



SHRAMIK ABHIVRUDHI SANGH

(JANA JAGARAN)



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Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh

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SAS Annual Report Summary 2023-2024

Background of SAS: Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh (SAS) locally known as Jana Jagaran (JJ) is a registered Society under the Karnataka Societies' Registration Act. It is a voluntary, non-profit organization working for the integral development of the socio-economically disadvantaged sections of society. Its area of operation presently consists of Belagavi and Kolhapur District of Maharashtra. It works for the rights of people to sufficient and nutritious food, good health, education, employment and a dwelling place in a clean and healthy environment with opportunity to participate in the decision making process that affects their lives. Hence its development strategy is to use the available resources for the empowerment of the common masses of people and to bring about lasting improvements in the economic, social, cultural and environmental spheres. It works with all people of good will irrespective of their religious, caste and political affiliations. All its initiatives are for creating the conditions necessary for strengthening the village communities and enabling the rural population to live in a clean and healthy environment. Its strategy is awakening and empowering the poor to assert their rights and gain confidence and power to take control of their lives.

The organization strives to implement Universal Apostolic Priorities UAP along with Province Apostolic Priorities PAP while actualizing Universal Sustainable Goals (SDGs).

It believes that at the heart of 'sustainable development' is the 'human' development, involving investment of resources and time, harnessing the energies and aspirations of the people and developing in them skills and capabilities in order to develop themselves and contribute to the wider community. To achieve that SAS provides the overarching inspiration, guidance and vitality and initiates field activities. Since the last 45 years SAS has been implementing a number of initiatives for Integral Rural Development with highly satisfactory outcome.

A). Capacity building of SAS Staff: The SAS staff carried on the project structured and collaborative approach in their monthly meetings, focusing on the planning and evaluation of human rights and training activities. These meetings served as a platform for discussing upcoming events, selecting pertinent training topics, and brainstorming potential resource persons who can deliver impactful trainings to beneficiaries. The meticulous planning extends to logistical details such as venue selection, scheduling, and determining participant numbers, ensuring smooth execution of each event. Additionally, responsibilities were evenly distributed among staff members, fostering a strong sense of teamwork and shared commitment to the project's success. Suggestions for enhancement were carefully noted and integrated into future training sessions. Moreover, the staff monthly submitted detailed reports, data, and case studies, which aided to maintaining transparency and accountability. SAS organized 10 staff *14 days of Capacity Building Activity

B). SHG Monthly Meetings: The SAS staff successfully conducted monthly meetings with a vast network of 1086 SHGs. This resulted in a remarkable total of 11,662 meetings, engaging 151,102 individuals. These interactions were crucial in overseeing the financial aspects of the SHGs, including monitoring savings, loans, and interest rates, and effectively linking the groups with banking institutions or NRLM loans for income-generating activities. Moreover, these meetings served as vital forums for discussing broader societal changes and preparing the SHG members to face the challenges of the modern world. This collective empowerment enabled them to assertively claim their rights and resist societal injustices, thereby not only transforming their individual lives but also making a substantial impact on the broader community. The SAS staff's meticulous and empathetic approach thus catalyzed a movement of social change and empowerment among rural women, echoing the core values of mutual help, self-reliance, and concern for social justice.

C). Capacity Building Training for SHG: During the past project year, SAS undertook a comprehensive Capacity Building (CB) program, significantly expanding its reach to empower rural communities. This initiative included training schedule spanning 24 days, directly involving 3416 members from 368 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across 100 villages. This marked a substantial increase in participation, reflecting the growing impact and outreach of the program. The meticulously designed training modules covered a wide array of topics, all aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of core human values, enhancing personal development, and promoting human rights based approach. The impact of the training was profound, not only benefiting the participants but also inspiring them to unite with their neighbors in times of need, fostering a sense of community solidarity. The program stood as a testament to the power of education and collective action in transforming lives and societies.

D). SHG Leaders Training: Through the project year 2023, SAS staff successfully orchestrated a series of 10 specialized training sessions for 721 experienced leaders of 361 Self-Help Groups (SHGs), surpassing their initial target for engaging SHG leaders. This accomplishment underscored the commitment and capability of the SAS team in enhancing the skills and leadership qualities of SHG leaders. Notably, in an effort to ease the excess expenses of the training, some SHGs demonstrated commendable initiative by contributing in-kind to these meetings. This gesture not only helped in cost reduction but also fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among the SHG members. Their development into proactive agents of change not only benefited their respective SHGs but also had a wider impact on community development and empowerment, exemplifying the success of SAS's training initiative.

