

# **AIDE MEMOIRE**

**Second Joint Review Mission of  
Mahila Samakhya  
(9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2009)**

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Section 1:

# PROCESS

## 1.1 TIMEFRAME

Schedule: 9th-17th November 2009

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
9 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Monday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Briefing by Government of India</li> <li>⇒ Internal discussions, preparation for field visits and Departure for States</li> </ul>
10 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Tuesday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ State level discussions and briefings</li> <li>⇒ Discussion with other districts and State level organisations and State Team.</li> <li>⇒ Travel to district</li> </ul>
11 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Wednesday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Field-visit in district (1)</li> </ul>
12 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Thursday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Arrival at SPO, and State Report Writing</li> </ul>
13 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Friday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Wrap-up at State level with draft State Report to be presented to the State Education Secretary (Chairperson of EC of State MS).</li> <li>⇒ A fax or email copy of draft State report to be sent to NPO, GoI before departure from State.</li> <li>⇒ Depart for and arrive in Delhi</li> </ul>
14 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Saturday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Arrival in Delhi for those Mission members unable to travel the day before</li> <li>⇒ Meeting with Mission Leader for finalization of core issues for National Report</li> <li>⇒ Core team writes National Report</li> </ul>
15 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Core team completes draft National Report and shares with NPO (by email/fax)</li> <li>⇒ Meeting with MHRD Officials to discuss State Reports and National Report (second half of the day)</li> </ul>
16 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Monday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Modification and finalization of State &amp; National Reports, by Core team</li> <li>⇒ Members other than core team depart by evening</li> </ul>
17 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Tuesday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Wrap-up</li> </ul>

1.2 Composition of Mission and six states traveled to:

S.No.	State MS programme visited	Name of GoI nominee on Mission	Name of DFID nominee on Mission
1	<b>Assam</b> Mahila Samata Society	<b>Ms. Niti Saxena</b>	<b>Ms. Biraj Laxmi Sarangi</b>
2	<b>Gujarat</b> Mahila Samakhya Society	<b>Mr. Abhyuday Choudhary</b> (Finance & Procurement Specialist)	<b>Ms. Aashti Zaidi Hai</b> (Education Adviser, DFID-India)
3	<b>Jharkhand</b> Mahila Samakhya Society	<b>Mr. Bharat Bhushan</b>	<b>Ms. Vandana Mahajan</b>
4	<b>Kerala</b> Mahila Samakhya Society	<b>Prof. Fatima Alikhan</b>	<b>Ms. Sangeeta Mehta</b> (Deputy Programme Manager, DFID-India)
5	Mahila Samakhya, <b>Uttar Pradesh</b>	<b>Ms. Gita Menon</b>	<b>Mr. Sampat Kumar</b>
6	Mahila Samakhya, <b>Uttarakhand</b>	<b>Dr. K. Lalita</b> (Mission Leader)	<b>Ms. Arundhuti Roy Chowdhury</b> (Social Development Adviser, DFID-India)

1.3 List of materials provided to Mission members:

- i) Agenda for MS JRM briefing (09.11.09)
- ii) TOR for MS JRM 2009
- iii) XI Plan document of MS programme
- iv) Presentation by NPD, Ms. Mittal, at briefing (09.11.09)
- v) Physical progress data, MS (upto 30.09.09)
- vi) Releases & AWPBs, financial information (08-09 & 09-10)
- vii) State visit teams
- viii) State report framework
- ix) NPO contact information
- x) Progress briefs of 10 State MS programmes
- xi) Aide Memoire - MS JRM '08

#### 1.4 Minutes of Briefing:

The first briefing for the Mission members was held in the MHRD Conference Hall at Shastri Bhawan (New Delhi), on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Anita Kaul, JS (EE.II) and Dr. K. Lalita (Mission Leader), and continued from 11.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Participants included: Mission members (12), Ms. Anita Kaul (JS-EE.II), Ms. Sarita Mittal (NPD), Ms. Taranga Sriraman, Ms. Santosh Sharma & Ms. Mousumi Chakraborty (NPO Consultants), Mr. Arun Sharma (US, MHRD), NPO staff, and other DFID officials (2).

Ms. Sarita Mittal (National Project Director) made a presentation regarding the MS programme itself as well as its progress/action taken since the last JRM (2008). (Please refer annexure IVb.)

The Joint Secretary made the opening remarks, asking the Mission members and other participants to introduce themselves. She spoke about the uniqueness of the MS programme as the longest running programme for education and empowerment. Ms. Kaul pointed out the danger of dilution of such an agenda by the pressures for service delivery, and also that the bottom-upwards planning process in MS – whereby rural women prioritise their own needs – is perhaps the main reason for the programme's sustenance so long. She then invited Dr. K. Lalita to lead the Mission.

Dr. Lalita thanked the MHRD for the responsibility, and said she looked forward to catching up again with the programme that she has been associated with in various capacities over the years (including as NRG member earlier). She requested the Mission members to use the following time to raise any questions/concerns they may have prior to the State-visits etc. She herself pointed out the changing nature of MS' external visibility and identity/recognition

Ms. Geeta Menon suggested that the Mission should look at overall differences in what makes one State MS programme more visible than the other. The National Consultant suggested that variations/diversity in programmatic strength, innovations & focus – e.g. strength/autonomy of federations, girls' education taken up on large-scale – be looked at in context of difference in age of various State programmes as well as the particular socio-political-economic atmosphere they exist in.

There was also discussion on the backlash against the programme, pressures from political entities and pressure for service-delivery on a programme essentially focused on facilitating women's empowerment. Prof. Alikhan suggested that the role of State Resource Centers must be looked into by the Mission in this regard.

Ms. Sangeeta Mehta and other DFID officials suggested that briefing and statistics provided may look at progress specifically in the past year as this is an annual JRM. They also requested more information on progress/action taken against the specific recommendation of the first JRM regarding setting up of the National Resource Centre. Ms. Mehta also suggested that the Mission garner feedback from the State programmes regarding use of the Technical Cooperation Fund so far (e.g. on ERU training cycle) and possible uses in the future.

Finally, logistics of the entire schedule were discussed, NPO contact information was shared, and after lunch, the Mission members left in pairs (a GoI and DFID nominee each) for the respective States.

### 1.5 Minutes of Wrap-up meeting:

The wrap-up meeting for the second MS JRM was held at the USI Campus (New Delhi), on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Anita Kaul (JS-EE.II) and Dr. K. Lalita (Mission Leader), and continued from 3.30 - 6 p.m.

Other participants included:

- i) Mission members – Prof. Alikhan, Mr. Bharath Bhushan, Ms. Mahajan, Ms. Zaidi-Hai, Ms. Sangeeta Mehta;
- ii) MHRD officials –Ms. Sarita Mittal (NPD) and Mr. Arun Sharma (US, MS);
- iii) Mr. Nandkumar (State Education Secretary, Chhattisgarh)
- iv) MS SPDs – Ms. Prashanthi (A.P.), Sr. Sabeena (Bihar), Mr. Rangapariya (Gujarat), Dr. Seema Bhaskaran (Kerala), Dr. Suchithra Vedanth (Karnataka), Ms. Geeta Gairola (Uttarakhand) & Dr. Rashmi Sinha (U.P.);
- v) Representatives of State MS programmes - Ms. Nirju (APD, AMSS), Sr. Bernard (SRP, JMSS), Dr. Smriti (State Consultant, UPMSS), and Ms. Richa Rath (SRP, CGMSS);
- vi) Non-official members of the NRG – Dr. Ratna Sudarshan, Ms. Dipta Bhog, Ms. Ranu Bhogal and Dr. Geeta Nambissan;
- vii) NPO Consultants and staff.

In her opening remarks, the Joint Secretary declared the successful completion of the second JRM for MS, and invited the Mission Leader to make a presentation of the key findings at the National level. This included observations regarding Sanghas & federations, expansion of MS coverage, participation in formal & non-formal education, women's empowerment & quality of life, MS leadership & visibility, programme & financial management, and Technical Cooperation Fund. The main recommendations made by the Mission were as follows:

- Central-level policy decision to ensure that MS learnings are integrated with other Centrally-Sponsored Schemes, to bring gender-perspective into the latter. MS programme should not become a service delivery agency on the ground.
- MS programme should reconnect with other national/state level movements and advocacy groups.
- Issues of long-term financial sustainability of the federations need to be acknowledged. SPOs should explore various models & options, including a need-assessment and visioning exercise to assist federations' making informed choice in programmatic & financial aspects.
- Participation, leadership & decision-making roles of sangha members from most marginalised communities need to be examined. State programmes should collect and analyse disaggregated data in terms of their access and reach.
- 2 studies to be commissioned (before next JRM) under the TC fund, on – (a) impact of MSK on girls' educational outcomes and (b) evaluation and documentation of MSK methodologies and needs of MSK learners.
- The FM&P Manual should be ready for State programmes' use by June 2010.



- Mission strongly suggests that NPO should look for other alternatives to achieve the establishment of proposed National Resource Centre without delay.

The Mission Leader also spoke in detail about the necessity to support the development of such leadership of State programmes so as to build MS' visibility and solidarity with other groups/agents of civil society. Issue-based action and empowerment-centric education of women are also focal points for leadership based on MS philosophy/non-negotiable principles. The challenge is to face pressure to deliver services and dilute processes for women's empowerment in the face of vested interests. The support of GoI (NPO/MHRD) is crucial in such cases, to help negotiate larger conflicts/systemic backlash faced by the State programmes.

Time and resource constraints under the XI Plan are affecting the strategy and quality of processes that are now directed by the impetus placed on physical expansion along with empowerment. The programme functionaries as well as the sangha and federations that they support – all require capacity-building and revisitation of perspectives at various levels.

Renewed focus on quality, methodology and impact of interventions like MSKs and MS-run KGBV/NPEGEL as well as interventions specifically for women's literacy and education, was recommended by the Mission. Similarly, the role of State and National Resource Centres, as well as the importance of documentation of MS' journey and impact so as to more effectively bring together the qualitative impact and the 'statistical' (quantitative progress), was emphasized by Dr. Lalita.

There was some discussion on this between the non-official NRG members present. Dr. Nambissan felt that documentation needs to be done more creatively, charting especially federations' own journeys and building sangha members' own capacities to narrativise the process of empowerment that MS facilitates with them. Ms. Bhogal responded by suggesting that it is not imperative to develop the programme staff or sangha members' capacities to produce documentation of the kind that donor agencies or academics demand, and that it may be better to recognise that certain specialized types of documentation work may be outsourced from communications experts/external documentation specialists etc. Ms. Bhog expressed the view that even in that, too much focus on specialized documentation may dilute the work agenda itself of developing rural women's thematic, functional and real literacies which is actually more important to MS philosophy and principles.

A number of SPDs present raised the issue of time and resource constraints affecting the expansion drive set for the state programmes under the XI Plan. It was reiterated that speedy action needs to be taken at Central level to address other issues of staff security – social, financial and physical. The setting up of a Committee for internal review of programme provisions at the Ministry level was welcomed by all, but emphasis was laid on its taking timely initiative to change schematic provisions. Similarly, Ms. Mehta (DFID) lauded the changes brought about in fund flow system at the National level after recommendations of the last JRM – including joint (State programme-MHRD) budget planning process from new FY 2010-11, introduction of single bond system and declaration of financial envelope. She cautioned, however, against delaying in initiating other processes – like setting up of NRC, and studies on MSK recommended by this JRM – as lengthy procedures in governmental set-up obviously result in changes only so much later.

Similarly, in discussion on federations – an area of concern and which the Mission recommended revisitation with respect to vision and sustainability – the SPD of APMSS, Ms. Prashanthi, shared the phase-wise work with and journey of federations towards autonomy and

financial planning in the past year. She welcomed all other State programmes to study this for support to work with federations in their respective, diverse contexts.

In conclusion, the Joint Secretary thanked everyone – especially the Mission members – for their participation and contribution, observations and recommendations. The National Consultant thanked all the NPO staff and consultants, and the Mission for the successful completion of a JRM that has generated many points for action at National and State levels.

Section 2:

NATIONAL  
REPORT

**National Report on the Second Joint Review Mission**  
**For Mahila Samakhya**  
**9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

*Mahila Samakhya* (MS) – Education for Women’s Equality – is the Government of India’s (GoI) main programme targeted at gender inequality. It promotes gender equality and women’s empowerment through organisation of rural women into collectives, called *Mahila Sanghas*. These help women, particularly from socially and economically marginalized groups to resist violence; to gain better access to education and health services; to open up economic options such as microfinance and enhance women’s role in local government. These would enhance women gaining self awareness and confidence. Education is at the core of activities. The *Sanghas* campaign for and support women and girls’ participation in formal and non-formal education as well as address other concerns related to health, violence, livelihood and natural resource management.

1.2 The purpose of the current phase of *Mahila Samakhya* is to consolidate and expand the programme and to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in a total of 167 Districts across 11 Indian states<sup>1</sup>. This purpose is to be achieved through the following:

- Expansion of the programme to form an additional 21,000 *Sanghas* in 420 additional EBBs;
- Raised confidence and capacity of one million *Sangha* and federation women members with increased engagement of other women community members;
- *Mahila Sanghas* playing an active role in monitoring village level educational, health, rural employment and other relevant activities;
- Greater participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education;
- Women empowered to improve the quality of life of themselves and their families.

1.3 MS is a national programme funded through national resources with additional external funding by the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID). The DFID funding is from the year 2007-08 to 2013-14. Following the monitoring mechanisms provided for in the collaborative understanding, the second Joint Review Mission (JRM) for MS was conducted from 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2009. The Mission’s objectives were to review and make recommendations on the following:

- (i) Progress of overall implementation, particularly expansion and consolidation of the programme’s coverage.
  - (ii) Processes being adopted to achieve the objectives of Mahila Samakhya.
  - (iii) Issues related to State and District implementation capacity.
  - (iv) Financial management.
  - (v) TC Fund implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> The programme is currently operational in 102 districts and 468 blocks in ten states: Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh will be added to the ten existing states in the programme during the period of DFID support.

1.4 The Mission comprised of 12 members (GoI:6, DFID:6). Each State team comprised 2 members. The Mission visited six States during the Mission; Assam, Gujarat, Kerala, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The details of the Mission composition are attached at Appendix 1. State reports are annexed.

1.5 The Mission records its deep appreciation of the support received from the Department of School Education and Literacy, National Project Office, and State Project Directors, their respective teams and the sangha women and girls in making available their records, providing astute presentations, facilitating field visits, open and candid discussions.

## **2. Main Recommendations**

1. There should be a policy decision at the Central level to ensure that MS learnings are strategically integrated with other Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as NRHM, NREGA, MDM, Gram Nyayalay to bring in gender perspective into the other programmes/schemes. MS programme should not become a service delivery agency on the ground.

2. MS programme should reconnect with other national/state level movements and advocacy groups like right to food, monitoring of implementation of Domestic Violence Act, participatory natural resource management, social justice and equality issues etc.

3. Issues of long-term financial sustainability of the federations need to be acknowledged. SPOs should explore various models and options. A need assessment and a visioning exercise could assist the federations to make informed choice for both programmatic and financial aspects.

4. Participation, leadership and decision-making roles of sangha members from most marginalised communities needs to be examined. It is recommended that the states collect and analyse disaggregated data in terms of their access and reach.

5. It is recommended that 2 studies are commissioned, through the TC fund, on – (a) impact of MSK on girls' educational outcomes and (b) evaluation and documentation of MSK methodologies and needs of MSK learners. These should be initiated before the next JRM.

6. The FM&P Manual is ready to be used by the States by June 2010.

7. Mission was informed that the MoU for the proposed National Resource Centre (NRC) is not being renewed and hence all plans for the NRC in its current status are stopped. Mission would like to strongly suggest that NPO should look for other alternatives and interim.

## **3. Sanghas and Federation**

### 3.1 The Sanghas:

As the women's collectives or the *sanghas* (sanghams, samoohs, vanitha sabhas as they are variously called) are the foundations on which the entire empowerment agenda of MS is built, various processes were and are adopted to form, strengthen and empower them. As reported by the NPO, in the last six months 2289 sanghas have been added bringing the cumulative total till September 2009 to 35516.

Depending on the political climate, the development agenda of the government and the governance structure, there have been varying methods of sangha formation and strengthening. As a normal rule, sanghas of willing and motivated women from disadvantaged communities of

the village are first formed which then attempt to encourage the unwilling women to join. But there are variations. In Kerala, for instance, the initial year is spent on raising awareness through a 'status of women study' which is presented to the panchayat before the mobilisation is undertaken to form sanghas.

As a rule, a sangha begins on a small scale to address practical and sometimes strategic issues affecting women's personal lives, such as education, domestic violence, health, livelihood etc. With maturity of sanghas they are able to strategically address issues related to rights and choices and make informed decisions. As the sangha strengthens, it begins to question social practices and patriarchal control mechanisms as well as the generically androcentric orientation of larger interventions such as government programmes and legal provisions.

It is to be expected that given the variations on the basis of area, community, character and interests of members and the choices and decisions made as well as the type and extent of support provided, there would be differences in the strength of the collectives. In most States, sanghas have been categorized into strong, medium, weak and emerging. Over the years MS in various states (for example in Gujarat and Assam) have defined what a strong or weak sangha is and worked out appropriate strategies.

Though the sanghas were observed dealing with strategic issues, it was observed that in some states sanghas are unable to do so effectively. For instance, in Jharkhand the capacity of the sangha to seek removal of structural constraints in women's empowerment seem to be a matter of concern as they are focusing more on service delivery of girls' education programmes. Also while engaging with NREGA for wage employment, they fail to play an active role in designing of the NREGA activities to improve resource base of the vulnerable households. In contrast, women from the Mahasanghas in Uttarakhand are planning to suggest appropriate strategies/activities for inclusion of aged and variously challenged people.

With a range of programmatic options open, sanghas going into a delivery mode is an expressed concern. There is tremendous pull towards this in all the States.

### 3.2 Federation of Sanghas

*MS envisages that as Sanghas (formed in each village) mature, they would come together as federations at the block levels. These federations, it is anticipated, would provide the solidarity for the sanghas to work together on social issues, ensuring a learning environment and at the same time respond to the ever-changing socio-political environment. (MS XI Plan Document, p.8).*

This is the context in which the entire focus on consolidation, expansion and phasing out has to be situated. Formation and strengthening of federations was received in a positive spirit, however, in the initial stages there was some resistance from many States to the idea of phasing out. For example it has been a continuing debate in MSUP as the XI Plan document has put in a 3- year phase out, intensifying the pressure therein. In its view, in 3 years a sangha can at best reach the 'medium' level and the constant presence of the Sahayogini is still required. A CRP or JRP is not sufficient even if a federation exists to support the sangha.

Nomenclature used for federations varies amongst the States. In some States the name adopted was a strategic decision. In Kerala, with its political climate usage of term federation is viewed

with suspicion hence the term 'mahasangha' was preferred. AMSS has panchayat mahasanghas instead of cluster groups, which come together as block level federations.

Federations too are at different points of the empowerment continuum. The strong ones are today negotiating a space for themselves in the larger environment and impacting upon the larger world – they take up campaigns, action at sangha level, leverage support for their agendas, seek and give legal support, interface with and provide an alternative model for government programmes as well as attempt and successfully run programmes. For instance, in Uttarakhand, the federations have influenced the panchayats to create conducive environment for women to assert for space within PRIs.

With the strengthening of federations and increasing demand for 'what next?' from them, the roles and responsibilities of MS are also emerging as a challenge - as federations also look towards MS for networking, information and financial resource support. What kind of support should be provided to federations at different stages, when and for how long is an issue within MS. Linked to this is also the issue of demarcation of the roles of the federations from those of MS. Federations are also seen as extensions of MS to deliver activities and are also dependent on MS for such activities. With the increased emphasis on convergence, there is a concern that they might become a service delivery agency for other government programmes (for example, in Jharkhand, where they seem to be into service delivery mode with an emphasis on economic activities).

Financial sustainability of strong federations is an emerging issue in most states. While attempts are on to leverage a financial advantage from larger programmes by some federations, most manage by collecting a membership fee to meet travel and other expenses. There are different strategies and ways to address financial sustainability of federations (e.g. Jharkhand, Gujarat, Assam and Uttarakhand). It is imperative to cull out these state/federation-specific experiences and develop shared strategies

The danger of federations being 'hijacked' by political forces for narrow gains, and of being co-opted into larger programmes, is a looming concern in keeping with the vision of 'strong', vibrant and visible federations.

### 3.3 Recommendations

1. Federations in MS are at various stages of maturity. The vision & practice behind this need to be consolidated and shared at the national level. Cross-sharing, documenting, analyzing and feedback should be followed as an important strategy for the growth and sustainability of the federations. Though it is a long-term process, it could be initiated this year by both NPO and SPO.
2. MS should evolve strategies to ensure that the inter-linkages between the thematic committees of federations/sanghas are strengthened to develop along the lines of MS vision. Inter-sectoral areas of attention for advocacy must be Built to ensure that federations grow beyond sangha to become leaders for change and gender equality in policy and programme implementation (for example, better working of the PRIs/women's health plans at block level/effective implementation of law on domestic violence/SC ST atrocities Act/use of RTI/women's view on forest laws).

3. Issues of long-term financial sustainability of the federations need to be acknowledged. SPOs should explore various models and options. A need-assessment and visioning exercise could assist the federations to make informed choice for both programmatic and financial aspects.
4. Participation, leadership and decision-making roles of members from disadvantaged communities need to be examined. It is recommended that the state programmes collect and analyse disaggregated data in terms of their access and reach.
5. The state programmes need to facilitate formal recognition of sanghas and mahasanghas by the Government departments for both implementation and social audit of Government programmes. Institutional recognition needs to be promoted at State and National levels.

#### **4. Expansion of MS Coverage**

As per the XI Plan, expansion of MS strategy should focus on achieving a critical mass. This is meant to go side by side with phasing out. Expansion is both through planned adoption of new areas and through the individual initiative of the sanghas and federation. As reported by GoI, in the last six months MS has expanded to 1363 new villages in 17 blocks in 7 Districts. While most often the MS norm of taking the educationally backward blocks are accepted in planned expansion at the organization level, there are variations in this too. For instance in Assam and Kerala instead of selecting the district strictly by ranking them on the basis of developmental indicators viz. lowest literacy levels, HDI and lowest ranked EBB district, MS has used a combination of factors (along with EBB) for selection of districts.

In states like Assam and Jharkhand, political disturbances/insurgency factors influence MS plans for expansion. Institutional changes and uncertainty within state MS programme environment (as in Gujarat and Jharkhand) has also been an obstacle towards expansion.

Rapid expansion in a short time has created a tremendous pressure. Thrust on expansion is observed to impact process-oriented approach of MS and increased pressure on the MS team at all levels. Target approach is pushing sangha formation as well as federation process into fast track without time and space for its evolution and maturity.

##### 4.1 Recommendations:

1. Expansion without consolidation is an issue that needs to be addressed. The Mission received these concerns related to consolidation and expansion. It is recommended to have a mid-term review to assess the robustness of and realistic targets for expansion and phasing out.

#### **5. Participation in Formal and non-formal education.**

##### 5.1 Background and Context:

The central objectives of Mahila Samakhya focus on creating the circumstances and providing the necessary support structures so that women and girls are able to participate in formal and non-formal education programmes.

However, State programmes were unable to provide systematic evidence of increased participation in formal and non-formal education as an outcome of the MS Programme. There



was inconsistent reference across states regarding the share of girls' enrolment in primary, upper primary and secondary levels of education across the States increasing from last year. Notably, social disaggregation of this data was provided only in Assam. References to completion, retention and drop-out rates were, similarly, largely absent. Anecdotal examples do suggest that Sangha women are unequivocally committed to their daughters' participation in school – at least the primary and upper primary level. Similarly, discussions with Kishoris (adolescent girls) in the States also indicate that they are participating in formal schools till the completion of elementary education. Less clear was the participation in secondary education.

On a strategic and policy level, it was widely referenced across States that Sangha women regularly participate in Village Education Committees (VECs), Education Committees (formed at Sangha and Federation level), Mother Teacher Associations and Parent Teacher Associations. In Gujarat, for instance, it was observed that their involvement has led to the active monitoring of student and teacher attendance and improvement of quality of education provided. There was less engagement with curriculum and teaching and learning materials and gender sensitisation in schools.

## 5.2 Non-formal education

**Women's Literacy** – State programmes have employed various interventions to promote women's literacy including year-round literacy classes and intensive short-term literacy camps or linkages with National Institute of Open School (NIOS) Programme. In several States, the definition of literacy was being broadened to include financial, health, legal and other kinds that were relevant and useful for women as they navigate their everyday lives. In this context, there were instances where there was collaboration with NGOs to provide materials that relate to health, for instance in Gujarat. There were several examples where MS literacy efforts were operating in collaboration and convergence with State Adult Literacy Program (Sakshar Bharat Mission Plan in Assam, Sakshartadeep in Gujarat). In several states this has led to functional literacy and enabled women to gain skills in managing bank accounts, gaining access to government benefits, and in some cases clearing Class 10 and 12 examinations. Across states a very promising by-product of women's increasing literacy rates is that many of them have begun to send their own daughters to school. For example in U.P., women in some villages have ensured 100% enrolment of girl children, with no more child marriages. In Uttarakhand, 2,637 Sangha women have registered in 2009 for NIOS certificate courses.

However, there was a sense (notably in Jharkhand) that women's literacy was being sidelined by a focus on the provision of non-formal education for girls. There is also a need to continuously build on literacy programmes so they respond to the dynamic nature of women's lives. Finally, several state programmes commented on the non-accessibility and issues regarding regularity of literacy interventions given women's (often demanding) workload.

**Mahila Shikshan Kendra/Jag Jagi Kendra** – Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSKs) are residential bridge programs for girls from rural and marginalised backgrounds from the ages of 5 to 14<sup>2</sup>. Focusing on the quality provision of holistic and gender sensitive education, they are designed to create a cadre of aware, educated and trained women who could play a role in the development of educational activities at the village level. There are several success stories of MSK girls overcoming tremendous odds to take on new, economically independent roles and moving up educationally to clear Class 10 examinations. In Jharkhand, more than 30 young girls who passed

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<sup>2</sup> Note that in some states, the ages vary. In Jharkhand, MSKs are focused on girls 15+ and in Assam MSKs are serving girls ages 13 – 18.

out of MSK are now sahayoginis, para-teachers, MSK teachers, anganwadi sevikas etc. The number of MSKs varies by state (9 in Assam, 4 in Gujarat, 11 in Jharkhand, 7 in Kerala, 6 in Uttarakhand and 16 in Uttar Pradesh), only 4 of which have been added in the last six months across the 10 states. This has to be contrasted with 290 KGBVs added in the same period.

In the past six months 801 girls have passed out through MSKs across the States. On leaving, girls from MSKs either continue their education further by enrolling in formal schools, often KGBVs but also in regular formal schools. Fewer girls, it appears, seem to abandon their education. In Gujarat for instance 118 out of 121 that passed out were mainstreamed. Yet, there is still a need to strengthen the linkages between MSKs and formal schooling system (linkages with Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, for instance, should be looked at for mainstreaming girls to secondary school). There needs to be some inter-MSK sharing, within and/or between states and there should also be a focus on innovative ways to ensure girls stay in school, once they leave the MSK. Vocational education and other opportunities for older girls should be looked at. Finally there continues to be a need to assess the quality of the education provided in MSKs by assessing students' learning levels. Anecdotal examples suggest that quality is high; however, NPO needs to commission a study on the impact of MSK intervention.

### 5.3 Formal education

***Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya*** – Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) are intensive residential programs for marginalised rural girls funded through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Of the 6 states visited, these schools are operated and run by MS in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh only, (11 in Gujarat, and 33 in Uttar Pradesh). A laudable achievement in UP, for instance, is the powerful way that the MS empowerment philosophy has been integrated in to the KGBV pedagogy. The State is now considering extending the programme up to Class 12. However, MS does feel the pressure to meet demand for increased service delivery without compromising the MS focus on mobilization and empowerment. In Gujarat, for that matter, there has been a strategic shift away from service provision and towards mobilising participation and monitoring quality. However, there needs to be more attention paid to teacher training on gender and social issues. There is also room for KGBVs to converge with Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (GoI's Secondary Education for All programme being launched in 2010).

***National Programme of Education for Girls at Elementary Level*** – NPEGEL is a concerted effort on the part of GoI, under the umbrella of SSA, to provide additional components for education of girls at elementary level in educationally backward blocks. The scheme focuses on using innovative strategies to provide access to and facilitate the retention of girls, to ensure greater participation of women and girls in the field of education, to improve the quality of education through various interventions and to stress upon the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment. MS implements NPEGEL in Assam, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh (within 55, 64 and 148 model cluster schools respectively), while Kerala, Gujarat and Jharkhand are not currently engaged with the programme. The Mission would like to record the good practices in Assam where UNICEF has extended its support in providing add-ons in NPEGEL schools including training of girls in martial arts, sports etc. These trainings are being scaled up by the SSA throughout the State. Assam has additionally included gender into training modules/manuals for school teachers, which have been developed in collaboration with DIET and UNICEF.

#### 5.4 Education and Convergence

MS' attempts to infuse the women's empowerment agenda into government programmes are neither uniform nor systematic in the visited States. In some states like Uttarakhand, Kerala and UP there have been laudable attempts to ensure this. MS has organic linkages with SSA through KGBV and NPEGEL. In the last six months, MS has increased its KGBV coverage to include 290 new centres and 447 new NPEGEL centres. MS has also been working with State Education Department, Literacy Mission on curriculum development, training and implementation (KGBV, Mid-day meal, NPEGEL). The Education Department acknowledges the role and presence of MS as an important stakeholder in girls' education as observed in Jharkhand and Assam.

As observed in Gujarat, there is a difference between MS-managed KGBV and SSA due to difference in approach and operational style of delivering quality-based educational programmes.

#### 5.5 Recommendations:

1. A more strategic approach to education programmes and interventions for both women and girls is required. Moreover, it is to be ensured that service provision is not diluting the focus of MS on mobilisation and advocacy.
2. Women's literacy programmes should not be neglected or sidelined due to focused efforts in formal or non-formal education for girls. Linkages between education for empowerment, equality and literacy should be strengthened through training, pedagogy and curriculum of educational programmes.
3. It is recommended that 2 studies are commissioned, through the TC fund, on – (a) impact of MSK on girls' educational outcomes and (b) evaluation and documentation of MSK methodologies and needs of MSK learners. These should be initiated before the next JRM.
4. Overall, MS educational programmes need to be backed by strong monitoring coupled with systematic and disaggregated information collection and analysis to study the impact of these programmes on girls' enrolment, retention, completion and transitions.
5. State programmes are recommended to study Assam's NPEGEL model.
6. GoI/MHRD to initiate efforts to: a) address the need for change in SSA mindset of looking at MS only as service provider for providing strategic inputs based on their in-depth field experience, and b) to form and activate existing mechanisms for better coordination between MS and SSA. Efforts from SSA functionaries should draw in field-level learning from MS to improve programme delivery and outcomes.
7. Capacity-building - on monitoring, advocacy and policy dialogue - for the sangha and federation members in VECs.

#### **6. Women's Empowerment and Quality of Life**

Sangha women have been engaging with a wide range of issues affecting their lives both in the external and familial environment. As they have reported, by being part of a collective they feel strengthened to challenge the external forces and pressures and issues of violence within the family. Therefore, despite initial pressures and resistance from their families, they continue to be part of the journey of MS and in case of older sanghas they have garnered their families' support. Through these collectives they continue to contribute towards change in larger milieu and at the same time they have been making difference in their own life situations.

### 6.1 Making a difference with literacy

In MS, education has been the key strategy for the empowerment process. Newly acquired literacy and numeric skills are helping women in taking additional responsibilities in sanghas, federation and their family lives. In Jharkhand and Gujarat, neo-literates help in account-keeping of the federations, bank transactions, communication with Government officials, process documentation etc. Similarly, in Assam, literacy is considered as criteria for leadership and 171 neo-literates have been selected as sangha leaders. As seen in Uttarakhand, literacy skills have also enabled women to question certain malpractices. It has improved the status of women in community and family. Across all states, impact of basic literacy (except for Kerala where illiteracy is not an issue) has been critical to an increase in their awareness, self worth and confidence.

### 6.2 Addressing gender based violence/discriminatory social practices

Violence against women (particularly domestic violence) is being taken up as the key action area by sangha members. They come together as a pressure group to intervene in cases of violence ranging from spousal abuse, dowry cases and sexual abuse to child marriages and witch-hunting. Nari Adalat has emerged as a critical strategy for redressal at the local level. As reported by GoI, 170 Nari Adalats (6 of which are new) have dealt with 1700 cases in the last six months. These courts have received acceptance within local community and in administrative system. In Kerala, as service providers under PWDVA, KMSS is providing shelter to the survivors of VAW. Sangha women know that if they face any type of violence or abuse, they can fall back on the collective strength of sanghas and this gives them a sense of security and agency to challenge unequal power equations within their homes. An encouraging example comes from Uttarakhand where Mahasangha women had intervened in a case of sodomy, convincing the survivor's family to come forward and lodge a complaint. Expanding the analysis of gender based discrimination and inequalities, women have started questioning the social practices that promote stereotypes. In states like Assam, Kerala, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand, women - in consultation with community and religious leaders - have succeeded in bringing changes in such practices. Many sanghas have resolved not to give or take dowry. In Uttar Pradesh, women are beginning to work on issues of female foeticide and declining sex ratio.

Attending to health and nutrition concerns: Sangha women's understanding on health issues revolves primarily around reproductive and child health. Most of them have participated in health awareness, demanding and monitoring health services. In Kerala and Assam, women have succeeded in establishing sub-centres under NRHM to increase access. In Gujarat, adolescent girls are also benefiting from workshops on health issues. Herbal medicine centres in Gujarat and Jharkhand are also helping local women in dealing with everyday health issues; however such practices should be promoted with caution and opportunities should be provided to women to make an informed choice. It was observed that women's awareness/consciousness towards their own physical and mental health did not surface as an issue. Though some sangha women have been working on food security, importance given to nutrition seems to be lacking. Sangha women have started taking on new challenges, for example in Uttarakhand, where during the Mission's visit women started to discuss disability as an issue. In Kerala, sangha women are dealing with issues of destitution and rehabilitation. While Sangha women in Assam are working as ASHAs in community mobilisation, in Gujarat they were reported to monitor ASHA workers.

### 6.3 Access and control over resources

Access and control over resources (particularly economic) have always been important for women particularly from disadvantaged groups. As federations/sanghas they have been engaging in collective cultivation and fish farming by leasing gram sabha land/pond or barren land (in Jharkhand, Gujarat, Assam and UP). In Jharkhand, women are engaging with different small-scale livelihood interventions ranging from candle making, lacquer bangle-making, mushroom cultivation, embroidery, federation tent house rental, catering, soap & detergent making to production of herbal medicine, and bamboo products. In Kerala women have received training on rubber tapping, honey bee cultivation, paper bag making and masonry. Some sangha women are exploring livelihood options with individual savings or through other Government programmes. In Gujarat, sangha women are saving money through 838 groups. In Assam, there are SHGs (saving groups) within samooths that are linked to DRDA and NABARD. It is necessary to ensure that with such interventions where sanghas have SHGs (saving group) with them, the functionality of the sangha should be maintained.

Many examples of convergence initiatives were seen in the States visited, for example, Assam's work with NREGA (equal wages), interactions with the Social and Tribal Welfare Department in Kerala, Mid Day Meal in UP, MS Jharkhand and Gujarat's work with District Rural Development Agency and Fishery Department.

The flip side of women's participation in government programmes has been the increasing work load which is not commensurate with the wages and income that these women earn from their involvement in these activities. For instance, as observed in Jharkhand, the women masons reported that for the construction of one toilet which requires one day's labour for a group of 4-5 masons, they get Rs. 40 each for their work.

### 6.4 Participation in PRIs

Women have also been participating in community-based institutions and local governance in all the states (except Jharkhand where there haven't been any panchayat elections). Till date, 10,797 Sangha women have been elected to Panchayats across the states. Their engagement with PRIs has been multipronged i.e. local level action by women within the Gram Panchayat, interventions through federations and participation in panchayat elections. Before and after the elections, interfaces were organized between candidates and communities as well as EWRs are trained on basics of PRIs (Kerala and Assam). In Uttarakhand, with sangha women being selected as EWRs, Violence against Women has been included in the agenda of the panchayat and the elected sangha women address the matter. In UP, women have managed to compel existing pradhans to inform them in advance about panchayat meetings and to attend them. However, in Gujarat, despite the election of local women representatives, it was reported that in some instances they have been supplanted by influential men in the community, sometimes even their own husbands.

### 6.5 Improvement in civic amenities and environment:

Women have also been fighting for ensuring accessibility and effectiveness of basic civic amenities and other schemes/provisions, including Job Cards, BPL cards, stoves, IAY houses, PDS, road, electricity and water supply. In Gujarat, members of Mahiti Kendras help facilitate access to government benefits and schemes. As members of Van Samitis and Van Panchayats, women have also been working as guardians for preservation of natural resources and against poaching of forest produce by outsiders. In Uttarakhand they raised their collective voice against a builder who was instrumental in cutting down trees. The matter was taken up to the district

administration and the construction work was stopped to save the forest area. However this is one of the areas that need to be strengthened in order to make a larger impact on women's lives. In Kerala, under the Harithamithram programme, it was reported that Sangha women have been using organic farming techniques for sustainable agriculture and for improved health; Panchayats have recognized these women as service providers and funded them for seeds and manure.

### 6.6 Recommendations

1. Within literacy programmes, MS state programmes are encouraged to expand the notions of literacy to include health, financial and legal literacy that impact women's daily lives.
2. Women at Sangha/Federation level should be able to claim their rights (e.g. wages, nutrition, health, justice & security against violence) as individuals, while engaging with these at larger/collective levels. This is to be ensured through rights-based discussions at all levels from the Sangha to the State.
3. An orientation programme for functionaries and sangha women dealing with cases of violence needs to be organised by the SPOs. This would ensure broadening the focus to address different forms of gender discrimination and violence.
4. Sanghas'/federations' legal advocacy capacities need to be built for an effective use of RTI, DVA, SC/ST atrocities Act, Forest Control Act, NRM policies, to name a few.
5. There is an activist movement on health. All MS women are involved with it. There should be capacity-building programme at all levels to focus on health, not merely as absence of illness, but to create a healthy woman with special focus on nutrition-related issues, e.g. anaemia, malnutrition etc.

## **7. MS Leadership and Visibility**

Though not strictly a part of results framework, the Mission observed that the programme is grappling with issues of leadership and visibility. We would therefore like to mention these in some detail for the Centre and the States to consider.

The leaders of the programme need to be committed to non-negotiable principles laid out by the MS programme such as: respect for women's existing knowledge, experience and skills; collective decision making; decentralized and participatory approach; and building structures that facilitate democratic functioning. Those who abide by these principles are individuals who have social concerns and have been rooted in social movements.

It is such an individual who could provide the necessary programmatic and strategic guidance. It was observed by the Mission that state programs suffered in instances where Programme Directors are government officials holding other portfolios alongside the MS. Also it was noted by the team that the organizational culture prevalent in such contexts did not lend itself to the non-negotiable principles of MS. In one state, the team observed that, though the state and district program staff is committed to the philosophy of MS, the programme suffers and is indeed going downhill due to the State Director not taking any real interest or involvement in the programme.

Another non-negotiable principle is for the programme structures and personnel to provide a facilitative role at all levels. This is the basis for building an alternative culture for the organization. This would also require the leadership at all levels to consistently invest in the

programme with inputs imparting knowledge and regular guidance. The Mission observed that this practice followed in certain states has been a motivating factor for the Sangha and federation women developing into self-assured, vibrant collectives that are successful in playing the role of ‘dabav samooh’ (pressure groups) at the village and block levels, e.g. Uttarakhand, Assam and UP.

### 7.1 Visibility

The programme has been unique in its focus on women’s education in the larger sense, and been an effective means to mobilize and organize women enabling them to take charge of their own lives as also of their daughters’ lives. They also have made an impact on their husbands/partners and extended families.

This process had been acknowledged, respected and supported by the larger civil society in certain states where the leadership of the programme succeeded in making linkages with the broader civil society, NGOs, academicians, lawyers, writers and intellectuals who stand in support of the programme. Examples where this is prevalent include Assam, Uttarakhand and Kerala.

There is a lack of awareness among various sections of the government with regard to what MS stands for, what its objectives are, and about the nature of the programme. In several states, the team observed, MS is referred to as an NGO by state functionaries. This lack of clarity among the government departments often leads to problems like pressure being applied by the state governments to take up ‘service delivery’ for all the government programmes. This poses particular problems when comparatively well-funded programmes like SSA expect MS to deliver where they have no means or personnel.

In Uttarakhand, the visibility achieved by MS has led to political parties taking an interest in joining, directing or even attempting to take over the leadership. Where the Mahasanghas are strong, they manage to retain control in their hands while maintaining links and negotiating with the local level political forces. In Kerala this remains an issue of concern for the SPD.

Specific political contexts have helped or hindered the programme implementation. Kerala state MS programme might face problems with the presence of strong political parties interfering with their ideological positions. The support from high-level government officials has helped the programme to survive – and in the absence of support the opposite has happened.

The Mission observed that where MS was already active, the presence of Maoist movements or the separatist ethnic movements did not hinder the MS processes and on the contrary extended support to the programme. This is to qualify that these are observations and the Mission did not have time to delve into this further.

## **8 Programme Management**

8.1 Programme management across states is decentralised, participatory and flexible allowing MS to respond well to emerging challenges. The annual work plan and budget is built through a well thought out process starting with a reading of field trends, interaction with sangha women, federation plans, district plans leading up to agreed state plans.

