



# QUARTERLY UPDATE

## Swayam Shikshan Prayog



### Prema Lives in Millions of Hearts

Thank you all for being with us, the SSP family, during this difficult time. Prema Tai will be greatly missed by the SSP family. However, her spirit lives on in the millions of grassroots women who are tomorrow's change makers and leaders.

"Livelihoods to enterprise is a long journey for rural women. They will benefit from a community support system at key touch points—which requires the involvement of their families, peer entrepreneurs, and institutions. Donors and facilitators must realize this as they co-create this significant and inclusive ecosystem. It is important so that women are not viewed as mere income earners, microcredit borrowers, or self-employed people, but as tomorrow's economic contributors and leaders. It's time we changed our mindsets."  
Prema Gopalan

In an interview with IDR in December 2021, Prema talks about her vision of building an ecosystem that enables women to take charge, the role of agriculture in building sustainable livelihoods, and how crisis can be an opportunity to fast-forward development -  
<https://idronline.org/article/gender/building-an-ecosystem-for-women-leaders-in-rural-india>



### Introduction

This newsletter brings you updates about the programs, initiatives and activities implemented across SSP villages by the grassroots women leaders.

It is with extreme grief in our hearts that we announce the passing away of our visionary leader and founder of Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Ms. Prema Gopalan on 29th March, 2022.

She was a bright star spreading her light and touching the lives of millions of women.

Her absence has created a deep void but we salute her exemplary contribution by carrying forth her legacy of working with communities of grassroots women nurturing and empowering them.

## Maharashtra

### Orientation on Farmer Producer Organisation

SSP organized an Information Dialogue workshop at Hagalur village in Solapur on 17th February, 2022 to educate women producer groups' members and directors of the Bharari Sakhi Producer Company on governance, market, access to finance, government partnerships and relevance of value added products. The event had several eminent resource persons. Mr. Madan Mukne, Project Director, ATMA, Solapur spoke at length about on the importance of professional attitude, maintaining quality of organic produce and finding right markets. Ms. Manisha Misal, Block Agriculture Officer, North Solapur explained various techniques of bio-farming methods and ways to increase production using lesser inputs.



### Dialogue Workshop

An interactive dialogue session was arranged by SSP in Osmanabad between the women leaders of Osmanabad and the government agriculture officers of ATMA on February 22., 2022.

ATMA officers oriented them about the various relevant schemes that women could avail, with special focus on Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme.

During the dialogue, the women leaders were explained about the opportunities for entrepreneurship development as Sakhis in promoting insurance, healthcare, digital literacy etc. 130 women leaders participated in this event.

### Product Launch

Women from the Bharari Sakhi Producer Company launched their vegetable marketing efforts in Solapur city on the occasion of Makar Sankranti on January 14. Women farmers who cultivated organic vegetables moved beyond household vegetable production to form a collective and experiment with new urban markets to sell their produce.

Over the past three years, women farmers from Solapur block have been adopting SSP's 'one-acre farming model'. However, a major challenge they faced was the inability to negotiate a fair and viable price for their products from intermediaries who visited their villages. SSP organised meetings with Sakhi leaders and told them about the benefits of starting a Farmer Producers Company - which include marketing support at a larger scale, distribution of profits to company members and a fair price for farmer's produce.

### Trainings

A training program organized by SSP on Climate Resilient Farming at Ausa, Latur on 10th January 2022. This was followed by a Workshop on Food security and Nutrition, Osmanabad on 17th January, 2022. Women leaders from Nagar taluka in Ahmednagar district, Maharashtra attended training on health, nutrition, sanitation and food security using Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methods on 8-9 February, 2022 in Jamkhed town. Thirty-eight leaders, representing over 80 villages attended three sessions organized by SSP. Participants agreed to reach out to women in their villages to spread awareness on the above issues.



