



Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh

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SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

Introduction

Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh (SAS) is registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act. Fr. Joseph Chenakala is the Secretary cum Chief executive of the institution, which has various initiatives for integrated rural development across in 12 districts of Karnataka and part of Kolhapur district of Maharashtra State. SAS's general body meets once a year to scrutinize and monitor various activities, budgets, accounts and to take policy decisions. The governing body of SAS meets 4 times a year, interacts with the secretary and important staff members, reviews the ongoing programs of the society, and plans new initiatives.

The implementation of all the initiatives, with the help of various project coordinators, rests with the chief executive. SAS monitors all the programs with the staff and project coordinators on a monthly basis and does course corrections taking all the stakeholders into confidence. Dr. Z.Baig is the Project Coordinator for the Project Organization Building of Nomadic Shepherds' Community in North Karnataka. He assists and accompanies his staff to the project area. He utilizes at least two days in a month for review and evaluation, documentation of the field data and planning for the next month in consultation with the chief executive. Fr. Thomas Chenakala, Mr. Parashuram Rangi, Mr. Anthony Jacob, Mr.Yeshwant Bandhurge, along with the supervisors, coordinate all programs under women empowerment and related activities. Mr. David D'Costa, along with his staff, coordinates the Biogas and Rural Sanitation Program. Ms. Agatha D'Souza functions as the office administrator and, Mr. George Menezes and Alex Fernandes assist her in her work. Fr. J Chenakala, along with his other works, finds the time for field visits and has direct interaction with the stakeholders of all initiatives of SAS. The funding partners, NGOs and government officials and SAS managing committee members also visit the stakeholders.

I. INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The target group of this project is women and rural households. They are mostly farmers. They are victims of general socio-economic backwardness, inadequate and inefficient finances and marketing services. The size of their land holding is very small and often over-manned resulting in low productivity. Their agricultural practices are neither economically nor environmentally sustainable. They are not able to make use of modern agricultural practices hampered by ignorance of such practices, high costs and small land holdings. Irrigation facilities are inadequate and they depend on rain. Many are indebted. The two components of the project: Women Empowerment and Functional Vocational Training are for members of these

households. The geographical extension of the project is limited to Belgaum District of Karnataka State, and Kolhapur District of Maharashtra, India.

Overall objective and specific objective of the project:

The overall objective of the project was to help build strong local communities that were capable of playing an active role in the planning and the implementing programs for creating socio-economic, political and cultural conditions that enable people to have access to necessities of life in a clean and healthy environment by using local resources in an eco-friendly manner.

The specific objective was to plan and implement two complementary activities in the field of Women Empowerment and Functional Vocational Training.

Women Empowerment through Self Help Group Movement and their Federation.

The direct beneficiaries of new SHG formation were 63 SHGs with 963 women in the age group of 18 to 65 from low socio-economic strata of society distributed mostly over Belgaum, Khanapur, Bailhongal, Hukkeri and Chandgad revenue blocks. All of them were regular with their savings in their respective groups from the date of the formation of their SHGs. Their savings as on 31-12-15 was a sum of Rs. 1,221,896/-

Direct beneficiaries of accompaniment of old SHGs and formation of SHG Federation were 826 old SHGs consisting of 13388 members. Their savings as on 31-12-15 was a sum of Rs. 134,351,395/-.

Women Empowerment through SHGs & Their Federations:

SHGs played a major role in empowering women especially from the lower socio-economic strata of the society. The various initiatives of SAS like micro credit facilities, income-generating activities built up their self-confidence and personality. The increase in the income and the dynamics of SHG helped them to live a dignified life, which in turn attracted other women to join the SHG movement of SAS. SHG women became agents of social change and role models.

The formation of SHG Federation further strengthened and empowered the women to address various issues faced by women in their villages. Through the Federations, women availed of various government schemes and low interest bank loans for income generation.

Specific activities realized during Jan – Dec 2015:

A. Formation of new SHGs

SAS staff visited on regular basis the villages and families and motivated women who were not yet part of the SHG movement. The target for 2015 was 50 new SHGs. However, SAS formed 63 SHGs with 963 members (i.e., 26% more than the target). The old SHG members were of great help in forming new SHGs. All those new groups engaged in credit and thrift activities and

had their bank account with the nearest bank. Moreover, all the 963 (100%) new SHG members saved regularly from the day one.

B. Training in Book Keeping and Financial Management

The representatives of new SHGs got training in bookkeeping and financial management. During 2015, SAS conducted 7 days training for 289 women.

C. Training in Personality Development for the new SHG members

Change was a slow process. Everyone needed encouragement and little push to achieve one's dreams. Hence, SAS conducted training programs in Personality Development and Group Dynamics for the new SHG members. SAS conducted three training programs spread over 4 days and 475 women participated.

D. Capacity Building Exercise

Change is possible if there is constant support and accompaniment to achieve ones dreams. The old SHGs needed support and helping hands to guide them to greater heights. SAS accompanied them with regular capacity building exercises at their group level and at the level of clusters of groups. SAS conducted 33 capacity-building trainings with the help of 184 resource persons for 426 SHGs from 149 villages. 4716 women SHG members participated in those trainings.

E. Federations

Federation offered a bigger forum to develop further SHGs by taking advantage of the collective strength of its members. SHG Federation was a democratic body formed with certain number of SHGs functioning in a specific geographical for tackling common issues which an individual SHG was not be able to tackle. Implementation of MGNREGA in the Gram Panchayat areas was a good example of this strategy.

SHGs were formed in to Federations at various levels - Village level, Village Panchayat level, Taluka level and District level. SAS conducted eight meeting at Panchayat level with 553 participants; 7 meetings at Taluka level with 197 participants; 2 meetings at District level with 49 participants and nine public meetings with 4537 participants.

