

Disaster Response, Recovery and Resilience: SSP was created in 1998 after an earthquake devastated Maharashtra, India, in 1993. It helped women in the area become farmers and entrepreneurs, making them financially independent and overcome the hardships after the disaster. Since then, SSP has helped women in other areas across seven states India and has expanded their focus to include sustainable agricultural practices, sanitation, nutrition awareness, and clean energy etc. SSP is also a member of the Huairou Commission, a global coalition that empowers grassroots women leaders around the world.



The extensive impact of the COVID-19 disaster also provided new opportunities for reaching vulnerable rural communities. This has been demonstrated by women leaders mentored by SSP and who have been at the forefront of the response – generating awareness, caring for the needy, bridging the gaps in last mile connectivity and preparing alternate strategies for economic survival. The resilience of these women is a source of learning for the entire system; it not only enabled women in households to be recognized for their contributions, it also called for their active participation in decision-making since households needed to diversify sources of income, reduce dependencies, again self sufficiency and align with local networks and governance systems.

Key Milestones

1998

SSP established, partnership with Government after 1993 Latur earthquake

1998-2001

100,000+ women organized in SHG network and Sakhi Federations

2012-15

Launched rural women as clean energy entrepreneurs with USAID support

2015

Launched WCRF program, partnered with State Government of Maharashtra

2016 Present

Scaling partnerships in WCRF with donor organizations

2018

Initiated Women-led WASH Practices program supported by UNICEF

2020 Present

Scaling up of WCRF model focusing on low-carbon farming practices, Digital Upskilling of Women Entrepreneurs, Scaling up of access to innovative and affordable energy efficient solutions for rural populations

Recognition

- 2022: Global Center on Adaptation (GCA)'s Local Adaptation Champions Awards 2022 at COP27
- 2022: NITI Aayog's Women Transforming India Award
- 2019: Schwab Foundation's Outstanding Social Entrepreneur of the Year (WEF) 2019
- 2018: Social Entrepreneur of the Year India Award, awarded by Jubilant Bhartia Foundation and Schwab Foundation
- 2017 – Winner of the 2017 Equator Prize declared by the UNDP from 806 nominations from 120 countries for its women led climate resilient agro-ecological farming model
- 2016 – Winner of the 2016 UNFCCC Momentum for Change Lighthouse Activity Awards, for its ground breaking project that empowers grassroots women to emerge as clean energy entrepreneurs and climate change leaders
- Advanced Level Gold Certification of NGO Transparency by GuideStar India valid until 2023



Partnerships

Ashoka Innovators For the Public | ADM Cares | ASTANOR | Avendus | DASRA | European Union | GIZ & Welthungerhilfe | Hindustan Unilever Foundation | HSBC | Huairou Commission | Kamal Udwardia Foundation | Misereor | NABARD | Nasscom Foundation | Shapoorji Pallonji Group | Shaikh Jaffer and Nematullah Ebrahim Family Foundation | UNICEF | U.S. Department of State | RTI & USAID | Womanity Foundation | Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission.

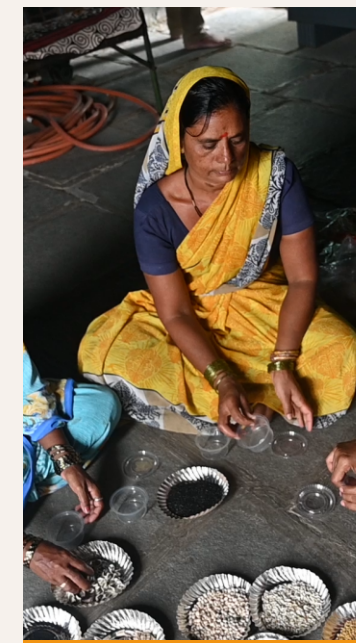


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SWAYAM SHIKSHAN PRAYOG



About Us

Late Ms. Prema Gopalan, as Founder and Executive Director of Swayam Shikshan Prayog, developed an inclusive, participatory, and women-led approach to disaster management through her pioneering work of community-led rehabilitation and reconstruction in 1200 villages after the devastating 1993 Latur Earthquake.

Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) which stands for Self-Education for Empowerment was formally registered in 1998. For the last 24 years, SSP has facilitated sustainable community development by building capacities of grassroots women's collectives to lead social and economic transformation in climate threatened regions of India. SSP widely advocates for changing public policy in favour of recognizing grassroots women's collectives in their new roles as community resource persons / community level facilitators, leaders and shares these learnings widely with peer networks and institutions globally. Our work, by choice, is centered around low-income climate threatened communities across India.

