

# QUARTERLY UPDATE

## Swayam Shikshan Prayog

July - September 2023

### Highlights of the Quarter

#### State-level CSOs Learning and Advocacy Event

Swayam Shikshan Prayog organised a two-day advocacy workshop in Osmanabad, Maharashtra, on September 8-9, 2023, bringing together 15 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from all over Maharashtra. It was a vibrant platform for discussing the challenges faced by marginalized women farmers and sharing knowledge regarding their rights and provisions for them. The workshop was helpful in learning and reflecting on women's rights and empowerment. At the end of the event, each CSO created a three-month action plan, showing their commitment to turning ideas into real change. This collective effort is a significant step towards our mission of raising awareness of women's rights and ensuring economic fairness for rural women in Maharashtra.

Link:

[https://www.facebook.com/swayamshikshanprayog.org/posts/624323199862768?ref=embed\\_post](https://www.facebook.com/swayamshikshanprayog.org/posts/624323199862768?ref=embed_post)

#### District Advocacy Workshop in Wayanad

Swayam Shikshan Prayog conducted a district-level dialogue workshop on September 16, 2023 at Venniyode in Kalpetta Block of Wayanad District, Kerala on the topic of "Women-Led Climate Adaptive Farming Practices in Wayanad". The objective of this workshop was to learn about existing and new government programmes around farming, how to access them, and strengthen climate resilient farming practices at the local level. The event was attended by officials from the District Industries Centre - Wayanad, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) - Ambalavayal, Agricultural Infrastructure Fund (AIF), Krishi Bhavan - Kottathara and elected representatives from Kottathara Gram Panchayat. Over 200 women leaders and farmers also participated in the event.



State level CSOs Learning and Advocacy Event organised by SSP in Osmanabad, Maharashtra



District Advocacy Workshop organised by SSP in Wayanad, Kerala

## Innovative Clean Energy Solutions for Rural Population through Women-led Micro-Entrepreneurship

The roundtable discussion on 'Scaling up access to innovative clean energy solutions for rural population through women led micro-entrepreneurship' at Delhi organized by USAID, was an absolute success thanks to the valuable insights and experience sharing by our speakers. We received unique perspectives, rich experiences and views on improving gender-diversity in clean energy rural entrepreneurship.

Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/SAREPEnergy/posts/288110050423226>



## District Level Dialogue Workshop in Osmanabad District

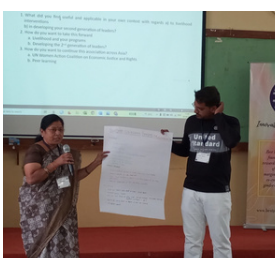
The District Level Dialogue Workshop under the ISUDWOG project supported by the European Union has left a lasting impact on the participants and stakeholders. By providing informative and valuable insights, fostering collaboration, and empowering women and girls to develop various value chains, the workshop has taken a significant step towards achieving inclusive and sustainable development in Osmanabad district. As the community continues to implement the shared knowledge and practices, the positive effects of this workshop are expected to ripple throughout the region, creating a more prosperous and equitable society for all. Organised by SSP in Osmanabad, Maharashtra on 26th July, this event witnessed the participation of more than 900 women farmer producer group members from across the district.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/swyamshikshanprayog.org/posts/601672552127833>

## International Peer Learning Exchange by Huairou Commission

Swayam Shikshan Prayog participated in the South Asian Peer Learning Exchange, organised by the Huairou Commission and facilitated by Best Practices Foundation in Bangalore, India from June 26-28, 2023. This Peer Learning Exchange was organised with the objective of sharing reflections, learnings and experiences between members of the Huairou Network in South Asia (Nepal, India and Bangladesh), and discussing how participants can apply best practices to their own local contexts. Devkanya Jagdale, shared SSP's own experience of entrepreneurship and value chain development in Marathwada, Maharashtra, as well as the WILL (Women's Initiative to Learn and Lead) Program that SSP is implementing to build a cadre of empowered grassroots women leaders at the local level.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/swyamshikshanprayog.org/posts/596427415985680>



SSP's women leaders speaking at events organised by the Huairou Commission

### **Empowering Families, Nourishing Generations**

Swayam Shikshan Prayog was part of the "World Breastfeeding Week: Empowering Families, Nourishing Generations" campaign, with the support of GIZ and Welthungerhilfe. SSP has organised 58 Nutrition meetings in 51 villages. 908 women participated including 131 Anganwadi Workers in Washim. To drive the core messages across rural communities, various activities were conducted throughout the week, such as awareness rallies, focus group discussions, puppet shows and live online seminars, in which 14,915 community members and 578 Anganwadi workers participated.

