



**SHRAMIK ABHIVRUDHI SANGH**  
**(JANA JAGARAN)**





Reg. No. DR/SOR/17/84-85

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### SAS Annual Report Summary 2024-2025

**Background of SAS:** Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh (SAS), known locally as Jana Jagaran, has been a pillar of grassroots development since 1978, working across Karnataka and Maharashtra. Grounded in the principles of dignity, justice, and equality, SAS seeks to transform rural communities by empowering the most marginalized—particularly women, children, and disadvantaged families. The organization’s holistic approach combines community mobilization, leadership development, environmental sustainability, and access to basic services such as education, health, sanitation, and clean energy. SAS has moved from delivering welfare services to strengthening people’s ability to drive their own development through participation, awareness, and solidarity.

This year’s efforts reflect SAS’s deepening commitment to inclusive rural transformation. The formation and strengthening of over 1,150 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) brought nearly 18,000 rural women into collective action—allowing them to save money, access credit, and resolve local issues. Legal awareness programs empowered over 4,500 women to understand entitlements and demand justice. Young girls enrolled in the Functional Vocational Training (FVT) program gained practical skills and delayed early marriage. The construction of 444 biogas cum toilet units significantly improved women’s health, safety, and dignity while promoting ecological farming through organic slurry. Supplementary education, sustainable agriculture at Xavier Farm, and job-oriented sponsorships further strengthened SAS’s integrated development model.

Through these interconnected efforts, SAS has focused lasting change—raising confidence among women, increasing girls’ access to education, supporting livelihoods, and inspiring civic action. The organization’s ability to engage communities, respond to emerging needs, and foster leadership at the grassroots has helped bridge the gap between development policy and lived reality. This report highlights key achievements of 2024–2025, capturing the spirit of accompaniment and hope that defines SAS’s journey with the rural poor. It is a tribute to what is possible when communities lead, and organizations walk with them in partnership.

**Empowerment through Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** One of the cornerstones of SAS’s strategy is the formation and nurturing of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), primarily composed of rural women. These grassroots collectives are designed to promote savings, mutual support, and independence. In 2024 alone, SAS worked with over 1,150 SHGs across Karnataka and Maharashtra, directly impacting nearly 18,000 women.

Each SHG functions as a support system where women come together in monthly meetings to discuss savings, loans, community challenges, and possible solutions. Beyond financial matters, these gatherings provide a safe space for women to express their ideas, support one another emotionally, and take collective action.

SAS plays a key role in building the capacity of SHG members by training leaders in communication, record keeping, and group management. These efforts have helped many women overcome fear, break free from social inhibitions, and build self-confidence. Over time, these SHGs have become platforms for leadership development, economic empowerment, and social transformation. Through community mobilization, many SHGs are now influencing decision-making at the village level and playing a proactive role in development planning.

Many women reported that they were now confident enough to visit banks and government offices independently, a significant shift from previous years. In several villages, SHGs took collective decisions to stop child marriages, lobby for improved roads, and campaign for better public health facilities. This illustrates the expanded role of SHGs in driving positive social change, far beyond just financial cooperation. The SHG model is evolving into a powerful vehicle for community-driven change, thanks to consistent support and mentoring from SAS field staff.

**Empowerment through Capacity Building and Legal Awareness:** To make SHGs more effective and informed, SAS conducted several training programs on leadership development, financial literacy, health, and legal rights. In the reporting year, over 4,500 women from 451 SHGs participated in various capacity-building initiatives.

Training sessions focused on:

- Leadership and public speaking
- Basic and advanced bookkeeping
- Health, hygiene, and nutrition
- Legal rights and entitlements

Legal awareness sessions were particularly impactful. Conducted in simple and relatable language, these sessions educated women on issues such as domestic violence, child marriage, property rights, dowry laws, and protection against sexual harassment. Women also learned about the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), ration card benefits, widow and disability pensions, and other government welfare schemes.

As a result of these sessions, many women were able to recognize and challenge social injustices, demand their entitlements, and support others in their communities facing similar issues. The training in bookkeeping has also led to better financial management within SHGs, making them more transparent and sustainable. The improved documentation and accountability have boosted the confidence of financial institutions and government departments to collaborate more openly with SHGs.

In addition, SAS has made use of visual aids, street plays, and real-life case studies to communicate complex legal issues in a way that is accessible and memorable. These tools helped in better understanding, especially for illiterate or semi-literate members. Increased awareness has led to a rise in women seeking legal redress and supporting fellow villagers in legal matters.

Regular feedback sessions and refresher courses were also introduced to help participants retain information and share their experiences. Legal empowerment has now become a shared community asset, with women becoming more vocal and assertive in village meetings and Gram Sabhas.

**Empowerment through Income Generation and Government Linkages:** SAS actively supports SHGs in initiating Income Generating Activities (IGAs) such as small-scale farming, livestock rearing, tailoring, petty shops, and other home-based enterprises. During the year, more than 8,200 women availed loans totaling nearly ₹10.8 crore for various purposes including IGAs, education, healthcare, and house construction.

