

# QUARTERLY UPDATE

## Swayam Shikshan Prayog

April - June 2023

We are proud to release SSP's first Quarterly Newsletter for this financial year. Stay updated with our work and achievements in promoting women's empowerment and leadership through initiatives in entrepreneurship, clean energy, climate resilient agriculture and health and nutrition. Thanking all our donors and well-wishers for supporting us, and enabling us to continue bringing change from the ground-up.

## Highlights of the Quarter

### The National Level Workshop on Value Chain Strategies

"The concept of value chain is still alien to many educated people, which these women from SSP are striving to develop in the rural areas", remarked Mr. Dashrath Tambhale, Director of Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA), while appreciating the efforts that the women are taking to develop different value chains in the aspirational district of Osmanabad. Mr. Dashrath Tambhale was the Chief Guest for the National Level Workshop on Value Chain Strategies organized by SSP on 21st of June, 2023 at Pune with the support of the European Union.

The panel discussions brought out the many possibilities and partnerships for the sustainability of the value chains and was enriched with the participation from many eminent personalities such as Mr. Kailas Mote from the Maharashtra State Horticulture & Medicinal Plant Board, Pune, Mr. Anjani Kumar Srivastava, General Manager at SIDBI Pune RO, Mr. Yogendra Shelkey, SBI Pune, Mr. Rakesh Ganguli, UN Women India, Mr. Parthasarathy Thiruvankadam, CEO, Skill Green Global, Ms. Ratna Mathur, Ms. Chaitali Kamble, Development Professional, Dr. Anil Kavtekar, Head Dairy Development at Schreiber Foods Pune, Mr. Amit Asnikar, Founder, Grammunati.net, Mr. Mukund Deogaonkar, Co-Founder, Afferent Wearable Tech amongst the many.



## Women in Renewable Energy: A Dialogue on Policy, Technology, Skilling and Finance

SSP's grassroots women leaders Ms. Vandana Khandekar and Ms. Laxmi More from Solapur and Osmanabad Districts, Maharashtra respectively, were invited to speak at the event titled "Women in Renewable Energy: A Dialogue on Policy, Technology, Skilling and Finance", organized by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India on the occasion of World Environment Day on June 5, 2023.

Ms. Vandana Khandekar was one of the panel speakers at the session on "The LiFE of Women: Lessons from the Ground and the Future of the LiFE Movement". She says "Under the Women-led Climate Resilient Farming model, we grow locally demanded agri products in each village, led by women. Social and cultural barriers needed to be overcome to get productive village in over 10 villages now, with 500+ women." "For biogas, the advantages include cost effectiveness, lowered health effects and costs as well as cleaner energy. We are happy to be able to work with women to scale DRE technologies effectively".



## Advancing Women's Leadership in Climate Action program organised by USAID

Two of SSP's leaders, Rajashri Doranhali and Jyotsana Mane from Solapur and Latur Districts of Maharashtra respectively, were invited to participate in the South Asia Regional Conference as part of USAID's Advancing Women's Leadership in Climate Action program on May 11th, 2023 in New Delhi, India. The South Asia Regional Conference aimed to initiate discussions on the importance of gender mainstreaming in the South Asia energy sector, and promote women leaders from the energy sector. It brought together senior Government officials, business leaders, academia, private sector and experts from India, the U.S., and South Asia to discuss the challenges of gender mainstreaming in the energy sector and role of gender diversity in advancing a climate resilient energy system.





## Program Updates

### Inclusive and Sustainable Development for Women and Girls (ISUDWOG)

The European Union supported project - Inclusive and Sustainable Development for Women and Girls (ISUDWOG) is being implemented in the Osmanabad district of Maharashtra. Objective of the project is to strengthen the ability of civil society and its organizations to be influential in socioeconomic development, through participatory bottom-up processes, strategies, and actions for the main benefit of women. Achievements in the last quarter include:

- Conducted a two-day basic training session on business start-ups, with the active participation of 200 grassroots women
- Organised a four-day workshop with 330 participants, discussing insights emerging from their work and potential solutions to address challenges faced during value chain development.
- Organised a national-level workshop to discuss strategies and the development of four rural value chains (Goat, Milk, Vegetable, and Pulses). This served as a crucial platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration between the 125 participants.
- Organised multiple two-day refresher workshops focused on scaling up farmers' capacities in organic farming and climate resilience. The workshop was conducted in three blocks of Osmanabad, with 240 women farmers participating.
- Establishment of 17 milk collection units, managed by 10 women per unit, signifying the growth in the rural milk value chain.
- In an effort to foster economic and financial growth within the value chain, SSP has supported women entrepreneurs in procuring two machines: a Khowa (milk product) making machine and a Chilli powder (spice) grinding machine in Osmanabad. These machines are able to produce a sufficient quantity of value-added products, with raw material provided by 50 women farmers. This is contributing to the expansion of the value chain.
- Through the efforts of village and block leaders, convergence activities with the government and financial institutions were ongoing. This resulted in government support for 74 rural women amounting to a total of 5,16,500 rupees. Additionally, 27 women farmers successfully obtained loan approvals from banks, securing a cumulative loan amount of up to 13,00,000 rupees.