## Bihar

### Clean Energy Sakhis of Bihar



On March 8, 2022 the International Women's Day, women leaders from Bihar, created and published a video about SSP's Clean Energy Entrepreneurship Program in Bihar. To promote clean energy as well as encourage entrepreneurial skills among women, women leaders in rural Bihar took up the mantle of Urja (Energy) Sakhi's. They began promoting solar light products, as well as bio-pesticides and bio-insecticides for organic farming. One can listen to what these inspiring leaders, who are moving beyond their households to gain financial security by becoming entrepreneurs, have to say about their experience working as local agents of change!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uit7LneCTrg>

In new product partnerships, SSP partnered with Skyline and Sea Fire to supply electric stoves to several Sakhis in an effort to promote access to clean energy products and its business.

### Anita devi, Rasisa, Nalanda, Bihar

Starting as a Urja (Clean Energy) Sakhi in 2019, Anita devi, from Rasisa village in Bihar is now a successful Super Sakhi, overseeing 9 villages and 18 Sakhi's. After receiving many training's from SSP in the importance of sustainability and clean energy, impacts of climate change and benefits of organic vegetable cultivation, Anita devi started spreading awareness on these issues in her community. She put up stalls at Gram Panchayat meetings, SHG meetings and other village gatherings to sell clean energy and bio-farming products. As a result of regular mobilization activities that she did in her village and surrounding areas, she was able to learn about the issues that the village faced, and also gained respect in the eyes of the community. In the local elections of 2021, Anita devi was elected as a member of the Block Development Council. She claims that her work as a Sakhi, where worked in the community for their betterment, is the reason she won the election. Today, many of Anita's community members have started practicing organic farming and using solar light, improving both their health and the environment.

## Kerala

### Product launch

Keravriksha Producer Company, Wayanad launched the sale of organic rice on 9th Feb 2022.

The existing stocks of organic rice were sold out on the first day, indicating a thumping response from buyers. Enthused by this response, the Company is planning to launch more value added products to the market in the coming months.

On 18th March, they launched other products including Aromatic rice (Kayama), Dry Tapioca, and Honey which are in good demand in the market. Keravriskha hopes to lead the value chain market from the front in coming years.



## VACCINATION DRIVE

This is a good example of collaborative efforts showcasing how women leaders and the Gram Panchayat came together to combat Covid-19 in Rajuri village, Osmanabad, Maharashtra. "The Rajuri Gram Panchayat is very active and was an excellent partner to the women leaders and SSP in supporting the COVID-19 response efforts", says Shahida Tai, community leader in Osmanabad.

During the first-wave of COVID-19 in 2020, the community members faced a lot of difficulty as they had to travel all the way to Osmanabad city to isolate themselves at hospitals. Hence, the women leaders, SSP team and Gram Panchayat collaborated to start an isolation center in the village itself. Rooms were provided by the Panchayat on the school premises, while medical supplies like beds and medicines were supplied by SSP. The isolation center started taking patients from August 2021. Daily check-ups were provided to villagers suspected of being COVID positive.

When the government started providing vaccinations, there was a lot of hesitation and many misconceptions amongst the community. Taking a lead in making their village 100 percent vaccinated, women targeted business people and members of the panchayat to get vaccinated first. Using the Gram Panchayat's voter's list, they also conducted household visits, addressed village meetings and used a mobile van to spread awareness on the government organized vaccination camps. As of January 2022, more than 95% of Rajuri village has received their second COVID vaccine. The isolation centre and clinic also continue to run successfully.

## Graphic Storybook

### 'Raindrop in the Drought'

Godavari Dange'. This comic book tells the story of Tuljapur's local heroine rallying 50,000 women from drought-ridden Marathwada to adopt the one-acre model of farming to enable them to provide daily meals to their families.

This comic book about the life of Godavari Dange is part of Goethe-Institut's project to highlight stories of grassroots feminism in the global south. Dange's life - from growing up in drought-hit Marathwada as a young Bahujan girl, getting married at 16 and widowed at 21, to creating a one-acre farming model that liberated many female farmers - is an exceptional story about the power of feminist potential that many may not have heard of. The comic, by Reetika Revathy Subramanian and Maitri Dore, is a lovely tribute to an exceptional life.