To learn more about the activities, click here: <https://rb.gy/q6hnx>

### **Partnership Launch of Women-led Keravriksha FPO with District Industries Centre, Wayanad**

In a proud moment for Keravriksha FPO in Wayanad, Kerala, the women-led farmer producer organisation took a big step in partnering with the District Industries Centre (DIC), Wayanad to promote value-added products to a larger market during the Onam festival. The FPO's products, which are popular locally, have been selected by DIC as a partner and supplier to promote the 'Brand Wayanad' initiative, being organised by the District Administration. On 16th August 2023, selected products such as red chilli powder, turmeric powder, sambar powder, coffee powder, dried mango, honey, coconut oil, honey gooseberry, and vaduku were handed over to DIC officials by Directors of the FPO.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/swayamshikshanprayog.org/posts/614405070854581>

### **Exposure Visit and Learning Exchange between SSP and PRADAN**

Swayam Shikshan Prayog, with support from Hindustan Unilever Foundation, participated in a learning exchange visit to view the excellent work that PRADAN has been doing on watershed management in Purulia, West Bengal since 2017. In the three-day visit, both SSP and PRADAN teams engaged closely to understand PRADAN's model on water security to promote agriculture and how they implemented their USHARMUKTI program in over 54 blocks of West Bengal, through collaboration with the government and MGNREGS program, engaging the community with a vision of a long-term development plan. Through this exchange, SSP was able to learn from PRADAN's approach through which they have successfully brought acres of barren land into cultivation and helped small farmers create their own water security assets leading to reduction in migration in the region and promoted sustainable income for the families.

Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/swayamshikshanprayog.org/posts/628306399464448>



### **FPO Field Visit to Pune**

On September 27th 2023, SSP organised a peer learning visit for 15 women leaders from the Bharari Sakhi Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO), based in Solapur District. The leaders, many of whom are Directors of the FPO, visited the Pune-based Abhinav Farmers Club to understand their organic vegetable cultivation and marketing model. The objective of the visit was to demonstrate to women farmers how to scale-up vegetable cultivation using innovative techniques and marketing methods. The women also visited the Club's farms and saw how proper planning allowed them to cultivate 25+ vegetables on a small plot of land.

Link: [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=635113295450425&id=100068552802114&mibextid=Nif5oz](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=635113295450425&id=100068552802114&mibextid=Nif5oz)

### **Improved Cookstove Distribution in partnership with ReNew Power**

In 2023, SSP partnered with the private sector company ReNew to promote the use of improved cookstoves within poor rural households in Gaya and Nalanda Districts of Bihar, making affordable clean energy solutions more accessible to all (SDG7). SSP's women leaders led on-ground efforts to document wood-burning stove use in 44 of Bihar. Based on the results of this survey, between August 20 - September 5, 2023, 2000 vulnerable households in these villages were provided with Improved Cookstoves at a subsidised rate and training on the use and benefits of the stove. The women who led these efforts also received a commission from the sale of each cookstove.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/swayamshikshanprayog.org/posts/632971378997950>

Demonstration and distribution of Improved Cookstoves in Bihar by SSP's women entrepreneurs



### **Solar Sabha in Bihar**

As a leader and forerunner in the clean energy sector at the grassroots level in Bihar, Swayam Shikshan Prayog - SSP participated in a Solar Sabha organised by the NGO Purpose in Rajgir in Bihar on July 26, 2023. The Solar Sabha was conducted to raise awareness on clean energy solutions and promote dialogues between other stakeholders in the energy sector and grassroots communities. In addition to the 500+ grassroots women leaders associated with Purpose, the event was attended by other civil society organisations, community leaders, and government officials from the State Electricity Board, Mayors, Block Development Officers (BDOs) and members of National Rural Livelihood Mission's (NRLM) JEEViKA program. During the event, grassroots woman leader and entrepreneur Anita Kumari, who has been associated with SSP's Clean Energy Program since 2015, addressed the gathering and described her journey of empowerment as a Clean Energy Sakhi.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/swayamshikshanprayog.org/posts/609132184715203>

## 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. The major achievements in the last quarter include:

- **17 women entrepreneurs** in Osmanabad district **started their own dairy enterprise.**
- **82 women began their own goat rearing enterprise.**
- **25 women began selling vegetables in the retail market.**
- As part of the Alliance for Sustainable Inclusive Development (ASIDO), **30 members purchased small dal mills, and began collectively producing, processing and marketing their products** in Lohara, Omerga and Osmanabad Blocks.
- Members of the District Service System, a platform for facilitating business and government scheme linkages, have actively assisted in the establishment of women-led businesses to further build local value chains. **A total of Rs. 1,01,74,000 has been loaned to 199 women entrepreneurs as part of this process.**
- DSS members have also played a crucial role in connecting women entrepreneurs to government schemes, amounting to **a total of Rs. 35,47,940 being accessed by 77 women.**
- A group of entrepreneurs in the Pulses Value Chain established a successful start-up specializing in the production, processing, and packaging of pulses, ultimately **achieving sales of 100 kilograms of dals through their dal mill operation.**
- **SSP organised 6 block level workshops** with government officials and women leaders to explore government schemes that are accessible to women entrepreneurs, which were attended by 819 women.
- **SSP's grassroots women leaders organised 14 cluster level meetings and 1 district level workshop** with government and bank officials to promote government schemes and bank linkages, which were attended by 1857 women.
- **SSP's leaders organised meetings in 116 villages of Osmanabad District, reaching over 6,000 women,** to create awareness about rural value chains and products like dairy, goatery, pulses and chilli powder.
- **Bylaws for ASIDO** - a body dedicated to sustainable development of four key value chains: pulses, dairy, vegetables, and goats - **were finalized, to govern and regulate its operations and activities.** These bylaws were evaluated and assessed by two legal advocates to ensure compliance with legal standards and best practices.
- Women leaders promoted agri-allied clean-energy alternatives, as a result of which **226 biogas plants were installed in 77 villages across Osmanabad.**
- As a result of government scheme linkages, **5189 women farmers were able to access seed inputs worth Rs. 15 lakh** from the ATMA department, as part of the PM POSHAN scheme.