To ensure that SHGs are linked with institutional support, SAS facilitated connections with government schemes like the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), and others. SAS staff played a critical role in:

- Assisting 2,376 individuals in acquiring MGNREGA job cards
- Encouraging over 42,000 people to apply for work under MGNREGA
- Helping nearly 35,000 individuals secure employment

The employment generated through MGNREGA resulted in over 21 lakh workdays and led to community assets such as water conservation structures, farm ponds, and sanitation facilities. These initiatives not only provided economic relief but also contributed to long-term development in rural areas. Moreover, SAS encouraged collective marketing of SHG products, enabling women to negotiate better prices and access broader markets.

Several SHGs also started group ventures such as seed nurseries, poultry units, and collective food processing businesses. These enterprises not only provided income but also built entrepreneurial skills. SAS also organized exposure visits to successful SHG businesses, allowing members to learn from real-world examples and build networks.

Efforts were also made to include youth in family-run SHG ventures, bridging the generational gap and ensuring sustainability. With improved incomes, several families reported sending their children, especially girls, to higher education—marking a significant cultural shift.

**Empowerment through Collective Action:** Recognizing the power of unity, SAS has played a crucial role in promoting Self-Help Group (SHG) federations at the village, Taluka, and District levels. These federations bring together women from diverse backgrounds to exchange ideas, build solidarity, and advocate for issues affecting their communities. Throughout the year, SAS organized federation meetings and leadership workshops that

helped women gain clarity on pressing issues such as domestic violence, child labor, substance abuse, and gender-based discrimination. Through these platforms, women gained both the skills and the confidence to speak out and demand meaningful change from local authorities.

A highlight of the year was the celebration of International Women’s Day, where over 1,300 women participated in rallies, cultural programs, and experience-sharing sessions. These vibrant gatherings strengthened community bonds and inspired increased participation in social campaigns. Notably, SHG federations successfully campaigned to reopen a defunct Primary Health Centre, benefiting over 2,000 people. Another federation secured access to clean drinking water for their hamlet after sustained advocacy. Such achievements reflect the growing capacity of women leaders to drive change at the grassroots level and influence rural governance.

To strengthen coordination and communication, SAS introduced digital platforms for federation leaders to connect, collaborate, and organize across districts. What Sapp groups and mobile-based tools have enabled real-time sharing of updates, strategic planning, and mutual support. These technological interventions have improved responsiveness and built a stronger, more informed leadership base. SAS continues to provide mentorship, exposure visits, and policy training, helping transform federations into recognized voices for justice and equity—not only for women, but for the broader rural communities they represent.

**Empowerment through FVT Program:** In response to the unique challenges faced by adolescent girls and young women in rural areas, SAS launched the Functional Vocational Training (FVT) program. This initiative aims to empower young girls who are at risk of early marriage, educational drop-out, and gender-based discrimination.

The program focuses on equipping girls with:

- Vocational skills such as tailoring and garment design
- Life skills including personal hygiene, nutrition, and personality development
- Legal awareness and knowledge of their rights

By offering these opportunities, the FVT program aims to delay early marriages, promote independence, and instil a sense of self-worth among rural girls. The program acts as a bridge, helping girls stay engaged and build aspirations for a brighter future. In the long term, these empowered girls become role models who influence their peers and siblings to continue education and delay marriage.

Community elders have observed noticeable changes in the demeanor and aspirations of girls who completed the FVT program. Many have gone on to complete secondary education or started their own tailoring businesses. Some have become youth mentors in their villages, motivating other girls to join the program.

**Empowerment through Vocational and Life Skills Training:** The FVT course runs over a ten-month period and includes intensive training in tailoring, stitching, and garment design. Girls enrolled in the program receive individual attention from trained FVT guides who also act as mentors.

Besides technical skills, students receive training in:

- Basic literacy and numeracy
- Personal hygiene and health awareness
- Communication and public speaking
- Cultural activities such as singing, dancing, and drama

Classes are conducted in both Kannada and Marathi to ensure inclusivity and better understanding. The informal teaching style encourages students to shed their inhibitions, explore their talents, and develop self-confidence. Field visits to tailoring shops and interactions with successful women entrepreneurs are also organized to expose students to real-world experiences.

**Awareness on Rights and Empowerment:** Legal awareness is a major component of the FVT curriculum. SAS invites legal professionals and social workers to conduct sessions on topics such as:

- Child marriage and the Prohibition Act
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act
- Anti-dowry laws
- Prevention of Sexual Harassment

Participants are also informed about schemes like the Kishori Shakti Yojana and other welfare programs. These sessions are designed to help girls understand their rights, identify social injustices, and learn how to seek help when needed.

By the end of the course, many students become capable of not only protecting themselves but also advocating for others in their community. Several FVT graduates have emerged as leaders in village youth committees and women's groups, actively working for social transformation.

**Empowerment through Inclusive Support and Annual Events:** In 2024-25, the FVT program enrolled 496 girls across 46 centers, each supervised by a dedicated FVT guide. To support their learning, students received toolkits containing scissors, measuring tapes, tailoring equipment, and notebooks.

