



Personal Development

Social Development

Samriddhi

OUR PEOPLE
THEIR STORIES
OUR INDIA

Economic Development

Ecological Development

Institutional Development

Our People - **Their Stories** - Our India

In the heart of India's diverse villages, stories of resilience, determination, and innovation unfold every day. This book brings together ten inspiring narratives that showcase the indomitable spirit of ordinary individuals who turned adversity into opportunity.

From creating sustainable livelihoods and improving education to addressing critical issues like water scarcity and waste management, these changemakers have sparked revolutions in their communities. Each story is a testament to the power of human will, community collaboration, and the transformative impact of initiatives like Mission Samriddhi.

Let the journeys of Bharat, Mahendra, Lakshmi, and others inspire you to believe in the extraordinary potential within every ordinary life.



श्री कृष्णा गोशाला
दूध संघर्षिका

दही भंडार
दही सेन्टर

आपकी दूध - बहुत थोड़ा दानपुर, जौ. 8383175883

काम - दही भंडार वृत्त (दही भंडार)

सिखाए गए - दही, दही, दही

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The Man who milked his ability

Bharat Singh is a 33 year old youth from Khajarah Buzurg village in Babina, Jhansi district in Uttar Pradesh. He had passed his 12th standard, but could not get gainful employment as he was physically challenged. He had to shoulder the responsibility of looking after his parents, a brother and two children.

Then in 2023, the Parmarth Samajh Sewa Sansthan in collaboration with Mission Samriddhi, implemented their Project Pragati. Bharat Singh requested the Parmarth administrators to include him in their outreach, so that the society could benefit from employment. He also participated whole heartedly in the programmes that were conducted as part of this project.

Looking at the vigour and enthusiasm of Bharat Singh, the Parmarth team scouted around for avenues of employment and prosperity in Khajarah Buzurg. They found that though there was production of around 400 litres of good quality milk there, due to problems of storage and collection, the remuneration given to the families was quite low. Parmarth held discussions with Shri Krishna Goshala

in Jhansi (who were part of the Nova Group), and they decided to set-up a mini dairy collection and storage centre in the village. Now Bharat Singh, as the dairy manager, brought in fat meters, weighing scale as well as milk collection and storage cans, to ensure that the villagers got a fair deal. He also saw to it that all the milk producers got their payments in their respective bank accounts on the 5th, 15th and 25th of each month, for the milk handed over during the last 10 days. Bharat Singh received a commission of Rs. 1.50 per litre collected, and through his hard work, he could get around Rs. 15 – 16,000 rupees per month as his due. Further, due to his efforts, over 25 families in the village received a steady income, and they didn't have to go out of their village to sell their milk.

Bharat Singh now enjoys a respectable place in his village, and the youth in the village look up to him for inspiration on how to use the ability that one has to provide a livelihood to his villagers, as well as look after his family with honour and dignity.



Revolving fund leads to a revolution

The power of assistance given at the right time to the right person is brought out by the story of Chitra Bala Ray. She is a member of Lakhimi SHG of the Progati Village Organization in Ambuk Koimari Village in Goalpara, Assam. She was finding the task of making both ends meet very difficult, inspite of having a small Backyard Piggery and Poultry unit, which suffered from high mortality and low income owing lack of proper feed, vaccination and a structured shed.

Mission Samriddhi, with the help of SeSTA and ASRLM, studied her situation and gave her Revolving Fund support. She also received training and demonstration on Scientific Pig Rearing and Backyard Poultry by SeSTA professionals. The life expectancy of both units improved once a proper shed was set up, along with the introduction of

nutritious feed and a regular vaccination cycle. In the period ending September 2024, she was able to sell two male pigs, as well as 12 piglets, leading to a revenue of around Rs. 80,000, and a profit of over Rs. 50,000 after expenses. She also streamlined her Poultry unit and earned over Rs. 63,000 from Poultry batches this year, and a resultant profit of Rs. 40,000 after expenses for vaccination and construction of a shed.

The assistance from Revolving Fund support, as well as the technical advice and support received from Mission Samriddhi, SeSTA and ASRLM, have not only given Chitra Bala a strong financial foundation, but also pitched her as a role model for other women in her Gram Panchayat. It's really true, a little help goes a long way in the right hands, and at the opportune time.



