

# SPANDAN SAMAJ SEVA SAMITI

*Let's Make World a Better Place*

## ANNUAL REPORT

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## From Director's Desk

The year was anecdotal as it had mixed scenario of pandemic prevailing and then declining. The post COVID scenario posed many more challenges to rebuild and regain the that was lost, may it be livelihood, food accessibility and other resources.



The organization persisted with its core Mission to outreach relief in the disaster and then work to address the post -COVID scenario. Hence Food Basket relief continued to malnourished children and families in reverse migration. With easing of restrictions, the efforts were directed to restore the work rhythm. The situation analysis reveled the needs to restore the food security and prevent women and young tribal girls to find gainful employment. The training and capacity building emphasized COVID appropriate behavior and importance of diet diversification. Series of voluntary work were facilitated to develop neighborhood land and water resources. Deepening of wells, se-silting river and erection of sandbag check dams and farm fences works were undertaken.

Special initiative included alliances and beginning of two promising livelihood programs. The linkages have been established and goat rearing, and technical skilling have begun. To reach veterinary services to far reaching areas, *Pashu Sakhis* (barefoot veterinary workers) have been facilitated. Similarly, the women skilling and livelihood called *Karm yogini* (*we too can do it*) has trained two dozen tribal young girls who have set up their nano – enterprises.

An intensive program of Nutrition Education for the Anganwadi workers has begun and it intends to cover nearly 1700 AWW across the district. It is a prescheduled training series with very effective and attractive training -Learning materials and methods. Intermittently a process of participatory learning & action was facilitated to enable the community to have deeper understating of issues and challenges facing them and present it in respective gram Sabha meetings. These has set a precedence to engage the community in village planning process.

The women empowerment has been a progressive process and they had been at forefront to not only care and work for the village but stand up to access their entitlements, Commendable solidarity, and perseverance they have exhibited at many instances.

Our Team has shown significant caliber and commitment during the pandemic and now in post pandemic times. We are proud of them. The organization was recognized by World Economic Forum as one of the Fifty Last Mile Responders for our relief work during the pandemic.

Finally, a heartfelt gratitude to our supporters and donors who have helped us and encouraged us to tide over the crisis that loomed up and have continued to do so. None the less the community we relate to had been extremely supportive without whose support we would have been helpless.

With sincere regards

Seema Prakash



## Ground Report

The brief of various activities, interventions and process facilitation is as:

### COVID Relief and Awareness:

With pandemic prevailing in the early months of the year, the relief and awareness work went hand in hand. About relief the food basket containing cereals and 3 types of pulses, oil and jaggery, peanuts and popped rice. The relief was extended to 900 SAM/MAM children in the project geography. Monthly rations were extended to 200 families in reverse migration who had no food at home.



The awareness campaign employed various BCC tools and techniques to let the people adopt COVID appropriate behavior- masks and handwashing and social distancing. Apart from meetings and personal interactions a range of innovative methods like snake and ladder board game, wall paintings, food demos, exploration, and promotion of ancient recipe still in vogue and so on. The adamant and reluctant individuals were convinced and motivated to get vaccinated. The myths surrounding vaccination was busted. Selfie points were installed at various vaccination centers.

The families were also motivated to install Tippy Taps at homes and thus enable easy hand washing with less water wastages. Public Handwash stations were also installed. Masks were distributed and 1700 Anganwadi workers were provided PPE kits and oximeters.

### Towards Nutrition Security:

To offset the nutrition insufficiency that has been widespread, the effort to promote Backyard Nutrition Gardens was carried forward. This year 1200 families were supported with seeds and technical advice to raise the gardens. Some new techniques were taught on how to grow more vegetables in less spaces.



The effort was supplemented with continuing visits and education on diet diversification. We are aiming to increase the number of food items in marginalized families' plates. It currently averages at 2-3 items, and we want to increase it to 4-5.

The effort is supplemented by inclusion of fruits and 4 nurseries have been set up at strategic locations to feed the saplings of at least 5 types at each household.

