



QUARTERLY UPDATE

October to December 2020

EVOLVING A STRATEGY

SSP has joined the national efforts to empower grassroots women's networks and communities through relief, recovery and building long term resilience to reduce the impact of the COVID crisis. Two decades of SSP's experience in turning "crisis into opportunity" to build community resilience in climate hit drought prone regions has a strong network of women leaders - the "Sakhi Task Force " - that take on leadership roles in their communities. The Sakhi Task Force of 150 women leaders worked actively with local governments for COVID awareness, ensuring health services, distributing ration kits to poor families, and availing jobs for the migrants under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) strengthening the resilience of women in rural areas.

SSP supported by UNICEF is presently working with the Government Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) system to facilitate a district wide COVID intensive, WASH sensitive community preparedness initiative across three districts of Maharashtra in Osmanabad, Solapur and Latur considering the distress due to lack of livelihood and food security. Coordinating with the district authorities (Rural Development Department, Water and Sanitation, MNREGA, Public Distribution System), Panchayats, sarpanches and women leaders in 250 villages to facilitate and ensure implementation of health, hygiene and social protection schemes to address needs of vulnerable groups impacted by COVID Pandemic.

Impact

SSP has facilitated various programs during the COVID situation and reached out to over three lakhs families across 15 districts in Maharashtra, Bihar, Odisha and Kerala in response and recovery initiatives.

SSP in partnership with UNICEF and Hindustan Unilever distributed 3 lakhs soaps for frontline workers & communities in hospitals, municipalities, communities & Gram Panchayats.

Convergence with Local Government

The Sakhi Task Force demonstrated that dialogue and lobbying with local governments are more effective and powerful in crisis situations. Over 150 women leaders from Sakhi Task Force (STF) were in COVID-19 Sahayata Committees formed at Panchayat level in Osmanabad district to ensure smooth flow of actions between government and community. They lobbied with Gram Panchayats to take up village level issues such as cleanliness, institutional quarantine facilities, water availability, PDS distribution, health check-up, COVID testing and health services.



Health and Nutrition

In Nanded, Arogya sakhis assisted and monitored quarantine people households by daily home visits and providing awareness on COVID19 prevention and precaution. Over 7183 women and Families participated in home based awareness care meetings. Online meetings were conducted for giving awareness on 'water conservation and budgeting', 'health and sanitation practices' and training on antenatal care, postnatal care, infant care and vaccination'. Lack of nutrition and changing eating habits cause concerns for women and girls in rural villages. To address this issue, women leaders and farmers from 15 villages of Nanded district organised a Nutrition Festival with Health centers and front-line workers.



World Toilet Day celebration: 19th November celebrates world toilets days and raises awareness of billions of people living without access to safely managed sanitation. During pandemic times, there is no better cure than prevention. Arogya Sakhis celebrated the day by generating awareness, sharing information to create behavior change in bridging the gap between building toilets and their proper use and promoting health and hygiene practices in more than 50 villages in Osmanabad district



Women-led Climate resilient farming (WCRF) & Agri-Enterprises

Food security: Women farmers from remote villages in Nanded, Osmanabad and latur have demonstrated that shifting from cash crops to food crops has multiple yields - nutritious food, viable farming and incomes all year round. 300 women farmers have converted about 300 acres (1 acre each) of their land into 'Sakhi Anna Suraksha Sheti' or 'One Acre Model' farming. From half acre to One acre, they have introduced bio fertilisers and bio manure to reduce the input cost, save money and ensure availability of healthy and nutritious food at the local level.

As a part of new initiative, 600 Sakhi Farmers were trained on climate resilient farming practices on Birds Eye Chilli, Tubers, Chinese Potato, Mushroom and Paddy cultivation for Sakhi Farmers in Kerala. 60 Sakhi Farmers from Wayanad took 25 acres of land on lease to cultivate traditional aromatic rice varieties of Gandhakasala and Jeerakasala using the organic method. Every employed woman receives Rs 8288 as wages from 28 days of MNREGA work (Rs 296 per day)

Vegetable Cooler paves a path of prosperity

In partnership with SSP, Sakhi Unique Rural Enterprise (SURE) and RuKart Technologies 'Sabji Cooler' - a solution to help farmers keep their produce fresh for longer - paves way in Maharashtra where lack of cold storages is a major hurdle for farmers, the initiative promises to be a game changer for women who are set to allot more of their land area to crop diversification and take vegetable farming in a big way. The innovation of Sabji Cooler brings a significant change in the style of farming and helps them earn more. It is a chamber-like storage unit made of brick, runs on evaporative cooling applications without electricity. One such cooler is capable of storing about 100 kg vegetables/ fruits for 3 to 4 days. Link to the Janshakti news - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gdWEykYFxi



VOICE OF WOMEN



SHAILAJA NARWADE

As an experienced leader and farmer, she worked with her group and Gram Panchayat to explore ways in supporting migrants and poor families. After negotiation with a local solar power company, they managed to get daily jobs for 40 migrants and rich farmers offered work for 30 migrants in their farm land.

