

QUARTERLY UPDATE

Swayam Shikshan Prayog

April - June 2024



Key Achievements

One Acre for Water Security: Osmanabad's Story

SSP's work on promoting the women-led climate resilient farming model, which incorporates water conservation and sustainable resource use was featured by the India Development Review (IDR) on the occasion of World Environment Day.

Link: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/india-development-review_one-acre-for-water-security-osmanabads-activity-7205788298152189952-Vuqp/

Fair For All: Harvesting Resilience (10-minute film)

The Fair for All program, supported by the Huairou Commission, boosts climate-smart agriculture and value chain in Wayanad, Kerala, and Dharashiv, Maharashtra. SSP is empowering women farmers, and reaches out to 7,500 grassroots women across 35 villages in Maharashtra and 15 villages in Kerala, promoting economic empowerment and sustainability.

Click here to watch this movie:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K7Mg2nemdk>



Hindustan Unilever Foundation and SSP's partnership to create scalable water solutions

Amidst the scorching heat, Osmanabad's villages faced a severe water crisis. But when Hindustan Unilever Foundation & SSP partnered, there was hope. From dry wells to sustainable futures, see how women led the change, transforming lives & landscapes.

Link: <https://x.com/i/status/1788089816216711592>

Empowering women through socio-technical innovations: A case study of women-led climate resilient farming by Swayam Shikshan Prayog

This study by SSP and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) aims to fill the research gap in the limited focus on the lived experiences of women farmers by examining the specific challenges faced, providing critical insights for targeted interventions.

The study explores how Socio-Technical Innovation Bundles (STIBs) integrated into SSP's WCRF model contribute to building the resilience and empowerment of women farmers in Dharashiv district in the region. By comprehending the dynamics and interaction of STIBs, it aims to contribute substantively to the discourse on empowering marginalized women farmers in the face of agrarian challenges and climate change impacts.

Link: <https://www.indiawaterportal.org/articles/empowering-women-through-socio-technical-innovations?>

Highlights of the Quarter

Women-Led Climate Resilient Farming

SSP's Women-led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF) model attempts to reposition women as farmers, leaders and change agents who adopt food secure and climate smart practices on their farms. Along with being mindful of the natural resources, it improves productivity, increases income, enhances health and nutrition of the family and builds resilience.

Awareness Raising

SSP conducted farmer literacy and awareness raising meetings in 10 villages in Wayanad, Kerala, to create awareness on the importance of climate resilient farming, sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurship and health and nutrition. These meetings were attended by over 657 women farmers.

Training on Climate Resilient Farming

13,552 women farmers from Osmanabad and Latur District of Maharashtra, Wayanad District of Kerala and Bidar District of Karnataka were trained on SSP's WCRF Model. This included technical training on topics such as on seed germination tests, vermicomposting, water conservation, soil testing, and livelihood diversification. Field visits were conducted to demonstrate best practices in integrated organic farming and WCRF implementation. In Kerala, 628 women farmers from 10 villages participated in field visits as part of their WCRF training.

SSP also organised advanced training sessions on the WCRF model for 3,024 Community Resource Persons (CRPs), Mentors and Trainers from Latur and Nanded Districts of Maharashtra and Bidar Districts of Karnataka, to enhance promotion of climate resilient agricultural practices amongst the community. 10 CRPs from Bidar District, Karnataka visited 'demo farms' in Latur, Maharashtra to observe implementation of the WCRF model, livelihood diversification activities and interact with empowered women leaders.



Implementation of WCRF Model

3,165 new women farmers started implementing the WCRF model on their farms. This included a shift from cash crops to nutritious vegetables, grains and pulses, along with creation and use of organic fertilisers and other bio inputs. Farmers also installed vermicompost beds on their farms and started fodder cultivation for livestock rearing.

SSP also supported 1000 women farmers in 500 villages of Osmanabad District of Maharashtra and 10 women farmers in Bidar District of Karnataka to set up model farms as learning and demonstration sites of best practices in the WCRF model.



Organised Campaigns

SSP organised Soil Testing Campaigns in Wayanad District of Kerala and Latur District of Maharashtra. In Kerala, the campaign was organised in partnership with the Kerala Soil Survey & Soil Conservation Department in 11 villages of Kottathara Gram Panchayat in Wayanad District, Kerala. A total of 305 women farmers received soil health cards, providing information on soil nutrient levels, pH statistics, and crop-specific fertilizer recommendations. In Maharashtra, the campaign took place in 30 villages, with 274 women farmers conducting soil testing to promote more targeted and informed farming decisions.

