

# ANNUAL REPORT



**SPANDAN SAMAJ SEVA SAMITI**

**2014-15**

## From the Director's Desk.....

The Year 2014-15 was yet another year of stride towards its Mission for Spandan Samaj Seva Samiti. We as a team have been implementing a layered model with dual emphasis on alleviating the suffering of currently malnourished children on one hand while facilitating enhanced access of poor families to more food and nutrition. Our interventions revolved round these mandates.



Community based malnutrition management has been our core program that has been aiming at early recovery of majority of malnourished children in a non-facility based care. The families of malnourished children were followed up with counseling on diet diversifications and better child care and referral advice if needed. Nearly 1000 children were so tracked and their families assisted. The special program for children below 03 years included piloting community crèches for children of daily wage earning Korku tribe mothers. Various interventions at Anganwadi centers continued to make them genuinely child friendly spaces and thereby help them access most of the six intended services. The regular health camps continued bridging the service delivery gaps in the remotest areas.

This year we also complemented the government effort at administering Vitamin A and deworming medicines. We could reach hundreds of children and so helped the health department have greater outreach especially to the children in remote locations.

The focus on Household Food Security included Revival of Traditional Crops and Millets and Backyard Nutrition Gardens primarily. The new technology in form of Millet De-hulling mills and Threshing machines were introduced to ease the processing of Millets and thereby motivate more farmers. Then poor families mainly depending on wage earning were assisted to access more employment under MGNREGA while material incentives were extended to foster spirit of volunteerism and undertake micro land and water development works.

The issue of migration has remained and this year we have accelerated our efforts at listing the migrant labors, issuing them Identity cards endorsed by the Panchayats. A special booklet in Korku language has been developed containing basic information on care during migration.

Our proactive work on gauging vital information on Korku language and culture was carried on and was used to develop culturally relevant communication materials to demystify malnutrition, help develop health seeking behavior, revive Millets and have updated information on various food and employment entitlements.

Behavior Change communication has been an integral program and innovations like Wall comic posters have continued to make significant impact. More IEC materials were developed and used this year.

This year was anecdotal in the sense that our work on malnutrition received wide appreciation and could bag prestigious *Stree Samman Puruskar* from HE President of India and *Best NGO Award* from Glenmark Foundation Mumbai.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our donors, supporters and Team for all the good work we could do.

(Seema Prakash)

## **PROGRAMS**

### **COMMUNITY BASED MALNUTRITION MANAGEMENT**

This core program developed as there was widespread reluctance among the community to take their malnourished children to Nutrition Rehab Centers at urban health centers for at least a fortnight long treatment protocol. We believed that many children can recover at home, if detected early and proper nutrition and care is ensured. Our Ambulatory Care Team covers 100 villages across two blocks and caters to 1000 children on an average every month besides pregnant women and Lactating mothers. The care includes anthropometric nutrition assessment, diagnosis and basic medication. The mothers are advised better nutrition, child care and referral if needed. The Frontline workers use a mobile app to gather information of children and women and the data is collated and analyzed periodically to have adequate understanding of prevailing malnourished children: underweight, wasted and stunted. For instance, high incidence of stunting shows that malnutrition has been a chronic problem.



For children below 03 years, being in most vulnerable to malnutrition age, 08 community crèches have been piloted. They are run in a neighborhood home and a woman selected by the community manages the center with an assistant. Each center caters to 20 children and ones belonging to daily wage earning mothers unable to take care of their children. The children receive 03 feedings, day care, health checks, vaccination and play way learning. Most of the children in crèches have shown steady growth and less prone to sicknesses. The mothers too are counseled for appropriate home care.

To improve the micronutrient intake by the children, Backyard Nutrition Gardens have been promoted. The mothers with malnourished children are assisted with vegetables seeds and demos on how to grow gardens at their backyards. During the reported year nearly 60% mothers could have vegetables like gourd, lentils, pumpkins, tomatoes and spinach that they could include in the diets.

Regular Health Camps are being organized to bridge the service delivery camps. Held in most remote regions the care is extended to large number of families unable to make it to the health centers. This year 18 health camps could outreach 2536 men, 968 women and 893 children.

Anganwadi centers received special attention and periodic events like Anganwadi Divas and Immunization Camps are being organized. In the spirit of celebration women and children have added motivation to participate in the ICDS programs and thereby access more food and nutrition.