E). Training on Government Entitlements: To convey this critical information effectively, SAS staff diligently coordinated with an array of government department officials. This diverse group of resource persons included Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Department Officers, Anganwadi teachers, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, Circle Development Panchayat Officers, Gram Panchayat members and Presidents, bank managers, Panchayat Development Officers, Taluka health officers, and the Joint Director of the Social Welfare Department. Their expertise provided participants with an in-depth understanding of various schemes, legal proceedings, necessary documentation, and entitlements based on caste and economic status.

MGNREGA: The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been a significant tool in providing employment and enhancing rural livelihoods in India. The involvement of SAS in motivating 33,481 individuals from 118 villages to apply for MGNREGA work and the subsequent employment of 28,399 people is a testament to their effective mobilization and support strategies. These workers contributed to 1,739,403 man-days of labor, earning wages and implement rents totaling a substantial sum of Rs. 556,608,960. This not only provided immediate financial relief but also contributed to long-term community development and environmental conservation. **NRLM:** (National Rural Livelihood Mission) is a poverty alleviation project implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. In 2023, Through SAS's efforts, a remarkable number of SHGs engaged with 466 SHGs from 85 villages applied for the scheme, with 266 successfully receiving funds for Income Generating Activities (IGA). This achievement marked a significant step in boosting the economic self-sufficiency of these rural communities. SAS's involvement not only bridged the gap between the NRLM scheme and rural beneficiaries but also underscored the importance of streamlining implementation processes for such poverty alleviation programs.

F). Para Legal training for local grassroots leaders: SAS organized in the project period, 4 training program for 244 participants focusing on legal awareness, especially for women, with an emphasis on making complex legal topics accessible to everyone. The resource persons, including lawyers and police officers, were fluent in local languages like Marathi and Kannada, which was crucial for effective communication. The topics covered were diverse and significant, including the Preamble of the Indian Constitution, Women's Rights, Registration of Birth and Death, Legal Age of Marriage, Rights to Property, Laws specific to Adolescent Girls and Women, Women's Legal Rights, Police Protection, and Strategies to Handle Violence against Women. The training methodology was interactive, incorporating talks, group discussions, and question-and-answer sessions. This approach allowed participants to engage deeply with the content and clarify their doubts.

G). Training in Women's Rights/Empowerment SHG members: SAS organized 7 trainings for 576 women from 43 new members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), focusing on a wide range of topics for community empowerment and personal development. The training began with an overview of SAS's goals and objectives, providing participants with a clear understanding of the organization's mission. This was followed by detailed sessions on the rules and regulations governing SHGs, crucial for the smooth operation and success of these groups. A significant part of the training emphasized the importance of human values such as love, fellowship, justice, freedom, equality, unity, solidarity, and service within the SHG context. These values are essential for fostering a supportive and inclusive group environment.

H). Advocacy and networking through SHG Federations: The federation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) is a groundbreaking move towards empowering women in rural areas. This initiative organizes these women to achieve comprehensive development, not just economically, but also socially, politically, and culturally. By doing so, it helps integrate them more deeply into the fabric of society, aiming to uplift not just individual women, but their communities as a whole. Advocacy and networking, key functions of these SHG Federations, play a crucial role. They enable women to access government services and entitlements more easily, and also provide them with the tools and knowledge to fight against gender discrimination, domestic

violence, and other social injustices. To ensure these federations operate effectively, SAS offers ongoing support and education on various relevant issues.

Village Level SHG Federation Meeting

SAS in the project period 2023, held 48 days of **Village Level Federation** meetings with 2569 participants from 288 Self-Help Groups across 49 villages, a vital step outside their usual plan. SAS organized 12 days **Federation at Panchayat Level** meetings for 891 members belonging to 156 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across 19 Gram Panchayats. SAS organized eight effective meetings for members of the **Taluka Level Federation**, involving 248 participants from 4 Talukas. SAS organised 2 Meeting of SHG **Federation Members at District Level** for 76 participants. This experience encouraged them to view their neighbors not just as fellow villagers but as brothers and sisters, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity. The meetings were not just informative but also transformative, motivating the participants to work towards a more equitable and just society.

