that each child could see positive traction towards his or her goal.

Scholarships were also distributed basis the children's performance in an annual exam, and to encourage them to do better every successive year. They could interact with and meet their mentors on a regular basis, who would also explain the various courses of study and career options available. A number of students were also supported through their collegiate years through Higher Education Scholarships. The most satisfying aspect of the Ullas Trust outreach has been the return of some Ullas students to become mentors for the younger children.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Eyes Have It, The Eyes Have It

Healthcare in rural India is a hit-and-miss affair. When it comes to tertiary healthcare, it is essentially non-existent. Therefore, when looking at a world-class eye hospital in Khekra in Baghpat district, people were astounded. This was because the existing paradigm that people had to come to hospitals in the cities for surgeries and the like, whereas now, this new eye hospital turned that concept on its head.

The world class ADK Jain Eye Hospital has been conceived to help underserved communities see the light, through selfless service, professional expertise

and appropriate technologies. It also serves as a Centre of Excellence, integrating local research with global advancement, furthering the cause of medical treatment and research. The hospital is part of our commitment to the region, and has amplified its outreach through numerous eye camps and cataract surgeries, with the very best and latest in equipment and infrastructure. The hospital also attracts patients from the nearby towns, as it is the best-in-class in that region.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Power of Women

Water is an absolute necessity for life, and for our existence on this planet. When Rani Bisone came to a remote village in Bhainsdehi in Madhya Pradesh, she was unpleasantly surprised to see that the village was suffering from a water scarcity. There was hardly any water in the village, and whatever was needed by each family was transported by the women by hand or through bullock carts. Rani soon realized that this was no way to live as a community.

She decided to take this up at the next Gram Sabha. She realized that she was the only woman attending the meet. She anyway put forward her request for getting piped water into the village and thus ease the burden of women. The other women in the

village soon got together and started supporting Rani in her demand. The Gram Sabha was forced to pass the resolution and contacted the relevant Government department. Sure, there were quite a number of hurdles that had to be passed along the way, but the women quickly realized that this was the only way forward. Soon enough, sanctions came through and the pipelines were laid to bring water into the village. Rani then turned her attention to ensuring proper education in the village school, and upgrading of the Primary Health Centre to handle minor illnesses. Rani's story continues and she continues to inspire women in her village.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Collective Farming – the Holistic Way

One of the major factors that has kept the productivity, yields and incomes of Indian farmers low is the small and fragmented land holdings that they have. Farmers with larger farms tend to do well even as far as farm productivity and yield is concerned. Beating this problem required the pooling of land, labour and capital, but most importantly, changing the mindset of farmers to enable them to undertake Holistic Collective (HOCO) farming. This initiative of Mission Samriddhi integrates the principles of natural farming with the strengths and values of collective farming. There was a series of interactions with the farmers of Shiratoki, a small tribal hamlet in the Yavatmal district, where forty households pooled 125 acres of their land to practice collective farming. The concept of collective farming resonated with them since they had a similar practice of 'Attari', whereby they all contributed their labour in the fields of others.

A Farmer Producer Organisation was established to systematically manage the production and the marketing of the produce. Technical inputs on aspects of crop planning, water management and harvesting and natural farming practices are provided by a team of subject experts to the farmers. The overall plan has facilitated the establishment of water structures to harvest an estimated 200 crore litres of water through farm ponds, compartment bunding and continuous contour trenching. The farmers were trained to produce non-chemical fertilisers, pesticides and bioenzymes. The individual farmers receive an assured income in the form of a monthly salary and sharing of the profits, thus giving them the benefits of land pooling and collaboration with other farmers in their village to collectively improve income levels all around.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Farmers' Incomes Mushroom in Sonbhadra and Namakkal

Mushroom cultivation can help reduce vulnerability to poverty and strengthens agri-livelihoods through the generation of a fast yielding and nutritious source of food and a reliable source of income. Mission Samriddhi has developed the Tamil Nadu Mushroom Fund, which aims to support small and marginal farmers in Tamil Nadu. The initiative at Namakkal includes setting up mushroom farms for 50 farmers and ensuring a minimum income of Rs.8,000 per month, which could scale to Rs.20,000 /month, within a year. The inspiration and driving force behind this initiative was Arul Thomas, an Agri-entrepreneur specializing in mushroom farming, processing and sale. We worked along with him, to receive sanction orders from the State Government for the construction of mushroom sheds as well as subsidy from the State Rural

Development & Panchayat Raj Department. Rang De helped us to get bridge funding from social impact investors.

In Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh, Banwasi Sewa Ashram, with the support of Mission Samriddhi set up a Mushroom spawn production laboratory with technical help from ICAR- Indian Institute of Vegetable Research, Varanasi, to produce 750 kg of spawn per month. 65 farmers have been trained in a skill that will provide them an additional source of income. Encouraged by this a Farmer Interest Group (FIG) of 2500 farmers has come forward to get trained in mushroom cultivation and sell the produce under the registered company.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Farmer Producer Organizations – Framing the future!

70 % of rural India depends primarily on agriculture for their livelihood.

With small landholdings and without year round access to water, quality inputs, sufficient labour, appropriate machinery, credit financing, markets and essential knowledge - our small farmers practise unviable and unsustainable farming which have trapped them into a life of perpetual anxiety sometimes leading to suicide

One of the ways to overcome these challenges is to collectivise the farmers initially into Farmer Interest Groups and then Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs). Promotion and strengthening of FPOs have been one of the key strategies of the Government of India to achieve inclusive agriculture growth.

Promotion of FPOs is an important initiative in Mission Samriddhi Clusters to collectivise farmers and support them by strengthening backward and forward linkages. Mission Samriddhi, in collaboration with ISAP Foundation, has supported the formation of 10 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in Maharashtra and UP - 3 in Wardha, 2 in Yavatmal, and 5 in Sonbhadra - to empower 5000 small and

marginal farmers to improve their income and to get the benefit (both input and produce) of economies of scale. Technical assistance for increasing farm productivity through better soil health, soil nutrients, better quality seeds, water management, linkage to schemes, marketing support and value added processing are some of the key focus areas for empowering the small farmers in our communities.

Ramlochan from Dakshinanchal FPO in Sonbhadra is showing the way through regular meetings amongst farmers, KVK and the Agriculture Department to provide quality seeds for paddy, maize, urad dal and til. His FPO has also procured rice, maize and peanuts at scale from all the farmers and ensured better pricing.

Similarly, Nitesh Thool, the CEO of Vidarbha Satpura FPO in Wardha is doing a commendable job in ensuring a 10% increase in income by cotton ginning as value addition. Venturing into dairy farming and launching a new fodder production business are steps being taken to increase farmer incomes.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Khadi, Khadi, Mera Dil Dhadke

Khadi has a strong emotional connect with Indian history and our freedom struggle. However, it has lost its pre-eminent position among fabrics over time, and due to the introduction of newer and more economical competitors woven on automated machines. Khadi is still predominantly a handloom fabric, and finds it difficult to escape its image of being of rough texture. Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti in Wardha has a strong legacy that is intertwined with that of the Father of the Nation. The humble charkha is still used extensively to spin threads that go into the making of Magan Khadi.

Khadi fabric can be woven as fine as muslin, or according to the tastes and wishes of various

consumer groups. However, due to the large input of labour and expertise required in the weaving of khadi, the economics of this fabric do not allow it to compete on mere prices. The craftsmanship displayed by Magan Khadi ensures that each item of clothing is not only beautiful to behold, but also easy on the planet and our eyes. This is because Magan Khadi uses 100% organic cotton grown in their fields near Girad in Waigaon. This ensures that the fabric breathes more easily and has a softer feel to it.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To Bee or Not to Bee

Honey has been a trusted source of energy from time immemorial. However, the methods of extraction have left a lot to be desired, as also the rampant adulteration in commercially available honey. The Centre for Bee Development (CBeeD) in Wardha has done yeoman service in correcting these two anomalies. They have trained tribal bee collectors on the correct methodology for honey collection which is based on two aspects. The first is on the protection for the collector from bee stings, by providing gear designed especially for this purpose. The second is the methodology for the safe and non-violent removal of only the

honey storing portion of the beehive, which then allows the bees to continue their existence in the same hive without a hitch.

CBeeD has also set up a storage and testing facility in Wardha to store, process and pack the honey thus collected. They also have a full fledged laboratory to test all incoming samples for signs of adulteration. This has enabled Nisarg Honey to become the benchmark for taste and quality. The Centre also regularly trains honey collectors around the country so that the indigenous bee population is sustained and preserved.



ग्रामीण समस्या मुक्ती ट्रस्ट
मृदा व जल संधारण कार्यक्रम

डोहा मॉडेल

प्रकल्प गाव - बोदोनी

सहाय्य : मिशन समृद्धी

Mission Samridhi

ECOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Reviving a River – The Nirguda Story

The Nirguda River has a length of around 165 kms. and flows in its entirety in Yavatmal district. It then joins the Wardha River which eventually joins the Godavari. The Nirguda River used to carry the monsoon runoff from the district and could be found to have sufficient water nearly throughout the year. However over the past decade or so, the river would run dry just as soon as the rains stopped, thus losing its importance as a source of irrigation. One of Mission Samriddhi's partners – Gramin Samassya Mukti Trust decided to take up the job of rejuvenation of Nirguda River.