Mahendra is all pumped up

Mahendra Kumar was just like any other unemployed youth in Uttar Pradesh – hoping against hope that some gainful employment comes his way. Living in one corner of Sonbhadra District in village Barve, he knew that chances of employment were indeed slim. Then he heard that the nearby Banwasi Seva Ashram was conducting a training session on repairing of hand pumps. Mahendra felt that this was the opportunity that he had been waiting for, contacted the Community Local Resource Person, who provided him the relevant details. He then went to Banwasi Seva Ashram, and underwent the three day intensive training on hand-pump repairing.

Now that he was a trained mechanic, he came across another hurdle – he did not have the requisite tools for the job. He again contacted the CLRP who talked to the Gram Pradhan of Barve – Shri Ranjeet. The Gram Pradhan provided Rs. 10,000 as a revolving fund from the Panchayat budget to Mahendra, with the stipulation that he would need to repair the hand pumps within the village.

Mahendra was delighted with this turn of events, bought his tools and immediately went to work and repaired the hand pumps in the village. Word of mouth soon spread, and Mahendra became a pump mechanic very much in demand. He now travels across the district, and has started earning money that he never thought was possible, being in his village. He returned the money back to the Gram Pradhan, and is now earning an amount of around Rs. 8,000 per month.

Mahendra is eternally thankful to Banwasi Seva Ashram for that skill training that opened a door of opportunity for him to become the economic base of his family. Today Mahendra has before him a path to life and looking at Mahendra's example, over 10 other youth have become trained in trades like gas stove repairing, electrician, sewing machine repairer etc.



Bal Panchayat takes the lead

Arangur Gram Panchayat, with the support of Mission Samriddhi, embarked on a transformative journey by establishing a Bal Panchayat. Recognizing the potential of children as changemakers, the Gram Panchayat council collaborated with Mission Samriddhi to create a structured plan for forming the Bal Panchayat, ensuring democratic and transparent processes.

The formation of the Bal Panchayat began with discussions to finalize the election timeline, including nomination, scrutiny, campaigning, and polling. The Election Committee led by Mr. Raja, President of Arangur Gram Panchayat, oversaw the process. 33 nominations were received for 11 positions, including Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Members. On election day, 153 votes were polled, marking a significant milestone in child-led governance.

To enhance its functionality, the Bal Panchayat formed four standing committees: Administrative, Environment, Education, and Sports. Each committee, led by a Chairperson and comprising seven members, meets monthly to discuss plans and activities. These meetings are followed by a Bal

Panchayat council meeting to consolidate decisions and implement initiatives effectively. Notably, the Chairperson and three Standing Committee Chairpersons are from Ullas Students, showcasing the program's success in fostering leadership among young participants.

The Bal Panchayat's impactful activities include environmental initiatives like tree plantation drives, celebrating children's birthdays and plastic cleanup campaigns, which have fostered sustainability. Educational workshops on the Constitution and bird watching, along with cultural programs, have empowered children with knowledge, creativity, and confidence.

The success of the Bal Panchayat has significantly influenced the community, inspiring both children and adults. By empowering young minds, Mission Samriddhi and the Arangur Gram Panchayat have set a benchmark for inclusive and sustainable development, preparing children for leadership roles and strengthening the community's collective spirit for a progressive future.



Lakshmi turns over many new pages

It promised to be a scorching summer day in Siwanpat village, part of Amla Panchayat in Betul. At 7:00 AM, the streets were already buzzing with the joyful noise of children enjoying their school summer holidays. Meanwhile a group of children are gathered in a small house's courtyard to enjoy the reading activity by the Ullas library. Far off in the field, Lakshmi walks towards the courtyard and watches the children, hesitant but curious. Finally, she joins the group. A volunteer, encourages Lakshmi to sit near her and read. Lakshmi, with great enthusiasm, takes a book but seems puzzled, merely touching and feeling it.

The volunteer, noticing something unusual, asks the other children about Lakshmi. They explain that she can't read or write because she hasn't been admitted to school. One of the children suggests that if Lakshmi gets admitted, she will be able to

read like them. The volunteer promises to talk to Lakshmi's parents about getting her admitted. However, the first conversation with her parents was unsuccessful. They are hesitant due to a small problem with Lakshmi's leg. The next day, when the children learn about this, they all, in a chorus, asked the volunteer if she will help them get Lakshmi admitted in school.

The following day, the children gathered and headed to school for Lakshmi's admission. With the collective effort and support of the Bal Sangh (Children's Association), Lakshmi got admitted into school. Now, Lakshmi regularly attends the summer camp, where she learns the basics of reading and writing. Her dreams and aspirations will unfold as she starts attending school after the summer holidays, marking the beginning of a new chapter in her life.