In conclusion, the most critical and most desired outcome of the SHG Federation was improving access to livelihood opportunities and enhanced income for the members of the federation. SAS aligned various activities and capacity building exercises around access to livelihood and people's rights. There was also the ambitious plan to build the capacity of the federations and make them effective delivery channels for livelihood products and services. That had a dual impact - not only many members accessed the schemes and services for their livelihood and income enhancement but also the service delivery itself became a livelihood channel for some members. SAS played the role of a mentor and facilitator to the Federations.

F. Animation and Guidance of SHGs

As the years passed, SAS staff gained very good experience to work at the grass roots level. They won the people's trust and confidence by severing them constantly irrespective of all the hurdles. Thus, SAS achieved remarkable results in all the fields of SHG animation. The regular visits and accompaniment of SHGs enabled SAS staff to reach their target every year. Self Help Group Area Coordinators along with supervisors supported all the SHGs on monthly basis and organized various capacity building, trainings/exercises for them. During reporting period, SAS conducted 9169 meetings with the participation of 113,398 women from 826 SHGs.

SAS cultivated among SHG members the habit of constant saving. They took initiative and started income generation activities, mostly agro-based. Practically, all of them freed themselves from indebtedness, and they lived a life of self-respect and dignity with improved status in the family and society.

G. Implementation of MGNREGA

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGA) is a social security Act that attempts to provide employment and livelihood to rural laborers in the country. In an effort to make inclusive and overall development a reality, MGNREGA was passed as a labor law, and implemented across 200 districts in 2006. By 2008, it came to cover the entire country. The scheme provides any adult who is registered for rural employment a minimum job guarantee of 100 days each financial year. That included non-skilled work, making it one-of-its-kind across the world. It was later renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). MGNREGA is an entitlement to work that every adult citizen holds. In case such employment is not provided within 15 days of registration, the applicant becomes eligible for an unemployment allowance. The implementation of MGNREGA is left to the Gram Panchayats.

SAS took up MGNREGA work seriously in four taluka of Belagavi district during the year. Due to the insufficient rains, most of the crop had failed. There was hardly any work in agriculture. To overcome the livelihood crisis SAS staff motivated SHG members and others for work under MGNREGA. In some of the villages besides SHG women, many other women were inspired and applied for Job Cards and work under MGNREGA. Outcome was noteworthy: 13,529 women applied for work and 6290 got work across 40 Gram Panchayats and 57 villages. These women put in 323784 days work and earned Rs. 69,289,776/- as wages. Another 1782 persons made job cards under MGNREGA and are ready to do work under MGNREGA.

H. Organic Farming

"An organic farm, properly speaking, is not one that uses certain methods and substances and avoids others; it is a farm whose structure is formed in imitation of the structure of a natural system that has the integrity, the independence and the benign dependence of an organism"
[Wendell Berry, "The Gift of Good Land"](#)

Organic farming is not new to India and it is being followed from ancient times. It is a method of farming, which primarily aimed at cultivating the land and growing crops in such a way, as to keep the soil alive and in good health. The farmers use organic waste such as vermi-compost, animal and farm residues and other biological materials along with beneficial microbes to release nutrients to crops for increased sustainable production in an eco-friendly pollution free environment.

With the increase in population and need for organic food, our compulsion would be, not only to stabilize agricultural production but also to increase it further in sustainable manner. The scientists have realized that the 'Green Revolution', with high inputs, has reached a plateau and is now diminishing with falling returns. Thus, a natural balance needs to be maintained at all cost for existence of life, property and safe environment. Organic farming is the best solution available in our times. This concept of organic farming is as follows: Nature is the best role model for farming. It does not use any inputs nor demand unreasonable quantities of water. The entire system is based on intimate understanding of nature's ways. The soil in this system is a living entity. The soil's living population of microbes and other organisms are significant contributors to its fertility on a sustained basis and must be protected and nurtured at all cost.

The beneficiaries of organic farming initiative 2015 experienced its positive impact on their lives. By implementing what they learnt from the training and exposure, they generated additional employment and income and got tasty organic food items. The compost making efforts resulted in clean and hygienic surroundings. Many of them did not depend on the market for vegetables. They grew vegetables and fruits, such as Cauliflower, Cabbage, Pumpkin, Brinjal, Ladies fingers, Green chillies, Capsicum, Flat beans, Ash gourd, Onions, Ridge gourd, Bitter gourd, Tomato, Spring onions, Beans, Coriander leaves, Coconut, Cashew, Mango, Lime, Lemon grass, Curry leaves, Turmeric, Chiku, Guava, Punde, Flowers, Mustard, Ginger, Amaranth, Carrot, Sweet potatoes, Garlic, Fenugreek, Cluster beans, Palak, Dill, Colocasia, Spring onions, Radish, String beans, Groundnuts, Coriander and Papaya. They consumed such organic produce at home; shared with friends and the relatives; cooked during the training programs and sold in the market for a premium price. For many of them, 'kitchen garden' is a hobby. Children manure and water them. They keenly observe their growth and fruition. The program impacted neighbors and motivated them also to go organic.

SAS conducted for 450 women, across 7 days, lectures, exhibitions and demonstrations on organic farming and use of farm and animal waste. SAS motivated and gave financial assistance to 200 SHG women for initiating them into organic farming/kitchen garden.

I. Role of Supervisors in Women Empowerment

The project staff took special interest with regard to SHGs and especially the new 63 SHGs with 963 members. With their local contacts and the help of old SHGs, they formed and animated new SHGs and constantly accompanied new and old SHGs through training/exercises in capacity building, personality development, book keeping and financial management. The staff guided the group with many personality development exercises. Monitored their thrift and credit activities. Assisted them in the process of group building and sustenance. Initiated them into kitchen

garden/organic farming. Created awareness on issues affecting women and children and their village. Created linkages with bank and mobilized finances/subsidies from the government. Initiated income generation activities Formed federations of SHGs at the village, panchayat, taluka and district levels. They also motivated and helped members of all SHGs to participate actively in the federation process at village, panchayat, taluka and district levels.

