



SHRAMIK ABHIVRUDHI SANGH (JANA JAGARAN)



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SAS Annual Report Summary 2022-2023

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.

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.

Action 1: Integrated Rural Development [supported by Action Solidarite Tiers Mondes (ASTM) Luxembourg]

Activity 1.1 Capacity building of SAS staff: The SAS staff met regularly (once a month), as per the yearly schedule, to evaluate and implement the project initiatives. In these meeting staff discussed the upcoming events, chose the topics for trainings based on human rights. They also brainstormed possible resource persons who could explain the topics in way which benefits the beneficiaries. The planning also included fixing of the venue, date, time for meeting and the number of beneficiaries to be trained in the meeting.

The staff shared the responsibilities for smooth implantation of the initiatives. For some Staff Capacity Building exercises, experts were called to enlighten the staff on current scenario of world, India and of local areas.

Activity 1.2 SHG Monthly Meetings: SAS staff animated and accompanied the SHGs on a monthly basis. The outcome was the accompaniment of 1013 SHGs through 10627 meetings with the participation of 135,499 persons. Staff monitored their SHG accounts, savings, loans, interest and linked them to banks or NRLM loans whenever the amount was needed for Income Generation Activity. The staff also discussed with them the changes in society and prepared themselves to face the challenges modern world.

Activity 1.3 Capacity building training for SHGs: SAS conducted Capacity Building training across 28 days with the participation of 4597 members of 493 SHGs from 114 Villages. The Capacity building activities helped to see what they were missing in their lives and strengthened them to work for it. They not only benefited from the training but also motivated their neighbors to stand together in times of need. SHGs owned up the Capacity Building program by contributing in kind for some of the training programs and the rest was taken care of by the project.

Activity 1.4 SHG Leaders Training: SAS staff managed to conduct 7 training for 500 old SHG leaders during the project year. These meetings helped the members to revisit their roles as SHG leaders. SAS animated SHGs follow the tradition of changing the SHG leadership in every second or third year. Thus, new leaders are trained to manage the SHGs. The training helped them to learn the art of efficiently managing their SHGs.

Activity 1.5 Training on Government Entitlements: SAS staff managed to contact various resource persons from government departments to explain the government schemes of the concerned departments to the beneficiaries. These resource persons included Agricultural Department Officers, Anganwadi Teachers, Animal Husbandry Department Officers, Department of Women and Child Development, ANM Staffs, Panchayat Development Officers, GP members, GP President, Bank Managers and Staffs, Taluka Health Officer and the Joint Director of Social Welfare. They explained to the participants their schemes, legal procedure involved, number of documents needed, different schemes and benefits based on caste and economic conditions. The participants not only applied for the schemes but also informed their neighbours who are not part of SAS guided SHGs.

SAS motivated in 2022, 39,398 people from 114 villages to apply for work under **MGNREGA** and 28,351 people (men & women) got work. They worked for 1,378,745 - man days and received as wages Rs. 289/- and Rs.10/- as rent for their implements per day. SAS guided SHG members and others earned the sum of Rs. 412,244,755/- as wages for work under MGNREGA. SAS also helped 4,523 people to get new job cards and 5,752 persons to get labor cards. SAS encouraged SHGs to participate in National Rural Livelihood Mission (**NRLM**) activities and gave them assistance to prepare the required documents and submit applications. 824 SHGs from 109 villages applied for NRLM scheme and 230 SHGs received funds for IGA. In many Gram Panchayats, the amount has been credited to the GP Account are yet to be disbursed to the individual SHGs.

Activity 1.6 Para Legal Training for local grassroots Leaders: SAS organized 4 trainings and covered 426 women from 50 SHGs. SAS planned common topics and invited resource persons from legal background either practicing lawyers or police officers. SAS also made sure that the resource persons were well versed in the local languages (Marathi and Kannada) and who could explain the complicated legal terms in simple language.

Activity 1.7 Training in women's rights/empowerment of New SHG members: SAS organized 7 trainings with the participation of 488 members from 42 SHGs. The trainings covered the following topics: Aims and objectives of SHG, Introduction by each member and sharing about group activity, Rules and regulations followed in the group, Activities from each SHG, Future vision of SHG. The participants were guided to live a happy life by serving others. SAS staff insisted that they not only become aware of their rights but also stood up for defending theirs and their neighbours' rights.

Activity 1.8 Advocacy and Mobilization: A SHG federation is a democratic body formed with certain number of SHGs functioning in a specific geographical area, with the objective of uniting such SHGs for common cause and addressing them, which an individual SHG would not be able to do. SHG members view the federations as their voice and their space to demonstrate their collective strength. Federations are seen as a pipeline through which benefits can reach the last mile - an easy, cost-effective way to reach out to a large group that would have otherwise been inaccessible

SAS conducted 40 days meetings of **Village Level Federations** with 2007 participants from 211 SHGs and 48 villages. SAS conducted meetings, across 14 days, for **Gram Panchayat Level Federation** with 729 participants from 118 SHGs of 26 *Gram Panchayats*. SAS conducted 8 meetings for **Taluka Level Federation** Members with 217 participants who represented 130 SHGs from 111 villages. The participants were happy with the topics and the procedure of the meetings. Most of the members profited from the meeting and were inspired to work for a better society where neighbour is seen as equal brother/sister.