District level value chain strategic workshop with ASIDO, DSS & value chain network members



## **Project on Creation of Women Entrepreneurs and providing handholding support**

This project aims to create 500 women entrepreneurs, in addition to providing handholding support to 300 micro-entrepreneurs and 24 super-entrepreneurs in Osmanabad and Tuljapur blocks of Osmanabad district, with the support of Sterling Investment Corporation Pvt Ltd. Major achievements of the last quarter include:

- Conducted Entrepreneurship Development training with 270 women entrepreneurs in Osmanabad and Tuljapur blocks. As a result, 264 women have started their own small-scale businesses in the farm, non- farm and agri-allied sector.
- Providing hand-holding support to 42 women entrepreneurs, by linking them with banks and government schemes to access finance, inputs and equipment to establish or expand their businesses,

## **Building a Resilience Shield: Rural Women Lead Economic Recovery**

The project supported by SJNEFFL focuses on supporting 1500+ women entrepreneurs engaged in farm and nonfarm activities, provide training on entrepreneurship, digital literacy, examine their business model in the light of current economic conditions and on linkages to enable women to strengthen their businesses.

- Organised two-day training sessions for 800 women entrepreneurs, to help them revise critical aspects of business operations and foster scaling-up and growth.
- Organised a three-day domain-specific training on handmade millets and the dairy business in Solapur, to equip women entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to create and market handmade millet products.
- In response to advocacy with the local government, they have indicated their support to grassroots women entrepreneurs in starting micro-processing units for creation of millet products.

## **Start up Village Entrepreneurship Program (SVEP) in Jalna district**

SSP is implementing the Start Up Village Entrepreneurship Program (SVEP) in partnership with Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission-UMED in Jalna District, Maharashtra. The program aims to create sustainable self employment for women and youths in non-agriculture enterprises. SVEP considers entrepreneurship as the important base of economic growth and development. Highlights from the last quarter include:

- Organised 16 entrepreneurship development rainings in Jalna and Bhokardan Blocks. These training sessions were attended by 372 women entrepreneurs. As of June 2023, a total of 97 and 108 new enterprises have been established in Jalna and Bhokardan Block respectively.
- Organised six refresher trainings for CRPEP's (Community Resource Person for Enterprise Promotion) and Trainers in both Jalna and Bhokardan Blocks.
- Established Block Resource Centers in Jalna and Bhokardan Block, titled Pragatshil Mahila Taluka Sansadhan Kendra, Jalna and Sanskruti Mahila Taluka Sansadhan Kendra, Bhokardan. These centers, run by have approved 258 business plans submitted by women entrepreneurs in the two blocks.

## Micro Enterprise Promotion Program (MEPP) to set up 500 enterprises in Osmanabad district

The MEPP Programme supported by SIDBI focuses on promotion and facilitation of 500 women entrepreneurs with the stakeholders in the Osmanabad district for credit Linkage with Nationalized Banks, DIC etc. in the project period of April 2023 to March 2026.

- The start-up of the Community Resource Centre was the main highlight of this first stage of the MEPP Programme. The Community Resource Centre was officially introduced on May 25, 2023, as part of the Inauguration Programme. Mr. Ramakant Rahate (Deputy General Manager, SIDBI Pune RO) did the inauguration. Ms. Laxmi Waghmare (SDE, SIDBI, Pune RO) Mr. Pravin Dongare (Chief Manager, SBI Regional Office), Mr. Avadhut Pol (Rural Self Employment Training Centre, State Bank of India), and Mr. Pandurang More (DIC, Osmanabad) were honored guests for the inaugural programme.
- Awareness campaigns on the program were conducted in 8 villages, reaching 90 grassroots women. Out of these, 45 women have started their paperwork applying for loans from SIDBI for the purpose of their enterprises.. An additional 24 rural women have submitted files with CIBIL for Checking and Verification of their application forms..
- Bank Linkage Campaign: The project team visited Osmanabad and Tuljapur Block Centre and the District Industry Centre, the State Bank of India, Canara Bank and the Rural Self Employment Training Centre of the State Bank of India, Food and Civil Supplies Department for bank linkage.
- Women were certified as part of SSP's Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP), and became eligible for Mudra Loan, PMEGP, and CMEGP programmes. A cohort of 35 women was created, who registered for the MEPP.
- The RSECTI (Rural Self Employment Training Institute) organized a domain training programme for 35 women entrepreneurs in Masale and Papad Udyog, located in Osmanabad district. 35 grassroots women entrepreneurs completed this training, enabling them to access loans.



