



# Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh

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## SAS 19-20 Note on Activities

### Brief background of SAS

**Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh**, is a non-profit organization registered under the Karnataka Societies' Registration works for the integral development of the socio-economically disadvantaged irrespective of their religious, caste and political affiliations. Its area of operation presently consists of Belagavi and other Districts of North Karnataka and Kolhapur District of Maharashtra. Since the last 42 years the SAS has been implementing a number of initiatives for Integral Rural Development with highly satisfactory outcome. SAS story is one of teamwork, high motivation and dedication and commitment of its staff. SAS makes a difference because all the players honestly and sincerely try to 'walk the talk'. SAS staff sees themselves as educators, organizers, and leaders who lead by serving. They take special care to respect the sentiments and the culture of the people.

**Integrated Rural Development** supported by Action Solidarité Tiers Monde (ASTM Luxembourg: The target group of this project is women and rural households. They are victims of illiteracy, general socio-economic backwardness, inadequate and inefficient finances and job opportunities. The two components of the project - *Women Empowerment* and *Functional Vocational Training* are for enhancing their capabilities and income generating skills.

### Action 1: Empowerment through Self Help Group Movement and Related Activities

SHG is a holistic program covering different aspects of self-employment and organization of the rural poor into small groups for their capacity building. SHG is self-governed, peer controlled, informal group of people having a desire to collectively work for their betterment. The core values of the group are self-reliance, and concern for social justice, and mutual help. SHG responds to the social, economic, psychological needs of its members. Organization and empowerment of rural women speed up the process of socio-economic development. As an isolated individual a woman is powerless. However, by coming together as a group, they initiate and take forward the process of societal transformation.

SAS successfully formed and animated SHGs distributed mostly across Belagavi, Khanapur, Gokak, Bailhongal, Ramdurg and Hukkeri and Chandgad and Gadhinglaj revenue blocks. Direct beneficiaries of accompaniment of old and new SHGs and formation of SHG federations were 978 SHGs with 15735 members as on 31-12-2019. Indirect beneficiaries were 15735 members\*4 family members = 62940 persons and the general public across 8 revenue blocks. The SHG movement has made a lasting impression on the lives of men/women associated with SAS. It inculcated among SHG members the habit of saving and banking. Their cumulative savings at the end of Dec 2019 was the sum of Rs. 239,087,601/. The group members took loans to meet unexpected expenses and for income generation activities. All SHG members have personal saving bank accounts and receive amounts from the government's poverty alleviation schemes directly into their bank accounts. Most of the women had never interacted with a bank before they joined SAS's SHG movement. SHG also contributed to their personal and social development. They come forward to learn new skills. They stand as one body to assert their rights. SAS staff monitor every month 978 SHGs with 15,735 members. They conducted during the year 10,430 group meetings with the participation 137,898 persons.

Their capacity building training provided inputs on entitlements and poverty alleviation schemes of the government. The participants got inputs on Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Right to Education (RTE), National Food Security Act (NFSA), etc. The capacity building trainings were conducted with the help of audio-visual

aids, group discussions, talks, experience sharing, role plays, and awareness songs. SAS staff fruitfully conducted 27 capacity building trainings with the participation of 3468 members from 275 SHGs from 61 villages. They also got inputs on organic farming using video clips, street plays to communicate the ill effects of chemical fertilizers and insecticides. It included exposure visits to organic farmers. Successful organic farmers shared their experiences on how organic farming has benefited them. Some such programs were conducted in collaboration with government agencies that gave special incentives to those who took up organic farming. SAS organized 9 days training on organic farming with the participation of 614 men and women who showed interest in organic farming.

Due to poverty a large section of society is unable to fulfill even the basic necessities of life. Government of India launched several poverty alleviation programs in order to benefit the poor. During 2019 SAS organized 12 days awareness and training program with the participation 2870 members from 113 SHGs coming from 23 villages. Under SAS's guidance in 2019, 14,647 people from 61 villages applied for work and 7,369 people worked for 711,807 man-days and received wages of rupees 184,358,013/-. SAS also guided 4132 persons to obtain labor cards and 2,289 persons to get job cards under MGNREGA. SAS motivated SHGs to apply for benefits under NRLM; helped them to collect documents such as identity proof, Aadhaar cards, SHG records, bank passbooks in order to avail the benefits from NRLM. SAS helped 433 SHGs to apply for the benefits. As a result 76 SHGs from 59 villages received rupees fifteen thousand each as revolving fund. The government has promised interest-free loans and subsidies for income generation activities and funds for sustainable economic developments.