Series of Mothers Meetings and Training were organized to help them develop a health seeking behavior over reliance on quacks and tribal healers and superstitious beliefs and practices.

The Quacks and Community Opinion leaders were engaged in discussions and orientations and were motivated to counsel mothers of malnourished children opt for proper care and treatment. Many have been helping in this regard.

### **LIVELIHOOD & FOOD SECURITY**

The effort included facilitating beneficiary families undertake micro land and water conservation activities like farm bunds, sand back check dams, well constructions and well deepening. Some works were accomplished through MGNREGA while some were undertaken through Cloth for Work initiatives. In the latter the clothing and grains were provided as incentive for undertaking these works voluntarily.

Series of training, workshops and interactive sessions were organized to help the wage earners know more and access more of the benefits through various Food & Employment schemes. They were also helped to utilize the Public Hearing forums to register their grievances and participate in Gram Sabha.

This year we began promoting Millets more vigorously. Campaigns were organized to sensitize the community to revert back to traditional crops and Millet. Soybean crops have been failing in tandem from last two years and many farmers showed willingness to use a part of their field to grow Millet. Small Millet like Kodo-Kutki and Major Millet like Maize and Sorghum were revived. To ease the Millet processing that is being done manually by women at mud mills; low cost technology was introduced in the form of Millet de-hulling mills and Millet threshers developed by Central Institute of Agricultural Engineering (CIAE) Bhopal. This will relieve the women from drudgery and have a motivating effect on others to grow Millets.

To address the issue of temporary distress migration, the listing of migrant labors was done across 50 villages. The listed migrant workers were provided identity cards and an info-let containing info on care to be taken during migration. Now these cards are being endorsed by the Panchayats to lend them more weightage.

The Grain Banks have continued successfully with community managing and replenishing them. They have assigned great importance as it continued to help many families facing food shortages could access grains on time and be succored from extortion of money lenders and rich farmers.



### **BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION**

A serious thought has been given to this aspect considering its deleterious effect on food and nutrition and biodiversity and many species. We began with promoting locally made organic pesticides and Millet growing. Demos were held and many farmers adopted the organic pesticide. This is having a ripple effect and soon more farmers will be prompted. Our efforts to draw government attention to conserve red listed Forest Owl was carried forward with more information gathered from the habitat and the community.

### **GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

Women empowerment has been a key area of intervention. It has included capacity building of Tribal women with regard to their rights, leadership roles and collective action for development and various legislations related to their safety and security and justice. Distinct leadership and organization was evident in many cases where women took lead at demanding work under MGNREGS, taking up voluntary works like well digging and face-lifting the crèches or managing their Self-Help Groups. The women Langoti village set an example of voluntary collective courage by digging a well on their own, much to the wonder of the menfolk and local administration.

Various training, workshops and orientation were held to build their capacity. The adolescent girls were focused to help them have better care of health and nutrition. Sanitary Napkins were promoted to improve the menstrual hygiene and FGDs were held to break the taboo around this subject.

### **PRESERVATION OF KORKU LANGUAGE & CULTURE**

This is a key area of intervention and is important as Korku has been earmarked as one of the endangered languages. The process comprised information gathering from oral traditions through community meetings and interaction with the aged. The information generated was collated and converted into communication materials used for Behavior change and transmitting vital aboriginal knowledge to present young generation. A pocket dictionary and a series of booklets and pamphlets were developed and used extensively. The Behavior Change Communication material in Korku language has been very effective at generating discussions and help faster learning.



## IMPACT

- The CBMM program has been very effective and could generate significant community participation. 1200 children recovered at homes by being early tracked and followed up by home based counseling and mothers' behavior change for positive health seeking behavior and better feeding and care of malnourished kids.
- The spirit of volunteerism was reinforced and many families came forward to undertake land and water development works that have helped them have increased farm production. This is significant in this region as many families face household food insecurity that peaks during 2-3 months every year.
- Having distressed over failure of main soybean crops many farmers took recourse to growing millet that has three advantages: enhanced food availability and direct intake of essential nutrients; farm based livelihood alternative and biodiversity conservation.
- Women leadership has been on rise and they have demonstrated their ability to play a crucial role in their village development.
- With more information and documentation the interest in preservation of Korku language and culture has received wider attention.

