



Seva Mandir



ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

**Seva Mandir**

TRANSFORMING LIVES

# Our Mission

Seva Mandir's mission is to make real the idea of society consisting of free and equal citizens who are able to come together and solve the problems that affect them in their particular contexts. The commitment is to work for a paradigm of development and governance that is democratic and polyarchic. Seva Mandir seeks to institutionalize the idea that development and governance should not just be left to the state and its formal bodies, such as the legislature and the bureaucracy, but that citizens and their associations should engage separately and jointly with the state.

The mission, briefly, is to construct the conditions in which citizens of plural backgrounds and perspectives can come together to benefit and empower the least advantaged in society.



Dr Mohan Sinha Mehta  
Founder, Seva Mandir  
(1895-1985)

' Where there is sorrow,  
where there is poverty and oppression,  
where man is inhuman to man,  
where there is darkness of ignorance,  
it is here Seva Mandir must reach out.'



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## Jagat Singh Mehta, 1922-2014

After an illustrious career as a politician and diplomat, during which he served as Indian Foreign Secretary from 1976 to 1979, Jagat Singh Mehta was invited by the Board of Trustees to take over as Chief Executive of Seva Mandir in 1985. He proved immediately to be a practical, hard-working and hands-on Chief Executive who took delight in travelling far and wide throughout Seva Mandir's work area - driving, walking, motorcycling. He used his formidable administrative experience to make Seva Mandir into an organization that was democratic, transparent, run according to rules, and that cared for its staff.

He also took over Seva Mandir's fundraising with a rare zeal, writing to every donor, explaining the reasons behind his coming to Seva Mandir, and requesting their continued support. He formed a Friends group in England in 1989, and it was this group that nurtured the idea of building an endowment for Seva Mandir - so essential to any institution's autonomy. Every single visitor or volunteer to Seva Mandir, known or unknown, found an invitation to a meal at Jeewan Niwas (his

residence). In the 30 years that he lived in Udaipur, countless are the dinners and lunches he hosted.

Jagat Sb also took on the role of President of Vidya Bhavan, an educational society founded by his father, and where he himself had studied from 1932 to 1937. Then in his 80s he was asked to become head of Jheel Sanrakshan Samiti, formed by a group of intrepid activists who wanted to save the lakes of Udaipur from being destroyed and polluted by vested interests. This cause was dear to him, and would see him get up at 4 am and do the five-hour drive to Jodhpur High Court to fight court cases to prevent encroachments on the lakebeds.

As Gunjan Doogar, editor of the Seva Mandir newsletter, writes, he was: 'a leader exemplar, an icon of humility and humanity, and one of the earliest ambassadors of not only India but also Seva Mandir. Age could not deter him, and he continued to actively guide Seva Mandir and other institutions, write books, engage in discussions and shower his love until the end. His own life was a testament to his beliefs of hard work, perseverance and dedication for the betterment of society and will continue to inspire and motivate all of us at Seva Mandir for years to come.'

(With thanks to Neelima Khetan, from whose speech at the Memorial Meeting for Jagat Sb in March 2014 much of this is taken)



# President's Foreword

India can be proud of its elaborate framework of citizen entitlements and a decentralized democratic polity, yet it is worrying that the state institutions mandated to provide social services - education, early childhood care, health care and civic amenities such as access to clean water and decent sanitation - are not functioning properly. The governance of forests, pastures, watersheds and ground water, resources on which the poor depend for their livelihoods, are likewise far from satisfactory. There is an imperative need to reimagine and build institutional structures and civic mores that reinvigorate service providers and citizens to work for a more just society. As part of this quest for an alternative paradigm of development, Seva Mandir is experimenting with its own autonomous service delivery programmes and institution-building efforts.

In Seva Mandir's experience, the key to successful service delivery is creating institutional arrangements where staff and frontline service providers are valued as distinct individuals and constantly enabled to perform their duties. This enabling includes improving their skills and providing work contexts where they feel reaffirmed in their own search for dignity. In the case of improving governance, the key challenge is not only to hold statutory bodies accountable, but to foster cooperation among local people to hold themselves accountable to norms aligned with working for the common good, for just social arrangements and sustainable resource use.

The year in question has been promising in many respects. Seva Mandir's programmes - providing schooling to children without access to well-functioning schools, nutrition to small children born to working women and poor families, maternal and child care in remote villages, and small pilots to improve access to clean water and better sanitation - have shown positive results. On promoting and protecting pasturelands and forests and treating watersheds, village people have come together in large numbers and refused to cooperate with forces that encourage their privatization and commercialization. In over a hundred villages, communities have declined to take individual titles to forest lands and instead have sought community forests rights. In many places where the management of common property resources has

broken down due to neglect or the assertion of powerful vested interests, people have rallied to restore these lands to their former status. Many have joined these struggles on moral grounds and not for any benefit they stand to gain.

What has been disappointing in this period is the lack of response from the government with respect to the efforts of village people to create community forest rights, an entitlement provided under the Forest Rights Act, and to be accepted as co-managers of forests under the long-standing Joint Forest guidelines. Also troubling is the hesitation of townspeople and villagers to counter powerful individuals and groups out of fear of losing benefits acquired through their patronage. Seva Mandir is beginning to better understand how it can help people overcome fear.

All the work done by Seva Mandir is thanks to the generous support of donors. Seva Mandir is fortunate to have found new donor communities as support from some of its traditional Western donors has started to decline. Some of the new support has come from the corporate sector, both within India and abroad. This is all the more praiseworthy as Seva Mandir is not located anywhere near their factories and corporate offices.

The Friends of Seva Mandir UK, under the leadership of its Chairman Chris Wiscarson, has raised a great deal of money for Seva Mandir. Chris has personally given Seva Mandir confidence in its own mission and practices by coming regularly to see its work in the field and praising it in many different circles. Chris's faith in Seva Mandir led him to persuade the Speaker of the House of Commons to host an event for Seva Mandir in his hallowed chambers within the Houses of Parliament in London. Poonam Abbi, Executive Director of Friends of Seva Mandir USA, with the help of its trustees, has raised money from the Indian diaspora and from American society at large. The central and state governments have also contributed funds to Seva Mandir, especially for its work on sanitation. Their support is greatly cherished as it allows Seva Mandir a chance to share its ideas and practices with administrators and elected leaders who have it in their power to scale up ideas and programmes. Seva Mandir is also deeply indebted

to its many individual donors and private philanthropists and to the charity portals that raise money for it in ever more technologically sophisticated ways.

Seva Mandir is also greatly indebted to the many volunteers who come and give of their idealism. One volunteer spent 18 months in a small township called Delwara preparing young people to learn English and know their community heritage and Seva Mandir's effort to improve civic amenities and build social solidarity across caste and communal lines. With this knowledge these young people have developed a new source of livelihood as tourist guides, but equally the programme holds the potential to produce modern-day bards chronicling for the benefit of their fellow citizens the daily struggles in Delwara to make it a better and more humane place. Our special thanks are due to John and Felicia Pheasant, who after retiring from their distinguished careers in the UK visit Udaipur six months in a year. They have been training Seva Mandir staff to write proposals and edit documents that communicate the work of Seva Mandir. The annual report before you is just one example of their dedicated service to helping Seva Mandir.

One of the most significant contributions to the improvement of Seva Mandir has been its collaboration with scholars. Their evidence-based ideas and evaluation methods have not only changed the course of our thinking and practices on specific programmes, they have also created a culture of systematic monitoring and evaluation within Seva Mandir. This year scholars from the University of Georgetown - Professors Raj Desai, Shareen Joshi and Anders Olofsgård, a former colleague of theirs, now based in Sweden - have initiated research to assess the impact of cooperation on improved governance and development outcomes. The results of this research will have a profound bearing on conceptualizing development

interventions. Another long-term research collaboration is with the Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur. Research apart, thanks to Janat Shah, IIM director, students of management are being exposed to rural development work as an integral part of their studies. This exposure will, we hope, lead in the future to the cross-fertilization of ideas across different management cultures, and new ideas on the meaning of development.

Seva Mandir's experiments with governance and institution-building and programmes to expand well-being are showing promise. We hope that this alternative approach to development and governance based on the performance of duty will become as attractive to mainstream policy makers and philanthropists. Their support will give more room to ordinary people living in small towns and villages to build a better and more just society.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Seva Mandir, I would like to congratulate Priyanka and her team for another outstanding year of dedicated service and struggle.

Finally, I would also like to pay tribute to my father and fellow trustee, Jagat S. Mehta, who passed away on 6 March 2014. He had retired as a trustee in November 2013 due to his fading health. He played a historic role in managing a long and difficult transition after the death of the founder of Seva Mandir in 1985. He was an unabashed cheer-leader and well-wisher of Seva Mandir. His life was greatly enriched by the affection, care and respect he received from his friends and colleagues in Seva Mandir.

Ajay S. Mehta  
President



# Overview

Seva Mandir's 2013-14 annual report sets out its progress, achievements and the challenges faced during the year. At one level, this report will seem like an aggregate of Seva Mandir's different programmes. And at another, it is a narrative of Seva Mandir's journey in relocating power, responsibility and governance from the traditional power centres to ordinary citizens. I take the liberty of sharing with you an incident that happened in Delwara on the day I sat down to write this Overview. Strictly speaking, therefore, this incident is not of the reporting year, but nevertheless I feel it will help me make the point about Seva Mandir's programmes and processes being geared towards fostering democracy and self-governance.

Delwara is a qasba, a peri-urban area, about which you can read more in chapter nine of this report. Seva Mandir has been involved in improving the civic and living conditions of Delwara through citizen ownership and participation, an essential part of which has been the formation of the Nagrik Vikas Manch (NVM) or citizens' forum, which works closely with Seva Mandir in planning and implementing development programmes in Delwara. The NVM is drawn from the 18 mohallas or neighbourhoods of the town.

The current NVM's term ended in July 2014, since when the Seva Mandir team in Delwara had been trying to have the elections held. But they were constantly blocked by the incumbent NVM members who wished to hold on to power. These were the same people because of whom other citizens feared to speak out, with the result that the participation in NVM meetings had dwindled to an all-time low. These NVM members also started maligning the Project Coordinator of Delwara, accusing him of thwarting development work in the town and not bringing in a big enough budget. This was largely a diversionary tactic to deflect attention from the fact that their abuse of power was distancing people from the NVM.

After a considerable struggle and many meetings, both formal & informal, spread over five months, elections in 14 of the 18 mohalla committees took place by the cut-off date. Four mohallas (mostly the



neighbourhoods of these same people) resisted the elections. But in an aam sabha (open meeting of all citizens), the citizens and Seva Mandir collectively decided to hold the NVM elections in spite of the four mohallas whose elections were still pending.

The NVM election was scheduled for three days later. The day after the aam sabha, the remaining four mohallas did in fact complete their elections, probably fearing that they would otherwise be out of the NVM.



Between the main square and the Rajput quarter, Delwara

The NVM elections were successfully held today, and new young people were elected in place of those who had traditionally been seen as socially, politically or economically powerful. One of those elected was a young Muslim woman.

Delwara's story has been a journey from a squalour-filled township to a clean one, from a water-deficient township to a water-adequate one. But it has, just as importantly, also been a journey which has enabled ordinary citizens

peacefully to resist unethical power brokers and to form a constructive outlook for the future.

Delwara's journey mirrors the journey Seva Mandir has made, and is still making, in all its 600 villages. Its different programmes, while seemingly discrete, add up to provide opportunities and strength to enable citizens to deepen self-governance. As you read through the report, you will see how this is happening. There are villages where communities

have opted for community forest rights over individual claims. There are about 1,000 modestly educated and modestly paid villagers who are effectively discharging their responsibilities as teachers, Balwadi<sup>1</sup> Sanchalikas<sup>2</sup>, health workers, para-engineers etc. There are about 100-150 panchayats<sup>3</sup> which have chosen Seva Mandir to implement MGNREGA<sup>4</sup> and build toilets in their areas. And along with all this, there are significant improvements in children's learning levels, health status, immunization cover, women's status, better drinking water and sanitation status along with improved natural resources.

All this has been possible with the support of past and present donors, friends, staff, volunteers, board members and partner communities who have remained patient and trusted in the power of constructive work to braid together these material and non-material improvements. We take this opportunity to thank them all and to seek their support in the future.

It is increasingly felt these days that there is little interest in this narrative of changing social relations and deepening citizenship, and in the value of civil society organizations working in this field. Often

policymakers and donors do not find this narrative valuable because these projects do not seem easily replicable and scalable, even though they understand that no public good - whether it be water systems, schools, public parks or grazing land - will function well if not located in a social environment that supports it. We hope that Seva Mandir's experience on the ground will be able to influence this thinking.

And finally, as we place this report in your hands, we would like to remember and pay our homage to Shri Jagat S. Mehta, our trustee, guide, friend and a motivator, whom we lost on 6 March 2014. Jagat Sb, amongst many other things, helped Seva Mandir become an institution based on norms but also on personal concern. He laid down systems and nurtured the young young and the old young, he worked hard, harder than most of us, but also never missed an invitation for a meal - whether he had to walk, drive or be carried to it on a cot. We hope the report does justice to Jagat Sb's legacy and place it as our tribute to him.

Priyanka Singh  
Chief Executive

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<sup>1</sup> Balwadi: SM-run preschool

<sup>2</sup> Sanchalika: woman trained by SM to work with young children in the Balwadi in her local area

<sup>3</sup> Panchayat: village-level elected government bodies

<sup>4</sup> MGNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, a government initiative to provide assured employment via development activities prescribed by the panchayats



## Strengthening Village Institutions

Building and strengthening village institutions is both a process and a programme. The process involves building ownership, governance and inclusive participation within the villages. The programme involves creating opportunities, cutting across all boundaries, for people to come together and cooperate to improve their own and their community's lives. The process is integrated in all Seva Mandir's programmes. The Village Institution Programme is a torchbearer ensuring that this value is constantly kept alive. The ultimate aim is for communities to take responsibility for their own development.

The need for this programme arose as a result of the limited capacity of the traditional caste panchayats<sup>1</sup> as well as elected panchayats to address effectively the fragmentation of communities over a wide variety of issues and the lack of developmental outlook at village level.

The specific objectives of the Village Institutions programme are to:

- Strengthen the management of village funds, which will include investments earning a high return, better usage and record-keeping
- Deepen the inclusion of women, young people and children in community institutions
- Assess the functioning of community institutions as democratic, non-partisan citizen spaces and share results with the rest of the organization
- Facilitate better linkages between the community institutions and the panchayat and carefully study and share the outcomes

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<sup>1</sup> Caste panchayat: non-government decision-making body set up by a community along caste lines



Newly elected woman treasurer of the Dal Mill management committee, Kotra

The programme comprises three major components:

- **Gram Samuh:** This is a general body of which every citizen of the village is a member. The Samuhs elect an executive body called the Gram Vikas Committee.
- **Gram Vikas Committee (GVC or Village Development Committee):** These committees are responsible for leading the local development process and finding solutions to the problems facing villagers in a collective and democratic manner.
- **Gram Vikas Kosh (GVK or Village Development Fund):** built up through contributions from the communities as well as from Seva Mandir, it serves two critical objectives as it not only gives the communities the ability to fund some of their needs, but also provides a reason for the whole community to meet and discuss the allocation of funds on a regular basis.

## Gram Vikas Committee

GVCs have overall responsibility for village-level development and there has been considerable progress towards making them fully representative of the communities they serve.