SSP also partnered with Kerala government's Agriculture Insurance Company (AIC) to facilitate registration for the weather based Crop Insurance Scheme, in an attempt to mitigate farming losses due to unpredictable weather conditions. The campaign was attended by over 200 women farmers from 10 villages of Kottathara Gram Panchayat in Wayanad, Kerala and led to more than 50 farmers successfully registering for the crop insurance scheme.

In Osmanabad District of Maharashtra, 500 women farmers also accessed bio-seed treatment kits at subsidised rates from the Manjari Sakhi Farmer Producer Company, supported by SSP, and used it to improve seed quality.



Weather Advisory Service

SSP is now providing weekly Weather-based Advisory Services to 656 women farmers from 10 villages in Wayanad, Kerala. Through Whatsapp Groups, weather advisories by Indian Meteorological Department and the Plant Health Clinic, Kerala, and general crop advisories from the Kerala Agricultural University are summarised and shared with farmers. This initiative is empowering farmers with timely information to plan their cultivation practices effectively, adjusting strategies in response to weather forecasts like sudden rainfall and storms.

Peer Learning Exchange

SSP organised a Peer Learning Exchange between women farmers in Osmanabad and Nanded Districts of Maharashtra. On June 2, 2024, 54 women farmers, associated with SSP from 10 villages in the Kandhar Block of Nanded District, visited experienced farmers and entrepreneurs in Washi Block of Osmanabad District. The newly engaged women visited farms where SSP's Women-led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF) model was being implemented, along with sustainable water management and soil conservation. They also had a chance to interact and observe the functioning of various agri-allied businesses like poultry rearing, goat rearing, fruit orchard cultivation and milk collection operated by rural women.



Technical Training with Partners

SSP's Wayanad team organised two technical trainings in partnership with Sai Agro Innovations Research Foundation and MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Kerala. These training, including visits to demonstration sites, was attended by 27 women farmers from Kottathara Gram Panchayat in Wayanad attended these trainings on the theme of climate-resilient farming through techniques such as vertical gardening, seed preservation and organic farming.

Government Scheme Convergence

SSP supported 247 women farmers from Latur and Osmanabad Districts in accessing agriculture-related government schemes, through which they received seeds, pesticide kits, vermicompost beds, and irrigation infrastructure.

Advocacy Workshops

SSP organised a Block Advocacy Workshop attended by 168 women farmers from 10 villages in Kandhar Block of Nanded District, Maharashtra. The workshop was attended by government officials from various departments including the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, ATMA, Veterinary Departments and local Bank Officers, who shared information on how to access relevant government schemes that would benefit women farmers.

Yashodha Raman's Journey to Empower Women Farmers in Maravayal, Kerala



Yashodha Raman is a grassroots woman farmer and leader, belonging to the Kurichya tribal community from Maravayal in Wayanad District of Kerala. After the devastating floods of 2018, Yashodha and her husband both lost their jobs, as their livelihoods were dependent on agriculture. As agriculture became an unviable livelihood option, members of Yashodha's community have migrated from traditional methods of agriculture to daily-wage labour in nearby plantations over the years.

When SSP began to work in her village, Yashodha took the lead in forming the Sakhi Farmers group, made up of 10 women, in her village. In 2020, Yashodha's group identified a small barren plot of land belonging to one of their group members and decided to cultivate it collectively. Using sustainable methods of organic farming, they cultivated vegetables like brinjal, lady's finger, tomatoes, cabbage, and green chilli. The harvested produce was divided amongst the group members for household consumption.

Over the years Yashodha has emerged as a leader in her village, advocating for the rights of women farmers. She engages with local government officials and other community leaders. She regularly attends dialogues organised by SSP and has successfully negotiated access to inputs like seeds for her women's farmers group. When Maravayal was beset by a pest attack, Yashodha successfully negotiated with the local Agriculture Department to provide farmers with technical training on the production of bio-pesticides and bio-insecticides to protect their crops. Today, under the guidance and mentorship of Yashodha, 10 farmers in her village have cultivated vegetable gardens to promote their family's health and nutrition.

Rohini Dhole, from Nagewadi village in Bhoom Block of Dharashiv District is supporting farmers in her village to shift to climate-smart farming methods.