8.2 As reported in the last JRM, the most compelling concern again remains on recruitment and retention of staff in most of the states. There are substantial vacancies at all levels. Staff

honorarium, social security, corpus funds for accidents and emergencies still remain valid concerns. With the implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission award by the Centre and the State, wage differentials between MS and other programmes such as SSA, NRHM have risen significantly. GoI shared that they have initiated a committee to look at these issues. The Mission would like to put its weight behind an early and comprehensive review and corrective measures to enable the states to fully recruit and retain their staff. As was stated in the last JRM Aide Memoire, a mid plan revision of honorarium has been done in the past (2001) and could be used as a precedent. Keeping this number of posts vacant will inevitably impede the effective management of the programme and in particular its expansion. In addition, long-term vacancies can have a demoralizing effect on the staff since programme implementation is dependent on almost half the sanctioned staff, putting an inordinate load on those in position. For example, in Gujarat, 15 out of 22 Resource Person posts are vacant.

8.3 Older MS districts have been provided a project vehicle. Later districts suffer from lack of this. Given late working hours and travel to remote villages, mobility (vehicular) support and communication support (mobile phones) is crucial for expansion as well as consolidation. Innovative solutions could be explored to make this possible. It is the same observation made in the last Aide Memoire and the Mission feels disappointed at the status quo of the issues.

8.4 Knowledge Management still remains a major issue with all the States visited. It is extremely important to capture the very rich processes and process-oriented learnings, but the Mission has observed that experiences are not being captured adequately, nor being analysed and converted into further learning for the programme at all levels. In keeping with suggested guidelines in the XI Plan document for MS (refer page 14, 3.7.2), the SRC could play a very important role. Encouraging initiatives have been seen in Assam and UP (the last JRM had highlighted AP) where SRCs are functional.

8.5 A robust MIS and updated results framework still remain unavailable at the State level. States that have been through the JRM process last year showed comparatively better data management. The Mission would like to urge the states to use participatory methods and tools to assess progress against objectives and indicators as outlined in the Results Framework. NPO can offer some lessons learnt from the SSA model. However, it should be borne in mind to maintain a balance between data management and process-oriented knowledge management. In view of limited capacity at the SPO level, information management could be outsourced.

8.6 There are suggestions from SPOs for regular, structured and strategic guidance by the NPO to state and District teams. A sense of protection and an enhanced negotiating power of the NPO vis-a-vis the State Government are wished for, as most of the MS programme operates not only in difficult areas but also in heavily pressurising/disturbed political environment.

#### 8.7 Recommendations:

1. Designing capacity-building programmes for MS office personnel, including on gender-budgeting, research methodologies, management skills and ICT. SPOs could apply for research grants to enable the state programme to carry out analytical work and knowledge management with appropriate facilitation from NPO.
2. Encouraging exposure visits of Sanghas within the state and other states for information-dissemination and mutual learning. Ensure that peer review at all levels becomes a standard element of MS reviews – including inter-state peer review.



3. The states which are not visited as part of the third JRM can send their SPDs along with the Mission members for mutual learning and analytical skills.
4. States should interpret guidelines dependant upon their needs and capacity – for example withdrawing a sahayogini after three years.
5. NPO to ensure that in lack of a NRC, some options for the resource personnel are made available. The Mission would also urge the NPO to bring in a new NRC.
6. Resource centres should be further strengthened at the block and district level to ensure sustainability of federations' work, such as access to new information, materials, etc., and to help the federations to keep growing with more in-depth, regular review/self reflection of their work. This would lead to strengthening their knowledge systems and to connect with larger state and national contexts.

## **9. Financial Management**

9.1 States have good accounting and audit arrangements. As shared by GoI, a **financial management & procurement manual from the NPO is in preparation** to help them in their capacity building.

9.2 A larger issue still to be addressed by the NPO relates to fund flow. The Mission was glad to note that based on last year's recommendation, states requests will be allowed (requisitions from 2010-11) by acceptance of a single bond for the whole year. Most of the States reported problems at present with fund flow. It was shared with the Mission that in some states many of functionaries continued to work without receiving their honorarium for months. The Mission would like to recommend that mechanisms should be put in place to ensure these incidents do not happen.

9.3 Procurement: There is not a very significant amount of procurement within the MS programme. A small sample check of procurements undertaken at the state office indicated that procurement was being undertaken in line with prescribed MS and state procurement procedures and that a clear audit trail was being maintained.

### 9.4 Recommendations:

1. NPO to take an active role in communicating and clarifying resource envelope early in the year, streamlining the budget and the funds released, as also associated processes.
2. Designing capacity-building initiatives for the accounts staff at the state and district level.
3. Find re-appropriation of funds in the revised estimate for the year 2009-10, so as to allow smooth functioning of the ongoing activities.
4. State MS programmes to undertake standardisation of accounting systems whereby they are required to follow a uniform double-entry accounting system on accrual basis.
5. Statutory compliance: Release of fund by NPO depends on compliance with all the statutory requirements by State MS programmes within the stipulated time. The SPOs must follow these without exception.
6. Quarterly review and re-appropriation of budget by states at the EC meetings is recommended.
7. Programme committed expenditures to be reported along with next year's budget.
8. The FM&P Manual to be ready for use by State MS programmes, by June 2010.

## **10 Technical Cooperation Fund**

10.1 As a part of DFID's support, funds are available under Technical Co-operation to support and facilitate the strengthening of capacities at the national and state levels. The Mission was given information on the various initiatives undertaken during the last year. Mission was happy to note that NPO had been strengthened with additional Gender & Financial expertise and administrative support.

10.2 The Mission was informed that the initial, quick capacity-building inputs for orienting/refreshing MS staff members to deepen the understanding of staff on gender and social exclusion issues in existing and new MS locations has been rendered by the Education Resource Unit (ERU). Mission has also had an opportunity to get some state feedback on the training. There was a mixed response to the usefulness and effectiveness of the trainings.

10.3 Another assignment under the TC fund – the MS Baseline Survey - was being carried out by ORG Nielsen. In addition, documenting and replicating best practices across States is also being commissioned to an independent consultant. The State Reports highlight some select practices that can be picked up for this assignment.

10.4 All of these initiatives will be jointly commissioned by DFID and GoI.

### 10.5 Recommendations:

1. NPO to revert to DFID with an update from the ERU training; sharing their own as well as State programmes' views on it, along with a future action plan.
2. In wake of capacity-building issues seen extensively in MS State programmes, the Mission would like to suggest that MHRD considers utilising the TC fund for such issues. In the last JRM, DFID had shared a draft TOR on the lines of the TCF arrangements under SSA. MHRD and DFID should revisit these to enable the states and the NPO to utilise the TC funds for capacity building issues raised in the National and State reports.
3. On query, the Mission was informed that the MoU for the proposed National Resource Centre (NRC) is not being renewed and hence all plans for the NRC in its current status are stopped. The Mission would like to strongly suggest that NPO should look for other alternatives and interim arrangements for inputs are made available.
4. Information on Baseline and the documentation work on Best Practices were not available yet. The Mission would like to ask the next JRM to look at these in more detail.

Section 3:

# STATE REPORTS

**(Section 3.1)**  
**Mahila Samakhya, Assam**  
**Joint Review Mission, 2009**  
**State Report**

**Introduction:**

The Joint Review Mission members, Ms. Niti Saxena and Ms. Biraj Laxmi Sarangi, visited AMSS from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2009 with the objective to review progress in programme implementation, particularly expansion and consolidation of the programme coverage, as well as to look at processes being adopted to achieve the objectives of Mahila Samakhya programme. The review also includes examination of issues related to SPO's and District Implementation Units' (DIUs') capacity and financial management.

The review started with a briefing from the State Project Director along with her team at the SPO about the current status of the programme, progress made after the first JRM conducted in November 2008, and various processes adopted and achievements made till date. The briefing was attended by some of the federation members and District Project Coordinators (DPCs) who apprised the team about roles, functions and issues addressed in their respective districts at federation and Sangha level. The Mission also met representatives from selected partner organizations and networks viz. UNICEF, North East Network (NEN), Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI), SSA, the Action Northeast Trust (ANT), and discussed areas of convergence and complementarities in approach. Due to time constraint the Mission could visit only one district, Sonitpur<sup>3</sup>. During the field visit, the Mission had discussions with members of Dhekhiyajuli Panchayat Sangha, Balipara block panchayat members, girls from Kishori Kanghas and Mahila Shikshan Kendra, and functionaries of DIU in Tejpur.<sup>4</sup>

The focus of the discussions with federation and Sangha women was on the processes of federations' functioning, interventions and future plans. Apart from issues such as violence against women, child marriage, trafficking of women/girls, child labour and witch hunting, the discussion also included economic issues related to access to information on marketing of products and availability of resources at village & community level. However, illiteracy and non-enrollment of girls in schools remained as the major issue of discussions. The State wrap up meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at the SPO, Guwahati. Subsequent to this, the Mission met with Mr. A. B. Mihammad Eunos, Secretary, Elementary Education, Govt. of Assam, and Chairperson of AMSS. In this meeting the Mission members shared the key issues and recommendations for AMSS.

The Mission acknowledges and extends its gratitude to the AMSS team (right from field to state level) for their support, time, open discussions and warm hospitality. It is equally important to thank the officials from Department of Elementary Education, Adult Education and representatives from partner organizations & networks for their time and valuable inputs during the discussion, and last, but not the least, all the women and girls interacting with whom (despite the language barrier!!) has been an enriching and energizing experience.

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<sup>3</sup> District was decided by the AMSS based on prior visits to other districts and maturity of the program.

<sup>4</sup> Please refer to Annex 1 for Itinerary with list of people's met

## 1. Coverage and Outreach of AMSS

AMSS initiated its work in Assam in 1996 –97 in 3 districts and in 12 years it has expanded to 12 districts. Details of its geographical coverage are given as below:

	Progress till October'08 (As per first JRM)	Progress from October'08 to Sept.09	Total progress up to the Month of Sept.09
Total Districts	10	2	12
Total Development Blocks	41	7	48
Educational Blocks	27	2	29
Panchayats	268	16	284
Total Revenue Villages	2379	420	2799
Expansion to villages through federations	102	1	103

In the initial phase of District Primary Education Programme funding, AMSS' interventions focused on districts and blocks with low female literacy rate (below 30%). With the XI Five Year Plan, the key expansion strategy has been to work in Educationally Backward Blocks (EEBs). Herein, District Information System for Education (DISE) data is taken as the base for district selection. Along with EBB criteria, there are other criteria that are taken into account while selecting new districts for expansion viz. flood ravaged areas, districts with regressive practices against women and the girl child, high dropout rate & poor attendance rate for girls in primary schools, and presence of tea/minority (Muslim) communities etc. For instance, recently added district Lakhimpur is not educationally backward but there are pockets with low female literacy rate within the district, which are also flood prone where dropout rate is much higher. AMSS has also considered reaching out to different regions - upper, lower and central Assam. While reaching out to different regions, the programme also selected districts which are in close proximity to the existing districts. Essentially, instead of selecting the district strictly by ranking them on the basis of developmental indicators viz. lowest literacy levels, human development index (HDI) and lowest EBB district, AMSS has used a combination of factors (along with EBB) for selection of districts. It is worth mentioning that as of now districts with political disturbances and or insurgency are not considered for expansion.

AMSS is covering only 10 % of villages in the State; however, with the Panchayat and cluster approach the impact is visible in these clusters of villages. While the outreach is limited in terms of geographical expansion, the work has certainly impacted the lives of thousands of women and girls in these areas. Despite the frequent floods, tough terrain and ongoing political unrest that definitely impact the implementation, AMSS has gradually expanded to reach out to women from marginalized communities (including to those in Udalgiri district that is part of BTAD<sup>5</sup>). Inter-generational expansion was also visible in the federation meetings where old sangha members were sitting with their daughters-in-law who are taking the lead now.

The impact of MS intervention can also be assessed by the ripple effect in neighbouring non-MS areas where demand has been emerging for formation of Sanghas. Presently, AMSS functionaries along with some active federation members are extending necessary support. This is where the role of stronger federations becomes more critical in terms of taking the lead in guiding the

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<sup>5</sup> Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District

ground processes in such areas instead of DIU functionaries. Keeping this objective in mind, the strong federations have been supporting in geographical expansion of the programme and so far have reached out to 103 villages & as many Sanghas.

Given the socio-economic and political situation of the State there is a need for expansion of AMSS interventions. Therefore concrete strategies should be developed for lateral expansion of the programme. It is suggested that AMSS consolidates the emerging demands and analyses the same (geographically and socially) for further expansion plans.

## 2. Programme processes in Sangha formation

Sangha, village level women's collective, is the lynchpin of the programme and through these collectives the programme has been able to reach out to 1,54,596 women across 12 districts.

	Progress till October'08(As per first JRM)	Progress from October'08 to Sepr.09	Total progress upto the Month of Sept.09
Total Sangha	2769	261	3030
Newly formed Sanghas	106	259	365
Total Sangha members	141897	12699	154596

Based on the indicators given below these sanghas are categorized into three categories –

Categories	Indicators
Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sangha meeting started but strong dependency on sohayoginy. Attendance of members in meeting fluctuates</li> <li>- Self reflection not started but sohayoginy has to initiate the discussions</li> <li>- Vision of sangha yet to clear and still reflecting the expectation of material gain</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regularity in sangha meeting increasing</li> <li>- Some rules start to set within the sangha (e.g. fix date and time of meeting)</li> <li>- Issues started to emerge in local context and information seeking started</li> <li>- Having action plan but confidence level not enough to face challenge</li> <li>- Gradually village people come to know about the group (sangha) but not about their activity</li> </ul>
Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can establish group's own existence in the village</li> <li>- Enabled to struggle independently for independence &amp; control in the spheres like socio-economic, political, health &amp; others, reflecting access and control over resources &amp; taking opportunities for development.</li> <li>- Women's and girls' education considered by sangha as its primary concern</li> <li>- Continuing the struggle with concerns of 'Right, Value, Status' in formal and informal spheres</li> <li>- Efficient network with federation</li> </ul>

*Adapted from formats shared by APMSS*

Out of the total 3030<sup>6</sup> Sanghas, 1269 are ranked as strong, 860 as medium and 680 as the weak. This categorization is done at the federation level and gets consolidated at district and State levels on monthly and quarterly basis, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> Out of these 221 are newly formed, thus have not been categorised

The rich socio-cultural composition of the State's demography is well reflected in the membership of these Sanghas. While considering programme guidelines that suggest targeting women from disadvantaged communities, AMSS does not take economic status of women as criteria for selection. The objective is to include larger number of women (better-off and poor) in order to mobilize the larger community towards change.

SC members	9.42%
ST members	25.28%
OBC	27.56%
MOBC	8.76%
Minority	19.41%
General	9.56%

According to State functionaries, this is also a step towards bringing both better off and poor women together at one platform. Number of members in a Sangha is also flexible depending upon the local context: it could have from 30 to 100 members and there could be more than one Sangha in bigger villages. As per AMSS, each Sangha goes through the cyclic learning process of education that entails identification of problems, their analysis, looking for solutions, collective decision, action and reflection. Sangha women have been working mainly on 6 broad issues viz. Education, Health, Women in Local Self Governance, Natural Resource Management, Social & Gender Equity and Economic Self Reliance.

It is interesting to note how AMSS (with support from NEN) has been able to connect the universal standards of women's human rights (provided in CEDAW) with ground realities in Assam. Despite this, the programme continues to talk about social equity and not equality. In keeping with principles of the women's treaty, AMSS should advocate for *equality* with an understanding that equality, a legal standard, is a goal to aspire towards while equity is a process of equitable distribution of resources and benefits to facilitate equality.

Sangha women have been dealing with issues of VAW (violence against women) through Nari Adalats as well as collective actions at local levels. They have been taking up cases of domestic violence, witch hunting, child marriage, child labour etc. They are monitoring to ensure quality of Mid Day Meals in schools and have also started taking up issues related to immunization and total sanitation. Sanghas are also developing their understanding on natural resources, their preservation and proper utilization. Barren lands are being used for collective farming and gardening, and public ponds have been leased out to them for fish farming. Inching towards economic self-reliance, each Sangha has a common fund with individual contribution ranging from Rs.1 to 10. The Sangha members are also part of Self Help Group programme promoted under NABARD SHG-Bank Linkage programme, and Swarna Jayanti Swa-rozgar Yojana implemented by District Rural Development Agency. Depending upon the size of the Sangha, one Sangha could have 1-5 SHGs. Accounts of Sanghas and SHGs within them are maintained separately by the members.

### **Key Issues**

- Substantial numbers of Sangha members are from SC, ST, MOBC and minority community; however this does not ensure true inclusiveness of a collective. In heterogeneous Sanghas, there is a strong possibility that women with socio-economically disadvantaged status would be unable to participate equally in Sangha processes and as a result issues impacting their community may get sidelined in the other larger agenda.
- While indicators for Sanghas' assessment are defined, and the same are linked to review and further planning, the modalities of the assessment process along with its purpose, have to be well understood by the Sanghas and federations, as also MS functionaries who facilitate the assessment process. There is a strong possibility that such an understanding varies from individual to individual, creating inconsistency in the assessment and categorization of Sanghas.

- Categorization of Sanghas is being used by the DIUs for planning and deciding upon further inputs; however, the differential planning has to be introduced.
- It is good to have planning committees on different issues; however, in view of cohesive and holistic planning, inter-linkages of these committees are to be ensured.
- Peer evaluation of Sanghas was identified as a key issue by the first JRM in order to allow external assessment and additional learning opportunities – this has not been introduced in the field as yet.

### 3. Federations

AMSS has a unique three-tier structure comprising of Sanghas, Panchayat Mahasangha (GP Federation) and block level federation.

#### Journey of Federations in Assam

- At the beginning of the X plan, federations of Mahila Sanghas were being formed in the areas where AMSS' intervention had existed for more than five years or more. Initially, federations were formed at the cluster level. The formation process was spontaneous wherein Sanghas of one cluster came together to resolve different issues (in FY 2001-2002). In the meantime, Panchayat elections were held in Assam after a long gap. In order to ensure more focus at Panchayat level as well as to address Sangha members' concern regarding long distance travel (particularly in difficult terrain), AMSS decided to change the concept of cluster to that of Panchayat level. In older areas, with the consensus of Sangha women, clusters were redesigned and transformed to Gram Panchayat. This was done with strategic planning on formation & strengthening of Gram Panchayat federation which led to the issues of formation of block federation.
- In 2003-2004, Sanghas' consolidation started at block level.
- By 2004-2005, federations were formed at block level in five districts of AMSS
- In 2006-2007, a State level convention was organized with the participation of 400 women from Sanghas and federations.

Presently there are 64,003 members in these federations. Current status of the federations' coverage is given as below.

Block	Gram Panchayat	Village	Sanghas	GP Level Federation	Block Federation
48	321	2799	3030	165	22

Of the total 22 block federations formed, 6 have been registered. 13 more block federations are in the process of registration. Two registered federations have been selected as Field NGO under National Rural Health Mission

and two have submitted proposals to AMSS for setting up MSKs. Federations are preparing component-wise profile for each Sangha in order to capture the evolution process of Sanghas from village to block level. Federations are playing an active role for strengthening the weaker Sanghas. They are supporting Sanghas in newly expanded districts to organize awareness camps which are also a platform for introducing MS philosophy. Selected members of federations are also contributing to trainings as resource persons. Some federations have taken the resolution to make their block dowry-free and a few have decided that theirs would be a 'total women literate block'. Taking the learning from Nirantar's newsletter '*Khabar Lahariya*', a few quarterly newsletters are being published at block levels and they have also organized literacy camps for women. One block federation (Kapili) in Morigaon district organized a district level *mela* to sell products woven by members to facilitate income generation for the federation.



In keeping with their mandate of providing a larger platform for Sangha women's struggle, block federations are coming together to raise their voice against VAW, unequal wages, alcoholism etc. They have also been actively involved in State-wide Right to Food Campaign wherein they demonstrated protest (in form of rallies) against irregularities in supply of PDS items. 26 Panchayat Mahasanghas organized 'Data Exhibition' at Panchayat level. Panchayat development reports were also prepared as part of this initiative and using the same these federations have started raising claims for women's entitlements to food security.

With the objective of establishing federations as democratic and sustainable institutions, processes like selection of functionaries, rotation of executive councils etc. have been put in place. The institutional processes of these federations are clearly laid out and have been discussed during the state level Sangha convention. Issue-wise planning sub-committees on education, health, legal issues and economic empowerment have been constituted to ensure effective planning at the federation level. Similar to Sanghas, the federations are also categorized as weak, medium and strong federations. For example, in Sonitpur district, of 25 Panchayat federations, 8 are strong, 15 are medium and 2 are categorized as weak Panchayat federations, and all 4 block federations are of medium categories.

AMSS has also supported construction of 130, 19 and 8 Kutir (huts) for Sanghas, Panchayat Mahasangha and block federations, respectively, on community owned land. Some of the federations have started renting out these huts for trainings & workshops – money thus collected adds to the revolving fund. Also, each member (from Sangha level) contributes Rs.1- Rs.5 to the fund.

### **Key Issues**

- Understanding of purpose and mechanics of institutional processes laid down for federation are yet to reach out to larger group. This includes the need for clearer understanding on demarcation of roles of federations and AMSS as well as withdrawal strategy, particularly in medium strength federation<sup>7</sup>.
- Major focus of the federation is on claiming entitlements which is important for sustained impact. However, criticality of strong economic base for long term sustainability can not be ignored. Thus, federations need to engage more intensively with the economic empowerment agenda.
- While both time and space need to be given for federations to reach a level of maturity for their autonomous functioning and the process cannot and should not be rushed through, some time cap should be given for federations to become autonomous.
- Given the limited availability of time and restricted exposure of members from disadvantaged communities, this would also restrict their opportunity to be in a leadership and decision-making position in the federation.
- The stronger block federations still need technical support from AMSS including support in planning, monitoring, review and networking. They require enhanced managerial and financial skills including planning, management, accounts keeping and administration to be able to function as an autonomous body at the block level.
- Federation women have tough competition with the emerging presence of local NGOs and for this they would need enhanced communication, advocacy, negotiation and documentation skills for developing strategic equations with other stakeholders.

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<sup>7</sup> With an assumption that strong federation would be categorized as strong only when such understanding has been developed in its members

#### 4. Training programmes under MS

Based on the recommendations of the first JRM (November 2008), AMSS has undertaken following training programmes:

- A series of gender training (6 nos.) was planned for MS functionaries of all level (from State upto Sahayogini level) – 4 trainings have been organized so far. Ms Runu Chakraborty, a reputed Gender Trainer, has been the key resource person.
- A state-level accounts training for DPCs and accountants has been organized and a handbook regarding accounts processes has been developed.
- Seven-day training for MSK teachers has been conducted at the level of the District Institute for Education and Training. 36 MSK teachers from 9 districts have attended the training on teaching methodologies for Maths, Science, English, EVS, life skills and gender. Teachers were also trained in activity-based and multi-grade teaching.
- Training on documentation is planned from 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in Shillong for programme functionaries.

During the last year AMSS functionaries have also attended national level trainings organized by ERU:

- 5 functionaries have attended ‘Induction Training’ held in June (in Ranchi) organized for the functionaries who have not completed one year in MS;
- 15 functionaries also attended the refresher training cum workshop for older MS staff.

Along with training of AMSS functionaries, there have been capacity-building interventions for federation members also, which are given below:

- Workshop for concretizing organizational structure of federation as well as to define the role of Sangha, Panchayat Mahasangha & block federations
- Workshop to streamline the system of information flow from Sangha to federation<sup>8</sup>
- Orientation on developing MOA as per the format given under registration act
- Training on organizational management and financial management
- Issue-wise training organized for issue-wise ‘Planning Group’ of federation
- Regular/frequent orientation organized for federation on different Acts like – RTI, DV Act etc

Steps have been taken to include gender into training modules and manuals, e.g. a gender module for voluntary instructors of Jagrity Kendra, as well as for school teachers (under NPEGEL), has been developed in collaboration with DIET and UNICEF. In the past, a training module has been developed on Child Protection in collaboration with UNICEF.

#### **Key Issues**

- There is also emerging demand for capacity building in the following areas :
  - Vocational skills training and education in MSKs, especially for older girls as they cannot be mainstreamed in schools;
  - Refresher training of volunteers of Jagrity Kendra;
  - Research methodologies (in context of SRC), programme management skills and Information Communication and Technology. These were recommended by first JRM.
- Training Material: With regards to the first JRM’s recommendations, there are areas which AMSS is yet to work upon. For instance, it is yet to enhance its training inputs on dealing

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<sup>8</sup> After the workshop the Sangha profile and component wise profiles have been developed

with cases of survivors of violence (counseling skills, addressing psychological needs of women and girls).

- Also there is need to develop gender-sensitive materials addressing gender-based problems that are specific to different communities/areas such as child marriages, witch hunting, trafficking, impact of alcoholism etc.

## 5. Participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education

AMSS has interventions like literacy camps, Jagriti Kendra (adult literacy centres), Nav Jeevan Kendra, MSK (for out of school and dropped out girls of 13 – 18 years), that have been providing educational opportunities to women and girls.

Not only have these enhanced the academic base for them, but have also provided comprehensive information on a range of extra-academic issues. Sanghas are also running Shishu Vikas Kendra (SVK) for development of +6 children and to increase their regularity & retention in primary schools. To enhance the literacy skills of Sangha women covered by the Jagriti Kendra, a set of three primers developed by Adult Education Department was being used by AMSS to enhance their learning skills in accelerated learning mode. Based on field experiences, these primers were consolidated into one that made them more accessible, easy to handle and readable. Components on gender & legal issues were also added to it. According to the Deputy Director - Adult Education, the success rates of these primers are higher than the earlier set.

Total No. Of Literacy Camps	754
Primer Base Literacy Camps	710
Non Primer Base Literacy Camps	44
Total Literate Through Literacy Camps	23760
Total No. Of Jagriti Kendras	2015
Total Literate Women Passed Outs From Jagriti Kendra	51941
Closed down Jagriti Kendra	351
NPEGEL Programme	
No. Of Dist. Under NPEGEL	3
No. Of NPEGEL Centers	55
No. Of School Covered	781 (6 blocks)
No. Of Girls Covered	20491
Mahila Shikshan Kendra (MSK)	
No. of MSKs	9
No. of students	915
No. of girls mainstreamed	479
Social Composition of Girls in MSK	
SC: 8.52% ST: 26.89% OBC: 16.39% Minority: 33.66% Others: 14.54%	

In keeping with growing demand for MSKs, three new MSKs have been opened in the last year (i.e. since the first JRM). There were several issues highlighted by the first JRM regarding MSKs viz. enhancing the budgetary head for food item (from Rs.25 per girl per day) and to increase capacity of MSK from 30 to 50 girls. While the former has been revised, the latter is a decision to be taken at the national and State level (through EC). AMSS is also implementing NPEGEL scheme in 55 clusters of 6 blocks covering 900 schools. Therein, AMSS' major intervention is to provide life-skill education, decision making, negotiation skills and how to cope with socio-psychological needs of adolescent girls. Besides this, Karate training and skills related to repairing bicycle, gas stoves & tube-wells are also given. There has been an increase in girls' participation in self defense & life skills training and talent search examination.

Education is the key agenda for the sanghas and federations. While federations are involved in running Jagrity Centres and organizing literacy camps, some Sangha women have become VEC

members, EWRs and are members of formal school-level committees formed to ensure effectiveness of the school. Besides these, even the women who are not in any formal committee have demonstrated their collective influence to improve the delivery of the educational services viz. teachers' regularity, quality of MDM etc.

Involvement of sangha in VEC	2025
No. of sangha involved in school monitoring	451
No. of sanghas involved in Mid Day Meal scheme	989

With its limited coverage, AMSS could not have changed the overall educational status of the district, but it has certainly made a niche in the non-formal educational system and has contributed to quality improvement in school service deliveries.

### Key Issues

- Irregularity & retention of women in Jagrity Kendra and sustaining their interest is a challenge for the programme. Literacy skills of the women need to be continually enhanced so that they are able to access better life opportunities. Once literate they can support building competencies of other women.
- Though AMSS and some federations are working on women's literacy through centres and literacy camps, the need for women's own literacy did not come upfront during the discussions. Instead it revolved around girls' education.
- Despite motivational discussions with parents, many girls do not get mainstreamed or drop out before completing primary education. Socially disaggregated data is available with the MS programme office, but they have not analysed dropping out trend on the basis of social categories. Such analysis would help the functionaries to define targeted strategies for particular pockets and community where lesser girls are getting mainstreamed.
- Kishori Sanghas are seen as the second generation of Sanghas. But presently more inputs need to be given to them regarding gender and life skills. This has been a constraint for the programme as there is no specific budget line for training of the girl child.

### 6. Participation in implementation of other Government programmes

Besides SSA, AMSS' participation in governmental programmes is primarily in the health sector. AMSS has tried to sensitize Sangha members on RCH issues and to collaborate with district and State level agencies and programmes like OVHA and NRHM to ensure benefits for Sangha members. Some of the initiatives are as follows:

In a Dhemaji Sangha, women managed to set up health sub-centre in a village, created awareness about malaria and ensured distribution of mosquito nets. With support from district blindness control board, the Sanghas in Kustholi and Gerua in Loharighat district organized free eye camps. In Dhubri district also they organized the Leprosy awareness programme. Now the DIUs in Goalpara and Nagaon district enjoy the status of 'mother NGO', which in itself is a big recognition of their presence and capacity to mobilize the mechanisms at local level. Apart from these, AMSS functionaries have received a number of training programmes related to RCH and are giving training to ASHAs on pregnancy test card (NISCHAY) in

Status in Assam as per NFHS			
Indicator	NFHS I	NFHS II	NFHS III
Institutional Delivery	12	18	23
Trends in vaccination coverage	19	17	32
Trends in children's nutritional status	49	36	40
Infant mortality rate	89	70	66

Nagaon and Goalpara along with HLFPPPT (Hindustan Family Planning Promotion Trust). Among the Sangha members, 1143 members are selected and working as ASHA and a few have been selected as AWW, which also is a big achievement in itself.

At advocacy level, women are also engaging with programmes and schemes like NREGA, IAY, MDM, PDS and using RTI effectively to demand more information about the implementation and beneficiaries of these and other schemes. In 2008-09 they have filed 214 applications under RTI, of which 100 have been answered. There is need to establish linkages with mechanism of PWDV Act at state and district level – if the Act is not being implemented effectively, AMSS and federations can create pressure for the same and if there are district level systems working, federation women (legal issues planning committee members) can work with the same to ensure a larger number of women benefit from the same.

Under the GoI's Sakshar Bharat Mission Plan, the Department of Adult Education has submitted proposal for enhancement of female literacy rate up to 80% by 2012 in seven districts - of these, 4 are AMSS districts. AMSS has been involved in the planning discussions regarding the same. In 2008-09, Department of Elementary Education assigned AMSS to review the Mid Day Meal in the context of increasing enrollment, attendance, dropout rates and improvement of their learning etc. The study was conducted in 9 districts, 18 blocks and in 470 schools by the Sangha women and investigators hired by AMSS. AMSS functionaries were involved in orienting the investigators and Sangha women, data analysis and report writing. The study reveals that there is need for improvement of infrastructure facility - while the poor people value the assurance of a free lunch, the middle class were least bothered about it. Since then it has become a focus for these Sanghas (who were involved with study) as they learnt more about the programme by participating in review process.

### **Key issues**

- Though the sensitization and collaboration have been initiated but these still need to go a long way. Till now, health is not figuring in the Sangha's priorities as a major agenda to pursue. The relation between ill health, malnutrition and loss of person workdays, disability and its overall impact on the life cycle has not yet been focused upon.
- The relation with social welfare programmes, supplementary nutrition and other service delivery aspects which contribute to the good health of mother and child, has not been prioritized.
- Though the women are working on the Right to Food Campaign, information regarding the provision of basic supplementary food available at the village level for children and mothers is not yet explored. While women are working on larger issues, they need to reflect upon their own lives continuously. They need to be aware about their rights and entitlements not just as a Sangha member but also as an individual. For instance, while she is participating in Right to Food campaign at Panchayat level, she should also be able to make the connection, and demand proper supply of Supplementary Nutritional Programme from the AWC for her children.
- Though Sangha women are demanding equal wages, proper payment & job cards under NREGA and are monitoring midday meals, these engagements still need more systematic and strategic approach to address the other aspects of these schemes. E.g. for NREGA to include other provisions like legal guarantee of the State to provide employment, Unemployment Allowance, provision of sheds and caretaker for children etc.

## 7. Women empowered to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families

As part of a larger collective, women certainly feel strengthened and have been part of the Sanghas despite initial pressures & resistance from their families. According to them, the programme has impacted positively their confidence level, mobility, exposure and self worth. Despite work, other responsibilities and limitation of time, they are involved in social issues impacting women as a whole. Sanghas have been dealing with issues related to violence against women locally, including domestic violence, dowry demand and harassment, witch hunting and early marriage of girls. In some federations and Sanghas, they have resolved not to take or give dowry. Begum Gul-e-noor is a Muslim woman from Dhubri district. She is an active Sangha member and for past two years has been working as ASHA also. When she lost her husband, she was told to use the title of 'Bewa' (widow) instead of Begum. She resisted and fought her way through the local community. Today she continues to be addressed as Begum – a few other women in her community have followed her. In the same district

	Progress till October'08(As per first JRM)	Progress from October'08 to Sepr.09	Total progress upto the Month of Sept.09
No. of cases settled by Nari Adalot	471	7	478
No of cases in process by Nari Adalot	88	9	97
No. of cases settled by Sangha	871	147	1018
No of cases in process by Sangha	298	72	370
No. of cases settled by Mahasangha	383	32	415
No of cases in process by Mahasangha	145	76	221

(which is a Muslim dominated area), as part of the ritual on birth of a male child, the Kazi is asked to offer to special prayers. Sangha women got together and in discussion with the community they have started inviting the Kazi to offer prayers also when girl children are born there. As a standalone, these are anecdotal incidents, but when such localized struggles assimilate together they trigger and cause major changes in practices - as in the case of Rabha tribe, where women after years of struggle, have succeeded to change the customary law related to inheritance of land to widowed women without male child.

Ensuring women's effective participation in community-based institutions and local governance, Sangha women also stood for Panchayat elections. Before and after the elections, interface was organized between candidates and communities. Out of total 586 Sangha women who contested for different seats, 323 have become EWRs.

Caste/Community wise profile of Elected Sangha women in Panchayat Election (% out of total 323 elected sangha members)					
General	ST	SC	Muslim	OBC	MOBC/Tea Community
23.53	17.96	8.05	24.77	23.22	2.48

Through SHGs they have also started saving small amounts of money; if they need they can take credit from the group at 3% as

compared to 10-15% in the market. Loans are usually taken in case of illness of family members, education of their children etc. Some Sangha women who are too poor to contribute the

prescribed Rs.20-25 in the SHG do not become member of it; however, they can still take credit from there.

The programme has surely affected the lives of these women and they need to reflect upon changes in their own life situations more critically now. They have been advocating for certain rights at larger level; however, they still need to recognize their own rights as individuals. For instance, during discussions, a member from Balipara block federation mentioned that in terms of cash and labour contribution, she would prefer contributing more towards the federation fund than to her own household as the fund was her 'own', while family earnings, land etc. belonged to her in-laws, husband and children. On one hand, the statement shows the strong bonding between this particular woman and the federation, but on the other hand, it also surfaces her unawareness towards her share in family financial and land resources. Clearly, while working with right-based approach, more information on women's human rights are to be included in the discourses at all levels.

## **8. Resource Support Systems**

AMSS has been partnering with other stakeholders from State up to Panchayat level. Being a partner of SSA, AMSS has been drawing academic support from DIETs for teachers' training, evaluations etc. In turn, the DIETs also ask AMSS to provide gender inputs to their interventions. UNICEF has extended its support in providing add-ons in NPEGEL schools, including training of girls in martial arts, sports etc. and the same has been scaled up by SSA in the State. In Sonitpur (which has high trafficking zone), AMSS has collaborated with UNICEF on the issue of child protection to create a protective environment for children. A module has been prepared for Child Protection committee and federation members, local authorities have been trained on the same. Awareness has been generated amongst community members, representatives, children and Sangha women. This intervention was initiated in 2007 and is still continuing.

In partnership with North East Network (NEN), AMSS has raised women's issues at different forums like presentation in front of Ms Saeeda Hamid, Member, Planning Commission, as well as to the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, at Delhi. NEN has also used the data available with AMSS for its research work. This partnership has been particularly helpful for AMSS in dealing with witch hunting cases in areas adjacent to the Meghalaya border where NEN partners have helped them in resolving cases. They are also taking technical support for training on developmental politics and gender budgeting, from ANT. VHAI has trained AMSS field functionaries on health issues, particularly those linked with NRHM.

Federations also look up to AMSS for networking and information resource support. The State Resource Centre is operational in the AMSS state office and research scholars from university, JNU and other organizations are using the material available here for their academic purposes. According to the team, in another two years and with more clarity from NPO, SRC will gain visibility. In the absence of any such organization working on women's empowerment, SRC can be critical in reinvigorating women's movement in the State.

The EC could be a good resource support for AMSS. However due to paucity of time, interactions are limited to quarterly meetings and sharing programme status and no academic support.

## Key Issues

- Networks see AMSS as a district-level 'legitimate' Government programme and while they draw benefits from the ground presence of AMSS, it should ensure optimal outcomes for Sangha women and how their lives are benefiting from these advocacy efforts.
- Memorandums coming out of various conventions and demonstrations have been given to ministers and senior officials, amongst others, by the federation members. But this process does not stop here. Consistent follow up needs to be done at State level by AMSS to demonstrate results of evidence-based advocacy to federation members
- State team needs clearer guidelines from NPO on SRC, its linkages with NRC and federation etc. Also they would require training on action research and process documentation to be able to run the SRC effectively.
- At district level, AMSS has the identity of a government programme. However, at State level the same programme is seen as an 'NGO' programme. It is important for AMSS to make itself visible as a Government of India programme and use this identity to work cross-sectorally with other departments at the State level on an equal footing.

## 9. Programme Management

On the basis of FYP guidelines AMSS follows strong planning and monitoring processes. The monthly meeting at district level is attended by all Sahayoginis and cluster level resource persons (CLRP) from the entire district along with DIU members and the in-charge from State office. In the meeting, the Sahayoginis and CLRPs share their problems, progress & prospects in the operational area. Accordingly, report writing, documentation and further interventions are made. These review meetings are not only for planning & documentation. Rather, they help to understand the issues and build capacities of all concerned. State Review Meeting is held once in two months and is attended by the SPD, ASPD, SRPs, Consultants, DPCs, RPs, JRPs and Accounts personnel. These meetings are organized to review activities in all districts and prepare activity plans for the Districts/State Office. At every meeting, budget and expenditure are also reviewed. It takes into account the programme philosophy as described in the national guidelines, budget provisions of GoI, human resource and suggestions of JRM and other evaluators.

At present the staff position in AMSS is as follows:

State Office/DIUs (New/Old)	Functionaries	Post filled up	Vacant Post
State office	Total:	15	2
Old Districts (9)	DPC	9	
	Total:	205	1
New districts (3)	DPC		3
	Total	19	
	Grand Total:	239	6

### Key issues

- In confirmation with the recommendations of the first JRM there is a greater need for capacity building in specialized areas like programme & management, supportive supervision, communication, differential planning and technical updates on specific areas on a regular basis.
- In absence of institutes with technical and professional courses (e.g. social work) there is a dearth of trained and qualified people, and due to non-lucrative remuneration packages, professionals are not keen to join the



programme.

- There is increasing need of social security packages for the staff working in the AMSS as they don't even have the PF contribution and just because they have registered under PF Act the staff has to pay for both employer and employee contributions.
- The work demands multiple roles from the same individual, hence demands multi-tasking with multiple skills.
- At this stage of programme implementation, more independent impact evaluations and concurrent monitoring will provide better feedback to the programme. These should include indicators beyond existing MS impact indicators, like the usage of PWDV Act, SC Act /ST Act, land ownership, malaria, ANC, immunization, use of SNP etc., to assess the greater impact of the program.

## **10. Financial Management**

As suggested by the first JRM, accountants' meet is held on monthly and/or bi-monthly basis to review financial progress and for proper utilization of funds. Executive Committee meetings are organized quarterly and are attended by the EC members including the National Programme Director. The EC is chaired by the Education Commissioner & Secretary, Government of Assam. The progress of the programme, extension of contractual engagement of functionaries, new strategies and budgets are submitted for approval. EC approves the AWP&B for each financial year and reappropriation is done according to GoI guideline. State Programme Director and State Accounts officer (SAO) are jointly empowered to sign a cheque upto Rs 3 lakhs (which was initially one lakh. DPC and District Accountant are jointly empowered to sign a cheque upto Rs 20,000/. Any Cheque amounting to more than Rs. 3 lakhs is jointly signed by the SPD, AMSS & Chairperson, AMSS. SPD submits the filled format provided by NPO along with unspent balance & projected expenditure for a specific period, besides Bond paper provided by NPO. DPC submits Utilization Certificate (UC) along with Receipt & Payment Account and projected expenditure for a particular period. External Audit is done annually through Chartered Accountant (CA) with due permission from the Chairperson, AMSS. Chartered Accountant has been engaged and the audited report is placed before EC for approval. Since there is no internal auditor, AMSS offers to CA firms (minimum three numbers) for internal audit & finally one firm has been engaged on quarterly basis. Both External & Internal Auditors check not only books of accounts but also verify the minutes book, participant register, stock book etc. They have adopted the purchase procedures with specified guideline.