Health is Wealth

25-year-old Dharmendra Khara, of Pateipadar village of Kathapada Gram Panchayat, Odisha has been getting heaps of blessings from the people of his village. Selected as one of the Community Leaders being mentored and trained by CYSD, Mission Samriddhi's partner in Odisha, Dharmendra is determined to ensure that everyone in his village receives their entitlements.

Dharmendra recounts that "Earlier this year, a 2-year-old child suffering from a heart ailment required immediate medical attention. She was taken to the Community Health Centre (CHC), from where she was referred to the District Hospital for better treatment. During this course, it was noticed that the child did not have a birth certificate, and hence the family was not eligible for the government benefit."

With limited time on hand, Dharmendra had to act quickly. He went to the ASHA worker in his village to collect the birth certificate and found that the baby's birth has not been registered. With the help of an advocate, Dharmendra got an affidavit which was submitted to the district collector's office, the process was escalated and within two weeks the birth certificate was sanctioned. This was provided to the hospital, the operation was successful and the baby is hale and hearty now. "I feel extremely happy that I was able to help save someone's life", says Dharmendra. He has received appreciation from various media as this was covered across TV channels and newspapers. He further mentioned that a proper plan of action has to be designed to make people aware of their entitlements. "My only aim is to make sure that the government's policies reach villages like ours and people must be made aware of their entitlements," he added.



Kavita shows the way forward

Rohatek is a village in the tribal belt of Yavatmal District, about 40 kms away from the district headquarters. There are around 150 families living in Rohatek. The tribal Kolam community used to provide employment for around 70 families as labourers. Kavita Bhojar lived here with her husband and daughters, only getting occasional work. She participated regularly in the meetings and programs organized by the Gramin Samssaya Mukti Trust, a partner of Mission Samriddhi.

There were ongoing projects concerning education, health and livelihood. Seeing her passion for social work, she was selected as a voluntary worker under GSMT. On her own initiative, Kavita started informing women about employment and savings, and explained the importance of self-help groups to about 50 women from the village. This was important, as there was not a single self-help group in the village. "We'll start," she said, "Let's come together and empower ourselves in groups". Her

efforts were successful in forming 5 groups of 50 tribal women out of some 90 women in the village. Problems started to arise as most tribal women did not have documents. Through the Gram Panchayat, Kavita set up a camp and connected Aadhaar card and PAN card to 30 women, and linked the groups to MAVIM (State Women's Development Corporation).

The SHG's managed without any financial help for about 6 months. Seeing this, the Sarpanch requested Kavita to accept the post of ICRP (Internal Community Resource Person), with a salary of Rs.1000. The Sarpanch also arranged for loans to four women to set up a goat farming collective business, as well as assisting 10 other women to take tuition classes and thus contribute to the family's kitty. Kavita got these livelihood opportunities up and running, and is now thinking about creating a women's manufacturing company. All power to her.



Many rivers to cross – and a will to do it

Mission Samriddhi partners with Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) for developmental activities in the state of Odisha. CYSD works to improve the quality of lives of tribal, rural and urban poor in Odisha and has been building a cadre of community leaders desiring to work with vulnerable groups, through a unique leadership program. The program that is rooted in the concept of value-based leadership, self-responsibility and personal growth aims to work on the personality, skills and leadership style of the leaders of community-based organizations (CBOs).

Lachi Pangri, a Community Leader of Mathapada village, who completed the 1st phase of the program, was very disturbed to see that Banuaguda village, which is just 4 kms. away from Mathapada had no Anganwadi Centre (AWC). The village is surrounded

by a river and gets disconnected for most of the year leaving the children with no access to the AWC. She felt that she could do something to change this state of affairs. She then conducted a survey and found out that there were 22 children in the age group of 3 to 5 years who were being deprived of their entitled ration from the AWC. Lachi set up a meeting with the Sarpanch and Gram Panchayat officials, and supported them to write an application that was handed over to the Block officials in a Special Gram Sabha. With the active support of the Panchayat and other stakeholders, the construction of the bridge has commenced. Lachi played a pivotal role in overseeing the project to ensure its timely completion, and to ensure an all-weather connection to Banuaguda village.