Activity 1.9 Formation of new SHGs and Training in financial management: During the project year 2022, SAS formed and animated 37 new SHGs. SAS organized 4 days Training in Financial Management for 137 members from 63 SHGs. In the training, the participants learnt about SHGs' accounting and book-keeping methods. They were happy that SAS had customized the accounts and the book-keeping methods to suit their specific situation. They understood that their savings were managed well by the group representatives and even if one entry went wrong, there were three more entries in different books for cross checking.

Activity 1.10 Skill development and IGA for SHGS: In the recent years government is promoting self-employment and NRLM scheme in large scales. SAS motivated many SHGs to avail the funds through those schemes. SHGs are keen on investing funds in IGA in order to better their social and economic status. SHG members are engaged in income generation activities - mostly in agriculture and horticulture, livestock rearing and some of them in off-farm activities. In the project year 2022, 3897 SHG members borrowed Rs. 87,928,319/- as loan from their SHGs to actualise their dreams and aspirations.

Activity 1.11 Functional Vocational Training (FVT): The Functional Vocational Training Program aimed at the overall development of the rural adolescent girls, stressing on their personality development and income generation capacity. The program gave them a positive outlook on life and made them realize their self-worth. It helped them to enhance their status in family and society. The girl with tailoring skills was no more a liability to the family but an asset. Achieving this transformation was not an easy task. The FVT centres for the Indian Academic Year 2022-2023 were started officially in June with 688 students, across 66 centres under the guidance of 64 experienced guides.

Basic Details			Marital Status		CASTE			
Guides	Centers	Students	Unmarried	Married	SC	ST	OBC	Others
64	66	688	458	230	76	74	44	494

In the months of August 2022, SAS organised empowerment programs for FVT students across 6 days; 654 students from 66 centres were the beneficiaries. During those days SAS distributed teaching/learning materials to all the 2022-2023 FVT students. The students who missed the program due to various reasons, were given their learning materials through their guides.

SAS is in constant contact with the rural population. One may say that SAS's insistence on local men and women as its staff has been its secret of success. SAS is confident to complete the project as planned. SAS is ever grateful to ASTM for its generous financial support and constant guidance and accompaniment of the above activities.

Action 2: Biogas Plants cum Toilet Units [supported by BMZ/Andheri-Hilfe e. v Mackestrasse 53, 53119, Bonn, Germany]

SAS ventured to do what others wouldn't even dare to dream. SAS's biogas plant cum toilet unit has been a beautiful gift to rural households and to the mother earth. This project aimed at Reduction of greenhouse gases, protection of forests and enhancement of the livelihoods of poor rural households, especially women, through household biogas plant cum toilet units in Belagavi District, Karnataka . The project beneficiaries are chosen on the following selection criteria:

- They belonged to the social category of the *Dalits* (scheduled castes), *Adivasi* (scheduled tribes) or to the below the poverty line (BPL) category
- Small or marginal famers with less than 2 ha of land (non-irrigated)
- Households that did not have mechanical means of production and transport
- Households that earned a large part of their income through wage labor
- Households without members in fixed employment (e.g. government employees)
- Households living in simple houses

During 2022, 627 units were constructed under the above project and another 331 units with SAS's own resources. During 2022 and earlier SAS had also reached out with its own funds to beneficiaries from Chandgad and Gadhinglaj Talukas of Kolhapur district.

Table showing units built in 2022						
TALUKA	VILLAGES	UNITS	CATEGORY			SIZE
			SC	ST	OTHERS	2cm
Bailhongal	13	56	0	14	42	56
Hukkeri	28	86	4	27	57	86
Belgaum	52	481	0	50	425	479
Khanapur	96	320	9	13	300	322
Chandgad	1	15	0	7	8	15
TOTAL	190	958	15	111	832	958

The beneficiary households received, as envisaged in the project, multiple benefits from their units. They not only accepted the innovative idea and technology but also played very active role to construct their unit and to improve the quality of their lives. They are partly aware of the harmful effects of cutting trees. In their unit they found a viable alternative to firewood as cooking fuel and to open defecation for nature call. It is a heartwarming experience to listen women and grown-up girls from the beneficiary households about the difference in the quality of lives that they experienced due to the biogas plant cum toilet unit

Action 3. Organization Building of Nomadic Shepherds Community in North Karnataka [supported by Andheri-Hilfe e. v Mackestrasse 53, 53119, Bonn, Germany]

SAS catered to the needs of Nomadic Shepherd communities of North Karnataka Districts: Belagavi, Hukkeri, Gokak, Ramdurg, Bailhongal, Chikkodi, Raibag and Soudatti blocks of Belagavi District and Shepherd Cooperative Societies of Belagavi, Haveri, Gadag and Dharwad districts. The work was carried out by the SAS staff, with the support of former VLWs, Self Help Groups, their Federation Leaders both men and women, Leaders of Shepherds' Cooperative Societies' Federation, and Shepherd Leaders elected in to the Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) under the guidance of the project director.