J. Shg Women Contested Gram Panchayat Election

Gram panchayat election was held in May 2015. The atmosphere was filled with joy, hope, confidence and the eagerness to see the outcome of the election because many SHG women had participated in the election process. 36 women from SAS's SHGs contested in the election. Out of 36 women, 28 got elected; 8 of them did not make it. All the women owed their victory to SAS's training in leadership and personality development. They did make a mention how SAS had formed them and given them the confidence and the ability to speak in the public and stand for their rights. The elected women have pledged that they would work towards the betterment of society and keep in mind all the values they imbibed from SAS.

It was a joyful and comforting time for SAS staff. Their many years of hard work in the area women empowerment started bearing abundant fruits. Contesting in gram panchayat election was traditionally the prerogative of men. Now the status and role of women in society is changing rapidly; it is something to be celebrated - a great achievement. SAS's SHG women became role models for other women and men. SAS is proud of all the SHG members who took active part in the panchayat election process and especially of those who contested the elections and won. (36 women form 4 taluka contested and 28 of them were elected.)

K. Wings to Women's Aspirations

I CAN FLY... I WANT TO FLY... I FLEW...! These short utterances are from a group of 30 persons from Idalhond and Guramatti - two remote villages of Belgaum Taluka, Karnataka State. The Group consisted of 28 women and 2 men in the age group of 28 to 72. All of them were members of Self Help Groups formed, animated and guided by SAS. They dared to dream the impossible! Crossing the barriers of poverty, illiteracy, and rustic life, they planned and carried out 'Bharat Darshan': a journey from their remote village > Belgaum > Pune > Delhi > Agra > Varanasi > Mumbai > Belgaum > back home, with a **Pune-Delhi Flight** added. They roped in at their cost, Mr Shankar Kalluri and Fr. Santosh Vas of SAS for the trip. The finances were not a restraint. They believed that money was for man and not man for money, that the only function of money was to satisfy the necessities of human life and to fulfill the deepest aspirations of the human spirit.

It was the first train journey for thirteen group members, the first boat journey for seventeen and the first flight for all of them. While travelling by train one woman shouted excitedly, "Look, who'll travel in those boxes?" It took a little time for the group to realize that she was referring to the goods wagons...and all the others had a very hearty laugh! Surely, this outing was a dream-come-true for those 28 SHG women and 2 men.

On rare occasions, they had travelled by bus and train and had envied often the ‘big’ personalities who travelled by planes that sailed through the clouds and disappeared into the distant horizon. Initially a flight was just a dream for them, and then it became a possibility and an obsession and soon a reality. Their mantra “I can...I want it ...” has turned into “I did it”.

On 16 March 2015 they took the Pune-Delhi Flight. They journeyed on 15th night by train from Belagavi to Pune. They had a day in Pune for sights seeing and in the evening, they took the Delhi Flight. The women were daring and enthusiastic and yet scared and nervous about the flight. They had seen the reports and visuals of plane crashes in T V channels; and were conscious of the taunts of friends and foes. Once the plane took off, they were relaxed. Up in the sky, one woman wondered aloud whether the plane was moving or had stopped in the midair. They could not believe that a cup of coffee cost Rs.100 in the plane!

While in Delhi, they visited Raj Ghat and paid homage to the *Samadhi* of Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. They visited the Red Fort from where Indian Prime Ministers addressed the nation on Independence Day. They entered India’s largest Masjid - Jama Masjid, where women are allowed for prayers. In the afternoon, they visited India Gate where the Republic Day Parade is held and they saw from outside the Parliament and the President’s Place. They visited the house where Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi lived and the spot where Indira Gandhi was assassinated. In the evening, they visited the Qutub Minar and the Lotus Temple. The next day, 18 March, they travelled to Mathura and saw Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi and Vrindavan Garden Temple where it is believed that Lord Krishna was born and brought up. In the afternoon, they reached Agra and were proud to visit one of the Wonders of the World - The Taj Mahal.

On 19th, they reached Varanasi/Kashi, the sacred place for Hindus. In the morning, they visited the remains of Buddhist Temples and Monasteries at Sarnath - the place where Buddha gave his first discourse to his first five disciples, and the museum. In the afternoon, they crossed the river Ganges by boat and had a dip in the sacred Ganges to purify themselves of their past sins. Later they had a boat ride in the Ganges and witnessed the *Maha Arathi* offered to the river. Then they had some time to purchase *Banarasi Saris*. Late evening they boarded the train for the home journey – Banaras > Mumbai > Belgaum. Forty-eight hours of train journey! One or the other exclaimed, “two hours flight is worth the money for those who can afford”!

The women were delighted with the outcome. They experienced travel by land, by air and by water all in one short trip of seven days. They reached another milestone in their lives – dreams are for real! They were deeply indebted to Shankar Kalluri and Santosh Vas for the perfect planning and arrangements and to SAS who made them dream dreams!

Functional Vocational Training

Target group – Rural girls - school dropouts, mostly in the age group of 15 to 25 from low socio-economic strata of society.

Direct beneficiaries - 58 rural women who were trained and appointed as teachers and 678 girl students who were trained with functional vocational skills.

Indirect beneficiaries - The families of the 58 teachers. The families of 678 girls. The village community as a whole.

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. They had enhanced status in the family and society. The girl with tailoring skills was no more a liability to the family but an asset. Achieving this transformation was worth the effort.

At the end of the 10 months of training, they discovered themselves as persons with dignity and talents. They got training to cope up with their limitations and live as happy human persons. They experienced growth in personal dignity, self-confidence and self-worth. The program kept the girls meaningfully engaged for yet another year, delayed their marriage, and gave them an excellent opportunity to be better prepared for their marriage and the future.

Among other things: They got knowledge regarding laws protecting their rights – e.g., Right to Education, Law against Child Marriage, Dowry, Sexual Harassment, Domestic violence, Trafficking, etc. SAS staff and other resource persons provided inputs on personal hygiene, health, family welfare and family life. Program also included a component on gender sensitization - how to deal with the other gender.

