



"You must not leave faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty."

- Mahatma Gandhi

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WHAT is inherited, should not be consumed.

Craft heritage is the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group of society i.e., inherited from the past generation, maintained in the present and bestowed to the future generation with added value. It is unique and irreplaceable, and therefore places the responsibility of preservation/conservation by the present generation. It also needs the participation of civil society in public policies.

It is a heritage asset of tradition and skill and a continuous source of income even for management and maintenance. Transfer of craft knowledge and skills to the future generation through revival is imperative.

Cooperative week and Heritage week were celebrated by the Federation members in mid-November.

- Lalita Krishnaswami

Vimo Sewa Cooperative's deposition before the select committee of Rajyasabha on Insurance Bill 2008

Vimo SEWA Cooperative's team comprising of Mirai Chatterjee, Chairperson, Vimo SEWA Cooperative, Arman Oza, CEO, Vimo SEWA Cooperative and Hameedaben, union leader of SEWA Delhi, appeared before the Select Committee on Insurance of the Rajya Sabha. The committee is working on amending the Insurance Bill (2008) to permit more Foreign Direct Investment. They were invited to present their submission before the Committee. The proposed amendments include the proposal to reduce capital requirement for standalone health insurance companies from Rs 100 crores to Rs 50 crores. Based on this, Vimo SEWA Cooperative proposed a similar reduction in capital requirements for insurance cooperative societies.

Vimo SEWA Cooperative's arguments centered on the following:

1. Vimo SEWA Cooperative's long and extensive experience with the low income segment and creation of an Insurance Cooperative in 2009.
2. The fact that cooperative and mutual insurance sector commands a market share of 27% in the global insurance market.
3. Countries like the Philippines have successfully implemented the concept of Mutual Benefit Associations (MBAs) or micro-insurers.
4. The fact that a cooperative structure can overcome the antagonism between the insured wanting maximum benefits (claims) and the insurer wanting to minimize claims.
5. The fact that a cooperative, by virtue of its democratic governance structure has better acceptability among consumers and is therefore an ideal vehicle for promoting social business.
6. A cooperative typically is born small but can grow big. It cannot be expected to be 'born big' which is precisely why no cooperative has been able to comply with the high entry level capital requirement so far.

At the Select Committee hearing, Dr. Chandan Mitra, Chairman, in his opening remarks itself, indicated the Committee's eagerness to receive ideas on spreading the penetration of insurance among the low income segments. After the oral deposition from Vimo SEWA Cooperative, Shri Anand Sharma, MP, said that they had carefully gone through its representation and fully appreciated the logic put forward. They assured Vimo SEWA Cooperative that the Committee will give due consideration to its proposal.

Visit to Tanzania

Delegation of 10 members from different cooperatives visited Tanzania with the purpose of promoting an integrated approach to poverty reduction and self-reliance for women and their families. It would be through microfinance, microenterprise and livelihoods promotion, micro-insurance, health and child care and capacity-building for leadership and management by local people, especially women. This was a part of Setu Africa Project. The team partnered with the organizations like CHODAWU and International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF).

A workshop was held on "Organizing and Integrated Approach to Self-reliance". The Indian High Commissioner to Tanzania, Mr Debnath Shaw, was present at the inaugural function. He said, "While the history of Tanzania and India's solidarity has been mostly at the political level – including very high-level interaction between our founding fathers Julius Nyerere and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru – this workshop signifies that such interaction has now come down from those high pedestals of the yesteryears to the grassroots level." He added "We want to pass on our experiences and the knowledge that we have acquired over the last 60 years or so since Indian independence, to our friends and partners – particularly in the developing countries."

Senior government representatives from 6 ministries including labour, agriculture and health along with more than 30 participants from unions, coops, grassroots-level collectives and NGOs participated in the workshop. Shobhanaben, daughter of a street vendor spoke about her struggle and what it meant to organize and be part of SEWA Movement. All the participants were moved and inspired, when she said she has got her university degree from IGNOU.

21 grassroots level organizers from Tanzania participated in a training program in cooperative education, spontaneously organized by the visiting team.