SAS guided cooperative society leaders to plan and establish Farmers Producer Organization (FPO) at Hukkeri, Yaragatti and Chikkodi in order to support the shepherds in rearing healthy ruminants and marketing them and in their other development activities. The Ex-gratia scheme that compensated the shepherds for death of their ruminants was activated throughout the North Karnataka districts as the outcome of many networking sessions by shepherds' leaders and that of their cooperatives. At the market places shepherds got good prices for sheep, goat, seed ram and fattened lambs. SHG women had

easy access to loan for their IGA from the Belagavi District Central Cooperative Bank. Many shepherds took advantage of the Kisan Credit Card loan at low rate of interest.

Action 4. Enhance Educational and Health Status of Women and Children of Belagavi District [supported by INTERSOL, Kreuzstrasse 9, 5020 Salzburg, Austria]

The third batch of health assistants' course was commenced on 01-01-2022 with 16 girls. But six girls dropped out during the course of the year due various family and personal reasons. The students were provided with board and lodge facilities, medical care and psychological counseling to heal both their physical and mental wounds. Students were trained in nursing skills to take care of a patients and to assist the doctors. In the year 2022 The Health Assistants' Course was upgraded and registered with BSS (Bharat Sevak Samaj). BSS is the national skill development agency sponsored by the planning commission, Government of India to ensure public co-operation for implementing government skill development plans. The students were trained accordingly. Their training, besides preparing the girls to become Health Assistants, transformed their whole personality and which ultimately would impact society very positively.

Through this project SAS also subsidized the medical bills of 1195 patients and Laboratory tests of 902 persons.

Action 5: Vocational Training for under Privileged Rural Women [support to buy equipment by Jesuit Missions, Inc., USA]

Mr. Praful Sha, from USA supported the annual day gathering of Functional Vocational Training Students. The funds were channeled through the Jesuit Missions, Inc., USA. Around 650 rural students got an opportunity come to the city and exhibit their talents and skills on a big flatform. The shy and timid students who joined the FVT Program 10 months ago, transformed into young, responsible citizens who look for the future with courage and hope. We are grateful to Praful Shal and to USA Jesuits for their support and kindness.

Action 6: Educational Assistance to poor students

SAS continues to support the dreams of aspiring poor students for professional courses. Good number of rural girls want to be self-sufficient and support their families by pursuing professional courses but lack finances to actualize their dreams. Most of these students are referred by SAS staff or religious leaders from the respective localities. SAS helps them with a big part of their fees. The amount that comes back to SAS from the students is used to help other students. During the 2022-2023 financial year SAS spent for educational assistance sum of Rs. 22,53,900/- and it received the sum of Rs. 8,00,535/- as contribution from the students who were helped earlier.

Action 7: Xavier Farm Machhe

Nestled along the outskirts of Machhe and Santibastwad villages, Xavier Farm is an ideal place to experience the marvels of nature and to learn with Nature. Xavier Farm is managed and developed partly under the aegis of SAS. Jesuit staffs of SAS reside there by night and also supervise the farm activities. During the day, they are engaged in the other Integral Rural Development Initiatives of SAS. Covering over an area of 35 acres, Xavier Farm engages in ecological agriculture, horticulture and dairy management. The farm grows cash crops, vegetables, fruit trees and spices. The farm also has a dairy which provides fresh and wholesome milk to a number of institutions and households at reasonable rates. The cow dung serves as feedstock for the biogas plants, which supply biogas for cooking to all the families that reside in the farm and rich biogas manure for farming activities.

“*On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si)*” is an appeal from Pope Francis addressed to "every person living on this planet" for an inclusive dialogue about how we shape the future of our planet. Xavier Farm Project is part of SAS's concern for the ‘*Care our Common Home*’. The farm has been the venue for various meetings, training, exposure and outings for schoolchildren and families from Belagavi. SAS uses the facilities in the farm for conducting training for the participants/beneficiaries of SAS initiatives. The day-to-day care of the farm is entrusted to three husband and wife pairs. During the year many women from the neighboring villages work in the farm and earn their livelihood and support their families.

Conclusion

All the activities and programs of SAS are interrelated and strive towards alleviation of poverty through Human Rights Based Approach. Through the poverty reduction measures such as the SHG movement, Functional Vocational Training, Natural Resource Management, Construction of Biogas cum toilet units for the rural poor, create awareness on a wide range of topics: health matters, home remedies for simple ailments, kitchen gardens and wholesome food, legal matters and human rights, family counselling centres, gender equality, government schemes and funds for poverty mitigation, organic farming, and work with marginalized social groups like the traditional shepherds, SAS is in constant contact with the rural population.

As SAS presents its summarized report for 2022-2023, 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!

For SAS, Belagavi, 21 June 2023