### **Key issues**

- As per the first JRM review the budget allowance in MSK has been revised from Rs.25 a day for each girl for food to Rs.28, through readjustment, as the overall budget remains the same.
- As mentioned above, Auditor rotation has been ensured but no representative from other States has visited the programme for review.
- Significant paper work at state office and DIUs still creates tremendous pressure and irrespective of increase of programme line items and expansion, the human resources have remained the same till now. The NPO should design capacity-building interventions to enhance skills of State and district-level accounts persons.

Financial year	Approved budget (in Rs.)	Fund released (in Rs.)	Fund utilized (in Rs.)
2006-2007	52,199,000	35,300,000	30,883,251
2007-2008	54,533,000	35,000,000	31,446,547
2008-2009	58,347,000	34,174,000	39,599,923

- There is a difference between the approved budget for State and release from GoI and further utilization is affected due to delay in release.

Fund received in 08-2009	14 <sup>th</sup> July 08	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 09	31 <sup>st</sup> March 09
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- Due to financial uncertainty the advertisements for the two new consultants are not taking place.

## **11. Good Practices and Innovations**

### ***Data Exhibition: a unique programme of Sangha members***

The data exhibition was initiated with an objective to foster better understanding on PRI within the community, to stress the importance of data for effective planning & implementation and to ensure active participation of community in PRIs. The expected output was that community would be equipped with data and prepare Panchayat Development Report. Sanghas and panchayat federations took the leading role in data collection. Through discussions, Sangha/panchayat federation identified women to collect household data and each of them collected data from 10-14 households. Besides, one Sangha woman each took responsibility to collect data about last five years' activities of Gram Panchayat along with financial details. Sangha took overall responsibility of collecting information on public institutions. The data collected were on education, health, economy, community-based organizations, public resources, PDS, human resources etc. After collection of all the data, discussion was organized with other community members to verify the validity of data. AMSS played the role of facilitation, compilation and organization of the camp. On a particular day, as decided by the Sanghas, federation and the community, data were exhibited either in community halls and/or schools or any other public places. Representatives from various government/non-government organizations were invited to see the exhibition. Community members who were not involved in the process of data collection also came to see and forwarded their comments in a formal platform. One of the community representatives presented the Community Report in front of the government, NGO and community representatives. These reports from different federations have been sent to various government departments and PRIs for further action.

List of Gram Panchayats where data was exhibited:

<b>Name of District</b>	<b>Name of Block</b>	<b>Name of Gram Panchayat Covered</b>
Goalpara	Balijana	Dariduri, Bordamal, Kalpani Chandmari, Bodahapur
Darrang	Pashim mangoldoi	Jonaram Chouka, Rongamati, Oulachoka, Dahi, Joljoli
Sonitpur	Dhekiyajuli	Pirakata, Roumari, Gormora
Nagaon	Roha	Monipur toop, Jorabari
Dhubri	Rupshi	Sahebganj, Balijan, Dumordoh, Rupshi
	Mahamaya	Mahamaya, Barkanda
Morigaon	Bhurbandha	Salmari, Boghora, Azarbari, Dighabari, Donduwa

The account given below is from Dariduri Gram Panchayat, Goalpara district and represents the kinds of issues that were identified by the community in the district:

- Though 100% sanitation was done in the Panchayat, people are not using toilets because of shortage of water.
- In seven revenue villages, there is no electrification.
- Children of the Panchayat cannot read in the evening because of shortage of kerosene supply under Public Distribution System.
- High school students from Dariduri have to walk five kilometers to reach their school.
- Primary Health Care Center should be established in the middle of the Gram Panchayat. Doctor is irregular in the center situated in Borbhita.
- There is no telephonic arrangement in the Panchayats. Government should provide one telephone to each village of the Panchayats.
- Agriculture is the livelihood of 90% people of the Panchayat, thus proper irrigation system should be developed there.

**Impact:**

- Involvement of men in Sanghas and federations’ activities increased
- Deliberations started among community regarding existing anomalies of Gram Panchayats
- Sangha women are invited by the Samanbay Samiti in their annual general meeting
- BPL list prepared by Sangha was accepted
- Strengthened networking with Government & thereby getting benefits of schemes – NREGA, IAY, PDS etc.
- Block federation in Dhubri district decides to celebrate Information Day annually.
- Number of RTI application increased.

**12. Results Framework**

Recently introduced Result framework is seen as a planning and monitoring tool that will support AMSS in measuring their progress. It has been discussed and designed to compare the progress year wise. AMSS has taken adequate steps to discuss and prepare an update on the result framework keeping its targets and financial constraints in view.

***Key issues***

- As the program is only covering a small pocket of the block it is difficult to establish any comparison with District Information System for Education and NFHS data.
- It needs lot of debate and discussion at different levels to create an objectively achievable framework.

Narrative	Progress (September’08 to September’09)
<b>Goal</b>	
Better educated and empowered women and girls accessing their rights and opportunities equally with men and able to participate fully in public life.	

<b>Purpose</b>	
Mahila Samakhya (MS) consolidated and expanded to promote gender equality and women's empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>21</b> girls above 15 years are covered by MSK</li> <li>-Total Kishori Manch: <b>63</b></li> <li>-Adolescent girls involved: <b>1,834</b></li> <li>- Two registered federation submitted proposal to organize literacy drive of age between 15-25 (for Rabha Tribe)</li> </ul>
<b>Outputs</b>	
1. MS coverage expanded to an additional 21,000 Sanghas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-2 districts covered</li> <li>- 5 EBB covered</li> <li>- Total Sangha formed- 268.</li> <li>-Membership in <b>Sangha</b></li> <li>SC- 1,116</li> <li>ST- 3,266</li> <li>Muslim- 484</li> <li>OBC- 1,285</li> <li>MOBC- 2,234</li> <li>Others- 4,649</li> <li><b>TOTAL: 13,034</b></li> <li>- EBB covered: <b>3</b></li> <li>- 3 no. of Gender training organized for all Sahayogani/CLRP/JRP in context of present field situation</li> <li>Inviting national level trainer Ms. Runu Chakravarty.</li> <li>- Two registered block federation got the status of FNGO under NRHM.</li> <li>- Two block federations submitted proposal for implementing MSK according to their need (basically to start literacy drive and to organize leadership training)</li> </ul>
2. Raised capacity and confidence of approximately 10 lakh Sangha/federation women with increased engagement of other women community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme organized especially for tea community women (350 women participated)</li> <li>- Data exhibition organized at Gram Panchayat level: 16</li> <li>- Application under RTI: <b>51</b></li> <li>Sangha benefited through different schemes</li> <li>- <b>888</b> nos. Sangha involved in Gram Panchayat planning meetings, Women got equal pay for equal work in Dhubri.</li> <li>- <b>25</b> bighas of community land used by Sangha.</li> <li>- Total plantation: <b>1,438</b></li> </ul>
3. Mahila Sanghas enabled and actively assisting and monitoring/interfacing with all educational, health, rural employment and other relevant programmes in the villages including primary schools, Alternative and Non-formal Education Facilities etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Involvement of Sangha in VEC – <b>2025</b></li> <li>-No. of Sangha involved in school monitoring – <b>451</b></li> <li>-No. of Sanghas involved in Mid-Day-Meal scheme – <b>989</b></li> <li>-<b>4567</b> Sangha women were involved in regularization of NREGA</li> <li>- Muslim widow in Dhubri district started writing “<i>Begum</i>” after her name instead of “<i>Bewa</i>”.</li> </ul>

<p>4. Greater participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal educational programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>25</b> girls are literate through peer support</li> <li>- <b>520</b> girls were trained</li> <li>- Two MSK girls got medals in State Level Karate Competition. One silver &amp; other bronze.</li> <li>- Two girls got admission in Jawahar Nabaday Bidyalay (Morigaon)</li> <li>-<b>164</b> girls passed out from MSK &amp; secured 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> position in formal school.</li> <li>- Two block federations started six months scholarship for best girl (Dhubri District) of BPL category.</li> <li>- 702 no of boys and 793 no of girls are trained in co-educational institute.</li> <li>- One meeting organized in October'09 involving SEBA, SCERT, SSA Elementary Education Department etc.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Women empowered to improve the quality of life of themselves and their families (economic opportunities, health, political participation)</p>	<p>Women in credit linkage: <b>177 Nos.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Involvement of Sangha in “ Raijmel” (Community meeting): <b>42</b></li> <li>- 150 male member of PRI have been trained.</li> </ul>

### 13. Conclusions and Recommendations:

In the given geographical and political context, AMSS is working effectively and reaching out to women of different castes, community and religious groups. Large percentages of women and girls who are part of the programme belong to disadvantaged groups. The same inclusiveness is visible in composition of programme functionaries and is in consonance with the composition of women and girls covered by the programme. The focus of AMSS has been on overall education of women that enables them to access more opportunities and take informed decisions for improvement of their life situations. Over the years, their mode of functioning has transformed to the right-based approach. In accordance with the key issues highlighted above, the following are some recommendations by the second JRM, for consideration:

- There is a greater need of planning for consolidation of existing actions and initiatives of AMSS looking at its long term (12 years') investment in women's empowerment within the State. The programme should develop parameters and timeline taking into account the diversity of the State for different stages of maturity of Sanghas, Panchayat federations and block federations, with clear role demarcations for each of these bodies, including AMSS.
- As a larger number of federations are heading towards maturity, AMSS should invest intensively in the capacity-building of federation members, taking into consideration their sustainability within the existing competitive civil society. These would range from visioning to management, documentation, advocacy and networking skills. Simultaneously, capacity-building of the AMSS team (particularly at district level) has to be undertaken to address their enhanced technical roles emerging with maturity of federations.
- It is recommended that capacity of the existing State Resource Centre should be strengthened by providing extra human resource & equipment and upgrading the facilities, as well as by providing technical skills to relevant staff through training, exposures & other capacity building initiatives. It should also develop specialized training capacities at the SPO, DIU and

block level to provide technical resource support to other programmes for gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Given the criticality of intricate linkages of various issues impacting upon women's lives there should be effective collaboration of AMSS with other Departments such as Department of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, Rural Development, Planning and Department etc at State and district level to leverage the optimal benefits and entitlements. Such collaborations should not be limited to service delivery of relevant schemes through AMSS functionaries/federations, but should entail their involvement at planning and policy level.
- AMSS should focus on building alliance with groups and networks inside and outside Assam that have been working on related issues like witch hunting, Right to Information, land rights, NRM in order to take their ongoing efforts to another plane.
- There are growing voices from the ground regarding men's participation in the programme, but the same has to be introduced very strategically without compromising the objective of empowerment and ensuring that agency of the woman remains with her in the entire process.
- Promote good practices for evidence-based advocacy like data exhibitions, using the information collected and following up the action taken, to ensure that women involved are able to get tangible outcomes from such practices. This being a very sensitive and highly skilled tool (like social auditing), it needs to be handled more professionally and can be replicated with technical and financial support.
- Independent monitoring and evaluation, like RCT (Randomized Control Trial) can be built into the programme to provide feedback and ensure timely correction of the programme. It is suggested that this exercise should be taken up at the National level to ensure standardization.
- It is recommended that AMSS consolidates the information & data based on social categorization and analyses the same to assess participation level of women & girls at varied levels in Sanghas, federations, MSK etc. For instance, instead of data only on mainstreaming, the same has also to be juxtaposed with data on passed out girls and drop out girls from different social categories.
- Kishori Manch needs to be further strengthened to ensure active participation of all sections of adolescent girls from the community and their linkages with the Sanghas to promote the second generation leadership.
- Steps have been taken by AMSS towards enhancing understanding of functionaries on gender. However it is to be ensured that the understanding with gender analysis of social processes gets transferred across to the membership of Sanghas and Kishori Sanghas with least loss or dilution during transmission.

**(Section 3.2)**  
**Gujarat Mahila Samakhya - State Report**  
**Joint Review Mission 10-12 November 2009**

## **1. An Overview of Gujarat MS Programme**

### ***1.1 Acknowledgements***

The Mahila Samakhya (MS) Joint Review Mission (JRM) team comprising Mr Abhyuday Chowdhury, Government of India nominee, and Ms Aashti Zaidi Hai, DFID Representative, visited Gujarat from 10 November to 12 November. The support extended to the team by the functionaries of MS at national, state, district and sub district levels as well as by the partners is highly appreciated.

We especially thank the Gujarat Mahila Samakhya (MSG) State Project Consultants, Accounts Consultant and District Programme Coordinators of Surendranagar and Rajkot for facilitating our visit to the districts for an in-depth field level review. The mission thanks the SPD and his team, and district teams for their cooperation, support and hospitality.

The list of interactions, field visits to the State and the two districts are attached in Annexe 1.

### ***1.2 Background of JRM visit***

The second Joint Review Mission of the Mahila Samakhya programme in Gujarat (MSG) arrived in Ahmedabad on 10 November 2009 and visited Surendranagar and Rajkot districts. While in the field, discussions were held with District Programme Coordinators, Block Resource Persons, Cluster Resource Persons, Junior Resource Persons, Sangha members, Maha Sangha members, informal teaching staff at KGBV, KGBV learners, and the State MS team.

At the State level, briefings were held with: Mr. Rajen Rangapariya, Deputy Director of Education Department, Chairman GCERT, Chairman, State Examination Board, and in-charge State Project Director of Mahila Samakhya; all 7 District Programme Coordinators; State Programme Consultants, State Accounts Officers and Accounts Consultant. Unfortunately, a meeting could not be held with Mr. Gupta, Chairman of Gujarat MS Society and Education Secretary. Review will be substantiated with Mr Rangapariya and SPO Consultants.

### ***1.3 Coverage***

The Mahila Samakhya programme in Gujarat started in 1989 in three districts, Sabarkantha, Rajkot and Vadodara. It expanded into Banaskantha in 1994, Panchmahal and Surendranagar in 1998 and finally into Dangs in 2001. There are 38 Blocks in these 7 districts covering 2202 villages (see Figure 1.4).

### ***1.4 Expansion Strategy and Rollout***

In the last year (from the first JRM to the second), the number of MS villages have expanded from 2016 to 2202 and the number of Sanghas has increased from 1770 to 1900. The number of Mahasanghas (or Federations) has remained constant at 24. Last year's JRM made reference to an expansion plan into 2 additional districts (Narmada and Dahod). However, given certain funding and leadership constraints this did not occur. There was some initial discussion with the SPD and State Programme Consultants about expansion into Kutch and Narmada in the next financial

year<sup>9</sup>, but according to the Consultants the expansion into Kutch will require a great deal more State support because the region is unique in comparison to the other districts MS is active in.

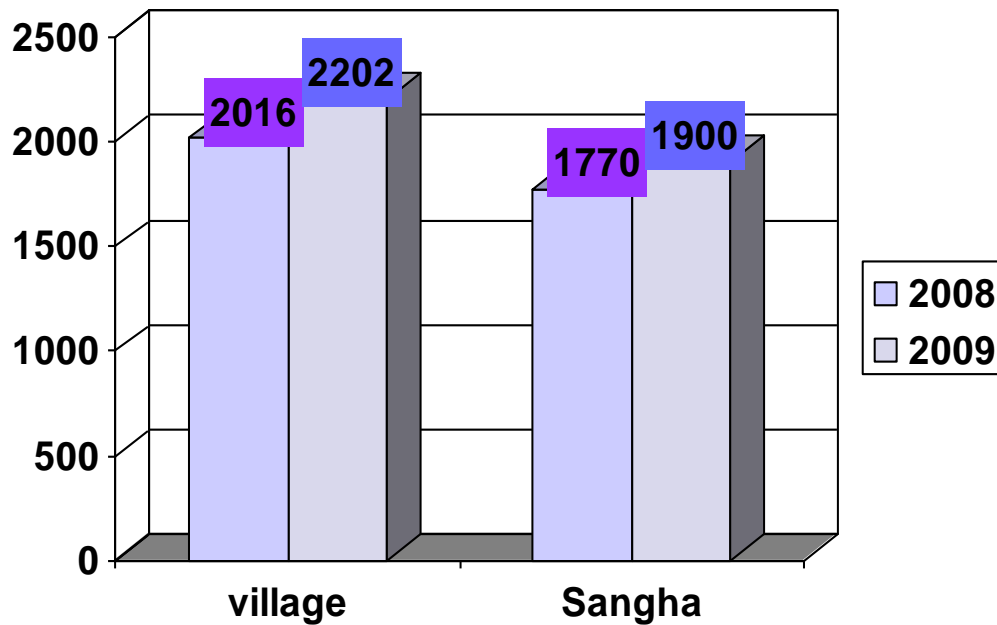


Figure 1.4: MS Expansion 2008/9

#### 1.5 Strengths of State MS programme and concerns

- Very experienced, committed and capable cadre at the state, district and sub-district level;
- Appears to be a great deal of strategic thought and planning in the activities and implementation of MS in districts;
- Strong commitment to accountability, monitoring of programme activities and documentation;
- Visibility of programme; saw a number of vernacular press clippings. According to several of the District Programme Coordinators, Mahila Samakhya has a tremendous reputation across the state. We were told that the programme as a whole is respected very highly throughout the state.
- Accounting staff throughout the program at all levels has been given to a third party provider, as per XI Plan.

#### 1.6 Key issues and recommendations

- Staffing of state, district and sub-district level is a problem. At the highest level, there is a need for a dedicated full time SPD;
- Political pressure to merge MS into the Department for Women and Child has had a demotivating effect on State Program staff;
- Gap in funding from April to September 2009 put a stop to most state, district and block level activities. As those months are when the programme is most active, this has slowed down progress in 2008/9;

<sup>9</sup> JRM team notes that Narmada does not have any blocks where the rural female literacy rate is below 30% as directed by the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan document. Kutch district has only two EBB blocks with rural female literacy rate below 30%.



- To take up with NPO for regular and timely flow of Funds;
- NPO/GoI-led negotiation for reduction of political interference.

## **2. Programme Processes in Sangha Formation/Roles**

### ***2.1 No. of sanghas***

There are a total of 1900 active Sanghas in Gujarat, 130 of which were added between November 2008 and October 2009. A total of 42,686 women are Sangha members.

### ***2.2 Observations on and nature of methodology of sangha formation and their strengthening***

Sangha formation starts by meeting the key stakeholders and leaders in a particular village: the Sarpanch, the school teacher/head teacher, the Anganwadi worker, the Asha worker to get a real sense of what the existing structures are. After this point, a baseline survey is conducted to understand the culture, the ethos, the educational participation, and the issues that are vital to that village. A rural appraisal, also known as village mapping, is also completed to provide specific reasons and/justification for entering a new village. The CRP will initially facilitate these meetings and activities sometimes accompanied by the DPC or JRP. At this stage, there is no mention of actually forming a Sangha. Rather, the focus is issue-based: Is there a problem with teacher absenteeism? Of domestic violence? Or with sanitation? The approach is to help solve these very real issues, as opposed to starting a group. In the words of the State Programme staff, “Unlike NGOs we never promise that we will provide the solutions.”

The second stage of Sangha formation is to build a process around a particular social issue and then to initiate a meeting around this. It is very much a need-based process driven by specific problems in the community. The women need to realise on their own the process of forming a collective to solve particular issues. It is only after this stage that conversations about forming Sanghas actually occur.

Once a Sangha is formed, it is categorised as being Weak, Medium, or Strong. State and District financial support and “hands-on” involvement is based on this categorisation. Strong Sanghas typically join hands with Mahasanghas, while weak Sanghas can take up to ten years to make that leap. But the determination is based almost entirely on self-evaluation and initiative. For instance, at a Sangha cluster meeting or training, Sanghas make charts to discuss their categories. The JRM team attended a meeting of a Sangha (between 5 and 7 years old) in Chotila Block, Surendranagar. According to the staff, it was considered a strong Sangha. Activities the Sangha was involved in include a Savings group, through which one sangha members financed her children’s education.

*Gauri Ben, the President of the Sangha, is an inspiration in herself. Involved in governance, sanitation and school improvement activities she had pressured the Zila Panchayat to provide funds for a girls’ school in the village after their existing school building was damaged. They are now in the process of building a six- room school building for girls in their village and a separate boys’ school. More inspiring though was her own journey: a widow and a Class 7 dropout, Gauri Ben joined the mahila Sangha 5 years ago. Now, she has not only passed her Class 10 and 12 exams and is about to start college!!*

### ***2.3 Status of sangha by perspective, training, activities, and self-confidence***

The whole approach to Sangha formation and strengthening is through the lens of gender-sensitisation. For instance, if women are unable to attend trainings because they have household responsibilities or may need to work in the fields during the agricultural season, gender is discussed in that light: Why can't you come to trainings? What household responsibilities do you have? How does your work/housework shape who you are and your identity? These kinds of issues are used in work with the Sanghas to bring awareness about gender to the discussions.

### ***2.4 Key issues and recommendations***

- Taking care in work with weak sanghas to make them strong sanghas;
- A clear road map, to take up problems of women's education in the poorest-of-poor families, must be made;
- Involvement of Sanghas in health-related activities, including nutrition;
- To use individual examples/katha/cases to garner collective support and mobilisation.

## **3. Federations**

### ***3.1 Number of Federations***

There are 24 Mahasanghas<sup>10</sup> (or federations) registered in 6 districts in Gujarat (excluding Dangs), but no new Mahasanghas have been added during the past year.

JRM Team was informed that 2 Mahasanghas are in process in Dangs district and that one district-level Federation (the 24 Mahasanghas are functioning at the Block level) is under formation (which will consolidate the Ekta and Shakti Mahasanghas) in Morbi Block, Rajkot District. It was also informed that Mahasanghas at Banaskantha have started the process of forming Federations. The JRM's understanding is that initially, the blocks shall form two Mahasanghas each and then combine to form Federations.

### ***3.2 Process of Formation of Maha Sanghas***

The federations held a total of 168 Mahasangha meetings between 2008 and 2009, known as *Karobari* meetings. JRM Team attended one such meeting in Vankaner Block where the members of two Mahasanghas were meeting to cover the following agenda items:

- a) The Maha Sangha budget 2009/10
- b) Enrolment-drive to send dropout students to school
- c) Setting up a Grain Bank

### ***3.3 Autonomous functioning of federations***

The Mahasanghas are formed into societies with their own constitution and guidelines. Each Mahasangha has an Executive Committee, consisting of 11 members including all office bearers, under the strategic guidance of MS. These appear to be operating almost entirely autonomously, receiving no support from the State office. They also have Education, Economic, Panchayati Raj, Health and Legal Committees made up of Sangha representatives. The Mahasanghas often work actively in villages where MS is not present – by conducting trainings and doing projects for government programmes or for NGOs (discussed in more detail in Section 3.5). They are

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<sup>10</sup> Note that in Gujarat, the term Mahasangha is used to describe a Block-level Federation. Based on findings from an Evaluation of Mahasanghas that was conducted in 2004, the State MS Office decided that when Mahasanghas form at the district level they will be known as Federations.

involved in third-party monitoring of programmes and are working closely with Asha and Anganwadi workers.

### ***3.4 Leadership, participation & decision-making***

As mentioned in the section above, the Mahasanghas are governed by an 11-member Executive Committee, which includes 4 office bearers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Joint secretary). These positions are decided in a participatory manner with unanimous agreement from all members. It was seen from the registration process of the Shakti Mahasangha into a Society (under the Act) that all the initial members work as agricultural labour. They are using their own skill and experience to run the meetings of the federation under the active guidance of the District Programme Coordinator.

### ***3.5 Sustainability of federations: Support from MS State Programme***

Mahasanghas appear to be functioning in a sustainable manner, not receiving financial support from the state programme office. Each Mahasangha autonomously establishes a membership fee, to be paid either by each Sangha, or by each Sangha member or a combination thereof.

Mature Sanghas in MSG receive financial support from the State MS office in the amount of Rs 500 per month for the first year, following which they receive Rs. 250 per month for an additional 2 years. After 3 years, the State MS office ceases to financially support the Sanghas. When these Sanghas join a Mahasangha, they are required to pay a membership fee to Mahasangha, which as mentioned previously can vary from Block to Block. Additionally, if Mahasangha decides to establish a further fee per member, they can do this and decide the regularity of the fee – whether on a monthly, annual or lifetime basis.

As such, when a Mahasangha is formed, it has an established Fund already available to it. Beyond this, to sustain the Mahasangha activities, they have been involved with several different kinds of contractual work with both government and NGO clients. Pratham, for example, has contracted all Mahasanghas in Gujarat, including the 2 Mahasanghas that are in-process in Dangs to assist in the collection of data for their Annual School Education Report (ASER). Each door-to-door survey that Mahasanghas complete for Pratham earns them Rs. 25. Similarly, the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) often contracts Mahasanghas to assist with various health, education and sanitation projects, including a cleanliness project, a nursery drive, and the administration of Polio drops. Several of the Mahasanghas (in Baroda and Rajkot, especially) also have contracts to provide meals to Mahila Shiksha Kendras (MSK) or to Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs). In Jasdan Block (Viranagar village), MSK was located in the premises of an esteemed local charitable trust. The mahasangha collaborated with them and as a result, they provided food through out the year to MSK girls and this is how MSG saved Rs. 3 lakhs.

### ***3.6 Issues and recommendations***

- Financial sustainability has been achieved where the programme is sustainable;
- Fund-raising activities need to be strengthened;
- Development and retention of skills continues to be an issue;
- Training and capacity building for fund-raising activities.

## **4. Training programmes under MS**

### ***4.1 Nature and types of training programmes***

For 2008/9, most training activities occurred at the Block and District level, far less at the village level and none occurred at the State level.

According to the State Programme Office, there were a total of 425 trainings conducted between November 2008 and October 2009 in all 7 districts. Up to end-September 2009, a total of 15,596 women received training through MS. Most training occurred in Rajkot and Surendranagar districts (160 and 74 respectively). Training activities varied from Bal Sakhi training, training for literacy instructors, training for the Sangha committees (health, education, panchayat, legal and economic), training for Mahasanghas in Nari Adalat and for the Executive Committee, various health, gender and literacy training for Kishoris, and capacity-building training for Saahelis.

While in the field, we heard about training for Kishoris in literacy (see Section 7.1) that was being conducted in Rajkot district for 2 days. In all the meetings we attended with Sangha and Maha Sangha members there was reference to the Nari Adalat trainings that were being conducted with the collaboration and support of a local advocate, NGO and police inspector.

There was a great deal of training material that was used to dispense knowledge around social, health and nutrition issues for Sangha and Kishori Sangha girls and women that was seen at the Rajkot office. Much of this was developed in collaboration with local NGOs and was rich in local context and culture.

Unfortunately, there did not appear to be any training for State Programme staff, District Programme Coordinators, District Resource Persons, and Cluster/Junior Resource Persons.

#### ***4.2 Gender perspective-building programmes: capacities, delivery and efficacy***

Gender perspective building appeared to be built into all the training and activities of MSG. From the formation of Sanghas around issues affecting women to the conducting of surveys to determine training needs, from the use of gender-sensitive training materials that are specific to the context of rural women in Gujarat, to the delivery of trainings (often in the evenings so more women are available to attend) - gender perspective is integrated into MSG's work.

#### ***4.3 Extent of external training resources tapped***

There is a fair amount of synergy and collaboration with NGOs. The DPCs gave several examples of trainings that they were aware of that were available for the Sangha and Maha Sangha women to participate in. In Morbi, Rajkot District, we met with members of the Nari Adalat who had attended 4-month long paralegal training through the NGO Samajik Manch and a shorter training on documentation (writing press notes, completing applications, and project proposals) through the NGO Jatha.

#### ***4.4 Internal assessments and reflections of training programmes***

Internal assessment and reflection were built into the planning process so that there was a strong feedback mechanism. This was strongest at the District level, where the DPCs and the Resource Persons kept clear records and documentation of trainings conducted, evaluations by trainer and beneficiaries, and records of learning outcomes. This information was analysed at the district level and used to feed back into upcoming training activities. The JRM members saw evidence of this in Rajkot district. At the state level, there was careful documentation of all trainings provided by district and this was used to plan future activities.

#### ***4.5 Key issues and recommendations***

- Although there is an abundance of training activities in Gujarat, there is a need for more strategic planning at the state level;
- There is a dearth of training for DPCs, Resource Persons and State-level staff; this should be strongly encouraged;

- Intra-state training and workshops are powerful vehicles to share lessons and move the programme to the next level. Again, participation by MSG staff in such trainings should be prioritised;
- Some deeper analysis of the impact of training activities needs to be conducted.

## **5. Participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education**

### ***5.1 Types of interventions and coverage***

MSG is involved in increasing the literacy of women and the participation of girls in both formal and non-formal education. While it has continued to play an active role in promoting and organising literacy camps and classes, MSG does not take a very active role in service-provision of formal and non formal education institutions – there were limited numbers of Mahila Shiksha Kendras, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, and Bal Sambhal Kendras (Bal Sakhis) in Gujarat. As mentioned to JRM team, the MS functionaries raise awareness in villages that their job is not to provide services but rather to hold service providers accountable. They have strategically withdrawn from areas where other service providers are available and have instead focussed attention on increasing the participation of girls in, monitoring and quality improvement of education. For instance, if they were previously running Mahila Shiksha Kendras, and Child Care facilities in areas where there were already KGBVs or Anganwadi centres, MSG chose to close their centres and work in collaboration with the existing KGBVs and Anganwadi programmes.

### ***5.2 Role of sanghas/federations in education issues***

The Sanghas and Maha Sanghas are active in education issues. Through their involvement with Sakshartadeep (Literacy Lamp), Pravesh Utsav and Karyakalan Utsav, the Sangha women ensure that all girls are enrolled in school. According to State Office, there are approximately 4235 Sangha women involved in Pravesh Utsav (the primary school enrolment drive) and through their efforts about 3757 girls have been enrolled in primary school.

Recognising that attendance, retention and quality continue to be issues, the sangha/members have a strategic, consistent interaction with the school teacher and/or headmaster. On finding that a particular girl is absent, the Sangha women, particularly those who are members of the Sangha Education Committee, go to the home of the absent girl and follow up with her family. They monitor the functioning of the Bal Sambhal Kendras including monitoring the quality of the food provided and organising additional resources when required. Finally, as active participants in the Mother Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Association they look into issues of educational quality, teacher attendance and attitude, and the quality of the mid-day meals. The JRM was told that the women have on occasion taken issues related to education up to the block level in cases where specific action (e.g. teacher suspension) was needed.

### ***5.3 Mahila Shiksha Kendras***

The Mahila Shiksha Kendra (MSK) programme is designed as a one-year fully-supported residential programme preparing girls to bridge the gap in their education and appear for regular school exams at the end of the school year. MSG helped those who successfully passed these exams to continue their education through Ashram Shalas or regular schools. According to MSG, in 2008/9 the girls in MSKs were put through a special programme of holistic education with an academic programme that gauged their individual capabilities and prepared them for sit for the regular school examinations. Personal grooming, improved language skills, learning to ride a bicycle, vocational training and study tours help the girls gain confidence and learn life skills. Their education also focused on learning about health, hygiene, reproductive and sex education. They also were involved in sports and cultural activities. Accordingly, in 2008/9, MSG ran 4

MSKs out of which a total of 141 girls completed the year-long programme. Of these, 121 girls sat for the entrance examination to enter Standard 8, and 118 were actually mainstreamed into formal schools. There have been no MSKs initiated in 2009/10; according to the State Consultants, this was due to the lack of funds from April–September 2009.

**5.4 Convergence mechanisms and coordination with other education programmes (e.g. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, regarding KGBV and NPEGEL)**

Currently, MSG manages 11 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) in 6 districts (excluding Dangs) which are primarily residential bridge programs for girls from the ages of 5 to 14. Of the 11, 5 are type A (able to enrol up to 100 girls) and 6 are type B (enrol up to 50 girls). These 11 programs enrolled 614 girls in 2008/9 and 804 girls to date from 165 villages. Currently, 6 of these KGBVs are located on land that has been acquired and in built-for-purpose centres, while 5 KGBVs are located in rented property while the school building is being constructed. In 2008/9, 115 girls from KGBVs had been mainstreamed into formal school.

Numbers of KGBVs		Enrolment	
		2008-09	2009-10
Type – A	5	328	437
Type – B	6	286	367
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>804</b>

*Table 5.4: Number and Enrolment in KGBV 2008-10*

The JRM team visited a built-for-purpose KGBV in Matel, Rajkot district where there were currently 68 girls enrolled in a Type-A school. At the time, there was only one teacher for all grades in the school, although MS was in the process of recruiting another teacher. With two classrooms, 6 toilets, one large dining space/kitchen, storage room, and dormitory, the school building was impressive in terms of facilities and infrastructure, although it had sustained some damage from recent rainfall. Each student was given SSA textbooks, school bag, all personal hygiene items, uniforms, individual blackboard and stationery. The students seemed happy and indicated that they enjoyed the residential program, the academics (especially learning English and Gujarati), watching TV, playing and going on study tours. While the JRM team was not able to observe teaching and learning in process, it appeared that there was some peer-learning going on. The students were divided into two groups by learning level, and it appeared that 3 older girls were helping instruct the younger girls when the teacher was in the other classroom with the other older girls.

MSG has not been involved with supporting the NPEGEL program since 2004 and more broadly there does not seem to any coordination with SSA Gujarat.

**5.5 Status of education of girls including the standard upto which they have studied, mainstreaming in higher education, vocational education, quality of education.**

This data was not made available to us by the State office.

## **5.6 Adult Education/Community Mobilisation**

MSG takes an active role in literacy-related activities across districts, including running 6-day literacy camps and following this, year-round literacy classes. They also collaborated with a Gujarat state government programme called *Shala Praveshotsav* and *Sakshartadeep*. The main government literacy programme, *Nirantar Shikshan*, is not operational right now, although several NGO literacy programmes continue. The camps and classes are built on the principles of adult literacy, whereby the women are assured that they are not ‘uneducated’ – while they cannot read or write they are educated in many other regards including agriculture, home making, etc. Another strength of the camps is that many of the materials are developed locally to reflect the local culture, customs and needs of the women.

Sanghas begin their literacy activities by first initiating a *Shikshan Survey* or literacy survey to identify the areas where the programmes are most needed. Based on a) high drop out rate, b) low literacy rate and c) high gender gap, they decide to run programmes. To raise awareness about the camps, Sangha members attend the Gram Sabha (local self governance – village meeting) to obtain the support of the local Sarpanch, conduct rallies, sing songs about literacy and perform in *nataks*, or street plays. Trained volunteers including MSK graduates, Kishoris from Kishori Sanghas (Young women/adolescent girls’ Sangha) and other educated girls from the village etc. conduct the camps.

Last year, in 4 districts, 128 literacy camps were organised at the Sangha-level in which approximately 2739 Sangha women participated. Of these women, approximately 573 women were, at the end of the camp, able to write their name, village name, names of family members and sign their name.

The camps are followed up in many instances by year-long literacy classes, which are in some cases held during the night (*Ratrishalas*) so they are more convenient for those women who are working in the field or have household responsibilities during the day. Consisting of approximately 20 women, and organised and co-ordinated jointly by the Sangha and the Cluster Resource Person, the classes are led by a trained instructor (there was a district level training for the instructors taking place while we were in Rajkot) who is paid an honorarium of Rs. 150 per month. The classes focus on functional literacy – including information on nutrition and reproductive health, financial basics as well as basic reading and writing. Of all 7 MS districts, approximately 5078 learners attended 288 classes – 2529 women are now considered as functionally literate. This was defined on three parameters: Ability to read, ability to write, and ability to do both. There was more focus in the MSG literacy programmes on the functional ability of women to read.

## **5.7 Key issues and recommendations**

- Conducting Literacy Classes regularly remained a challenge, given the Sangha women’s daily schedules and responsibilities;
- There is a significant drop out rate due to migration, agricultural seasons, etc.;
- Girls/women should be encouraged to join open universities wherever practicable;
- Tracking and follow up of girls once they pass through KGBV and/or MSK programmes;
- Making available data on girls’ participation, achievement and quality of education received; particular attention to disaggregation by SC/ST/Minority.

## **6. Participation in/implementation of other Government programmes (health related programmes/schemes, NREGA, SSA etc.)**

### ***6.1 Participation in Government Programmes***

There were several ways that MS is working to optimize women's participation in Government of India or State programmes: namely through the *Mahiti Kendras* (information centres) or more directly through the Sanghas' or Maha Sanghas' involvement in village or cluster level committees. Open several times a month from morning till evening, the Mahiti Kendras were cited as an essential service to share information and facilitate participation of women in government programmes. In addition to providing information, the Kendras liaise with the appropriate government official so that information is provided directly to beneficiaries regarding various schemes.

With a significant increase in the number of Sangha and non-Sangha women and other community members benefiting from the Kendra services, 9 new centres were added to the existing 14. Through these 23 centres, 1989 people (Sangha/Non-Sangha women/men) have utilised the services including participating in schemes such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), the Indira Gandhi Widow Pension Plan, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Indira Awas Yojana (a rural housing scheme) as well as getting information on electricity meter procedures, TB support, ration-card related processes, handpump repair, or getting name included in the BPL list. Primarily as a result of the Mahiti Kendras, 3317 Sangha and 317 non-Sangha women have benefited from NREGA.

### ***6.2 Advantages like enhancing the capabilities, job opportunities etc.***

The two presidents of the Mahiti Kendras in Morbi Block, Rajkot district, Kanta Ben and Raju Ben, said that their most important contribution to society is that they have access to information that helps other people improve their lives. They said that before they launched the *Mahiti Kendra* they used to go to various government offices in Gandhinagar to get forms or information on various schemes. They were routinely pushed around by the employees there or were made to wait for hours before being served. Tired of wasting the time they were taking away from tilling the field and other responsibilities, and of spending money on travel, they decided to open the information centre. The local government body was supportive of them, giving them access to a few rooms they could use to set up their centre. They had recently found out about the Indira Gandhi Pension Fund, eligible for women over 62 years. Having completed over 50 forms for local women, they have received verification for over 25 of them.

*Kanta Ben, the Mahiti Kendra President from Morbi Block, Rajkot District, said her greatest accomplishment was helping a poor widow access financial services – a bank loan of Rs. 50,000 with which the woman was able to buy sari materials whole sale and sell them in her village. With her earnings she is not only paying off her loans, but is supporting 5 members of her family including her son, for whom she bought an auto rickshaw. The income generated from the auto is contributed to the family.*

### ***6.3 Difficulties – financial or otherwise, pressure of work and time consumed***

Several of the women cited that although they were eligible for benefits from social programmes, such as Indira Awas Yojana, they ran into problems accessing the services. A woman in Morbi



told us that though she had been given a house through the scheme, someone in the village who exerted a great amount of power locally had taken over the property and was refusing to vacate it.

Similarly, it was found that women faced a great deal of difficulty getting payment and job cards for NREGA. In some villages, they have not received payment for more than 8 months after completion of work. In all 7 districts there was a great deal of frustration with the scheme and the women openly expressed their frustrations in both the gramsabha and to the Sarpanch.

#### **6.4 Key issues and recommendations**

- Although quite entrenched in the system, the Mahiti Kendra members still cited difficulties accessing information and forms from the various departments in the local government offices;
- Given that the Gujarat government has made all their documents, schemes and forms available on the internet, the JRM team suggested that women operating the Mahiti Kendras receive some basic computer training in using the internet to access forms online. While it would be useful for them to have a computer in the Mahiti Kendra office, in the short term it may be easier for them to use an internet café where the attendant could easily assist them in locating government documents and forms;
- Continuous coordination at Sarpanch and block level for information regarding all ongoing schemes is needed.

### **7. Women empowered to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families**

#### **7.1 Types and variety of interventions**

The women spoken to in the Sanghas, Kishori Sanghas and Mahasanghas described various social, economic, religious, caste-based issues faced by their communities. They openly discussed the proliferation of domestic violence and alcoholism as being two of the biggest social problems. In Muslim-dominated Vankaner, there was discussion of polygamy and divorce as well. In all above situations, the support of the Sangha women formally through the *Nari Adalat* (women's court), or informally, was cited as being helpful, as was the use of the Mahiti Kendras, discussed in the previous section.

*There as a gruesome case of a teacher raping and sexually assaulting one of his students in the recent past. The Nari Adalat committee members from Morbi Block, in Rajkot district, decided that this was something they would not stand for – they wrote a letter to the District Collector demanding justice. They asked him, “How will we send our girls to school? How can we trust our teachers?” While the women are yet to receive a formal response from the Collector, they have some degree of satisfaction in that the teacher has received a life sentence.*

First set up in 1998 in Vadodara district, and operational only in Maha Sangha villages, Nari Adalats consist of a core group of selected members from the legal committee of a Sangha. This group holds hearings along with representatives of village-level collectives; meeting typically twice a month (or more if necessary) at a designated time and place to deal with cases of violence against women or other personal disputes. These adalats have developed a great deal of credibility within villages, with families choosing to resolve their disputes through this mechanism. In fact, as a sign of this credibility, the police has referred 19 cases to the Nari Adalat

in the last year – and the local police officer provides his stamp of approval on the ID cards that Nari Adalat members wear.

There are now a total of 29 Nari Adalats with 9 new added in 2008/9 in Sabarkantha district (2), Rajkot (4), Surendranagar (1), Banaskantha (1) and Vadodara (1). Out of 849 cases, 249 were solved while the remaining are in process. At the village level, 657 Sangha women are members of their legal committees. Both Legal Committee and Nari Adalat members have received a great deal of training in the last year: 8 legal awareness trainings, 14 trainings for Nari Adalat Committee members, 27 trainings for Legal Committee members and 4 exposure visits.

Given the respect that the Nari Adalat system has received, the Gujarat Mahila Seva Ayog has given funding of Rs. 4.7 lac to 22 Nari Adalats for the period of April 2008-December 2009. This money is being used to assist with the processing of cases, for travel and other associated expenses, stamp paper, etc. Several Mahila Samakhya programmes from other states including Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh have visited Nari Adalats to see the system operate and several other agencies have also expressed interest in its process.