Belonging to a small landholding family, Rohini and her husband engaged in the cultivation of cash crops like Soyabean and Sugarcane on their 4 acre farm. However, uncertain monsoons and repeated droughts has put the family in a precarious economic situation. In 2022, SSP began to work in Rohini's village and she learnt about the Women-led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF) model, food security and conservation of natural resources.

Inspired by the training, Rohini negotiated with her husband and installed a vermicompost bed on her farm. She also began to practice organic farming on a small part of their farm, planting pulses, grains and vegetables for both household consumption and sale in the market. Rohini's farming practices were very successful, leading to her gaining the confidence of both her family and the community. In 2023, Rohini earned an income of over 1.6 Lakhs from her organic farming initiatives.

Not limited to only benefiting her family, Rohini also began to work as a Sakhi in her village. She developed her piece of land as a demonstration plot, using it to teach other farmers best practices in sustainable, organic and climate-smart agriculture. Rohini also carried out a detailed survey of 213 women farmers in her village to understand cropping patterns and water use. On the basis of those findings, which showed a heavy leaning towards cash crops like soybean and intensive water consumption, she started pushing women to venture into diversified food crop farming which required less water and improved household health and nutrition.

Today 16 other farmers have installed vermicompost beds in their farms and over 100 women farmers are implementing the one-acre model on their farms. More recently, Rohini has been promoting the installation of biogas units on farms, with an aim to shift to clean energy sources.

Women's Entrepreneurship and Value Chain Development

SSP, through its entrepreneurship development program, has supported and mentored thousands of women to start and scale up businesses by creating Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) for rural value chain development.

Awareness Raising

In the Wayanad District of Kerala and Latur District of Maharashtra, SSP reached out to 19,620 women farmers through awareness raising sessions that focused on livelihood diversification farming, opportunities in agri and non-agri allied businesses and fostering women leadership. These women were mobilised to attend SSP's EDP training and start small-scale income generating activities. SSP also created awareness amongst 350 women entrepreneurs in Osmanabad District on financial institutions and credit linkages to scale up business activities.

In the last quarter, SSP created a network of whatsapp groups in 189 villages in Latur, Solapur and Pune districts of Maharashtra, to facilitate easy dialogue and communication between women leaders and share information about government schemes and other opportunities.

Entrepreneurship Training and Support

1,302 women farmers from Wayanad, Kerala, and 14,210 women farmers from Osmanabad, Latur, Nanded, Pune and Solapur Districts of Maharashtra participated were trained on livelihood diversification, income generation, digital literacy, business orientation and financial management as part of SSP's Basic Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP).

Meanwhile, 125 women entrepreneurs from Wayanad, Kerala participated in Advanced EDP training to further build domain specific entrepreneurship capacities. Mentorship and handholding support continued to be provided by senior Sakhis and leaders to new and emerging entrepreneurs.

In Osmanabad District, 102 women also participated in training on micro-enterprise promotion, focusing on building capacities in credit linkages and support.



Livelihood Diversification

7,877 women from Jalna, Latur, Solapur and Pune Districts of Maharashtra started one or more small scale businesses in the last quarter and became financially independent. They diversified to both agri-allied and non-agri allied businesses like dairy, goat rearing, grocery store, flour mill and spice production. Women also efficiently managed their businesses using financial tools and gained the capacity to access markets for purchase and sale of products. Women also started using digital financial management and bookkeeping software, online payment and banking systems to run their businesses.



Dialogue Meetings

SSP organised cluster level dialogues for 40 women entrepreneurs from Akkalkot Block of Solapur District, Maharashtra. These meetings provided opportunities for cross-learning, and women were able to discuss various challenges faced in operating businesses. They also interacted with government officials from various departments, gaining knowledge on relevant schemes to promote their businesses.

Government Scheme Convergence

SSP supported 286 women from Latur District in Maharashtra in accessing government schemes amounting to Rs. 1,27,63,580. These schemes provided women entrepreneurs and farmers with inputs like manufacturing units, sprinklers, and seeds.



Credit Linkages

50 women entrepreneurs from Nanded District also accessed loans amounting to a total of Rs. 54,00,000 from Maharashtra Gram Bank and State Bank of India through the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFMPE) Scheme to scale up their enterprises.

Meanwhile, in Latur District of Maharashtra, 350 women entrepreneurs were able to access credit worth Rs. 1,22,46,000 from government schemes like the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), CMEGP and the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY). 1103 women were also able to access funds amounting to Rs. 1,04,80,000 through Samhita-CGF's Returnable Grants.