SAS staff and resource persons briefed on Behavior Change Communication (BCC) program in various gatherings to increase awareness among students, teachers and other community members about existing laws that aim to protect the young, the availability of services for adolescents, the importance of nutrition, the importance of girl child, the importance of delaying marriage and child birth and small family.

SAS staff and resource persons helped to link the tailoring skills with employment and income-generating opportunities. That ensured that the skill they learnt was not forgotten, but gave them opportunity to generate income for themselves and their families. SAS identified and facilitated safe spaces where young girls could meet and build a support network with their peers.

Activities

a. Garment making skills: The FVT centers, which began in June 2014, wound up their program in April 2015. The new centers began in June 2015 and would function for 10 months i.e., till March end, 2016. They function 6 days in a week; Sunday is a holiday. Training is for a period of 3 hours a day. The timing of the center was chosen by each center to suit the convenience of the students. At the end of the ten month period there was an exam to assess students' skills and they were awarded certificates.

b. Personality development and life coping skills: During the 10 months' period, students got training/exercises in personality development and inputs in life coping skills. As part of this training, they got opportunity for singing, dancing, public speaking, enacting skits, sharing

personal experience; and opportunity to critically examine traditional attitudes and practices regarding women's education, employment, mobility, women's status in family and society and inputs on women's right, health, hygiene, nutrition, marriage and family life, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and socio-cultural taboos affecting the girl child and women. They got opportunity to take part in cultural activities organized at village and inter-village levels.

c. Common gathering and outings: During the year they participated in two common gathering in which they put up cultural programs and showcased their progress and achievements in life coping skills in the presence of their parents, villagers and other invitees.

II. ORGANIZATION BUILDING OF NOMADIC SHEPHERDS

SAS started to work with the traditional shepherds some 32 years ago in 1984. The northern districts of Karnataka State - India, is home for over two hundred thousand "Kurubar", traditional sheep pastoralists. As a community, they are illiterate, landless and backward. Their profession and nomadic lifestyle keep them unorganized, marginalized and exploited. They are the largest group engaged in sheep husbandry in the state. Karnataka State has over 13 million sheep and goats; 60% of them are in the northern districts. Depending on access to water and fodder, the size of their flocks, they are on seasonal or perennial migration with their flocks and families. Industrialization and infrastructure development has taken away most of their grazing lands. Contagious diseases regularly took heavy toll of their livestock, their only means to livelihood. As a community, they felt helpless and dejected and accepted their fate.

SAS reached out to this community in a unique way. SAS realized that regular veterinary services and medicines were beyond their reach since they were in remote areas. They hardly benefited from government's free vaccination for sheep against contagious diseases. Due to inferior delivery system, many sheep died even after vaccination. The Kurubar relied on ritual offerings to gods and hoped and prayed that things would be better. The immediate task before SAS was to help them to treat their sick animals and protect the healthy ones. SAS identified a couple of natural leaders from the community and a veterinary doctor to serve them.

SAS explained to the shepherds the need of prophylaxis vaccination against Entero Toxaemia, Haemorrhagic Scepticemia, Rinder Pest, Foot and Mouth Disease, Sheep Pox and the importance of regular de-worming. SAS accompanied them and became a bridge between them and the power centers and helped them to access vaccines and medicines. The results were amazing! SAS organized 15 days' training for 60 of them in the State capital and gave them a thorough exposure to health care of ruminants under the aegis of Veterinary College, Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals and Sheep and Wool Development Board of Karnataka Government.

The training inputs helped the shepherds to better their self image and gave them strength to face the challenges ahead. After the training they returned to their villages and became the first group of barefoot educators/para-vets under SAS's guidance. They adopted modern veterinary

practices, identified common diseases in sheep and goats and successfully administered vaccines and medicines.

SAS's response to the plight of shepherds in Belagavi area has over the years grown into a full pledged out-reach program that covers shepherds across Karnataka State. SAS's assets are a team consisting of a highly motivated and committed veterinary doctor and many enthusiastic social activists drawn from the youth of shepherding community. Due to their relentless toil and rigorous accompaniment, a large number of shepherds accepted modern veterinary practices and drastically reduced mortality in sheep and goats.

SAS was aware that sustainability and further development of this initiative would depend very much on the community. Hence, SAS prime focus and thrust was on 'Organization Building' of Shepherds. As the first step in the Organization Building Process, SAS formed hundreds of Self Help Groups (SHGs) of shepherd men and women. Nomadic, semi nomadic and sedentary shepherds of the area joined the SHG movement. SAS formed and nurtured three zonal level federations of SHGs, separately for shepherd women and men, and an apex north Karnataka level federation of shepherd women and another of shepherd men.

As the organization building process continued SAS realized the importance of involving other stakeholders in the movement. SAS empowered elected representatives of zonal federations of women and men, elected representatives of apex federations of women and men, influential elders of the community, traditional healers from the community, presidents of registered shepherds' cooperative societies, and directors of DCC bank to contribute to the Organization Building process as volunteers. SAS also sought the support of elected representative of gram panchayat and other local bodies, Officials of the Ministry of Animal Health and Veterinary Services, Youth organizations, NGOs, Officials of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Banks, Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals, Officials of Karnataka Sheep and Wool Development Corporation, Officials of Department of Essential Services, Officials of Social Welfare Department, and other rural development departments of the government, revenue officials, Officials of Women and Child Welfare Department, and the Police department for SAS's Organization Building efforts.

"Organization Building of the Shepherd Community" achieved newer heights year by year. SAS staff proved themselves to be good community builders. They tried all the possible avenues to empower the shepherd community socially, economically and politically.