Inauguration of Micro Enterprise Promotion Program supported by SIDBI in Osmanabad





## **Strengthening Grassroots Women Entrepreneurs through Building a Business Development Ecosystem**

This project is being implemented in Solapur and Latur districts in Maharashtra supported by HSBC, India.

- 2,000 women farmers from the Solapur & Latur Districts of Maharashtra were mobilized through awareness raising and orientation sessions on entrepreneurship and the scope of agri-allied businesses.
- 430 women farmers were trained with 2 days of basic entrepreneurship training which covered 47 villages till now.
- 100 Leaders (CRP) have been appointed from 100 villages to support women with advanced entrepreneurship training.
- To handhold and mentor women who were previously trained, we appoint 40 mentors and 20 trainers to complete the training session in the villages.
- Created a network of 840 customers to support women in their enterprises.

## **Scaling up access to innovative energy efficient solutions for rural populations in India through a women led micro-entrepreneurship model (SAREP)**

This project is being implemented by SSP in five districts of Maharashtra and Bihar, and supported by South Asia Regional Energy Partnership (SAREP) Fund from USAID. Through this initiative, Women micro-entrepreneurs or Swayam Sakhis are trained and supported in promoting clean energy products through a self-entrepreneurship model.

- SSP trained 171 Swayam Sakhis on bio-digester products; 144 Sakhis on the Subjee-Cooler technology and 30 Sakhis on digital literacy.
- Swayam Sakhis organised meetings in 764 villages in Maharashtra with farmers, to promote the benefits of clean-energy products like bio-digesters and Subjee-coolers.
- Organised a demonstration cum exposure visit to show farmers how the Subjee-Cooler functions and its uses.
- Organised a meeting with the District Collector of Osmanabad, to orient them on the Subjee Cooler, with the aim of including the product in government schemes for subsidy. As a result, the product has been connected to the District Industries Centre (DIC) scheme, giving farmers a subsidy of 35% on the purchase of Subjee Coolers.
- The RTI/USAID team visited Solapur field sites and viewed the bio-digester and Subjee-Cooler products and implementation sites. Through their interaction with the women farmers.
- Using new marketing and promotion techniques, like mobile vans that move among villages.
- In Nalanda and Gaya districts, 486 villages were covered by the mobile vans for clean energy product promotion.
- 52 grassroots women from the Sakhi NGO in Nevada, Bihar visited two villages in Nalanda district to understand and view the biogas and Subjee cooler installation.
- Created and distributed IEC material in the form of leaflets, pamphlets and success stories of Oorja Sakhis, which explained the benefits of affordable clean energy solutions.

## Empowering Women Owned Small & Micro Businesses (SMBs) through Technology (ICT) in Latur district

The project supported by Nasscom Foundation focuses on empowering rural women-owned businesses with digital, financial and entrepreneurship skills, thus enabling them to scale up their livelihood enterprises. In the last quarter, the focus was on Digital Upskilling of 325 rural women entrepreneurs from agri & agri-allied subsectors in Latur District. The major achievements of the last quarter are:

- Data collection, identification and mobilization of agri & agri allied entrepreneurs in 10 blocks with 466 women beneficiaries.
- Selection of 20 beneficiaries from the previous project phase in 4 Blocks. 40 women agri-entrepreneurs were identified and trained as role models.
- Organised Project Orientation meetings with beneficiaries from 10 Blocks.

## Marathwada District Transformation Model

The three-year project 'Marathwada District Transformation Model' supported by Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) focuses on Implementing a Sustainable Water for Agriculture model to improve water security and wellbeing of one lakh women farmers across 6 blocks of the drought prone Osmanabad district of Maharashtra

- 30,000 farmers were trained on one acre farming model and other climate resilient best practices in Osmanabad. As a result, these women farmers have adopted techniques like seed germination tests, bio-seed treatments and other improved sowing methods.
- 125 sakhis are on board and digital support & training are given.
- Sakhis or grassroots women leaders have been invited and participated in GramSabha and various government programs at the Gram Panchayat and local government level.
- Conducted awareness raising meetings on government scheme convergence and opportunities to apply for relevant schemes in the project villages, which were attended by many women farmers.
- Distributed seed kits to 2,000 women to promote the cultivation of vegetables and millets in the project villages.
- Establishment of 750 'demo farms' to illustrate best agricultural practices using the one-acre model have been created in villages.
- Carried out awareness raising and orientation sessions about water conservation techniques in 100 villages of Osmanabad district
- Women farmers began to create their own bio-pesticides and bio-fertilizers to use in their farms as part of the one acre farming model implementation.