A series of capacity building and awareness building exercise happened. They primarily focused on helping mothers understand and undertake diet diversity from locally available food items, complete vaccination schedules, get ANC/PNC benefits and give attention to personal and neighborhood hygiene.

## **Promotion of Sustainable agriculture practices**

The focus of this intervention is to promote organic manure and pesticides to improve the per acre crop yield and reclaiming the soil in coming years. It also includes Revival of Millet and cultural crops that have been nearly extinct. Construction of Cattle sheds and skilling on preparation of organic manure has been a major activity supplemented by regular interaction and motivation and technical support to handful of farmers who dared to revert to the organic farming. The Model farms have been developed that serve as on -field school for more farmers to come and see and understand its long-term benefits. A process to set up a seed bank of perennial and local seeds has also been initiated.



## **Systemic support**

As part of a government initiative to engage civil societies through adoption of Anganwadis we were also assigned Anganwadis across 25 villages. They were repaired and renovated and provides with toys, water cans, weighing machines, TLM in local tribal dialect and other materials to make them child friendly spaces. The outcome has been that the retention time of children at centers has improved and that contributes to their health and wellbeing.



## **Accessing Entitlements**

An effort as being made to help marginalized beneficiary families access most of the food and employment and social security benefits., They are being proactively informed of the scheme benefits they can lay hold of the way they can do it – applications, approaching appropriate authorities etc. They are also guided to take use of grievance redress machinery in place. The major schemes include – work under MGNREGS, maternity benefits, PDS and ICDS.

## **Livelihood support**

The program began as post -COVID rehabilitation. It focused on helping the migration prone tribal -rural girls can set up their own micro enterprises. Series of meetings and brainstorming at the community level and reflecting on earlier efforts that failed or succeeded, it was decided that women and girls have the ability for multi-tasking as often we see them in their home. Thus, a skilling camp was organized with practicing hands as trainers. They were given a weeklong intensive training on motorbike repairs, beauty parlours skills and repairing of household electric goods. They were provided basic tools and accessories to





begin with. Most of them have set up shops in their villages and are able to earn though meagre income a but with time they are becoming popular. People are amazed to see these girls repair motor bikes that till now was considered in male domain alone. Then that too in very remote villages by tribal girls. They have been called *Karm Yoginis*.





## Goat Rearing

Considering the complex issue of malnutrition with nutrition, economic and cultural implications, and the target community very docile to face the challenge, we decided to promote Goat rearing on a scale. It has inherent potential to provide milk for malnourished children, can add to income and its dung can be used as fertilizer. Then it is something that community knows so no new introductions are needed. We have made provisions for keen families to get loan with very meagre interest. On the other hand, we have trained and equipped women barefoot veterinary workers (Pashu Sakhi). 25 of them have been trained, equipped, and uniformed and they are doing significant service at the village level. In fact, they are bridging a gap of veterinary services that are very poor in the remote regions. It will reduce mortality and contribute to healthy goats and remove the most critical hurdle families faced when the goat died in lots.





## Land & Water Conservation

This is a program that has continued since a decade now. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that women are encouraged to come forward and share their voluntary labor to develop their neighborhood land and water resources. They are not paid any wages, but a kit called Dignity Kit is provided to incentivize them. It contains cereals, pulses, blankets, rugs and slippers. The kit is received from our Partner GOONJ. This year the women took up neighboring riverbed de-silting, land bunds, land levelling, clearing debris from streams, well renovations, erection of sandbag check dams and so on. Total of 1500 man-days of voluntary labor contribution (*shram daan*) could be facilitated during the reported period.





## **Behavior Change Communication**

It undergirds all our efforts to demystify malnutrition among the tribal families and build a scientific temper in traditional community leaders. This intervention includes grassroots meetings of mothers to help them understand the importance of diet diversification, exclusive breastfeeding, supplementary feeding, accessing available health and nutrition benefits and reinforce their collectivity and consider taking up micro enterprises. 15 SHGs have been helped to associate with the NRLM.