## 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:

- During the last quarter, SSP's team conducted 2 training sessions at the block and cluster levels. These **6-day training sessions were attended by 225 women farmers, following which 217 of them established small-scale businesses** in their villages.
- SSP's women leaders carried out **Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) trainings with 550 women farmers, out of which 513 women started their own businesses.**
- SSP's **Sakhi leaders and mentors have helped 18 women entrepreneurs start Laxmi Milk Collection Centers.** These centers are carrying out transactions amounting to around Rs. 40 lakh monthly.
- SSP's women leaders and **mentors have connected 87 women entrepreneurs to various government schemes,** enabling them to access loans and inputs amounting to Rs. 95.97 Lakhs.
- In the past quarter, SSP's women leaders have supported women entrepreneurs to **access loans from private and public banks, micro-finance institutions and their own SHGs, amounting to Rs. 124.97 Lakhs.**



## 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. While 811 women in Solapur were engaged in the first year of the project (this is the second year of engagement with them), 750 new women have been identified for entrepreneurship support in Akkalkot this year. Major activities in this quarter include:

- **Two refresher trainings** were organized in Solapur to help previous participants to revise critical aspects of business operations such as financial concepts, marketing, product development, customer support to support their enterprise growth, which were attended by 800 women entrepreneurs.
- **14 meetings were organized at the cluster-level across multiple villages to foster knowledge sharing, cross-learning and awareness** of opportunities and resources for women entrepreneurs. These were attended by a total of 593 women entrepreneurs from Akkalkot Block.
- **150 women farmers received business training** on the sorghum-millet value chain, the dairy business and goat rearing.
- SSP's women leaders conducted **EDP Training for 750 women in Akkalkot Block**
- 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.

## ReNew - Improved Cookstoves Distribution

SSP partnered with ReNew Power to promote the use of Improved Cook Stoves (ICS) in vulnerable households to reduce dependence on wood and reduce smoke inhalation.

- SSP organised a **two-day product training for 70 Swayam Sakhis** in Gaya & Nalanda District on 5 to 6 September, on the topics of micro entrepreneurship and digital literacy.
- A **two-day ToT on the ICS was organised for 22 energy sakhis** from Gaya and Nalanda Districts. The training covered strategies for efficient distribution, along with orientation and demonstration of usage of these stoves.
- In the last quarter period, **2000 households in Gaya and Nalanda Districts were provided with Improved Cook stoves at a subsidized rate**, along with training on the benefits and use of this stove.
- 2000 families learned about tree conservation, environmental balance, advanced cooking techniques and started positive initiatives in this direction.
- **A Sakhi and two staff members from SSP participated in a Solar Sabha** organised by Purpose NGO in Rajgir on July 26, 2023. The Solar Sabha was conducted to raise awareness on clean energy solutions and promote dialogues between other stakeholders in the energy sector and grassroots communities.
- **18 Sakhis from SSP participated in the Saksham Samaj Pahal** network meeting in Rajgir, Bihar on September 25, 2023, to discuss issues around clean energy and climate change.



## 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:

- SSP organized **27 Enterprise Development Program trainings for 685 women** from Jalna and Bhokardan Block, focusing on the topics of Personal goal setting, Understanding Enterprise and its types, Competitions , 4P's (Product, Price, People, Publicity), 4C (Customer and Competition, Cost and Capital, Capital, Capabilities), Financial Planning, Backward and forward linkages.
- A total of **1209 women participated in 50 trainings focusing on record keeping** for business management, which were conducted in Jalna and Bhokardan Blocks between July - September, 2023.
- SSP organized **2 block-level entrepreneur meetings and 6 cluster-level entrepreneur meetings** in Jalna and Bhokardan Blocks, which focused on the topic CEF Distribution, and were attended by 416 women entrepreneurs.
- Sanskruti Mahila Taluka Sansadhan Kendra, Bhokardan **supported 76 women entrepreneurs with CEF loan** on 5th July 2023 for the Enterprise expansion.
- For those 76 women entrepreneurs **total of INR 20,81,000 loan have been disbursed under Community Enterprise Fund (CEF)** for which repayment is also started from August 2023 by CRPEP.
- **Community Resource Person for Enterprise Promotion (CRPEP)'s and Trainers Capacity Building Training** is conducted at Jalna in which 35 people participated from both blocks consisting Block Mentors, CRPEPs, Trainers and Women entrepreneurs and Laxmikant Malwadkar Sir. The Topics covered in EDP are taught in an improved way of training according to the EDP training module .