Marathwada District Transformation Model Project Team

## **Women-led Resilient Development and Leadership: Improvement of the socio-economic conditions of women from poor households**

This Misereor supported project focuses on community driven resilience and change that is women-led. The project envisions women-driven change in communities, markets and local governance systems, and aims to reach 50,000 farmers across 500 villages in 10 blocks in Latur, Solapur, Osmanabad, Nanded and Jalna districts of Maharashtra.

The major achievements in the last quarter include:

- 1,499 women received land titles in their name, as a result of advocacy and lobbying by rural women leaders with their families and the community at large.
- 2,040 women farmers received a total of Rs. 15,898,230 as support from various government schemes on agriculture, health, and agri-allied business and loans from banks.
- 994 women participated in government programs and deliberated on better planning and utilization of available resources.
- 1,200 women attended leadership trainings at cluster level
- 28,002 women farmers are trained on one acre model farming practices
- 383 women participated in the three block level workshops organized by SSP

## **Promoting community resilience and growth: Health & Nutrition Project**

The “Health and Nutrition Project” is being implemented by SSP with the support of Kamal Udwadia Foundation in Loha block of Nanded district, Maharashtra. The project has generated good learnings and reflections during the activities conducted in the last quarter:

- Conducted on-site demos of vermicompost beds creation of organic input such as bio-pesticides, bio-fertilizers and bio-insecticides. These sessions helped develop the capacities and skills of village level Aarogya Sakhis, for better management of the one acre farming model that assures food security and zero cost farming.
- Conducted entrepreneurship training and demonstration of phenyl, detergent, liquid dish wash and pitambari to Aarogya Sakhis proved to be an interesting activity for them.
- Collaborated with the local government for organising village level health, nutrition and sanitation workshops, as well as block-level dialogues and an awareness rally on World Environment Day.
- Twenty-five Aarogya Sakhis from SSP were facilitated by their local Gram Panchayats, receiving the ‘Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Puraskar’.



Training for women farmers on one-acre model farming at Nanded



## FAIR FOR ALL program in Maharashtra and Kerala

The Fair for All program supported by Huairou Commission focuses on 7,500 farmers benefit from the project across Wayanad district in Kerala and Osmanabad district in Maharashtra through the project focusing on a strengthened civil society which is capable of creating space and mobilizing people across geographies to demand and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable trade and value chains that respect human rights, protect the environment and promote women's economic empowerment.

- 1,675 women farmers from Maharashtra and Kerala were mobilized through awareness raising efforts on women's rights, land rights, and available government schemes.
- 485 women farmers were trained in basic business and market.
- 645 women who were already engaged in operating agri-allied activities, participated in advanced entrepreneurship training in agricultural value chain. Thesetwo-day trainings consisted of both classroom and practical teaching through field visits, and focused on the topics of
- Organised a block-level dialogue workshop in Bhoom Block of Maharashtra, that was attended by grassroots women leaders and the representatives of the ATMA & PoCRA department to explore opportunities for accessing government schemes in agriculture. .
- Sarayi FPO, operating in Bhoom block in Maharashtra focusing on the pulse value chain, were able to successfully lease land for collective cultivation of millets. They also used improved crop management and preparation techniques, including soil and germination testing to select the best crops for the area.
- Conducted capacity building training on product identification, standardization and market with 150 Kera Vriksha FPO members in Wayanad, Kerala.
- Conducted Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions with 30 trainers on SSP's one acre farming model, with the objective of scaling up to new communities in Wayanad.
- As a result of training and support by SSP's grassroots leaders, 25 women farmers started implementing the one-acre farming model for vegetable cultivation in Kerala, improving health, nutrition and their income.
- SSP identified active traditional seed protectors and mobilised 8 varieties of traditional seeds and distributed them to 25 families in Wayanad, Kerala.



Training for women farmers at Wayanad district

## Gender Transformative Program

SSP in partnership with UNICEF, MAVA and CORO India are implementing the Gender Transformative Programme in Osmanabad district, which seeks to reduce the gender disparities in Osmanabad by engaging with students and teachers of upper primary and secondary schools. SSP has organised sessions with students and teachers of 20 schools in the district. The gender sensitivity trainings were participated by School Management Committee members and school staff. The focus of these trainings were to reduce the gender disparities among the adolescents, youth and women.