- 15 new GVCs were added last year
- Almost 42% of GVC members are women
- 60,859 households are represented in 7 blocks, an increase of 3,025 households
- 38% of GVCs have women as office-bearers this year, compared with 25% last year
- 103 re-elections for the GVCs were conducted in 76 villages
- 11 zonal federation meetings were conducted with 189 federation members from 73 GVCs

### Women's participation in the GVCs

Women's membership in these 547 Committees has risen to 2,509, and of these 240 women are office-bearers; moreover 52.5 % of them are treasurers. This is a remarkable achievement since, first, it is difficult to find literate women, and secondly, men are often reluctant to give a powerful position to women.

### Support to People Initiative

The Support to People Initiative (SPI) is a Seva Mandir initiative to improve the capacities, accountability and responsibility of GVCs in running, monitoring and evaluating village projects. Their tasks include



Democratic election of the new Dal Mill management committee, Kotra

monitoring the work of para-workers<sup>2</sup>, paying them, renewing contracts etc. During the reporting period, 148 GVCs received 23 SPI follow-up training courses, with the main focus being to increase villagers' skills in effective monitoring and payment of village volunteers. The training sessions were designed to make the GVCs capable of managing the development projects running in their villages on their own. Issues like loans, cash in hand, and management information system updating were discussed in the training sessions.

## Gram Vikas Kosh

These village funds are allocated for various areas of development within communities.

- Total GVKs 632
- The total fund of the GVKs has increased from Rs 42,100,000 to Rs 46,000,000 (an increase of 9% which is just double of that of last year).
- This year Rs 74,345 came into the GVKs from 19 MGNREGA sites, compared with Rs 155,244 last year (the shortfall being caused by delayed MGNREGA payments).
- While MGNREGA is slowly becoming a steady

contributor to GVKs, in this period interest on Fixed Deposits (FDs) at 62% has been the biggest contributor to GVKs. Better management of funds in FD has also led to better interest earnings.

- The utilization of funds for development purposes shows an increase from Rs 812,202 last year to Rs 1,176,310 in this reporting period.
- 48 cluster-level accountants are working in 6 blocks and have so far updated 90% of the records, which reflects the success of the training sessions provided for them.
- 110 people participated in training on fund management, of whom 76 were women. Women are increasingly taking a more proactive role in the development of their communities.
- There are clear signs of improvement in fund management, the earnings from FD being a good example. But there is of course room for improvement and village-level planning for future fund management is ongoing in areas such as the amount placed in FDs, utilization of the interest, appointment of cluster-level accountants, financial planning workshops etc.
- Preparing the zonal federations for financial

<sup>2</sup> Para-workers: field workers not on SM staff but hired by village development committees

integration has also been initiated as the federations can prevent some of the problems that have been experienced to date.

## Training

Around 70 training sessions and 88 meetings were conducted for different purposes, with 4,075 participants of whom 1,730 were women. The sessions covered an introduction to institutions and a basic understanding of how to handle the funds of the Gram Vikas Kosh.

Three training courses were held with 151 village leaders to advise them on coordination and responsibility in their dealings with panchayat representatives and their development work.

A three-day training course for the zonal workers responsible for coordination of village institution work was held. Besides other important aspects, the training focused on identifying and understanding current issues faced by the villagers and on sharing new topics such as community forest rights, the decline in the child sex ratio, etc. Overall, a great deal was done to build the capacities of the old and new GVCs and of the community as a whole during the year.

## Community Participation in Gram Sabha

Many villages and GVCs have worked closely with panchayats over issues including functioning of ICDS<sup>3</sup> centres, schools, pasturelands, water availability, social benefit schemes etc. In some villages the collaboration was very positive, while in a few there were some differences.

The GVCs collaborated with 54 panchayats over the implementation of MGNREGA on work such as desiltation of 10 water-harvesting structures and 31 pasturelands, individual works and 106 toilets.

## Speeding up payments

In the past financial year it was observed that the process of payment to village volunteers was lengthy and caused delays of up to three months. Moreover the advance given to the GVCs to pay volunteers sometimes remained underutilized, and large amounts of money were refunded at the financial year end. In order to regularize payments and ensure proper cash-flow management, certain systems were introduced on a pilot basis in Girwa block.

As a result the time required for preparation of actual bills and payment to volunteers was reduced by 50% and this has helped in better management of funds. This system was therefore introduced in all blocks and focused efforts were made to regularize it. Currently, in 243 GVCs who have a sufficient balance in their bank accounts, payment to the associated grass-root level workers is made at the latest by the 18<sup>th</sup> of each month. In 92 GVCs who are dependent on the cheques received from the organization the payment is disbursed within the month, whereas it used to take more than three months. This is a significant achievement. This new system has been put in place in about 336 GVCs, and is being strictly followed, ensuring that the workers receive their dues on time.

<sup>3</sup> ICDS: the government's Integrated Child Development Service



### Changing attitudes

Nayakheda (Kelwada) is a village that has recently become associated with Seva Mandir. There are no roads, no electricity and very little other infrastructure. With around 43 households, the village is dominated by the Singh Rawat caste. They are mostly dependent on wage labour for their livelihoods and most people, especially the young, migrate to Mumbai or other cities for cash income, leaving women and the elderly back home in the village. There has been no development activity in the village, a point which the youth raised with the local Sarpanch<sup>4</sup> and other political leaders during elections.

The villagers approached Seva Mandir to ask for its help. During the initial couple of rounds of group meetings, the villagers were not ready to elect women to the new GVC because they argued that women have to do household and agricultural work and, if elected, they would have to shoulder additional responsibilities. After much discussion with the village group and sharing examples of other villages, the people agreed and elected four female committee members. The elected treasurer is also a woman who is educated up to the 5<sup>th</sup> standard. The whole population of the village is now part of the samuh.

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<sup>4</sup> Sarpanch: elected head of the panchayat



Successful common pastureland development, Kherwara

## Developing Natural Resources

Seva Mandir continues to work on restoring and enhancing the productivity of natural resources with a strong focus on afforestation, joint forest management, community forest rights, watershed development and agriculture. The conservation and rehabilitation of land, water and forests plays an important role in strengthening livelihoods, fostering social solidarity and preserving the ecology of this degraded region.

During the year, there have been a number of achievements:

- Our engagement in MGNREGA with the state and panchayats has further strengthened, as a result of which Seva Mandir has been able to generate appropriate wages and create common structures like village pastures and water harvesting.
- Seva Mandir received overwhelming media support on the issue of community forest rights, which has helped keep up the communities' enthusiasm in the struggle to claim their rights with regard to common forests.

- Monitoring and evaluation systems of the Natural Resource Development programme were updated to make the data-collection methodology more efficient.

### Afforestation and Pasture Development

About 70% of Seva Mandir's working area comprises common lands, which are either pasturelands, forests or revenue lands. These lands play a significant role in helping people earn a sustainable living as they depend on them for fodder, food and fuelwood.

Several of these common lands, however, are being repeatedly encroached on (in other words, privatized illegally) as a result of which villagers are denied any access to the land. This also has social implications as it weakens communities. For Seva Mandir, it has been a long struggle to make communities cohesive enough to think about the collective good rather than focus on private occupancy of the common lands. We have not only helped facilitate dialogue between encroachers and villagers, but have also worked towards resolving boundary disputes.

The focus is to ensure that the various common lands can be protected by boundary walls or fences and then rehabilitated. Seva Mandir assists communities in carrying out soil and water conservation on these common lands and planting other vegetation to increase their productivity.

Throughout the process, communities are trained to manage and take responsibility for the common lands, while also ensuring that the produce is equitably shared.

- Under the Afforestation and Pastureland Development programme, a total of 673 ha of land was afforested, of which 95% was common land and 590 ha was covered through MGNREGA.
- Finding new areas for pastureland development is now becoming very difficult. For this reason, and the fact the new sanctions from MGNREGA were not received (see below), this year only 95 ha of new pastureland was developed.
- Grass production from 26 selected sites developed over the last three years was

measured and compared, to help us understand yield production: 4,678kg/ha was produced from those developed in 2012; 6,192kg/ha from sites of 2011 and 4,035kg/ha from sites of 2010, which is quite a high yield. This is good news as grass serves as an important source of fodder for 2,100 families. Surplus grass was also sold by families at Rs 5/kg.

- A total of 59,103 saplings were planted under all the programmes on various sites during the monsoon season.
- Several other products like custard apple, tendu/timru leaves, khakhra, tamarind, ber, ratanjot, mahua flowers, broom and bamboo leaves are also being harvested from the pasturelands.

One new challenge to emerge in our work on commons is increased incidences of man-animal conflict around the pastures, where thick foliage provides a safe hiding place for panthers and blue bulls (or nilgai, Asia's largest antelope). We are trying to work with the wildlife department to find a solution to this emerging challenge.



The NRD team and local farmers planning repairs to a drainage line as part of a water retention project, Kotra

## Joint Forest Management and Community Forest Rights

The Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme evolved in the early 1990s with the objective of making it possible for state forest departments to involve local people in forest management. The JFM regulation provided a role for NGOs as facilitating agencies working with local communities in their endeavour to protect forest areas. Seva Mandir has been involved in the implementation of this programme since its inception in the state in 1992. Using its existing village institutions, it has helped local communities form Forest Protection Committees (FPCs) as the village bodies responsible for the protection, management and conservation of the forest areas.

Community development programmes like JFM have, however, been a challenge in themselves. While, initially, motivating people to give up encroachments within forests and instead collectively work for their development was challenging, the erratic attitude of the Forest Department towards JFM has also not been very helpful. At times very proactive help has been received from the FD, but this has not been consistent. As seen in the last three years, the FD refused to sanction the JFMs proposed by Seva Mandir and consequently:

- We were not able to work on a single JFM proposal this year. After many discussions with the FD, it was finally communicated by the FD that they would work on all 7 sites proposed by Seva Mandir.

Despite the setbacks faced in the JFM, significant progress has been made at our end towards enabling communities to realize Common Forest Rights (CFR).

- 46 CFR proposals have been forwarded to the District Level Committee; 7 are at Sub-District Level and 33 at village level. In Kotra, all 9 proposals on CFR are now at the preparatory stage while in Kherwara 8 are currently in preparatory stage. Overall, 118 new claims are being prepared.
- We are also working on the preparation of CFR claims in new villages for which we have started a process of creating awareness involving all the important stakeholders. Seva Mandir is trying hard to engage with local government officials, panchayats and Forest Rights Committees.

### Protecting the commons

In Jogiyon Ka Guda, some Rajput families had broken the boundary wall protecting the pastureland and taken their goat inside to graze. When local tribal women saw this they tied up the goats in the community hall of the village. The goats' owners came with swords and sticks and argued with the women leaders, who dealt peacefully with the matter. They asked the owners whether what they had done was right, making the point that, if everyone grazed animals on the pastureland, the community would not be able to benefit from it. The Rajput realized that they were at fault, paid a fine of Rs 50 and agreed to repair the boundary wall.

This story needs to be seen against a background of traditionally hierarchical and often oppressive relations between Rajputs and tribals. For tribal women to stand up to Rajputs in defence of the commons is a testament to the huge confidence and empowerment they have gained and to changing power relations; their peaceful but firm handling of a potentially violent situation is a tribute to their wisdom.

- Seva Mandir has received considerable support from the print media, which focused on the importance of CFR and protecting the local ecology, people's struggle for CFR and the state's dismal performance in granting CFR. All the local dailies carried the story for almost 10 days.

## Watershed Development

Watershed development is the most effective way of reversing the degradation of land, thereby improving people's lives socially and economically. It is extremely important as it helps improve the quality of all natural resources - agricultural land and wastelands (private and common) - which contributes to overall biomass and therefore leads to an increase in ground water levels, and helps improve soil quality, fodder availability and agricultural productivity. The watershed is created by following a ridge to valley approach, in which check dams are built and soil is treated to increase the recharge levels of groundwater.



Seva Mandir has been working on watersheds since the mid 1980s and has so far worked on 35 sites, covering a total area of 14,000 ha.

- This year, we have treated 520 ha of watershed area against a target of 750 ha. Around 620 families have benefited from this work, which primarily took place in Jhabla village and Dob, Nevaj and Atwal villages of Jhadol block.

## Agriculture

Seva Mandir's agriculture programme includes a range of activities designed to improve crop production by strengthening local community seed banks, increase horticulture, improve livestock health, and promote organic farming. These activities help rejuvenate the land and water resources, and crop development activities increase the productivity of the local field crops.

- 340 farmers were selected to plant fruit trees following the Wadi (orchard) model in the third batch, compared with 300 and 360 farmers respectively in the first and second batches. The Wadi model includes plantation of 40 saplings of fruit trees (mango, lemon, pomegranate and aonla) and 120 saplings of forestry trees.
- Soil and water conservation and water resource

development activities were conducted with 179 farmers.

- Farmers were encouraged to grow seasonal crops and vegetables, which enabled them to produce food and cash crops. Wadi farmers who grew vegetables and other cash crops as intercrops earned between Rs 3,000 and 7,000 by selling their vegetables in the market.
- A few farmers cultivated organic wheat. They sold their produce for Rs 20/kg compared with the market rate of Rs 16/kg for conventionally produced wheat.
- 15 Community Seed Banks (CSBs) were maintained in Jhadol and Girwa blocks

## Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Though Gram Sabhas put forward 201 projects to 54 panchayats through MGNREGA in 2013-14, no new work was sanctioned for several reasons, including the code of conduct and change in implementation guidelines. Therefore in 2013-14, we worked on ongoing projects sanctioned in previous years. These

The NRD team and local farmers planning a water retention project, Kotra



included: 41 community works (de-siltation of 10 water-harvesting structures and 31 pasturelands) and 51 individual works and 106 toilets (reported separately).

- 45,775 person-days were created at an average rate of Rs 121 a day.
- 49,000 saplings were planted on 31 pasturelands (164 ha).
- De-siltation work increased water-holding capacity by 10 million litres.
- In individual land improvement projects, 5.5 ha of new cultivable land was created.
- Delays in labour payment have affected turnout in ongoing works.

## Research Activities

### 'Safeguarding Commons for Next Generation'

The project on common lands was started in October 2010 and is currently ongoing in 12 districts (three each) of Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Assam and Karnataka. The first phase of the study being conducted in Rajasthan was completed this year.

### 'Documentation of Community-based governance in southern Rajasthan'

Supported by IASS-IFAD<sup>1</sup> collaboration, the study started in December 2012 with the aim of documenting reports of community-based governance of common resources, and concluded in February 2014. The study's findings were presented at a workshop conducted by IFAD in Rome and at the Global Soil Week organized in Berlin by IASS.

Major findings from these studies were shared through a national-level workshop with various stakeholders - government functionaries, development practitioners, academics and policy advisors.

### Key findings from the studies

- According to the study on 'Safeguarding Commons for Next Generation', on the ground de facto Common Property Resources are only 30% to 40% of what is on record (de jure). Cultivable wastelands are the most encroached categories with about 80-100% of the land under encroachment (for cultivation) while the Community-Managed Resources like protected pastureland, developed JFM sites or religiously protected lands (Orans) were either free from encroachments or the least encroached sites and have the best vegetation.
- Based on the findings in the study 'Documentation of Community-based governance in southern Rajasthan', rehabilitation of the village common lands and their management by communities has led to a fivefold increase in fodder production per hectare, providing additional income through the harvest to more than 70% of the population. Supplementary benefits in the developed sites include floral and faunal growth, a reduction in women's workload and strengthened social capital through equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms.
- According to the findings, the failure of proper conservation and management of local institutions, lack of support from an external development agency, corruption at panchayat level and weakened legal support to local communities for resource conservation have been found to be major blockages in resource management. On the other hand, protection of community land from privatization and its restoration has increased community resilience in the face of drought and irregular rainfall. Benefits from the sites, the interlinkages in the community, combined with an effective leadership and the continuous and intensive grass-roots level support by an external agency, especially to overcome social inequalities and power differences, have been found to be the basis of a sustainable community-based governance. However, fostering community solidarity is not something that follows a blue print, so getting community buy-in is a long-term, unpredictable process.