The Annual Gathering held in February was a major highlight. Girls showcased their skills through dances, skits, and speeches. They shared personal stories of transformation, many stepping on stage for the first time. These events celebrated their achievements and boosted their confidence.

**Empowerment through Biogas cum Toilet Project:** In 2024-25, SAS continued implementing the project of constructing biogas cum toilet units for poor rural households in six talukas: Belagavi, Bailhongal, Khanapur, and Hukkeri in Karnataka, and Chandgad and Gadhinglaj in Maharashtra.

A total of 444 units were constructed, directly benefiting 2,220 individuals. The objectives were to:

- Provide access to clean cooking energy
- Improve sanitation and hygiene
- Reduce deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions

These units combined the benefits of biogas for cooking with attached toilet facilities, thereby addressing two major issues—indoor air pollution and open defecation.

**Benefits to Women and Families:** The biogas cum toilet project significantly eased the burden on rural women. Before installation, women spent 2-3 hours daily collecting firewood and cooking over smoky stoves, leading to chronic respiratory and eye issues. Girls often missed school to help with chores.

With the new units:

- Cooking time was reduced
- Health conditions improved
- Girls returned to school
- Women had more time for income-generating activities

The toilets added dignity and safety, especially for women who previously had to relieve themselves in unsafe conditions, often during the night or early morning.

**Environmental and Agricultural Impact:** The project had significant ecological benefits. By switching to biogas, families reduced their dependence on firewood, helping to curb deforestation. The biogas units also cut down the release of methane and carbon dioxide, both potent greenhouse gases.

An added advantage was the organic slurry produced by the units, which replaced chemical fertilizers. Farmers reported better crop yields and healthier soil, promoting sustainable agriculture and food security.

**Community Involvement and Training:** A participatory approach was central to the project's success. Families were involved in every step—from identifying sites and digging pits to managing construction.

Training was provided to:

- Families, especially women, on operating and maintaining the units
- Local masons and supervisors, thereby creating rural employment

Awareness meetings and house visits ensured that even those initially resistant to the idea understood the long-term benefits.

**Education Support for Poor Students:** Through its Student Sponsorship Program, SAS helped poor and deserving students pursue higher education in fields like healthcare, teaching, and hospitality. In 2024-25, 18 new students were added, and financial support totalling ₹22,00,510 was disbursed.

Students received assistance for:

- Tuition and admission fees
- Hostel and boarding charges
- Study materials and uniforms

A unique feature of the program is its revolving model. Once students secure jobs, they are encouraged to repay the assistance. In 2024-25, former students contributed ₹11,91,535 back to the fund, ensuring continuity and sustainability.

**Organic Farming and Rural Employment at Xavier Farm:** The Xavier Farm in Macche serves as a model for ecological agriculture and women's employment. The farm grows medicinal herbs, vegetables, spices like turmeric and ginger, and fruits such as papaya and banana. A dairy unit adds value.

Focus areas include:

- Training women in organic methods
- Promoting nutrition and local food systems
- Demonstrating chemical-free farming

Women working on the farm earn livelihoods, gain agricultural knowledge, and become ambassadors for sustainable living.

**Supplementary Education and Student Growth:** In four villages—Madwal, Kanasgeri, Pamaldinni, and Pacchapur—SAS ran supplementary education classes from June 2024 to March 2025, with Madwal continuing through summer.

Approximately 120 students benefited. Besides academic support, children engaged in:

- Personality development sessions
- Talent camps
- Cultural and sports activities

These efforts helped children overcome shyness, build self-esteem, and aspire for higher education.

**Exposure Visits and Learning Experiences:** SAS welcomed several groups for exposure visits, including Jesuit novices, youth volunteers, and field researchers. These visits offered hands-on experience in rural development, organic farming, and social empowerment.

Visitors learned directly from SHG members, FVT students, and farmers. Inspired by these real-life stories, many returned to their communities with a renewed commitment to social change.

**Conclusion:** The various initiatives carried out by SAS during the year reflect a deep and meaningful commitment to rural development, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Through Self-Help Groups (SHGs), women gained financial independence, leadership skills, and the confidence to actively participate in their communities. The Functional Vocational Training (FVT) program empowered adolescent girls by providing them with vocational skills, awareness of their rights, and the confidence to dream beyond traditional gender roles. The Biogas cum Toilet project significantly improved the quality of life for hundreds of rural families by offering clean energy, better sanitation, and sustainable farming practices. Meanwhile, the education sponsorships, Xavier organic farm, supplementary classes, and exposure visits further reinforced SAS's mission to uplift the marginalized through education, skill development, and ecological living.

Together, these programs demonstrate a holistic and integrated approach to rural transformation. They not only addressed immediate challenges such as poverty, lack of sanitation, and limited access to education, but also empowered individuals to take charge of their own development. Women, girls, and young students are now better equipped to lead healthier, more dignified, and independent lives. Communities are more united, children are learning with confidence, and local environments are being protected. The ripple effect of these efforts is visible in stronger families, cleaner villages, and more hopeful futures. SAS's inclusive and people-centred model continues to inspire and lay the foundation for lasting and meaningful change across rural Karnataka and Maharashtra.