## Project SENU (Securing Nutrition Enhancing Resilience) for improved food and nutrition security and practices of effective community nutrition education

The SENU (renamed as POSHANAM) project supported by Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and GIZ is being implemented by SSP in the Washim district of Maharashtra. The project focuses on providing and enhancing nutrition and health status of children, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescents girls of 15 to 49 years age group and also on promoting the importance of 10 food groups through sensitive nutrition gardening. Updates from the last quarter include:

- Conducted orientation workshops on nutrition and health with ICDS supervisors
- Conducted Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions with 714 Anganwadi Workers from 4 blocks of Washim District in the last quarter.
- SSP staff and grassroots women leaders from participated in a Capacity Building & Leadership Development Workshop at Bhopal, organised by Welthungerhilfe.
- Project staff and grassroots women leaders from Washim participated in a state-level workshop in Navi Mumbai, organised by WHH on the programs implemented by them with the NOGs. This event was attended by ICDS Commissioner IAS Rubal Agrawal, ICDS department members, WHH team members, GIZ team members, DSC team members and the SSP Washim team.
- A team of global heads, from GIZ, Germany visited Poha village in Washik district to attend the N-PLA Community meeting organised by the ICDS department and Anganwadi workers under SENU Poshanam Project. The meeting gave project partners an opportunity to understand how SSP is implementing the SENU Project in Washim and empowering AWWs on the N-PLA method.
- Organized 34 N-PLA R1 Meetings and Trainings across Washim District, which were attended by 1088 Aanganwadi workers.
- The SSP Washim team organised a one-day Workshop for the ICDS Supervisors at Tuljapur in Karnaja block, which was attended by 17 ICDS supervisors.
- In Washim district, the SSP and WHH Project developed a strong network and relationship with the district and block level ICDS Department through participation in various joint programs, meetings and workshops.
- WHH organised a 3 days SAKSHAM leadership and team building workshop in April, 2023 in Bhopal, for partners from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. This event was attended by the project manager and team from SSP.





## Stories from the Field

### Beginning One Acre Farming in Wayanad

Swayam Shikshan Prayog's globally recognized Women-led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF) Model is gaining acceptance amongst tribal women from Wayanad, Kerala. SSP has been working with locally created Sakhi Farmer Groups in Wayanad to transform high-input chemical dependent monoculture farming to sustainable farming practices that benefit the land, environment, health and nutrition.

Sreejisha belongs to the Sakhi Farmers Group consists of eleven women from the Kurichiya tribe, who traditionally practice sustainable farming through the use of indigenous seeds and poly culture practices. The Sakhi Farmers Group led by Sreejisha in Kallattippoyil leased a 2-acre plot close to their village and began cultivating vegetables like cabbage, beans, carrot, cauliflower, beetroot, chilly etc on a collective basis. Today, the group sells their produce to the Keravriksha FPO and also in the local market, dividing the income between each of the group members. Since starting this collective initiative, Srijisha is earning an additional income of INR 1,000/- per month.



### A Mercurial Leader Embracing New Technologies

Poonam Sinha is a leader and entrepreneur from Bhasingapur village in the Parwalpur Block of Nalanda District, Bihar. In 2023, Poonam didi was one of the women leaders who was selected to receive the 'Subjee-Cooler' and demonstrate its use in the community. The 'Subjee-Cooler' is an innovative device that can be used to store agricultural produce and keep it fresh by using water for cooling purposes. Since Poonam didi received the 'Subjee-Cooler', she expanded to selling fruits and vegetables in her grocery store as well. With the support of her son, she stocks up on 4-5 different vegetables every alternate day from the wholesale market and sells its at retail rates in her own shop. As a result of this endeavour, she is earning an additional income of Rs.1500 per day from selling fruits and vegetables. She continues to mentor new Sakhi's and guide them in expanding their own clean-energy businesses.



## Emerging as a Business-savvy Entrepreneur

Sanjeevani Kamble, from Bolegaon Village in Shirar-Anantpal Block of Latur District has emerged as a business-savvy entrepreneur after attending SSP's Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) training. She has grown to become an empowered leader who is guiding and mobilising other women from her village to begin their own entrepreneurship journey. In 2022, Sanjeevani tai attended a six-day integrated training that focused on entrepreneurship development, creating a supportive business ecosystem, WCRF model of farming, identifying business opportunities, promotion, marketing and customer service. In the last six-months, she has been able to increase her monthly income by Rs.5000 as a result of her diverse businesses.

Due to Sanjeevani tai's enthusiasm and work, she was also selected to be a local village leader. Through her efforts, 16 other women from her village started small enterprises such as tailoring, papad making, poultry, dairy etc. Today, Sanjeevani tai identifies herself as an empowered and self-confident woman leader, who is able to negotiate with wholesalers in the large Latur market for purchasing goods, and has become familiar with digital banking and payment systems over time.

## Standing out as an Inspiration

Bhagyashree Yadav, a woman leader and entrepreneur from Borfal village in Ausa Block of Latur District stands out as an inspiration to others, with her path breaking work in building women's leadership and supporting them to become financially independent. Bhagyashree tai first joined SSP in early-2022, working as a leader in her village to promote climate-smart agriculture and women's entrepreneurship. Having attended SSP's Entrepreneurship Development Program herself, she enrolled herself in a cosmetology course and started her own beauty parlour business. At the same time, she also began to implement the one-acre farming model on her farm, and started selling organic vegetables in the village. Both these businesses were a success, with Bhagyashree tai earning around Rs. 20,000 per month on average.