D. Formation/animation of new SHGs Annually: SAS staff formed 73 new SHGs of 1080 members.

SHGs' Savings in Dec 2023			
Description	No. SHGs	Member	Savings Rs.
New SHG	73	1080	₹ 4,197,602
Old	1013	16072	₹ 340,955,322
Total	1086	17,152	₹ 345,152,924

J. Training in Accounting and Financial Management: In 2023, SAS took a significant step towards empowering rural communities by forming and animating 73 new Self-Help Groups (SHGs). This initiative brought together numerous women, providing them with a platform for collective economic growth and social support. To further enhance the effectiveness of these SHGs, SAS organized a specialized four-day training session in Financial Management. This training was attended by 158 members from 71 SHGs, including some groups that had missed the previous year's training. The focus of this session was to equip these women with the necessary skills for managing their group's finances.

K. Skill Development and IGA for SHGs: In recent years, the Indian government has been vigorously promoting the Employment Act and the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) scheme. Responding to this, SAS actively motivated numerous Self-Help Groups (SHGs), including those formed by SAS and others, to utilize these schemes. The SHGs, keen to improve their social and economic status, invested the funds in various Income Generating Activities (IGAs), mainly in agriculture, horticulture, livestock rearing, and some off-farm activities. SAS's efforts over the years helped these SHGs build substantial savings and gain access to financial support from banks and the government. As a result, SHG members could easily secure loans through their groups.

Loans taken by SHGs for IGA in 2023		
Purpose	Members	Amount (Rs)

Livestock	724	₹ 2,40,60,500
Agriculture	1,207	₹ 2,58,32,700
Education	582	₹ 1,21,84,500
Other IGA	1,317	₹ 3,85,73,961
Total	3830	₹ 10,06,51,661

In the project year 2023, the impact of these efforts was notably significant. A large number of SHG members, totaling 3830, availed loans amounting to ₹ 10,06,51,661/- from their SHGs. These loans were utilized for diverse purposes including children's education, medical expenses, house construction or repairs, income-generating activities, wedding expenses, and agricultural or horticultural projects. Some members also used these loans to create assets. This financial empowerment, facilitated by SAS and supported by government initiatives, not only addressed the immediate needs of the SHG members but also played a crucial role in their overall development and empowerment.

H. Functional Vocational Training: The Functional Vocational Training (FVT) program, undertaken by SAS, significantly impacted the lives of rural women, especially adolescent girls, in recent years. This initiative focused on empowering these women, who often face gender disparities and economic dependence in their male-dominated societies. The program's main goal was to provide these women with new skills and motivations to become economically independent, thus becoming breadwinners for their families and reducing gender disparity.

Data on FVT Guides and Students 2023-2024

Basic Details			Marital Status		CASTE			
Guides	Centres	Students	Unmarried	Married	SC	ST	OBC	Others
67	67	708	518	190	81	85	42	500

The FVT program emphasized the overall development of rural girls, highlighting the importance of their personal growth. It provided an alternative to the early marriage norm prevalent in rural areas by engaging these girls in productive activities for an additional year. This training not only included vocational skills but also incorporated lessons in value education, sex and family life education, and life coping skills. Additionally, it imparted knowledge about human rights under the Indian Constitution. The girls who participated in this program experienced a significant transformation; they were no longer seen as liabilities in their families but rather as valuable assets, particularly those who acquired skills like tailoring.

I. Family Biogas Plants cum Toilets: In the year 2023 SAS would like to built biogas cum toilet units in five talukas (Belagavi, Khanapur, Hukkeri Bailhongal and Gokak) of Belagavi district in Karnataka state and two talukas (Gadhinglaj and Chandgad) of Kolhapur district in Maharashtra state

In the year 2023 project SAS has chosen two new talukas Gadhinglaj and Chandgad of Kolhapur district in Maharashtra state. These talukas share the borders of the Belagavi district. The targeted beneficiaries have heard about biogas cum toilets and also witnessed the functioning of the same. They are in touch with local supervisors and constantly pester them to build one.

Initially, SAS built a few units in these villages as an advertisement, so that many more families are motivated in the near future. Secondly, SAS would like to observe the enthusiasm, maintenance and care from the beneficiaries' side.

SL	Taluka	Villages	Units
1	Belagavi	52	207
2	Bailhongal	3	16
3	Hukkeri	9	24
4	Khanapur	37	138
5	Gadhinglaj	11	51
6	Chandgad	40	209
7	Gokak	1	4
TOTAL		153	649

Awareness Building and Selection of Beneficiaries: In the area selected for the project area villages, local supervisors along with village elders and representatives of self-help groups, organised small meetings and elaborated on the benefits from the biogas cum toilet units. The details of the project, selection criteria, finances, their contribution in kind and cash was explained. A few interested households expressed their desire to build a unit for themselves. SAS biogas team noted those names and followed them up with further information and visited their houses to inspect the place to build a unit. The biogas team prioritized the poor who fulfil the section criteria and built units for them.