They did a drone reconnaissance of the river bed and correlated the findings with that of the GIS survey to determine the locations where the recharge of the

underground aquifers was not taking place as hitherto. These were the locations where GSMT utilized the Doha Model. This involved digging wide and deep pits which would help both in storage of rainwater and recharge of groundwater. This was a long and laborious process but over 3 kms. of the river bed were taken up as a pilot study. This gave good results and encouraged the team to take up more locations for implementation of the Doha Model. The Nirguda River has seen a revival of its fortunes in recent times.



ECOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Awalgaon – getting it Right about Forest Rights!

Awagaon's residents, an indigenous group of forest dwellers recognized as a PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group), was granted CFR (Community Forest Rights) in December 2013 after a prolonged struggle. The progress made in the tribal village since then has been remarkable - a role model village, the best practices of which could be adopted by other CFR villages.

Prashant, a 30 year old, is leading from the front in the journey of Awalgaon's development, actively engaging with the Government in the convergence of schemes and their implementation. His efforts through the Gram Sabha, have helped them master scientific practices that have enhanced the quality of both their agriculture and Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP – gum, custard apple, mahua etc). These include developing complex and elaborate contour maps for better understanding of the soil, crops and plantations for the optimum utilization of forest resources including water. Today, Awalgaon boasts of continued access to water, a gas connection in every household, a toilet and a solar light in almost every household. Additionally, women's Self-Help Groups have been instated to work towards making gender equality a reality in the village.

Historic injustice meted out to forest dependent communities due to curtailment of their customary rights over forests resulting in their displacement and marginalization, is the reason why the Forest Rights Act 2006 came into place. FRA recognizes and vests the right to use, manage and conserve forest resources, and to legally hold forest land that these communities have used for cultivation and residence in forest dwelling communities while playing an integral role in the sustainability of forests and in conservation of biodiversity.

Gramin Samasya Mukti Trust (GSMT) , Mission Samriddhi's partner organization in Yavatmal has been striving for the sustainable development of forest dwelling communities, over the past 25 years. GSMT have raised awareness and empowered Gramsabhas in more than 500 CFR villages to prepare, implement and handhold communities through a Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) to sustainably and equitably manage community forest resources in integration with the Forest department. Through sustained efforts, GSMT along with Mission Samriddhi have brought in social and economic justice to deprived communities such as Awalgaon and many other villages.



INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions, Ensuring Sustainability

Despite the provision of the 73rd amendment that provided a Constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, it is yet to realise its full potential in letter and in spirit. The true devolution of power is yet to unfold across the country barring few States.

In Mission Samridhi, we believe that strengthening institutions of local self-governance is at the core of sustainable development and building institutionally strong Gram Panchayats that move away from being just an implementing agency to being a local self-government in the true sense, is absolutely essential.

An intensive and structured transformation of select Gram Panchayats in Jharkhand and Maharashtra following the unique Gram Panchayat Organisation Development (GPOD) framework, developed by Anode Governance Foundation has been a key initiative. The GPOD framework involves the application of Organisation Development (OD) principles to equip Gram Panchayats to have a clear set of shared values, build relevant structures and take informed decisions to operationalise their

vision and mission. As former Mukhiya of Pindarkon GP, Kamakhiya Singh once said “I became a Mukhiya of Pindarkon in 2015 which had a practically non-existent Panchayat. Thanks to the training, I can now proudly say that I was able to make Pindarkon, a GP that is transparent and has the trust of the community in local self-government”

Besides building capacities of PRI members and bringing about change on the ground, facilitating decentralised governance within the government eco-systems and triggering the process of policy formulation is essential to bring about Systems Change. In Jharkhand, we are supporting PRADAN to establish a State Project Management Unit (SPMU) under the Department of Panchayati Raj (DoPR), Government of Jharkhand (GoJ). The SPMU has been able to influence in the enhancement of the Departmental budget from 65 cr. to 240 cr. and the sanctioning of several people friendly schemes such as the Panchayat Gyan Kendras, Common Service Centres, Urja Village.

Mission Samriddhi

SOCIAL IMPACT ENTERPRISE

Mission Samriddhi is a social impact platform dedicated to holistic development of Rural India, through the design and development of projects that are sustainable and capable of scale to positively impact the larger population.

As suggested by the name, 'Samriddhi', the unifying value is prosperity for all. Mission Samriddhi, believes in the cumulative strength of Celebrate, Connect and Catalyse - Celebrating what is working, Connecting people, process & technologies to drive scale and Catalysing the change by providing competence, confidence, education and funding.

Celebrate

Connect

Catalyse

www.mission-samriddhi.org