In Osmanabad District, SSP supported 67 women entrepreneurs in applying for business proposals through the government's DIC portal. Out of these 4 credit loans were sanctioned, amounting to Rs.3,99,000.



Community Enterprise Fund

In Jalna District, SSP supported distribution of the Community Enterprise Fund (CEF) to 112 women entrepreneurs worth Rs. 47,70,000 for scaling up their businesses in the last quarter. The CEF is designed to deliver loans to entrepreneurs to satisfy their entrepreneurial needs with very small interest rates. It helps to enhance credit worthiness of the village entrepreneurs and also showcase the ability of the community institution led enterprise capital provisions to demonstrate disciplined credit behavior. This will also enhance bank's confidence in the unorganized sector. The Sanskruti Mahila Taluka Sansadhan Kendra (BRC), Bhokardan also approved business loans worth Rs. 46,00,000 based on 168 business plans, to be distributed in the next quarter.

Capacity Building of FPO leaders

SSP organised 18 training sessions for 205 Directors, Promoters, Mentors and Members of the Keravriksha FPO in Wayanad, Kerala. The training focused on strategic business development, product promotion and marketing.

Sakhi Flour Mill in Wayanad, Kerala

The Keravriksha Farmer Producer Organisation, which started operations of the Sakhi Flour Mill this quarter, represents a significant milestone for women farmers and shareholders in Kottathara Gram Panchayat. Currently 100 producers are benefiting from the flour mills activities, as shareholders can access the mill at fair and affordable rates. As a result of easy access to an affordable flour mill, producers have expanded their product offerings, and scaled up sales of various grinded products like coffee powder, spices and various flours.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In Jalna District of Maharashtra, SSP's team is conducting a comprehensive data collection exercise to track entrepreneurship information, including enterprise performance. In the last quarter, income data of 1300 women entrepreneurs was tracked, as part of SSP's continuous monitoring process. Meanwhile in Latur, Solapur and Pune districts, SSP's team collected baseline data and profiles of 13,694 women entrepreneurs. Data on business plans, attendance in meetings etc. is also being stored for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Trailblazing Work of the Sarayi Sakhi Producer Company in Bhoom Block of Osmanabad District, Maharashtra

In the drought-prone Bhoom Block of Osmanabad District, highlights of the work of the women farmer-led Sarayi Sakhi Farmer Producer Organisation in the last quarter include:

Creation of Demonstration Plots

The Sarayi Sakhi FPO successfully leased 5 acres of land in Bhawanwadi Village in Bhoom Block to establish a millet farming demonstration farm. Through this initiative, the FPO aims to promote climate resilient farming and revive the millet farming culture in Bhoom, an area where traditional millet crops have been replaced by cash crops and water-intensive agriculture.

Seed Capital for Business Development

The Sarayi Sakhi FPO provided seed capital of Rs.10,000 through revolving grants to 51 women farmers from Bhoom Block who have launched their own businesses across different sectors.

Value Chain Promotion Meetings

SSP and the Sarayi Sakhi FPO organised three value chain promotion meetings in Bhoom Block, attended by 277 women farmers. The event created awareness on the importance of farmer producer groups and enabled the FPO to promote their products while also attracting new members to the flaxseed and ghee production value chain.

Dialogue Workshops

With the support of SSP, the Sarayi Sakhi FPO organised one block-level dialogue workshop in Bhoom, Osmanabad to share information on livelihoods and agriculture related government schemes with 110 women farmers. The event also facilitated dialogue and interaction between the women and representatives of the Block Agriculture Office, allowing participants to voice their concerns and learn collaboratively.

Government Collaboration

The Sarayi Sakhi FPO established a partnership with the Bhoom Block ATMA Department, securing a project under the Panjabrao Deshmukh Naisargik Sheti initiative. Through this initiative, the FPO will train 500 women, collectively managing 1250 acres of land, in organic farming practices. For effective implementation, these women have already been organised into 50 women farmer groups. At the conclusion of the three-year period, these women will receive a formal certification in organic farming from the government.

Clean Energy

Needs Assessment Survey

To further expand the Clean Energy Program in Gaya and Nalanda Districts of Bihar, SSP conducted a Needs Assessment Survey and Focus Group Discussions to understand community awareness on climate change and clean energy solutions. SSP's team reached out to a total of 1,28,242 farmers, women youth and Gram Panchayat members from 102 villages in April 2024.