### **Action 2: Functional Vocational Training:**

Functional Vocational Training aimed at the overall development of adolescent rural girls with emphasis on enhancing their personal growth and income-generating capacity. The program helped them to pick up life coping skills and prepared them to face their future with courage, self-confidence and a sense of self-worth. SAS did that by training them in garment-making skills. The training incorporated value education, sex and family life education and other life coping skills. Through a process of animation and awareness building, both the teachers and the learners were sensitized about gender discrimination. They were helped to critically examine and challenge traditional attitudes and practices regarding women's right, health, education, employment, mobility, women's status in family and society. They were given inputs on health, hygiene, nutrition, marriage and family life, sexually transmitted diseases and socio-cultural taboos that affect girl children and women and ways to tackle them. The program enabled 641 young rural women, to have better self-appreciation and to face their life and future with courage and confidence.

Since last many years Action Solidarité Tiers Monde (ASTM), 55, av de la Liberté, L-1931 Luxembourg, has been SAS's partner for its "Integrated Rural Development Program" which mostly deals with women empowerment through SHG Movement and FVT Centres.

### **Action 3: Organization Building of Nomadic Shepherd Community**

The activity covered 11 Districts of North Karnataka with the help of Village Level Workers (VLWs) , Self Help Groups of men and women. The movement included shepherd leaders, leaders of shepherds' cooperative societies and leaders of various district central cooperative banks, directors of Shepherds' Cooperative Federation, and members of gram panchayats, officials of Animal Health and Veterinary Services, and functionaries of various other government departments. Organization building has been a continuous process. SAS's VLWs, with the support of members of SHGs and shepherds' cooperatives were able to bring more shepherds into the process. The VLWs showcased various development programs, IGAs and the programs supported by the government of Karnataka, the KSWDC, and the Textile Department to the shepherding community. SAS collaborated with the government institutions, commercial banks and community leaders and gram panchayat to achieve its objectives.

During this reporting period SAS formed, animated, guided and accompanied 1461 old and new shgs of men and women with a membership of 19906 persons from the shepherding community. The shepherd SHGs had the cumulative savings of Rs.90.11 million. They obtained bank loans to the tune of Rs.11.million. They lent Rs.110.4 million to the members. Overall impact of OB process was a strong socio economic base. The shgs had good overall development and the support of their respective leaders

and SAS's VLWs. SAS had put in place number of CBOs, trained the cadres and made them functional to access various government schemes and incentives and to utilize the local inputs for a successful and dignified profession.

**The initiative contributed to the following:**

- ✦ Supply of 660 NARI suwarna seed rams worth Rs. 20 million from the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services and KSWDC to the Shepherd cooperatives.
- ✦ Additional fodder seeds worth Rs. 15 million distributed.
- ✦ Allocation of Tents, Nets, Solar Lamps and Raincoats worth Rs.40 million.
- ✦ Promotion of Deccani sheep, Shirohi, Boer, Betal, Jamanapari, Kenguri, Bannur, and Yalagu.
- ✦ Promotion of Darper Sheep and Shami Goats by private farms.
- ✦ Release of mycoplasma and blue tongue vaccines.
- ✦ Grant from Textile Department for purchase of transport vehicles, and for sheep shed, training centre and housing for spinners and weavers.
- ✦ Supply of feed concentrates under National Drought Relief Fund at Koppal District.
- ✦ Allocation of vacant plots to shepherds' cooperatives.
- ✦ Marketing of sheep by shepherd cooperatives at Kerur, Harapanhalli and Malebennur.
- ✦ Provision of loans for sheep and goat farming scheme under Devaraj Urs Backward Classes Development Board.
- ✦ Supply of carding machine, shearing machine and spinning and weaving equipment from the Textile Department.
- ✦ Proposal for establishment of new sheep markets at Sirguppa.
- ✦ Supply of rations (civil supplies of the government) through shepherd cooperatives in various districts.
- ✦ Special budget allocation by Karnataka Sheep and Wool Development Corporation for the technical training of rural shepherds.
- ✦ Loan waiver scheme of up to Rs. 2 lakhs for the shepherd spinners and weavers.
- ✦ Special Veterinary Teams mobilised to control Blue Tongue and Anthrax in the State.
- ✦ Sanction of additional budget of Rs. 15 million under *Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojane* for additional 10+1 sheep/goat units.
- ✦ Allocation additional of Rs.15 million for de-wormers under natural calamities relief fund.
- ✦ Provision of toilets, street lights and roads through the efforts of SHGs.
- ✦ Provision of MGNREGA work to various beneficiaries.
- ✦ Establishment of 3 cooperative societies exclusively for women shepherds.