## EVENTS

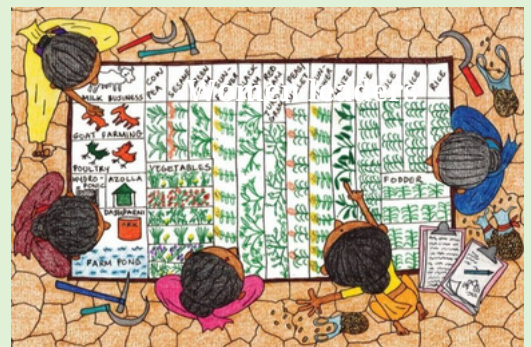
### RISE: World Summit

Mr. Upmanyu Patil, Director of Programme, SSP participated in the 9th edition of RISE: WORLD SUMMIT 2022 as a speaker and subject expert. The objective of the summit was to generate conversation and arrive at actionable solutions and viable innovations to fulfill the 17 Sustainable Development Goals to achieve Agenda 2030, a vision created in 2016 with focus on interlinkages between the 17 goals for integrated development.

### Webinar - UN Women

SSP participated in the webinar on "Women Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship" held on 15th March 2022 to talk about ways to support women in their journeys as entrepreneurs. The event was jointly organised by UN Women and Ashoka Livelihoods for All. Mr. Upmanyu Patil was the speaker in this event from SSP.

One acre for health:  
Marathwada's  
women farmers  
choose food crops  
by  
REETIKA REVATHY  
SUBRAMANIAN, MAITRI DORE  
Osmanabad district,  
Maharashtra



<https://idronline.org/ground-up-stories/one-acre-for-health-marathwadas-women-farmers-choose-food-crops/>

utm\_source=Facebook&utm\_medium=social\_media&utm\_campaign=gu\_women&fbclid=IwAR1fi5KRqAgj8XuO6\_59lq3UBU5pACIKjCmPLPYCLWIBzm6dg\_dPAYs7rBU



## RECOGNITION

### WTI Award

Prema Gopalan, Founder and Executive Director of Swayam Shikshan Prayog, was one of the winners of the Women Transforming India Awards (WTI) 2021. She was felicitated on 21st March, 2022 by the NITI Aayog 'Institution for Transforming India', Government of India for her role in promoting sustainable development and empowering women's collectives. She was one of the 75 Women Entrepreneurs who were selected for contributing greatly to India's growth in many ways.



## How Solar Power Is A Practical Answer For Farming Communities In Asia

An article in Business World appreciated SSP's effort in exploring renewable energy options in Maharashtra. They mention about the chilling services in Latur is by Promethean Power Systems, in partnership with SSP. Promethean's chillers use batteries incorporating sustainable thermal energy storage technology, making diesel generators redundant.

Farmers who have been forced to work on small and unproductive plots of land, or who are increasingly facing droughts and rising temperatures brought about by climate change, are finding that solar can provide them with a whole new way of processing, preserving, and storing their crops. In Maharashtra, western India, a network of community dairies has been set up, using sustainable refrigeration technology, where people can bring their milk to be tested, chilled, and sold on.

<https://www.businessworld.in/article/How-Solar-Power-Is-A-Practical-Answer-For-Farming-Communities-In-Asia/17-03-2022-423099/>

## "Women Leading Local Climate Adaptation"

Urmila Londhe, from Gour village in Latur, Maharashtra constructed a 'subjee-cooler' on her farm. This climate-smart technology keeps vegetables fresh and reduces spoilage without needing any inputs other than water. Urmila tai and her husband sold vegetables grown on their farm as their only income.

After associating with SSP in 2021, Urmila tai learnt about the benefits of organic farming and began cultivating vegetables using organic methods. Seeing the improved quality of harvest, she gained confidence and agreed to adapt subjee-cooler technology. Before the subjee-cooler, Urmila tai used to lose at least 20% of her produce daily, due to heat and spoilage. The subjee-cooler, which reduces the temperature by at least 10 degrees, uses nitrogen balls to maintain a cool temperature, and only requires an input of 20 litres of water daily.

Today, she has increased her income from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 per day, as losses from spoiling vegetables are minimal. She has gained confidence in herself, and respect of her family. Seeing her success, other women have also registered to get subjee-coolers.