Additionally, as a result of the many initiatives supported by MSG since its inception, a cadre of Sangha women has emerged from the grassroots who are capable of working as facilitators to promote women’s empowerment. These *Saahelis* (‘friends’), identified by Mahasanghas and working primarily in Mahasangha villages, have been operating since 2005 and carry out a number of different activities as outlined in the figure below.

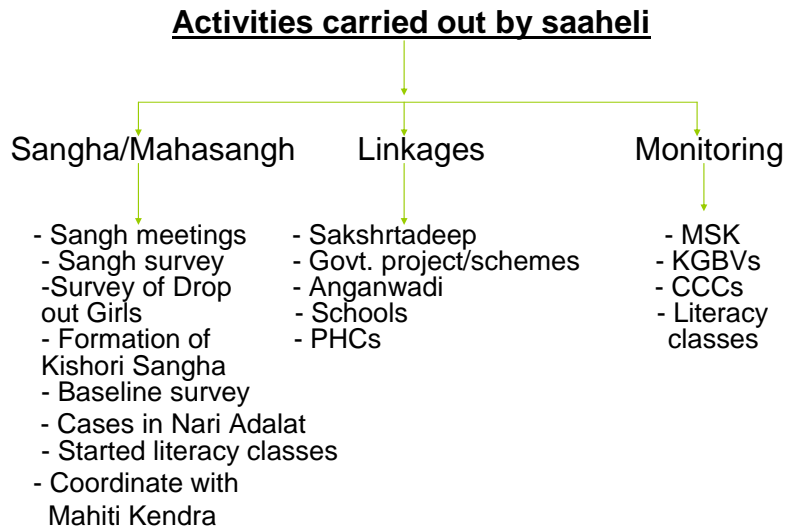


Figure 7.1: Primary Saaheli Activities

The model of using Sahayoginis was abandoned in Gujarat after 2005, after which the Cluster Resource Person stepped in to provide support to Sanghas. Responsible for 25 villages at a time, this was found to be an unsustainable model with limited impact.

Saahelis then entered the picture and they provide services to up to 5 villages at a time. 77 saahelis have been working in 313 villages in 5 (of 7) Mahila Samakhya districts. In all 5 of these districts, capacity-building trainings have been conducted for the saahelis. In 126 Mahasangha

villages of Sabarkantha district, the saahelis have been carrying out support activities independently without help of any MSG functionaries.

For the empowerment of adolescent women, MSG has the Kishori Sangha programme, which has seen a significant increase in activity in 2008/9. Currently there are 467 Kishori Sanghas with over 6974 girls. These Sanghas engage in a variety of activities including self defence, gender sensitisation, drama, summer camps, health camps, and training on capacity building. As a result of these trainings, 87 girls who had dropped out after Class 7 completed the forms to clear their Class 10 examinations. A total of 125 Kishoris have been trained in self-defence and of these, 27 kishoris have been sharing their teaching with school children at the village level as well as in KGBVs and MSKs.

Kishoris indicated an interest in getting involved in Sangha activities and have begun helping them in a variety of different ways including writing minutes for meetings, helping complete various applications, helping maintain savings accounts. As mentioned earlier, kishoris have also voluntarily assisted with the literacy camps and classes discussed in Section 4.1.

### ***7.2 Priority programmes undertaken by the State and processes used for their implementation***

Sangha women collaborate on a number of government initiatives at the local level helping to mobilise their communities and increase participation. State Project staff mentioned participation in several state initiatives ranging from Karyakalon Utsav (which focuses on girls' education), Pravesh Utsav (to drive primary school enrolments), Aarogya Karyakram (to drive primary health care) and Gunotsav (which focuses on quality education).

### ***7.3 Participation in Panchayati Raj/local self governance***

Sangha women continued to play an important role in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), or local self governance. While PRI elections were not held in 2008/9, there are 489 Sanghas in Gujarat that were elected to the position of Sarpanch, 69 Deputy Sarpanch and 2080 members of Panchayat. Additionally, 22 Sangha women were elected to District level Panchayat.

In a Chotila block Mahasangha meeting, a member of the Moti Moldi Sangha reported that one of their own members was the local Sarpanch. While she was not present at the meeting, they said that though she was initially elected because her husband was an influential community member, after becoming active in the Sangha she was empowered to make her own decisions. In her capacity as Sarpanch she had made several improvements to the village.

However, according to the State Programme Office there do appear to be some problems with the participation of women in Panchayati Raj. In several instances, although Sangha members have been elected, they have been supplanted by influential men in the community, sometimes even their own husbands.

### ***7.4 Livelihood improvement and work on health (esp. women's health, indigenous medicinal systems etc.)***

There are 838 savings groups in the Sanghas with a total of 16103 members. They have been able to save upwards of Rs. 1, 75,03,136 to date.

MSG health care programmes focus on children, adolescent girls and women. The approach has been to develop the capacity of the Sanghas and then to support the activities of the Health Committees of the Sanghas in their efforts to promote health awareness, improving the functioning of and collaboration with the existing health system, monitoring the ASHAs, providing alternate health centres (Jasood Kendras) and capacity building for midwives.

This year, as a strategy for reaching out to adolescent girls, MSG conducted Yuvati Shibir, health workshops for adolescent girls that focussed on addressing health issues relevant to their lives. Exercises such as body mapping helped the girls learn about their bodies and understand biological functions without feeling inhibited. Information regarding reproduction and reproductive health was provided through charts, posters, story books, role plays, songs and puppet shows. This year, 520 girls participated in 13 health workshops conducted by MSG.

Since 1995, MSG has been running Jasood Kendras, or natural health centres, in Baroda district. Initially, Sangha women received training in medicinal herbs and the use of local plants to treat everyday health issues. Open once a week, these centres have had several success stories that were covered in the last JRM. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the Kendras have been duplicated anywhere else in the state. State Programme staff cited the availability of certain herbs and plants only in the hilly, tribal areas of Baroda district as being an impediment to expansion.

### ***7.5 Key issues and recommendations***

- Replicating or expanding Jasood Kendras within Baroda and across all MS districts;
- Linkages between nutrition, economic activities and health need to be explored; i.e. increase women's understanding of organic farming and their knowledge of nutrition;
- Work towards increasing availability of Open University options; widen opportunities and options for Kishoris;
- Interference with women's participation in Panchayati Raj needs to be looked into;
- Examination of impact of Nari Adalat as a tool for women's empowerment is recommended;
- Convergence of Nari Adalat system as much as possible with judicial system.

## **8. Resource Support systems**

### ***8.1 Networking with NGOs, women's groups, research etc.***

Over the years, MS movement has gathered momentum to include increasing number of women in villages. In order to strengthen the movement, the Rajkot DIU office has on many occasions joined hands with other NGOs or Women's group to participate in common training/awareness/programmes. We were shown records of participation involving the following NGOs:

- Anandi, a women's NGO
- Naujiban Trust, focused on HIV/AIDS
- State level paralegal training for Nari Adalat with other NGOs
- Samajik Nyaya Kendra -- NGO
- Documentation -- Charkha NGO

Role of State Resource Centre in supporting MS was not observed to be on a visible scale.

### ***8.2 Role of NRG and EC members as support group***

We could not find any active involvement of NRG participation till 40<sup>th</sup> meeting on 23.5.09. Ms Nishi Mehrotra attended the meeting and recorded to advise MS Gujarat representatives to visit Andhra Pradesh to gain experience on the problems associated with strategic withdrawals. This was discussed at the meeting with reference to the withdrawal of Dahod block from MSG.

MS Gujarat held only two meetings during 08-09 instead of 04 which is the statutory requirement at the minimum. Less meetings by MS Gujarat has resulted in less interaction on relevant issues among the EC members.

### 8.3 Key issues and recommendations

- Meetings of EC to be held as per Act at the minimum;
- All members of EC to attend meeting regularly;
- Lack of physical space for the SPO limits its ability to act as resource;
- Role of State Resource Centre needs articulation and strengthening;
- State-level coordination to be activated without any delay;
- EC has to take a proactive role in supporting the implementation of the MS programme.

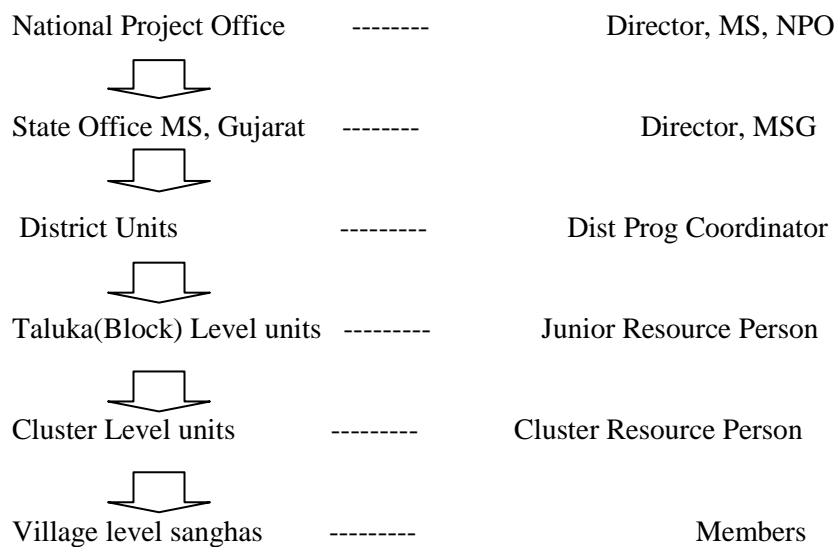
## 9. Programme Management

### 9.1 Participatory Management Systems

The philosophy and principles of MS call for decentralized management structures in participation, decision making and devolution of powers and responsibility to district, block and village levels.

In this regard, formation of sanghas with the help of Sahayoginis starts the process of participatory management, where the sanghas formed evolve their own strategy to face challenges at the village level. The members with experience and lessons learnt during sangha-formation become resource persons for sanghas and mahasanghas at Block level.

The administrative structure of programme management of MSG is shown below:



The Executive Committee is the highest policy making body at the state level.

The district level activities are planned and discussed at the monthly meetings of the District Implementation Unit (DIU). The DIUs are responsible for: a) preparation of budget, b) review of activities of sanghas, c) programme planning and programme-related coordination, d) administration, e) networking with Mahasanghas, other NGOs etc.

### ***9.2 System for recruitment of staff, adequacy of staff, capability and efficiency of staff (including budget and accounting staff), and turnover***

MS state recruits staff for SPO, DPC, DRP, JRP, SPO consultants, DEO and assistants at all levels. CRP is recruited at Block level. SPD is recruited by the EC, as per the recommendations of a Selection Committee comprising GoI representatives, NRG and EC Chairperson. There is understaffing at levels of CRP, JRP and DRPs. Currently there are to be 22 Resource Persons at the District level, but 15 of these positions lie vacant. CRPs are working in 25 or more villages and are finding it very difficult to manage the long hours and travel required for this. As a result, turnover is very high with the CRPs and they frequently get poached by local NGOs offering them higher remuneration.

The recruited staffs have shown adequate capability in their work during 2008-09.

Despite the reported high turn over of CRP, JRP and DRP, a JRP at mahasangha sabha in Rajkot district (which we attended on 12 November) stated specifically that it is not money but the objectives of the MS that have inspired her to continue work with the Mahasangha. There are 22 sanctioned posts for District Resource Persons. At present, there are only 7 filled positions, leaving 15 unfilled positions.

Motivation is being used as a retaining factor by the respective DPCs for reducing the turnover of dedicated members.

### ***9.3 Annual Work Plan and Budget formulation and tracking systems***

The work of AWP&B starts at the grassroots-level as stated elsewhere in the report. Sangha plans are made after a need-based assessment conducted by the CRP, which then get collated and filtered up to the State Programme Office via the DIU. The tracking of activities and the expenses associated with them is generally done by the respective DPCs and old members of the sanghas. Old JRPs also help to monitor the CRPs for tracking the activities already taken up but delayed due to unavoidable reasons.

Monthly meetings are held every month at Block level to monitor the progress of various activities of Mahasanghas.

There are General Committee and Finance committee at SPO-level for procurement purpose.

### ***9.4 Key issues and recommendations***

- The retention of skilled persons;
- Formation of Federations at block and District level.

## **10. Financial Management**

During FY 08-09, MS Gujarat had a budget of Rs. 342.93 lakhs (passed at EC meeting dated 23.5.2008). Fund released during 08-09 to the districts was Rs. 165.28 lakhs. Expenditure booked (as per unaudited accounts) was Rs. 205.69 lakhs. From the following table it is observed that the fund was utilized for:

**Old Districts**

	Budget	expenditure	Fund released + Op. bal.	1.4.08
Management cost	88.02	77.35		
Programme cost	254.80	128.34		
	342.82	205.69	165.28	34.64
<b>New Districts</b>				
Management cost		0		
Programme cost		0		

MS received funds from two other state programmes - SSA and Gujarati Mahila Seva Ayog. Separate bank account for each such programme may be maintained for better fund management of MS activities.

**A flow chart showing the fund flow is shown below:**

MS Delhi (GOI) ----- MS Gujarat (Society) ----- MS Districts(Groups) -----  
Disbursement for the activities.

**A flow chart showing expenditure reporting is shown below:**

Sanghas ----- MS District ----- MS Gujarat ----- MS Delhi(GoI) -----  
Reimbursement (DFID).

MSG holds a monthly meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup>, where all proposals of expenditure are tabled for approval by the MS Gujarat. The meeting is attended by DPC, RP, JRP, CRP, Assistant, Accountants at the SPO of MS.

The proposals of expenditure thus approved are released on the next day.

MSG got its accounts audited for the year 07-08. The financial statements for the FY 08-09 are yet to be audited. The process of appointment of statutory auditor was completed only on 28.10.09 and the job, we were told, shall begin very soon.

The society has also not submitted its Annual return for 08-09 to the Registrar under the societies act till date. The Annual Report has to be submitted to the concerned authority within 30.9.09. I Tax return for FY 08-09 (AY 09-10) is also held up for this reason. Annual report of 07-08 is yet to be published though the compilation work has been completed.

During 08-09, MSG followed its own “delegation of financial powers (draft)”, which contained:

- Delegation of financial powers.
- Travelling allowance rules.
- Leave rules.
- Appointment procedures.

The 'draft' was amended on 11.12.08 for revision of TA/DA rates for MS staff. The draft is also used as a procurement manual for making purchases, by MS.

MSG has constituted a finance committee headed by SPD which decides on procurement of goods and services as per financial powers stated in the 'draft' rules.

Both at the state and in the districts, the accounts are maintained on computers with Tally financial software. They are consolidated at the SPO for audit purpose. MSG conducts an internal audit every year through an external CA firm. Internal audit report for 08-09 has already been completed for MSG and MS districts (7 nos) as well.

The accounting work at SPO and DIU level have been fully outsourced to accounting consultants with relevant experience.

Funds were released twice during 2008-09 by GoI. It takes 45 to 65 days from the date of the claim by MS Gujarat. After receipt of funds, the SPO disburses them as per proposal of expenditure submitted by different districts (DIUs). Following is the monthly release of fund during 2008-09:

**Release of Funds, in Rupees, Lacs 2008/09**

April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
3	10	3	61	4	.03	3	6.25	16	30	0	19

**Total 165.28**

*Delay in release of fund:*

It was also observed that the MS Gujarat could not carry on its normal activities during April 09 to Sept 09 due to delayed release of funds by GoI. The lack of fund resulted in closure of MSKs for six months.

*Issues and Recommendations*

- Availability of fund in time.
- Preparation of Budget in time.
- Activities to conform to the priorities envisaged in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan document.
- Control over advance payments.
- Transparency in procurement procedures.
- Accounting transparency.
- Accounting of funds from more than one fund providers.

In order to make MS more transparent and accountable to its staff, stakeholders, funders and Government, development and implementation of procedures supported by a comprehensive accounting and procurement manual is essential. The present draft manual needs to be revised in its form and content to include the following:

1. Defining responsibility centres for receipt of fund of MS.
2. Accountability.
3. Cost consciousness at operative and strategic levels.
4. Transparency in procurement.
5. Consistency.
6. Legal/statutory matters.
7. Audit.



The manual shall help MS staff to take informed decision/judgement, on any economic activity of MS. This shall build up an atmosphere of trust and respect among all stakeholders as well as with the general public.

## **11. Conclusion**

### ***11.1 Summary of Key Issues in the State MS programme***

#### **LEADERSHIP**

- There is a gap in the ability of the State Programme Office to take a leadership and advisory role. The current SPD is engaged with 2 charges including that of the Chairman of GCERT, Chairman of Gujarat State Examination Board, and Mahila Samakhya SPD is an additional charge. He candidly admits that while he has every intention of visiting the districts to support the implementation and activities of MS, he has been unable to do so thus far. To a great extent, he relies on his staff and that of the District Programme Coordinators to sustain the programme.
- The State Project staff, although extremely experienced and competent in running the programme, are unable to get the leadership, strategic advice, direction and motivation they require for MSG to go to the next level. They often turn to the MS SPDs from other states including Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand to get guidance.
- There has been a great deal of turnover with the SPDs in the last few years. Recruitment for a full time SPD has been ongoing for the last 3 months. At the time of the field visit, an offer had been made to the current SSA Gender Officer and the SPD in-charge was awaiting confirmation.
- Lack of regular meetings of EC; in the financial year 2008/9 there were only 2 meetings rather than the quarterly meetings that are required.
- Lack of State Resource Centre
- Non-involvement of NRG; conscious effort to involve them at all stages must be made, especially for the EC meetings
- Visionary and strategic guidance from National Project Office

#### **STAFFING**

- Staff retention and turnover continues to be high at the CRP and JRP level. There is a great demand to hire these highly qualified individuals by NGOs who often are able to offer them a larger salary. In tribal or hilly areas, there is a particular problem recruiting and retaining staff due to travel times, lack of transport facilities and the existing honorarium structure.
- There continues to be a problem with staffing in MSG, with complaints of difficulties in finding trained, dedicated and experienced staff. With the turnover of Balmitras (KGBV teachers), CRPs have often been playing a double role.

## **EXPANSION AND SUSTAINABILITY**

- Delay in expansion into 2 new districts: Last year's JRM discussed expansion into Narmada and Dahod. This did not happen, and according to the SPO, now there is discussion of moving into Narmada and Kutch. Narmada does not have any blocks where the rural female literacy rate is below 30% as directed by the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan document. Kutch district has only two EBB blocks with rural female literacy rate below 30%.
- Long term sustainability of Federations; role clarity and financial sustainability.
- Have been unable to organise attend any state-level or intra-state trainings; difficulty securing permissions to organise space, pay for TA/DA, meals and other expenses.
- Issues with convergence with national schemes such as NREGA.

## **POLITICAL ISSUES**

- Some mention was made of political interference by the State Department of Women and Child Development. The Department has initiated a process to merge MS in to the W&CD department with the understanding that the aims, objectives and processes of the MS programme and the programmes at W&CD are similar.

## **FUNDING**

- Fund availability – funds arrive only irregularly from GoI – lack of clarity about funding availability.
- Publication of 2007/8 Annual Report delayed till date; Annual report of 2008/9 still pending.
- There was a funding gap between April and September 2009 where there was a delay in securing funding from GoI due to a procedural issue (not getting clearance from the EC prior to submission of budget). Due to this, all staff were working without pay and travel allowance and were unable to carry out many state, district and block level activities. In several instances, they had to borrow funds from Mahasanghas which they repaid once the state funds were received.
- Again, because of funding, no new KGBVs were launched. Girls that were supposed to start in new KGBVs were asked to join existing programmes, though in some cases distance to the village was quite far.

### ***11.2 Summary of Recommendations***

- State Programme office strongly recommended the hiring of a female SPD. The issue of need to hire a non-government person needs to be looked into.
- For staffing issues at level of JRP/CRP/RP, recruiting local persons is seen as a solution but one that involves lowering the qualification standards.
- Reviewing the present honorarium structure is recommended.
- More strategic involvement, direction and guidance from NPO and NRG.
- Review of MSG's financial and procurement systems is recommended.
- More focus on the results framework and on strengthening data, especially disaggregated data on SC/ST and minority participation in MSG's work.

**Annex 1****Tentative JRM Schedule of field visit in MSG**

November, 2009

<b>Date</b>	<b>Districts</b>	<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Time</b>
10-Nov	State office, Ahmedabad	Schematic briefings	10-30 a.m. to 11-30 a.m.
	Surendrangar	Meetings with district programme co-ordinators and visit to travel	2-00 p.m. onwards...
		Sangha meeting	5.30 p.m. onwards
11-Nov	Rajkot	Meeting with Mahasangha in Vankaner block	11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
		Visit to Information centre in Morbi Block	3 p.m. to 4 p.m.
		Kishori Sangha Cluster Meeting in Morbi Block	4.15 p.m. onwards...
		Back to Ahmedabad	
12-Nov	State office, Ahmedabad	State Report Writing	
13-Nov	Gandhinagar	Meeting with State Education Secretary - cancelled	

**(Section 3.3)**  
**Jharkhand Mahila Samakhya**  
**Joint Review Mission, 2009**  
**Draft Report**

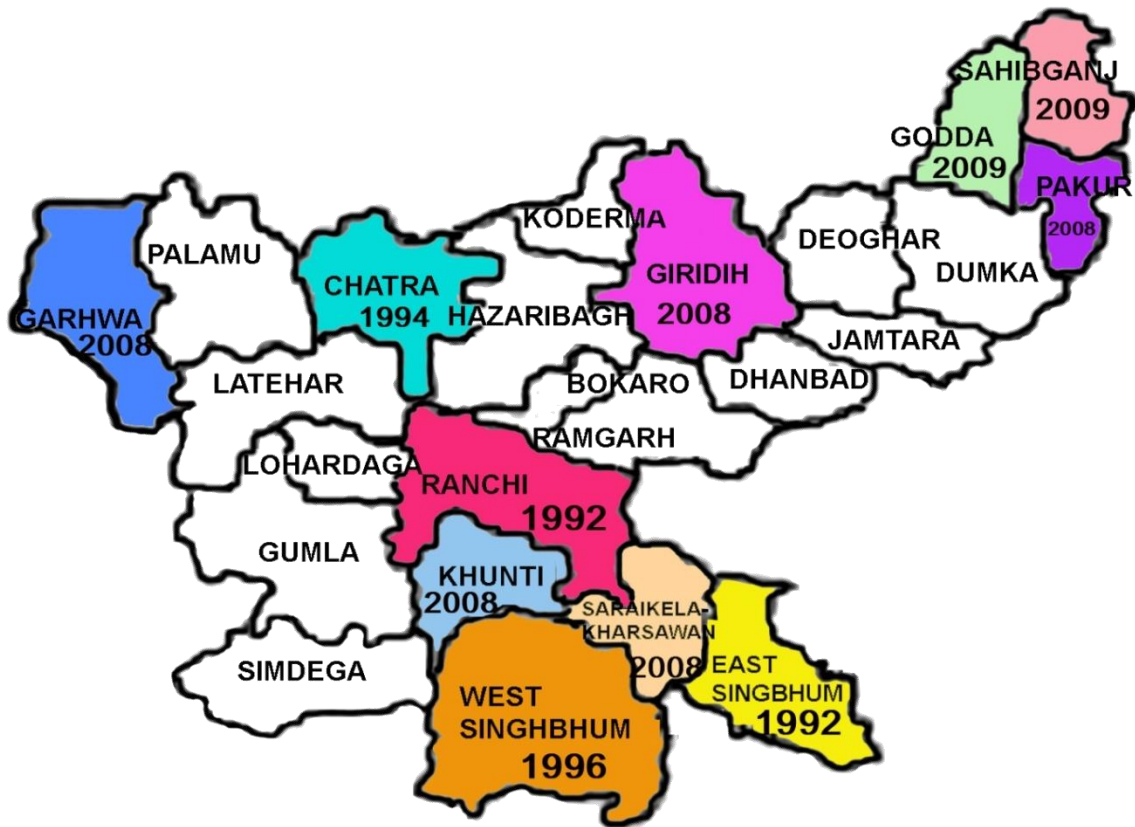
**I. An Overview of Jharkhand Mahila Samakhya**

Structure of the field visits of Joint Review Mission

The three day field visit (10-13 November 2009) to Jharkhand Mahila Samakhya included mainly interactions with JMSS functionaries (State and district offices, federations and Samoohas), and observation of activities and interaction with stakeholders of federations in Ranchi district. Field visits also covered Mahila Shikshan Kendra, and economic activities of JMSS. Besides, the observations of the Joint Review Mission were shared with the Principal Secretary, Department of Education. Annexure 1 provides details of the activities covered and people interacted with during the JRM.

Socio political context of JMS

Jharkhand became a new State from 2000. The State has a distinct demographic profile consisting of several tribes and an important segment of Scheduled Caste communities. It is also characterized by low literacy and poverty. It is a developmentally-challenged State with political instability and poor governance systems at all levels. It is perhaps the only State which has not had Panchayati Raj Institutions' elections till date. Large part of the State has Naxal influence. Issues of migration, natural resource exploitation, trafficking, poor health and nutritional status and oppressive caste system in almost all parts of the State are a matter of concern in Jharkhand. Struggle for women's empowerment led by JMS is located in the above socio-political context of the State. Annexure- 2 provides details of issues of concern in JMSS' operational area. These areas need to be included in prioritization for MS interventions.



Social composition of JMSS’ work

JMSS works in 11 out of 24 districts in the state, covering 71 blocks and 4098 villages through 8255 Samoohas. JMSS is present in 13% of the total villages and 32% of the blocks in the State.

Samoohas, including those under federations, cover altogether 126,728 women. Sample data on the social composition of members of Samoohas reveals that tribals constitute 46.34% of total members, followed by 31.58% of OBC members and 14.73% of SC members. 6 districts have predominantly tribal members ranging between 50.1% in Singhbhum and 97.74% in Khunti. OBCs, the second largest community, are found in four districts (from 30.94% in Giridih to 51.91% in Chatra). Scheduled Castes, the third largest community, is found in three districts (from 27.41% in Chatra to 42.42% in Garhwa). Minorities forming 3.60% of total Samooha members have significant presence in Pakur (22.16%), Giridih (15.10%) and Ranchi (8.12%).

Most Samoohas are homogeneous, comprised of members belonging to a particular tribe or caste in the village, with high potential of social capital. On an average, there are two Samoohas per village having members of a particular habitation or social group in the village. However, there are also Samoohas with mixed social composition in Ranchi and in most blocks in Pakur & Giridih districts. Membership details of the non-federation Samoohas by social composition is furnished in the Table as follows:

**Table 1: Membership by social composition in samoohas of JMS**

Sl. No	District	No. of Samooh	Samooha Women					Total	% of ST to Total members	% of SC to Total members	% of OBC to Total members	% of Minority to Total members
			ST	SC	OBC	Gen.	Minority					
1	Ranchi	397	4744	451	830	40	536	6601	<b>71.87</b>	6.83	12.57	8.12
2	Chatra	1603	1246	5298	10033	1634	1115	19326	6.45	<b>27.41</b>	<b>51.91</b>	5.77
3	Khunti	177	2378	0	18	10	27	2433	<b>97.74</b>	0.00	0.74	1.11
4	East Singhbhum	840	6658	1513	4703	334	82	13290	<b>50.10</b>	11.38	<b>35.39</b>	0.62
5	West Singhbhum	475	6613	270	1195	0	0	8078	<b>81.86</b>	3.34	14.79	0.00
6	Pakur	50	458	11	49	9	150	677	<b>67.65</b>	1.62	7.24	<b>22.16</b>
7	Garhwa	103	263	462	350	14	0	1089	24.15	<b>42.42</b>	<b>32.14</b>	0.00
8	Giridih	55	153	247	254	43	124	821	18.64	<b>30.09</b>	<b>30.94</b>	15.10
9	Saraikela-Kharsawan	226	3700	82	431	38	1	4252	<b>87.02</b>	1.93	10.14	0.02
	Total	3926	26213	8334	17863	2122	2035	56567	46.34	14.73	31.58	3.60
			46.34	14.73	31.58	3.75	3.60	100.00				

Coverage & expansion

The story of MS coverage and expansion in Jharkhand has been uneven and in spurts. Growth of JMSS is intertwined with the broader political shifts and turns taking place on the socio-political map of Jharkhand. This has resulted in shifting focus and competing pulls and pressures on the JMS programme.

MS Jharkhand has three phases of expansion and shifts in focus:

Phase I (1992 to 2000)

- 1992 to 2000: It was part of Bihar Education Programme,
- 1992-93: Started with 2 districts in East Singhbhum and Ranchi
- 1994: Chatra district was added
- 1995: West Singhbhum district was added
- MS programme with 4 districts continued till 2007

Phase II (2001 to 2006)

After Jharkhand was carved out as a separate state from Bihar in 2000, JMS was part of SSA from 2001 to 2006. From 2000 to 2003 there was little guidance provided to MS from SSA or GoI. In this phase, Jamshedpur Jagjagi and other activities were closed down, NPEGEL was a major activity and all MS districts had EEC, bridge schools and Bal Jagjagi. Samoohas became weak with only secondary importance given to non-SSA activity. It was also a phase

of rapid expansion thrust upon JMS for expanding the SSA activities (running NPEGEL programme and monitoring of KGBV) in 3308 more villages without additional staff. It was a phase of high turnover of Sahayoginis because of relocation to new blocks, reduced (from Rs. 2500 to 1500) and delayed payment of honorarium. Visibility and credibility of JMS was drastically affected which raised doubts about its existence in Jharkhand.

#### Phase III (2007 onwards)

JMS gained autonomous identity with its registration as a Society, as well as appointment of State Programme Director. MS activity was revived in old blocks as well as new blocks and districts were covered under GoI-DFID support in XI Plan. JMS coverage expanded to 11 districts (5 in 2008, and 2 more in 2009). Bifurcation of districts (Khunti from Ranchi & Saraikela from West Singhbhum) took place in 2007 & 2008. This also changed programme management and structure of JMS, as well as affected coordination. Coordination from parent district was affected; the money to set up new district programme management structures came much later which put pressure on the parent District Implementation Unit. New blocks were only added in 2008 after receiving funds from XI Plan under GoI- DFID collaboration.

#### Expansion & Roll out

It is important to note that expansion, till 2007, was more in terms of districts and less in the coverage of Samooahas. It has been a period of revival from June 2007 to March 2008. Rapid expansion from 2008 to September 2009 with two districts and nine blocks in short time has increased pressure on JMS. From 2009, JMSS adopted the strategy of staggered expansion to ensure effective consolidation and providing enough space for Samooaha building processes - instead of covering all the 250 villages per district as per the XI Plan target in one go. Targets are rescheduled under which 25 villages each, instead of 100 villages, have been covered in two new blocks.

**Table 2: Expansion and coverage**

Particulars	2006 - 07	2007 - 08	2008 - 09	2009 April to September	Total
Districts	5	5	9	2	11
Blocks	62	62	62	9	71
Villages		3308	3998	100	4098

Thrust on expansion is observed to have impacted process-oriented approach of MS, and increased pressure on the MS team at all levels. Target-based approach is pushing Samooaha formation as well as federation process into fast-track without time and space for its evolution and maturity. Rationale for additional districts with small number of villages needs examination from 'consolidation vs. expansion' angle.

#### Strengths of MS Jharkhand:

- Strong foundation which was laid in the beginning, and has led to acceptance of MS team and MS philosophy by the women and local communities;
- Continuity of MS team at various levels, and Sangha work despite the 'breaks' between 2000 and 2007;
- Acceptance and respect from the government agencies;
- JMSS is seen as one of the very few credible large scale women's organizations in the state;

- It has a strong and big cadre of local women as development activists in the village communities.

## **II. Programme processes in Samooha formation**

Samoochas are the nucleus and identity of all MS activities in Jharkhand. The Samooha remains the medium of awareness and organization of women. There is a strong sense of belongingness & confidence among the Samooha members. The power and awareness of being united as a collective with a common history of gender-based exploitation and exclusion and realizing women's agency binds the Samooha together. Sharing personal histories of subjugation, voicelessness, denial and violence in a collective space gives Samooha members the opportunity to engage in a common cause to fight against gender inequality.

The Samooha - in terms of numerical strength - comprises of 10 to 20 members. Members seek exposure to information, knowledge and gender analysis which was denied to them earlier. The focus of the Samooha is providing awareness about government programmes and accessing these.

JMS has an impressive record of Samooha formation (8255 Samoohas in 4098 villages of 62+9 newly carved blocks in 11 districts). There is rapid expansion of Samooha formation since 2008-09 (2752 Samoohas).

Samoochas are providing awareness and improving capacities of the members to access welfare programmes and schemes. Participation of the Samoochas in these activities is yet to grow into demand for policy changes and seeking removal of structural constraints for women's empowerment (e.g. to demand improvement of schools in tune with the growing enrollment rates and upgradation of schools from the elementary level for absorption of girls into high schools). Samoochas are engaged in NREGA for wage employment but not playing active role in designing of NREGA activities that improve the resource base of vulnerable households. In a tribal State like Jharkhand, gender issues in forest management, drought mitigation, migration etc are critical to the vulnerability of tribal women and need to be addressed in Samooha processes.

Samoochas also lack adequate perspective and capacities to challenge and demand gender-sensitive implementation of laws, policies and programmes (e.g., corruption in NREGA, application of RTI Act to demand accountability of public services for women and girls, quality education in schools, improving standard of services of PHCs - like MS has led to more women being selected as Sahiyas and improved institutional deliveries but their role has not extended to challenge malpractices in services of SJSY).

### Key Issues

- Samooha-formation process in new areas has to contend with growing influence of thrift & credit and micro-finance programmes by the government & NGOs. Samooha members and Sahayoginis are seen as soft targets for implementation of government service-delivery at the village level without due considerations of adequate remuneration & autonomy. There is pressure on the Samooha member/sahayogini to compromise her role as a social change agent for women's empowerment and gender equality, and is being seen instead as a good worker for delivery of the government development programmes for children, women and girls in the rural communities. Samoochas have to contend with emerging challenges from the larger socio-political and economical forces around them which make them vulnerable to de-stability, co-option, shifting the focus from women's empowerment;



- Need for federations and Samoohas to shift gears to address strategic gender interests and social change.

### Recommendations

- Criteria for Samooha formation may also include factors such as female-headed families, health, migration, drought-prone area, trafficking, importance of forests, ethnicity;
- Older Samoohas to move into the role of undertaking strategic gender interests;
- Stronger advocacy role for them to demand, push and negotiate with the systems to respond to protect women's and girls' human rights.

### **III. Federations**

Federation of village Samoohas is the women's collective institution at block level. Federations are critical to JMS as they are the longer lasting institutions of women's mobilisation and empowerment vehicles which are self driven and based on their own resources. Federations are legal entities with complete structure of their own indicating the Samooha-building process reaching the stage of being on their own. Strong federations are planned to replace MS presence, with the latter phasing out its programme support in the block. Federations as institutions rooted in the women's groups are envisaged to reflect members' aspirations along with local wisdom in challenging effectively the locale-specific structural constraints. Diverse socio-cultural context of the tribal communities adds immense significance to the emergence of federations from Samooha-building process.

#### Process of federation formation

Federations are in varied stages of functioning as autonomous bodies. Federation process is in progress, grading of Samoohas is being done by the federations in their respective blocks and strengthening of the groups is planned. Federations are improving their financial viability by creating their own funds through members' contributions and also taking up activities from the government. Federation process includes capacity building of the Samoohas and formation of legal, educational and health committees. Organizational management is also covered in capacity building of the federations. Federations have human resources with considerable exposure to the Samooha process building.

There are 13 federations, of which 6 are registered and 2 more are in process. There were 5 federations by March 2008. One federation was registered in 2008-09 and more federations are in the process of being readied for registration. Registered federations include Chetana Mahila Samakhya of Raj Nagar block in Saraikela, Jiwan Jyoti Mahila Samakhya of Tant Nagar block in West Singhbhum, Samiha Mahila Samooha of Patmda block in East Singhbhum, Marshal Mahila Samakhya of Dumaria block in East Singhbhum, Prerna Mahila Samakhya Society of Simaria-Chatra-Lawalong blocks in Chatra, and Jagat Jyoti Mahila Samakhya of Chanho block in Ranchi district.

Federations comprise large number of members and groups. Membership of 26,182 women belonging to 1615 groups is part of the federation process. Significant growth is seen in year 2008-08 onwards with 913 federation groups (293+620) and 15,627 members (5319+10308) against 702 groups and 10555 members up to March 2008. Details of the coverage in federations are presented in the table given below:

**Table 3: Federations' coverage**

Particulars	Up to March 2008	2008-2009	April-September 2009	Total
Federation blocks	13	0	0	13
Registered Federations	5	1	0	6
Blocks under federation process	0	0	2	2
Federation groups	702	293	620	1615
Members in federation group	10555	5319	10308	26182

Autonomous functioning of federations

Federations are moving towards gaining own identity and planning to function on their own. In terms of human resources, federations are fairly independent. There is no Sahayogini in the federation block. There are JRPs & CRPs and they are planned to be withdrawn from April 2010. Federations have own accommodation and office management systems. 11 federations have their separate offices (in rented building, in government block campus, in MS facilities like Mahila Kuteer and field center, one federation raised funds from local MLA for the construction of office building). Some have applied for accommodation in government block offices. They have separate office for Nari Adalats. Convention of Federations is organized with 400 participants from 13 federations. Book-keeping and accounts are maintained by themselves with guidance from MS functionaries. Internal financial review is done by MS and statutory audit by competent CA.

Sustainability & leadership

Federations still have a long way to go in context of financial autonomy and capacities to be independent, although they are implementing a variety of activities to generate resources to become economically viable. Federations are engaged in income-generation activities like catering services, construction of toilets, vermi-composting, hand pump repairs, and auto driving. 6 Federations run Nari Adalats, engage in enrolment drive and monitoring of KGBV. Some federations run Palna Ghar and Jagjagi centre. (Annexure-3 provides details). Along with MS activities they are also getting government programmes with the help of MS. They have no resources independent of MS support. Federation's autonomy, with small savings and small number of villages, needs examination. Sustainability to be independent of MS requires serious resource mobilization strategy vis-à-vis its role. Total savings of Sanghas is Rs 6.08 crores against the annual budget of current MS activity which is Rs 7.8 crore (2009-10). Federations' own savings is very small part of the total savings of Sanghas.

Leadership in most of the federations is nascent, with JRPs and CRPs providing constant support and guidance. JMS has developed a transition plan for integration of the JRPs & CRPs in the federations.

Key Issues

Federations are seen as larger offshoots or large size Samoohas instead of rising to and/or moving from micro to macro, individual problems of villages to advocacy and policy issues changing the structures sensitive to women's concerns. Monoculture or simplistic adoption of six broad thematic areas is affecting the federations to respond to locale-specific concerns and issues

affecting women's interests. Federations are moving into service delivery mode, with emphasis on economic activities. Federations are seen as an extension of MS, for delivery of MS activities and with dependence on MS. There is a long way to go from baby steps to independent adult functioning (e.g. catering services limited to MS training needs). Expansion targets are pushing the process of federation formation.

#### Recommendations

- Strategic plan to build capacities of the federations to work as independent and self sustainable entities is required;
- Need for perspective building of the federations to balance between their work on development and empowerment activities;
- A concept note may be prepared by the NPO-GOI on what it would take in technical, financial, legal and administrative terms for federations to evolve as institutional entities;
- Build inter-sectoral areas of attention for advocacy to ensure federations do grow above Samooaha view to become leaders for change and gender equality in policy and programme implementation (e.g. better working of the PRIs, women's health plans at block level, effective implementation of law on domestic violence, SC & ST atrocities Act, use of RTI, women's view on forest laws);
- MS state office with SRCs and DRCs to play a stronger technical, facilitation and supportive role to enhance capacities of federations;
- Role of each of the mature federations to be carved out at the state-level in their annual work plan and budget plan of 2010 onwards.

#### **IV. Training programmes**

A wide range of training programmes are conducted by JMS although they are broadly in six thematic areas. They vary in nature and focus depending on the target group within a particular thematic area. Gender sensitization is key to all types of training activity.

Education constitutes the major area of training. Both women and girls are stakeholders in the training. Education trainings are oriented towards both school and non-school empowerment and vary with the age of the trainees. Interventions in education related training include Mahila Shikshana Kendra (MSK), Jagjagi, Kishori Manch, camp schools and Palna Ghar. These programmes range from pre-school teaching (Palna Ghar), mainstreaming through camp schools and Kishori Manch for adolescent girls (Kishoris), MSK for 15 to 35 year old females. There are also educational programmes for children and women in jail. MSK in jail and Palna Ghar are recent initiatives from 2008-09.

#### Gender perspective-building training programmes

JMS has trainings for capacity building and strengthening gender perspective. These trainings are in the areas of health, PRIs, law, federation and organizational development. Training needs to be located in the concrete locale-specific realities of gender discrimination and forces perpetuating vulnerability of the women. Trainings seem to view these areas in isolation and remain elementary, with major focus on providing information and too little attention to the critical analysis & application towards changing one's life for empowerment. Emphasis on critical appreciation of the law, and existing opportunities required to resist & challenge co-option into status quo processes, need special attention in furthering gender awareness.

### Training activities in vocational areas

Vocational training is provided to improve livelihoods and empowerment of the women and girls. It has continued to be in the skills typecast with women such as tailoring, soap and candle making, with recent forays being made into non-traditional skills such as auto driving, masonry, hand pump mechanics, carpentry, etc

Training in vocational areas is effective when there is a proper match between the candidate's aptitude, resources (capital), demand in the local market, and effective training. Training without adequate infrastructure and time (e.g. one sewing machine for 20 trainees and two weeks' duration in Ganeshpur from 9 to 25 June 2009) would be less fruitful. Training for becoming self-employed also requires entrepreneurial orientation and planning of business economics. Masons engaged in toilet construction of Korambi village have little idea about the economics of toilet construction material. They need exposure to the skills of work execution and also thorough understanding of the economics so that they can undertake the activities on their own.