Organization Building of Nomadic Shepherd Community in 2019-20 was at its consolidation phase trying to decentralise Training, SHG Formation, Regional Networking, Training in Ethno Veterinary Practices, etc. All the IGAs were supervised by our staff and the leaders of regional federation and shepherds' cooperatives. The project objective of Organization Building of the Shepherding Community was a success. SAS accompanied the community in its socio-economic, cultural and political development in a systematic and organised fashion. Various activities taken up by the community leaders in the areas of education, health care, and development of skills among both the genders of the community are worth recognition. The modernisation of management practices, health care, and productivity among the ruminants are praise worthy. The overall prosperity of the shepherding community is due to SAS's planned Community Building Process of many years. The shepherd leaders and SAS's local staffs continue the process. They motivate the sheep farmers to form breeders' associations to exert pressure on the local officials to access the benefits of various schemes/entitlements of the government- KSWDC, KCSGRF and the Textile Department.

The SHGs, Regional and NK Federations and the Shepherds' Cooperatives are taking forward the movement - the organisation building process, modern management practices, establishment of stall fed sheep and goat farms and introduction of pedigree sheep and goats with modern nutrition and marketing facilities. SAS foresees a bright future for the shepherding community - self-driven and self-sustained with their organizational strength. The strong leadership which has emerged will keep up the good rapport that SAS built between the government institutions and the community. The government of Karnataka has become sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the shepherding community. The various programs and projects under taken by the government for poverty alleviation show results in the form of higher income

generation, better bank finances and service delivery by the department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services. There is over all development in the socio-economic and educational sector giving the shepherding community members an opportunity to excel.

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 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 new found identity and courage.

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, Mackestrasse 53, 53119 Bonn, Germany. That 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. SAS is confident that the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) of shepherds that SAS built up over the years would sustain and take forward the movement on their own. Mr. Sanjay S. Upari the Research cum Documentation Officer of the project (now with the designation of **Social Activist**) will work for the period August 2019 to July 2022 in order to accompany the shepherd community as a one-man-army, providing outside support to the CBOs of shepherds.

#### **Action 4: Biogas Plants cum Toilet units**

Location of the Project: Belagavi, Khanapur, Bailhongal and Hukkeri Revenue Blocks of Belagavi District. The project contributes to Improving the livelihoods of poor rural households in Belagavi district in a sustainable way; Increasing gender equality; Safeguarding the environment through the protection of forests and the reduction of greenhouse gases through conversion of cow dung and human excrements to biogas, and Improving the soil fertility through the use of high quality biogas manure.

SAS constructed and commissioned 690 Biogas Plant cum Toilet Units in 2019 for 690 households. All of them now cook on biogas and use toilets. They know how the unit works. Ritual barriers in cooking on biogas were overcome through education/awareness. The households experienced that the biogas intervention reduced indoor air pollution caused by smoke and soot from the use of traditional ovens. Besides, the time spent on gathering fuel wood and cooking is greatly reduced. The hygiene in the kitchen, house and surroundings improved; women and children and other family members enjoyed better health; all were very happy to have their own toilet; they used it and kept it clean. 690 households cover at least 80% of their energy needs for cooking with biogas and in doing so save 1752 kg of firewood

households/per year. Deforestation, degradation and conversion of forest land for agriculture and settlement put tremendous pressure on forest. Thousands of tons of firewood are consumed for cooking and heating purposes. Biogas proved to be a viable alternative source of energy for cooking. The beneficiary households use biogas manure on their fields and save costs for chemical fertilizer and supply healthy agricultural products.