As a member of the local Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO), Swayam Sakhi Shetmal Producer Company, she was also eligible to start a Laxmi Dairy in her village. In February 2023, Bhagyashree tai became the proprietor of her own Laxmi Dairy, the first women-led dairy in her village. Today over 70 farmers are linked to her Laxmi Dairy, and she collects around 350 litres of milk per day, earning around Rs.25,000 per month from this enterprise.



## In the Media

### SSP's Work Featured on Sahyadri Doordarshan

SSP's work was featured in an episode of Raitcha Darbar on the Sahyadri Doordarshan channel on April 17, 2023. The episode showcases our efforts in promoting sustainable, climate-smart agriculture using water conservation techniques and including rural women leaders in water governance at the local level through improved watershed management techniques. This work is being carried out as part of SSP's Marathwada District Transformation Model, supported by HUF in Osmanabad District of Maharashtra.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/1lejB5lXKF0?feature=share>

### SSP has partnered with Dhvani Rural Information System

Dhwani used the LinkedIn platform to announce that they have partnered with Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) to build a partnership ecosystem that enables grassroots women's networks to access skills training, financial, and digital literacy, and technology and marketing platforms. Some of their notable programs include - climate resilient farming, promoting livelihoods and women-led FPOs, fostering women's leadership and much more. SSP will be using our platform, mGrant, to track and monitor their projects, including beneficiary tracking and program-level impact measurement.

Link: [bit.ly/3K9s2pM](https://bit.ly/3K9s2pM)

### Making agriculture viable for small and marginal farmers

An article published by IDR looks at how organisations such as Swayam Shikshan Prayog - SSP and Pradan are demonstrating that smallholder farming can be made viable through simple and consistent innovation.

Link: <https://idronline.org/article/agriculture/making-agriculture-viable-for-small-and-marginal-farmers/>





## **Channeling women's leadership and entrepreneurship by SSP in partnership with Ashoka**

SSP has been working on empowering rural women in the drought-prone regions of Marathwada, Maharashtra for over 25 years. Our focus has been on building supportive ecosystems within which women build their leadership capacities and become financially independent through the development of rural agricultural value chains.

Check out the video below, which shows how rural women are transforming from homemakers and agricultural labourers into businesswomen that run their own dairy and vegetable enterprises, as well as leading Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) that benefit the farming community.

Link: <https://youtu.be/VjuKddn21AM>

### **Climate change is not gender-neutral**

SSP was featured in an article discussing how the impact of climate change disproportionately affect women. Read the full article here: <https://bit.ly/3Omqw55>

"The good news is, while women are especially vulnerable to the climate crisis, they can act as powerful agents of change. Women possess unique knowledge and experience, particularly at the local level. A fine example is the work done by late Prema Gopalan's organisation Swayam Shikshan Prayog in the state of Maharashtra, that is helping small and marginal women farmers to transition from cash to food crops and promoting more diversified and climate-resilient livelihoods through farm-allied businesses."



### **Zero to Hero - Godavari Dange**

Godavari Dange, one of our trailblazing grassroots women leaders has been featured in the regional newspaper Maharashtra Times. At a young age, Godavari emerged as a powerful leader and changemaker in Osmanabad District, Maharashtra with the support of SSP. Today, she guides other rural women in the Marathwada region on leadership development, climate resilience and economic empowerment. She has also represented SSP and other grassroots women at the local, national and international level in various conferences and policy fora.

Read the full article, which highlights Godavari's journey over the past 20 years, here: <https://bit.ly/43Gjai5>



## Lessons on making livelihoods resilient

Based on insights from a study on building community resilience in a post-pandemic world, IDR looks at three key strategies for nonprofits in the livelihoods sector - including an example for SSP's work. Link: <https://bit.ly/3q1O9aE>

"For example, Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) – a nonprofit that supports women entrepreneurs in areas such as agriculture, health, and sanitation—has developed and strengthened a vast rural network of women’s collectives, women-led enterprises, and farmer producer organisations since its inception. Their relationship with women leaders on the ground enabled them to address operational challenges during the pandemic, as these women leaders helped them in mobilising village stakeholders such as anganwadi workers and ASHA workers, gram panchayats, and farmers to respond to the crisis."