<sup>1</sup> IASS: Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam, Germany; IFAD: International Fund for Agriculture Development

## Income Generation Cell

The Income Generation Cell was set up in May 2012 with the objective of strengthening livelihood activities under Seva Mandir's Self-Help Group umbrella. There are currently three livelihood activities under the aegis of the cell:

**Dal Mill:** Over the last four years, the dal mill has almost doubled its procurement of lentils, increased the number of participating farmers from 300 to 526, and has seen sales multiply more than fivefold. It has, importantly, been making efforts to diversify its client base: whereas in 2011 90% of the dal was sold within Seva Mandir, in 2013 this figure was only 40%. But the mill has not yet reached breakeven and that is the major challenge remaining.

**The Fisheries Project** started in Jhadol block with five women's Self-Help Groups comprising 75 women. A number of ponds were stocked with fingerlings, but fishing has only been possible in three ponds as there have been problems with fish growth.

**The VitaGoat Project** was set up in Kaya village of Girwa block as a soy processing enterprise to provide employment to local youths. VitaGoat is a food processing system using locally available fuel. Despite many attempts, we have been unable to make this project self-sustaining, as finding a market for tofu has been very difficult. The sole benefit, albeit a significant one, has been the nutritious soya milk provided for children attending our learning

camp at Kaya. It has therefore been decided that the VitaGoat project will henceforth be part of the Kaya Training Centre and used to produce soya milk and tofu for the centre's residents, in particular the children.

In addition, three small new income generation projects have started in Shisvi village of Girwa block:

**The Washing Powder Project** involves a few women buying and combining mild chemicals to make washing powder. The powder has been tested in Delhi and shown to be eco-friendly and eligible for ISO certification. In the year to March 2014, 80 kg of washing powder was sold, generating an income of Rs 4,000 to supplement these women's other income.

**Sewing Activity:** 26 girls in Shisvi are being trained by Sadhna (which started as one of Seva Mandir's income generation activities and grew until it became a separate Mutual Benefit Trust with three commercial outlets of its own). Sadhna will try to provide sustained work for those who qualify as they are in need of people to stitch.

**Potteries Project:** Since early 2013 Seva Mandir has been training ten families to use the new electric pottery wheels and fast manual wheels purchased as part of this project. Where traditionally only water pots were being made and sold for little profit, these new machines increase the villagers' productivity and this activity has increased the income of each family by Rs 800–1000 per month.

Learning machine sewing at the Shisvi training centre





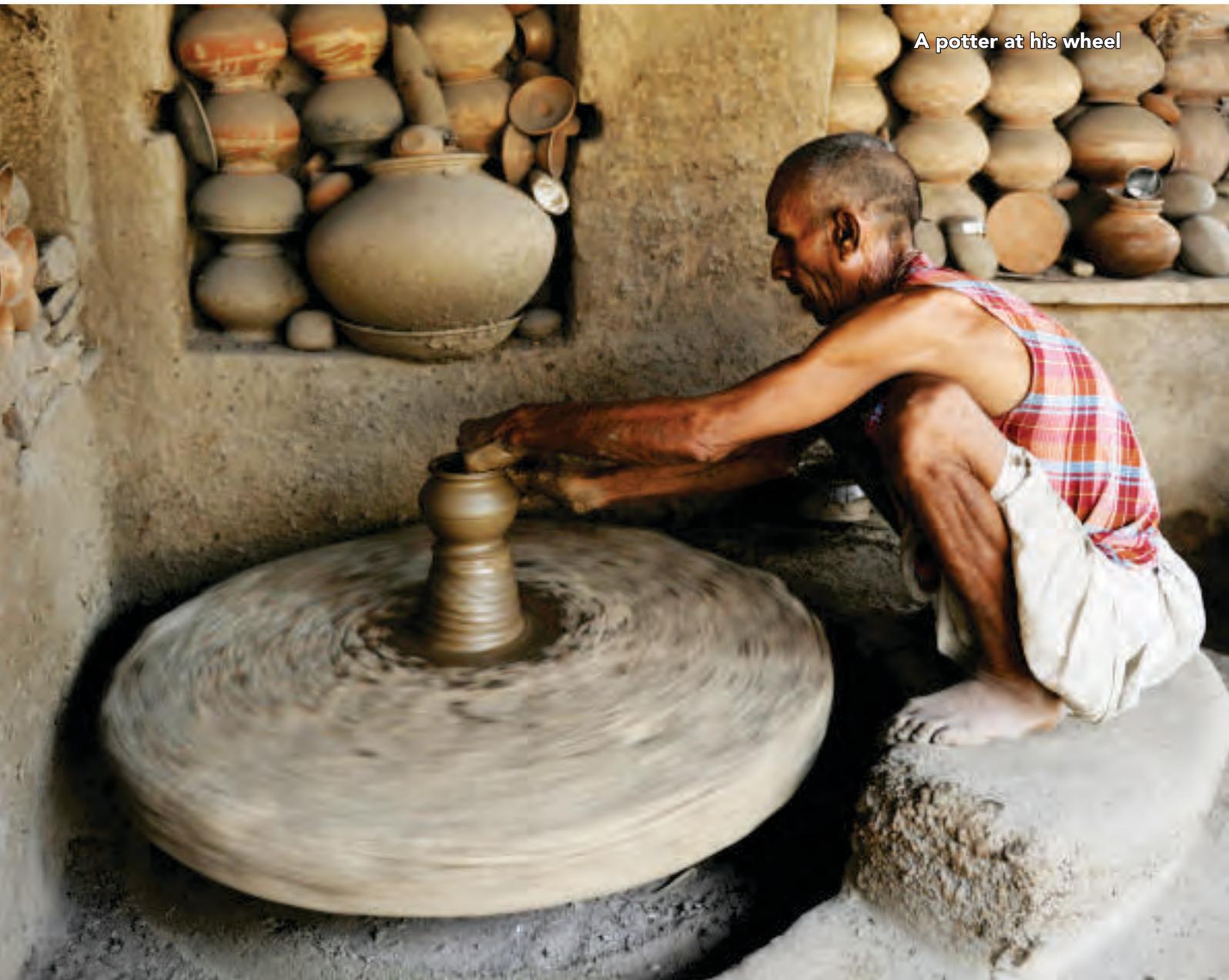
Packaging of washing powder



Processing the dal at the dal mill, Kotra



Processed dal ready for delivery



A potter at his wheel



Villagers in Dholi Ghati, proud of their new tank and now confident in their ability to chlorinate and maintain it

## Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation

Seva Mandir works in a region that has sub-humid climatic conditions and undulating terrain and is prone to drought. Limited water availability forces communities to work hard to fulfil drinking water needs for domestic consumption and agriculture.

Against this background, a key focus of Seva Mandir's work has been on increasing and securing the availability of water for drinking and sanitation. The organization has undertaken well-deepening, watershed development and construction of rainwater-harvesting structures to harvest, recharge and conserve surface and ground water, and has now augmented the availability of drinking water for over 25,000 families. It has also worked on sanitation awareness and building toilets, both dry and wet.

### Clean Drinking Water

Poor availability of clean drinking water (CDW) causes innumerable problems for local communities. Unsafe

water causes diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases, especially in children, and increases families' spending on health care. A lack of CDW further increases the vulnerability of families and reduces their chances of moving out of poverty.

Seva Mandir spent much time examining the problems in order to find suitable solutions. Open-dug wells and handpumps, which are the commonest sources of drinking water, used to dry up during the summer. The quality of drinking water was also a problem: chlorination is not always effective in open wells, and handpumps, accepted as the only possible CDW source for villages, require regular maintenance.

After several pilots and trials, Seva Mandir came up with an innovative solution to ensure CDW in hilly and remote rural settlements: community tanks (each designed to meet the drinking water requirements of a minimum of 20 families) are built and connected with open wells. As the tanks have a far smaller

capacity than the wells, it is much simpler to chlorinate the water in the tank. It is then filtered to make it potable.

CDW facilities have now been developed in 13 villages, and these have been regularly monitored. A focus has been on increasing the regularity of use of tanks and improving their management.

Work on CDW has begun in four new villages, and women have been encouraged to play a leading role in CDW management.

- Access to CDW ensured for 193 families (1,158 people) against the target of 325 families, the main reason for the shortfall being that in Shisvi (a peri-urban area) only 80 out of 175 families chose to connect their properties to the panchayat tank, while one tank system planned in Shisvi for 35 families had to be dropped due to disagreement between users on water source. We have created access for 8 families by building a common tap through which drinking water is supplied. For the rest of the families, we are in the process of repairing pumps and constructing water reservoirs.
- 43 tanks constructed
- 13 new CDW systems installed and 5 in progress
- 325 families gaining enhanced CDW availability through well restoration, tank restoration, rooftop rainwater-harvesting and recharge systems.
- Use of tanks is becoming more regular with 74.5% of the tanks being used throughout the year.
- 437 candle filters<sup>1</sup> given to families to help provide CDW to households in rocky areas where no tanks can be built; 64% of the families have been using candle filters regularly.

Seva Mandir representatives training the villagers of Dholi Ghati in chlorination of their new CDW tank.

From the top:

1. The woman president of the Gram Sabha receives instruction in measuring the chlorine
2. ... and then mixes the chlorine in a bucket of water several times
3. A young villager then climbs onto the roof of the tank to pour in the chlorinated water
4. Water is soon being drawn from the now chlorinated tank
5. Clean drinking water!



<sup>1</sup> Filters using ceramic 'candles' as the filtering mechanism

# Ecosan Success Story

A proud householder in Shisvi who has an Ecosan toilet built with support from Seva Mandir



# Ecosan

इको-सेन  
शौचालय



The Ecosan toilet keeps dry and wet waste separate. One pan is used until the tank below is full; the pan is then closed (right) and the other used while the collected dry waste turns to manure

The manure is then used on crops



Juicy limes from the garden of the Ecosan owner

## Sanitation

The condition of sanitation throughout SevaMandir's area is dismal. Only 30% to 40% of families have access to a toilet according to a study conducted on WASH Governance ('Learning from an Integrated Water and Sanitation Programme of Seva Mandir') by a volunteer. Lack of toilets can be attributed to a couple of key factors, with cost being one of the most critical. Even though the government provides subsidies to enable poorer families to build toilets, it is not sufficient. Therefore steps are being taken to build more Ecosan toilets, which use less water and turn waste matter into odourless manure for agriculture.

Along with lack of sanitation facilities, usage is also a critical challenge, and it is necessary to work with communities on a long-term basis to encourage them to give up age-old customs and use the toilets. The design of Ecosan toilets has been changed to incorporate the needs of women and older people, and also to reduce the construction cost. The new toilets were constructed with either an attached or separate bathroom, and the entire construction cost of the bathroom was borne by families. The new design has met with users' approval and women especially appreciated the availability of bathrooms.

- 275 toilets (compared with a target of 267) were constructed this year, of which 214 were Ecosan and 34 were water-based.
- 79% of the toilets are in use by most family members, compared with 75% last year.
- The proportion of women using toilets is increasing after regular follow-up and monitoring.

- 3 community bathrooms have been constructed for women and adolescent girls.
- A drainage line of about 1,800 metres covering the main hamlets of Shisvi was constructed, with work partly supported by the panchayat, and families contributing labour.

### Convergence with NBA and NREGA

A major achievement this year was that for the first time Ecosan toilets were constructed in convergence with Nirmal Bharat Abhiyaan (NBA)<sup>2</sup> and MGNREGA. In 9 villages, 213 toilets received support from NBA and 150 received support from MGNREGA.

A total of Rs 695,980 was raised from the government: Rs.395,600 from NBA for 83 toilets and Rs 300,380 from MGNREGA for 87 toilets.

It has not always been easy to gain the cooperation of the panchayats and block officials. In half of the villages they were reluctant to support applications for new toilets, the most common reason being that money had already been sanctioned and used for 'ghost' or 'paper' toilets that do not exist, so it is now difficult for officials to sanction Seva Mandir to build the same toilets!

While convergence with NBA was relatively easy, getting support under MGNREGA was extremely challenging and delayed implementation by almost six months. Offers of support from MGNREGA for 64 Ecosans in the latter part of the year could not be taken up without incurring more delay, so, in order to ensure that the projects proceeded on time, the families and Seva Mandir decided to meet the labour costs jointly.

<sup>2</sup> NBA: formerly known as the Total Sanitation Campaign



## Empowering Women

While women in southern Rajasthan play a major role in livelihood activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, collection of forest produce and wage labour, and they enjoy certain rights not shared by women in other regions, such as choosing their partners and physical mobility, it is also true that most of these women are either illiterate or have low levels of education. Despite their role in earning their family's living, their position in society is weakened by lack of access to institutions such as the police and the legal system, and the fact that they are unable to claim their rights and find it hard to know which institutions they can contact to address issues such as domestic violence and economic inequality.

As a result of gender inequality, women face different forms of violence throughout their lives, from before

birth to old age. One of the most common forms of violence faced by women in Seva Mandir's area is domestic violence. State institutions like the police are in most cases both inaccessible and insensitive to women. The traditional institutions responsible for dispensing justice, the caste panchayats,<sup>1</sup> are similarly insensitive to women.

More recently, we have also seen female foeticide become a factor in our area. According to the 2011 census, Udaipur district's juvenile sex ratio had declined by 24 points since 2001. This sharp decline could be due to neglect of girl children, female infanticide, an increase in sex-selective abortions and female mortality at different stages of life.

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<sup>1</sup> Caste panchayat: non-government decision-making body set up by a community along caste lines

## Social Empowerment

Seva Mandir's work on women's empowerment has led to the creation of an array of public spaces where women can speak out. These collectives have become good platforms for mutual support, mutual learning, solidarity building and interface with external stakeholders. They have enhanced women's confidence and awareness on issues of violence. In many areas, these collectives have successfully raised and addressed issues of violence which include spousal violence, sexual harassment, property disputes, witch accusations, female foeticide, infanticide, trafficking etc. Furthermore, women's negotiation skills have improved so that they are able to deal with the issues of violence effectively and strategically using non-violent means.

The women's collectives have also led to the creation of many female leaders. Many of these leaders, who are experienced and respected in the community, and have been trained by Seva Mandir, are elected representatives of Panchayati Raj<sup>2</sup> Institutions, work as Self-Help Group accountants, run Balwadis<sup>3</sup>, work as health-care providers, support women in accessing social security schemes and ensure effective implementation of government development programmes.

### Women's Groups and Cluster Associations

Women's Cluster Associations were developed by Seva Mandir to provide an alternative space in which women could discuss the problems they face on issues ranging from domestic violence and childcare to raising small loans. In many of the meetings held, cases related to gender discrimination were resolved.

These cluster-level meetings have also enabled and empowered women to discuss other issues affecting them such as the provision of clean drinking water, lack of sanitation facilities and the functioning of government services.

At present there are 579 Women's Groups and 39 Cluster Associations with a membership of 9,314.