Clean Energy Sakhis

In Bihar, 20 Sakhis were trained in the Clean Energy Entrepreneurship Model, starting their clean energy business and scaling up SSP's work to 200 new villages. In Maharashtra, 47 Sakhis were trained to improve their communications and business skills. These Sakhis carried out last mile promotion in 519 villages, leading to installation of 1008 biodigesters, and earning a total of Rs. 12.24 Lakhs through the sale of biodigesters, clean energy products and fixed income.



Government Scheme Convergence

SSP organised meetings with the Agriculture Extension Officers In Osmanabad and Latur Districts to explore opportunities for increasing outreach of biodigesters through government scheme convergence. SSP also organised a district-wise virtual orientation session with Sakhis in Maharashtra on the new Carbon Finance Scheme.

Empowering Change: Megha Bodale Leads the Clean Energy Transition in Shingadgaon, Maharashtra



Megha Bodale, from Maharashtra's Solapur District, has been embracing cost-saving clean energy technologies since joining SSP in 2022. Initially hesitant, with the support of SSP's women leaders, she convinced her husband and in-laws to install a biogas unit on their farm. The benefits were quickly apparent. Cooking for 25 people on wood and gas stoves produced a lot of smoke, causing coughing and eye irritation among the children. Owing to the biogas unit, the family fully transitioned away from wood-burning stoves. By 2023, Megha's family was saving Rs. 18,000 annually due to reduced reliance on LPG cylinders. She also convinced her family to use the leftover "biogas slurry" as a natural fertilizer on their farm and started cultivating vegetables for household consumption on their 2 acres of land. Growing a variety of fruits and vegetables, the family now saves around INR 2,000 per month by producing their own food. Using this slurry in their banana and lemon orchards, they reduced their use of chemical fertilisers and other inputs, saving INR 19,000.

Megha plans to inspire more women in her village to adopt bio-farming practices and aims to transform their 20-acre farm into a model of sustainable farming. Her story is one of embracing clean energy solutions and building a more sustainable future for her family and the community.

Water Conservation

Training and Awareness Raising

SSP's team conducted awareness raising activities on the theme of watershed management and conservation in 50 new villages from Osmanabad District of Maharashtra. They also distributed training manuals on water conservation, climate-resilient and sustainable farming to 500 Sakhis from 6 blocks in Osmanabad District of Maharashtra. The objective was to create awareness and increase knowledge of best practices amongst women farmers.

In Wayanad, SSP conducted training and awareness raising on water conservation schemes with 750 women from Kottathara Gram Panchayat, through which could access inputs such as sprinklers and drip.

Government Scheme Convergence

SSP partnered with the Maharashtra government to implement the Gaalmukt Dharan and Gaalyukt Shivar Yojana (GDGS) in Osmanabad District. During this quarter, desiltation work was done in 2 villages as part of this scheme.



Kaushalya's Pandhavlle is paving the way for water security and conservation in Irla village, located in the drought-prone Osmanabad District of Maharashtra

With a poor rainfall for the past two years, farmers in Kaushalya's village were being forced to convert to rainfed agriculture, as borewells, which supported irrigation, dried up. After attending SSP's training In 2023, Kaushalya began an intensive campaign to create awareness and sensitise her community on the importance and benefits of watershed management. This included reaching out to over 500 women farmers through regular meetings, household visits as well as dialogues with the Gram Panchayat to gain support from the Sarpanch and other village leaders. As a result, 9 farmers built farm ponds in their fields in 2023 with the support of SSP, which collected and stored rainwater, while also recharging groundwater. The benefits of these were immediate, with farmers able to grow vegetables and pulses in the Rabi season, which require more water.

In 2024, Kaushalya and SSP's technical team began a sunken pond initiative in the Terna river which flows through Irla village, with the aim of harvesting rainwater and improving groundwater levels. Within a few months, these sunken ponds had collected a small amount of water which was being used by the entire community to water their animals. Working with farmers, Kaushalya also linked them with the Chief Minister's Sustainable Agriculture Irrigation Scheme, through which they can build farm ponds on their land. So far, one farm pond has been constructed through government scheme convergence, while others are in the pipeline.

Kaushalya has emerged as a well-respected leader in her community, who has recognised the importance of her work. More farmers are now willing to set aside some land for creating rainwater harvesting structures. Kaushalya's dream is to make her village fully water- secure, so the impacts of climate change like irregular rainfall and more frequent droughts do not debilitate farmers.