## Repositioning rural women as Advanced Entrepreneurs and Business leaders

This project, supported by Avendus Capital, is being implemented in 90 villages in Deoni and Latur blocks of Latur District, Maharashtra for the period of April 2023 to March 2024. It aims to develop rural women's entrepreneurship by providing skills to women from marginalized backgrounds and increase their earning potential.

- SSP **conducted trainings with 90 Community Resource Persons (CRPs)** in the month of July, 2023 in Latur and Deoni, on the topics of Entrepreneurship Development.
- Women leaders from SSP conducted **awareness raising and mobilisation activities with 1294 women farmers** on SSP's Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) in Latur district.
- SSP's team **conducted 10 batches of the six-day Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP)**, which were attended by 317 women entrepreneurs from Latur and Deoni blocks.
- An **outlet to sell farmer produced products** like organic pulses, grains, papad, oil etc. associated with the Swayam Sakhi Shetmal Producer FPO was **started in Latur** city in July, 2023. The outlet is currently serving over 1600 customers in Latur.
- **Marketing activities were conducted** in villages near Latur city to promote organic farm products being sold by the FPO using a promotion van. Through this activity, 1240 new customers were reached in the last quarter.



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

Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) is implementing the SENU (Securing Nutrition Enhancing Resilience) Poshanam Project with the support of GIZ and WHH In Washim District. This project emphasises on Nutrition & Health education. One of the key strategies of the SENU Project is Improving Knowledge, Awareness and Practices (KAP) of target households on diet diversity, maternal- child care and WASH.

- Held round-2 NPLA **capacity building training with 48 Anganwadi workers** of Kinhiraja & Kenvad bits at Malegaon in Washim district.
- **Celebrated World Breastfeeding Week** between August 1-7, 2023, in 51 villages of Washim District by organizing 58 nutrition meetings. A total of 908 women and 131 anganwadi workers participated in these meetings.
- SSP's team **celebrated a monthly Nutrition Day** by organising R1 & R2 Village Level NPLA Nutrition education meetings in 6 blocks of Washim District. These sessions were attended by adolescents, and pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Conducted **13 batches of round-2 NPLA capacity building training for 349 Anganwadi workers** from Manora and Karanja Blocks.
- A '**Poshan Rakhi**' activity was organised in **8 villages of Washim Block**, where 248 Rakhis were prepared by 234 participants
- **Poshan Month was celebrated**, with more than 30 activities being implemented in 149 Village of Washim district with the 3204 participants.
- **Seed kits distribution and creation of Nutrition Garden** - Distributed more than 400 Seed kits to 400 women in Washim.

## 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's team **trained over 145 grassroots women micro-entrepreneurs**, called 'Swayam Sakhis', on digital literacy and the benefits of technologies like biogas and subjee coolers.
- SSP organised village-level orientation meetings with farmers to promote the use of **clean-energy technologies like biogas and subjee coolers in 770 villages**, reaching up to 7,080 farmers.
- SSP's micro-entrepreneurs carried out household and farm visits in over 500 villages, reaching up to 5,678 households and farms in Osmanabad, Latur, Solapur districts in Maharashtra and Gaya and Nalanda districts in Bihar. As a result, **1,089 farming households booked biogas plants** between July and September 2023.
- **469 biogas plants were installed** during this period, with farmers using the gas made from the bio-digester for cooking and the slurry as fertilizers in their farms.
- Between July - September, 2023, the **micro-entrepreneurs earned a cumulative income of Rs. 14.77 Lakhs** from the sale of clean-energy products.

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

This 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:

- SSP's leaders conducted **orientation programmes with 196 women entrepreneurs** on the topics of digital, financial and entrepreneurship skills and micro-businesses in the last quarter.
- **22 women agri and agri-allied entrepreneurs (WAEs) were selected**, who will be provided with additional support to position them as entrepreneurship 'role models' in the community.
- **20 active women entrepreneurs from Latur were identified for developing video documentation and case studies**, for the purpose of understanding the impact of the digital training
- SSP's team **mapped women entrepreneurs business profiles**, and carried out quantitative and qualitative surveys with women from Osmanabad and Latur District to understand the credit needs of women entrepreneurs.
- On September 4-7, 2023, **a team from Nasscom Foundation conducted a field visit to 5 blocks in Osmanabad District** (Dharashiv, Osmanabad, Parranda, Nilanga and Ausa), and interacted with 44 women entrepreneurs to learn about micro businesses and entrepreneurship.
- In the last quarter, the **team collected a detailed business profile of 24 women entrepreneurs** from Osmanabad and Latur District With the objective of evaluating the impact of SSP's Digital training program.

## 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.

- SSP's team **mobilised 1753 women farmers** from Latur and Solapur Districts and created awareness on the EDP program.
- In the last quarter, **826 women entrepreneurs received EDP training**.
- SSP **selected 40 mentors and 20 trainers to provide information to women farmers** on entrepreneurship development and handholding support to entrepreneurs.
- **235 retailers were identified in this quarter**.
- **87 women entrepreneurs were linked to government schemes** in the last quarter.
- SSP **supported 142 women entrepreneurs in accessing financing** through bank linkages and private finance.
- **372 women entrepreneurs were provided with handholding support** to improve their businesses.
- **97 new women entrepreneurs were provided with handholding support** to build their businesses.