Events were organized during the World Breastfeeding week and National Nutrition Months. The community engagement was ensured through innovative activities like Poshan Palki, Dadi ka chullha, snake and ladder game to impart nutritional messages. During COVID special awareness drives through awareness bullock carts and selfie points at vaccination centers.

A proactive process is on to build scientific temper among the traditional community opinion leaders. We are having continuous interaction with them, orienting them on the causes and consequences of malnutrition and enabling them to get the message across to their kinsmen that malnutrition is not a disease neither some deities' curse. It can be well managed at home with better feeding and caring and sending very sick kids to nutrition rehab centers. The rituals can be held after the child gets well. An orientation protocol is being prepared to make them social behavior change agents.





## IMPACT

The project during the year generated following key impact:

- COVID threat lingered for few months during the time and the Food Basket relief continued to nearly 700 severely malnourished Korku tribe children. It was a significant effort in times of food - distress and kept needy families alive and happy.
- The community awareness on malnutrition – its causes and home-based care is increasing. One can see that reversal in the fact that mothers of malnourished children are taking more care at feeding of the child. Their participation in the Anganwadis too has increased. This has resulted in reduction of malnutrition significantly.
- The diet diversity has increased due to intervention like backyard nutrition gardens and Millets back in the community. The food insecure families can access more food items in their neighborhood itself.
- A sustained effort to help the marginalized target families have increased crop production and adopt sustainable agriculture practices has been ongoing. It has motivated more farmers to opt for it. They are preparing and using organic manure and pesticides and endeavoring to set up perennial seed banks. Thus, biodiversity is being restored. Many have enough food for their families.
- We could help the district administration to revamp 25 dilapidated Anganwadis and equip them with toys and other facilities. This has helped in enhancing the retention time of children at the centers.
- Land and water conservation works through voluntary labor has been successful. The community with meagre incentives (no wages) came forward to undertake micro land and water conservation works like check dams, land bunds, well deepening and clearing the debris of neighboring streams to increase its storage capacity and so on. It has contributed to increase in per acre crop yield.
- The Livelihood program has been initiated to help tribal women and girls find local livelihood opportunity and thus relent migration. 25 girls identified were skilled in motor bike and household electrical good repairing and running beauty parlors. They have been helped to set up small shops in their villages and some of the girls have been making a significant income and setting example for other girls.
- The promotion of goat rearing to a scale has progressed well keen families have been assisted to procure loans to set up their own enterprise. The barefoot women veterinary workers (Pashu Sakhis) have been doing a great service at bridging the service delivery gaps and even proving helpful in emergencies. It will help in reduction of goat morbidity and mortality that was a great challenge to the enterprise.
- The BCC activities in forward run have focused on building scientific temper and has targeted the traditional community opinion leaders such as the tribal Priest & Healers and headman. They have shown grown understating and are able to sensitize their kinsmen on causes and consequences of malnutrition, home based care of malnourished children especially diets and have been advising treatment over rituals.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The recent government statistics showing alarming proportion of anemia among women in reproductive age and children below six years is a matter of concern. It's a nutritional emergency and needs urgent interventions on war footing to stabilize the situation.
- The ongoing community centric malnutrition management must be consolidated and documented to have evidenced based reports and sharing of this perspective.
- The Livelihood initiative needs scaling and expanding. We dream of an all-women motorbike service garage at few strategic locations. It will provide employment to more women.
- The Goat program needs consolidation and scaling so that the goat farmers can be enabled to collectivize themselves and sustain the process.
- The land & water conservation works through peoples' participation has been very effective and that needs to be done more as demands have been pouring in. This can be done as Food for work with grains and pulses as incentive.
- The scientific orientation of traditional community opinion leaders has been a successful venture. They have been bridging the service delivery gaps and bringing about positive behavior changes regarding malnutrition. Now they need to be enabled and empowered to become social behavior change agents. More training and orientation are needed to enlarge their scientific understanding and skills.