The isolated shepherd, with his family and belongings on migration route, became part of a big family - a powerful shepherds' organization. There was quantum change in his lifestyle. He grew in self-confidence and courage. He approached the government offices with courage and the newly discovered individual and community identity. He knew that he could make his voice heard in the power centers right up to the capital of the State. The shepherd woman changed her situation. She had access to finances and enjoyed better status in family and society. She stood out in the SHG, Federation and GP meetings, expressed her views, and asserted her rights. The efficiency with which she adapted to traditional and nontraditional IGA (income generation activity) was a striking example of her professionalism in agro-economics. The SHG movement

helped women to secure their livelihoods, to bring in changes in the areas of education of their children, health and hygiene and rural infrastructure. That was possible due to their active participation in the trainings and meetings organized by SAS and their enhanced participation in their respective *gram sabhas*. Women were preferred for bank finances and subsidies. They became good at fodder production and preservation of native breeds of sheep and goats. Government became sensitive and empathetic and responded to their needs and dispensed bank loans at reduced interest, and other poverty alleviation schemes - insurance of people, animals and crops, support price for agriculture produce, incentives for milk production, subsidy on seeds and fertilizers, enhanced compensation for death of ruminants, etc. SAS's initiative of organizing and training the leaders of registered shepherds' cooperative societies further strengthened the process of Organization Building of Shepherds.

Some statistics - Karnataka State population is 66,000,000. Shepherds constitute 8% of the population (5,280,000). Eight% of the shepherds (422,400) are actual sheep pastoralists with herds of 30 sheep/goats on an average. 9.5% (40128) of actual sheep pastoralists are members of cooperative societies.

As on 31 July 2016, SAS formed and animated 1280 SHGs of actual sheep pastoralists with a membership of 17682 persons (926 women SHGs with 12516 members and 354 men SHGs with 5166 members) across 12 districts of North Karnataka. SAS organized them into three zonal federations of women and another three zonal federations of men and apex North Karnataka federation of women SHGs and Men SHGs. As on 31 July 2016, the shepherds SHGs had a savings of Rs. 39,295,870 and had mobilized bank loan of Rs. 16,728,400.

SAS identified 136 Shepherds cooperative societies across 10 North Karnataka districts (Belagavi, Gadag, Haveri, Vijayapura, Koppal, Raichur, Ballary, Bhagalkot, Davangere and Chitradurg), convinced the directors of these cooperative societies about the importance of Organization Building, and involved them actively in the organization building process. They worked closely with the apex North Karnataka federation of shepherd women and men SHGs. The process culminated in a registered North Karnataka Shepherd Federation Ltd. It had the membership of 136 shepherds' cooperative societies with 37687 members and the share capital of Rs. 20,704,228/- and 3,812,249 sheep and goats.

Seeing the advantages of a strong organization and concerted action, another 99 shepherds' cooperative societies from 15 additional districts (Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru Urban, Gulbarga, Mandya, Chikkamagaluru, Dharwad, Mysore, Chamrajnagar, Tumkuru, Hasan, Kolar, Bidar, Ramnagar, Chikkaballapur and Yadgiri) joined the federation. And the shepherds' cooperative societies' federation got the status of state level federation and it was registered as "Karnataka Sheep and Goat Shepherds' Federation Ltd." It has the membership of 235 cooperative societies with 50397 members and Rs. 27,629,228 share capital.

As the result of the intense organization and conscientization process, the shepherds identified major issues on which they wanted the government's immediate intervention and active support. The issues were: 1. Representation of actual sheep pastoralists in the policy/decision making bodies, (2) Market facilities for sheep and goats (3) Easy access to veterinary services and

medicines for sheep and goats (4) Compensation for dead ruminants (5) Facilities for processing and marketing wool (6) Grazing rights in forest and traditional commons, (7) Incentives for shepherds' cooperative societies.

With regard to each of those issues, they articulated in detail the problem, the solution, the role of the community, and the support expected from the government. They prepared a memorandum. A delegation of North Karnataka Shepherds Federation presented it to the chief minister, the minister for animal husbandry and veterinary services and the heads of the concerned departments of the government. The politicians and the bureaucrats received the *kurubars* well and promised to initiate action. The delegation also met some of the Members of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly and pressurized them to pursue the matter with the government.

The response of the government was quick. The Director of Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee of Government of Karnataka agreed to make arrangements for the sale of sheep and goats on live-weight basis in all the Agricultural Produce Markets and to appoint a person from the shepherds' federation in the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee. The Chief Conservator of Forest, Government of Karnataka instructed officials under him to allow shepherds to graze their livestock in forest areas and to stop harassing them. The Director of Karnataka Sheep and Wool Board assured that shepherds could make use of the wool cleaning, carding and spinning facilities in different parts of the state and promised to train them in wool carpet making skills and to help them to set up their own wool carpet making units. The shepherds still await a response to their demand for veterinary hospitals exclusively for sheep and goats and medicines and services for sheep and goats along the migration areas. Funds were made available for compensation for the death of ruminants and for incentives to the cooperative societies. The shepherds networking team regularly visited the state capital and other power centers for lobbying and networking.

The Kurubars could not believe what they saw, heard and experienced: *"I never thought that I would visit Bangalore and meet the ministers and the bureaucrats, and represent our cause to them"*, said Malappa Renage, the secretary of the North Karnataka Federation.

"This experience gave me a good jolt; it made me dream of the great things we would achieve through organization", said Bhimanna Ramagonatti a member of the Federation.

"I am a shepherd with a little education. I can't imagine that I am the president of a shepherds' organization and I am chosen to represent my community in the power centers. I will never let my people down, no matter what it costs me," says Manjunath Ghanti, president of the Federation.

"My association with SAS has been a turning point in my life. I want a dignified life for all my people. They have great expectations from me. Bangalore visits strengthened my resolve and determination. It helped me to reaffirm my faith in organized action", says Miss Chandrakala Chitralingappa, a postgraduate Kurubar girl, president of women's Federation.

Persons who participated in the monitoring of this out- reach program had the following to say, *“As we went from village to village and interviewed shepherd after shepherd, it became apparent that here was a monumental work done with such small team of workers that it was almost unbelievable, and it might be the only example of its kind in the country!”* The persons from the power centers also exclaimed that to gain the confidence and respect of such a large number of shepherds required a large amount of dedicated and quality work at the grass roots and it could only be achieved by NGOs like Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh with a missionary zeal and altruism.