The households feel that biogas cum toilet unit improved their standard of living and enabled them to live with dignity. Women enjoyed the badly needed privacy and felt liberated from the curse of open defecation. Biogas is most valued for its time saving work efficiency. Most women expressed great satisfaction, particularly with the cooking aspects of biogas, indicating that biogas is quicker, easier and safer for cooking than firewood and it provided the additional benefit of a hygienic toilet. A large number of beneficiaries became aware of the role of biogas in the conservation of environment. Many of them pointed out the improvement of family health as a significant benefit. They backed that up by stating that biogas was smokeless and did not require constant attention or blowing to keep the fire burning. Some pointed out that introduction of biogas resulted in behavior changes of the individuals regarding general cleanliness in the residence, improvement in the toilet habits which ultimately minimized family health problems, and health related expenses. Many women stated that there have been positive changes on family relations after the adoption of biogas. Males in the households corroborated it by saying that many men and elderly women started assisting in the kitchen because of the ease in cooking on biogas. That was a great help for women and girls and that also improved relation and team work in terms of gender division of labor at household level.

#### **Action 5: Educational Assistance**

The initiative, started in 2004, has completed 16 years. During that period SAS helped 301 students with their professional studies, brought joy and gave wings to the dreams of the students and to their families. SAS gave gratuitous educational assistance to many students to meet the expenses of their education and professional courses. During 2019-2020 SAS helped 20 students with interest free unsecured loans and 61 others with gratuitous assistance. During the 2019-2020 financial year SAS spent the sum of Rs 1,292,500/- and it received the sum of Rs. 95,100 as contribution from the students who were helped earlier.

It is heartening to see the youngsters after their studies handling responsible jobs and taking care of their families. Many have made the best of their studies and took up jobs in different parts of India, while a few braved the odds and went abroad.

#### **Action 5: Xavier Farm**

Xavier Farm Machhe engages in ecological agriculture, horticulture and dairy management. The day-to-day care of the farm is entrusted to three husband and wife pairs. The farm nurtures many varieties of trees; cultivates sugar cane, maize, potatoes and sweet potatoes, fodder grass and a variety of vegetables. There are also mango, jackfruit, coconut, banana, papaya and medicinal plants. The fruits are ripened naturally without the use of chemicals. SAS's Farm Project provides shelter and perennial livelihoods for three households and wage labour for persons from the neighbouring villages. The farm supplies fresh 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. The farm has been the venue for various meetings, training, exposure and outings for schoolchildren and families from Bellagio. SAS uses the facilities in the farm for conducting training for the participants/beneficiaries of SAS initiatives in the area of Women Empowerment, Functional Vocational Training, Organization Building of Nomadic Pastoralists, and Organic Farming. The Farm also facilitates the field visits of students of Masters in Social Work, representatives of NGOs and funding partners who come to SAS for a lived-in exposure cum experience in the field of Integral Rural Development.

#### **Conclusion**

SAS does its work among the shepherds in partnership with Andheri-Hilfe, Mackestrasse 53, 53119 Bonn, Germany. That 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. Since last eight years, SAS constructed biogas plant cum toilet units for rural households in partnership with BMZ/Andheri-Hilfe, Mackestrassse 53, 53119 Bonn, Germany. That partnership greatly enhanced SAS's capacity to reach out to large number of poor households in the rural areas of Belagavi District. SAS is immensely grateful to BMZ/Andheri-Hilfe for their support. Since last many years Action Solidarité Tiers Monde (ASTM), 55, av de la Liberté, L-1931 Luxembourg, has been SAS's partner for its "Integrated Rural Development Program" which mostly deals with women empowerment.

As SAS presents the report for 2019-2020, it deeply appreciate 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 our office and field staff, continue to be our strength at all times. May God bless them all, our partners, friends, benefactors, and well-wishers!

(Detail Report is available at: [www.shramik.in](http://www.shramik.in))

Joseph Kurian Chenakala  
For S A Sangh (Secretary)

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