### Women's Resource Centres

Seva Mandir started women's solidarity groups in the mid 80s to counter gender discrimination and to get women together and out of their homes, especially since they could not attend the mixed group

meetings. This resulted in a strong membership of 553 women's groups in Seva Mandir's working area. Some of these women's groups showed exemplary leadership in resolving problems facing women. In order to strengthen this initiative and give women a structured space for resolving the problems facing them, Women's Resource Centres (WRCs) were started in 2006. The WRCs provide much needed space for women to deal with issues which are difficult or controversial for them to raise in their communities, for example gender-based discrimination and violence, but which are critical for women's realization of their human rights.

The mission of the WRCs is to address these issues through the establishment of independent and autonomous platforms where marginalized women are able to give voice to their suffering, seek support from one another, and unite to challenge gendered violence and economic inequality.

- There are 10 WRCs and they have taken up 155 cases of gender-based violence, against the target of 75.
- There are 39 Women's Cluster Groups and they have tackled 35 issues related to inaccessibility of government services.
- 910 Cluster Association and WRC leaders have taken part in Seva Mandir activities, against a target of 500.

### WRCs saving families

When a 22-year-old woman from a rural hamlet in our area began a relationship with a young man from another village, her aggrieved husband took the case to the panchayat where the woman's parents were fined Rs 100,000. After a while, the woman began to be abused and tortured by her new partner and finally he turned her out. She tried to return to her husband but he too rejected her. For five or six months she was living with her uncle, and she then decided to ask for the help of the WRC. The WRC agreed to take up her case, and, thanks to their continued support and counselling, husband and wife are now reconciled. The husband also returned Rs 60,000 to his wife's parents. This is just one example of how the WRCs save families.

<sup>2</sup> Panchayati Raj: system of governance in which the panchayat is the basic form of administration

<sup>3</sup> Balwadi: SM-run preschool



## Review of WRCs

A recent review by a volunteer observed that the WRC leaders, coming as they do from within the community, fully understand the conflicts, the possibilities, the difficulties and the best ways of resolving the issues they are confronted with in the village. The report also commented that not only are WRCs a locus for social justice and increasing women's ability and reach in society, they are also a force for change within the community. This change may be occurring at a slow pace, but it is beginning to transform the community by creating greater equality for women, by empowering marginalized groups, and by increasing the ability and authority of women within the community. As a result, society is better simply because the WRC exists. The very fact that a space is dedicated to enabling marginalized members of the community, especially women, to empower themselves is in itself fundamentally transformative.

### Strengthening Capacity of Women Leaders

Women leaders including cluster leaders, Traditional Birth Attendants and Balwadi Sanchalikas<sup>4</sup> were trained in sensitizing women on gender and violence, including work on savings and credit. 27 training sessions were conducted with 954 women taking part.

A separate training course was also held for WRC leaders which included sessions on the status of WRCs and the current challenges the leaders face in resolving cases and dealing with the documentation process. 24 women leaders from eight WRCs participated in this session. In addition, 34 WRC leaders participated in an exposure training organized in Gujarat

In view of the hard work, commitment and sensitivity of the WRC leaders, and rising costs, their honorarium was raised from Rs 100 to Rs 200 per day.

### Sensitization of panchayat leaders and youth

Three training sessions were organized for panchayat leaders, which focused on the concept of gender and the declining sex ratio. Seven separate training sessions were also held for caste panchayat leaders, primarily focusing on gender issues.

A two-day consultation was carried out with young girls of Jhadol and Badgoan blocks to provide them with a platform to interact with each other and enhance their understanding about personal hygiene.

A 10-day theatre workshop was organized in Kherwara in which a total of 14 young people (11 boys and 5 girls) from different villages participated. They learnt how to write and perform a play and prepared small skits on female foeticide, gender discrimination and violence faced by girls at home and in school. They also presented skits on the Seva Mandir campus and across seven villages of Kherwara block to make communities aware of gender issues. Seva Mandir would like to thank Plan International and Plan India for supporting these activities under their Engendered programme.

- 58 panchayat leaders participated in the 3 training courses organized for them.
- 142 people participated in the 7 training courses held for caste panchayat leaders.

- 619 young people (338 girls and 281 boys) participated in 18 training programmes.
- 14 young people participated in the theatre workshop.
- 150 girls participated in the 2-day consultation.

### Solidarity event

A two-day solidarity event was organized in Sagwara village in which 395 people participated. The purpose of the event was to share and take forward issues that emerged during the various training and consultation sessions. Considerable progress was made on how to go about tackling issues of declining sex ratio, violence faced by youth and the challenges women face in pursuing higher education.

### The confidence to protest

In Mhammad Falasiya, 150 women and men carried out pit-digging work for the Forest Department, which had promised to pay Rs 135 per day to each worker. They completed their work in June 2013 but after 1½ months had still not been paid. They talked to the Forest Guard about it and he told them that he would come to their village next day and make payment. They all waited for him, but he didn't turn up. He then called up the women and asked them to meet at Magwas village, where they waited for half the day until at last he came. He told them that they would be paid Rs 100 per day for their work but asked them to sign a receipt for Rs 135, which they refused to do. Following their protests, the Guard stopped all payments.

In August, women leaders from the cluster took their case to the Sub-divisional Magistrate (SDM) in Jhadol block and also informed the print media. As a result of immediate action by the SDM, the very next day they received wages at the full rate of Rs 135 per day.

<sup>4</sup> Sanchalika: woman trained by SM to work with young children in the Balwadi in her local area



Women running a Self-Help Group

## Economic Empowerment

### Self-Help Groups

Women's collectives or Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were set up to help empower women financially and make them more independent. These SHGs also enable women to undertake savings and credit activities. Several SHGs have used their funds to renovate their houses, repay loans etc.

- 579 SHGs with a membership of 9,314 women continued to meet regularly. The net owned fund of the SHGs up to March 2014 was Rs 45,300,736. There has been an increase of Rs 9,171,697(25%) in this period.
- The total savings (compulsory & voluntary) stand at Rs 39,899,939. The cash at bank is Rs 9,063,791, cash in hand Rs 2,925,936 and total loans outstanding Rs 33,629,334.
- 4,755 loans were made from SHG and external funds, amounting to a total of Rs 39,902,000.
- There has been a 1.4% increase in the number of loans and a 30% increase in the total amount disbursed compared with last year. These loans were mainly used for household consumption, agriculture, animal husbandry and debt repayment.

- In addition to the internal lending, 55 women members of 6 SHGs of Kagmandara village SHGs borrowed Rs1,050,000 from their village development fund at an interest rate of 12% per annum. The loan was used for various purposes such as house repair, payment of old debts, agriculture, purchase of assets etc.

### External collaborations

Seva Mandir has collaborated with Rajasthan Rural Livelihood Projects (RRLP) to strengthen two SHG clusters, Jhunthri and Pareda of Kherwara block. In this period one of the clusters received Rs 2,860,000 for 26 SHGs to undertake income generation activities such as constructing pucca<sup>5</sup> houses, land levelling, purchase of diesel and electric pumps for irrigation, purchase of items for their shops etc. Being able to raise funds from the government is a step forward for the groups.

### Micro-insurance

At the time of writing, 1,156 people were insured under the Jeevan Madhur and Jeewan Mangal schemes of LIC<sup>6</sup>. These plans provide benefits to nominees on death (natural or accidental) or maturity. During the reporting period, no claims were lodged.

<sup>5</sup> Pucca: with a concrete as opposed to a thatched roof

<sup>6</sup> LIC: Life Insurance Corporation of India



## Key Challenges

The selling of land by tribal people to outsiders has increased over the last few years and looks set to increase further. This is having an impact on the economic situation of tribal families, as well as on gender relations, as the sudden inflow of money leads to men taking second, much younger, wives, and also to an increase in alcohol consumption and violence against women. So the sale of land is having a negative impact on the lives of women and, of course, in the long run, those of the family and community.

Trafficking is also emerging as a serious problem. For some time there have been occasional stories of trafficking, but this phenomenon seems to be on the increase. Seva Mandir plans to work with the local communities and panchayats on issues of gender-based violence, the declining sex ratio and the trafficking of young girls, so that they are sensitized on these issues and incorporate them as part of their development agenda.

### SADHNA

Sadhna was started within the income generation unit of Seva Mandir in 1988, with the aim of providing women in the rural, tribal and urban slum belts of Udaipur with an alternative method of income generation. The initiative focused on handcraft, and the skills taught to the women consisted of appliqué, patchwork and running stitch (locally known as tanka). After 17 years as a part of SevaMandir, Sadhna had expanded into a small-scale self-sufficient unit producing handcrafted products, and the decision was taken to register it as a Mutual Benefit Trust. Today it boasts a participation of more than 657 women and three commercial outlets.







## Early Child Care and Development

Seva Mandir addresses early childcare and children's development needs by establishing community-run preschools called Balwadis for children between the ages of one and five. These children used to lack adequate care, nutrition and security, and extreme poverty forced parents to work either on their farms or as hired labourers, thus making it difficult for them to look after children.

To address these issues Balwadis were established to provide safe and secure facilities for young children. Each Balwadi is run by a Sanchalika, a local woman whom Seva Mandir has trained to work with young children. The main objectives of the Balwadi programme are as follows:

- Ensure the overall cognitive and physical development of children and prepare them for school
- Enable caregivers to attend to other important livelihood and educational activities
- Increase community contribution to and demand for quality centre-based early childhood care and development

In order to address children's preschool needs and prepare them for school, a structured curriculum has been designed for three- to five-year-olds. By March 2013 the curriculum had already been introduced into 77 Balwadis and it has now been extended to 51 more, taking the total to 128 Balwadis. In those following the curriculum, the Sanchalikas have been able to carry out preschool activities effectively with children. Field observations show that children are enjoying and learning a lot from the various activities carried out during the day and seem to be much more active and vibrant.

- 198 Balwadis (against a target of 200) provided childcare services to 4,785 children (2,457 girls and 2,328 boys) against the target of 4,400 children.
- 3,147 mothers benefited as a result.
- 839 five-year-olds (or 90%) went on to primary schools (434 girls and 405 boys).

## Deepening Community Ownership

As a result of continuous discussion with parents, there was an increase in voluntary contributions in both cash and kind. Contributions were received in 113 Balwadis: 37 received fuelwood, 25 received a total of 542 kg of wheat and 46 received contributions in the form of washing utensils, floor mats, toys etc. In 32 Balwadis parents also helped transport monthly supplementary nutrition to the Balwadi. In all, parents contributed a total of Rs 355,450, which is about 66% of the expected fees.

## Important Activities

### Assessing and addressing nutritional needs

48 Sanchalikas were involved in assessing the nutritional status of the children attending Balwadis, using both the weight-for-age method and, following recent consultations, Mid Upper Arm Circumference tape. The assessment of 4,312 children from 188 Balwadis indicated that 62% (2,670 children) are healthy, 35% (1,515 children) are moderately malnourished and only 3% (128 children) are severely malnourished.

In order to address these needs, the children who attend Balwadis are given nourishing meals and snacks, and are regularly supplied with basic medicines and nutritional supplements to improve haemoglobin levels and deworming. The Sanchalikas pay special attention to weak children. 50 children from 22 Balwadis were referred to a malnutrition treatment centre (MTC).

### Bridging the immunization gap

In areas where government provision is poor, Seva Mandir has ensured immunization through its own nurses, who immunize children in 62 of the 198 Balwadis that we run.

### Birth registration

Efforts are being made to continue the registration of children's births. As a result, 1,047 Balwadi children have received their birth certificates, while another 2,389 registrations are in process.

## Strengthening Capacities

During the reporting period, much work was done to

strengthen the capacities of Sanchalikas and staff. Nine training courses and six bi-monthly meetings were held to improve the knowledge and efficiency of Sanchalikas. Ten Sanchalikas have emerged as master trainers and 21 Sanchalikas have been trained in the new curriculum.

## Links with External Agencies

During the reporting period, two meetings were held with the state partners of Rajasthan FORCES<sup>1</sup> to review the functioning of the network, enhance understanding of patterns in the government-sponsored Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), restructure the state's girl-child policy and establish the future strategy of Rajasthan FORCES.

Seva Mandir has initiated a collaboration with the Centre for Micro Finance, Institute for Financial Management and Research (IFMR) and McGill University to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the impact of its childcare programme. The research project aims to study the effect of an affordable day-care programme on health and economic well-being over the course of participants' lives, including children's health and nutrition, girls' education and women's health.

## Insights and Lessons Learnt

In its quest to find more effective solutions to anaemia, Seva Mandir conducted a pre-pilot to assess the impact of double fortified salt (DFS) in Balwadis. Interestingly, and surprisingly, it was found that over time the haemoglobin levels of children in both the treatment and control villages improved and there was no significant difference between the two groups. A closer look at the data revealed that the contributing factor was children's attendance: the higher their attendance, the better their anaemia levels.

The good news is that the Balwadi design has been proved to be effective in improving children's anaemia levels. The challenge is to ensure children's regular attendance, and the programme team is focusing on this now.

The objectives of the Balwadi programme have always been twofold, but while earlier there was more emphasis on childcare, the focus is now just as much on preparing children for school by means of

<sup>1</sup> FORCES: Forum for Creche and Child Care Services

the new curriculum. Seva Mandir has appointed Sahayikas (assistants) on a pilot basis and results reflect that, at the Balwadis where there are Sahayikas, the Sanchalikas are better able to focus on the preschool component.

## Key Challenge

The Balwadis are fulfilling a critical need by providing good day care with a focus on preschool learning and health. The benefits of the programme (on children and caregivers) are appreciated and understood by the community, but we now need to find ways of improving the regularity with which children attend.

### What Balwadis mean to mothers

Kesari Bai lives in Talai village and works as a housewife, a farmer and labourer. She has been sending her four-year-old daughter to a Balwadi for the last two years. She is happy because, while her daughter is at the Balwadi, Kesari Bai can work with a peaceful mind knowing that her child is safe, learning and receiving important nutrition. Kesari Bai is able now to earn about Rs 100 a day. She says, 'Without the Balwadi, I would find it very difficult to earn enough. I am also very happy to know that at the Balwadi my daughter is being given nutritious food, which I would not be able to provide. I tell all my friends that they should send their children to the Balwadi so that they too can enjoy peace of mind and a reduced burden.'



## Educating the Next Generation

In this region a significant number of children are still out of school for a wide variety of reasons. In the last couple of years several state and non-state interventions, policies and schemes have been implemented, including the recently passed Right to Education bill. Despite these affirmative steps, the status of education in remote, disadvantaged areas remains a concern. Children face neglect and there are high rates of teacher absenteeism coupled with poor pedagogical methods, inadequate learning material and lack of infrastructure. Therefore, alongside an emphasis on providing meaningful education, Seva Mandir's priority is to motivate children and create the right conditions to allow them to develop an interest in education in an attempt to prevent them from migrating for work at an early age.

The government's interventions take a long time to implement and have sometimes had unintended and unhelpful consequences. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, for example, more popularly known as the Right to Education (RTE), was enacted in August 2009 and the State of Rajasthan

introduced it from March 2011. This act could affect Seva Mandir's Shiksha Kendra and Residential Learning Camp programmes as they are not RTE-compliant<sup>1</sup>. The Government of Rajasthan reviewed Seva Mandir's curriculum and pedagogy and visited 11 randomly selected Shiksha Kendras (SKs). All these centres passed the test of quality and rigour. The officials praised our SKs' efficiency, and, as a result of their experience on the ground, and after vetting the curriculum and teaching materials, the State of Rajasthan granted our SKs the status of Special Training Centres. However, we still await written confirmation that Seva Mandir's Shiksha Kendras have been granted this status.