Training for project staff, local masons, animators and selected beneficiaries as multipliers: SAS biogas team met once a month to share the development in the work area. The team included Ms. Agatha J. D'souza, Mr. Ningappa K. Budri, Mr. Shankar S Kalluri, Mr. Laxman D Patil, Mr. Yellappa G. Naik, Mr. Demanna N. Naik, Mr. Ashok S. Gurav, Mrs. Mahadevi N. Budri, Mrs. Sangeeta L. Patil, Mrs. Jaishree S. Kalluri and Fr. Santosh G. Vas. In these monthly meetings the implementation of the project was discussed. The local supervisors presented survey of the villages and the interested household names for the construction of units. They also presented the requirements for the project such as Number of persons in the household; Quantity and kind of fuel used for cooking; Number of cattle; Availability of space; Ease of acceptance of new technology; Overall atmosphere of the household cleanliness, the primary occupation of the members of the household; Criteria for selection of beneficiaries and the poverty criteria. Since the number of units limited for under this project 2023, the team chose the most deserving households fulfilling the selection criteria of the biogas project.

Construction of Biogas Plants cum Toilets: The deenabhandhu (friend of the poor) biogas plant was developed in the '80s by AFPRO (Action for Food Production) an Indian NGO. Due to its cost-effectiveness and its efficiency in gas production, it is the most widely accepted model in India. Its technology is simple and well-engineered. To run a 2m³ plant the dung of 2 cows (20 kg per day) is needed. Cow dung/biomass with water is mixed by hand in the input tank and released into the digester. The toilet is connected directly to the digester. From the digester, the gas is piped to the kitchen and the biogas stove. The gas flow is regulated with a valve. The plant has a capacity of 2m³ of gas which is sufficient to cover the daily cooking energy of a 5-member

family. The size of the plant (gas holding capacity) suits the quantity of dung and excrement available. Regular feeding of the unit assures a continuous supply of gas. The pressure of the gas is always low and there is no risk of an explosion or fire hazard. The spent slurry is directed to a pit at the side which becomes a rich organic manure for farming. The plant is built near the kitchen and the cowshed.

Training of the Beneficiaries: The whole family was involved in constructing their biogas cum toilet unit from the beginning of its construction till its commissioning. The supervisor interacted with the beneficiary households and instructed them in plant maintenance and proper use of biogas and organic manure, including how to charge the plant initially with cow dung. A lot of patience and time was expended to ensure that they made optimum use of biogas for cooking and biogas manure for their farming. In the training, SAS stressed those aspects and also focused on the positive effects of the biogas plant cum toilet unit on the ecosystem, global warming, and hygiene in and around the house and the village.

The training was planned for the beneficiaries suit the needs and situation of the beneficiary households and the objective of the project. To a large extent, it helped the beneficiary households to understand how their biogas plant cum toilet unit functions and freed them from irrational thinking and cultural and ritual biases. It made them aware of the manifold benefits/advantages of the unit and made them capable of taking good care of their unit.

J. Health Assistants' Course and Subsidized Medicines

The project has among other things the following three main objectives: 1. To enhance the educational and health status and also socio economic status of young rural girls, who have a minimum of 10 years of schooling by giving them training to work as Health Assistants through relevant training. 2. To provide health care facilities like medical tests and laboratory investigations at a very subsidized and affordable rates to the patients from poor households. 3. To provide medical care at a subsidized rate to the poor patients at C. G. Hospital and in some selected villages.

The Health Assistants' Course: Out of 20 trainees one dropped out due to personal reasons. The program is aimed to empower poor young girls with essential health care skills, while enabling them to break free from the cycle of poverty. The training curriculum covered a wide range of topics, including basic medical knowledge, first aid, hygiene practices, reproductive health, medical terminology, emergency responses, disease prevention and care for specific ailments prevalent in the community. The curriculum was designed to equip participants through class room instructions and practical exercises. The girls participated in regular class room and practical sessions facilitated by experienced trainers and health care professionals. The sessions focused on providing them with a solid foundation in health sciences and communication skills required in the profession including training in spoken English. Our Trainees also took turns to assist the main cook in the kitchen. They also enjoyed purchasing the grocery and vegetables needed for their kitchen. They did a bit of gardening too. The evenings were spent in indoor and outdoor games, watching T.V. or in other recreational activities.