The route that SAS followed in the Organization Building process

- ✚ Reached out to emergency situation of disease and death in sheep and goats
- ✚ Introduced preventive and curative measures to protect their livestock
- ✚ Engaged in the formation and animation of SHGs of shepherd women and men
- ✚ Introduced SHGs to government and financial institutions in order to benefit from various poverty alleviation and development schemes of the government
- ✚ Formed and guided federations of men/women SHGs at zonal and north Karnataka level
- ✚ Formed, guided and accompanied a networking team to represent shepherds and their problems to the Government
- ✚ Organized Ethno-Veterinary training and promoted the use of ethno vet medicines
- ✚ Promoted a verity of income generation initiatives - lamp fattening, seed ram production, value addition to wool, fodder cultivation, keeping dairy animals and off-farm initiatives
- ✚ Enlightened them on their right to traditional grazing areas, protection against organized theft of sheep, education of their children, compensation for the death of animals, livestock and its effects on ecology
- ✚ Created awareness on issues like child marriage and gender disparity, and importance of integration with other communities in the village
- ✚ Created awareness on the status of shepherds in north Karnataka
- ✚ Trained SHG men/women and their federation members as leaders
- ✚ Identified and trained traditional community leaders, elected representatives and traditional healers
- ✚ Trained of cooperative society leaders and accompanied them to form the federation of cooperative societies
- ✚ Convinced persons across the community on the importance of a state level organization to protect shepherds rights and achieve holistic development of the community
- ✚ Through frequent networking and lobbying made the government, bureaucrats and the power centers party to the Organization Building Process which resulted in a State level federation of shepherds and their cooperative societies.

Summarized appraisal/self assessment

SAS’s efforts at “Organization Building of Shepherds’ Community”, has developed into a mega platform for protecting the rights and the livelihoods of the shepherding community of Karnataka. The status of the shepherd today is far different from yester years. Today he is a very confident person, empowered with awareness of his rights and capacity to access various

government programs. He behaves in a dignified manner and approaches the government and its officials and bureaucrats with a newfound identity and confidence.

The exposure of the common shepherd and the leaders to various training programs, seminars and meetings at various levels added to their knowledge and skills for lobbying and networking. The SHG women became the backbone of the organization. They confidently entered the leadership platform. They had a high representation in gram panchayats. They skillfully managed various traditional and non-traditional income generation initiatives. They were instrumental for the improved education of shepherd children. With women empowerment, atrocities on women, children, menace of alcoholism, dowry, child marriage, and bonded labor diminished.

SAS's efforts at forming and animating a large number of shepherds' SHGs and forming their federations, lobbying and networking with other stakeholders and incorporating the registered shepherds' cooperative societies into the organization building dynamics resulted finally in registering the State level "Karnataka Sheep and Goat Shepherds' Federation Ltd." In future this organization would take over and further strengthen the various initiatives which SAS set into motion.

SAS did this work in partnership with Andheri-Hilfe, Mackestrass 53, 53119 Bonn, Germany. Andheri-Hilfe assisted SAS for the last 17 years. This partnership greatly enhanced SAS's capacity to reach out shepherds across Karnataka State. The work has made a great impact on the shepherd community. SAS is immensely grateful to Andheri-Hilfe for its generous support. The support from the government and all the other stakeholders played a very positive role. The contribution of Dr Zafrulla Baig, the program coordinator and other project personnel was immense.

It is needless to say that there is a lot more to do. The newly emergent community based organization – "Karnataka Sheep and Goat Shepherds' Federation Ltd" will, hopefully take forward the work to further heights along the 'trail-blazed' by SAS. SAS will continue being a catalyst, the inspiration.

III. BIOGAS PLANT CUM TOILET UNIT

For a third of the world's people, the energy crisis is the daily scramble for cooking-fuel. Their search for firewood, once a simple chore, has now become a day's work for many. Wood and cattle-dung cook food in most Indian villages. The traditional cooking method releases only 17% of potential heat in wood-cooking, 11% in dung-cake cooking – wasting 83% of the firewood and 89% of the dung-cake. Women waiting for darkness to relieve themselves is a sad story of our country. The potential of biogas plant cum toilet units to overcome the crisis of cooking fuel, CH⁴emission and disposal of night soil is not fully assessed.

The Advisory Board on Energy estimated the potential for family-based Biogas plants at 16-22 million. They would deliver energy equivalent of 13.4 million tons of kerosene and fertilizer equivalent of 4.4 million tons. Biogas Plant converts fermentable organic matter, in particular, human and animal waste into combustible gas and fully matured organic manure. Biogas

eliminates the age-old practice of burning wood, cattle-dung and kerosene for fuel. It saves women and children from smoky kitchens - a major cause of lung and eye diseases. A Biogas plant cum latrine unit is an effective and economic means for sanitary disposal of human excreta. Manure from the biogas plant is better than ordinary manure in quality and quantity. The digestive process in the biogas plant kills seeds of weeds and organisms causing disease. Biogas manure is rich in nitrogen, phosphorus, potash and humus. '*Deenbandhu*' is the most efficient and economical model, costing 45% less than the KVIC model.

Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh (SAS) has been constructing Biogas Plant cum toilet units for rural households of Belagavi district (Karnataka) since two decades and more. Karnataka government recognized SAS as a Turn-Key-Agent for the promotion and construction of such units. SAS has been instrumental in providing them to more than 15,000 households.

The households with such units, especially their women, derive immense benefits. It provides them a better living environment. Their scramble for firewood, dependence on dung-cakes for smoky cooking, wastage of cattle-dung badly needed for agriculture, the long wait until dark for defecation in the open – all such issues are solved by biogas plant cum toilet units. They directly protect the climate, conserve forests, liberate women.