### **Issues & Recommendations**

- Trainings in broad thematic areas miss the inter connections (e.g. gender perspective in forest laws with reference to thematic areas such as legal literacy, livelihood promotion, better governance in health & education services);
- Lack of hand holding, follow-up support and financial backing; these are necessary for the vocational trainings to become economically viable as a source of livelihood for those trained;
- Systematic and strategic planning for entrepreneurship development is required in the vocational training programmes;
- Training needs to provide understanding & tools for social inquiry and social action;
- Need to build more gender sensitivity into all thematic trainings (e.g. looking at sex ratio, male & female sterilizations, incidence of hysterectomy, impact of commercialization of health, VECs to see gender barriers in school education particularly in areas such as enrolment, curriculum, ethnic dimensions among others);
- Plan to generate locale-specific database on key areas of MS is required to guide focused advocacy, training and networking (interface areas of PRI & Forest Act, health status of tribal women and governance in PHCs, migration & trafficking, law, etc);
- Some of the information and database needs for gender sensitive policy interventions may be commissioned by SRC and other agencies in the state.

## **V. Educational interventions: Participation of women and girls**

### Types of interventions and coverage

The educational interventions mentioned below are being implemented by JMS with the aim to enroll the girls from the last village of the last block from the last household where they do not get the opportunity to study.

Coverage of the JMS' educational interventions is given below. Information on coverage was made available; however information related to how many of those enrolled have continued, dropped out or completed the primary and/or elementary education was not available with the SPO. A quick review of the figures shows that the educational interventions of JMS have continued at more or less even pace. There has been a slight increase in numbers in the last two years. This is mainly due to the funds received under XI plan by Jharkhand Mahila Samkhaya from 2007 onwards.

**Table 4: JMSS' educational interventions - coverage**

Particulars	Up to March 2008	2008-09	From Apr. 09-Sept. 09	Total
MSK Batches	49	9	10	68
Trained Students in MSK	1725	271	293	2289
Jagjagi centre	485	95	2	582
Women covered in Jagjagi	10259	1661	55	11975
Jagjagi in Jail	0	6	0	6
Women covered in Jail Jagjagi	0	200	0	200
MSK in Jail	0	0	1	1
Women covered by MSK in Jail	0	0	30	30
Camp school	9	1	1	11
Trained students in camp school	442	40	40	522
Kishori Manch	881	28	15	924
Members in Kishori Manch	14515	1102	175	15792
Kishore Manch	0	0	21	21
Members in Kishore Manch	0	0	218	218
Palna Ghar	0	9	0	9
Children in Palna Ghar	0	207	0	207
Literacy camps organized	358	35	11	404
Women and Kishori covered by literacy camp	19480	2340	650	22470

**The Jagjagi Kendra** is a non-formal, life skills-based education centre for the adolescent girls in the village, the **Mahila Shikshan Kendra (MSK)** is an 11-month residential learning programme for education and training of girls above 15 years, and the **Kishori Manch** is a platform for young girls at the village level. These are the backbone of educational interventions of JMS.

Criteria for the selection of girls for MSK and Jagjagi are largely their educationally backward status and their coming from impoverished, vulnerable and marginalized sections of society.

There are several success stories of MSK girls overcoming tremendous odds to take on new, economically independent roles and educationally moving forward up to 10+ levels. More than 30 MSK-trained girls are now Sahayoginis, para teachers, accountants, Sakhis, night guards, MSK teachers, ANMs, Anganwadi Sevikas etc. The Kishori Manch - which is running in all 11 districts - also has several individual stories of the girls carving out their own niche as young leaders challenging social norms related to marriage, education and health. Many of the Kishori Manch members are running small economic enterprises such as pickle making, stitching and candle making. Here, the note of caution needs to be placed - that most of these enterprises are in the traditional women-focused areas which are not economically sustainable in the long term.

The curriculum of MSKs and Jagjagis is mainly designed for preparing the girls to enter the formal education system. However it also has components of life skills education, legal awareness, health and hygiene education and teaching vocational skills. From 2008, basic computer handling and use of audio-visual teaching technique is being imparted in all MSKs.

JMS is keen to have technical support from gender and education experts to enrich and renew the course curriculum and pedagogy for these programmes.

## New educational initiatives taken up in 2008-09

- Running of Mahila Shikshan Kendra and Jagjagis for the women in prison. This programme was started from April 2008. One MSK is running in Central Jail in Ranchi amongst women prisoners, providing literacy and vocational training. Two MS staffs have been deputed as teachers, who have been given special permission by the Jail authorities. JMS is running Jagjagi centers in 6 District Jails in the old districts. Four women prisoners were trained to run Jagjagis and they received honorarium from Mahila Samakhya for their services thereafter. They have also been trained for using theatre and other cultural mediums such as songs and stories.
- From April 2008, 9 Palna Ghars have been implemented directly by the federations. It is an early childcare service programme for children of working women.
- Another new feature has been the setting up of 28 **Kishore Manch** for young boys. The Kishore and Kishori groups have taken the responsibility of creating hygienic environment surrounding their respective villages, ensuring the consumption of IFA tablets by adolescent girls, seven health and hygiene messages disseminated among groups etc. They have also organized lots of campaigns to ensure full enrolment of girls and boys in school, spread awareness messages against child marriage and other harmful socio-cultural practices. Kishori Manch in Siangkal village of Khunti has formed a hockey team. They also celebrated Kishori Sammelan at the block level where they introduced various activities to improve the knowledge and capacity of young boys and girls like quiz competition, street plays and Games.
- From 2008 the camp schools are being managed and run by the federations.

The educational activities that have carried on are the **Camp schools** and **Literacy camps**. Both these programmes are meant to provide encapsulated, short-term basic literacy course for the out-of-school girls and women. Camp schools are a short-term residential bridge course preparing young girls to be put back in primary schools. The camps are non-residential short term preparatory and refresher courses on basic literacy skills which are held for the girls before they join the MSK. The camps are also held for Samooha women. Literacy campaigns were organized for mass awareness at village, Panchayat and block level so that illiterate women and girls can identify, learn to read and write the basic alphabet. These programmes also provided information on issues such as how to approach the local police station, and how & what kind of services women can seek from the block & Panchayat authorities.

Since the beginning of Mahila Shikshan programme, 64911 girls out of 95795 covered through MS education programmes have been mainstreamed to elementary schools and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV).

**Table 5: Mainstreaming of girls in MS' educational interventions**

Particulars	Up to March 2008	From April 2008-March -09	From Apr. 09-Sept. 09	Total
Mainstreamed from MSK	1225	253	271	1749
Mainstreamed from Jagjagi	2564	415	23	3002
Mainstreamed from camp school	398	35	0	433
Mainstreamed from Palna Ghar	0	5	1	6

The figures (information provided by the SPO) show the socially disaggregated profile of the girls who have joined mainstream education. This shows that 85% of the girls are from S.T, 7% of the girls from S.C, 3% are girls from minority, 4% from B.C and 1% from others. However JMS doesn't have data on the status of education of girls from their districts, blocks, villages regarding the standard up to which they have studied, how many have gone for higher education and how many are continuing the vocational education. It was found that age of the trainees and the objective of preparing them for schools are not very practical as many are not able to reach learning levels of Class V. Those who are around Class II or III find difficult to cope with the children much younger to them.

Despite sincere attempts made by the JMS team to bring in the MS understanding of education through all its programmes, the educational interventions rely more on the traditional understanding of education as delivering on literacy skills. Twinning of education for empowerment and gender equality with literacy is not strong enough in the training, pedagogy and curriculum of the educational programmes of JMS. Capacities of the SPO team at all levels need to be enhanced to allow them to analyze, review and translating the vision of women's education for empowerment which they have into real and measurable terms in its educational programmes.

### **Role of Sanghas and federations in education issues**

JMS is supporting education governance through facilitating Samooaha members' participation in Village Education Committees. 5791 members from the Samooaha are represented on the VECs. The Samooahas also have their own education committee which didn't seem to have strong influence on the VECs to address issues concerning girls' education. The discussion with the federation members and with the state and district teams couldn't clarify if there is a strong interface between the VEC and Mahila Samoooh education committee representatives. The role and need of the MS education committee vis- a- vis VEC need to be reviewed.

Members of these educational committees are monitoring Mid Day Meal Scheme. Samooaha members in some villages have got contracts for the cooking of the mid day meals. School monitoring for its regular functioning and checking teacher absenteeism are two main roles of the Samooaha education committee members. There is a very positive change in attitude in the Samooaha members towards sending their daughters to school. Almost all the Samooaha members who were spoken to during the field visit said that they are ensuring that their daughters are enrolled in the MSKs, Jagjagis or in the government school.

Impact of monitoring and support of the Samooaha members to promote and enhance education among girls in their villages and communities, cannot be assessed for want of systematic data on the trends. It can be inferred, based on the interactions during the field visit, that the impact of the Samooaha interventions has been mainly focused on increased enrolment of girls or to ensure the regularity of school functioning. There is much more the Samooahas can do to use their collective strength and awareness for stronger accountability of the local schooling system for ensuring better retention and building a gender-sensitive school environment. There is scope for their role and influence to be much more dynamic and pro-active to hold educational institutions and governance accountable, in improving quality of education and in working for attitudinal changes of teachers & educational administration at the local level.

### **Convergence mechanisms and coordination with other education programmes especially Sarva Siksha Abhiyan regarding KGBV and NPEGEL**

Although JMS is not implementing these, it is actively engaged in complementing Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya and National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level by providing monitoring and technical support. The educational activities of JMS have been successful in increasing the access of KBGV and NPEGEL for the girls in MS areas. Many Samoohas are involved in the monitoring of the Mid Day Meal programme under the SSA.

JMS is seen as a pro-active body for girls' education in its coverage areas and by the State level educational administrators. The Education Department acknowledges the role and presence of JMS as an important stakeholder in girls' education. However, there is lack of JMS interfacing with SSA at the State, district and sub-district levels to provide its empowerment-based educational niche and expertise in the SSA interventions. Instead there is a constant pressure on the JMS to take on the implementation role for the SSA activities. It also has a historical connection with SSA in which for a period of 2000-2006, the MS programme was financed, implemented and monitored as part of SSA in the State which affected the relationship between SSA and JMS to be seen in unequal terms. This has meant that the scope for JMS to provide advisory and support services to the State Education Department is diminished and is dependent on the individual sensitivity and interest, or the lack of it, of the educational bureaucracy. For instance, recently, in the preparation of materials on health and hygiene education, JMS had provided technical support in its development. However, the concerned authorities in SSA have refused to acknowledge the support provided by JMS team in the publication of the materials.

Coordination with KBGV: To provide an assurance of continuity of education for the girls who are passing out of JMSS-run MSK programmes, a government notification was issued in 2008 to this effect. However, the educational managers and implementers of KBGV at the local level are not cooperative and resist in providing admission to the MSK girls in the KGBV. It was reported to the JRM team that KGBV functionaries are reluctant to admit MSK candidates because they are worried about their own malpractices becoming public. The tension between MS, KGBV and SSA is caused due to the vested interests of the KGBV and SSA functionaries which come in conflict with the MS style of delivering quality-based educational programmes.

The JMS educational team at the district and block level has tried to tackle this situation with application of group pressure and MSK girls' own advocacy using strategies such as *Gherao* and collective pressure building.

### **Key issues and recommendations**

- Educational interventions of JMS reflect a shift/decreasing focus on broader understating of education for women and girls which goes beyond acquiring basic literacy skills. The meaning of education needs to be reiterated as a process of learning to question, critically analysing issues & problems and seeking solutions for bringing change in the status of women and girls. For instance JMS could undertake a sample study of how its literacy activities among the Samoohaa members have been effective and sustainable, what has worked and what has not;
- MSK with its criteria of 15+ years for the trainees needs redefining of its focus, objective as well as its curriculum and strategy of mainstreaming of girls into schools (e.g, how can basic literacy ensure 15+ age girls into elementary school, and what is its role in their empowerment?);
- Systematic review and analysis of MSK role in empowerment is required. The Mission recommends that the JMS looks into issues such as number of girls mainstreamed into school, change in age at marriage, change in incidence of girls in migration and trafficking, source of livelihoods etc., among others;



- JMS' educational programme interventions need to be backed by strong monitoring and systematic data, information collection and analysis to study the impact of JMS on girls' enrolment, retention, completion and transitions;
- Separate strategies and learning modules may be designed for girls intending to get into school and those requiring non-school rights-based education, and for women for cadre-building needs of MS.

#### **VI. Participation in implementation of other Government programmes (health related programmes, NREGA etc.)**

The Samooha and federation members have active participation in the key development programmes which are being implemented by the government especially in education, health, water and sanitation and NREGA. The numbers also reflect the picture that the role of Samooha members in the implementation of education, health and sanitation government programmes has been a pretty strong one. It was reported to the JRM members that 40% of women from the Samoohas have been able to access government schemes.

The table below provides an overview of participation by Samooha and federation members of JMS in implementation of other government programmes:

**Table 6: Convergence/collaboration with other govt. programmes**

S. No	Department	Issues Worked On
1	JEPC	Camp school through federation in Ranchi
2	NREGA	Social audit of NREGA in W. Singhbhum
3	Ministry of Minority Affairs, GOI through TCDC	Manufacturing of lac bangles with federation in Ranchi
4	Drinking water & sanitation	Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in Ranchi, Chatra, W. Singhbhum and Saraikela
5	PHED	Hand pump repairing training and maintenance of hand pumps in East Singhbhum
6	Directorate of fishery	Fish cultivation
7	Ministry of Home Affairs	MSK & Jagjagi in Jails

#### **Extent of participation**

Particulars	Up to March 2008	2008-09	From Apr. 09-Sept. 09	Total
MS women in Mata Samiti	8829	180	2	9011
MS women in Gram Sabha	1378	421	13	1812
MS women in Saraswati Vahini	9094	356	271	9721
MS women as AWW	628	61	97	786
MS women as Para teacher	274	20	34	328
MS members in VEC	4094	1226	471	5791

MS groups in catering	26	13	0	39
MS women as Sahia	901	203	20	1124
Job card holder MS women ( NREGA)	10963	5902	345	16865
MS women got job under NREGA	7179	3608	234	11021

### Implementation of the Health programme and its services and schemes

Many Sangha members have become ASHA workers (called Sahiya in Jharkhand). An impressive number of 1124 women from the JMS have become Asha workers, of which 223 have been selected after April 2008. 786 women Samooaha members are also working as Anganwadi workers, of whom 158 have been selected after April 2008.

**Table 7: Details of JMS participation in health activities**

Particulars	Up to March 2008	2008-09	From Apr. 09-Sept. 09	Total
Formed Health Committee	1033	530	79	1642
Women trained in health issues	1203	15	41	1259
Organized Health Camp	167	5	6	178
Women's participation in health camp	8560	565	680	9805
MS members in Village Health Committee	1749	415	159	2323
Participation in pulse polio campaign	136	195	13	344

The participation of women from JMS in health-related activities and the interaction of the JRM team in the field shows that Asha (Health Assistants – grassroots health work) or Anganwadi workers (Woman and child Development – Nutrition and Early childhood education) are visible and accessible in the village and are known to MS staff and group members. The Samooaha members are also on village health and sanitation committees. JMS has improved women's access to mother and child health services. There is also better access reported on malaria and T.B.-related health services. However this couldn't be verified by any data records. DRPs could only provide single instances on the accessing of traditionally less accessed health services by women.

ASHA and DRPs reported that there is a comparative increase of child delivery in institutions due to the effective utilization of the benefits provided under the Janani Suraksha Yojna (JSY) which the ASHA is helping women to access. However, here again a note of caution needs to be sounded; the discussions with the Samooaha and federation members and ASHAs didn't reveal that the presence of ASHAs from the Samooaha has particularly benefitted the Samooaha women in improving their access to services. There was general awareness seen on 6 hygiene education messages about good hygiene practices (hand washing, using toilets etc.).

In another instance of participation and implementation under the SSA, 205 women Samooha members have been actively monitoring the Mid Day Meals programme in schools. In about 30 villages they have taken the contract to cook the mid day meals.

State wide campaign and construction of toilets under the Total Sanitation Campaign of DRDA and UNICEF support has been another implementing initiative which has been taken up since 2008. A trained cadre of more than 350 women masons has been built and has constructed about 800 toilets in Chatra, Saraikela, Ranchi and West Singhbhum districts. More than 50% of women from the federation groups have got toilets constructed in their own homes. The quality of work undertaken by the JMS trained masons is recognized in the area and there is a demand for their services by the beneficiaries. Recently the women masons have been building toilets in the Anganwadi centres. In a similar initiative, a trained cadre of more than 200 women hand pump mechanics has been built, and 60 women have been trained in water and soil testing.

### **Key issues and recommendations**

- These are undoubtedly impressive gains which the programme has made by facilitating women's entry into the male domain, and providing the women with advantages like enhancing their capabilities & job opportunities. Due to the presence and involvement of the Samooha members there is increased access of the government programmes by their respective village communities. However the flip side of the women's participation in the government-run programmes has been the increasing work load which is not commensurate with the wages and income that these women earn from their involvement in these activities. For instance, the women masons reported that for the construction of one toilet which requires one day's labour of a group of 4-5 masons, they get Rs. 40 each for their work!! The hand pump mechanics haven't demanded or asked for being paid as per the market rate for their professional services in the repairing of the hand pumps because the Samooha members haven't negotiated with the village consumer committees for their fair wages. Highly skilled cadre of Samooha women therefore is vulnerable to being exploited as soft targets for being the service delivery agents without due recognition of their services and proper monetary compensation;
- There is increasing pressure and lure for the JMS of being co-opted as service delivery agents of the government. ASHAs are compelled to meet the delivery targets of the PHC at the expense of not addressing the health and education needs of the Samooha members;
- The service delivery role of these Samooha members has diminished their scope as pressure groups to counter & challenge the gaps & weaknesses of the very programmes which they are implementing;
- These roles donned by the Samooha members impinge on the distinctive character of these Samoohas as the advocates of gender rights, thereby affecting their autonomy to work as independent rights based groups to influence & mainstream the gender concerns, and deal with the challenges thereof;
- Keeping the balance of perspective between being development workers and as gender advocates for women's empowerment is very much recommended.

### **VII. Women empowered to improve the quality of life for themselves & their families**

One of the most significant initiatives of the JMS for women's empowerment has been in the area of economic empowerment. The federation groups are running livelihood- support programmes and income generation programmes. The range of income generating programmes which the Samooha members have been running is furnished in the following tables sourced from three

district federations. Action Taken Report of JMS (2009) mentions that about 75% of the Samooha members have been engaged in one or the other livelihood programme carried out by their own saving or by accessing government schemes. This is indeed commendable!

Besides the activities mentioned in the tables below, there are many other small-scale initiatives that the groups have undertaken for livelihood security and economic enhancement. For instance, 35 women's groups have taken land on lease for cultivation. 320 PDS licenses have been taken by the women's groups at the village level. There are 19 catering units which are being run by Samooha members.

**Table 8: Economic activities of federation Samoohas in Ranchi Sadar block**

Name	No. of members	Supported by
Candle making	06	MS NGO Grant
Lac bangles	25(20 W+5K)	JMS & TCDC
Mushroom cultivation	20	Samooha savings
Embroidery	08 (Kishories group)	Group savings & federation
Federation tent house	Samooha member	Federation savings
Catering	06	DIU MS
Soap & detergent	15	MS NGO Grant
French work	06(Kishori group)	Group fund
Cutting & stitching	08(Kishori group)	

**Economic activities of federation women in Mandar block**

Name	No./category of women engaged	Supported by
Toilet Construction	Totambi	UNICEF, DWS
Vermi Compost	Korambi	UNICEF
Mushroom Cultivation	20	Group
Bamboo Products	20	Group
Tent house	20	Group
Production of herbal medicine	22	Group
Soap & detergent	40	Group
Fishery	20	Fishery Department, Group

**Economic activities of the federation members of Bero block**

Name	No. of women engaged	Supported by
Soap & detergent	20	Group
Crafts (Jhumar)	18	Group
Murhi	20	Group
Agriculture Activities	60	Group
Fishery	20	Fishery Department, Group

### Nari Adalat (women's court) interventions

Eleven Nari Adalats from all JMS districts have handled 110 cases (2008-09) of which 33 are settled and 67 are in process. The Nari Adalats are proving to be a popular and very effective mechanism in providing justice through the hearing meeting in presence of both the parties. The Nari Adalats also provide reconciliation support to first and second party. A few victims of VAW has been given opportunity to be a part of MS programme (through selection process) as recommended by the federation.

Kishori Manch, especially from the minority community, have become fully aware of VAW after attending Nari Adalat hearings. Moreover, they have started questioning their own communities' customs and traditions. Many young Muslim girls from the Kishori Manch don't wear the *burkha* when they come to the federation office and when they move out for the federation and Kishori Manch related activities.

**Table 9: Nari Adalat cases**

Particulars	Up to March 2008	2008-09	From Apr. 09-Sept. 09	Total
Nari Adalat	8	3	0	11
Registered cases	50	74	36	160
Cases under process	16	40	27	83
Settled cases	34	34	9	77
Cases solved at Samooha level	298	37	32	367

### Social norms and practices being challenged by women

The Samooha members have been raising their voice against gender discrimination, violence, child labour, child marriage, witch hunting, dowry and other discriminatory social practices. It was reported in discussions with the JRM team that due to a successful campaign by the block federation members in Chatra district there have been no child marriages since 2006. (However, the Mission has no source to verify that this has resulted and has been sustained to ensure complete stoppage of child marriages all over Chatra district.) Similar initiative to end bonded labour among SC communities (details awaited from JMS state office) has also been successful and helped in removing many children from bonded labour. In the process of challenging, the women have also been successful in some places in setting new precedents.

*Women in Mandar block were facing a lot of hardships due to the inconvenient location of the weekly market. Their source of earning was dependent on their selling of small every day utility articles in the weekly Haat. To make the activity viable, women's groups negotiated with the village community members for relocation of the place for the weekly market to a more accessible place. Success of the efforts of one Samooha led another Samooha to undertake a similar and successful exercise. The two Haats have continued to function successfully since 2004.*

The district teams narrated about a successful anti-alcohol campaign in Saraikela & West Singhbhum (details awaited from the SPO). Community support to families of the deceased members was provided by the Samooha members.

In 2004, the federation members decided to stop the tribal beauty queen contests in the annual Tusu Mela in Saraikela, which were being held for the past few years along the lines of such like events held by the glamour and beauty industry. They not only convinced the local communities to stop this practice, they also convinced them to replace the event with a prize distribution to promote girls who have successfully passed out from 8<sup>th</sup> standard and those who are pursuing 10+2 levels.

**Participation in Local Self Governance (PR System):** Jharkhand is an exception in that there has not been a single PRI election held so far! Municipal elections were held in 2008 and one candidate from MS samooha was elected from Khunti. Participation in PRI is grossly affected in the absence of functional governance structures at the local level. The longstanding political instability in the State has been a constraint in the restoration of the PRIs.

**Literacy and women's empowerment:** About 400 women have acquired basic literacy and numeracy skills in the last 2-3 years and they are using it in activities such as account keeping of the federations, bank transactions, accessing to govt. schemes, registering cases, lodging FIR, forwarding letter to the respective departments, sending notices, process documentation and reporting under Nari Adalat, and also in the progression of Samooha member into the role of Saheli, Sahayogini, CRP and JRP. There is lack of systematic information to provide a comprehensive picture of how literacy has been a critical element towards their empowerment.

**Livelihood improvement and work on health (women's health, indigenous medicinal systems etc.)**

Many of the Samooha members and ex-MSK girls are now paid functionaries in the MSK, Jagjagi kendras and federations. JMS is very proud of facilitating the development of human resources from within the MS community. Samooha members from the minority community are more aware now of their own health rights. Increased use of birth-spacing methods has been reported amongst them. More than 70 women have been trained in the preparation and use of herbal medicines. Three herbal medicine centers have been developed by the Samooha members where they cultivate some herbal plants or collect these from the nearby jungles and prepare medicines. These herbal medicine centres are used by these trained herbal medicine practitioners to counsel the patients and provide proper medication at cheaper rate. It is a much sought after initiative, the demand for which is fast growing.

**Women's participation in natural resource management:** 12 MS groups are part of the forest protection committees and there are 8 members in the government-constituted natural resource management groups. The women have been primarily playing the watchdog role in prevention of poaching of the forest produce by outsiders. There is not much work which was visible by the

Samooaha members regarding their forest rights and in the control and management of natural resources which are the primary source of livelihood and an intrinsic part of the social-cultural & economic lives of the people of Jharkhand.

### **Key issues and recommendations**

- Emphasis on empowerment of and rights-based advocacy & action by the Samooaha members needs to be constantly revisited; otherwise most of the federations are going to be focusing more and more on the economic activities having thrift, credit & micro finance as their motivating force;
- There is a need to be aware so as not to get overly involved in those spheres of activities which have been traditionally considered women's domain in the economic empowerment, livelihood support and vocational programmes being taken up by the federation and Samooaha members;
- JMS programme needs to respond to the specific gender-related socio-political challenges with regard to Jharkhand being one of the major out-migration States. It is also one of the key States for trafficking of tribal girls as well as in the exploitation & displacement of the tribal communities from their rich natural resource base. Impact of the Naxal and State actors' role, dealing with violence on caste & ethnic lines, and its threatening impact on women, girls and their families are other crucial areas which are missing from JMS' empowerment agenda. The programme hasn't looked at these issues because the focus of the JMS has been implementing development & State welfare programmes and for Samooah members to strengthen their work of addressing practical gender issues around health, education, domestic violence, vocational skills etc.;
- There is a need to sensitise and train federation members to create pressure and demand for the restoration of PRIs in Jharkhand;
- There is a need to build interactive and dynamic convergence between the six thematic areas of empowerment outlined in the JMS programme. Currently these areas are seen as exclusive domains with no attempt to build inter-linkages between the livelihood, legal rights, governance and education components on the ground;
- Utility and sustainability of vocational training requires proper targeting and planning of post-training services/interventions;
- Nari Adalats are confined to dealing with issues of domestic violence and family disputes. They need to broaden the focus to address other forms of gender discrimination and violence;
- Their understanding of the legal, gender and human rights for informed advocacy and social change needs to be built to ensure effective use and implementation of RTI, PWDVA Act, SC ST Atrocities Act and NRM policies, and for protection of rights and entitlements of the tribal communities under the Forest Control Act;
- To ensure that the dynamic learning from the processes of women's empowerment percolates to all levels – the SPO needs to be capacitated to review and revisit what are the key catalysts, what has worked and what has not worked, so as to carry these learnings into the new areas.
- The lessons learnt from JMS' journey so far should lead to building systematic understanding of the nature of collective power and support systems formed between women and girls of different excluded groups to address issues of gender discrimination, violence and injustice. This in turn would help in the creation of the forward and backward advocacy linkages between policy and practice.

### **VIII. Resource support systems**

## Role of State Resource Centre in supporting MS

State resource centre (SRC) has started functioning from 2008 with an infrastructure of a separate building with meeting & workshop rooms and 2 guest rooms, with accommodation facility for 40 participants. The SRC has been developed as a Gender Resource Centre to be used as a platform for sharing of best practices, conducting research & surveys, documentation, and module & IEC development. Currently it is mainly used for MS training, reflection, workshops and vocational trainings for all levels of staff and functionaries associated with JMS. A small unit of library has also been set up where state-specific books have been collected and the process of indexing and cataloging is in progress. The technical and physical infrastructure of the SRC has also been utilized by C-Change, SSA, VLP-RCH leaders and UNICEF for their programmes.

The SRC has the advantage and flexibility to develop its scope and create its niche as a gender resource centre in a State which has no strong gender resource organisations. It also has the challenge to lift itself from being a training centre to playing the role of a catalyst agency in advancing research & advocacy to address the second generation perspective-building for MS.

**Support from the NRG** members is seen as a major source of strength by JMS SPO. Recent trainings conducted centrally by ERU for all State MS programmes were considered to be useful in refreshing the core values, processes and approaches to be followed by the MS functionaries who have been there with MS for 10-20 years. However it was also voiced by the JMS team that much more support, guidance and interactions could be provided from the NRG and NPO office. The need for a national resource centre was raised during the discussions with the JRM team.

**Networking with NGOs, women's groups, research:** JMS' partnerships with some of the NGOs, foundations and government agencies are mentioned in the table. Most of the partnerships are very recent in nature and for some, dialogue is in progress.

**Table 10: JMS' partnerships with other agencies/departments**

S. No	Department/ NGO	Issues Working On
1	C. Change of New concept	Adolescent reproductive health
2	UNICEF	Water & sanitation
3	Sir Ratan Tata Trust	Education
4.	We Can campaign by Oxfam to prevent violence against women	VAW
5.	Room to Read Foundation	Community libraries for MSk, DRC and federation offices
6.	Child line of women and child development	Restoration, rehabilitation of girl child cases; starting a Childline in Pakur block

## Key issues and recommendations

- JMS has low visibility despite having a sizeable geographical presence with strong women's collectives at the village level. JMS needs to be more proactive in networking and building alliances with other State-level actors from the government, donors, private sector, media and women and tribal development NGOs & agencies;



- NRG & NPO to realign itself to the challenges and opportunities. It needs to be more responsive to State-specific scenarios, in governance-related issues and in facilitating the raising MS' visibility in respective States and at the national level;
- Capacities of the State Project Office need to be enhanced to develop data base & analysis process to understand and strategise socially disaggregated indicators & information systems.

## **IX. Programme Management**

Participatory management in the programme is intended through area-specific committees involving various stakeholders at district and state levels. There are committees for programmatic and financial aspects at State and district levels. Regular meetings with the staff at various levels provide feedback and the committees for different tasks address the issues raised. There are different committees in place viz., JMSS Executive Committee, Administrative Committee, Staff selection committee, Finance Committee, Purchase committee and sub-committees at State and district levels. Federations are represented in the sub-committees.

Staff Recruitment system has guidelines and a selection committee that requires compliance with NPO norms & reservation policy of the State. Staff strength is considered adequate by the State and district teams (Annexure 4 for details of staff strength). Work plan for the functionaries also takes into view the local situation in consideration, for instance the number of villages to be covered by Sahayogini is relaxed in areas with difficult terrain and poor transportation. However, the JRM team was informed that candidates for the reserved seats for STs are not available in some districts and the posts were vacant for some time leading to eventually filling these posts with general candidates (e.g. post of Accountant in Godda, Pakur, Sahebgunj, Garhwa, Chatra, Girdih districts). Staff said that salaries are less at all levels in comparison to the remuneration offered in other government and non-government bilateral & multilateral large-scale programmes. Nevertheless, staff turnover is not a major matter of concern.

### Issues & Recommendations

- Social security issues (insurance and PF) of staff are important areas of concern to them;
- Representation of federation members at appropriate levels and committees requires examination to ensure federations' involvement in the planning & implementation of exit policy and the transfer of mature Samoohas to the federations.

## **X. Financial Management**

Standard procurement systems are in place. Committees for planning, M&E, procurement are in place and audit is conducted on time by competent agency.

Delays in financial disbursement have been there due to late requisition made by the State team and also the procedural matters of the GoI. Delayed budget disbursals have increased pressure on staff to implement too much in too little time. For instance, the budget was released in mid September 2009 to be utilized by end of September. The programme implementation is affected and this also disturbs the work plan that is designed in accordance with the seasonality of the women's work calendar and livelihoods cycle.

### Issues & Recommendations

- Salaries delayed for six months affects morale and activities on the ground;
- Budget has to be provided for DRC;

- Flexibility is required in functioning due to locale-specific constraints, for instance rigid norms for non-purchase of vehicles as well as limited budget is making some DIUs get agencies with licensed cars on hire which are without reliable and accountable drivers.

## **XI. Innovation & good practices**

- Sanitary napkin production centre in Ranchi district is an initiative supported by UNICEF in which more than 50 women have been trained to make sanitary napkins. These napkins are being supplied to all the 60+ MSKs and to many of the KBGVs;
- Formation of child cabinet in all MSK and Camp schools (see annexure for details);
- Toilet construction work by federation members in Ranchi, Chatra, Saraikela and West Singhbhum (see annexure for details);
- Recognition of MS-trained women hand pump mechanics by district administration of East Singhbhum;
- Auto driving taken up as a source of livelihood by federation women in Tatanagar.

## **XII. Overall Key Issues**

- Educational interventions of JMS reflect a shift/decreasing focus on broader understanding of education for women and girls which goes beyond acquiring basic literacy skills. The meaning of education needs to be once again reiterated as a larger process of learning to question, critically analysing issues & problems and seeking solutions for bringing change in the status of women and girls;
- Samootha formation process has to contend with growing phenomenon of SHGs and micro finance programmes by the government & NGOs;
- Increasing pressure on MS, especially on Samoothas, to be the extended arm of the government for service delivery is affecting MS focus on women's empowerment increasing their vulnerability to co-option;
- Need for mature and old federations & Samoothas to shift gears to address strategic gender interests and social change;
- Note of caution needs to be placed that emphasis on target-oriented results may affect the pace and quality of MS processes;
- There is a need for JMS programme to look at the specific gender-related socio-political challenges with regard to Jharkhand being one of the major out migration States as also one of the key States for trafficking of tribal girls, and in the exploitation, displacement of tribal communities from their rich natural resource base. Impact of the Naxal and State actors' role, dealing with violence on caste & ethnic lines and its impact on women, girls & their families are other crucial areas which are missing from JMS' empowerment agenda. The programme hasn't looked at these issues because the focus of the JMS has been implementing development & State welfare programmes and for Samooth members to strengthen their work of addressing practical gender issues around health, education, domestic violence, vocational skills etc.
- Concerns related to delayed fund disbursement from GoI, low salaries for MS functionaries, lack of social security, rigid management guidelines across the country

## **XIII. Overall Key Recommendations**

- Expansion needs to be balanced with consolidation. The programme shouldn't be driven by targets under the pressure to expand too fast and too much;
- Education programme for the girls and women needs revisiting in terms of its value addition, impact, objectives and direction;

- Mature and older Samoohas need to focus more on the strategic gender interests and retaining the agenda of advocacy, challenging gender norms & seeking accountability for a gender-sensitive administrative and development machinery, thereby avoiding the pressure of being an extended arm for the government service delivery;
- GoI needs to respond to the special context of JMS in providing flexibility in the norms related to programme management;
- JMS to be provided technical support in enhancing its visibility and in making a strategic shift in its emphasis from development & service delivery to play its true potential of being a social change programme, challenging gender norms and working for gender equality & women's empowerment;
- Federations require role clarity vis-à-vis MS to become autonomous in due course of time and also need a concrete plan for financial sustainability to ensure their viability;
- Preparation of a concept note by the NPO on what it would take in technical, financial, legal and administrative terms for federations to evolve as institutional entities may be helpful;
- Capacities of the State Project Offices need to be enhanced to develop data base & analysis process to understand and strategise for socially disaggregated indicators and information systems;
- The lessons learnt from JMS' journey so far should lead to building of systematic understanding of the nature of collective power & support systems formed between women and girls of different excluded groups to address issues of gender discrimination, violence and injustice. This in turn would help in the creation of forward and backward advocacy linkages between policy and practice.

## **Annexure -1 Details of the activities covered and people interacted with during the JRM**

### **Field visits on 10-12 Nov 09 included:**

- MSK in Birsa Munda Central Jail
- Nari Adalat at Ranchi Sadar
- Vocational training programmes of lacquer bangle making and embroidery by Ranchi, Sadar federation, and meeting with Kishori Manch
- Discussion with State & district teams at SPO
- Interaction with Catering Service Unit (Ranchi), MSK & DIU, Ranchi
- Sanitary Napkin Production unit (Chanho block)
- Sangha members, Sahayoginis, Kishori Manch, Sahias, ex-MSK students, federation representatives at Ganeshpur, Chanho Block
- Federation representatives, Sahiyas and Kishoris at Mandar Block
- Herbal Medicine trainees at Field Centre, Burakukra
- Masons, Handpump Mechanics, Vermicompost unit at Korambi
- Meeting with Principal Secretary, Department of Education, Jharkhand

### **Secondary Information sources:**

- JMS Annual Report 2007-8, progress report 2008-09, IEC and teaching materials and curriculum of MSK and Jagjagi Kendras, Results framework-based reporting, Management and procurement related documents, Action Taken Report of JMS (2009)
- AIDE Memoire of first JRM (2008), XI plan document of MS, budget outlays and expenditure report

**Annexure- 2 Areas for special attention in JMS operational area**

District	Predominant Community	Other communities	Issues of concern
Ranchi	Oraon	Minorities	
Khunti	Munda		Malaria
West Singhbhum	Ho		Mining (bauxite)
East Singhbhum	Santhal	Mehtoos	Mining (coal), arsenic
Pakur	Pahadia (PTG), Santhal	Minorities	Difficult terrain, Trafficking, Kala-azar, Florosis, lowest literacy
Sahebgunj	Santhal, Pahadia (PTG)		Trafficking, Kala-azar, Florosis
Godda	Santhal		Difficult terrain, Trafficking, Kala-azar, Florosis
Saraikela	Santhal		Mining
Chatra	Scheduled Castes		Zamindari system, bonded labour
Garwaha	Scheduled Castes		Zamindari system, bonded labour, early marriages
Giridih	Santhal		open cast mica, fake marriages, presence of Maoists

**Annexure-3 Activities undertaken by Federations**

District	Block	Nari Adalat	Construction of toilets	Vermicomposting	Hand pump repairs	auto driving	Palna Ghar	Jagjagi centre	enrolment drive	M&E of KGB V
Saraikela	Raj Nagar	*****	*****	*****			*****	*****	*****	*****
West Singhbhum	Tant Nagar	*****	*****	*****					*****	*****
East Singhbhum	Patmda	*****			*****	*****	*****		*****	*****
East Singhbhum	Dumaria	*****							*****	*****
Chatra	Simaria-Chatra-Lawalong	*****	*****	*****			*****		*****	*****
Chanho	Ranchi	*****	*****				*****		*****	*****

**Annexure -4 Details of JMS Staff district-wise**

District	District Trainer	Block Co-ordinator	Block Trainer	Junior Resource Person	Cluster Resource Person	Saheli	Sahyogini
Ranchi	3	2	3	5	9	60	26
Chatra	3	6	20	8	20	50	61
East Singhbhum	2	7	9	4	10		49
West Singhbhum	2	4	5		1	52	42
Khunti	1	2	2	2	4	4	23
Saraikela	2		4	1	1	9	19
Pakur	4						20
Godda							12
Giridih						3	18
Sahibgunj							11
Garhwa	2						19
Total	19	21	43	20	45	178	300

(Section 3.4)  
Second Joint Review Mission  
Mahila Samakhya  
State Report – Kerala

9<sup>th</sup> November – 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2009





## **Acknowledgements:**

The Joint Review Mission (JRM) team comprising Fatima Alikhan, Government of India nominee, and Sangeeta Mehta, DFID Representative, visited Kerala during the second Joint Review Mission scheduled from 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The support extended to the team by the functionaries of the MS at national, state, district and sub district levels as well as the partners is highly appreciated. We especially thank the State Project team and district teams of Malappuram, Idukki, Thiruvananthapuram for facilitating our visit to the districts for an in-depth field level review. The mission thanks the SPD and her team, and district teams for their cooperation, support and hospitality. The list of interactions and the field visits to the district are attached in Annex 1.

The State has been implementing Mahila Samakhya (MS) Programme since 1998 in two blocks, *Idukki and Thiruvananthapuram districts*. Currently the Kerala Mahila Samakhya Society (KMSS) programme is being implemented across 3 districts (2 in the last year), 9 blocks and 66 Panchayats (a Panchayat in Kerala has about 20 wards/40 Villages), reaching 2,587 villages and influencing 21600 women (19800 women last year). The mission observed that the programme has gradually moved from a development and welfare-oriented organization to one based on the rights-perspective and direct intervention in cases of violence and denial of rights. The MS State programme's strategy is well thought out and involves 'status-of-women studies' prior to the formation of Sangha. The programme supports related activities at the panchayat level before they start forming the Vanitha Sabha (sangha as it is called in Kerala). A detailed note on the strategy is attached as Annex 2 to this report.

## **Expansion:**

The State has added one new district in the last year, namely Malappuram. With this they have completed the targets set in the XI Five year plan. Expansion has been undertaken to 5 blocks, 2 blocks (Vellanad and Athiyannur) of Thiruvananthapuram, 1 block in Idukki (Azutha) and two blocks in Malappuram district (Tanur and Nilambur). The strategy of expansion has been to conduct status study of women after orientation by MS at the Panchayat level.

KMSS has had to face many challenges. The state offers best practices in literacy and other indicators, however, many parts of the state are riddled with social inequalities, low status of women, cases of sexual abuse and desertion, dowry and early marriage. The strength of the programme lies in its co-ordination and collaboration with various Government departments, including efficient relationships with many other stakeholders. For example, with medical colleges whereby they are able to garner free treatment for the children of MSKs, and working with many government departments and organisations (Sakhi, Human Rights Law network, Sarang, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Bal Sahitya Institute, Chalchitra Academy, Centre for Development studies, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Social Welfare and Tribal Department officials).

The mission has been very impressed with the progress that the State has made since the joining of the current State Project Director (SPD). She has been in the position less than 2 years. Frequent changes with the SPD's appointment earlier have led to many programmatic delays in addition to demotivating and making work conditions difficult for the field staff. The last year has not only seen expansion but also many strategic and difficult issues being picked up and implemented by KMSS. The programme has rightly identified its value addition with advocacy at the policy level and intervention in Government programmes. They have avoided duplication at the ground level, concentrating instead on the most marginalized and secluded groups that are

otherwise left out from ongoing State initiatives. The Mission learnt that the many children coming to MSKs do not merely come due to lack of access to schools or poverty but also mostly due to breakdown of family ties, desertion and sexual abuse.