His Excellency, Mr Shaw, High Commissioner of India to Tanzania, and other participants at the workshop in Dar e Salaam

Visit to Ethiopia

A team of 12 grass-root cooperative leaders visited Ethiopia in September. The team interacted with different organizations like Women In Self-Employment (WISE), Abdigudina Adama SACCO Union & affiliated cooperatives to get an in-depth idea about issues from local people, especially women's perspective. The majority of members of this team are workers of the informal economy and are experienced organizers and leaders of their organizations.



SEWA team at WISE office in Addis Ababa

One day workshop was organized on value chain on the weaving craft for the visiting team. The project coordinator, Mr. Misrach Mekonnen gave them the historical perspective on weaving in Ethiopia, keeping in mind the "bottom-up" approach.

This exposure visit provided an in-depth view about various issues related with livelihood, social security, microfinance. Future plan of action will be formulated by Setu Africa team to address the need of our sisters in Ethiopia, based on the recommendation of the workshop.

Homecare Cooperative expansion



Massage training imparted to the leaders of
the cooperative

15 members received training in elementary techniques for becoming a beautician, including giving hand and foot massage. Some of the members have already started earning through providing the service at home.

The cooperative is expanding its activities through placement of the members in places like Vapi, Khambhat, Baroda and New Delhi.

15 members of the cooperative participated in data collection of a survey of 'Jandhan Scheme', initiated by the government of India.

Technology in the hands of women

Video Sewa Cooperative was invited to participate in Ankur Film Festival. 'Aa nagar man marun pan sthan chhe' (I also have place in the city) and 'Maare aakash ambvun chhe' (I want to reach the sky) were screened at the festival. This was followed by a panel discussion to know the outreach, impacts and use of the videos by the cooperatives. There was much appreciation that the videos were made by the grassroots women and also presented by them.

Video cooperative, with the membership of 680, endeavors to create awareness for socio-economic development of poor self-employed women. The cooperative's outreach is about 24,000 members and their families in urban and rural areas through its replay.

Many members enrolled their girl child in schools after watching "Kanya Kelavani Mahotsav" (young girls' education) and "Kanyaratna" program. Watching the video "sat rupiya thi char lakh sudhini safar" (the journey from 7 Rs. To four lakhs), 20,000 women opened their bank accounts. In many villages, the rates of child marriages has been reduced after replay of "Bal Lagna" (child marriage) program.

In order to link more members with technology, the cooperative gives training on video replay and photography. The cooperative will form a photography club, wherein, the children of the members will present their ideas through photography.



Video replay of 'Kanyaratna'



Photography club

Children's Day Celebrated

Sangini Sewa Child Care Cooperative celebrated Cooperative and Children's Day on 14th November. Nearly 800 children participated. Some of them who are now grown up and studying in high school organized and participated in the cultural program along with the children in the child care centers.

The cooperative also participated in a seminar organized by Child's Rights Collective. The issues discussed were Right to education, Right to nutritious food and Time to play.

Heritage week celebrated

Heritage week was celebrated by the crafts cooperatives in November.



Demonstration of live crafts at Design Sewa

During the heritage week, the Sewa Ni Haveli was seen active, bursting with women artisans from various crafts cooperatives. They were demonstrating and show casing their skills in various crafts like block printing, patchwork, embroidery, bead work, badla and crochet. The celebration was in collaboration with Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) of India and National Culture Fund (NCF), New Delhi.

In the launch of Ahmedabad Cultural Heritage Cluster at Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) Civic Center, Elicebridge, artisans from several crafts cooperatives put up an exhibition and demonstrated their skills and the crafts of block printing and mehndi.



Gift Shop at Sewa Ni Haveli



Design workshop

30 women participated in a Design Development Workshop. Each woman made a product individually, which was then displayed in the gift shop for the public. The workshop was organized in collaboration with Development Commissioner, Handicrafts.

Design Sewa at SEWA NI HAVELI today showcases products made by artisans from crafts cooperatives. A gift shop, inside the haveli adds to the attraction of the heritage building.



Safai Zumbesh (Cleaning campaign, organized by Sewa Federation in collaboration with City Heritage Center (CHC) at Dhal ni Pol



Professor of Nirmala Niketan College of Home Science College said, "It was very interesting and wonderful experience. The students had a great opportunity to see the artisans work in person."

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