Between July 2012 and March 2016 SAS constructed and commissioned 2185 Biogas Plant cum Toilet Units under its BMZ/Andheri-Hilfe project. The impact of that initiative could be summarized as below:

- ✚ Increase the fertility of land using nitrogenous organic manure: The digested slurry contains important plant nutrients, including nitrogen, which is mostly preserved during anaerobic fermentation. A small family size biogas plant of 2m³ capacity, using 50 kg fresh dung a day, gives 10 metric tons (10000 kg) of good quality organic manure annually. Hence, 2185 units would give 21850 metric tons of air-dry organic manure annually.
- ✚ Even at the rate of 2m³-meter gas per day, a small family size biogas plant of 2m³ capacity saves the equivalent of 452 liters of kerosene or 1752 kg of fire wood annually. Hence, 2185 units would save the equivalent of 987620 liters of kerosene or 3828120 kg (3828 metric ton) fire wood annually.
- ✚ 2185 households would stop cutting of trees and destruction of forest for meeting their cooking fuel needs.
- ✚ 2185 households - especially women and children - improve their general health - by making their kitchen smokeless and through better sanitary facility.
- ✚ Women, children and men of 2185 households have lesser workload, more time for leisure, for generating additional income, for pursuit of hobby, study, etc., because of their easy access to cooking fuel.
- ✚ The project trap annually (2m³ gas* 365 days* 2185 units) 1595050 m³ of biogas produced by cow dung and night soil and that in turn helps to protect the ozone and reduce global warming.
- ✚ The toilets attached to biogas plant take care of a major sanitary problem of 2185 households and enhance their personal dignity and social status.
- ✚ The 2185 units gave wages worth Rs. 8,740,000/- to the rural households.

- ✚ The rural masons got around Rs. 6,367,200/- as wages for constructing 2185 units.
- ✚ Brick making is a cottage industry in Belagavi area. Many farming households and landless laborers are engaged in brick making. Construction of biogas plant cum toilet units created a lot of demand for bricks and provided additional work and income for people engaged in brickwork. The income for brick makers was Rs. 15,976,274/-.
- ✚ The local supervisors got a sum of Rs. 1,445,570/- as wages for supervising the construction 2185 units.
- ✚ One cattle gives 10 kg of dung per day. One kg dung produces 0.037 cum gas. So per cattle one can get 0.371 cum gas per day. A family with five persons and two cattle can get around two cum meters of gas per day. Consumption for cooking per person per day is 0.300 cum meter. Hence, a family of five needs around 1.5 cum meter gas per day. Thus, a biogas cum toilet unit for a family of five persons with two cattle easily takes care of the cooking fuel needs of the family. The project provided 80 to 90% of the cooking fuel needed for 2185 households.

Christ Niwas Nesargi

Over thirty rural boys got the opportunity to stay and study at Christ Niwas, Nesargi. They were bona fide students of Vidya Mandir High School Nesargi. The boys came from poor background and many of them belonged to SC and ST category. Most of these boys, if there were not in the hostel, would have been child laborers. The hostel gave them opportunity to continue their studies to develop their personality and pick up many life coping skills. Over the years, boys learnt skills and trades that support their lives, e.g., basic computer skills, housekeeping, cooking, kitchen garden. The additional skills boosted their self-confidence and motivated them to pick up some English too.

Student Sponsorship -‘Mahadevi Project’

Everyone has many hidden talents within. What is lacking is the ‘opportunity’ to discover and develop. ‘Mahadevi Project’ reached out, with interest free financial assistance, to many poor students who wanted to do professional studies. Mahadevi Project has completed twelve years. During that period, it helped 239 students and their families. In 2015-16 Mahadevi Project reached out to 14 students and enabled them to do studies in General and BSc Nursing, Bachelor in Business Administration, Physical Education, Pharmacy, Computer Applications, Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Medicine, Diploma in Hotel Management and Catering and English M.A. Mahadevi Project created opportunity for poor students to pursue the study of their choice and make their dream come true.

Xavier Farm

Nestled along the outskirts of Machhe and Santibastwad villages, Xavier Farm is an ideal place to experience the marvels of nature and learn with Nature. Xavier Farm is managed and developed under the aegis of SAS for the past 18 years. Covering over an area of 35 acres, Xavier Farm engages in agricultural, horticulture and dairy management. SAS has taken up the care of the farm as a challenge in the spirit of ‘*Laudato Si*’. It believes that the portion of the blue planet entrusted to the care SAS needs to be developed for the common good. The farm has

been the venue for various meetings, training programs and outings for schoolchildren and families from Belagavi. SAS used the facilities in the farm for conducting training for the participants/beneficiaries of its initiatives in the area of Women Empowerment, Community Health, Functional Vocational Training, Organization Building of Nomadic Pastoralists, Organic Farming, and Training in Herbal Medicines for human and veterinary use. The Xavier Farm also provided lodge and board facilities, during their field visits, to groups of students studying for Masters in Social Work, representatives of other NGOs and funding partners who came to SAS for a lived in exposure cum experience in the field of Integral Rural Development.

Community College

Community College is an alternate education system, which is aimed at the empowerment of the disadvantaged and the underprivileged through appropriate skills development leading to gainful employment. Assistant Nursing course is one such initiative where rural girls, mostly school dropouts are trained to become skilled nurses.

The year 2015-16 witnessed VIII batch of 19 students passing out from the portals of our Community College. On 3rd April 2016 they had their valedictory function. They conducted it with a lot of interest and fun. The parents of the students shed tears of joy when they witnessed their timid and shy daughters on the stage - acting, dancing and entertaining everyone. They could not believe what their eyes saw: their daughters had become new creatures with self confidence and courage, eager to face the world and their future! By end of April 2016, 13 girls were employed in various hospitals in and around Belagavi and 6 girls in Narayana Hrudayalaya, a well known Cardiac hospital in Bengaluru.

SAS Visitors

Students from the universities of India and abroad and activists of NGOs, representatives of banks, women's groups and government departments and funding partners regularly visit us.