### **Programme processes in sangha formation/roles**

KMSS is currently covering 2587 villages in 66 Panchayats in its work. It has 21600 women in 570 vanitha Sabhas (sanghas) till September 2009. These have mobilized women (especially the poor and the most marginalized, though the Mission would have liked to receive disaggregated data for this), building their awareness,. Initial discussions within the sabhas brought into focus the issues of health, women's position or gender equality in society, education, food, farming needs, migration and desertion due to it, lack of say in family issues and village level politics. In this process, health, education, participation in governance, natural resources and social and gender equity, were the major issues taken up around which action was taken by the vanitha sabhas. With each meeting and analysis of relevant issues, the sabhas grew in strength; this can be seen even among the newly formed sabhas. Sabhas are seen to work together on common solutions through institutional means – collective-farming, securing their legal rights, etc. The Mission observed effective processes on the ground in context of the Resource Centre in 2 blocks in 2 districts, where the centre was functional and the Sangha members appeared confident, articulate and economically independent. They had ventured into the male-dominated vocations; masonry, rubber-tapping, paper bag making, collective farming, honey bee cultivation, manufacture of bamboo products, coir products, etc.

The Mission visited the Vengaramudu Resource Centre at Vamanapuram Block and observed: The Sangha women met there were vibrant and cheerful. They ranged in age from the older, senior members to young, newly married girls who had earlier been members of MS adolescent groups. They shared their life stories and how being members of the vanitha sabha had enabled them and given them the confidence to deal with critical situations in their lives - some becoming emotional as they recounted them.

The women were engaged in a range of innovative economic activities, from catering, making paper bags and palm leaf products to beekeeping and leasing land for paddy, banana or vegetable cultivation. Many were proud of how despite resistance they had trained as masons or rubber tappers, traditional male preserves that not only earned higher wages but also command respect. One woman who had trained to be an auto driver could not get her license as she had not passed the class 10 exam, and was planning to do the Equivalency exam conducted by the Kerala State government. On the major problems confronting women, many agreed it was the demand for dowry and there was a lively discussion on the issue and how they are bringing up their own sons and daughters. The vanitha sabha members have a room of their own for the Resource Centre, which they got allocated to them in the Panchayat and where they meet regularly.

### **Formation of Sanghas**

In the older blocks the sanghas were formed first before work was initiated at the panchayat level. But as explained earlier, at present work first begins with the panchayat and then mobilisation is undertaken at the sangha level. The number of vanitha sabhas in Thiruvananthapuram in the blocks of Cherienkeezh and Vamanapuram is 191 and number of sabha members is 7640. In Athiyanur block, the focus has been to work on child sexual abuse issues related to tourism and the work takes place with adolescent boys and girls, especially drop-outs. In all the panchayats of Vellanad block, the status study of women is being undertaken.

In Idukki district, in the panchayats of Adimali and Devikulam, there are 13 panchayats, 161 vanitha sabhas and 5162 women in these. In Azutha, the status study of women is under process. In Nilambur and Tanur (Malappuram district), the status study of women and orientation at various levels has been completed and KMSS is in the process of sangha formation.

### **Federations:**

Kerala has a volatile political environment. In addition to this, Kerala already has many functional SHGs (through the Kudumbashree programme) in the villages. For more information on the programme, kindly refer to Annex 3 of this report (link:<http://www.kudumbashree.org/concepts/html/index.html>). As KMSS took up federation work, it had to consider challenges brought about by the political environment and the state Kudumbashree programme (that has mobilized women at village-level for purposes of thrift and credit). As the State is very nervous therefore, with the use of the word 'federation', KMSS has initiated the process of formation of Mahasangha of women at the panchayat-level. For the formation of Mahasanghas, the strategy is to get Vanitha Sabhas from 3 wards to come together to form a cluster, and all clusters in a panchayat would combine to form Mahasangha. A workshop with JRPs and resource group members (an informal resource group at the state level) was facilitated to discuss the formation of mahasangha. The idea developed was to combine 3 vanitha sabhas to form a cluster and all clusters combine to form a federation. The Executive Committee of the federation would be either selected or elected from the general body as decided by the sangha women of each federation. Two women from each ward would comprise the resource group of 30 to 40 members. This concept is being developed and would be finalised after discussion with sangha members in each panchayat.

### **Training programmes under MS**

Education in Kerala has achieved remarkable progress by universalising primary and secondary education. The high rates of literacy make Kerala a role model for the rest of the country. With the advent of SSA, education has become accessible to most marginalized sections of the society as well. However, despite high levels of literacy and educational access, Kerala reflects poor status of women and gender disparities especially with respect to non-conventional indicators. The Mission was of the view that the conventional indicator of education has not helped in improving women's status or gender disparities. A total of 21600 women have been trained under MS till September 2009 (an additional 1800 from last year).

Gender segregation begins very early in Kerala society. KMSS has done ground breaking work by organizing gender education training in 14 districts over 4 days, training around 500 people from Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, State Council for Education, Research and Training, Directorate of Public Instruction, District Institute of Education and Training faculty, and Child Development Project Officers from social welfare departments. Gender education of teachers was completed at the State and district level by formation of State and District resource groups. Training was also given to office-bearers of teachers' organisations.

### **Thiruvananthapuram**

Several training programmes were held on various issues. There were 96 Harithamitram programmes focussing on organic farming, 3 programmes for gender training of anganwadi workers, 2 programmes for gender training of CDS and ADS of Kudumbashree, 2 gender training programmes for elected women representatives and a training in production of coir-related ornaments, one camp for the detection of cancer in collaboration with Regional Cancer centre (Thiruvananthapuram), one awareness programme on substance abuse, one young women's

camp, one sanghamam for senior women citizens and 9 workshops for strengthening resource groups of each panchayat.

### **Idukki**

In Idukki, in Devikulam and Adimali, there were 172 health related programmes in which 6860 sangha women participated. There were 111 programmes to strengthen jagratha samithis in which 4363 women participated. There were 81 programmes related to awareness related to panchayati raj in which 2665 women participated. There were 21 programmes on the issue of human rights in which 796 sangha women participated. There were 43 programmes on sanitation in which 1140 women participated. 12 district level programmes were held to strengthen jagratha samithis, 2 programmes to strengthen the women's component plan, 3 to strengthen forest rights Bill, 3 to strengthen gender education of teachers.

### **Malappuram**

In Malappuram district, status study of women has been undertaken and completed in 12 panchayats. Training on gender concepts and child rights was conducted for anganwadi workers in 15 panchayats. Gender training for ADS and CDS of Kudumbashree was conducted in 6 panchayats. Eight camps were held for children from tribal colonies for martial arts, environment, and literacy skills like reading and writing, etc. One-day seminars were held in 10 panchayats for the consolidation and exhibition of data of the status-of-women studies.

Due to the extremely effective indicators on education, KMSS does not get involved with the KGBV and NPEGEL intervention. However, the Mission observed that the programme can offer a supportive role to SSA by managing the MSKs which are catering to the last few hundreds of out-of-school children, who are unable to access/utilize the mainstream education process.

### **Participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education**

KMSS at the outset delinks education from literacy alone, instead seeing it as a process of continuous learning and gaining confidence, developing ability to think critically, enabling women to make informed choices in areas like education, employment and health (especially reproductive health), ensuring equal participation in developmental processes, and enhancing access to legal literacy and information relating to their rights and entitlements in society with a view to enhance their participation on an equal footing in all areas. Substantial efforts of the KMSS programme/MS functionaries are spent on building the self esteem and mental health of abused and deserted women. The state MS programme is unique in the sense that it has started a short-stay home for destitute women.

### **Interventions for Adolescents:**

Daughters of the vanitha sabha members also felt a need for a forum to articulate their concerns and thus, 158 adolescent sangamoms (groups of adolescents from various panchayats) evolved with girls and boys in the age group of 12-18 as members. Accordingly, educational and capacity-building programmes were initiated as camps were held for adolescent boys and girls. Camps comprising of 100 children each were held in 4 blocks last year. The 5-day camp involved sessions on environment education, nutrition focusing on organic food and organic farming, folk songs, child rights, gender education and sex education. At present there are 158 Adolescent Sangamoms with a membership of 5040 children and adolescents.

One of the main challenges of KMSS' work has been to bring out the issue of sexual abuse of children. In an economy that is heavily dependent on tourism, abuse and lack of attendance in schools have become major issues that most of the government departments are not happy to

address. In this context, working with NGOS like Equation and with the Social Welfare department, KMSS has not only raised the issue but has also advocated successfully with the tourism department and the Home Ministry to convince them about the gravity of the issue. As a result, the department has declared tourism areas as ‘zones of no-tolerance-to-sexual-abuse’.

### **Adult Literacy**

Though Kerala has achieved high literacy standards, the literacy levels in primarily tribal and Dalit populated areas are low, and KMSS works in these areas. The literacy classes do not merely focus on reading, writing and numeracy, but are based on a women-centred perspective and revolve around enhancement of life-skills. There have been instances of vanitha sabha members from ALCs joining together to protest against issues that affect their life. There was an instance when the ALC facilitator and sangha women stopped the CM and sub-collector on the way to satisfy their demand for rehabilitation of tribals who had lost their land. In another instance 200 tribal women mobilised themselves to demand the arrest of the accused who had murdered an anganwadi worker. In Thiruvananthapuram, there are 34 ALCs and 765 learners. In Idukki, in Adimali and Devikulam, there are 77 ALCs in which there are 1895 learners. In Malappuram, there are 25 ALC centres. KMSS has had an efficient relationship with the State Resource Centre of the Adult Literacy Mission. The mission met the officials from the State Resource Centre as well as the State literacy mission who were very appreciative of the work done by KMSS. The state MS programme currently has 111 ALC teachers, 111 Adult learning Centres (ALCs) are reaching out to 2660 women learners. Last year with this intervention, 182 women have completed the the 4<sup>th</sup> standard, 47 have completed the 7<sup>th</sup> standard and 58 have passed 10<sup>th</sup> equivalency exams.

### **Mahila Shikshan Kendras**

Though the primary aim of the MSK is to mainstream never-enrolled and dropout girls, that helps them to make a comeback to formal education, in Kerala, due to high literacy levels, the State (SSA) has not been permitted KGBV or residential schools under the innovation plans. KMSS runs MSKs that cater more to the abused and deserted children and young women who in this case are not benefiting from the mainstream/formal education. Each MSK houses 40 girls and has 3 teachers. Currently 8 MSK’s are operational with 309 girls enrolled within them. Since its inception, 21 have cleared 10<sup>th</sup> standard, 28 have gone for vocational training in Vinoba Niketan and 5 completed O-level examination of 10<sup>th</sup> standard, 2 tribal students scored the highest marks in the 10<sup>th</sup> standard. Five students have undertaken the ayurvedic course under Panchakarma.

As the children coming to MSKs belong to disturbed family backgrounds and many have been sexually abused, the educators have to work towards rebuilding their emotional and physical selves. Several extra-curricular activities have been undertaken to rebuild and strengthen personality and intellectual growth. The increasing reports of sexual abuse of girls, including within their homes and lack of short-stay/shelter homes for girls, has put pressure on KMSS to take these young traumatized girls into the MSKs. With the double burden of being abused and not having a home to go back to, these girls need to stay longer till they are emotionally and academically stable. Before the visit to the MSK, the Mission members learnt that the MSKs, with their supportive environment, counseling, the learning of Kalari (from which karate is said to have originated), music, dance etc. have benefited these children immensely. The visit to the MSK revealed just how well these children had integrated and how confident and happy they were in the joyous and secure environment surrounded by nature. In view of their current happiness, it was quite impossible to say which, if any of them had had a horrific background.

## **Women empowered to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families**

**Health:** In Idukki, intervention has been undertaken in the reproductive health issues of Muduvan women. They have their deliveries in valayapuram (small huts away from the hamlets). These are unhygienic places and the incessant use of contraceptive to procrastinate menstruation which is considered as polluting has affected their menstrual and reproductive health. A study was undertaken among the Muduvan women of whom 3000 were interviewed, and the findings presented before the health services and the NRHM. Then a proposal was submitted for the construction of sub-centres to replace the valayapuram. The proposal was accepted, the construction has begun and now there are regular vanitha oorukootams (local vanitha sabha women's sub-group) to monitor the progress. KMSS plans to expand these sub-centres into a local resource centre with library. Vyatati (mid-wife) training was conducted with the support of Social Security Mission in Kozhikode medical college. Mid-wives were provided with equipments. Several camps were held for the detection of cancer in collaboration with Regional Cancer Centre.

**Dowry and early marriage:** In Malappuram, dowry and desertion were traced as major issues facing women. Following special gramasabhas in which the issue was discussed, a dowry-free village campaign was initiated by both the panchayat and KMSS. The status study of women conducted in Nilambur revealed that families of 80% of women had given dowry and several women faced desertion. Women hardly had access to property rights and no decision making roles, either within the family or in public spaces. The dowry itself was hardly used by women but basically handled by men and their family members. Dowry was mostly in the form of gold or cash. Dowry demands existed prior to and following marriage and was the major reason behind desertion. Early marriages and lack of education, even being bereft of vocational, technical education or life-skills to fend for themselves due to gendered norms of socialization, have left women in critical condition. Desertion is considered as a tabooed condition and several covert societal restrictions are imposed upon deserted women. Women, especially from Muslim communities are married early. Workshops were held with religious leaders, elected representatives, youth, etc. This was followed by street plays in each ward and discussions on the issue of dowry, panchayat level marriage registration, identifying and working with (sensitising, rights-awareness etc.) unmarried women awaiting marriages, and starting PSC coaching and community college under IGNOU for deserted women. Vocational training and training in organic farming is also being provided as part of the campaign. The next phase involves the mobilisation of youth.

**Domestic Violence:** The movement from consciousness/awareness-raising to rights-based intervention has led to intervention in several domestic violence cases. 44 cases in Thiruvananthapuram and 31 cases in Idukki have been resolved and women gained status within their families. KMSS has registered under the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act as a service provider and now provides short-stay home facility. 90 domestic violence cases in Idukki and 109 cases in Thiruvananthapuram (total of 199 cases) are being resolved at the sangha level.

### **Food Security: Harithamithram: Training in Organic Farming**

The programme of developing Harithamithram and disseminating organic farming and manure is being done in collaboration with Kunnathukal labour bank and the block and gram panchayats. The basic objective is to ensure food security and build solidarity of women farmers. A year-long training was provided once a week; the panchayats have recognised these women as service providers and budget of 6 to 8 lakhs for seeds and manure has been set apart as part of the productive sector of the plan fund.

**Elected Representatives:** Elected women representatives were provided 4 trainings in gender planning, budgeting and auditing. Eighty-five elected representatives were seeing their budgets for the first time and they could understand the linkage between the two. The Mission would have liked some data on the number of women reached.

**Employment:** Various trainings in rubber tapping, honey bee cultivation, paper bag making and masonry has helped women gain livelihoods and enhanced their confidence. After initiating a study about NREGP in the blocks that KMSS works in, effort was undertaken for advocacy to be sensitive towards women's needs like providing protective equipments, infrastructural facilities like bathrooms, etc.

### **Resource Support systems**

The programme reported receiving effective, timely and useful interventions from its EC and NRG members for concurrent and future interventions. KMSS has many academicians, writers, activists and NGOs like Sakhi, Human Rights Law network, Sarang, SEWA, SSA, SCERT, Social welfare and Tribal Department officials acting as resource persons, to design and deliver the training programmes. KMSS does not have a state resource centre but does have resource group at the state and district levels. KMSS would like to receive more inputs on a regular basis from the NRG members. In order to institutionalise monitoring mechanisms, a social auditing process was initiated by forming the state resource group and block resource groups. There were presentations of the programmes undertaken, the presentation of planned budget and expenditure incurred on each programme. The state resource group comprises of academicians, functionaries from various government departments and social workers. Block resource group comprises of elected representatives and organizations engaging with social issues. This is an effective monitoring mechanism and helps in ensuring transparency and accountability.

### **Convergence with other departments**

The programme for gender education of teachers is being carried out with the help of the social welfare department. The dowry-free campaign in Nilambur panchayat is also in convergence with the social welfare department. Recognising and acknowledging the performance of Mahila Shikshan Kendras, the social welfare department has asked KMSS to help make the governmental children's shelter and juvenile homes into child-friendly institutions like the MSK. The tribal department is in the process of deliberating on KMSS' proposed project (submitted based on the department's own invitation) which plans to work with the most deprived tribals like Cholanalakans and Kattunayakans.

### **Programme Management**

One of the strengths of the MS programme is its participatory approach. This was evidently to the Mission members in the field as well in the programme management systems. From preparation of the work plans to their completion and settling of accounts, staff at various levels regularly engages with each other and with sangha/panchayat members.

For the Annual work plan and budgeting exercise, the State uses a format (specimen is attached at annex 4) integrating the various issues considered important by sangha members. This is consolidated by the sevini to develop the Panchayat plans. A discussion is held at the block level and results in a block-level plan. District plans support, supplement and reflect on the block-level plans and programmes before these are consolidated at the state level. At the State level, a two/three day workshop is held to further refine, reflect and accept the state plan. The planning

process starts in December each year and culminates in a state work plan by March/April. The plans respond to the context and priorities of the panchayat and have a built-in flexibility to address evolving needs. These are finalised at the state level and are implemented with the approval of the Executive Committee. After approval of the EC, these are submitted to the GoI (NPO).

**Monitoring and supportive supervision:** KMSS adopts a participatory approach towards the M&E issues of its programme. So it has built in mechanisms that allow for self appraisal as well as evaluation of the field work at the end of each financial year. In addition, an internal review after six months is carried out by mutual exchange visits amongst districts, and peer reviews are conducted. Their work and continuous interaction with panchayats not only provides regular feedback and transparency but is also used to provide efficient networking and support by being equal partners in working on issues. These regular reviews across levels on programme management and programmatic interventions/themes informs timely feedback and mid course adaptations to the plan.

There are lots of interpersonal issues and conflicts that may arise within one's own self for the sevinis and other workers. This coupled with the hostile local and political environment can be damaging both to self and the programme. Hence a committee was made to allow space and cathartic experience to the staff so that they did not internalise these fears, prejudices and anger.

Quick turnover is not a problem for KMSS. The Mission observed that many of their members and functionaries have continued with the programme over long periods. Some of them have even returned after the situation had stabilised. It was heartening to note that even when the programme was frozen, they had continued working. Even in the current situation, the staff has not been paid their honorarium for the last two months but the programme activities have not stopped. While appreciating high levels of commitments of the KMSS staff, the Mission strongly wishes to report that these are not practices that should be continued. The staff is entitled to their salaries in appropriate timing and enough support from the NPO should be provided to avoid any such situations in the future.

While there has been a progress at collecting data and compiling the same at district and state level in terms of targets, significant information around the qualitative aspects still seems fairly anecdotal. External expertise could also be hired to help develop an MIS.

### **Financial Management**

For the year 2009-10, KMSS has a total budget outlay of Rs. 4 crores, of which they have received a total of Rs.75 lakhs till date (with a carry over of 29 lakhs). As of end-September, reported expenditure was Rs 97 lakhs. In the last year (2008-09) a total of Rs 1.5 crores was received from GoI (and other sources like interest etc.). This brought the total income to 2 crores and the expenditure was Rs. 1.8 crores.

KMSS did not have any Accounts personnel but ensured that these 4 posts were appointed over the last two years. Funds are received from GoI at the State-level through electronic transfer. Onwards release of funds to all the Districts is done through cheques. DIUs have separate accounts with joint signatories. Funds flow from the Centre to the State was not found to be timely and is now posing a problem. The programme has expanded and has increased its ability to utilize funds, therefore leaving no balances/access of funds.



State has efficient mechanism for audits at the end of every financial year. The state volunteered and asked for the State Accountant General's office's review for its funds for 2004-2008. The State office has now initiated an internal audit twice a year at all levels. The financial reports are prepared after completion of audit done by the audit agency hired, as well as following the format from GoI. The annual audit report is placed in the executive committee meeting for approval and the same is sent to the NPO and chief audit officer of AG.

The state team follows the financial norms and procedures laid out for advances and settlements. The advance for all purchases is transacted through cheques. But the transactions for programme are still through cash. The Mission has encouraged KMSS to look into this and see if this needs to be addressed. However, all the programme expenditure is settled immediately on completion of the programme activities/events. All the bank accounts in KMSS are joint accounts.

Day-long induction training on Accounts procedures and systems on MS is conducted at the State office for the new accounts team members. Since most of them come from an accounting background, they did not need much procedural training but they attended a four-day long induction training on gender and development. They also received further training on accounting procedures at Bangalore.

#### **Good Practices and Innovations:**

- Gender Training
- Harithamithram : Training in Organic Farming

#### **Progress towards the Achievement of MS Objectives (Using Results Framework)**

The State can use support to work out the MIS related to the achievement of MS objectives and indicators. Recommendations of the Mission for KMSS are: to apply for research grant for documentation and analysis of the large body of work being done, training for capacity building of all MS Staff in documentation and analysis, the NPO and NRG to also provide necessary support.

#### **Trainings received under the Technical Co-operation Fund:**

The State was appreciative of the training received from the Educational Resource Unit (ERU) especially for the newly recruited staff. They shared that the training helped them to better understand the MS philosophy and ways of working. It also helped to reorient their thinking. The presence of the other states also assisted in filling the gaps in information in terms of issues, ways of resolving the issues and other working patterns. The Mission encouraged the state to think further on their issues of capacity building and to approach NPO in terms of further use of the TC fund.

#### **Conclusion/s:**

- **Summary of key Issues in the State MS programme**

While acknowledging and appreciating the progress made by the programme, the mission would like to summarise the main issues observed during the review mission:

- Capacity Building:

Capacity building is required both at the levels of both programme as well as financial management. As shared earlier, KMSS has made commendable efforts in shaping and implementing the programme. However the programme is dealing with many issues that require immediate capacity-building efforts to bring the newly recruited staff up-to-date as well as equip the functionaries to deal with issues of violence, psychological and physical abuse etc.

The programme can also benefit from capacity building in knowledge management. Though the state MS programme might have information, it was not available as a consolidated, verified document. The Mission would like to urge KMSS to use participatory methods and tools to assess progress against objectives and indicators as outlined in the Results Framework. The SPD shared that they had developed some formats but the sevinis and other functionaries were not ready/do not feel equipped to work with these.

- Leadership:

The programme needs to look at building more levels of leadership within the programme. The Mission observed that the SPD ends up managing most of the demands placed on the programme. She should look at options to delegate and build capacity of others in the office. This issue is being raised while acknowledging the efforts that the programme is making to build the capacity. However KMSS/SPO needs help with it.

- Local Context:

The Mission would like to record its appreciation for the work that KMSS is undertaking. Their portfolio represents work that is being done to get the most-marginalised access to education, health and a better quality of life. As most of the state has already shown many role models to the rest of the country, KMSS' work is primarily with those sections of the society that have not been a part of this model – abused and deserted women and children, tribals and their access to rights form a major bulk of the programme. In doing this, KMSS has made very effective relationship with the State departments, leveraging their funds, advocacy efforts and forming very credible relationships. However, given the volatile political environment the functionaries are worried by the uncertainties for the future of the programme.

- Support from the NPO and the NRG, Sustainability:

KMSS was very appreciative of the support provided by NRG members not only for the troubleshooting but also for the guidance on how to move the programme forward. However, given the local context, a major role is envisaged for the NPO not only in terms of guidance but also a stronger negotiation status with the State Government if so required. KMSS also needs to be conscious of its exit strategy in event of not only the political uncertainty but also to ensure that interventions like the work with short-stay homes, work with tribals, gender training etc would be continued.

- **Summary of recommendations of JRM for State**

- Some recommendations of the Mission are for KMSS to apply for research grant for documentation and analysis of the large body of work being done, training for capacity building of all MS Staff in documentation and analysis, and for the NPO and NRG to also provide necessary support.

- KMSS to interact with the Education Secretary to explore use of the innovation funds, scholarships for secondary education under both SSA as well as RMSA.
- Explore the opportunities for interaction with the Education Department on the intervention proposed for the Kovalam tourism area. There might be issues related to school drop outs/ enrolments that are common issues for both SSA and MS.
- Exchange programmes for the MSK children as well as many other functionaries. This would also go a longer way in addressing the issues of capacity building.
- The programme to concentrate on the progress made and reported in the last year. This would not only assist the future missions but would also help the State to work out its strategies and progress in a focussed manner.
- Financial management should be looked at with the assistance of the NPO in terms of timely requests and disbursements. Care should be taken from both sides to ensure that the programme is not left without any funds, and/or drawing on personal use of funds for programme. The programme can also look for further training of the accounts staff on these procedures and processes.

**Annex 1**

**Visit of Joint Review Mission Members 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

**Itinerary**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Place</b>
10.11.09	Presentation on the State Programme;  Meeting with the Sevinis  Meeting with other coordinating partners	State Office, Thiruvananthapuram
11.11.09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ State Resource Centre</li> <li>▪ Short Stay home</li><li>▪ Cluster Meeting</li><li>▪</li><li>▪ Mahila Shiksha Kendra</li></ul>	Venjaramoodu, Nellanad panchayat, Vamanapuram  Mayalamoodu, Pangode panchayat, Vamanapuram Nanniyode, Vamanapuram
12.11.09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Report writing</li></ul>	KMSS Office
13.11.09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Discussion with State Office team on draft report</li><li>▪ Meeting Chairperson</li><li>▪ Draft report presentation</li><li>▪ Return to Delhi</li></ul>	KMSS Office

The participants in the discussion were as follows:-

<b>JRPs</b>	<b>Sevinis</b>	<b>Partners</b>
Asilakumari Anita Padmakumari Sreeja Sheela Pushpakumari Suleikha Girija	Ajaitha Christya Ambili Sheela Usha	Dr. K Soman- Kerala State Literacy Mission Dr. Nair- Director, State Resource Centre Shukoor- Assistant Director, Social Welfare Gopalakrishnan- Sarang Shanti S- Environmental Activist Saroop- Equations Dr. Gangadharan- Research Officer-Women's Commission Deputy Director-Directorate of Public Instruction

In addition, mission interacted in detail with:

Sarlamma -DPC, Idukki  
Vinoji - DRP, Idukki

Sindu - DPC, Thiruvananthapuram  
Reena - DRP, Thiruvananthapuram

Rejula -DPC, Malappuram  
Regina - DRP, Malappuram

Boby Joseph - State Consultant  
Lily Pushpam - State Resource Person  
Remadevi - Associate Project Director  
Nadaraj Pillai - Accounts Officer  
Seema Bhaskaran - State Project Director

## **Annex 2:**

### **Status Study of women**

The status study of women was used as a methodology to start work in newer blocks. The status study of women is done using a questionnaire using random sampling as a methodology. The questionnaire touches several key areas like education, marriage, reproductive health, sexuality, political participation, cultural participation and use of media. After MS orientation, training in using the methodology is given to women from the ADS and CDS of Kudumbashree, ASHA activists, elected women representatives. The study is done through in-depth interviews of 250 women. The women are then taught how to consolidate the data and the findings are then presented before the governing board, officials of transferred institutions, ADS and CDS of Kudumbashree. This presentation and exhibition of data is in a workshop where the participants have discussions based on the findings and look at how this can be converted into projects and incorporated into the plan. This is an educational process where women engage in the research and learn about their own status.

Prior to the status study, gender trainings and MS orientation is extended to elected representatives, ADC and CDC of Kudumbashree, anganwadi workers. After the preparation of plan based on the status study of women and some panchayat level activities in order to explain the role and objectives of Mahila Samakhya, vanitha sabha (sangha) formation is initiated. Ward-level committees of jagratha samithis are formed and then converted into vanitha sabhas.

### **Note on Social Audit**

A social audit process was introduced to ensure transparency and accountability at all levels by presenting the plan, proposed budget and expenditure statement in the presence of the resource group and the block resource group. There is an open discussion on the budget and suggestions received.

The internal review process is undertaken mid-term and the evaluation process at the end of the year. The internal review process also involves looking at the accounting procedures and systems of each district and how that could be improved.

Advocacy - A draft bill for the prevention of child sexual abuse has been prepared and will be presented to the Law Ministry. The draft is under discussion and the final round of consultation is in December with the support of the judges of the high court.

Film and documentary viewing and production workshop was held in collaboration with Chalchitra Academy. This has been a medium of discussing issues and learning to use the media of films for discussion.

(Section 3.5)

**Mahila Samakhya Uttar Pradesh**

**Report of the Joint Appraisal Mission (9<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> November 2009)**

**Overview**

Mahila Samakhya, Uttar Pradesh (MSUP) was one of the first three States where the MS programme was initiated in 1989. Now it is 20 years since MSUP has been working towards empowering grassroots women to obtain the knowledge they need to ask for what is theirs by right, in the process negotiating their own space and place in rural society. In keeping with the MS philosophy, MSUP works with the poorest of the poor, particularly women of *dalit* communities, including the marginalized among minority groups. In U.P., the process began in the Sewapuri Block of Varanasi District and today covers 62 Blocks of 17 Districts. The programme covers 4871 villages and is implemented through 4776 women's collectives known as 'sanghas'. A total of 1,03,526 women are members of these sanghas. In comparative terms, MSUP works in the largest number of districts in Mahila Samakhya (A.P. comes next with 14 Districts), in the third largest number of Blocks and in the second largest number of villages. MSUP stands fourth in terms of sangha membership. There is a team of 1082 core workers supporting the process, working from the State Office (22 persons) and District Implementation Units (1060). These range from the Sahayogini who organizes women in 10 villages to the District teams and the State teams. Apart from this there is a large force of women who support the movement for empowerment at the village and cluster levels. These are members of the sanghas and sangha federations.

The process of expanding to 4 more Districts (Basti, Gonda, Lakhimpur-Khiri and Kaushambi) is underway, as is roll-back from 920 villages in 13 blocks of 7 Districts. Sahayogini have been phased out in 1620 villages in 18 Blocks in 12 Districts. MS is not target or statistics driven, hence these figures are quoted only to provide a wider canvas within which the observations of the Mission can be situated

The Joint Review Mission began with a detailed discussion at the State office with the State and most of the District teams on day one. We then proceeded to Varanasi District on day two, where, after a preliminary discussion, we met the members of the federation of Sevapuri Block. We then visited the Block Resource Centre (BRC) of Niyamatabad which is used for coordinating Block level processes by the federation (mahasangha) and from where the Nari Sanjivini Kendra (women's alternative health centre) is run. Here we had discussions with mahasangha representatives as well as with members of the *kishori* or adolescent girls' sanghas. We then visited the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya of Niyamatabad and interacted with the teachers and students. We then proceeded to the BRC of Chakiya Block (where the UNDP-supported SAVERA programme was implemented) and interacted with *mahasangha* representatives. In the late evening we met members of the District Resource Group (DRG) and after that, children of the MSK of Varanasi. On day three, we met the DM of Varanasi. The last day of the State visit was spent in writing and finalizing the State report and debriefing with the Secretary, Education, at Lucknow.

The JRM of 2008, being the first one, has extensively covered various dimensions of the programme, hence the attempt here is to avoid unnecessary repetitions.

As observed by the JRM 2008, a key strength of MSUP is the high level of motivation and ownership of MS by all concerned – the staff as well as the village women. High quality process-oriented work has been demonstrated under the programme. One could see how well the functionaries as well as the Sangha members have internalised the objectives, non-negotiables and vision of the MS programme. In other words, there is complete dedication to the 'cause that is MS'. In Varanasi and Chandauli at least, it was visible that the process orientation key to the success of MS is still intact after 20 years of struggle. It was also visible in the areas and programmes we visited that everything that MSUP does is 'empowerment inclusive'. Nothing goes without that. To instill and maintain the philosophy of selfless fight for the cause of women's empowerment among poor women is indeed a tremendous achievement. This was clearly evident in every process, be it that of the mahasangha or the Nari Adalat – the larger good wins over smaller gains. Unlike most programmes where money saved is money earned, here money saved is an opportunity to reach out to the poorest and give them access to the benefit of the process.

Convergence initiatives have started building up, with KGVB, SSA, NRHM, NREGA and UNICEF programmes being undertaken. The approach to taking up anything new particularly in terms of convergence with government programmes is cautious and controlled. Everything is adopted on MS terms and not dictated by the requirements of the programme in question. This is visible in new initiatives taken up such as the KGBV and the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme (see the vision depicted below):

We visualize Mid Day Meal as...

- An effective pedagogical tool to bring about social harmony addressing class, caste discrimination and cultural stereotypes.
- A learning lab where children can learn about the science of food, nutrition, hygiene, ecological balance etc.
- A binding force which can bring teachers closer to students, thus ending the fear factor in the classroom.
- A programme which will help sangha women to be economically self reliant and their presence in the school will be very reassuring for girl students
- An opportunity to bring about positive social change in the areas where MS is active and to have a demonstrative effect for rest of the country.
- An opportunity to break the gender barrier and allow women a chance to enter the male dominated technology area

On the advocacy front, the initiatives on UP Women's Policy 2006, amendment made to the UPZALR to include inheritance rights of daughters and the insistence on implementing the Domestic Violence Act 2005 are admirable.

The visibility of the programme is becoming a concern as MSUP goes from strength to strength. MSUP is as yet largely low profile and it does not seem as though larger government programmes



know or recognize what MS stands for. As federations get ready to negotiate larger processes and programmes, and to become managerially and economically self-reliant, the issue of visibility becomes a pertinent one. While MSUP is providing sustainable and meaningful models of programmes such as KGBV, MDM, NREGA or demonstrating that parallel justice systems such as the Nari Adalats can actually work, these have no recognition within the government and are not held up as best practices. Replication is affected by this. Formal presence in government development programme meetings and vociferous advocacy on the effectiveness of the MS process is a requirement. This needs support at the national level. A suggestion that came up from the MS team was to have a small module on MS in the induction training of administrative and other services.

A key concern still continues to be the exit policy. There seems to be a persistent debate on this within the programme in UP. We were told that under the GoI guidelines, a Sahayogini now has only three years to make the sangha self-reliant, after which she has to be phased out. This is clearly insufficient, as by this time the sangha would have reached at most at its medium strength. MSUP has taken the guidelines seriously and feels itself bound by it, and therefore under pressure. Then on, we are told, the Cluster Resource Person is given 2 years to consolidate the cluster process and then the Junior Resource Person gets 3 years by which time it is estimated that the mahasangha will be formed. The mahasangha will then get 2 years of financial support. We feel that this understanding and its application need to be examined in the context of initiatives by other State MSs, as a cross-learning exercise. In other words, MSUP needs to examine its exit strategies vis-à-vis what other State MSs are doing. Decentralisation, consolidation and phase-out are crucial to empowerment and a positive outlook and initiative on this will help the process tremendously.

The Sangha members under the umbrella of the *mahasangha* are looking for support and guidance on issues of poverty reduction. There is a need for channelizing greater support to Sangha members to enable them to improve their household incomes. While doing so, it is necessary to ensure that meaningful and empowering initiatives are continued to be taken up, and any pressure to give in to run-of-the mill solutions that target resources at women are overcome. This pressure has to be particularly situated in the context of the SGSY groups that are threatening to overwhelm the area. MSUP has so far been infusing the women's empowerment agenda into all its interventions, and this has to be kept up at all costs. The UNDP supported programme -SAVERA --was a meaningful initiative, as are those concerning the Mid-day meal, catering for MSKs and KGBVs. Group ventures, in general, have been successful here, as elsewhere in MS.

### **Programme Processes in Sangha Formation/Roles**

348 sanghas have been added to the MSUP kitty since the last JRM and the figure now stands at 4776. Three Mahasanghas have been added since last year. The sangha formation process remains the same – approaching the village, motivation through songs and small talks if nothing else works; gradual inclusion of willing women and persistent follow up with the unwilling ones. However, at the village level the visibility of the sanghas is such that only rarely is expansion in membership a problem. Lateral expansion where the sanghas or mahasangha supports formation of new sanghas is happening as well.

The classification of sanghas into strong, medium, weak and emerging continues and at present there are 1901 strong, 1169 medium, 1358 weak ones and the rest of them are emerging sanghas. This assessment is done on an annual basis in a district, by teams deputed from other districts.

Sanghas normally strengthen at their own pace, but now the pressure to consolidate the sanghas is increasing with the 3 years' perceived deadline. The difference between sanghas formed with this deadline and those formed over many years needs to be examined. The Mission could not follow up on this, but according to the MSUP team, the new strategy ones are unwilling to hold meetings without the Sahyogini, and their empowerment orientation and leadership building is poor as well.

The strength of a sangha ranges from 15 to 35, sometimes even 50. The philosophy of a unified collective is therefore kept intact. Savings and credit groups are formed out of these with 15-20 members, but the sanghas remain as sanghas. This is an important strategy as most often, processes of savings groups overshadow the village women's unity. If new economic programmes are planned, it is necessary to ensure that they are not **by the diktats of such programmes and that the MS empowerment philosophy remains intact.**

A laudable initiative is of the Kishori sanghas, which are in full swing in old districts. There are 601 kishori sanghas in 13 districts. These Sanghas address issues of child marriage (take cases to sanghas and if not resolved, to the mahasangha), health, sanitation, vices, enrolment, retention and environment, and create public awareness through campaigns and demonstrations.

## **Federations**

The focus of this trip was the mahasangha and the education initiatives. Hence, in some way, the sangha strength, consolidation and phase out issue became key to the JRM process.

To date, 21 Mahasanghas have been formed under MSUP, out of which, 8 federations have been registered under the Societies Act. Five new federations have come up recently.

It is envisaged that the Mahasanghas (EC/GC made up of 2-4 members from each sangha) will monitor and manage structures like the Mahila Shikshan Kendras and Health Centres. These federations have started functioning like independent organisations in terms of organising their monthly Executive Committee meetings. However, there appears to be a need for constant facilitating support and motivation from the MS functionaries. The case of Mahasangha of Sewapuri Block of Varanasi district needs to be considered while chalking out the phase out strategy. The federation started staggering when the support from MS was suddenly withdrawn under a roll-back strategy evolved by MSUP in the initial stages of the programme, resulting in the disassociation and practical disintegration of half of the Sanghas in the Block. After a JRP was posted to provide the sensitive support, the Mahasangha started mobilising the women and re-activating the Sanghas at village level. The grant (subsidy) support given to limited Sanghas under the programme also seems to have caused problems in the group dynamics and some leftover Sanghas stopped functioning. While this has been a motivating factor to Mahasanghas in building the corpus of the strong Sanghas, limiting this only to few Sanghas created problems in the group dynamics of the federation.

MS is promoting an enabling environment to promote leadership development among the Sangha and Mahasangha women. 4 Core Committees are formed at Sangha level to work on the issues of Education, Health, Legal Issues and PRIs. Almost all the Sangha members are encouraged to be part of at least one of these Committees. There is a cadre of 'voluntary work force' in the name of 'Sakhis' who assist the Sahayoginis to mobilise the Sangha women in organising the meetings on the issues concerning their lives of the poor women. The federations have taken up the leadership responsibility in promoting Adolescent Groups, organising the Nari Adalats, implementing the MDM and enabling poor women to access their entitlements under NREGA and so on.

The federations under the MS are expected to evolve as self sustaining organisations of women. Thus, the federations would facilitate greater ownership of the programme. However the sustainability of the federations depends on the 'sensitive support' that is provided under the project. Here again, the phase-out strategy comes into focus, one that can enable the Sangha women to run their organisation on their own.

In some of the federations visited, the management expenses required for the federations are met through generating contributions, and incomes generated from the collective activities like Nari Sanjeevani Kendras, catering, preparing and selling stationery, sale of artificial jewellery, running flour mill, etc.

The Mahasanghas are also given training in writing project proposals to enable them to access/implement various other programmes that are working for the benefit of women and the poor. They are presently negotiating for social audit and implementation of the NREGA programme.

The Mahasanghas need to be trained in management, negotiating larger spaces and accessing programmes. To keep the connection going and to enable them to understand how things could be done, Mahasangha representatives are presently brought into the regular review and planning processes at the DIU level by respective JRPs.

Expansion without consolidation is still a concern in MSUP. This implies greater presence for a longer time and therefore greater pressure on the organization.

There is a need to define the role of the federations under the phasing out strategy of the MS programme. There is a need for more clarity and capacity building support to the field functionaries on this important strategy of the programme.

Over a period of time, the MS programme has generated a huge social capital in the villages. The empowered sangha women could be encouraged further to function as Community Resource Persons to take the message of women's empowerment to the remaining women in neighbouring villages and the districts. Towards this, the federations should be nurtured to work as Resource Organisations for other agencies and programmes like NREGA, NRLM etc.

The MS programme should work on harnessing the energy and strong zeal existing in the community to build self-sustaining mahasanghas. This has been amply demonstrated by the active Sangha women who are working as Sakhis and assisting the Sahayoginis, CRPs & JRPs in the implementation of all programme activities at the village level. The Sakhis attend the monthly and fortnightly meetings conducted at cluster level, participate in the planning of activities and facilitate implementation of the same at village level.

## **Training programmes in MSUP**

Training and capacity building in MS are not limited by structured programmes, but are processes built into the learning strategy itself. Capacity building happens at all levels – in sangha and mahasangha meetings, in staff reflections, larger meetings as well as in structured training programmes.