## SSP Participated in a 'Samvaad' on MGNREGS

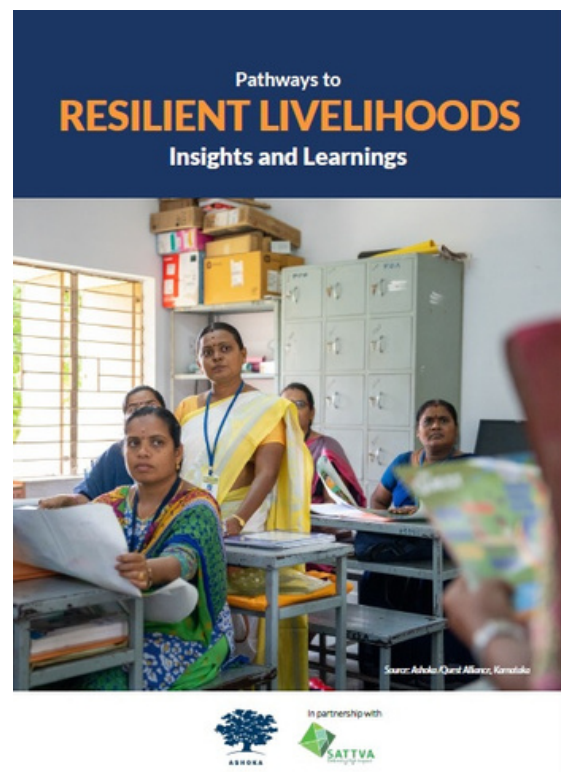
SSP participated in a “Samvaad” or dialogue with other civil society organisations on the “good governance initiatives” that the government says it has been taken under the rural job guarantee scheme. Among civil society organisations invited for the meeting were Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), Swadesh Foundation, DHAN Foundation, Reliance Foundation, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, and Transforming Rural India Foundation

Read the full article here: <https://bit.ly/3Q4osRu>

## Post covid-19 livelihoods landscape

SSP's programs were featured in a report published by Ashoka Livelihoods, illustrating how organizations stayed afloat during the Covid-19 pandemic despite the myriad challenges before them. Spread across three segments - value chain strengthening, employability and microenterprise development, the findings encompass desk-review and key informant interviews with Ashoka Fellows, experts, and industry leaders. Going beyond the operational models of these organisation, the study underpins the culture followed by the institutions that were able to sustain communities even in the face of crisis and explores the power of networks, infrastructure, and ecosystems towards architecting equitable livelihoods.

Read the full report here: <https://www.ashoka.org/en-in/files/livelihoods-landscape-study-june-2023pdf>



## IDR Podcast - 'On the Contrary'

Naseem Shaikh, Associate Director of Programs at SSP, was interviewed as part of the IDR Podcast - 'On the Contrary'. This episode, titled 'What will the future of farming in India look like?', uncovers India's farming landscape to envision a more sustainable future for agriculture and farmers in the country.

Listen to the full podcast here: <https://idronline.podlink.to/on-the-contrary?>

ON THE CONTRARY PODCAST

EP 5 | What will the future of farming in India look like?

“

Wherever we work, we have noticed that women undertake about 80 percent of all farming activities. Yet they remain invisible.

NASEEM SHAIKH

idr

## Women's Economic Self Reliance in Climate Change Adaptation

Upmanyu Patil, Director of Programs at SSP, speaks about 'Women's Economic Self Reliance in Climate Change Adaptation' in an interview featured in the Marathi newspaper Maharashtra Times on June 8, 2023. The article discusses SSP's journey over the past 25 years, starting with its work in Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery to now focusing on Climate Adaptation and development of rural Value Chains that promote financial independence in women of Marathwada, Maharashtra.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/swayamshikshanprayog.org/posts/575780548050367?>

## Events

### Gender Transformation Programme

SSP has been partnering with UNICEF to implement the Gender Transformation Program in the Osmanabad Block of Osmanabad District in Maharashtra. As part of this program, 13 rural women leaders from SSP have been carrying out awareness raising and reflection sessions with adolescent girls and boys from 10 schools in Osmanabad on the topic of gender equality. SSP has organised the Gender Fair successfully in two villages of Osmanabad, Maharashtra.

On April 24th the Gender Fair took place in Ansurda village with over 750 people in attendance, while on April 26th it was organised in Keshegaon village with the participation of over 700 people. Both programs were attended by community members including men, women, children, local Gram Panchayat and community leaders and local government officials. The events were very successful, promoting deep discussions and reflections amongst the various participants, particularly due to the program's practical and interactive nature.

## Felicitating Women Entrepreneurs in Osmanabad, Maharashtra under the SAREP Program

All roads led to Osmanabad, Maharashtra where a mega event of honoring 475 Swayam Sakhis or women micro entrepreneurs was organised. This Prize Distribution Event on May 29, 2023 was organised by SSP to commemorate women micro entrepreneurs who have been working tirelessly on-field in 3 districts of Maharashtra, namely Latur, Osmanabad and Solapur. The event was attended by the entire SSP project staff and Osmanabad District Industries Centre officers and other representatives.

During the event, Swayam Sakhis like Annapurna Thosar narrated their experiences on becoming the biggest proponents of biogas. "Earlier firewood and LPG were used in the villages but now we have convinced women to adopt biogas for both agriculture and cooking and will continue to do so", she shared.