Women's Empowerment and Leadership Development



Awareness Raising and Capacity Building

SSP organised awareness raising sessions with 2500 women from Osmanabad District of Maharashtra and Wayanad District of Kerala. These sessions focused on orienting grassroots rural women on women's rights, land ownership, food security and leadership development.

In Osmanabad, Nanded, Solapur and Latur Districts of Maharashtra, SSP organised advanced leadership training for 5000 women leaders belonging to 500 Village Action Groups in the last quarter. These trainings focused on developing VAG members' capacities to collaborate with local government officials and community leaders to access benefits, schemes and develop pathways to address issues that affect the most vulnerable members of the community.

Land Rights Campaign

SSP's Sakhis carried out mobilisation activities across Latur District of Maharashtra and Wayanad District of Kerala, to orient households and women farmers on the importance of land ownership. 97 women farmers from Latur obtained formal land titles as a result of this campaign, giving them land security and more decision making power.

In Wayanad, SSP built women's leadership capacities and knowledge of land rights. As a result 19 tribal women from the marginalised Paniya Community came forward to borrow land from landowners to carry out vegetable cultivation.

Dialogue Meetings

SSP organised network meetings in Kerala and Maharashtra, connecting grassroots women leaders to one another and giving them an opportunity to engage in discussions and dialogues on their achievements and challenges that they faced in their day-to-day work. These meetings were attended by over 1171 women leaders in total.

Collaboration with Gram Panchayat

SSP carried out a tree plantation campaign in 10 villages of Nanded District, in partnership with local Gram Panchayats. This campaign, attended by 122 people, aimed to create awareness on environmental issues within communities. A total of 2000 trees were also planted by volunteers and Sakhis during this campaign.

Mahila Mahiti Kendra

SSP facilitated the establishment of 3 Mahila Mahiti Kendras in Nanded District of Maharashtra. These centres act as platforms for women to discuss their problems, look for solutions together, and share information on government schemes and training.

Government Scheme Convergence

SSP organised meetings with the Agriculture Extension Officers In Osmanabad and Latur Districts to explore opportunities for increasing outreach of biodigesters through government scheme convergence. SSP also organised a district-wise virtual orientation session with Sakhis in Maharashtra on the new Carbon Finance Scheme.



Health, Nutrition and Sanitation

Awareness Raising

SSP organised awareness raising sessions on health and nutrition, focusing on the importance of a healthy and balanced diet, malnutrition, cultivation of kitchen gardens, cleanliness and hygiene. These sessions reached out to a total of 15,556 women from Nanded and Washim District of Maharashtra and Wayanad District of Kerala.

SSP also organised an exposure visit for 60 women leaders and Gram Panchayat members from Nanded District to the Patoda Gram Panchayat, a model village, in Aurangabad District of Maharashtra.



Training on Health, Nutrition and Sanitation

SSP conducted advanced training with 1,105 Arogya Sakhis, Community Resource Persons (CRPs) and Aanganwadi Workers to develop their capacities as master trainers.

SSP also facilitated the formation of youth groups in 30 villages in Nanded District of Maharashtra, to create awareness on issues of health, nutrition and sanitation within their communities. A total of 360 young boys and girls were trained in the last quarter.

Nutrition Gardens

SSP supported 6,515 women farmers from Washim and Nanded District of Maharashtra in creating nutrition gardens through the distribution of seed kits in 250 villages.

Monitoring and Evaluation

SSP's team conducted monitoring of field activities through continuous data collection. A total of 8161 households were surveyed in the last quarter.



Suvarna Ambatkar, from Anji Mothi village in Wardha District, Maharashtra, is a grassroots woman leader working to make her village food secure by improving farming practices and community health.

In early 2024, Suvarna engaged with SSP's work on women's empowerment and climate-resilient farming. Attending training sessions on sustainable farming and household nutrition, she began sharing her knowledge with the community. She organized meetings and household visits, raising awareness about climate change, sustainable farming, and health. Her leadership inspired many women farmers to change their farming methods and daily food habits. Over 100 women farmers conducted seed germination tests, prioritized local seeds, reduced chemical fertilizers, and shifted to homemade organic inputs. Landless women cultivated kitchen gardens in pots and bottles for household vegetables.