The Mission members visited the State office as well as the Varanasi DIU. The capacity of staff members was visible in their active participation in discussions, but time was not sufficient to follow up systematically on their capacities. It was clear in discussions in Varanasi that from the Sahayogini level on to the Sangha leadership, women were very capable. The level of information of the mahasangha women is laudable. They are informed on all issues relating to women's empowerment such as those on girls' education, early marriage, health and hygiene, herbal formulations, legal rights, Right to Information, etc. This naturally speaks of the level of information of the staff who have motivated and trained them.

In the past one year, MSUP has organized 40 state-level training programmes and 821 district-level training programmes on various subjects. The State and DIU teams are sufficiently skilled to impart training to Sahayoginis and sangha women. Outside resources are frequently used for State and DIU-level capacity building exercises, particularly on legal and technical issues. The UP team feels that perspective building is one area where it is fully capable of managing its mandate. From outside, what they need and expect more than re-orientation is capacity building on topics that go beyond gender, particularly those which are relevant to MS today, e.g., poverty analysis and strategies.

In recent evaluation of MSK teachers, in the form of written test, some failed on basic parameters; but to encourage them and give them another opportunity to prove themselves, they have been posted as 'part time' teachers with half the salary and the proviso that on passing the test next time, they would be turned into full time teachers again.

In the recent past, a training needs assessment was done. This underlined capacity building needs at each level of the strata. The findings are being followed up with initiatives such as the *buniyadi* (fundamental) training of Sahayoginis by the State Resource Centre. Staff appraisals, review and monitoring are a regular part of MSUP. As such there are yearly appraisals in which everyone contributes. Orientations are held on the basis of this. As a general rule, no staff member is terminated on the basis of the review, as the fault is not put entirely on one person.

The capacity of MS staff is well appreciated when they join another organization.

In terms of the pressure to train functionaries within a given time frame, the exit strategy once again comes into question.

We agree with the previous JRM on the issue of male gender training of police and administrative staff. Whether MSUP has sufficient staff to do so or can organize resources to do so in an issue in this.

## **Participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education**

The critical focus in MS is recognising the centrality of education in empowering women to achieve equality. Education in MS is understood not merely as acquiring basic literacy skills but as a process of learning to question, critically analyse issues and problems and seek solutions. The women's mobilization process is oriented towards this. The constant open meetings and night meetings of Sanghas facilitated by the Sahayoginis have created an enabling environment for the women to learn at their own pace and set their own priorities.

Many Sangha women have become literate and begun to send their own daughters to school. In some villages, the Sangha women have ensured 100% enrolment of girl children, with no more child marriages. They are recognised as 'Sahaj Suhawan' or model villages. Sangha women ensure smooth and effective running of the school in many villages. Intervention on Mid-Day Meal has demonstrated that nutritious food can be supplied at the same cost provided by the programme. It is these kinds of demonstrations that have made the administration wary of MS 'innovations'.

There are at present 16 MSKs that create a pool of aware, educated and trained women who could play an effective role in development of educational activities at the village level. The MSK that the Mission visited at Varanasi has been working very well. The girl children enrolled in the MSK were from the most marginalised sections of the society and each of them has a tragic story to tell from her past. The hope that the MSK has brought for these poorest children has been very inspiring. Similarly, the model of KGBVs that MS has provided is highly inspiring. The MS empowerment philosophy has been integrated in the pedagogy of the KGBV. Through MS intervention, there is consideration for extending the KGBVs upto 12<sup>th</sup> Std., which will be a laudable achievement. There are at present 32 KGBVs run by MS in U.P.

There is a need for instructions from the Government to facilitate convergence of MS objectives with SSA. Sensitisation programmes may be organised for education functionaries at district and Block level. There is a need for seeking written instructions from the State Government to engage Sanghas in the regular PTA and VEC meetings. The Sanghas would bring a new dimension in the implementation of the SSA programme through their active participation. The Sanghas should also be recognized as 'social auditors' of all educational programmes with specific monitoring to gender concerns.

Formal presence is needed in ICDS to engage the Sangha women in the mothers' committees.

## **Participation in /implementation of other Govt programmes**

MS as a programme is not involved in the delivery of services and resources. The sanghas and Mahasanghas seek alternatives and solutions to problems of access to services and resources. The MS programme assists and enables the Sanghas to effectively access, harness and utilise resources available (especially government programmes relevant to women's empowerment) at village, block and district levels,.

MSUP has been successful in bringing convergence with government programmes, wherein the Sanghas and Mahasanghas are participating in the following programmes and thereby accessing various entitlements provided under these:

1. KGBV
2. NPEGEL
3. MDM
4. NREGA
5. Block Resource Group & DRG
6. Adolescent Health Programme – A special initiative under NRHM
7. Internship assignments by IIM-Lucknow
8. NABARD (Rural MART)
9. NIFT

### **Women’s empowerment – enhancing quality of life of themselves and families**

**In our view, MS in UP is still one of the best models of women’s empowerment in the State.**

What is most laudable is the range of information that rural women possess and their capacity to fight out any injustice. Everything in MS is an opportunity to infuse women’s empowerment, e.g. the Mid-Day Meal which has been turned into an opportunity to address issue of caste, nutrition, social bonding, sangha self-reliance and breaking gender barriers

Through sheer persistence, the women have managed to achieve what concerted programmes have not achieved, such as 100 per cent literacy. Women are proactively tackling issues such as female foeticide and sex-ratio. Awareness on larger issues such as organ transplantation from women to men has been picked up.

In the past year, 6 sangha women were nominated for the Noble Peace Prize.

Issues of domestic violence are addressed through direct intervention or in Nari Adalats. These now take up an average of 500 cases per year in all and have resolved 770 cases so far. Women ensure that agreements are taken on stamp paper so that retractions are not possible.

There are 604 elected members to the gram panchayat who actively take up women’s causes. Women have managed to compel existing pradhans to inform them in advance about panchayat meetings and to attend them.

Economic empowerment is one area where the programme is still ambivalent. “Poverty not our agenda” is still an underlying feeling that is preventing active participation in poverty-alleviation programmes. We were told that MSUP does not have enough staff to address this issue, as well. Poverty and the need for economic empowerment is in fact a serious concern in the villages. Many other MS state programmes have taken up meaningful ventures without compromising the MS philosophy. These could be studied and strategies made accordingly. Some Mahasanghas are mature enough to seriously, even if cautiously, go into this issue.

It is significant that women are not discouraged by failure of economic ventures. For instance, profits in some of the collective farming ventures are not much, as land lease costs 8000 to 10000 per year and benefits vary with the quality of land and the vagaries of the weather. In such cases it appears that the process of putting up and running the venture takes prominence in the women’s experience, over profit or loss. The enthusiasm continues. This is integral to the MS philosophy and the logic of group ventures.

There are 914 Savings and credit groups in 4871 villages that follow internal lending. In Varanasi there is no serious attempt at bank tie-ups. During the Mission's visit, the DM offered to involve the groups seriously in SGSY. The pros and cons of this have to be worked out.

Through the process of group farming, women now own land - a significant achievement.

Job cards have been obtained under the NREGA programme for 18,000 women. 15,000 of them have got work through these.

A proposal for community radio for Auraiya was passed for Rs 65 lakhs. A similar process is on in Saharanpur.

### **Resource Support System**

One of the strategies followed in U.P. is to accept international and national researchers for research on its processes. The findings are used by the team to strategize interventions. State-level Gender Resource Centre is working for increasing the technical and practical skills of its own workers and other institutions. The GRC was established in 2001-02 and has been strengthened over the years. The present roles of the GRC are building awareness through campaigns, conferences etc., handholding of sanghas and Mahasanghas, advocacy, research and analysis, exposure visits, field placements and gender training of functionaries.

SRG members have contributed in developing the KGBV curriculum design and content development, and UNICEF, IIM-L, Sahabghi Shikshan Kendra etc. are part of the SRG. Internal capacities are used for district-level training needs. Lateral linkages with government expertise are still weak at the State level. However, at the district-level and even at the block-level, somewhat vibrant linkages were visible.

### **Programme Management**

The MS management systems have been designed to facilitate the programme objectives of flexibility, participatory and decentralised models of functioning and programme implementation. The participatory approach was evident as seen in the programme management systems of MSUP.

Annual Work Plan and budgeting exercise involves all levels of staff and the Sangha women, and the plans are prepared to achieve the objectives of the MS programme. The planning process starts in December each year and culminates in a state work plan by March. The plans are finalised at State level and are implemented with the approval of the Executive Committee.

Monthly reviews on the programme interventions are conducted at all levels. In Varanasi district, representatives of the Mahasangha were participating in the monthly review meetings along with the MS staff, resulting in increased capacity-building and greater involvement & ownership of Mahasanghas in the programme's implementation.

Efficient tracking of work plan is undertaken both for the financial and programme progress through the monthly meetings and periodic visits. The Consultants of the State MS office have been entrusted with the provision of constant facilitating and monitoring support to the DIUs. The MIS is computerised and is maintained at state & district levels, which provides the monthly progress of various activities planned under Annual Work Plan.

The programme implementation is affected due to the delay in and insufficiency of funds released by the GoI. Various programme interventions could not be implemented due to the cut in the budget since last two years. As a result the cost of management expenses is reaching as high as the 40% of the total budget. There is a need to be conscious about this high percentage of management expenses.

The programme activities in Bahraich and other flood-prone areas are severely affected and it is very difficult to implement programme activities during the flood period. Fund constraint, particularly untimely flow of funds, prevents taking up of programme activities during the non-flood period (April to August).

In all the meetings held with the programme functionaries, the issue of remuneration and social security concerns was raised. Since MS is a Central Government-supported programme and is implemented by an autonomous society, there is a natural comparison between the pay and allowances provided under programmes like SSA. Given the challenges and the difficulties that the staff needs to face to achieve the objectives of the MS programme, there is an urgent need to look at these issues positively.

Though MSUP has been successful in facilitating convergence and influencing the government departments at State-level in advocating the issues of women's participation in education and empowerment, there is a need for more proactive and concerted efforts in influencing the district authorities.

### **Financial management**

MSUP has got proper financial management systems in place. The Accounts are maintained electronically. Proper accounting records are made available. At the State level the Accounts Officer is responsible for accounts and at the district level it is the Accountant. The minimum qualification of Accountant is B.Com. Many of the Accounts Staff possess Masters Degree (M.Com). The total number of Accounting Staff at state and district level is 17. Of them, 6 have been working in MS for the past 10 years. Trainings on Accounts and Financial management were organized at state level, first in the year 1996 and second in the year 2001. There is no regular practice of state finance staff visiting districts but in case of need, it is done. There is a monthly financial review meeting of district accountants which is held regularly.

MSUP has got a systematic MIS which enables the Accounting Staff to capture the data on fund-utilisation as against fund-allocation and releases to the districts. The monthly trial-balance in the prescribed format is submitted by the districts at the end of the every month and compiled at state level.

There is fair understanding among the Accounts Staff, at State level and in the district visited, about how each type of expenditure has to be classified.

MSUP has been following the practice of making payments through cheque in respect of



payments exceeding Rs.1000.00 and these are made by account payee cheque. Cash payment is made for payment up to Rs. 1000.00. Bank reconciliation statements are prepared on monthly basis. The funds are transferred from GoI to SPO by RTGS (electronic transfer), and from State to district by CBS/RTGS (electronic transfer). At the State office, the cheque is signed by SPD and Accounts officer jointly and at the district office by DPC and Accountant jointly.

Advances are sanctioned for organising trainings and other programme activities. The application mentioning the purpose is submitted for advance, by employees, on which DDO sanctions the advance. After sanction of the advance by DDO, the accountant releases the payment of the advance. After completion of activity, the concerned employees submit the bill/vouchers and the amount of the bill/vouchers is adjusted towards advance by accountant, after obtaining sanction from DDO.

Accounting is done on a double-entry system.

Internal Audit of District project offices is conducted by Chartered Accountants for every four months. The last audit was done for the period of Dec 2008 to March 2009.

Auditors who were appointed for the FY 2005-06 continued till 2007-08. A new C.A. firm has been appointed by the E.C. for the FY 2008-09 after getting proposals of Chartered accountant firms. All the proposals with a comparative summary are put up before the E.C.

Procurement systems are followed according to the prescribed guidelines.

Trainings should be organised on regular basis for Accounting Staff and also the Mahasangha members on funds management, utilisation of funds and maintenance of Accounts books.

A systematic mechanism should be set up to take corrective action on internal audit reports.

Statutory Auditors from CAG-approved panel may be engaged for the external audit.

### **Good Practices and Innovations**

In the previous JRM the following were mentioned as Good Practices: the Nari Adalats, the Nari Sanjeevani Kendras, breaking patriarchal customs that project women negatively and curriculum design in KGVBS and MSK. To this we can add the Mid-Day Meal scheme which shows that a range of gender and social issues can be addressed through a regular programme. This, in fact, is the fundamental good practice in MS as such.

### **Key Issues & Recommendations**

Key issues have been taken up and specific recommendations made in the respective sections of this report. Here the main areas of concern are picked up for concerted focus.

1. Visibility of MS is a key issue that is a concern vis-à-vis recognition and replication. Formal presence in government development programme meetings and advisory bodies at all levels and vociferous advocacy on the effectiveness of the MS process from all

quarters are a requirement. A suggestion that came up from the MSUP team was to have a small module on MS in the induction training of administrative and other services. We fully endorse this as well as the first JRM's recommendation for institutional recognition of MS as a GoI programme. Efforts have to be made on all levels to ensure that the MS models (such as in MDM, KGBV, Nari adalats etc.) as well as the very model of empowerment by MS (through the collectives) are recognized and replicated.

2. The sanghas and the Mahasanghas are key to the successful empowerment process that MS demonstrates. Any strategy that negatively affects these foundations of empowerment needs to be avoided, such as a limited timeframe. At the same time, MSUP needs to set a clear agenda wherein strengthening and consolidation of the collective is made possible, followed by a timed phase-out strategy. Our suggestion to MSUP is not to be restrained by GoI guidelines on the number of years for phasing out and instead, to get on with a reasonable and targeted phase out process. Cross-sharing with other states on their exit strategies will be of tremendous help. Decentralisation, consolidation and phase-out are crucial to empowerment, and a positive outlook on this will help the process tremendously. On the part of GoI, it is necessary to formally clarify whether the guidelines are so binding as to create the pressure that MSUP is feeling at present.

3. The process of empowered Sanghas motivating and creating a larger base of collectives needs to be encouraged further. This could emerge as a key strategy for federation strengthening and self reliance.

4. There is a need to systematically promote the federations acting as resource organisations for other agencies and programmes like NREGA, NRLM etc. Pressures against this are bound to be high as there is great resistance to any 'innovation' in conventional programmes, but a concerted strategy on this will help.

5. The sanghas and Mahasanghas need to be formally recognized by government departments for both implementation and social audit of government programmes. Institutional recognition needs to be promoted at State and National levels.

6. Convergence with SSA and other programmes needs to be strengthened at field level, without compromising the empowerment agenda of MS. Sensitisation programmes could be organised for government functionaries at district and Block levels.

7. Sangha members under the umbrella of the *mahasangha* are looking for support and guidance on issues of poverty reduction. There is a need for channelizing greater support to them to enable them to improve their household incomes and to manage their organizations effectively. However, it is necessary to ensure that meaningful and empowering initiatives continue to be taken up and that the MS empowerment process is not compromised. MSUP has so far resisted any compromise.

8. In the strong federations, a frequent question asked is: 'what next'? MSUP is attempting linkages for taking up meaningful programmes and non-programmatic initiatives such as campaigns. There are often promises made by government functionaries at the senior levels that are not kept. MSUP is seeking formal and written assurances instead of verbal promises. This is an encouraging strategy and needs to be supported and kept up. Any intervention at the national level on this will help.

9. A greater proactive role of the NPO in understanding the programmatic and management issues, as well as problems of MSUP, will help tremendously.

10. The programme implementation is affected due to delay and insufficient funds released by the GoI. Various programme interventions could not be implemented due to the cut in the budget since last two years. As a result the cost of management expenses is reaching as high as the 40 per cent of the total budget. There is a need to be conscious about this high percentage of management expenses.

11. Programme management & staff security issues need to be addressed urgently.

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**(Section 3.6)**  
**Mahila Samakhya, Uttarakhand**  
**Joint Review Mission, 2009**  
**Draft Report**

**Acknowledgments**

The Joint Review Mission team (JRM) of Uttarakhand comprising of Dr. K Lalita (Government of India representative and Mission Leader) and Ms. Arundhati Roy Choudhury (DFID), visited the State between 10-13 November 2009. The JRM team wishes to thank the State, District and sub-district functionaries of MS Uttarakhand as well as the partners for the support and cooperation extended during this period. The team also thanks women members of Sanghas and Mahasanghas from Pauri, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Champawat, Udham Singh Nagar and Nainital for making the visit an insightful experience.

*The list of individual and organizations met during the visit are attached as Annexure 1.*

**Programme Overview**

The programme has been in operation from 1989 as part of MS, UP when it worked in only one district that was Theri. Two other districts of Pauri and Nainital got added after 1995-96. In 2004 and 2006, after the formation of Uttaranchal, the programme expanded to three other districts of Uttarkashi, Champawat and Udham Singh Nagar. The State Project Director of MS Uttarakhand took charge in 2004, though she was actively associated earlier with the programme for several years. The geographical area covered by the programme is 6 districts, 21 blocks with a total number of 2417 villages being. These have as many Sanghas, and 8 Federations, with the total membership of women being 52427. The programme is constituted mainly by the Pahari people, also having a sprinkling of other communities, on which there was no data available.

The Mission records its appreciation of the MS programme in Uttarakhand. It stands as an example of a successful effort at working towards building an environment for women to learn at their own pace, deciding on their own priorities, seeking knowledge & information and making choices in the truest sense. The JRM team felt this is achieved greatly due to the leadership of the State programme provided by the SPO and DIU teams. The team also observed the MS programme at all levels practicing the non negotiable principles laid down in the MS vision, and succeeding in building an alternative culture of open, non-hierarchical functioning & participatory decision making. As a result, the women of the Sanghas and Mahasanghas are a vibrant, articulate community who fearlessly face situations and constantly learn from experiences of negotiating their everyday lives.

**Federation: Programme Expansion**

The Review team was pleased to see the programme reach and coverage. The data given in the annexure confirms consistent progress and achievement in programme coverage.

**Outreach and Coverage: 2009-10**

- 40 villages, 17 Kishori Sanghas and 40 Mahila Sanghas have been added.

- The membership of Sanghas has increased from 50659 in 2008 to 52427 and that of Kishoris from 6635 in 2008 to 6953 in 2009.
- As per the government targets the programme is expected to add two new districts in the year 2010. The planning process for the expansion has been initiated. The two district identified are Pithoragarh and Haridwar.

### **Programme Focus and Strategy**

The Sanghas and Mahasanghas are in different stages of maturity ranging from 3 to 10 years. What was heartening to observe is that the Sanghas' and Federations' membership covered three generations of women, including young and newly-wed girls. This reflects the successful development of second line leadership. Through reflection, dialogue & analysis these federations are identifying and engaging in newly emerging issues such as control over Jal-Jangal-Jamin (water, forest, and land), use of RTI to seek information on rights and entitlements, and the DV Act, among others. They have begun to raise questions regarding the functioning of PRIs. They are now working on issues like making the Panchayats conducive for the elected women representatives. Strategies to achieve cooperation from men are being developed. Geeta, a member of the Sangha, says: "*although we desire to work with men for changing their mind set, we do not have the expertise for it. We need help*". MS Uttarakhand has certain limitations in working with men, and in this they need strategic guidance.

#### Issues

- In the new districts, blocks and villages that have pockets with high concentration of Dalits, religious minorities and other vulnerable communities need to be identified through a process of social mapping.
- In order to ensure inclusion of small pockets or villages of socially disadvantaged and marginalized groups, the village selection norms and criteria of 50 families need to be relaxed.
- Need to develop strategies to address the newly emerging issues. This is critical to move away from the programmes becoming mere events, to more in-depth critical engagement.
- Enhance linkages with SRCs and NRG for knowledge building.

*For details of programme reach and coverage please see annexure 2*

### **Capacity Building and Training Programmes**

"I was illiterate. I participated in training and workshops on health. Developed my skills and capacity. Joined literacy camp to learn reading and writing. I have become a herbal expert and a trainer on health issues. Now, I am being invited as trainer by various government and non-government organizations. Not only have I earned the respect in the community but earning economically as well" - Shusheela Badola, Mahasangha Health Core-team member.

The state office is engaged in trainings and workshops on capacity building for MS functionaries at all levels.

- The training and skills-building requirement for the period has increased with the expansion of the programme to new villages as well the newly emerging issues in the existing districts.
- The targets for the training programmes vary from members of the Sanghas of newly expanded areas to strong Sanghas of older fields of activity. Based on the needs, district training modules along with new modules at State level are developed.
- Some of the key issues covered over the last year include gender sensitization, literacy, Van Panchayats, water resource management, health, RTI, NREGA, report writing, planning and management, federation and Mahasangha visioning.

#### Issues

- As the programme is progressing, new areas such as policy debates and analysis, policy influencing skills, knowledge of government programmes, planning, budgeting, and financing etc. needs to be undertaken.
- Working with men as a strategy for women's empowerment is critical. There is a need to not only evolve a strategy for working with men, but also to develop specific training modules.

*For more detailed information on training conducted please see annexure 3*

### **Participation of Women: Formal and Non formal Education**

The field visits confirmed and demonstrated the active participation of the Sangha and federation women in promoting formal and non formal education. It also confirms the active participation of the Sangha women in the village level education committees.

#### **Formal Education**

- At least 2 members from each Sangha are expected to regularly participate in the Village Education Committee meetings. As of now there are 1266 Sangha Women members in the VECs across the MS districts.
- What is to be noted is that the Sangha women actively engage in demanding trained teachers, monitor teachers' attendance, mid day meal programme, children's attendance, & marks secured by the children, along with infrastructural issues such as toilets for girls, etc.
- The Sangha women make individual contacts with the parents and girls who have dropped-out from school. Awareness is developed on the importance of girls' education through parents' meetings, Literacy-Jatha (processions) & Nukkar Natika (Street corner Sangha theatre/plays).
- As a result, there is an increase in number of parents seeking more information from the MS field workers for their children's education.
- Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSK) are opened for those girls who are not admitted in KGBV due to being over-aged. In these MSKs, girls prepare for the class 5 and 8 examinations. Sometimes totally illiterate girls are also admitted in residential MSKs to teach them reading and writing.
- The girls are then mainstreamed into formal schools. For example, in the year 2008-2009 out of 346 girls, a 140 and of 2058 young women who took the ABC exams, 28 got mainstreamed into formal schools.

- 24 Muslim girls from Madarsas are studying at the MSK in Dehradun now.

### **Issues: Linkages between SSA and Mahila Samakhyas**

- Lack of coordination in understanding and survey data between MS and SSA particularly on issues such as out of school girls, drop out rates, etc.
- GoI/State Education Department/SSA needs to form and activate existing mechanisms for better coordination between MS and SSA.
- SSA needs to make special attempts to draw in field-level learning from MS to improve programme delivery and outcomes.
- Effort to work on the need for SSA to change its mind-set of looking at MS only as service provider is necessary, instead inviting MS to providing strategic inputs based on its in-depth field experience.

### **Non Formal Education**

- MS undertook surveys to evaluate the literacy status of women in the MS coverage area. This survey reveals the number of illiterate, drop-outs, and adolescent girls.
- Activities are conducted to create an atmosphere for awareness on education. In Sangha meetings, discussions are conducted on the importance of literacy. As a consequence of these efforts, the demand for education increases many fold.
- Literacy camps are organized for Sangha women and Bridge courses are normally organized for girls who wish to enhance their education levels and re-join the formal schools. Women not only take part in MS Uttarakhand-run Literacy Camps enthusiastically but also register themselves in the National Institute of Open Schooling Programme and appear in examinations. In 2009, 2637 Sangha women were registered for Open Board (A, B, C) certificate courses.

*For details of number of girls admitted in Mahila Shikshan Kendra, NPGEL, see annexure 4*

### **Women Taking Charge of Their Own Lives**

The intensity and diversity of priorities set out by the Sanghas show that they are highly responsive to the local context and circumstances. The case-studies bare evidence to the processes rather than mere mechanical fulfillments of targets, processes being the spirit of MS programme. The case-studies discussed below show that this is not merely acquiring basic literacy skills but also learning to examine and analyze issues critically, and working towards resolving the issues women confront in their daily lives with institutions around them, starting from family, community and the State institutions. It is this process that creates ‘citizens’ out of women who demand their rights in all respects.

Damyanti Badola of Dugadda Mahasangha made a presentation before the JRM team. After an impressive presentation, she disclosed that she was illiterate and when MS programme was launched in her area, she became a sangha member and also aware of her limitation as illiterate. She decided to take up learning to read and write. When MS started literacy camps in her village, she encouraged many other women to join them. After developing the skill of reading and writing at the camp, she joined a bridge course and appeared for std. V exams and passed. Reading a chart during the presentation effortlessly, she added: *“I have taken class eighth exam this year. I have erased the stigma of being illiterate for myself and am proud of making Mahasangha presentation before you”*.

The case study given below shows the confidence women exhibit in executing technical jobs challenging the popular assumptions:

Four water tanks were to be constructed in Maletha village of Dwarikhal Development Block of Pauri district under NREGA scheme. Two tanks were to serve as reservoirs for the village. The general practice had been that men and women worked together under the supervision of men. And while this happened, men often rested to smoke, making women fetch stones and take up the other hard labour for construction. If some women stopped work to feed their babies or even just take a breath, they received comments that women were not worthy of this job. They were accused of earning based only on the hard labour of the men. To retaliate against these men's claims, the sangha women demanded that rest of the tanks be divided among men and women separately. Their demand was agreed to as the men thought that women cannot perform the task independently. Construction of the tanks was divided between men and women of the village. Women began to work. Men completed their job two days earlier than the women and made fun of the women for working till so much later. When engineers came with the Gram Pradhan for physical verification of the work, they found that three tanks, which were constructed by men and under their supervision were smaller in area than the specification given, but the tank constructed by women was one meter longer than the required specification. The men had to rework their tanks while the women were appreciated for their job by the engineer. When asked about the extra length of the tank, the sangha women replied "We have deliberately made this tank longer because the water of the tank has to be used by us. It will benefit our village". This incident raised the esteem of the women.

The other example is of Mahasangha women who came forward to participate in the tender process for a civil construction which is usually exclusively the domain of men. The experience narrated below is an example of the initiatives taken by the Mahasanghas of Mahila Samakhya, Uttarakhand:

The Sumangala Mahasangha came to know that a tender has been called for by Jalagam (Watershed) department for the construction of water tanks. In the Mahila Samakhya executive meeting at Kasayali, it was decided that Sumangala Mahasangha would bid for the contract. The fees for the tender submission were raised by the Mahasangha members. Local contractors who were also interested in the tender, tried to spread word that mahasangha members were not trained technically and were lacking in engineering skills & expertise. The tender was opened and contract was given to the Mahasangha (Yamkeshwar) as their rates were least. The aware and vigilant Mahasangha members, Ganga Devi and Premlata, replied "We have been doing such construction work at Panchayat level, so we have adequate experience. If needed, we will take the help of technical person." But everyone thought the women would fail and ultimately seek the help of men. The Mahasangha members made a fixed deposit of Rs. 13000 with the Jalagam. They borrowed money from the village Sanghas' saving funds to commence the work. Three water tanks were constructed under the supervision of Mahasangha members. The technical team of Jalagam Department evaluated the quality of the construction work and the women were praised for its excellence. When the Mahasangha received payment from Jalagam department, they paid back the loan with interest to the sanghas.

Women also have taken up issues as individuals, questioning authorities when they face injustice and Damyanti Barthwal's story is a fine example:



Damyanti is an active member of Mahasangha of Yamkeshwar Block. She has a water connection for her house and pays her bills regularly. But for last six months, four of the families of the village, including hers, were not receiving water due to technical faults in the water pipelines. Damayanti requested the Gram Pradhan to write to Jal Sansthan (the corporation responsible for providing potable water) to repair the fault in the water pipe so all four families get water supply. Damayanti says the Gram Pradhan holds a grudge against her since she is vocal about the village issues and is always questioning authorities when people are affected.

The line-fitter of the Jal Sansthan visited village. When she asked him the reason for his visit, the fitter told her that the Gram Pradhan had submitted an application to the Jal Sansthan about some of the families not receiving water from the water pipelines. Although illiterate, Damyanti asked to see the application from the Gram Pradhan. When she looked at the application, she could make out that there was nothing similar to her husband's signature which she recognized well. The Gram Pradhan had not included their name in the application. The fitter told her that he was unable to repair the pipelines feeding the taps of hers and other three families because their names were not included in the application. Determined, Damyanti took the fitter to the Gram Pradhan and tore up the application before him as it did not include her and other aggrieved families' names. She forced the Gram Pradhan to write another application with all the four families' names included. She didn't stop there. She then, along with other Mahasangha members, met the Executive Engineer of the Jal Sansthan narrating the incident and requested him to visit the village. The Executive Engineer sent the Junior Engineer to the village to repair the faulty pipelines. Here too, the Junior Engineer expected some favour from her as is the usual practice. Some people advised Damyanti to give him a bottle of liquor as he is fond of it. She firmly said "No", and then added, *"Although I am the wife of an ex-Army person, and can arrange for liquor, I will not. It his duty to get the pipeline repaired. If he visits my house, I will welcome him, he will eat as we do, but I will not bribe him. Now we are enjoying sufficient water"* said a beaming Damyanti.

This is an example of women fighting on issues of Jal-Jungle-Zameen, the very basis of their survival:

The Ramgarh region of Nainital district is known for its scenic beauty. The private land-developers have acquired a huge chunk of land there and started constructing resorts. The villagers of Khaprad village and its surrounding area noticed that water-generation of their natural water sources stopped after construction started. When they tried to find out the reason, they came to know that an influential builder has bought 100 bhigas of land (around 17 hectares) at the top of the hill and has constructed a dam on their water source, to feed his resort and apartments. The women understood the reason for their water source going dry. This problem was discussed by the sangha women at a Mahasangha meeting and the Mahasangha decided to visit the area. They found that not only the builder has constructed the dam on their water source but has mined the boulders in the area for stone to construct on the Van panchayat area. This, they said, is illegal. Similarly, he has constructed an approach road through their Van Panchayat land to his resort without any permission. When the team of women tried to meet the builder to stop him from using water from their source and to dismantle the dam, the builder's men told them that their owner has permission from the higher officials and they will continue to use the water meant for the community. They told the women threateningly, "Do what you will. The builder is a powerful and influential person. You cannot touch him".

Realizing the gravity of the problem, the Mahasangha organized an open meeting, inviting villagers as well as activists, intellectuals, social workers, academicians & journalists from different places. In the meeting, villagers and Sangha women narrated their problems and how encroachment has affected their natural resources and made their lives difficult. Women said that the encroachment by the builder on forest land has closed their forest bridle paths which they use to collect fuel and fodder. The villagers disclosed that the laborers working for the builders are defecating in the forest, near the water sources, polluting these as well. This has posed a health risk to surrounding villages. The Mahasangha, with the signature of all the prominent people present in the meeting, submitted a complaint to the district administration, about the encroachment in forest & Van panchayat land and other irregularities. The Mahasangha also requested for proper demarcation of Van panchayat lands encroached. The District Magistrate, watching the actions by the women and seeing the public support they managed to build for their demand, sent revenue officials to inspect the spot. The site was inspected by officials along with the local people and Mahasangha members, and the team found various irregularities committed by the builders. They immediately ordered the builder to stop the work and imposed a penalty of Rs.20 lakhs on him.

Seeing the success of women's efforts and local support to their movement for the community forest, many political parties tried to hijack the leadership of the movement. But women resisted their efforts and kept the leadership firmly in their hands. The builder tried to break this movement by threatening the sangha women & MS workers with musclemen brought from outside. But the women resisted. He then resorted to trying to bribe the MS workers who were working with the Mahasangha, offering Rs.10 lakhs and well-paid jobs at his office - but he could not succeed. Nevertheless, through local henchmen, the builder succeeded in bribing the men who were with the women initially, offering them money and employment. Slowly menfolk deserted the women. But because of the women's determination, still do not have courage to oppose them openly. They individually tried to influence their wives to leave the movement, without success. The women said, *"This is a fight for our existence. Forest and other natural resources are our lifeline. Men may desert us but we have our 'bahanapa' (sisterhood) with us to fight for the cause"*. The struggle is still on, receiving wider support from different quarters.

The Mahasangha has become the very life of these women. "We are so involved with the activities that, even in our dreams we are working for the Mahasangha" says Ganga Devi, a member.

### **Resource Support Systems**

Over the years, MS has broadened its linkages with different development actors across to engage more effectively and exert pressure. This involves working closely with:

- A number of non-governmental organizations. In the year 2009-10 MS Uttarakhand facilitated and formed a network of 22 organizations to pressurize the Department of Women and Child Development for effective implementation of the Domestic Violence Act;
- Different government and academic institutions, to receive training such as the Department of Organic Board, etc;

- And formed a State Resource Group consisting of people from the academia, retired IAS officers, activists, NGOs, women writers and educationists. Similarly at the district level District Resource groups have been formed.

*For names of the State Resource Group members, please see annexure 5*

### **Programme Management**

The Mission members were happy to note that the programme has created a distinct organizational culture that is decentralized, non-hierarchical and participatory. Both in the MS office as well as in the Sanghas, the team witnessed Sangha members and the staff exhibiting a self-assured way of handling issues and discussions. The deliberation in the meetings confirmed and demonstrated the active engagement of the staff members and the Sangha women in the programme management. It also reflected the depth of knowledge and awareness of the social context among the MS workers & Sangha women. The women exhibit high commitment and passion.

However, there are certain issues that plague the organization. Women who join SPO or DIU teams, at all levels, are constantly looking for better salaries elsewhere.

#### Issues

- The high staff turn-over puts excessive stress and strain on the programme quality, particularly in the context of programme expansion.
- The vacancy rates offer an additional challenge to the programme. As of now 14 positions remain vacant - 2 District Programme Coordinators, 9 Junior Resource Persons, 1 Cluster Resource Person, 1 data entry operator at the state level.
- No provision for social security, medical benefits and provident funds, making it hard for even the most dedicated staff to continue their work.
- The State PD is yet to receive a formal agreement letter from 2006 onwards.

*For details of posts vacant please see annexure. 6*

### **Financial Management**

There is a gap between approved budget for yearly activities and actual release of funds from the Centre, which severely affects the quality of work. For example, in the year 2007-2008, an amount of Rs. 384.11 lakh was approved but only Rs. 335 lakh was released. In the year 2008-2009, a total amount of 537.58 lakh was approved but only 370 lakh was released. For the year 2009-2010, Rs. 593.19 lakh has been approved and only Rs. 250 lakh has been released as on 6<sup>th</sup> of October. This is despite the fact that the audited statements are sent on schedule.

## Monitoring and Evaluation System

The Mission members observed that in terms of structure and functioning, the programme seems to be doing well. However, what appears to be a problem is that in the process of regular reviews, the experiences shared are not leading to better learnings and further growth of MS family.

The programme is monitored as below:

District Level	State Level
Monthly DIU Meeting	Quarterly State level meetings
Monthly Reports and Planning	Monthly Reports and Planning from DIU's
Monthly data	Monthly Data
Self Assessment	Self Evaluation
Quarterly Report + MIS	Quarterly Report, Annual Report + MIS
Regular Field visits	Field visits
Monthly Trail balance	Monthly and Quarterly Trail Balance for Financial Monitoring
Interaction and Planning with Sangha Women	Interaction with Sangha Women at state level

### Issues

- Need to develop and strengthen monitoring mechanisms and capacities at the Sangha and Mahasangha level
- Need to collect more outcomes and impact data along with inputs. This is critical to move away from anecdotal to evidence-based conceptual and critical analysis
- Need for more social-group disaggregated data along with gender disaggregated data
- Need to ensure that the findings of the evaluations feed into improving programme quality.

### Conclusion

1. Visibility - Visibility has been achieved in the civil society by creating broad-based resource groups at the State and district level comprising of individuals from academic, activist, media, legal backgrounds. Different strategies have been adopted for strategic engagements at different levels. These range from policy advocacy to bringing success stories from other States to the notice of the State government, monitoring and implementation of the government programmes and pressuring the government through *dharnas*, etc. The innovative use of strategies and its successes would stand as examples to MS programme in other States. It should be duly acknowledged and appreciated by the GoI. Even at the State level, general external/public awareness about the MS programme seems to be sadly lacking.

2. Inclusion - The programme is constituted by Paharis mainly, having a splintering of other communities. This could explain the cohesiveness of the Sangha programme. Now the programme needs to focus more systematically on:

a) The small pockets of very vulnerable and excluded groups (such as Dalits , Muslims). It also needs to facilitate processes which would lead to inclusion of marginalized groups at the leadership level,

b) vulnerable sections of villages such as the aged, visually, physically and mentally challenged and orphans to be brought within the development framework.

3. Sustainability – Federations have largely become independent and have been successful in achieving the conceptual objectives of the programme. Now issues related to further skills development and mechanisms for financial independence (both in terms of day-to-day working and expansion) are being raised by the Federation members. These needs are to be thought through in a focused manner both at the State and National level.

### Recommendations

- ❖ Share and disseminate the work of Mahila Samakhya with other government departments and ministries for larger policy impact. This would also lead to their appreciation and provision of support to MS work from these other departments and ministries;
- ❖ Create formal mechanism to feed in findings, learning & experiences of Sangha women into other government programmes such as education, health, livelihoods, Panchayat Raj etc. ,in order to improve their implementation;
- ❖ Systemic identification and efforts to include the most disadvantaged section of the society – this can be done through social-groups disaggregated data analysis, social mapping and evolving specific strategies to reach these groups;
- ❖ Plan to create and strengthen: a) resource centers at the block and district level to ensure sustainability of federation work such as access to new information, materials, etc.; b) to help the federations to keep growing more in depth, and regular review & self reflection of their work. This would lead to strengthening their knowledge systems and to connect with larger state & national contexts;
- ❖ Building better linkages and working together with issue-based organizations, networks and groups without specific political party affiliations. This will help strengthen the MS federation work;
- ❖ The experiences of the federations and Sangha members should be systematically documented and formally published;
- ❖ A suggestion was made by the women themselves for the inclusion of the old and infirm people in the NREGA programme by providing the scheme for activities such as taking care of small babies, making tea for meetings and NREGA workers, cleaning the village regularly, cleaning the water resources etc.;
- ❖ Expedite decision on financial changes – social security, medical insurance, honorarium etc.

**Annexure 1: List of Participants in the Meeting with JRM**

S.N.	NAME	Designation/ADDRESS
1	Ms. Damyanti Barthwal	Federation Member, MS Pauri
2	Ms. Shakuntala Rawat	Federation Member, MS Pauri
3	Ms. Susila Devi	Federation Member, MS Pauri
4	Ms. Savitri Devi	Federation Member, MS Pauri
5	Ms. Damyanti Badola	Federation Member, MS Pauri
6	Ms. Anuradha Joshi	N.R.G. Member M.S. Govt. of India, SRG Member M.S Uttarakhand
7	Ms. Geeta Gairola	SPD. MS Uttarakhand, Dehradun
8	Ms. Hemlata Khanduri	SRP MS Uttarakhand, Dehradun
9	Ms. Chandra Bhandari	SRP MS Uttarakhand, Dehradun
10	Mr. K.S Bisht.	Account Officer, MS Uttarakhand, Dehradun
11	Mr.D.C. gaur	Expert, SPO SSA Uttarakhand Dehradun
12	Ms. Ramindari Mandrawal	Protection Officer, PWDVA. Dehradun
13	Mr. Kamal Joshi	Member SRG MS Uttarakhand
14	Dr. Sandya Joshi	Member SRG, HESCO/WISE Organisation Dehradun
15	Dr. Kiran Negi	Member SRG, HESCO/WISE Organisation Dehradun
16	Ms. Santosh Dimri	Member SRG, DHAD organization,Uttarakhand
17	Ms. Kusum Ghildiyal	Member SRG, Sec. SEED Org.,Uttarakhand
18	Ms. Raanu Bisht	Member SRG,Women entrepreneur,Uttarakhand
19	Ms. Puran Barthwal	Member SRG, SEDS Org.,Uttarakhand
20	Ms. Pushpa Barthwal	Member SRG, SEDS Org Uttarakhand
21	Ms. Virendra Painuly	Member SRG, Social worker Uttarakhand
22	Ms. Jai Prakash Panwar	Member SRG, Channel Mountain Communication, Uttarakhand
23	Mr. Ravi Jeena	Member SRG, CARE Org. Uttarakhand
24	Ms. Kirshna Khurana	Member SRG, Writer and Former Principal Uttarakhand
25	Ms. Jahanvi Tiwari	Member SRG, DISHA Org. Uttarakhand
26	Ms. Sunita Uniyal	DPC, MS Uttarkashi
27	Ms. Preeti Thapliyal	DPC, MS Pauri
28	Ms. Chandra Joshi	DPC, MS Udham Singh Nagar
29	Ms. Sita Dabral	Incharge (DPC), MS Tehri
30	Ms. Reena Panwar	DRP, MS Tehri
31	Ms. Kusuma Bhatt	DRP, MS Pauri
32	Ms. Bhagwati Pandey	Incharge (DPC), Champawat
33	Ms. Nimmi Kukreti	DRP, MS Uttarkashi
34	Ms. Pramila Rawat	DRP, MS Udham Singh Nagar
35	Ms. Jashoda Bisht	DRP, MS Champawat
36	Mr. Ajay Rawat	Accountant, State Office, Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand
37	Mr. Ravi Mehta	Steno/Office Assitant, State Office, Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand
38	Ms. Kalpana Kharkwal	Computer Operator, State Office, Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand
39	Mr. Pradeep Verma	Computer Operator, State Office, Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand
40	Mr. Rajive Pandey	Computer Operator, State Office, Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand
41	Ms. Usha Panwar	Computer Operator, State Office, Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand
42	Ms. Rajni Rana	Account Assistant (Short term), State Office, Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand
43	Mr. Subhash Raturi	Messenger, State Office, Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand
44	Mr. Mohan Singh Negi	Messenger, State Office, Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand

**Annexure 2****Progress in coverage from 2008 to 2009**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Progress up to 31.03.2008</b>	<b>Progress during 1.04.2009 to 30.9.09</b>	<b>Total up to 30.9.2009</b>
1.	No. of Districts covered	6		6
2.	No. of Blocks	21		21
3.	No. of villages covered	2377	40	2417
4.	No. of Sanghas	2377	40	2417
5.	No. of women members of Sanghas	50659	1768	52427
6.	No. of women trained under MS	117579	52265	169844
7.	No. of Federations formed	8	-	8
8.	No. of Mahila Shikshan Kendras	6	-	6
9.	No. of girls who have passed out of MSKs	180	-	180
10.	No. of Kishori Sanghas	427	17	451
11.	No. of Members of Kishori Sangha	6635	318	6953
12.	No. of Nari Adalats	7	7	14
13.	No. of cases dealt with Nari Adalats	250	84	334
14.	No. of Sangha women elected to Panchayats	3999	-	3999
15.	No. of KGBVs covered	-	-	-
16.	No. of NPEGEL centres	63 cluster, 10 Blocks		63 cluster, 10 Blocks

### Annexure -3

The training/workshop programmes undertaken in the year 2008- 2009 are as follows :-

- # Gender Sensitization workshops for field staff, office staff.
- # Formation of Mahasangha/Federations
- # Leadership development Training/ Workshops for Sangha and Mahasangha members.
- # Legal literacy and Awareness Camps.
- # Intervention and management of Natural community resources. like Van Panchayats, water resource management
- # Library and Office Management Workshops
- # Report Writing Workshops
- # Entrepreneurship development trainings Women.
- # Female Health Workshop and trainings on herbal use.
- # Right to Information workshops / Training.
- # Planning and Management workshop for federation members
- # Federation/Mahasangha vision workshop.
- # Domestic Violence seminar
- # Accounts management training programme.
- # Panchayat Training for elected Panchayat representatives.
- # ERU workshop.
- # Workshop on Food security at village level.
- # Refresher Training for senior workers.