Subsidized Laboratory tests and Medicine: The project has significantly increased the access to essential medicines and lab tests to the economically disadvantaged patients with

communicable diseases like acute diarrhea, pneumonia, HIV, Tuberculosis and non-communicable diseases like DM, HTN, Snake bite patients, etc. Children from poor families, orphans, widows, and rural women and men benefit from this program. We are also able to help many poor pregnant mothers by offering them services at subsidized rates (regular antenatal check-up: Hb, BP, urine, weight and abdomen at every visit, IFA tablets and two doses of Inj. Tetanus Toxoid, etc). The project has ensured affordability for those who would otherwise be unable to access even the minimal health care services. Thanks to INTERSOL we were able to care for many poor patients in the C G Hospital and in the villages. 1429 persons who got medicines and 924 persons who got lab tests 2023

K. Educational Assistance to Poor Students: This student sponsorship program is designed to help underprivileged students get the chance to pursue professional courses by providing the financial support they need. The program focuses on students who want to study in fields like health, education, and the food industry. By covering costs such as tuition fees, books, and living expenses, the program allows students to focus on their studies without worrying about money. This support helps them work towards achieving their dreams. In the project period SAS supported old and 18 new students ₹ 22,00,510.00 financial assistance. In return for this assistance, students are encouraged to repay the support once they find stable jobs. This repayment plan teaches responsibility and helps keep the program running, so more students can benefit in the future. In the project period the previous students who are employed repaid ₹ 11,91,535.00 to the organization.

L. Xavier Farm Machhe: The SAS organization manages Xavier Farm in Machhe as an experimental site for organic farming. This initiative focuses on cultivating various medicinal plants, fruit trees, and engaging in dairy farming. Rather than aiming for profit, the primary goal is to provide employment opportunities for women from nearby villages. The outcomes of this organic farming project are manifold. Local farmers learn and adopt organic farming methods, reducing their reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The cultivation of medicinal plants has lessened the community's dependence on allopathic medicine, enabling villagers to grow and use natural remedies found in their surroundings. Additionally, the dairy farming operation provides customers with pure, unadulterated milk delivered to their homes.

M. Supplementary Classes: This initiative aims to provide supplementary classes for village students who cannot afford private tuition and receive subpar education in government schools. Targeting economically disadvantaged students, the program offers evening classes to enhance their understanding of school subjects. By filling educational gaps and providing personalized attention, these classes aim to improve academic performance and ensure students grasp key concepts more effectively than in their regular school environment. This initiative represents a beacon of hope for economically disadvantaged students in rural areas attending government schools, where access to quality education is often hindered by financial constraints. SAS supported 6 centres for 186 students with 6 teachers.

N. Visitors: The project reporting period NGO witnessed a diverse group of visitors eager to learn from its impactful programs and projects. Among the visitors were Jesuit novices, Bachelor's in Social Work students from Nirmala Niketan Collage Mumbai, Eco Warriors youths from Gujarat, Maharashtra Goa and Karnataka and 9th standard school children of St Pauls

School, Belgaum. These visitors visited various areas of the NGO's work, gaining valuable insights into the organization's efforts to support the underprivileged and promote environmental sustainability. They had the opportunity to interact with beneficiaries, observe ongoing projects and understand the challenges faced by underserved communities.

Conclusion: SAS actively engages in the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across several villages, particularly focusing on poverty reduction and promoting awareness of human rights among the poor and marginalized communities. The organization operates in close collaboration with villages through Self Help Groups (SHGs), Functional Vocational Training (FVT) centres and construction of Biogas cum Toilet units. With a well-established presence in various villages, SAS possesses the necessary resources, including personnel, technical experts, and solid relationships with material dealers.

The organization's success can largely be attributed to the effective monitoring and implementation strategies. Regular meetings, detailed reporting, and constant interaction with stakeholders ensured that all activities were executed efficiently and any necessary adjustments were made timely. The staff's commitment to documenting and sharing the progress and outcomes of the project through detailed reports and case studies played a vital role in maintaining transparency and accountability. As the project concluded, SAS's efforts were not only evident in the substantial progress made in empowering women and youth but also in the strengthened capacity of rural communities to sustain these improvements. This comprehensive approach, backed by donors support, has laid a strong foundation for continued growth and development in these communities.

As SAS presents its summarized report for 2023-2024, it deeply appreciates its funding partners, Goa Jesuits and the Catholic Diocese of Belagavi for their generous support to SAS over the past many years. It's also grateful to the government machinery and its functionaries at various levels. The unstinted loyalty, hard work and dedication of its office and field staff continue to be its strength at all times. May God bless all - SAS staff, partners, friends, benefactors, and well-wishers!

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Camp Belagavi,
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