The objectives of Seva Mandir's education programme are:

- To ensure access to quality education for rural and tribal children aged 6-14
- To increase community demand for quality education

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<sup>1</sup> The RTE defines schools in terms of physical infrastructure (buildings and toilets) and teacher qualifications and salaries. Our schools in remote rural locations do not meet these criteria, though they offer good education and our pupils have been shown to outperform those in government schools.

- To give young people the skills, opportunity and confidence to play a part in their community
- To broaden and deepen its own programmes through research, development and analysis
- To work with government schools to provide quality education within existing institutions

Seva Mandir works towards these objectives through different activities such as Shiksha Kendras, Residential Learning Camps, the Scholarship Programme, Urja Ghar (Youth Resource Centres) and Activity Centres.

## Shiksha Kendras

Shiksha Kendras serve as bridge schools providing quality education for out-of-school children between the ages of 6 and 14 in remote rural hamlets. The Shiksha Kendras offer primary education which enables these children to transit smoothly into government schools.

- 170 SKs educated 6,052 children of which of 3,331 were boys and 2,721 were girls.
- The proportion of girls enrolled in SKs has steadily risen from 36% in 2008 to 45% in 2013.
- 1,248 children moved successfully on to government schools, up from last year's total of 1,114. Overall 58% of the children enrolled in class 5 and 6. It is significant that 81% of the children from Kotra (one of our most remote areas) were admitted to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> standard. This is a testimony to the kind of education that is being provided through the SKs.
- In the annual evaluation, a total of 4,805 children sat the exams, 43% of them girls.
- In the evaluations held during May 2013 and November 2013, 4,789 children (79%) sat the exams. In May 2013, 17.5 % had reached level 3 whereas in the November 2013 tests 31% children achieved this level.

## Training instructors

Capacity-building of the SK Instructors was a major focus area, and, in addition to the regular training sessions and meetings, a two-week World Teacher exchange programme was organized in collaboration with Edukans, a Dutch donor agency.

This event gave the instructors international exposure and allowed them to learn new teaching techniques and share their pedagogy.

## Regular attendance

While we have been very successful in ensuring teachers' regularity, regular attendance by children, especially younger ones, is a challenge we now need to address. A study, 'Student Absenteeism in Shiksha Kendras: Assessing the status and understanding the causes and factors influencing absenteeism in 17 Shiksha Kendras of Girwa and Jhadol blocks', revealed high rates of absenteeism across SKs (20% to 51%, and higher in the SKs of Girwa block than in Jhadol). The study showed that chronic absentees may be away for 26-68% of the time, which is very high compared with the absence rate of regular children, which is 5-25%. Absenteeism was higher amongst younger children than older students. Though no set pattern for absenteeism was observed, the prime reasons were domestic work responsibilities (33%), the family's indifference (24%) and the distance between the household and SK (24%). Interviews with parents, children and communities showed that little importance was attached to children's regular attendance and it was felt that attending school 4-5 days a month was sufficient.

## Residential Learning Camps

Seva Mandir has developed its Learning Camp programme into a highly effective mechanism for enabling the most marginal, rural out-of-school children to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. In these Learning Camps, the students' capacities, confidence to express themselves and academic performance increase. The camps reach the poorest of the poor, older girls, children from single-parent homes and orphans. We run a series of three camps each year, catering to 200 out-of-school children. The aim is that each child will attend three camps (which may span more than one school year).

During the year, three Residential Learning Camps were organized.

- These camps were held during the periods May-June 2013, November-December 2013 and January-March 2014.
- A total of 290 children from 23 villages of the 5 blocks attended these camps and 60 % of them were from Kotra. Participation of girls from this

block is, however, still low.

- 129 children completed their cycle of 3 camps during the first camp, another 122 did so at the second camp and 39 children participated in all 3 camps.
- Another major achievement has been that, of the children who attended the camps, 126 children (58 girls and 68 boys) went on to enrol in SKs, government or private schools to continue their education.

### Scholarship programme

- Seva Mandir carried out a 3-year pilot scheme in which scholarships were made available to children who had attended at least two Residential Learning Camps and then went on to government schools, the intention being to compensate families for income the children might otherwise contribute and encourage them to allow the children to stay at school rather than migrating for agricultural work.
- Random checks were made to ensure that children were attending school regularly, and if their attendance fell below a determined level they were no longer eligible for the scholarship.
- The pilot ended in March 2013. In 3 years of implementation, out of 214 eligible children, 162 (75%) benefited from this scholarship. The pilot has been extended for a further 3 years to allow us to continue to assess the impact of this scheme. In this phase, the scholarship amount has been increased from Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,500 for children in class 6 and above.
- At the time of writing 155 (72%) children are still in school: 84 (54%) are above class 6, the rest in lower classes. In the month December 2013-January 2014 the first instalment was disbursed to 134 children across all 5 blocks. Out of these, 52 (39%) children who are below 6<sup>th</sup> grade received Rs 1,000 and 82 (61%) children in grades 6-10 received Rs 1,500. 17 children (13%) enrolled in school were found to be irregular during random checks and were thus not eligible, and 4 children dropped out.
- For the first time this year, 5-day remedial residential camps were arranged for children

who were not coping in school because of poor teaching. These helped boost their learning levels. We have decided to hold longer remedial camps during the school summer holidays.

### Activity Centres

Seva Mandir runs four Activity Centres within government schools in Badgaon block with the help of village communities. These Activity Centres supplement the school's teaching and provide meaningful education to the children in the government schools, thus helping to build their base in mathematics and Hindi. Through these four Activity Centres, Seva Mandir has been able to support 681 children, 305 of them girls. The programme has also allowed us to build a better relationship with the government system and today many government teachers are using the Activity Centres' teaching material in their own classes.

### Youth Resource Centres (Urja Ghars)

Youth Resource Centres (YRCs) are alternative spaces where young people can come together and discuss important issues pertaining to them. These YRCs are run by youth facilitators.

- 17 YRCs are run in 85 villages with 3,416 young people (56% boys and 44% girls) attending.
- 3 employment fairs were held in 3 blocks, with an attendance of 431 young people.
- 61 young people attended various vocational and livelihood training sessions.
- 90 young people were motivated to join open schools and take exams to complete their education up to grade 12.
- 123 young people, including 50 girls, attended gender training.



### **A chance to learn**

Ramesh lives in the hamlet of Barbali. His family is so poor that his maternal uncle has to take care of him, and he had never been given the chance to study. But in spite of his poverty, he dreamt of attending school.

Fortunately for Ramesh, his uncle suggested to his father that he should attend one of the educational camps organized by Seva Mandir. So Ramesh's dream came true and he has now participated in two camps. He has learnt to read and write and has now being admitted to Vanpura Government School. After a year at the school, Ramesh was awarded a scholarship, which allowed him to buy a new bicycle to ride the 8km to school.

Ramesh is now in 5<sup>th</sup> standard and, thanks to his bicycle, is a regular student.



A pregnant woman receiving a regular health check from a TBA

## Improving Health

Seva Mandir has been addressing health issues in rural communities since the late 1980s with a focus on preventive and primary health care. The three main components of the health programme are the Maternal and Child Health Care programmes, which are being carried out with a cadre of trained Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) and Bal Sakhis<sup>1</sup> and the Adolescent Reproductive Health programme which is carried out mainly through the Youth Resource Centres.

### Maternal Health Programme

In remote villages, the lack of health-care facilities continues to be a problem, especially for pregnant women. Not only do most women have to travel a considerable distance to reach properly functioning

government medical facilities, there is also cultural resistance to women talking openly about their bodies and pregnancy. As a result, home deliveries by untrained local women are common, leading to enormously increased risks to both mother and child.

Seva Mandir-trained TBAs play an important role in the maternal health of village women, providing psychosocial support as well as helping them access institutional health care. Even in areas where there are institutional health facilities, TBAs continue to play a significant role as there are always some vulnerable families who are unable to access safe obstetric care.

- 309 TBAs provided obstetric care to 6,500 women.

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<sup>1</sup> Bal Sakhi: woman trained by Seva Mandir to provide newborn care

- Seva Mandir nurses provided obstetric care to 1,765 women in the communication camps; 127 of these women were referred on because of low haemoglobin levels.
- 5,615 deliveries were facilitated by TBAs, of which 3,321 were home deliveries and the remaining 2,294 institutional deliveries.

### Consultation and training

Village-level consultations with young mothers were organized in 13 villages of Bagruna zone to allow us to understand their health-care seeking behavior and the quality of health care available at the government health facilities.

This zone was chosen because it was facing many severe difficulties with respect to health-care facilities. The sub-centres and Primary Health Centre were almost dysfunctional; in the Community Health Centre (CHC) women were treated with indignity, at night most deliveries were conducted by untrained personnel, women were charged money illegally, and when the TBAs resisted they were humiliated and often turned away from the CHC.

In addition to this, orientation training was organized for Village Health and Sanitation Committee members to make them aware of our paramedical workers and their role in monitoring health facilities at regular intervals, to mobilize them to demand quality health care and to encourage people in their village to seek health care from qualified practitioners.

### Post-Partum Haemorrhage

Post-Partum Haemorrhage (PPH) is recognized as a major cause of maternal death, a fact borne out by verbal autopsies in our area. Given the high incidence of home deliveries, a pilot study on the administration of misoprostol to reduce PPH was begun in June 2011. 40 TBAs had already been trained in the safe administration of misoprostol, and this year Seva Mandir trained 20 more TBAs from the same block. The aim is to ensure that misoprostol is administered in all home deliveries.

A total of 177 women were given misoprostol during the reporting period, which is only 19% of total home deliveries. The primary reason for this low utilization is the presence of unqualified practitioners during home deliveries who commonly administer oxytocin, thus making misoprostol unnecessary.

### A TBA saves two lives

Sundari Bai lives in Rawa hamlet. During her first pregnancy she was in regular contact with the Seva Mandir-trained TBA of her zone, Gomani Bai, who checked that she was up to date with her tetanus and typhoid inoculations, and kept an eye on her iron and calcium levels. One night the TBA was called by Sundari Bai's family and found that she was suffering excessive bleeding. Gomani Bai immediately called for an ambulance, but it was not clear how long the ambulance would take to get there. In the end she hired a local vehicle to take Sundari to the nearest hospital in Tidi. Sundari gave birth to a baby boy and now both are safe and well. Both family and doctors praised Gomani Bai's efficiency, which saved mother and baby.

### Key challenges

**The decrease in institutional deliveries:** Kherwara, the best connected block in Seva Mandir's area of operation, continues to show a high number of home deliveries (76%). In Kotra 72% of deliveries are conducted at home, and in Girwa 51%. In Kotra, we have seen an alarming decline of 11% in institutional deliveries compared with last year. Overall, Seva Mandir's data indicates that this year there has been a 6% decline in institutional deliveries.

The decline, though marginal, is interesting because, following the introduction of government incentives such as Janani Suraksha Yojana<sup>2</sup>, there was an increase in institutional deliveries. Last year, that increase stalled, and we are now witnessing a decline. It would appear that the incentives are no longer effective and new efforts will be needed in order to stabilize and increase the rate of institutional deliveries.

It is not difficult to understand the reluctance towards institutional delivery. Ambulances do not reach the villages; private transport is used but is not always compensated for. In some Community Health Centres, the nurses refuse to care for women in labour; they treat them badly and send them home saying that they are experiencing false labour pains. They often misleadingly claim that a delivery is complicated and that the woman should be taken to

<sup>2</sup> JSY: a safe-motherhood intervention under the National Rural Health Mission (NHM), launched in April 2005 with the objective of reducing maternal and neonatal mortality by promoting institutional delivery among poor pregnant women through financial incentives

Udaipur. All of this has resulted in deaths, created mistrust between the community and the nurses, and made women more likely to opt for home deliveries.

All these cases can be debated and clinical and other explanations can be given, but it will be difficult to rebuild the confidence of the people of this area in the public health facilities. It is now crucial that this is discussed with the community, within the organization and that a way forward is arrived at.

**The problem of quacks:** Several stories continue to emerge of people trusting unqualified practitioners (who may charge exorbitant fees of up to Rs 3,000-4,500) to carry out home deliveries. Practices such as women being injected by these quacks to induce labour are common. Seva Mandir is working hard to sensitize the community on such issues, and efforts are being made to encourage people to demand quality health care from the government so that going to quacks is no longer a viable option. But given the dysfunctional nature of many institutions, the uneven spread of quality health services, and the extensive presence of quacks in many remote areas, this will be a long struggle.

## Child Health

75% of children aged 0-3 in rural Udaipur are anaemic, and half were reported to have experienced some type of illness in the last 30 days. The rates of immunization are also low: 19% among children aged 1-6 and 35% among children aged 1-2. Improper weaning and inappropriate care of infants are also key problems affecting neonatal and infant morbidity and mortality. The role of Bal Sakhis is therefore extremely important. They ensure that mothers are looking after the nutritional needs of the

### The cost of quacks

Surta was a resident of Dhadawali village of Jhadol block. Being an educated girl and an anganwadi<sup>3</sup> worker herself, she knew the importance of antenatal checkups and immunization when she was pregnant, and made sure she attended every checkup and was up to date with her inoculations. She opted for an institutional delivery and had a normal delivery at the Jhadol CHC. Post-delivery, she developed a fever for which the doctor gave her medicines and she was discharged from the hospital. After two days she again developed fever but this time her family called for the local quack, who gave her an injection which reduced her temperature. Surta's condition later began to deteriorate so the family took her back to the Community Health Centre, from where she was immediately referred to Udaipur. Surta died before she could reach the city. Her family's dependence on the unqualified private doctor led to a delay in appropriate treatment, which cost Surta her life.

children, and advise families on when they should get their children immunized. They also work with caregivers on components of child health such as age-appropriate nutrition, growth monitoring through weight for age, identification of common illnesses and appropriate care, birth spacing and hygiene.



Immunization of young children at one of Seva Mandir's monthly camps



Mothers whose babies complete their immunization receive 3 kg of lentils as an incentive

<sup>3</sup> Anganwadi: government-sponsored child- and mother-care centre



- The Child Health programme continues to extend home-based care through 94 trained Bal Sakhis to about 1,800 children and their caregivers in 34 interventions.
- 1,382 (728 boys and 654 girls) children were immunized in 1,081 Seva Mandir-run immunization camps. 300 boys and 279 girls (42%) completed their immunization schedule during the period. During the year 93.5% of the scheduled camps were held compared with 92% last year.
- 2,235 children (1,165 boys or 52% and (1,070 or 48% girls) were treated for ailments such as diarrhoea, fever, colds, coughs and skin infections.
- The number of children treated has slightly increased over last year.

### Referral Health Centre (RHC)

The RHC in Kojawara now has a gynaecologist visiting three days a week, as well as a resident nurse.

Throughout the reporting period, 147 camps were run by the gynaecologist at which treatment was free. At the camps a total of 2,812 women were treated for general as well as gynaecological problems. 1,195

(55.5% boys and 44.5% girls) children under the age of five were treated, mostly for common ailments.

The daily patient attendance at the camps this year was 28 compared with 18 last year. There has also been a significant increase in the number of patients on non-camp days (when patients are seen by the resident nurse as opposed to the gynaecologist and treatment is not free) as people come for follow-up visits and are willing to spend a nominal amount on medicine which is provided by the hospital at subsidized rates.