**Annexure 4**

Districts under MSK	Total Girls	No. of Girls (class)	
		5 th	8 th
Pauri	24	5	19
Nainital	30	9	21
Uttarkashi	30	30	–
Tehri	27	11	16
USNagar	32	18	14
Champawat	30	3	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>97</b>

**Annexure 4****Girls Admitted in MSK in Year 2008-09**

Districts under MSK	Total Girls	Class (no. of girls)		Pass out (classes)		Literate
		5 th	8 th	5 th	8 th	
Pauri	23	5	18	5	18	& 02
Nainital	26	9	17	7	17	& 01
Uttarkashi	25	25	0	25	0	& 01
Tehri	33	11	22	6	16	11
USNagar	32	18	14	18	13	01
Champawat	30	3	27	3	27	& 01
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>14</b>

**No. of Girls enrolled for the year 2009-10****NPEGEL****Early child care centers**

District	2008-09		2009-10	
	No. of centers	Beneficiaries	No. of centers	Beneficiaries
Champawat	21	314	22	289
Tehri	16	305	17	247
Nainital	16	296	18	313
Pauri	12	172	12	173
Uttarkashi	16	305	16	272
US Nagar	10	194	08	175
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>1586</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>1469</b>

### Annexure 5: Mahila Samakhya, Uttarakhand - SRG List

S.No.	Name	Designation
1	<i>Padma Shri</i> Dr. Shekhar Pathak	Editor, 'Pahad' Magazine, Professor and Head, History Department Kumaon University
2	<i>Padma Shri</i> Dr. Anil Joshi	Environmentalist, Chief Functionary of HESCO (An Organisation working for appropriate rural Technology)
3	Dr. Uma Bhatt	Head of the Department (Hindi), Kumaon University, Almora and Editor- Women's Magazine "Uttara"
4	Ms. Kamal Negi	Social Activist, Nainital
5	Mr. Shamsher Singh Bisht	Journalist/Social Activist Almora
6	Dr. Bina Saklani	Reader, Anthropology Department, Garhwal University, Srinagar
7	Dr. Atul Saklani	Professor, History Dept. ,Garhwal University, Srinagar
8	Mr. N.N. Pandey	Educationist/Additional Director, SCERT, Uttarakhand
9	Ms. Anuradha Joshi	NRG member and Secretary, SIDH Organisation, Mussorie, Dehradun
10	Dr. Rakesh Chandra Nautiyal	Dean, Faculty of Education, Garhwal University
11	Mr. Kamal Joshi	Journalist & Consultant on women issues, Kotdwar
12	Ms. Hemlata Bhatt	Principal, Govt. Girls Inter College, Lakhi Bagh, Dehradun
13	Ms. Ranu Bisht	Entrepreneur (Samya Sakshya-printing press)/ Social Worker
14	Mr. Rakesh Kunwar	Additional Director, SSA, Uttarakhand
15	Mr. S.D. Pant	Senior Advocate, Dehradun
16	Dr. Anita Dighe	Director, Distance Learning Programme, Himgiri Nabh University / Ex-NRG
17	Ms. Kamala Pant	Ex-Deputy Director, Department of Education, Uttarakhand
18	Ms. Krishna Khurana	Writer/ Social Worker
19	Dr. B.P. Maithani	Ex-State Coordinator, Information Commision, Uttarakhand
20	Ms. Geeta Balodhi	Coordinator, Kanya Jeenvan Dayani Samiti, Dehradun
21	Ms. Chaya Kunwar	Coordinator, HARC Organisation, Dehradun
22	Ms. Bharati Dangwal	State NGO Coordinator, Health Department, Dehradun
23	Ms. Jahanvi Tiwar	DISHA Organisation (Social Worker)
24	Mr. Pawan Kumar	Manager Communication, Monitoring & Evaluation, IFAD, Dehradun

25	Ms. Santosh Dimri	Social Worker, Dehradun
26	Ms. Rashmi Sharma	Manager, IEC, Directorate Watershed, Dehradun
27	Dr. Kiran Negi	Coordinator, WISE (HESCO), Dehradun
28	Dr. Sandhya Joshi	WISE (Women Initiative for Self Employment), Dehradun
29	Mr. Virendra Painuily	Educationist and Social Worker
30	Ms. Kamla Pant	Social Activist, Uttarakhand
31	Mr. P.N.Painuily	Freedom Fighter/ Ex- MP/ Social Worker
32	Ms. Janeab Rehman	Head, Dept. of sociology, MKP College, Dehradun
33	Mr. Puran Barthwal	Social Worker
34	Mr. Kamlesh Khantwal	Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Dehradun
35	Mr. Raghu Tiwari	Social Worker, Almora
36	Mr. Mukesh Bahuguna	Social Worker, Rishikesh
37	Mr. Jaiprakash Panwar	Media
38	Mr. Trepan Singh Chauhan	Social Activist
39	Ms. Kusum Ghildiyal	Social Worker

#### **List of Other NGO's**

- ✕ HESCO, Dehradun
- ✕ SBMA, New Tehri
- ✕ AMAN, Almora
- ✕ HARC, Dehradun
- ✕ CARE, Dehradun
- ✕ Lok Sampada, Kotdwar
- ✕ Lok Jeevan Vikas Bharti Bihari lal, New tehri
- ✕ Organic Board, Dehradun
- ✕ Ajivika (IFAD), Dehradun
- ✕ Livestock Development Board
- ✕ SRC, Dehradun
- ✕ NRHM, Uttarakhand
- ✕ CHHENAL MOUNTAIN COMMUNICATION, Dehradun
- ✕ WISE, Dehradun
- ✕ DISHA, Dehradun
- ✕ SEAD, Dehradun
- ✕ SIDTH, Masoori
- ✕ Samaya Sakhya, Dehradun

## Annexure 6: Detail Status of Vacant Positions

### Status of Vacancies in Mahila Samakhya, Uttarakhand

S.No	District	Name of the Post	Fill Post	Vacant Post	Total Village
1	US Nagar	DPC	1	Nil	350
		DRP	3	Nil	
		JRP	5	2	
		CRP	Nil	Nil	
		Sahayogini	35	Nil	
		Accounts Officer	Nil	Nil	
		Office Assistant	1	Nil	
		Data Entry Operator	1	Nil	
		Messenger	2	Nil	
2	Champawat	DPC		1	350
		DRP	3	Nil	
		JRP	5	2	
		CRP	Nil	Nil	
		Sahayogini	35	Nil	
		Accounts Officer	Nil	Nil	
		Office Assistant	1	Nil	
		Data Entry Operator	1	Nil	
		Messenger	2	Nil	
3	Tehri	DPC		1	360
		DRP	3	Nil	
		JRP	4	3	
		CRP	Nil	Nil	
		Sahayogini	36	Nil	
		Accounts Officer	Nil	Nil	
		Office Assistant	1	Nil	
		Data Entry Operator	1	Nil	
		Messenger	2	Nil	
4	Nainital	DPC	1	Nil	447
		DRP	3	Nil	
		JRP	7	1	

		CRP	7	Nil	
		Sahayogini	18	Nil	
		Accounts Officer	Nil	Nil	
		Office Assistant	1	Nil	
		Data Entry Operator	1	Nil	
		Messenger	2	Nil	
5	<b>Uttarkashi</b>	DPC	1	Nil	<b>350</b>
		DRP	3	Nil	
		JRP	6	1	
		CRP	8	1	
		Sahayogini	17	Nil	
		Accounts Officer	Nil	Nil	
		Office Assistant	1	Nil	
		Data Entry Operator	Nil	1	
		Messenger	2	Nil	
6	<b>Pauri</b>	DPC	1	Nil	<b>560</b>
		DRP	4	Nil	
		JRP	9	Nil	
		CRP	5	Nil	
		Sahayogini	35	Nil	
		Accounts Officer	Nil	Nil	
		Office Assistant	1	Nil	
		Data Entry Operator	1	Nil	
		Messenger	2	Nil	
6	<b>State Office</b>	SPD	1	Nil	<b>Implementation Unit</b>
		SRP	2	Nil	
		Accounts Officer	1	Nil	
		Accountant	1	1	
		Office Assistant	1	Nil	
		Data Entry Operator	4	Nil	
		Messenger	2	Nil	

**Annexure 7: MIS monitoring Format**

<b>Mahila Samakhya Uttarakhand: Data for the month of -----</b>				
<b>S.No</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Upto Previous month</b>	<b>currently passed month</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Coverage (Village)</b>			
<b>2</b>	<b>No. of Blocks</b>			
<b>3</b>	<b>No. of sanghas</b>			
<b>4</b>	<b>Sangha members</b>			
<b>5</b>	<b>Cluster Sangha</b>			
<b>6</b>	<b>Newly constructed Sangha/Cluster</b>			
<b>7</b>	<b>Villages in Roll-back process</b>			
<b>8</b>	<b>Kishoris</b>			
8.1	<b>No. of Kishori sanghas</b>			
8.2	<b>No. of members</b>			
<b>9</b>	<b>Women trained</b>			
9.1	<b>Health</b>			
9.2	<b>Legal literacy</b>			
9.3	<b>Gender</b>			
9.4	<b>Economic</b>	—	—	—
9.5	<b>Education</b>			
9.6	<b>Panchayat</b>			
9.7	<b>RTI</b>			
9.8	<b>Food Security</b>			
9.9	<b>NREGA</b>			
9.10	<b>Personality Development</b>			
9.11	<b>Leadership Development</b>			
9.12	<b>Other (Domestic violence, Environment)</b>			
	<b>Total</b>			
<b>10</b>	<b>Total No. of Kishoris trained</b>			

10.1	<b>Vocational training:</b>			
10.2	<b>Personality Development</b>			
<b>11</b>	<b>Federations formed</b>			
<b>12</b>	<b>MSKs</b>			
12.1	<b>Total MSK</b>			
12.2	<b>Total no. of students</b>			
12.3	<b>Total appeared in exams</b>			
12.4	<b>Total no. of learners benefited till now</b>			
12.5	<b>No. of girls enrolled in Class 5th</b>			
	<b>No. of girls enrolled in Class 8th</b>			
12.6	<b>No. of girls passed out in Class 5th</b>			
	<b>No. of girls passed out in Class 8th</b>			
<b>13</b>	<b>Mainstreaming</b>			
13.1	<b>Total no. of girls mainstreamed</b>			
13.2	<b>Total no. of women mainstreamed</b>			
13.3	<b>Total enrolment villages</b>			
13.4	<b>No. of Women registered for A Level</b>			
	<b>No. of Women registered for B Level</b>			
	<b>No. of Women registered for C Level</b>			
13.5	<b>No. of Women appeared for A Level</b>			
	<b>No. of Women appeared for B Level</b>			
	<b>No. of Women appeared for C Level</b>			
13.6	<b>No. of Women Passed out (A Level)</b>			
	<b>No. of Women passed out (B Level)</b>			
	<b>No. of Women passed out (C Level)</b>			
<b>14</b>	<b>NPEGEL</b>			
14.1	<b>No. of NPEGEL Blocks</b>			
14.2	<b>No. of NPEGEL Clusters</b>			
14.3	<b>No. of Schools in this clusters</b>			
<b>15</b>	<b>Literacy</b>			
15.1	<b>No. of literacy camps</b>			

15.2	<b>Total literate villages</b>			
15.3	<b>No. of women made literate</b>			
15.4	<b>No. of Bridge course</b>			
15.6	<b>No. of women</b>			
<b>16</b>	<b>Participation of women in Panchayats</b>			
16.1	<b>Pradhan</b>			
16.2	<b>Upa Pradhan</b>			
16.3	<b>Ward Member</b>			
16.4	<b>Kshetra Panchayat Member (BDC)</b>			
16.5	<b>Zila Panchayat Member</b>			
<b>17</b>	<b>Economic activities</b>			
17.1	<b>No. of savings groups</b>			
17.2	<b>No. of women involved</b>			
17.3	<b>Amount saved</b>			
<b>18</b>	<b>No. Who have established linkages with NABARD, SGSY, NYK</b>			
<b>19</b>	<b>Addressing violence</b>			
19.1	<b>No. of Apni Adalats</b>			
19.2	<b>No. of Nyay Karyakarthas</b>			
19.3	<b>No. of cases in Process</b>			
19.4	<b>No. of cases dealt</b>			
19.5	<b>No. of Cases registered under Domestic Violence</b>			
<b>20</b>	<b>Demanding accountability</b>			
20.1	<b>No. of villages where sangha women are part of school or village education committees</b>			
20.2	<b>No. of villages where sanghas have ensured regular visits by ANMs</b>			



Section 4:

**ANNEXURES**

(Section 4.1)  
**Terms of Reference**

Second Joint Review Mission (9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009), Mahila Samakhya

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The Mahila Samakhya Programme was initiated in 1989 to translate the goals of NPE and POA into a concrete programme for the education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly of women from socially and economically marginalised groups.

The critical focus in MS is recognising the centrality of education in empowering women to achieve equality. To move towards this objective, MS has adopted an innovative approach that emphasises the process rather than mere mechanical fulfillment of targets. Education in MS is understood not merely as acquiring basic literacy skills but as a process of learning to question, critically analysing issues and problems and seeking solutions. It endeavours to create an environment for women to learn at their own pace, set their own priorities and seek knowledge and information to make informed choices. It seeks to bring about a change in women's perception about themselves and the perception of society in regard to women's "traditional roles". This essentially involves enabling women, especially from socially and economically disadvantaged and marginalised groups, to address and deal with problems of isolation and lack of self confidence, oppressive social customs, struggles for survival, all of which inhibit their learning. It is in this process that women become empowered.

Women's collectives under the MS scheme, called Mahila Sanghas, play an active role in working towards removal of barriers to the participation of girls and women in education at the community level and play an active role in school management/running of alternate schooling facilities where needed.

1.2 The purpose of the current phase of *Mahila Samakhya* is to consolidate and expand of the programme and to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in a total of 167 Districts across 11 Indian states<sup>11</sup>. The objectives of the programme are as follows:

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<sup>11</sup> The programme is currently operational in 102 districts and 468 blocks in ten states: Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh will be

- To create an environment in which education can serve the objectives of women's equality.
- To enhance the self-image and self-confidence of women and thereby enabling them to recognize their contribution to the economy as producers and workers, reinforcing their need for participating in educational programmes.
- To create an environment where women can seek knowledge and information and thereby empower them to play a positive role in their own development and development of society.
- To set in motion circumstances for larger participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education programmes.
- To provide women and adolescent girls with the necessary support structures and an informal learning environment to create opportunities for education.
- To enable Mahila Sanghas to actively assist and monitor educational activities in the villages – including elementary schools, AE, EGS/AIE Centres and other facilities for continuing education.
- To establish a decentralized and participative mode of management, with the decision making powers devolved to the district level and to Mahila Sanghas which in turn will provide the necessary conditions for effective participation.

1.3 MS is a national programme funded through national resources with additional external funding by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The DFID funding will be from the year 2007-08 to 2013-14. The programme provides for monitoring mechanisms including provision for an annual Joint Review Mission (JRM) in the month of September each year. The JRM will include visits to six of the eleven states participating in the programme. This will be the second MS JRM and it is scheduled from 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

## **2. Mission Objectives and guiding principles**

2.1 The main objective of the JRM is to review progress in the implementation of the programme with respect to programme objectives and to discuss follow-up action, including capacity issues.

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added to the ten existing states in the programme during the period of DFID support, of which half the XI Plan period has passed.

2.2 The guiding principle is one of a Learning Mission: (a) learning of progress made against agreed indicators and processes, as well as (b) cross sharing of experiences that highlight strengths and weaknesses with a view to strengthen implementation capacities.

2.3 The Mission will:

- (i) Review progress in overall implementation, particularly expansion and consolidation of the programme's coverage, especially through federations' autonomy and activities.
- (ii) Look at processes (at village/sangha, block, district and State levels) being adopted to achieve the objectives of Mahila Samakhya.
- (iii) Examine issues related to State and District implementation capacity – training, staffing/vacancies, infrastructure & security, etc.
- (iv) Review financial management.
- (v) Review TC Fund implementation.

2.4 During their visits to the six states, the Mission would enquire, in detail, into the following aspects:

- Assess progress against the objectives and key indicators included in the MS Results Framework (Annex 1).
- Quality of programme interventions, particularly those for education.
- Programme management: staffing, training, participatory functioning.
- Financial Management: accounts staffing, post review of sample procurements, audit arrangements etc.

2.5 The second JRM for MS will make recommendations centered around the following issues drawn on the States visited:

- Assessment of progress towards MS goals and objectives, in particular expansion of coverage of the programme.
- Assessment of programme management and implementation arrangements (including financing & procurement).

- An assessment of State, district and sub-district management and monitoring systems in place.
- Specific blocks, districts and states requiring focused attention and targeting during the project.
- Any other focal areas requiring attention / emphasis

2.6 The Joint Review Mission for MS will provide brief State reports on each State visited and one overall (National) report. All of these will be compiled together as an Aide Memoire.

### 3. MISSION PLAN

3.1 The Mission would comprise of 12 members. Members would be chosen in such a way that expertise would be available for all the major functional areas with, as far as possible, particular specialisation of Mission members matched to the priorities of the MS Programme. The Mission would visit six States viz.: Assam, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Each State team will comprise 2 members (one GoI nominee and one DFID nominee on the Mission).

3.2 The Mission composition would be as follows:

GOI: 6 members including Mission Leader and one financial management and procurement specialist.

DFID: 6 members including financial management and procurement specialist.

3.3 Each State Team would submit a draft State Report on the State visited by them and obtain feedback on the same during a State level wrap-up with the Secretary, Education Department before departure from the State.

- 3.4 GoI will provide the leadership and coordination of each JRM. A core team of 8 members led by the Mission Leader will be responsible for compiling the overall report of the Review Mission on MS.

#### 4. TIME FRAME

The Review Mission would take place between 9<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009 as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
9 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Monday)	⇒ Briefing by Government of India ⇒ Internal discussions, preparation for field visits and Departure for States
10 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Tuesday)	⇒ State level discussions and briefings ⇒ Discussion with other districts and State level organisations and State Team. ⇒ Travel to district
11 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Wednesday)	⇒ Field-visit in district (1)
12 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Thursday)	⇒ Arrival at SPO, and State Report Writing
13 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Friday)	⇒ Wrap-up at State level with draft State Report to be presented to the State Education Secretary (Chairperson of EC of State MS). ⇒ A fax or email copy of draft State report to be sent to NPO, GoI before departure from State. ⇒ Depart for and arrive in Delhi
14 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Saturday)	⇒ Arrival in Delhi for those Mission members unable to travel the day before ⇒ Meeting with Mission Leader for finalization of core issues for National Report ⇒ Core team writes National Report
15 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Sunday)	⇒ Core team completes draft National Report and shares with NPO (by email/fax) ⇒ Meeting with MHRD Officials to discuss State Reports and National Report (second half of the day)

16 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Monday)	⇒ Modification and finalization of State & National Reports, by Core team ⇒ Members other than core team depart by evening
17 <sup>th</sup> November, 2009 (Tuesday)	⇒ Wrap-up

## 5. Documents and information required

1. Updated Results Framework from the States
2. State and district wise approved work plans and budgets 2008-09 and 2009-10
3. Information on Release of funds to states – 2008-09 and 2009-10
4. An update on the use of the TC funds; including ERU Capacity Building; Documentation of Best Practices, etc.
5. An annual update (four-page brief) on MS Implementation from the nine States bringing out achievements and key implementation issues.
6. Draft report of the Baseline Survey.
7. Update on establishment of NRC.

The Government of India will make the above documents available to the JRM by 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2009.

**SUGGESTED MS STATES SELECTED FOR SECOND JOINT  
REVIEW MISSION**

<b>STATES</b>	<b>JRM</b>
1. Andhra Pradesh	
2. Assam	√
3. Bihar	
4. Chhattisgarh	
5. Gujarat	√
6. Jharkhand	√
7. Karnataka	
8. Kerala	√
9. Madhya Pradesh	
10. Uttar Pradesh	√
11. Uttarakhand	√



## Annex 1: Results Framework

Narrative	Measurable Indicators (OVI)	Means of Verification (MOV)	Assumptions
<b>Goal</b>			
Better educated and empowered women and girls accessing their rights and opportunities equally with men and able to participate fully in public life.			
<b>Purpose</b>			
Mahila Samakhya (MS) consolidated and expanded, to promote gender equality and women's empowerment	<p>MS doubled to cover 167 Districts. Increase over baseline levels in MS blocks or districts if whole district is covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share of girls' enrolment in primary and upper primary schools reflects their share in the population (%).</li> <li>- Ratio of young literate females to males disaggregated by Social category rises (ages 15-24);</li> <li>- Better access to health services by women, disaggregated by Social category (%)</li> </ul>	<p>DISE and other Education statistics (Ministry of Human Resource Development).</p> <p>Education and health indicators pertaining to Sangha/Federation women and their families, generated within the MS Programme.</p> <p>MoH Annual reports (Reproductive Child Health II)</p>	<p>Greater gender equality improves investments in health and education for long term development, raises productivity and household saving and investment, reduces the burden of high fertility and promotes growth.</p> <p>Impact on Sangha women leads to a wider impact on non-sangha women also.</p> <p>MS processes receive support in a wider programmatic and political context. Policies and programmes facilitate the processes of gender equality.</p>
<b>Outputs</b>			
1. MS coverage expanded to an additional 21,000 Sanghas.	1.1 21,000 additional Mahila Sanghas operating in 420 additional Educationally Backwards Blocks (EBBs) by 2014) (membership by SC, ST, Muslim and other disadvantaged groups)	<p>Annual reports on progress from MHRD, MS JRM Aide Memories and specially commissioned surveys.</p> <p>Records of</p>	<p>Project personnel are in place at all levels to facilitate new Sanghas.</p> <p>MS functionaries are oriented for non-hierarchical management styles and</p>

	<p>1.2 A decentralized and participative mode of setting the agenda for MS established in the new EBBs (assessed annually from 2007-08).</p> <p>1.3 MS Programme Management structures are delivering support to the Sahyogini/ Cluster Resource Persons and Junior Resource Persons effectively (assessed annually from 2007-08)</p> <p>Existence of a systematic and effective plan of expansion /withdrawal from field areas and mechanisms for feedback.</p>	<p>Workshops and training programmes to check, inter alia, whether the pace and priorities of the programme are being set by Sangha Women and are reflected in the work plan of MS.</p> <p>Reports of Joint Review Missions</p> <p>MS reports</p> <p>Number and nature of capacity building activities for Sahayoginis/JRPs/CRPs.</p>	<p>respect for transparency.</p> <p>There is programme support to counter any backlash against the programme objectives.</p>
<p>2. Raised capacity and confidence of approximately 10 lakh sangha /federation women, with increased engagement of other women community members.</p>	<p>2.1 Articulated demand increases for information on issues concerning women's lives: health, legal matters, public works, government schemes for women and poor in general, panchayats and environment, (assessed annually from 2007-08)</p> <p>2.2 Local communities supported in building their capacity to access/and manage environmental resources (land, water, forest) (assessed annually from 2007-08)</p>	<p>Annual reports on progress from MHRD, MS JRM Aide Memories and specially commissioned surveys.</p> <p>MS (including National Resource Center) Reports</p> <p>Records of Workshops and training programmes.</p> <p>Mid Term Review</p> <p>Annual updates of Baseline Survey.</p>	<p>Women's groups at the village level set the pace, priorities, form and content of all project activities.</p> <p>The time burden on women and girls in respect of their household responsibilities is reduced or at least is at a level that does not prevent their participation in MS activities.</p> <p>Effective functioning of National Resource Centre for Mahila Samakhya and Girl's education:</p> <p>i) NRC harnesses necessary human resources to provide sustained support to State MS Societies in</p>

			material development, training and capacity building 2)NRC effectively facilitates the development and dissemination of lessons and knowledge generated by MS.
3. Mahila Sanghas enabled and actively assisting and monitoring/interfacing with all educational, health, rural employment and other relevant programmes in the villages including primary schools, Alternative and Non-formal Education Facilities,etc	<p>3.1 Active involvement in MS programme and participation of sangha women in village level development bodies</p> <p>3.2 Sangha monitoring the functioning of schools and Mid Day Meal programme with dialogue/ interaction between MS members and schools teachers and educational functionaries (assessed annually from 2007-08)</p> <p>3.3 Sanghas proactive on girls' education issues. Active engagement with Mahila Shikshan Kendras and other learning alternatives provided by MS or through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan/government.</p> <p>3.4 Sanghas and federations challenging and changing social practices and barriers to women's/girls' education and empowerment</p>	<p>SSA and MS (MHRD) Reporting</p> <p>JRM, Mid Term Reports and evaluations commissioned by programmes.</p>	<p>The schemes allow space for public participation and implementers are responsive to Sangha's voice.</p> <p>An environment is created for women and girls to seek knowledge and information and create opportunities for their education.</p>
4. Greater participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal educational programmes	<p>4.1 Girls' share of enrolment to all levels of education in the EBBs increases particularly SC, ST, Muslim, and other disadvantaged girls (Assessed annually from 2007-08).</p> <p>4.2 Girls in elementary education have improved :</p>	<p>State MS reports, Non-formal and formal school records</p> <p>District Information System for Education (DISE)</p> <p>Reports of Joint Review</p>	<p>The time burden on women and girls in respect of their household responsibilities is reduced or at least is at a level that does not prevent their participation in education and training</p>

	<p>completion rate; repetition rate, dropout rate particularly Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Muslims, and other disadvantaged girls (assessed annually from 2007-08)</p> <p>4.3 MS engaging in policy influencing at all levels in areas related to gender sensitisation of school curriculum and teaching and learning materials greater resource allocation for women's development.</p>	<p>Mission</p> <p>Education indicators pertaining to Sangha/Federation women and their families, generated within the MS Programme.</p> <p>Case studies profiling Sangha women/ families.</p>	<p>activities.</p>
<p>5. Women empowered to improve the quality of life of themselves and their families (economic opportunities, health, political participation)</p>	<p>5.1 Women take on active roles in economic, social and political arena.</p> <p>5.2 Access of women to credit</p> <p>5.3 Active participation of Sangha women in developmental activities and in decision making at village level</p> <p>5.4 MS enabling women to participate in electoral processes and facilitating inclusion of gender issues in local developmental agendas of elected representatives especially panchayats.</p> <p>5.5 Sanghas/federations effectively running, managing and supervising alternative forum and programmes such as Nari Adalats (Women's Courts), Health centres etc.-</p>	<p>Profiles of Sangha women and case studies from districts.</p> <p>Joint Review Missions.</p> <p>Number of elected women from under represented sections of society in local bodies.</p> <p>Annual Reports from States/Districts.</p>	<p>Managerial Capacity and /or staffing will be expanded or upgraded to deliver project outputs.</p> <p>Staff turnover will be managed through higher remuneration.</p> <p>Scaled up targeted interventions will not reduce the quality of MS.</p> <p>The activities of MS will not produce a backlash from certain members of the community that may be threatened by greater gender equality and empowerment of women.</p>

(Section 4.2)

**Presentation on MS programme & progress made at Briefing meeting**

**Mahila Samakhya  
Programme**

**Joint Review Mission**

9<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Government of India  
Department of School Education and Literacy  
Ministry of Human Resource Development

**MS Programme**

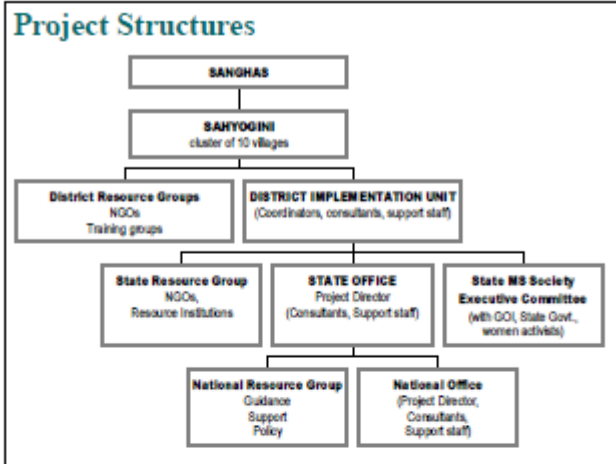
- National Policy of Education 1986
  - Education as an agent of basic change in the status of women
- Programme initiated in 1989
  - To translate the goals of NPE and POA
- Programme for the education and empowerment of women
- Implementation in educationally backward blocks with rural female literacy rate below 30%.
- For women from socially and economically marginalized groups

### Objectives

- Enhance the self-image and self-confidence of women
- Create an environment where women can seek knowledge and information
- Establish a decentralized and participative mode of management
- Enable Mahila Sanghas to actively assess and monitor educational activities in the villages
- Provide education for women and adolescent girls

### MS States

- Launched as a pilot project in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka in 1989
- Extended to Andhra Pradesh(1992), Bihar(1992), Assam(1995) and Kerala(1998)
- After bifurcation of States, the programme also commenced in Uttarakhand (2003), Jharkhand & Chhattisgarh (2006)
- MS Society registered in Madhya Pradesh (2007); programme yet to be launched.



- ### Physical Progress
- 31,608 villages in 102 districts in 10 States
  - 35,516 sanghas with 8.51 lakh women members
  - 162 Federations, 95 MSKs, 170 Nari Adalats, Counselling centres
  - 467 KGBVs, 1882 NPEGEL centres/clusters
  - 10,797 sangha women elected to Panchayats
  - 9,270 Kishori & Bala Sanghas with 1.94 lakh members

## Processes

- Women's collectives/Mahila Sangha
  - Sahayogini, the facilitator mobilizes women at the grass root level
  - Sangha provides space to women – meet, reflect, ask questions, think, analyze and articulate their needs collectively.
  - Seek solutions to local problems like education, fuel, fodder and drinking water.
  - Collective planning and action
  - Reflection and consolidation of learning
  - Increased self-confidence, visibility and social recognition

## Processes

- Federation
  - In older MS districts, strong Sanghas federate at block/district level
  - Federation are autonomous in their functioning
  - Coordinate, monitor and manage Mahila Shikshan Kendras, Nari Adalats, Health Centers.
  - Leadership, participatory decision-making, strengthening of weaker sanghas
  - Resource support to the programme.



## **Interventions**

- **Education**
  - Education through Sanghas
  - Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSKs) targeting adolescent girls and women
  - Adult Education Centers
  - Early Childhood Care and Education Centers
  - Pro-active role in Village Education Committees and Primary schools
  - Implementation of KGBV, NPEGEL and MDM programme.

## **Interventions**

- **Health**
  - Involvement in National Health Programmes, campaigns against prenatal sex determination, female foeticide, child marriage etc.
  - Training in herbal medicines
  - Awareness campaign for HIV/AIDS
- **Participation in Local Self-Governance**
  - 5580 Sangha women elected to various Panchayat positions
  - Actively participate in Panchayat meetings and other village level meetings.

## Interventions

- Nari Adalats
  - Non-formal dispute resolution mechanism
  - 170 Nari Adalats/Counselling centres in 9 States
  - Address issues of violence and other discriminatory practices against women and girls.
  - Campaigns to address social issues like alcoholism, child labour, child marriage, dowry, etc.
- Economic Empowerment
  - Income-generating activities like making and marketing herbal medicines, growing trees for fuel, sewing & tailoring.
  - Skill-building activities like masonry, hand-pump repair.
  - Convergence with Government programmes like NREGA

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- Executive Committee
  - Chaired by the State Education Secretary,
  - Quarterly meeting
- JRM
  - First JRM held in 2008.
- Meetings of GOI with SPDs
  - Twice a year
- NRG meeting
  - Twice a year
- National Evaluation
  - One evaluation conducted in 2004-05

### **National Resource Group**

- Discuss & debate conceptual issues & concerns
- Participate in States Executive Committee meetings
- Advise GoI on policy matters and MS strategy
- Advise on monitoring & review of the programme

### **Training of MS personnel**

- Expansion of programme necessitates regular training.
- Training for Sanghas and federations on different issues and skills.
- Training for capacity building of programme personnel.
  - At State level
  - National level training conducted by ERU
    - Needs Assessment
    - Induction training – Kerala & Ranchi
    - Refresher training – Hyderabad, Assam & Dehradun

### **Implementation of TC fund**

- National Office strengthened
  - Appointment of Gender Consultant, Financial Consultant, and Support Staff.
- Training programme for MS personnel in collaboration with ERU (Feb-Sept 2009)
- Baseline Survey - by ORG Nielsen
- Documentation of Best Practices – Best Practices Foundation

### **Financial**

- Total XI plan outlay – Rs. 209.60 crore
- 90:10 sharing between DFID and GOI
- Outlay for 2009-10 – Rs. 38 crore
- Release of funds till date – Rs. 28.70 crore
- Expenditure as on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2009 – Rs. 19.31 crore

**Release of funds & Expenditure – Statewise***(Rs. in lakhs)*

States	Unspent (unaudited) (2008-09)	Release (2009-10)	Total Fund	Utilization (upto Sept., 2009)
Andhra Pradesh	71.25	346.00	417.25	259.17
Assam	44.03	250.00	294.03	177.13
Bihar	11.34	400.00	411.34	224.29
Chattisgarh	18.34	100.00	118.34	11.65
Gujarat	27.49	200.00	227.49	111.84
Jharkhand	-26.55	200.00	200.00	152.7
Karnataka	58.02	348.92	406.94	255.16
Kerala	29.44	175.00	204.44	117.8
Uttar Pradesh	46.23	600.00	646.23	400.47
Uttarakhand	6.95	250.00	256.95	220.53

**Reimbursement proposals sent to DFID***(Rs. in lakhs)*

SLNo.	Period	Claim Amount
1	October, 2007-March,2008	1785.11
2	April, 2008 - September, 2008	1334.89
3	October, 2008-March,2009	2548.52

### **Update on the last JRM financial recommendations**

- Funds to be released in three installments - procedure under process.
- Social Security Issues – A committee constituted for the purpose
- Financial envelope to be informed to States for the year 2010-11 – meetings to discuss AWP&B in February, 2010.
- Accounting and Financial Management manual - under preparation

*Thank you*

**(Section 4.3) Physical progress up to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2009**

No. of	Andhra Pradesh	Assam	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Gujarat	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Uttarakhand	Uttar Pradesh	Total
Districts covered	14	12	14	05	7	11	14	3	6	17	<b>102</b>
Blocks	84 +14 withdrawn	48	72	06	39	62	53	9	24	62	<b>473</b>
Villages covered	3320 + 502(w)	2,799	5618	374	2202	4098	2860	2587.5	2377	4871	<b>31,608.5</b>
Sanghas	3320 + 502(w)	3,027	6075	15 (on process 40)	1900	8255	4659	570	2417	4776	<b>35,516</b>
Women members of Sanghas	1,34,637 + 12,086 (w)	1,54,039	127108	500	42686	127103	78970	21600	49164	103526	<b>8,51,419</b>
Women trained under MS	49,270	1,26,511	20,75,86 + 36,349 (kishori)	40 (sahyogini)	15596	15486	54207	21600	167504	22030	<b>7,16,179</b>
Federations formed	14 under Process of withdrawal + 14 Autonomous	22	6	-	25	13	39	-	8	21	<b>162</b>
Mahila Shikshan Kendras	17	9	22	-	4	11	04	7	6	15	<b>95</b>
Girls who have passed out of MSKs	2629	885	3580	-	121	574	122	78	267	605	<b>8,861</b>
Kishori /Bala Sanghas	2293	1,128	1260	-	473	924	1512	587	492	601	<b>9,270</b>
Members of Kishori /Bala Sanghas	34,622	30,050	32696	-	7504	15792	37418	17440	7649	11380	<b>1,94,551</b>
Nari Adalats/Rai centres/counseling centres	13	11 + 6	6	-	28	11	39	29	15	18	<b>170</b>
Cases dealt with by Nari Adalats	419	1,612	4738	-	1887	94	1679	103	332	1207	<b>10,465</b>
Sangha women elected to Panchayats	2210	503	470	-	1236	1	869	22	4100	604	<b>9983</b>
KGBVs covered	-	-	67	-	11	--	29	-	-	33	<b>140</b>
NPEGEL centres	96	55	963	-	0	--	108	-	64 clusters	148	<b>1434</b>

(Section 4.4)

**Suggested State Report Format for MS JRM 2009**

(Max. 25 pages)

- I. An Overview of State MS Programme
  - Background: including districts visited, persons/organisations interacted with to substantiate review, and State-wrap-up
  - Coverage
  - Expansion strategy and its roll-out
  - Strengths of State MS programme and concerns
  - Key issues and recommendations
  
- II. Programme processes in sangha formation/roles
  - No. of sanghas
  - Observations on and nature of methodology of sangha formation and their strengthening
  - Status of sangha by perspective, training, activities, and self-confidence etc.
  - Key issues and recommendations
  
- III. Federations
  - No. of federations
  - Process of formation of federations
  - Autonomous functioning of federations
  - Leadership, participation & decision-making
  - Sustainability of federations - programme wise, financial and resource support to federations from the MS States
  - Key issues and recommendations
  
- IV. Training programmes under MS
  - Nature and types of training programmes including gender sensitization programmes
  - Gender perspective-building programmes: capacities, delivery, efficacy
  - Extent of external training resources tapped
  - Internal assessments and reflections of training programmes
  - Key issues and recommendations
  
- V. Participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education
  - Types of interventions and coverage
  - Role of sanghas/federations in education issues
  - Rapport/impact on local schooling systems and programmes
  - Convergence mechanisms and coordination with other education programmes especially Sarva Siksha Abhiyan regarding KGBV and NPEGEL



- Status of education of girls including the standard upto which they have studied, mainstreaming in higher education, vocational education, quality of education
  - Adult Education/Community Mobilisation
  - Key issues and recommendations
- VI. Participation in/implementation of other Government programmes (health related programmes/schemes, NREGA, SSA etc.)
- Name of the programme
  - Extent of participation
  - Advantages like enhancing the capabilities, job opportunities etc.
  - Extent of influence/mainstreaming of gender concerns, and challenges therein
  - Difficulties – financial or otherwise pressure of work and time consumed
  - Key issues and recommendations
- VII. Women empowered to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families
- Types and variety of interventions, especially on gender discrimination issues, child marriage, female foeticide, female infanticide, violence against women etc.
  - Priority programmes undertaken by the State and processes used for their implementation
  - Participation in Panchayati Raj/local self governance
  - Livelihood improvement and work on health (esp. women's health, indigenous medicinal systems etc.)
  - Key issues and recommendations
- VIII. Resource Support systems
- Networking with NGOs, women's groups, research etc.
  - Role of State Resource Centre in supporting MS
  - Role of NRG and EC members as support group
  - Key issues and recommendations
- IX. Programme Management
- Participatory management systems
  - Recruitment system of staff, adequacy of staff, capability and efficiency of staff including budget and accounting staff
  - Retention efforts, challenges – esp. turnover issues/causes
  - Annual Work Plan and Budget formulation and tracking systems
  - Feedback, reflection and monitoring processes in MS
  - Sub-committees established at level of State programme – Grant-in-Aid, programmatic & financial
  - Key issues and recommendations
- X. Financial Management
- Fund flow from GOI and status of releases to districts from State
  - Status of audits and compliance

- Financial rules and delegation of powers; procurement systems
- Accounting and record maintenance
- Key issues and recommendations

XI. Good Practices and Innovations

XII. Progress towards the Achievement of MS Objectives (*Use Results Framework*)

XIII. Conclusion/s:

- Summary of key Issues in the State MS programme
- Summary of recommendations of JRM for State