## Social Media

### International Women's Day

#### Avendus's posts about Grassroots women leaders on Women's Day



**Sarita Walke** comes from the small village of Jawalgaon. She learned poultry farming, growing grains & dairy business after joining the Swayam Shikshan Prayog. Now, she provides for her family & conducts training for other grassroots women. Sarita is #BreakingTheBias. Are you? [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/avendus\\_avendus-x-ssp-womens-day-sarita-dhananjay-activity-6907606259814531072-xNsA/?fbclid=IwAR0y8j-Y5wqAV1fjT7pk4waAatBc6wMVGaLe0i6XGkMuP0kVII7aKBPtr18](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/avendus_avendus-x-ssp-womens-day-sarita-dhananjay-activity-6907606259814531072-xNsA/?fbclid=IwAR0y8j-Y5wqAV1fjT7pk4waAatBc6wMVGaLe0i6XGkMuP0kVII7aKBPtr18)

**Malan Raut** - The emerging leader in sustainable farming. Malan Tai lived in Mumbai before moving to Nagarsoga, a small village in Latur, Maharashtra. She made great strides in organic farming and dairy business with the support of Swayam Shikshan Prayog, where she received training in agri-entrepreneurship. Today she is working as a master trainer for the organization." <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6907213769572036608/?fbclid=IwAR1v1Qt9TjVNPbles1Qbp6SwFXh36M9yBIUxTpeLHzUw2jBOxGGzhkgCnfE>

**Gojar Nemame**, from Aurangabad District, Maharashtra, used to help her husband in their farm and take care of the household. Her mobility was restricted. After attending a SSP organized meeting of women to orient them on SSP's work and initiatives, Gojar Tai was inspired to take the lead in organising the village women into SHGs and farmers' groups. In spite of negativity from the community, Gojar Tai was able to convince her husband to support her. She attended many trainings given by the SSP team on the 'one-acre farming model' and implemented it on her own farm. Moreover, she promoted it amongst her twelve fellow SHG members.

Gojar Nemame has now emerged as a local leader, who advocates with government officials on implementation of schemes at the village level. She has successfully linked women to various schemes and familiarized them with local governance structures.

**To know more write to us at:**

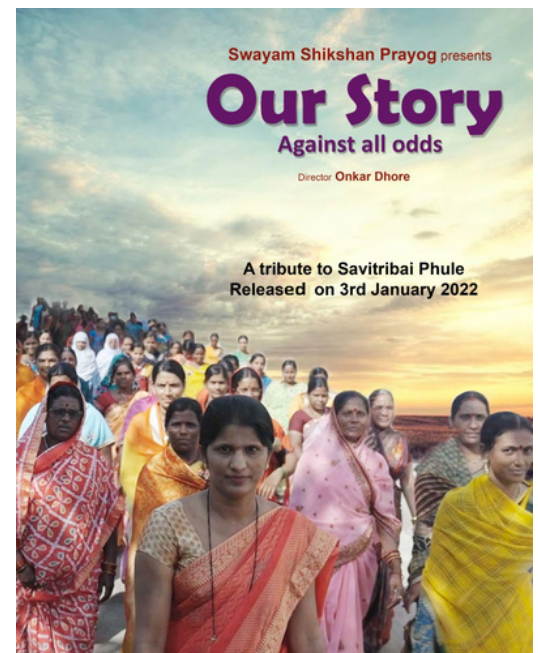
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**[www.swayamshikshanprayog.org](http://www.swayamshikshanprayog.org)**

## Aamchi Goshta' - Our Story

SSP launched on a visual depiction of the journey of several women through small films released on YouTube.

'Aamchi Goshta' - 'Our Story- Against All Odds' a short film received good response from the global audience on SSP YouTube channel. Link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MuGVFzEGV4>



### Our Partners:

Ashoka Innovators for the Public | Avendus | DASRA | Digital India Corporation | European Union | HSBC | Habitat for Humanity India | Hindustan Unilever Foundation | Huairou Commission & OXFAM Novib | Kamal Udwardia Foundation | Shapoorji Pallonji | MacArthur Foundation | Misereor | NSE Foundation | UMED- Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission | U.S. Department of State | Welthungerhilfe & GIZ | Womanity Foundation