### Adolescent Reproductive Health Programme

A training course on sexual health was held in seven Youth Resource Centres in Kherwara at which about 14 coordinators were trained on safe sex practices. These coordinators then held regular sessions to pass on what they had learned to the young people in their centres.

### **Bal Sakhis going beyond the call of duty**

Mangi Devi, the Bal Sakhi of Adkaliya village in Jhadol, came in contact with Roshan at the time of his birth. A few days later, the village TBA informed her that the child was unwell as blood was oozing out of his navel. Mangi Devi immediately went to examine him. Seeing Roshan's poor condition, she told his mother Leela to take the child immediately to the nearby health facility. Mangi Devi herself accompanied them to Dhimri where the compounder gave a few medicines and asked them to wait for two hours. The child did not stop crying and Mangi Devi decided to take him to Jhadol Community Health Centre (the secondary level of health care under the Indian Public Health care system), as his condition was critical. The doctor there referred him to M.B. Hospital, Udaipur. Mangi Devi called the 108 helpline and the ambulance came after two hours. The child was admitted to the nursery ward at the M.B. hospital where he underwent treatment for four days. Mangi Devi stayed with the family throughout the child's treatment and returned to the village with them. Roshan's parents feel indebted to Mangi Devi for her timely advice and her efforts in seeking proper medical care for their child.

16-year old Kuvari Kumari lives in Sawanka Kyara village, Kotra block. She was suffering from a urinary infection and her parents took her to the traditional healer as they had complete faith in his treatment. Over a month later Kuvari's condition, far from improving, was deteriorating. Helpless and in a lot of pain, Kuvari went to see Kapila Devi, the BalSakhi in that village. Kapila advised her to go to the doctor immediately but Kuvari said that her parents would not agree to take her to the doctor. So Kapila Devi herself took Kuvari to the nearest sub-centre where the nurse gave her a week's medication. On the fourth day, Kapila Devi and Kuvari went for a follow-up and the nurse observed a considerable improvement in her condition and advised her to continue the medication. Within 15 days Kuvari recovered completely. Kapila went to her house and spoke to her parents at length about the importance of timely and proper treatment. Kuvari's mother was very thankful to Kapila Devi for her help and also seemed to understand the importance of proper medical care.

Though Kapila Devi's job as a Bal Sakhi is to take care of the neonates and infants of her village, she is happy to use her skills for the benefit of anyone in need in her village.



## Improving the Lives of the Urban Poor

While Seva Mandir's work has concentrated mainly on rural areas in our region, we have also been operating with women and children in distress in some of Udaipur city's slum areas. The significant problems faced by the urban poor include high rates of unemployment, imbalance in the sex ratio, high levels of alcoholism, and lack of facilities such as clean drinking water and education. Seva Mandir works to reduce the effects of these problems, particularly amongst women and children.

Seva Mandir is also working towards community development in urban areas by introducing Mohalla Groups and Youth Resource Centres.

### Women in Distress

#### Short-Stay Home

The Short-Stay Home (SSH) has been run by Seva Mandir since 2004. It is supported by the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) of the Government of India. Its main objective is to rehabilitate women and girls facing different forms of violence through the provision of shelter and counselling services.

Often women are unable to resist or protest against

violence as they feel they have nowhere to go if they are forced to leave their husband's or in-laws' house. In some cases, women don't walk out of abusive situations and situations of extreme violence because they feel they have no safe place to go where they can retain some dignity. The SSH is a much needed shelter that enables women to move out of oppressive and violent situations.

In the year under review, the SSH provided assistance to 86 women and 41 children facing gender-based violence. Of these, 73.2% had suffered violence at the hands of their partners and their own family members, and 21.5% were girls who had been deserted by their parents because they were involved in relationships disapproved of by their family. 4.6% were sexually harassed and 6.9% suffered from mental illness. Data from both the WRCs and the SSH show that about 63.2% of women suffer from violence perpetrated by their partners and family members, indicating that home is not always a safe place for women.

#### Self-Help Groups

These groups empower women financially by helping them get involved in credit and savings

activities. There are currently 119 SHGs which include about 2,361 women (compared with 105 SHGs and a membership of about 2,062 women last year). These SHGs also serve as an important forum where women can discuss issues of significance to them.

## Child Protection and Development

Seva Mandir's programmes for children in slum areas work to create a safe and secure learning environment that also ensures that children's basic health needs are taken care of. These activities are conducted in collaboration with the Education and Child Development programmes.

### CHILDLINE

This is India's first free 24-hour emergency phone line for children up to 18 years of age in need of help. It was established in collaboration with the Ministry for Women and Child Development. Seva Mandir has been operating CHILDLINE in Udaipur since 2002. This service strives to offer protection to homeless, lost and abused children. Over the year, CHILDLINE dealt with 559 cases, of which the largest number concerned protection from abuse (244) and children being lost (73).

### Day-Care Centres

Migrant families coming to Udaipur often face difficulties as both the husband and wife have to work, in which case it is often the responsibility of elder siblings to look after the younger ones. To provide parents with an alternative, day-care centres were set up so that children could be given a safe and secure environment where their basic health and nutritional needs are taken care of. Currently there are four centres with a total of 101 children enrolled. This year, 29 new children joined the day-care centres.

### Bal Samuhs

Bal Samuhs operate as after-school centres where children are helped to do homework, participate in various outdoor games and get involved in activities related to arts and crafts. There are 12 Bal Samuhs currently catering for about 240 children (124 boys and 116 girls).

## Bringing Neighbours Together

Seva Mandir introduced the idea of Mohalla or neighborhood groups in 2007 to create a sense of

### A case for CHILDLINE

Khusboo, aged 2, lives with her family near Bhopa Magi sector 3. Her father is a peon (office boy) and her mother a housewife. One day, a family moved in next door and the two families began to get on well. The head of this second family was working with the police department. A boy from the neighbouring family, Ramesh, began to visit Khusboo and her family regularly. One day when Khusboo was playing in her courtyard and her elder brother was studying, Ramesh lured Khusboo away on the pretext of getting her some chocolate. After two hours, he dropped the child back at home crying. Her family tried to ask her what the matter was, and what she described amounted to attempted abuse. Her father called CHILDLINE, though he was afraid to lodge a formal complaint against the culprit as his family member was in the police. The matter was nevertheless properly investigated and Ramesh arrested two months later in the forest where he was hiding. He has now been convicted and is behind bars.

responsibility amongst citizens so that they play a more active role in the development of their society. Forging and deepening solidarity within the population of the urban slums is one of the most difficult tasks facing us, perhaps because there is a lack of social and cultural bonding, and perhaps also because some of the population of these areas is mobile.

Currently there are eight Mohalla groups operating with a membership of 703 people.

### Youth Resource Centres

Seva Mandir opened Youth Resource Centres in Udaipur's slums to give young people an alternative space to think creatively. Various training courses are offered, including gender training, vocational training etc. Seva Mandir also tries to involve the young people in development projects related to their communities.

A one-day workshop on making decorative items from waste materials was organized in September. 14 young people from the YRCs in Badgaon, Girwa and Urban blocks (12 female, 2 male) participated. They made items such as photo frames, wall hangings and table decorations.



## Delwara: Peri-urban Governance

Delwara is a qasba or semi-urbanized settlement with a population of more than 5,000 inhabitants, located approximately 28 km from Udaipur city. Seva Mandir has been associated with Delwara for more than 20 years, but its integrated work on improving civic amenities and engendering self-governance only began about ten years ago. When Seva Mandir initiated this work, with the support of the National Foundation of India (NFI) and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT), Delwara was characterized by clogged drains, scattered garbage dumps and contaminated public wells. These co-existed with rich heritage sites which include an 18<sup>th</sup>-century palace (now a luxury hotel) and step-wells. Delwara's population is a rich mix of social groups with over 25 caste communities. It has a combination of rural and urban challenges which include lack of basic civic amenities, water scarcities, inadequate sanitation and sewage, and lack of solid waste management.

Against this backdrop in 2004 Seva Mandir, in partnership with the citizens of Delwara and with support from NFI and SDTT, began work on water and sanitation, heritage conservation and restoration of public spaces, solid waste management, youth engagement and livelihoods, along with women's forums and self-help groups.

All these interventions were carried out through a citizen's body called the Nagrik Vikas Manch (NVM or Citizens' Development Forum) comprising 36 members, two from each of the 18 mohallas (neighbourhoods). Mohalla committees were also formed in each of these mohallas.

In the last ten years, a great deal of ground has been covered in specific sectors. Delwara's lifeline, the old pond Palera, was once dry and a dumping site for garbage. It was brought alive by dredging the pond and cleaning the feeder channels, as a result of which

the pond is full of water and the entire town of Delwara has not been water-scarce in the past three years. Today Palera is being maintained through civic action. Similarly, three other old step-wells have been cleaned and six community tanks have been constructed.

## Sanitation

Seva Mandir has built about 263 toilets in Delwara so far, of which 50 were built in Bhil Basti, a tribal neighbourhood. The Bhil Basti toilets are connected to a decentralized waste treatment system. The remaining 213 toilets are septic tank-based. Rs 1,100 is collected as a one-off contribution from every family to the cost of building a toilet. This sum is then saved in Delwara's Gram Vikas Kosh.

## Solid Waste Management

A large focus of Seva Mandir's work in Delwara has been town cleaning. There are now nine Arogya Mitras (sanitation workers) in Delwara, seven of whom clean the streets, while two ride cycle rickshaws to collect solid and liquid waste from households. These Arogya Mitras, who belong to the untouchable communities, have now gained respect for the kind of work they have done and this has led to some breakdown of caste differences. About 70% of Delwara's residents contribute a monthly fee of Rs 10 to support the cleaning initiatives. One of the major challenges has been that often Arogya Mitras stop working because of disputes relating to remuneration.

## Heritage Conservation and Restoration of Public Places

A Seva Mandir volunteer selected 20 local youths from the Youth Resource Centre and trained them in spoken English and local history so that they could conduct heritage walks around the town. After intense screening, six young people were finally selected as guides. On 30 August 2013 the Delwara Heritage and Community Walk was launched by the Minister of Culture. Visitors are charged Rs 300 for the walk, which covers 16 points in the village. 90% of the money collected through these walks goes to the guides, while 10% is deposited in the youth fund.

On the occasion of the inauguration of the walk, a large consultation was organized with the citizens of Delwara, with the purpose of assessing the changes

and benefits that have taken place in the last ten years and to plan for the future.

The consultation was very successful, with about 450 people taking part in five group discussions covering cleanliness of the community, availability of clean drinking water, women's empowerment, involving youth in community decisions and community participation in the development of Delwara.

During the reporting period 27 paid talks were organized by five guides and 14 were organized free. Through these walks a total of Rs 33,500 was collected, with Rs 6,373 going into the youth fund.

Renovation work was also carried out on the Bai Sa Bawri (step-well). The Bawri was an open pit opposite the main street, and there was always a danger of women and children falling into it.

## Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

The number of women's SHGs in Delwara at the end of this year was 17 with a total membership of 296 women. The total amount accumulated through the SHGs was Rs 984,890 of which Rs 894,777 was paid out in loans. During the reporting period training sessions were organized for 42 women SHG leaders to help them improve fund management.

## Youth Resource Centre

Delwara's YRC has been active, with one local village volunteer running it for five years. The YRC holds video training sessions and activities such as cooking, painting and theatre. The Heritage walk was also anchored by the YRC.

## Self-Governance: Executive and Mohalla Committees

Delwara's governance structure consists of multiple committees and it is clear that some committees participate more in meetings of the Delwara manch (local forum) than others. In order to build ownership of the development taking place, meetings of citizens' forums are being called at periodic intervals. It has been observed that the villagers are vocal about issues when they discuss them in private but not on a public platform.

In all the villages in which Seva Mandir works, the challenge has been to help people overcome

oppressive power relations, and, with time, and around Seva Mandir's tangible programmes, we have been successful in this. But in Delwara this challenge has been even more acute and the hold of a few powerful people over the citizens has been particularly strong.

This year was especially difficult in this respect. The NVM also being captive to this power structure, the manch meetings were often disrupted and little constructive discussion was achieved, which affected the pace of ongoing work as well as the initiation of new work. Citizens' attendance of the NVM meetings dwindled as they felt that they couldn't speak out publicly against the powerful.

Despite their reluctance to participate and speak out in the NVM meetings, people did speak freely in private spaces. An ethnographic documentation of Delwara clearly brought this out. Citizens shared the values of the NVM, even if it was temporarily captured. They felt that the NVM was the only neutral and autonomous space where citizens

could come together. They articulated the need to sustain the NVM and not be frustrated by the temporary setback.

While it is difficult to say when people will be able openly to resist unethical power brokerage, it is clear that there is a need to press on. During the year staff members therefore made intensive efforts to have several informal conversations with the citizens to encourage them not to be cowed by unethical forces. And there were instances when people managed this. An example is the discussions surrounding the Nirmal Gram Puriskar, a government award for panchayats whose areas are free from open defecation. The award is only for panchayats and not citizen's forums, and the panchayat was keen to apply for the award, but the manch and citizens opposed this as they felt that the real work had been done by the manch and Seva Mandir and not the panchayat.





### The Delwara Walk

The Delwara Heritage and Community Walk started as a project to generate local jobs and publicize the development work accomplished together by Seva Mandir and Delwara's people over the past 20 years. It has, however, had a wider impact. During the research and training stage, a group of young people, together with a volunteer, researched the town's 18<sup>th</sup>-century palace, 1,000-year-old Jain temples, step-wells and other historical sites. But, unlike other heritage walks, this one went beyond physical heritage to ask and answer questions about women's rights, access to water and toilets, caste discrimination, livelihoods and other aspects of Seva Mandir's work. For example, the group asked residents of the tribal neighbourhood about the impact of having a toilet for the first time, visited a livelihood training session run by the textile cooperative Sadhna, and explored the many ways a water tank has dignified living conditions in the community (by eliminating the 2-3 hours of daily drudgery involved in fetching water from afar).

It is too early to judge the talk's commercial success, but it has had clear benefits in enabling people to take responsibility for their community. Seva Mandir staff shared experiences accumulated over long years in the community, and dozens of other Delwara residents had a public outlet to air their opinions and debate the development work and social changes in their town. The guides themselves learned an enormous amount about their town and explored their identity as citizens of Delwara in multiple new ways. For example, because of the Walk, the Muslim members of the guiding class visited the town's Jain temples for the first time, and a high-caste Rajput guide interacted at length with members of the tribal community as he never had before. The young guides also flexed their political agency through the Walk, such as when they presented to local government officials on the neglect they had discovered at the town's waste management site. Now that the guides are keepers of their town's history and social inheritance, the ultimate goal is for them to pass this knowledge, and sense of responsibility, on to others - not only visitors to Delwara, but also members of the local community. In this vein Walks are being organized with Delwara's school children so that they too can begin to learn about and take ownership of the development of Delwara.



# Child Representative Programme

The Child Representative programme (CR) was started in 2005 in collaboration with Plan International in order to introduce the concept of child-centred community development (CCCD) into Seva Mandir's approach across all its programmes. A team was set up within the organization to review its coverage of children and ensure that its work would be beneficial to them. Considerable progress has been made, and CCCD has become an integral part of Seva Mandir's strategy.

The CR programme was developed by raising funds through a sponsorship mechanism whereby certain children (aged 3 to 18) from various villages could be directly connected with sponsors. These selected children, called Child Representatives, are chosen to represent the status and concerns of all the children in a particular village. This process has enabled us to study the impact on children of our work in the area.