## 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. Major achievements of the last quarter include:

- SSP's women leaders **assisted 152 women entrepreneurs in submitting loan applications** for starting and expanding small-scale businesses to the District Industry Center, under the CMEGP scheme, during this period. Out of these, 9 women entrepreneurs have already had their loans sanctioned.
- Sakhi Leaders assisted **331 rural women entrepreneurs in successfully registering for the government's MEPP program**, which aims to support and promote start-up enterprises.
- As part of the SIDBI Baseline Online Data Collection process, SSP's leaders **collected and entered baseline information of 331 women entrepreneurs** in the last quarter.
- Sakhi Leaders **supported 14 women entrepreneurs in submitting bank loans** under the Mudra scheme.
- SSP **organised 3 workshops to raise awareness about bank and credit linkages**, and relevant government schemes in Washi and Kallamb blocks, reaching 100 women entrepreneurs from 6 villages.
- SSP's leaders **provided handholding support to 15 emerging women entrepreneurs** from Washi Block by helping them collect necessary documentation needed for loan applications.
- **Two women entrepreneurs were supported in registering themselves on the government's Udyam Aadhar Portal** and received a formal certification from the Ministry of MSME.
- Through SSP leaders' efforts, **9 women entrepreneurs from 5 Block of Osmanabad District were sanctioned loans of Rs. 17,97,600 in total**, under the PMFME Scheme for the purpose of starting their own small-scale business. 6 of these women entrepreneurs have already started businesses such as papad making, spice and flour mills, and running shops in their localities.



Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) Training taking place in Nagarsoga, Maharashtra

## 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

- During the last quarter, various **improved agricultural practices were demonstrated by 375 sakhis in 320 villages** on 750 demo farms in Osmanabad district. These sessions were attended by 33,734 farmers.
- **Sakhis delivered 'Crop Advisory' IEC materials to farmers** in the form of videos, digital leaflets and whatsapp messages. They also organised meetings with Farmer Groups to share this information.
- SSP's team **organised monthly meetings Learning and Monitoring Workshops** with 370 Sakhis to track progress, promote cross-learning between participants and build their capacities.
- **SSP organised 5 Block-level Dialogue Workshops** between July-August 2023, in Osmanabad district, which were attended by women farmers and various government officials to facilitate information sharing on government schemes and the hurdles that are faced by women in accessing these schemes.
- Within the last quarter 26,000 farmers were supported by Sakhi leaders in applying for various government schemes related to agriculture and water management.
- **SSP organised 2 District-level Dialogues in Tuljapur and Lohara** in July 2023 to promote government scheme linkages. These meetings were attended by a total of 215 participants.
- SSP's team **organised various trainings and sensitisation workshops with farmers** between August-September 2023 to create awareness on watershed management and water conservation initiatives by the government.
- Trainers **organised PRA and GPDP planning meetings in 123 Gram Panchayats** to understand Panchayat-level water management plans, and identify avenues where SSP could contribute.

## Nurturing Leadership of Grassroots Leadership of Grassroots Women's Organizations in Scaling Community Resilience in Uncertain Times

This project is supported by Huairou Commission for the period of April 2023 to December 2024 and is being implemented in Maharashtra and Kerala..

### Maharashtra

- In Nanded District, **521 women farmers from 10 villages were mobilised to attend orientation programmes** on SSP's climate resilient farming model and its benefits.

### Wayanad

- SSP's team carried out a **selection of 10 villages for implementing the women-led climate resilient farming (WCRF) model**.
- In Wayanad District, **20 women farmers were trained on the WCRF model** and its benefits, along with opportunities for partnering with local government and agriculture departments for leveraging resources.
- During the last quarter, **indigenous vegetable seeds were distributed to 20 families of 3 tribal groups** from Wayanad.

## 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:

- **132 producer groups engaged in value chain enterprises held meetings** to strengthen their collective efforts to build their businesses for improving production and marketing, with a total of 2,506 participants involved.
- **Senior trainers conducted a Training of Trainers (ToT) program to build the capacity of 50 participants who are master trainers** from three districts - Solapur, Osmanabad, and Nanded, on the topic of developing and scaling-up the existing rural value chain setup.
- A total of **12 Community Resource Persons (CRPs) from Latur, Nanded, Solapur and Osmanabad underwent capacity building trainings** focusing on setting up value chain businesses, with monthly sessions held over three months.
- At the village level, **14 Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) trainings were conducted**, with 571 women farmers from Nanded, Solapur and Osmanabad Districts under the value chain producer group initiative.
- **113 new value chain producer groups**, involving 2,132 participants farmers, were established during last quarter.
- A **study tour was organized for a group of 15 participants actively involved in the organic farming value chain** through Bharari Sakhi Farmer Producer Company, Solapur. The tour took place at the Abhinav Farmer Club in Pune, on September 27, 2023, and aimed to provide valuable insights and practical knowledge related to organic farming practices and value chain activities.
- **Four district-level dialogue workshops were organized** in Solapur, Osmanabad, Latur, and Nanded, with 931 participants including FPO Directors, value chain producer group farmers, and value chain entrepreneurs for the purpose of exchanging entrepreneurial experiences and discussing bank and government linkages.