Our Approach

Our approach at SSP is bringing vulnerable and marginalised women to the centre of leadership in addressing disasters and climatic risks across India.

Fostering a Women Entrepreneurial Leadership Network

Grassroots women as innovators and changemakers are demonstrating community resilience strategies through climate resilient farming, sustainable livelihoods, and entrepreneurship development.

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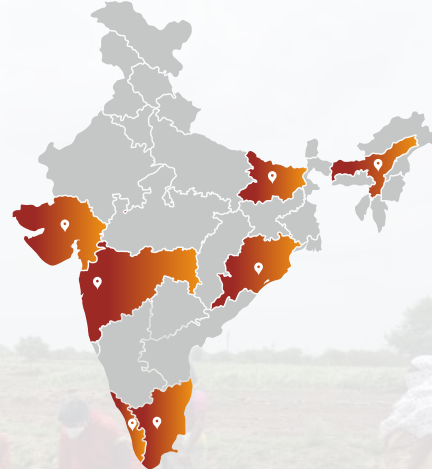


Advocacy and Convergences of Government Schemes and Services

SSP follows a structured approach for connecting women leaders with the government systems for establishing a sustainable process. The women leaders are trained to work closely with key government officials. Owing to the Covid-19, women leaders have emerged as community champions and secured places in Government constituted champions. The close interaction with the government at various levels has helped them to create a two-level network:



- With District and Block Officials - The block leaders, experienced women leaders and SSP team coordinate directly with the line departments at the district and block levels for accessing the schemes and benefits with regards to social protection, agriculture, water etc.
- At the village level - The women leaders at the village level or Village Action Groups (VAGs) work closely with the Gram Panchayat and the other government officials, supporting them in governance and reach the underserved communities. They also help the officials to assess the needs and follow up with them for access to schemes, government funds and usage. The direct contact between the block and village level leaders enable them to act quickly in accessing the benefits.



Impact

By unleashing rural women entrepreneurs in ailing economies, SSP has opened up non-traditional livelihood incomes, tripled household earnings and built new social capital in excluded areas. It has also galvanized investors, business trainers, climate scientists and government players to partner with rural women and co-create market-linked impact.

6 Focus Areas - Climate Resilient Farming, Clean Energy, Water and Sanitation, Health and Nutrition, Women's Entrepreneurship

7 States reached covering 2,320 communities across 30 climate impacted districts in India

SSP has empowered **300,000+** women entrepreneurs, farmers and community leaders

6 million people in low income and underserved communities

Partnership Ecosystem



Core Initiatives

Women-led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF): SSP's WCRF transforms marginalized women farmers in climate-risk areas into resilient leaders with better livelihoods and well-being, positioning them as women agri-innovators and decision makers. Women use their innate wisdom and skills, and are trained to decide on climate-sensitive sustainable practices, farm-allied activities, and engagement with diverse stakeholders. Through this initiative, there have been key shifts in farm practices, moving from cash crops to food crops, chemical to bio inputs, conservation of soil and water, and Diversified livelihoods through farm-allied businesses. 75,000 adopted farmers , 60,000 acres of land.



Clean Energy: SSP is developing the entrepreneurship of rural women by education and marketing of clean energy solutions such as biogas cookstoves, solar products, vegetable (subjee) coolers, water conservation techniques, organic agri inputs, solar powered milk can chiller plants, etc. through public awareness programs in the community, while earning an income at the same time. The Partnership on Women's Entrepreneurship in Clean Energy program (wPOWER India) funded by USAID has created 1000+ women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra and Bihar. Since 2016, supported by Misereor, this program is scaled up to more villages and built advanced capacities in women in Maharashtra and Bihar with more clean energy products and services.

Leadership: SSP is investing in increasing the knowledge, skills, leadership, and status of women by focusing on women's participation in governance, leadership in local governments and social leadership related to rights and inclusion of marginalized social groups. The Women's Initiative to Learn and Lead (WILL) is a leadership development process that provides the pathways, milestones and enabling systems for the tracking of SSP's women's leadership program. It is focused on women's participation in governance, leadership in local governments and economic resilience and social leadership related to rights and inclusion of marginalized social groups.



Women's Entrepreneurship: SSP, through its entrepreneurship development program, has mentored women to lead community level umbrella-network of Self Help Groups and Sakhi Federations in the geographical regions of their work. SSP also builds the credit-worthiness of women so that they can avail initial start-up or seed capital. SSP has supported thousands of women to start businesses and grow by creating Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). Six women led FPOs are created with more than 4,672 shareholders, who are taking lead in agriculture and value chain sector (currently promoting vegetables, pulses, goat rearing and dairy businesses).