- 132 villages were selected across 5 blocks.
- 4,500 Child Representatives are currently sponsored, 14 fewer than last year.

- These 14 children ceased to be part of the programme for a variety of reasons, the death of 8 of them being the most worrying.

## Child-Centred Community Development

### The Bal Manch

The Bal Manch or children's forum was created for children in villages who do not usually have space to express their views or explain the problems they face. The key objective is to help children become more confident so that they are more vocal about the problems they face, while also creating opportunities for them to discover and develop their talents and learn to work in teams. Children between 9 and 18 are organized into groups to discuss and share information on children's rights so that together they can create more awareness about these issues in society.

So far 68 Bal Manch have been established in which 1,600 children are actively participating, and 30 new Bal Manch are in the process of being developed along the same lines.

### Awareness campaigns

- A 45-day awareness campaign was held on child trafficking, migration and child rights in 33 villages in which Seva Mandir works, to make villagers aware of the negative implications of young children migrating or being trafficked.
- Various Bal Manch also held a rally in 40 villages to encourage children to attend school. 6,000 people took part in this rally.

### Training and activities

- A series of seven Bal Manch leadership training courses were held with a total of 352 children in attendance (167 females and 185 male leaders). Topics included defining a child, child labour, early marriage, sexual abuse and violence, the need for a children's forum, the role and responsibilities of the leaders and of the other stakeholders. An action plan was prepared and the children were taken on a field visit to meet officials of various government departments.
- Staff participated in various training courses organized by Plan on making Bal Manch meetings more regular and holding interesting activities like sports events, Independence Day and Bal Diwas (children's day) celebrations etc.
- Photography training workshops were held for young people affiliated with the CR programme so that they could take photographs of sponsored children, thus helping to track them.
- Sponsored children were taken for field trips to various government offices and NGOs.

### Successes

- A disabled sponsored girl was enrolled in a boarding school in Udaipur and about 17 orphaned children were provided with assistance under the Palanhar social protection scheme.

### Causes of death in Seva Mandir's Child Representative programme

In the last four years, 47 of the 5,000 child representatives have died. A quick look at the causes of death seemed to suggest that there was no pattern, making it difficult to devise a strategy to prevent further child deaths. A deeper enquiry into the deaths was therefore commissioned through volunteers. Their report showed that this death rate is close to the state and national averages. They also noted that these children were the most removed from access to services and the most in need. One-third of the deaths took place because of drowning, snakebite and accidents, including head injuries. Other causes included tuberculosis, intestinal perforation, malaria, sickle cell anaemia and jaundice. These children suffered from poor economic conditions, lack of education and poor health. The study recommended that there be more effective and more regular communication between families and zonal workers and that the families be given the phone numbers of the block representatives to ensure that contacting them is easier in times of crisis. The study also emphasized the need to train block workers on the use of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS), immunization awareness, personal hygiene and water purification. Seva Mandir is working towards incorporating these recommendations.

### Challenges

A significant challenge is to find meaningful engagement for children in the age group 13-16 years who are now working and not going to school, especially since these boys and girls don't want to re-join the education system.

### Child Protection

- 11 zone-level consultations were organized in which approximately 506 people (children, youth, village development committee members and women leaders, of whom 281 were male and 225 female) participated. The aim was to draw the attention of all stakeholders to issues of child protection.

- In 30 locations in Badgaon and Jhadol blocks, focused work on issues of child protection continued. Various activities were conducted to encourage children to regularly attend the monthly meetings of the forum.
- 3 residential training sessions were conducted for staff and were attended by 44 staff members, including members of the Kaya team involved in running the Residential Learning Camps, accountants and other support staff members. The sessions mainly focused on clarifying the definition of a child, children's rights, vulnerability, and defining and deriving protection. A risk analysis was carried out across spaces accessed by children. Interface with stakeholders, the Integrated Child Protection Scheme, gender-related issues and sexual harassment redressal policy were all discussed at length.

### Child migration

The migration of children for work has been of great concern to Seva Mandir. The Residential Learning Camps and the scholarships are some of the ways in which we are trying to deal with the problem. But it is not always easy to trace those who have already migrated, some on their own and others with their families. The Seva Mandir team was nevertheless successful in tracking three boys and, after much persuasion, brought them back to their villages and enrolled two of them in school. One of the children, from Girwa block, experienced difficulty in getting to school as it was quite a way from his home, so he was given a bicycle.

One of the most difficult cases was that of a child from Jhadol who had been travelling to Madhya Pradesh for ten months with a Rabari shepherd. It was a herculean task to find the whereabouts of the Rabari and the child. After some detective work, the shepherd and child were tracked down, and Seva Mandir staff members accompanied the father to meet them in Madhya Pradesh. The child was found to be in a very bad condition and had an untreated leg fracture. He was brought back with great difficulty, but his father refused to send him to school as he had received an advance from the Rabari, which he demanded that Seva Mandir should pay back. The father is receiving regular counselling to ensure that he does not allow this to be repeated and sends the child back to school. The mother is not alive.



Volunteers and students make use of the library's facilities

## The People's Management School

The People's Management School (PMS) was set up to help Seva Mandir become an important centre for learning, research, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building and nurturing the social environment.

### Research

Two studies were completed this year and work began on three new research studies.

#### **Food security study**

The research study entitled 'Status of Food and Nutrition Security in the States of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh' aimed to capture the status and multidimensionality of the issue of food and nutrition security for small and marginal farmers in one district in each of two states. In Rajasthan (Udaipur district)

the study was carried out by Seva Mandir, while in Madhya Pradesh (Shivpuri district) it was conducted by an organization called TAAL.

#### **Annual assessment - food security**

A small study was undertaken on food security of communities with support from our donor ICCO as a part of an annual evaluation exercise conducted by ICCO. The study involved the use of mobile phone technology for collecting and transferring data. ICCO collaborated with AKVO, an organization with expertise in mobile technologies for technical support. Data on food security was collected in Batheda panchayat of Girwa block, which was randomly selected by ICCO. The survey was conducted from July-August 2013 and covered 112 households in 4 villages.

### Study on trafficking of children in BT Cotton<sup>1</sup>

An action-research project on child trafficking in BT Cotton farming was initiated this year in an area covering 50 villages of Jhadol block.

A major component of this study was to capture the baseline situation of child trafficking in BT Cotton farming in Jhadol region. The survey indicated a high number of children still engaged in BT Cotton farming, however a significant shift has taken place in the location of work as the majority of children are now working as labour in their own or neighbouring villages and not migrating.

The second component of this study, which is ongoing, is on raising awareness among communities and stakeholders on the issue of child trafficking.

### Environmental health interventions study

Another study has begun to investigate environmental health interventions in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur (IIMU) and Duke University, USA, with the aim of understanding the complementarities across environmental health interventions in energy, water and sanitation. The study will cover about 900 families in 60 villages: 40 treatment villages from Kherwara and 20 control villages from Kherwara and 4 other blocks of Seva Mandir's work area. In this period, the baseline survey was conducted in the selected villages.

### Impact assessment study

In collaboration with Georgetown University, USA, a new study has begun this year to measure the long-term impacts of Seva Mandir's intervention. This study will examine how village-level organizations have nurtured co-operation and the results this has had in economic, social, environmental and political pay-offs. The study will also examine the effect of cooperation on better public services, improved local governance in villages, etc. The study will be conducted in 4,000 households in 200 villages of Udaipur and, as a control, Dungarpur districts.

## Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E)

During this period, the assessment of 2012-13 programmes was undertaken. Monitoring of three

programmes (Women's Empowerment, Village Institutions and Health) has been completed, and Education partly completed. The findings of the PMS assessments are reflected throughout this report.

Training for our teams needs to reflect the general trend towards outcome-focused reporting, so two workshops were held with a consultant to revise and adapt our LFA (Logical Framework Analysis) along these lines. The assessment for 2013-14 is being carried out using the new system.

## Capacity Building

Special attention was paid to staff training needs this year, as increasing their capacities to meet the requirements of these changing times has become imperative. As a result, a skill and capacity assessment of all zonal staff members was conducted to understand current levels and training needs which will form the basis of future training.

In addition, five staff members were nominated to take part in external training courses.

During the reporting period, five internal courses were organized: an induction-cum-training course for new workers, a rural development course, two workshops on outcome-based M&E and one on the use of mobile technologies.

### Induction-cum-New Workers' Foundation Course

An induction training and foundation course on development was held for colleagues who have joined in the last three and a half years. The induction aimed to tell participants about the history, programmes, structure and systems of the organization. The foundation course covered different development discourses and the role of voluntary organizations in the development sector. It also had sessions on cross-cutting themes, new challenges and grass-roots leadership.

### Rural Development Course

For the past few years, Seva Mandir has been organizing a Rural Development Course for the students of Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway. This year, 15 students participated in the course entitled 'Understanding Development Challenges in Rural India'.

<sup>1</sup> BT Cotton: a genetically modified type of cotton producing an insecticide

## Internship and Volunteering

The internship programme facilitates visits from volunteers and interns from India and abroad for short periods of time and provides them with an opportunity to learn about development work taking place at the grass-roots level.

The internship programme hosted a total of 181 volunteers and interns this year, against the target of 180. Many past relationships with Indian and foreign institutions for interns continued, such as those with XISS, Ranchi, University of Bristol UK, Nirma University and IRMA. And new relationships were established with institutions such as Amity University, Pravin Gandhi College of Law, IIT Mumbai, etc.

A total of 37 studies were carried out by volunteers in this reporting period. A few are highlighted in the chapters of this report. Others include:

- Choosing to learn: The Impact of Enrolment in a Seva Mandir Shiksha Kendra on Children who Progress to Government or Private Education
- A Study to Understand Ways of Monitoring and Evaluating Seva Mandir's Bal Sakhi Programme
- Land Sale in Villages Under Dhar Panchayat: Reasons and Consequences

Seva Mandir coordinated the Rural Immersion Programme for management students of IIM-U for the third consecutive year. This year, 110 students participated in the programme, of which 60 were hosted by Seva Mandir.

Seva Mandir participated in the I-Volunteer award programme 2014 in the category of 'Leader in Volunteer Engagement'. We were shortlisted for the final round and were one of the top ten finalists awarded at the ceremony held in Mumbai.

## Public Lecture

This year, one public lecture was organized, on 19 April, and delivered by Dr S. Parasuraman on 'Securing the Welfare of all within the Paradigm of Growth and Development'. Dr S. Parasuraman is Director of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and has over 25 years of experience as a teacher, trainer, activist, administrator and development worker. A copy of the lecture is available through Seva Mandir.

## Other Activities

### Library and Documentation Centre

The Public Library and the Documentation Centre were opened to nurture an interest in reading among Seva Mandir staff and volunteers as well as the general public of Udaipur.

During the reporting period, the Kunjru Library and Documentation Centre opened for 346 out of 365 days. On average 111 visitors used the library every day. A total of 43 new members registered with the library.

## External Fellowships

This year two members of Seva Mandir were awarded external fellowships:

- The fellowship of Ms Ronak Rathore, Coordinator of Urban YRC, was renewed by the Himalaya Foundation for a second year.
- Ms Tulsi Devi from Khewara block was awarded the C. Subramaniam Award 2013 by the National Foundation of India in the category of Community Worker.



Chris Wiscarson, FSM UK chairman, introduces an eminent panel to discuss the topic, 'Shouldn't India be taking care of its own poor?'  
The panel: Baroness Shirley Williams, Shri Ajay S. Mehta, Lord Navnit Dholakia, Lord Karan Bilimoria, Sir Mark Tully

## Resource Mobilization Unit

Seva Mandir is dependent on external funds from grant-making institutions in order to run its various programmes. However over the last few years the donor base has changed and it seems that it will continue to do so in the coming years, thus having an impact on the functioning of Seva Mandir and its response to communities.

### The Changing Funding Scenario

Up until now, philanthropic grant-making institutions from the west have been the main source of funds, but this has been rapidly changing. Donors from the west have been pulling out, partly because of India's image as a developed economy with a high growth rate. Some donors have also changed sectoral priorities.

Seva Mandir has over the years been fortunate to have donors who supported its comprehensive plans (three-year strategic and operational plans). For almost 25 years, more than half of the organization's receipts were for comprehensive plans, allowing us the flexibility to respond to community needs, use new opportunities, experiment and innovate. But in the last few years this kind of support has been reducing and is being replaced by project-based funding.

From 2010-11 to 2013-14 the contribution of institutional donors has declined from almost 80% to 51% of total receipts. Institutional donors (to varying degrees) understand the nature of our work and have normally offered funding for a 3-5-year project cycle. The reduction in funding from that source has therefore had consequences both for the amount of money and the way in which it is provided.

The new hope is the corporates who are an emergent category: from 1% in 2012-13 their share has risen to almost 17% in 2014-15. The concern, however, is that their grants are short-term, making any medium- or long-term planning very difficult.

Friends of Seva Mandir UK, and later FSM US, were set up by Seva Mandir to raise individual and institutional funds for the organization. The far-sightedness of the then leadership of Seva Mandir in setting up the Friends groups can be seen in the critical contribution that both these groups are making in raising support for Seva Mandir. During the course of the year the President and the Chief Executive visited London to attend FSM UK events.

Given this changing context, Seva Mandir had already started preparing for alternative fundraising mechanisms by setting up a Resource Mobilization Unit (RMU) and registering with online giving portals

like Global Giving and Give India. We participated in the Joy of Giving Week in which we asked banks to support our work, and also managed to raise a good amount during the Give India Yearly Challenge. During the year, RMU serviced donors giving through such portals by posting regular updates and reports.

RMU also serviced both the Friends groups, as well as supporting the different programmes in preparing and presenting new funding proposals, renewals and reporting.

With the nature of donors and giving changing, RMU has also tried to present reports and updates in new ways. The team attended training sessions on using video and social media, as a result of which three short movies were made on Seva Mandir's work on education, health and early childhood care. The team also worked on streamlining social media to help us gain a greater presence online. While these efforts have borne some fruits, the challenge to meet the organization's funding needs continues, as does the need to build capacities within RMU to address this challenge.



The first day at the Residential Learning Camp at Kaya: the joy of education shines through this young girl's smile

## Mohan Sinha Mehta Rural Training Centre Kaya

Seva Mandir's residential centre, the Dr Mohan Sinha Mehta Rural Training Centre, is located at Kaya village, about 30 km from Udaipur.

The centre was built as a learning centre retreat for Seva Mandir and a training space for villagers, and has facilities for board and lodging. It is available at reasonable cost for external organizations to hold training courses and workshops. This year 81 training sessions were held in Kaya, of which 62 were internal and the rest external. Approximately 43,000 people participated in these training courses (compared with around 32,000 last year).

This year the focus has been on ensuring better maintenance and upkeep of Kaya. We are currently making the entire estate more child-friendly by equipping it with a playground and building more toilets.

Work on waste management has also been initiated and a volunteer is drawing up a plan to train Kaya staff in the appropriate maintenance of solar systems.

Experts were called in to study the Kaya anicut (dam) and advise on better water retention. As a result, plastering by bentonite clay has also begun.