## Micro Enterprises Promotion Program organised by SIDBI

SIDBI and SSP partnered to organise a Micro Enterprises Promotion Program in Osmanabad, as part of the MEPP Program, which envisages to promote maximum enterprises by facilitating credit linkage with Banks / RRBs / SFBS / NBFCs etc. Under this programme, SSP will organize awareness campaigns and envisage mobilizing handholding, skilling of the new aspirants seeking to start micro enterprises in rural areas.

## Community Awareness Rally on World Environment Day

On the occasion of World Environment Day, the 'Janjagruti' or 'Community Awareness Raising' Rally was organized in 30 villages in Loha block of Nanded District, Maharashtra, where over 1,500 people participated to develop awareness among rural communities about the importance of environment conservation. The campaign led by Arogya Sakhis partnered with their local Gram Panchayats to spread awareness on the importance of organic farming, nutrition, sanitation and health and reducing the use of plastic.



## Celebrating World Environment Day in Wayanad, Kerala

SSP's Wayanad team observed World Environment Day. Sakhi Farmers from Wayanad, Kerala, launched a new initiative to promote kitchen nutrition garden as part of Women-led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF) model developed by SSP for preserving the environment for a sustainable future. Members of the Sakhi Farmers Group from Madakunnu, Gandhikunnu, Kallatti, and Kallatti Poyil observed the day with a focus on the importance of protecting nature and living a good life that respects the environment.



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## Peer Learning Exchange

On June 17, 2023, a team of staff members and community leaders from Pragati Koraput, an Orissa based NGO that works on conservation of natural resources and agro-ecological restoration, visited SSP to learn about the Women-led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF) Model and its implementation in Latur District, Maharashtra. The Peer Learning visit took place in Nagarsoga village in AUSA Block of Latur District, where the team visited SSP leader and model farmer Malan Raut's farms to see her climate-smart agricultural practices, fruit orchards and agri-allied enterprises. The visiting community leaders were particularly interested in understanding the viability of FPOs, managing losses and how to create sustainable income streams.



Vincenzo Milio, ILS LEDA Deputy President with the SSP Field team in Osmanabad, Maharashtra

## Inclusive and Sustainable Development for Women Program Field Mission

A field mission of ILS LEDA experts visited Osmanabad District in Maharashtra State, India, as part of the framework of the European Union's ISUDWOG project ("Inclusive and Sustainable Development for Women"). The visit and dialogues were conducted by Vincenzo Milio, the ILS LEDA deputy President, and General Director, supported by the lead partner Swayam Shikshan Prayog. The main output is to identify the priority for the ISUDWOG actions during the next 12 months.

## Workshop on Women in Value Chain

SSP organised a state-level dialogue on March 25, 2023 in Pune, Maharashtra, between government officials at the state and district level, along with 50 rural women who are leading village transformation efforts at the local-level. The event was attended by senior government officials like Mr. Nandkumar, Secretary MGNREGA & Soil Water Conservation; Mr. Nilesh Gughe, Master Trainer at Yashada; Dr. Sagar Dhara, United Nation Environment Program (UNEP) expert; Mr. Shekhar Gaikwad Sugar commissioner and Ex. agriculture & GSDA Commissioner; and Mr. Tambale, Director ATMA.



## Recognition

### Archana Mane is the CII Foundation's Woman Exemplar 2023, Micro Enterprise Category Winner !!

Archana Mane, an entrepreneur and farmer from Ansurda village of Osmanabad district, Maharashtra was awarded CII Foundation's Woman Exemplar 2023 Award in the Micro-Enterprise Category on 24th May, 2023. Archana was felicitated by Smt Smriti Irani, Minister of Women & Child Development and Minority Affairs, Government of India. Archana, along with other finalists for the Woman Exemplar Program, 2023, will engage in a year-long leadership development training organised by CII, to help improve the impact of her work. Archana's dedication, resilience and enthusiasm towards bringing about social change continues to inspire us and other rural women across Marathwada. She has demonstrated SSP's belief that women empowerment leads to local action and community development.

"CII Woman Exemplar Awards highlight the need to do much more to inspire women at the grassroots level to bring about social change. Between the Government and Industry, let us resolve to build a society that is empathetic to the needs of the women." Smt Smriti Irani, Minister of Women & Child Development and Minority Affairs, Government of India.

### Ahilyabai Holkar Puraskar

Varsharani Jadhav from Nagarsoga village in the Ausa Block of Latur District, Maharashtra was recently awarded the Ahilyabai Holkar Puraskar from the Nagarsoga Gram Panchayat, for her excellent work in promoting community development and women's empowerment over the past few years.

Working as a daily wage labourer in other's farms, Varsharani and her family used to depend on their meager farming income to support the household. Today, Varsharani continues to participate actively in issues of the Gram Sabha, and has also gained the respect of her family and community.

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