The road less travelled

This is the story of Aari village in the Badagaon Development Block, in Jhansi District of Uttar Pradesh. Aari is just 10 kms away from the district headquarters, but its story is similar to many such villages in our country – a story of “So Near, Yet So Far”. Aari did not have a proper road to connect it to Jhansi, or other market towns. The situation during the monsoon is not too difficult to imagine, putting daily commuters like school children, milkmen and women wanting to sell their produce, to a lot of trouble. This is inspite of Aari itself being the Gram Panchayat, as well as the Gram Pradhan being from the same village.

Then in 2023, Parmarth Samaj Seva Sansthan, in collaboration with Mission Samriddhi, noticed the trauma of these villagers, and took up the matter

with the District Administration and allied officials. In December 2023, the Rani Lakshmbai Central Agricultural University in Jhansi held a three day training session for farmers on productivity of their crops, when Jal Sahelis from Aari again brought up the topic of the pending road work. Due to the pressure brought to bear on them, the Irrigation Department floated a tender for the road in March 2024. However, due to the elections, the work on this metalled road was rather slow, but has now been completed, well before the monsoons got into full flow.

Now Aari village has all-weather road connectivity, and vehicles now ply to and from the village, easing the lives of all the villagers.



Manisha and her world of books

Bodad is a small village with a population of just over 900, on the Wardha-Pulgaon highway. Children from the Upper Primary School, needed to travel to Pulgaon after their 8th standard. The Headmaster and the Sarpanch felt the need for a village library and requested Mission Samriddhi to set this up in the village. Now community participation is a must for such a venture, and Manisha volunteered to take up the task of facilitating students and looking after the Ullas Grow By Library, that was soon set up.

Manisha was a very shy mother of two sons, never been outside her home or interacted with outsiders. But she had a passion for reading and interacting with children. With the help of school teachers and the Gram Panchayat, she reached out to children and their parents to make them aware about the Ullas library. In due course, Manisha realised that the children needed to acquire the skills of

communication, team work, time management and leadership. She conducted various activities like storytelling, reading aloud and engaging them to express their thoughts and ideas.

She allowed children to borrow books, especially those who are not able to come on a daily basis. Considering her experience and expertise, Manisha was selected as a member of School Management Committee (SMC). Her journey of learning and experience shows that she focused on the process to become the changemaker of her village. As a result of all the efforts and vision of Manisha and the support from all the stakeholders the library evolved as a village learning center (VLC) where children could come to build their own capacities and work towards becoming ideal citizens.

Community Development Framework

We, in Mission Samriddhi, realized at a very early date that ensuring the development, in whatever form was required by people on the ground, is not an easy concept around which one can wrap one's head. It is somewhat more complex than just doing whatever we think is good for the people. Community Development has many faces, and many phases. God really is in the details.

Over a couple of years of interaction with rural communities, we determined that development can be grouped together across Personal Development, Social Development, Economic Development, Ecological Sustainability and Institutional Development. All these are equally important, and each of them is really a compilation of various

sub-elements. This led us to develop our Community Development Framework, which forms the basis of Mission Samriddhi's efforts today, across our country. Each of the stories showcased above pertain to one of the sub-elements in our CDF, and the Framework is reproduced below for your perusal.

The 38 sub-elements in our Community Development Framework have been further organized into 144 success indicators, which have given us the opportunity to develop a Development Scorecard, wherein we can measure how well we have done in a certain Gram Panchayat, and what needs to be corrected or enhanced.

D1 : Personal Development

D11: Growth Mindset
D12: Personal Values
D13: Behavioural Change
D14: Folk Art, Theatre & Culture

D15: Constitutional Values
D16: Volunteerism
D17: Sports

D4 : Ecological Sustainability

D41: Water conservation
D42: Soil health
D43: Climate Change & Biodiversity
D44: Plantation & Forestry

D45: Waste Management
D46: Disaster Risk Reduction
D47: Renewable Energy

D2 : Social Development

D21: Integrated Education
D22: Health & Nutrition Security
D23: Village Infrastructure & Basic Amenities
D24: Social Justice
D25: Child Friendly

D26: Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment
D27: WASH
D28: Differently Abled
D29: Mental Health

D5 : Institutional Development

D51: Shared Vision & Mission
D52: Schemes, OSR & Budget
D53: Gram Panchayat Development Plan
D54: Stakeholder management
D55: Social Security

D56: Plan Execution & Review
D57: Good Governance
D58: Standing & Functional Committees
D59: Social Audit

D3 : Economic Development

D31: Agriculture & Allied
D32: Non-Agri Livelihood
D33: Skilling

D34: Self Help Groups
D35: Farmer Producer Organisations
D36: Financing

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

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