# Appendix

1. Credibility Alliance Report
2. Members of Different Bodies
3. Programme Expenditure
4. Our Donors and Supporters
5. Financial Report

## CREDIBILITY ALLIANCE NORM COMPLIANCE REPORT 2013 - 14

**Identity**

- Seva Mandir is a Voluntary Organization registered under the Society Registration Act 1958, (Reg. No. 149/1967 - 68 dated 12.02.1968) and also registered in Rajasthan Public Trust Act, 1959
- Seva Mandir's Constitution & Trust Deed are available on request
- Seva Mandir is registered u/s 12A of the Income Tax Act, 1961
- All individual & corporate donations are also eligible for exemption u/s 80-G. The exemption u/s 80-G is available vide their letter No. AA/Udi/Judicial/2010-11/3586 dated 14.03.2011
- Seva Mandir is also registered under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 1976 to accept any foreign donations & grants vide Registration No. - 125690002, dated 11.02.1985.

**Name and address of the Banker**

1. State Bank of India, Main Branch, 23-C, Madhuban, Udaipur 313 001, Rajasthan (FCRA Account), and
2. Union Bank of India, New Fatehpura, Udaipur 313 001, Rajasthan (for Indian money).

**Name and Address of Auditors**

- M/s B.L. Pagaria & Co., Chartered Accountants, B-4 Bapu Bazar, Udaipur 313 001, Rajasthan.

**Mission**

Seva Mandir's mission is to make real the idea of a society consisting of free and equal citizens who are able to come together and solve the problems that affect them in their particular contexts. The commitment is to work for a paradigm of development and governance that is democratic and polyarchic. Seva Mandir seeks to institutionalize the idea that development and governance should not just be left to the state and its formal bodies, such as the legislature and the bureaucracy, but that citizens and their associations should engage separately and jointly with the state.

The mission, briefly, is to construct the conditions in which citizens of plural backgrounds and perspectives can work together to benefit and empower the least advantaged in society.

**Governance****Details of Board Members: (as on 31 March 2014)**

Name	Sex	Age	Position on Board	Occupation	Meetings attended
Shri Ajay S. Mehta	M	60	President	Mr Mehta retired as Executive Director, NFI. He is a member of State Planning Board, Government of Rajasthan.	2/2
Shri V.B. Eswaran	M	85	Member	President, Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development	2/2
Shri M.S. Kothari	M	78	Member	Ex-Chairman, Udaipur Division, World Wide Fund for Nature, India	2/2
Shri Jagat S. Mehta**	M	91	Member	Former Foreign Secretary, Government of India	2/2
Smt Neelima Khetan	F	52	Member	General Manager, PR and Communications, Coca Cola, India & South West Asia	2/2
Ms Pamela Philipose*	F	60	Co-opted Member	Director, Women's Feature Service	1/2
Ms Rajni Bakshi*	F	55	Co-opted Member	A Mumbai-based freelance journalist and author who writes about social and political movements in contemporary India	2/2

\* Co-opted Women Members are elected for a term of 2 years

\*\* Shri Jagat S. Mehta passed away on 6 March, 2014

- The Seva Mandir Board met twice in the Financial Year 2012-13, on 11 May 2013 and on 30 November 2013
- Minutes of Board Meetings are documented and circulated

# CREDIBILITY ALLIANCE NORM COMPLIANCE REPORT 2013 - 14

## Accountability and Transparency

- No remuneration, sitting fees, or any other form of compensation has been paid since the inception of the Organization to any Board Member, Trustee, or Shareholder
- The following reimbursements have been made to Board Members:
  - o Travelling expenses: Rs 376,161 (for attending Board Meetings)
  - o No other reimbursements have been made to any Board Member, Trustee, or Shareholder
- Chief Executive's remuneration: Rs 840,000 (per annum)
- Remuneration of three highest paid staff members (per annum):  
Rs 840,000(Chief Executive), Rs 756,540 (Director Finance), Rs 673,440 (Director Programmes)
- Remuneration of lowest paid staff member (per annum):
  - o Rs 42,000

## Staff details (as on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014)

Gender	Paid Full-Time	Paid Part-Time	Paid Consultants	Paid Volunteers	Unpaid Volunteers
Male	178	0	4	20	58
Female	79	0	4	17	87
Total	257	0	8	37	145

## Distribution of Staff According to Salary Levels (as on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014)

Slab of gross salary (in Rs) plus benefits paid to staff (per month)	Male staff	Female staff	Total staff
Less than 5,000	0	01	01
5,000 - 10,000	48	21	69
10,000 - 25,000	100	43	143
25,000 - 50,000	30	10	40
50,000 - 1,00,000	02	02	04
Greater than 100,000	00	00	00

## Total Cost of International Travel by Staff during the year (March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014):

Name	Mrs Priyanka Singh
Designation	Chief Executive
Destination	1. USA 2. UK
Purpose	1.To attend a leadership programme: NGOs and Civic Activism, sponsored by US Embassy 2. Fundraising
Gross Expense (Rs)	138,994
Sponsored by external organisation	1. Yes 2. No

## CREDIBILITY ALLIANCE NORM COMPLIANCE REPORT 2013 - 14

Name	Mr Ajay Singh Mehta
Designation	President
Destination	1. USA 2. UK
Purpose	Fundraising & meeting FSM UK and USA
Gross Expense (Rs)	212,600
Sponsored by external organisation	1.Self 2. Part Self

Name	Mr Shailendra Tiwari
Designation	Programme Incharge, NRD
Destination	Italy
Purpose	To attend a workshop called by IASS Germany (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam, Germany) at IFAD (International Fund for Agriculture Development) under the project pro-poor resource governance under changing climates
Gross Expense (Rs)	0
Sponsored by external organisation	Yes

Name	Ms Rimjhim Pandey
Designation	Programme Coordinator, Land Cell
Destination	1. Germany 2. Italy
Purpose	1. To attend Global Soil Week 2013, to present a paper contributed by Seva Mandir 2. To attend a workshop called by IASS Germany (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam, Germany) at IFAD (International Fund for Agriculture Development) under the project pro-poor resource governance under changing climates
Gross Expense (Rs)	20,388 (by our sources only)
Sponsored by external organisation	Yes

## MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT BODIES 2013-14

President: Shri Ajay S. Mehta

Chief Executive: Smt Priyanka Singh

General Secretary: Shri Narayan Lal Ameta

### Board of Trustees

- 1 Shri Ajay S. Mehta
- 2 Shri V.B. Eswaran
- 3 Shri M.S. Kothari
- 4 Shri Jagat S. Mehta
- 5 Smt Neelima Khetan
- 6 Smt Pamela Philipose
- 7 Ms. Rajni Bakshi

### Finance Committee

- 1 Smt Priyanka Singh
- 2 Shri Vijay Singh Mehta
- 3 Shri Bhagwat Singh Babel
- 4 Shri Sunil Sayal
- 5 Shri Anubhav Ladia
- 6 Shri Pankaj Ballabh
- 7 Shri Narayan Lal Ameta

### Executive Council

- 1 Shri Ajay S. Mehta
- 2 Shri V.B. Eswaran
- 3 Shri M.S. Kothari
- 4 Shri Jagat S. Mehta
- 5 Smt Neelima Khetan
- 6 Smt Pamela Philipose
- 7 Smt Rajni Bakshi
- 8 Shri Vijay S. Mehta
- 9 Shri K.S. Money (IAS)
- 10 Shri Janat Shah
- 11 Smt Vandini Mehta
- 12 Shri H.R. Bhati
- 13 Shri K.L. Bapna
- 14 Shri Umed Singh Panwar
- 15 Shri Bhupendra Sharma
- 16 Smt Shruti Goyal
- 17 Smt Priyanka Singh
- 18 Shri Narayan Lal Ameta

## MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT BODIES 2013-14

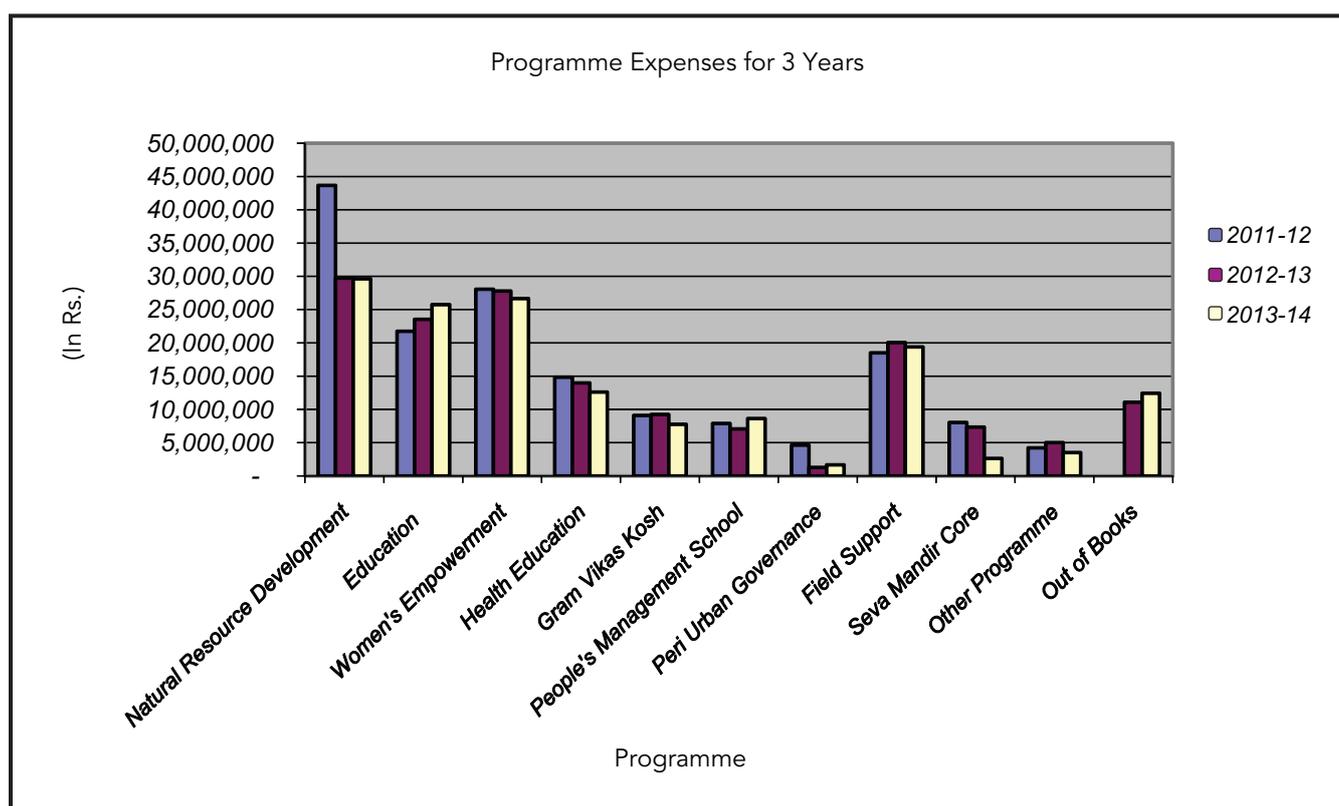
## Advisory Committee

- |    |  |    |                          |
|----|--|----|--------------------------|
| 1  | Shri Ajay S. Mehta                       | 25 | Smt Priyanka Singh       |
| 2  | Shri Vijay Singh Mehta                   | 26 | Shri Narayan Lal Ameta   |
| 3  | Shri Hansraj Choudhary                   | 27 | Smt Swati Patel          |
| 4  | Shri Raghav Raj Singh Ranawat - Shivrati | 28 | Shri Sanjiv Jain         |
| 5  | Shri Pankaj Butalia                      | 29 | Shri Vimal Jain          |
| 6  | Smt Anjali Gupte                         | 30 | Shri Harish Ahari        |
| 7  | Shri Yash Sethia                         | 31 | Shri Manoj Paliwal       |
| 8  | Dr Ashok Bapna                           | 32 | Shri Narendra Jain       |
| 9  | Smt Priya Khan                           | 33 | Shri Madhav Tailor       |
| 10 | Smt Sunita Jain                          | 34 | Shri Mohammad Yakub Khan |
| 11 | Smt Riddhi Shah                          | 35 | Shri Ranjeet Bijarnia    |
| 12 | Shri Kripa Shaker Joshi                  | 36 | Shri Narendra Thakur     |
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## PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2011-12 TO 2013-14

(in Rs)

PROGRAMME	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL
Natural Resource Development	43,660,546	29,721,719	29,630,822	103,013,087
Education	21,737,495	23,550,364	25,753,569	71,041,428
Women's Empowerment	28,049,937	27,777,839	26,661,168	82,488,944
Health Education	14,844,057	13,982,503	12,601,563	41,428,123
Gram Vikas Kosh	9,083,373	9,230,589	7,756,046	26,070,008
People's Management School	7,877,593	7,082,471	8,621,095	23,581,159
Peri-urban Governance	4,645,850	1,289,615	1,664,502	7,599,967
Field Support	18,497,285	20,050,687	19,373,968	57,921,940
Seva Mandir Core	8,035,778	7,350,931	2,629,721	18,016,430
Other Programmes	4,235,593	5,003,830	3,506,950	12,746,373
Out of Books		11,073,000	12,444,000	23,517,000
Total Expenditure	160,667,507	156,113,548	150,643,404	467,424,459



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7	Canada India Village Aid Association, Canada	29	Interchurch Organization for Development Co-operation (ICCO), The Netherlands
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- 8 Ram Kishan Singh
- 9 Ratan Paliwal
- 10 Rimjhim Pandey
- 11 Vimal Chand Jain



- Anganwadi: government-sponsored child- and mother-care centre
- Anicut: dam
- Bal Manch: Children's Forum
- Bal Sakhi: woman trained by SM to provide newborn care, identify problems and refer cases for further treatment as appropriate
- Bal Samuh: Children's Group
- Balwadi: SM-run preschool
- Block: administrative division of a District
- Caste Panchayat: non-government decision-making body set up by a community along caste lines
- CCCD: Child-Centered Community Development
- CFR: Community Forest Rights
- Cluster: group of panchayats
- ECCE: Early Childhood Care and Education
- FD: Forest Department
- Gram Panchayat: small village group below panchayat level
- Gram Sabha: Village Assembly
- Gram Vikas Committee (GVC): Village Development Committee
- Gram Vikas Kosh (GVK): Village Fund
- Gram Vikas Samuh (GVS): Village Development Group
- IASS: Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam, Germany
- ICDS: the government's Integrated Child Development Service
- JFM: Joint Forest Management
- MGNREGA (sometimes NREGA): Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, a government initiative to provide assured employment via development activities prescribed by the panchayats
- Mohalla: neighbourhood
- NRD: Natural Resources Development
- Nagrik Vikas Manch (NVM): Citizen's Development Forum
- Panchayat: village-level elected government body
- Panchayati Raj: system of governance in which the panchayat is the basic form of administration
- RTE: The Right of Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, more popularly known as the Right to Education
- Sahayika: assistant to a Sanchalika in a Balwadi
- Samuh: group
- Sanchalika: woman trained by SM to work with young children in the Balwadi in her local area
- SHG: Self-Help Group, a women's group set up by SM to provide credit and savings
- Shiksha Kendra: a bridge school run by SM to provide quality education to out-of-school children between the ages of 6 and 14 in remote rural hamlets
- SM: Seva Mandir
- Support to People Initiative (SPI): an SM programme to improve accountability and responsibility of GVCs in running, monitoring and evaluating village projects
- TBA: Traditional Birth Attendant
- Village Cohesion Index (VCI): a scale developed by SM that measures the status of institutions based on 4 indicators - participation, leadership, management (of resources, funds etc) and decision-making
- YRC: Youth Resource Centre
- Zone: SM subdivision of a Block

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