Women leaders in discussion with SSP's team about Value Chain development

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

Swayam Shikshan Prayag (SSP) has been implementing a Health and Nutrition project with the support of Kamal Udwadia Foundation (KUF) in 30 villages under the Sonkhed PHC in Loha block of Nanded District in Maharashtra since 2019. In the third year of this project, Aarogya Sakhis have emerged as village leaders and are implementing various practices to make the community self-reliant. The activities implemented during this quarter are as follows:

- A leadership training programme was conducted for 30 Aarogya Sakhis of 30 villages on July 13-14, 2023 to develop leadership qualities in them. Inclusion of vulnerable women into the mainstream was the theme of this programme.
- Following the first round of testing women's hemoglobin count in January 27th to February 2nd 2023, Aarogya Sakhis organised a second round of **blood tests for 187 pre-identified high-risk women** between August 1-14, 2023, during which a significant positive rise in hemoglobin count was observed in pregnant women.
- In August 2023, **village-level 'Garbh Sanskar' meetings were organised in 30 villages of Sonkhed PHC** on the topics of mental health and its impact on children's development, which were attended by a total of 236 pregnant women.
- In August 2023, **food festivals were also organised in all 30 villages of Sonkhed PHC**, focusing on maintaining a healthy diet and nutrition for women and children in the postnatal period, and how to recognise abnormality in infants. These sessions were attended by a total of 483 lactating mothers.
- To ensure food security and nutrition among villagers, **6 Aarogya Sakhis conducted village level trainings in 30 villages** under the Sonkhed PHC in the months of August and September 2023. These trainings focused on implementation of the one acre for health and nutrition, and were attended by over 1074 women farmers.
- On August 13, 2023, **10 Aarogya Sakhis attended an exposure visit** to Latur, Solapur and Osmanabad to learn about setting up an enterprise and market linkages. They visited established enterprises in Latur, Solapur and Osmanabad that manufactured papad, bhakri, khava and vermicompost.
- On September 16, 2023, a **health-check up camp at the Sonkhed PHC in Loha was organized, for antenatal and prenatal care** for mothers with children under the age of 5 years from 30 villages. This camp was attended by over 360 women and 400 children.



## FAIR FOR ALL program in Maharashtra and Kerala

The Fair for All program supported by Huairou Commission focuses on climate change, and agricultural value chain at scale across Wayanad district in Kerala, Osmanabad district in Maharashtra. The project aims to strengthen women farmers' roles in value chains and build the capacity of civil society organizations in mobilizing communities in value added products, market and fair price to develop an inclusive and sustainable environment and promote women's economic empowerment. The project targets 7500 grassroots women from 35 villages in Osmanabad, Maharashtra and 15 villages in Wayanad, Kerala.

### Maharashtra

- SSP's women leaders conducted **awareness training with 753 women farmers** from Bhoom block on the topics climate resilient farming, economic empowerment, agri allied business and marketing farm produce.
- SSP's team carried out an **advanced Entrepreneurship Development Program ToT for 30 new trainers** in Bhoom Block to build their capacities in organising trainings, handholding meetings and providing mentoring support to the women entrepreneurs in the block.
- Organized **advanced domain-specific training for the 480 women entrepreneurs** from the Bhoom block. Through this training, women entrepreneurs got detailed knowledge and on-sight learning in the domains of goat rearing, poultry, dairy and livestock management, horticulture and vegetables. Out of 480 entrepreneurs, 317 women entrepreneurs have created new business plans and submitted them to the bank for business loans to scale-up their business.
- On September 8-9, 2023, SSP organized a **workshop on capacity-building and strengthening of the CSOs in Osmanabad**. 13 CSOs from 11 districts of Maharashtra participated in this workshop, which focused on the policies and rights associated with women farmers and labourers.
- SSP initiated a **dialogue with the grocery companies Big Basket and Blinkit at the TISS campus** in Mumbai on September 12, 2023, with the objective of building capacities of small scale enterprises in standardization of value added products. This dialogue was attended by SSP staff and 3 Directors from the Sarayi Sakhi Producer Company.
- SSP conducted an 3-day **advocacy event for 150 grassroots women farmers from 8 villages** in Bhoom block to create awareness on their land rights and the various economic provisions and opportunities available to women through government schemes and bank linkage.
- SSP organised a **meeting with block-level ATMA department officials** in Bhoom to advocate for greater support to women farmers in reviving millet cultivation in the region. As a result of this meeting, the ATMA department provided 3340 seed kits to SSP's women farmers consisting of 5 different types of millets including, Bajra, Kharif Jawari, codo and Rajgira.
- The women-led **Sarayi Sakhi Produce Company in Bhoom block rented out land and created a demonstration plot** in Girwali Village, with the objective of promoting best practices in millet cultivation and its benefits to other farmers in the region.

### Kerala

- SSP's women leaders **conducted 9 awareness trainings with 270 women farmers** on climate resilient farming, agri-allied businesses and women's leadership in 15 villages of Wayanad District.