Gerald Roma, an educationist from Spain, a group of 38 staff of the Jesuit run NGO, Rajpipla Social Service Society (RSSS) working for the human rights of the tribals in Rajpipla Gujarat, Staff of Jana Pria Seva Kendra, Chitradurg, Students of Nirmala Niketan, College of Social Work, Mumbai, MBA students of St. Aloysius College Mangalore and Jesuit novices of Xavier Training College Belagavi, Fr. Christian, Jesuit Provincial and Fr. Kurmann of Switzerland, Ms Heike Kulve and Mr E Monis representative of Andheri-Hilfe, Germany, were some of our recent visitors.

SAS Staff

Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh (Jana Jagaran) has completed 38 years of uninterrupted service. It has left its mark on many lives in north Karnataka and in south Maharashtra, and more especially on the people of Belagavi district. Thousands of people have come in touch with the organization and have benefited from its various initiatives. Obviously, the credit goes to its dedicated staff and its funding partners. The greatest blessing that SAS has is its staff most of whom are from the communities it serves. They get joy and satisfaction in serving their brothers and sisters and

neighbors; they spare no effort in reaching out to the poor and needy in their area of operation. Often they affirm: *“We are proud to work with a NGO that walks the talk”. “The respect we get, because we are part of the ‘Jana Jagaran’ movement from the organization, from the government officials, the beneficiary households and the general public, is more than what can be gained with all the money in the world.” “We are proud that the fruit of our hard work is benefitting the most deserving households, and it is no exaggeration to say that the beneficiaries are often our relatives, friends, neighbors.”*

Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh and its staff, over the years, transformed themselves from service providers to organization builders. SAS movement is a story of teamwork, high motivation, dedication and commitment of its staff to the marginalized and underprivileged. SAS makes a difference because its staff honestly and sincerely tries to ‘walk the talk’.

SAS staff enjoys freedom; the luxury of doing always what they most enjoy doing. Each of them has beautiful experiences of empowering people, of building human communities based on values of peace, justice and love in harmony with nature and environment, as envisaged in the objective of the SAS. They move from village to village forming and animating SHGs, organizing Functional Vocational Training Centers, helping people to avail of various government schemes, spreading awareness on MGNREGA, and the like. Often, each staff is an organization by him/herself involved in multiple initiatives. Each one lives a purposeful life, knowing that the ultimate purpose of life is *‘to serve and not to be served’*.

SAS personnel have the knack to work with all strata of society. They cater to school going children, school dropouts, youth, rural women and men, SC, ST and the high castes. They are versatile. They are in pre-school education, functional vocational training, community college, community health work, SHG formation and animation, Organization Building of traditional shepherds, Watershed development, Biogas and rural sanitation, and Organic farming. They are effective communicators and organizers. Their vast knowledge and many years of grass roots experiences have made them master trainers. SAS team represents the cross section of the communities and social groups it serves – SC, ST, high caste, a spectrum of religious, social and political affiliation. The team is a model of inter religious; inter caste, and cultural harmony – unity in diversity, working together for the common good. SAS follows the cluster approach. Each of its staff can work from the homestead, reaching out to a number of villages with a variety of rural and human development initiatives.

Conclusion:

SAS did the work among the shepherds in partnership with Andheri-Hilfe, Mackestrass 53, 53119 Bonn, Germany. Andheri-Hilfe assisted SAS for the last 17 years in this work. This partnership greatly enhanced SAS’s capacity to reach out to shepherds across Karnataka State. The work has made a great impact on the shepherd community. SAS is immensely grateful to Andheri-Hilfe for its generous support. The support from the government and all the other stakeholders played a very positive role. The contribution of Dr Zafrulla Baig, the program coordinator and other project personnel was immense. It is needless to say, that there is a lot more to do. The newly emergent community based organization – “Karnataka Sheep and Goat

Shepherds' Federation Ltd." will, hopefully take forward the work to further heights along the 'trail-blazed' by SAS. SAS will continue being a catalyst, the inspiration.

Since last four years, SAS constructed biogas plant cum toilet units for rural households in partnership with BMZ/Andheri-Hilfe, Mackestrassse 53, 53119 Bonn, Germany. This partnership greatly enhanced SAS's capacity to reach out to larger numbers of poor households in the rural areas of Belagavi District. SAS is immensely grateful to BMZ/Andheri-Hilfe for their generous support. The support from the government in the form of subsidy and incentive also played a very positive role. The contribution of SAS staff has been admirable. The imitative has made a great impact on the beneficiary households and other stakeholders. It is needless to say that there is a lot more to be done do to fully actualize the tremendous potential of biogas plant cum toilet units to overcome the crisis of cooking fuel and CH⁴ emission and disposal of night soil in Belagavi and other districts of Karnataka and other parts of India. The Advisory Board on Energy, in its report "Toward a Perspective on Energy Demand and Supply in India in 2004/5", estimated the Indian potential for family-based Biogas plants at 16-22 million. It is only through the intervention and wholehearted dedication of many more trailblazers that India can come anywhere close to its potential.

Since last many years Action Solidarité Tiers Monde (ASTM), 55, av de la Liberté, L-1931 Luxembourg, Jesuitenmission, Königstr. 64, 90402 Nürnberg, Mr Rudolf Schleicher, Salzachstr 5, 81379 München, Germany, INTERSOL, Imbergstraße 2/3. Stock, 5020 Salzburg, Austria, have been SAS's partners of its "Integrated Rural Development Programs".

As SAS presents its annual report for 2015-2016 SAS expresses its deep and sincere appreciation and gratitude all the above partners and Goa Jesuit Provincial and Province, Jesuit Community Belagavi, Bishop Peter Mchado and the Catholic Diocese of Belgaum, for their generous support to SAS over the last many years. We are also grateful to the Government machinery and its functionaries at various levels. SAS's sincere thanks to its Chairman and Managing Committee members for their continued assistance and encouragement! The unstinted loyalty, hard work and dedication of its office and field staff, continue to be SAS's strength at all times. May God bless all of them - SAS's partners, friends, benefactors, well-wishers!



Joseph Kurian Chenakala
For S A Sangh

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