Suvarna's impact extends beyond the 30 women she directly works with, as many other women farmers seek her guidance and training. Recently, she used her knowledge about the dangers of child marriage to mobilize village authorities and government officials to stop an instance of child marriage. When asked about her future plans, Suvarna says, "I want to work towards making my village healthier, where people are not dependent on chemicals for farming but have moved towards sustainable methods."



SSP's MIS System

SSP is continuing to strengthen its MIS system, with field staff entering data on entrepreneurs and farmers to monitor progress, ensure accuracy and manage data effectively. To enhance project monitoring, SSP has implemented a detailed form-level dashboard for daily activity tracking. Five new projects have been added to the MGrant Portal, with data of 3000 farmers and entrepreneurs entered in the last quarter. Further SSP has also developed an in-house MIS system to collect baseline data, attendance records and profiles of women leaders, which is integrated with the dashboard.

Outreach: April - June 2024

Program Input	Outreach
Number of Farmers Participated on WCRF trainings	33,606
Number of Trainings conducted on WCRF Model	612
Number of Farmers Awareness Meetings Conducted	69
Number of farmers participated in Awareness meetings	1,050
Entrepreneurs Mobilisation	3,250
Number of EDP trainings conducted	91
Number of Entrepreneurs participated in EDP trainings	2,302
Number of Advance trainings conducted	0
Dialogue workshops	1
Agriculture and Nutrition training/Nutrition awareness	30
Network Meetings	7
No. of VAG leaders trained through leadership trainings	5,000
Farmers Mobilisation	332
Advocacy Workshop	1

Major Events

Round Table on “Pathways for Integrating Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture

On April 12th, 2024, SSP participated in the half-day Round Table Consultation organised by GIZ, in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development, Maharashtra, focusing on the projects Securing Nutrition, Enhancing Resilience (SENU) and Sustainability and Value Addition in Agricultural Supply Chains (Pro-Agri-Chains). The event was attended by various dignitaries, including Mr. Vijay Kshirsagar and Ms. Sangeeta, Deputy Commissioners of ICDS MH; and Ms. Trupti Mishra, Deputy Manager at NABARD. Other participants included project representatives from ICDS Nandurbar and ICDS Washim, including DPOs, Supervisors, Anganwadi workers, as well as representatives from GIZ India, WHH India, SSP, DSC, Welspun Foundation, and volunteers of SENU Poshanam Abhiyan. The event also presented an opportunity for SSP’s team to share the work they were doing in Washim District and interact with decision-makers and other implementing partners.

World Environmental Day Celebrations on June 5th, 2024

On the occasion of World Environment Day, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Wayanad, distributed five different saplings to 400 students at Valal AUP School, Kottathara. Through this initiative, young students were encouraged to continue their efforts toward greening and protecting the environment for a sustainable future.

120 women leaders from 11 villages in Kottathara Gram Panchayat carried out tree plantation drives on World Environment Day, planting fruit trees along with Gram Panchayat members at health centers, anganwadis and community halls. They also discussed the importance of embracing sustainable farming practices for environment conservation.

Knowledge Exchange Workshop on Low External-Input and Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA) and Agroecology

Swayam Shikshan Prayog participated in a two-day workshop focusing on effective ways for organizations to manage and disseminate knowledge on LEISA and agroecology in the community by empowering smallholder farmers to adopt sustainable methods, at Bangalore from June 20th to 21st, 2024.

The workshop focused on the best ways to develop a mechanism and network to streamline the knowledge and experience developed by small holder farmers across India. The healthy discussions and reflections paved the way for the future on how the partners of Misereor and other CSOs, as well as small holder farmers, to develop a network for exchanging best practices, and new emerging knowledge in agro ecology.

Apart from the SSP team, key persons from The Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECOEDECON), Rajasthan, Key Stone Foundation, Tamil Nadu, and AME Foundation, Bangalore actively participated and provided valuable feedback.

This initiative was supported by Misereor to strengthen the two way communication and knowledge systems in agroecology.



Empowering Grassroots Women: SSP's Role in Transformative Change Through Fair For All Program

On June 26, 2024, SSP joined a virtual Peer Learning Event organised under the Fair For All program. The event focused on the empowerment of grassroots women and their leadership to bring about transformative and systemic change in value chains. With over 50 participants from the Philippines, Myanmar, Indonesia, India, Netherlands, Brazil, Kenya, and Uganda, the event was an opportunity to build global and regional networks, exchange best practices, and participate in peer learning with grassroots practitioners from around the globe.