- SSP's team conducted 1 **advanced EDP training with 21 women entrepreneurs from 8 villages** in Wayanad, focusing on manufacture of cleaning products for the home.
- The women-led **Keravriksha FPO handed over its first batch of 6 value-added products**, including coconut oil, coffee powder, turmeric, honey amla, vaduku and chilli powder to the District Industries Centre (DIC), Wayanad for marketing purposes, as part of the DICs Brand Wayanad programme.
- In the last quarter, **4 capacity building trainings were conducted with 71 members of the Keravriksha FPO**, on the topic of organisational strengthening, agriculture value chain and identifying proper market for value added products.
- On 16th September 2023,, **SSP conducted 1 District Level Advocacy Workshop in Venniyode** on the topic of challenges of women farmers in facing climate change, accessing government programmes and promoting climate resilient farming model. This workshop was attended by 253 grassroots women leaders, farmers and entrepreneurs, along with local government department representatives, and members of the Wayanad District Industries Centre and Agricultural Infrastructure Fund (AIF).
- SSP's team **conducted 2 block-level advocacy workshops with 93 women farmers** at Venniyode, focusing on how to incorporate traditional and organic farming practices in MNREGS, revival of indigenous seed varieties of tribal communities and accessing government programmes.
- On 26th August 2023, **SSP organised a gram panchayat level advocacy workshop** at Venniyode on the topic of challenges in identifying agriculture value added market and standardising products and customer outreach, which was attended by 30 women farmers and the representatives of Veniyode Gram Panchayat.
- **SSP conducted a capacity building training focusing on development of agriculture value chains** in Venniyode on 29th September 2023, with 30 members from 6 CSOs in Wayanad District, who are working on social issues.
- **7 varieties of vegetable seedlings were distributed to 42 Members of 20 Paniya Tribal families** at Kolakkimottam Kunnu, Kolavayal and Vasthikkunnu on September 22, 2023 in Kottathara Gram Panchayat.



## Astanor MIS System

With the support of Astanor, SSP has **successfully developed a Management Information System (MIS)**. As part of the MIS System setting up with Dhvani RIS, **in the past quarter two significant projects have been integrated into the system: "Power of Voices - Fair for All" and the "SIDBI Supported Micro-Entrepreneurship Promotion Program."** The initiatives are fully operational and represent a significant achievement for our organization. Our dedicated field teams are actively engaged in testing the mobile applications associated with these projects. The feedback received so far has been overwhelmingly positive, with team members finding the apps intuitive and easy to use. This user-friendliness enhances our ability to collect and manage data effectively and efficiently.



# Stories from the Field

## Rohini Khade

Rohini Khade, from Solarwadi village in Washi Block of Osmanabad District is a grassroots woman leader and entrepreneur who is bringing about change in her community. In 2021, she attended a variety of capacity building trainings provided by SSP, and received guidance on starting her own small-scale milk business. Taking a loan from the SHG, she also started sharecropping on her neighbour's land using SSP's WCRF model. By reinvesting her profits from the milk and vegetable vending business, she was able to expand and diversify. Today, she owns 3 cows and has been able to purchase her own farmland where she cultivates a variety of food crops. She has also started running a small bangle and stationery shop in the village. Within three years, Rohini tai emerged as a strong and business-savvy entrepreneur, earning around INR 2 lakhs annually, which significantly improved her family's financial situation. She is also one of the formative leaders of the Village Action Group, which is a group bringing together women from different communities to develop their leadership and bring about change in the village.

## A Mercurial Leader Embracing New Technologies

Vandana Khandekar, a grassroots woman leader and entrepreneur from Pathari Village in North Solapur Block of Solapur District, Maharashtra is overcoming personal challenges and getting recognised for her excellent work in promoting community development and clean energy! Widowed at a young age, Vandana tai became active in her local Self Help Group (SHG), where she learnt about Swayam Shikshan Prayog and their work. Soon, she began to attend trainings on Entrepreneurship Development and Women-Led Climate Resilient Farming with the support of SSP. In the past two years, Vandana tai has guided 200 women farmers in implementing one-acre farming, improving household health and nutrition, along with increasing earnings through the sale of organic vegetables locally. Additionally, she was also instrumental in getting 20 biogas plants and 8 vermicompost beds installed in households across her village. She continues to support women in starting their own small-scale businesses to become financially independent and linking farmers to government agricultural schemes.

## Jyoti Sonkamble

Jyoti Sonkamble, a grassroots woman leader and entrepreneur, is supporting other women from her community in becoming financially independent in Dashpel village, located in Loha Block of Nanded District, Maharashtra. Working with SSP as an Arogya Sakhi since 2021, Jyoti tai realized that most of the women in her community were struggling economically, as agriculture became an increasingly uncertain livelihood source. With daily survival being a priority, women were unable to focus on their own health and well-being. Looking for a solution, Jyoti tai approached SSP to link select women with financial loans and begin goat rearing on a small-scale. As a result, eight women were provided with seed money of Rs. 8,000 from SSP. The selected women came from marginal and landless farming households, owning between 0-2 acres of land each. The women also invested some money of their own and purchased one goat initially. They were provided with training on goat rearing, basic veterinary support and entrepreneurship development training to ensure that they could sustain and expand their business. Over the past 2 years, all eight women have increased their herd of goats to around six goats per household, and earn an income of approximately Rs. 12,000 per animal as a result of the quality of their animals.