SANTOSHI SURVASE

Santoshi one of the Krishi Samvad Sahayak who adopted the “Women-led Food Secure Agriculture Model” and motivated 60 women farmers in her village to adopt the model. She did house-to-house visits for over 250 families identified 35 highly vulnerable families in her village and supported them to get ration kits. With the help of her group members, she collected 500 kg grains and pulses worth Rs. 20,000/- and distributed 50 kgs of vegetables free of cost to villagers. Being a flour mill owner, she allotted these services free and offered goods on credit to the poor.



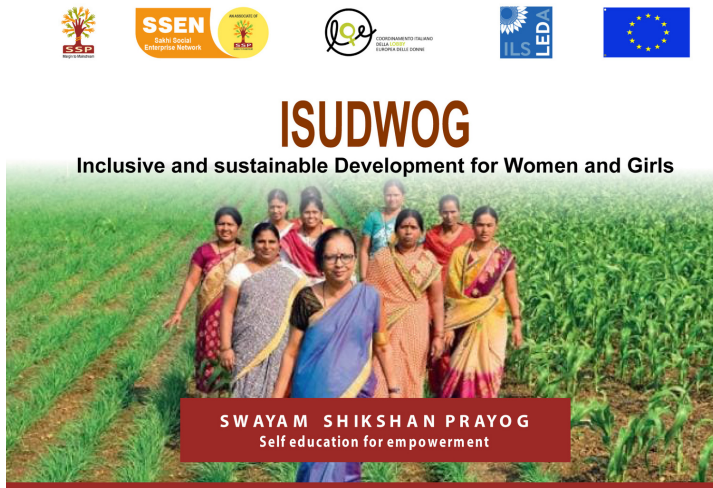
KOMAL PAWAR

Komal managed to list priority issues –ration cards, economic distress, lack of job cards and adequate work while involving key stakeholders - Gram Panchayat and Gram Sevaks to discuss solutions, and got sanction of the MNREGA work. She helped villagers submit job demand forms and enabled 20 women to get jobs under MNREGA earning INR 200/day. "The current crisis is one for which neither the Government and citizens are fully equipped, nor know enough about it. Preparing and empowering the rural communities will go a long way in this fight",



EVENTS

SSP partnered with European Union launched the project "Inclusive & Sustainable Development for Women and Girls (ISUDWOG)" for the Osmanabad district



Alliance for Sustainable & Inclusive Development of Osmanabad (ASIDO) and District Support Service (DSS) established between CBOs and local public and private. The project aim to bring 5,400 women entrepreneurs & women farmers into the mainstream by supporting them at every stage of the businesses from production to marketing through value-added chains such as pulses, dairy, vegetables and goat rearing and also supporting their producer groups and cluster enterprises and leading them towards sustainable development. Links to project website & DD Sahyadri TV News: <https://isudwog.swayamshikshanprayog.org>, <https://youtu.be/vWiKixwy7fg>

Mundar Redevelopment Project

SSP in partnership with Habitat For Humanity India and HSBC, constructed 26 new houses, done repair & maintenance of 129 houses, constructed 40 new sanitation units and all homes with solar lanterns. Rebuilding lives and livelihoods for the 236 families and leadership development of women; 27 trained women masons. Watch highlights of Mundar Rehabilitation project at <https://youtu.be/aA7DDyPBfml>



Webinar with Consulate of Sweden



Webinar hosted by UNICEF Maharashtra and Consulate General of Sweden, Mumbai on 19th November 2020. The audience witnessed the great efforts put forth by young children to contribute to climate change and to save our planet earth. As a part of panel discussion, Ms. Prema Gopalan talked about women leading as change makers, they have convinced their family about sustainable one acre farming and by producing seeds by growing food grains and vegetables.

To know more write to us at: sspindia1@gmail.com
www.swayamshikshanprayog.org