Dilshad Tamboli, a grassroots woman leader, farmer, and entrepreneur from Shelka Dhanora village in Dharashiv District of Maharashtra, and a Board Member of the women-led Sarayi Sakhi Farmer Producer Organisation, was a panellist. During the event, Dilshad shared how SSP is organising women into inclusive Village Action Groups (VAGs) to drive community development. These women leaders collaborate closely with local village institutions and government authorities to ensure that women from the most marginalised and vulnerable communities have access to rights and entitlements. Moreover, these VAGs empower women farmers to adopt sustainable and climate-resilient farming methods, facilitate linkages to credit and schemes for value addition of organic products, and create strong producer networks to develop women-led rural value chains in sectors such as dairy, spices, eggs, pulses, and vegetables.



PANEL MEMBERS				KEYNOTE RESPONSE
				
SUSAN GAMWINO Senior Program Officer, Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare UGANDA	DILSHAD TAMBOLI Grassroots leader and Director, Sarayi Sakhi Producer Company INDIA	EMMY ASTUTI Director, Association for Women in Small- Mikro Business Assistance INDONESIA	MRS. KHAM YIN Director, Shan Women's Development Network MYANMAR	ADONG JOSEPHINE Grassroots leader, passionate about WEE, women leadership, and women rights UGANDA
F4A Fair for All WEE Women's Economic COP Empowerment Community of Practice				MODERATOR
PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING SERIES: PATHWAY 1 WOMEN GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT: Leading Transformative and Systems Change in Value Chains				FIONA JARDEN Senior Women's Economic Justice Advisor, Oxfam Novib 

In the Media

Life: A journey defined by struggle

"Struggles are not just isolated events but an ongoing aspect of life that must be embraced and overcome"

Read about Vaishali Gughe, from Andur Village in Osmanabad District of Maharashtra, and her inspiring journey, as she joined SSP and transformed into an entrepreneur and leader.

Link: https://womeninagri.com/content_page.php?id=16

A cohesive ecosystem to support innovations for small and marginal landholding

Many similar impact programs exist in India to help various states consolidate and integrate small and marginal landholding farmers into a more cohesive system. Programs such as the Uttar Pradesh Accelerator PRAGATI, the Swayam Shikshan Prayog based out of the Marathwada region, PRADAN working in central and eastern Indian states, etc., are some examples that have created a step-by-step solution to solve various issues of the small and marginal farming community.

Link: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/startups/a-cohesive-ecosystem-to-support-innovations-for-small-and-marginal-landholding/articleshow/110397774.cms>

Cultivating grit and harvesting resilience

Read the journey of the 25,000 women who overcame structural barriers with integrated community support, and technical and social solutions. Women of Marathwada were able to diversify incomes, assert cultivation rights, and engage with government programs, fostering economic resilience and empowerment despite socio-cultural challenges.

Read more: https://bit.ly/4bRIBC4?trk=public_post-text

Indian Women Farmers: Digital Tools For Greater Participation

SSP's work on promoting digital literacy amongst women entrepreneurs has been highlighted in a two-blog series by Misereor. The articles discuss how women are using digital technologies to improve financial management and scale-up their business through online marketing and promotion.

Link to Part 1: <https://blog.misereor.de/2024/05/29/indische-farmerinnen-digitale-tools-fuer-mehr-teilhabe-teil-i/>

Link to Part 2: <https://blog.misereor.de/2024/05/29/indische-farmerinnen-digitale-tools-fuer-mehr-teilhabe-ii/>

SSP's Guiding Principles

Swayam Shikshan Prayog:

- Is dedicated to empowering women by providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to become agents of change in their communities.
- Strives to promote gender equality and challenge societal norms and practices that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and inequality.
- Works towards creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for women, enabling them to achieve economic independence and improve their quality of life.
- Aims to build resilient communities that are equipped to tackle challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, and socio-economic disparities.
- Engages in advocacy efforts to influence policies and practices at the local, national, and international levels, ensuring that the voices and needs of women are heard and addressed.
- Focuses on building the capacity of women leaders and their organisations (FPO) to implement effective and sustainable development initiatives, fostering leadership and collective action.
- Is committed to innovation and continuous learning, exploring new approaches and strategies to enhance the impact of its programs and initiatives.
- Believes in the power of partnerships and collaboration and works closely with government agencies, NGOs, civil society organisations, corporate companies and other stakeholders to achieve its goals.



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State Rural Livelihoods Mission-UMED.

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