## In the Media

### **Women-led organic agriculture practice: Developing community climate resilience and changing gender norms**

A paper written by Ratna Mathur with the inputs from Naseem Shaikh and Upmanyu Patil from SSP, examines local solutions to the climate crisis that have been developed with women farmers in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, India. It has been published in the IACD (International Association for Community Development) Practice Insights - Issue 2023, which focuses on the theme Community Development & Climate Crises.

You can access the full article here: <https://swayamshikshanprayog.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/IACD-Practice-Insights-Publication-July-2023.pdf>



### **Why Grassroots Organisations Are Essential for Sustainability**

Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) was featured in an article published on Earth.org. "This India-based initiative was started to promote sustainable agriculture and empower women to view challenges as opportunities. It aims to help support and sustain women in impoverished communities by providing the farming and entrepreneurial knowledge needed to survive. SSP also trains women in farming methods that promote climate resilience, clean water, and good health while maintaining environmental sustainability, such as conservation and protection of natural resources. This is vital, as about one in three people globally cannot access safe drinking water."

Link to article: <https://earth.org/why-grassroots-organisations-are-essential-for-sustainability/>

### **How India's Women Adapt to a Hotter World**

SSP's Women-led Climate Resilient Farming Model was featured in an article on the online media Page Fairplanet. "Women farmers are hit hardest by rising temperatures, so we train them to develop an alternative farming model. We encourage them to grow seasonal food crops instead of water-intensive cash crops. We simultaneously inform them to stay cool during a heatwave, advising them with simple solutions to avoid daytime work and suggesting visits to the farms during the early morning or sunset hours," Godavari Dange from Swayam Shikshan Prayog told FairPlanet.

Link to article: <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/how-indias-women-adapt-to-a-hotter-world>

## HUF Annual Report: Marathwada District Transformation Model

Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) Annual Report 2022-23 features SSP's Marathwada District Transformation Model: Empowering Women to Drive Prosperity. HUF is partnering with SSP to implement a district-wide integrated 'Sustainable Water for Agriculture' model relevant to farmers in climate-risk and drought-prone regions.

Link: <https://swayamshikshanprayog.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/HUF-Features-SSPs-Program-in-the-Annual-Report-2022-23.pdf>

## Meet Dhanshakti's Customer #1!!

SSP's leader and entrepreneur Malan Raut was featured on Finance Company Dhanshakti's LinkedIn page. "Womanpreneur Malanbai Raut with her husband and business partner Sambhaji made our day!! Malanbai started her dairy journey with Dhanshakti in March 2023. Today she is the proud owner of Radha and Yashodha, her two Jersey cows, generating a monthly income of Rs. 28000 for her family!! Our plan is to get that count up to 5 in the next 24 months!! Inspiration for hundreds of women in Nagarsoga village and all of us here at Dhanshakti. A big shoutout to Promethean Power Systems and Swayam Shikshan Prayog SSP for making this possible!!"

Link: [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/dhanshaktifinance\\_power-inspiration-agribusiness-activity-7085067819511427072-8R0e/](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/dhanshaktifinance_power-inspiration-agribusiness-activity-7085067819511427072-8R0e/)

## SSP's work featured on News Channel 'Tarun Bharat'

On the occasion of the 15th August Gram Sabha, women leaders from 150 villages came together at Barul in Tuljapur, Osmanabad district of Maharashtra to demand water infrastructures at both individual farms and at community level. This is the first time women came together in such numbers to participate in the Gram Sabha to demand water structures, and their demands have been accepted by the Gram Sabhas. This activity happened simultaneously across 150 villages in Dharashiv (Osmanabad) District, Maharashtra.

For more details, visit: <https://youtu.be/LBG3IOebeyY>



## Publications

**Celebrating 25 Years of Excellence - SSP's Annual Report for 2022-23 highlights our remarkable journey over the past quarter-century!**

We're thrilled to share with you our Annual Report for the last year. In this comprehensive document, we present a detailed account of our activities, achievements, and the incredible progress we've made over the past year. We're committed to transparency, and this report is a testament to our dedication to keeping our partners, and supporters, informed about SSP's work.

We encourage you to explore the report, learn more about our achievements, and see the real-world impact of investing in grassroots women's leadership and empowerment in rural India.

You can access the full report here:  
[https://swayamshikshanprayog.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Annual-Report-of-SSP-FY-2022-23-fv\\_small\\_size.pdf](https://swayamshikshanprayog.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Annual-Report-of-SSP-FY-2022-23-fv_small_size.pdf)



### **Interwoven Futures: How Civil Society Organizations can Accelerate India's Journey Towards Climate Resilience**

SSP's Clean Energy Program has been featured in a compendium, compiled by the ClimateRise Alliance and DASRA. The compendium presents insightful case studies that demonstrate how CSOs are driving impactful interventions at the grassroots level, mitigating the effects of climate change, and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Link:  
<https://www.dasra.org/resource/interwoven-futures-how-civil-society-organizations-can-accelerate-indias-journey-towards-climate-resilience>

### **Our Partners:**

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