

Contents

President's Note

Services

Activities

Developments

Events

Gujarat State Women's Sewa Co-operative Federation

SAHAKARITA

Co-operative Our Strength

Newsletter



Except for those differences which are natural and which can be obviously perceived, I don't approve of any differences between a man and woman.

- Mahatma Gandhi

President's Note

This moment takes me back in time 18 years ago in 1992, when Gujarat State Women's SEWA Co-operative Federation came into being with just 3 people on board to steer its course. From 33 co-operatives at its inception, we are now 103. Promoted by SEWA, it is the first women's co-operative federation in India.



The co-operative sector has already celebrated 100 years of the movement. Yet, in 1993 the percentage of women co-operatives was 1.5%. In 2010 it still remains just above 2% of the total co-operatives in the country today. In the new economic environment, co-operatives at all levels are now making an effort to re-invent themselves in order to be a part of the mainstream business in global markets.

Sewa Co-operative Federation was established with an objective to facilitate the empowerment of economically weak, self-employed women within the co-operative framework. The goal was to let women gain ownership of their trades and get directly linked with the consumers, without the interference of any exploitative middle agencies. It has been instrumental in sowing the seeds of growth and catalyzing the transformation of its affiliated co-operatives by bringing more women into the co-operative movement.

Many of its member co-operatives are innovative and don't fall in the set category of co-operative structure. Saundarya Cleaning Co-operative, Sewa Bank, Health Care, Child Care, Video Sewa and Home Care Co-operative are some of them. These co-operatives have now expanded and grown to become sustainable businesses.

However, a co-operative is a 'SOCIAL BUSINESS' venture despite being democratic in nature. It is guided by social and economic objectives along with social justice. It is a business where economic viability and governance evolve into transformation of co-operatives into self-sufficient, self-managed, sustainable entities.

Today the federation envisages creating a functional resource centre with its own design development infrastructure, fully equipped training module and strengthened financial systems and marketing support.

Its strategy is to enable the participation of women in the co-operative movement through 'low cost-high quality' advisory and business services. The foundation of Sewa Co-operative Federation is based on SEWA's values rooted in Gandhian ideology.

This is the first issue of the Federation's quarterly newsletter and is an endeavor to connect with all our member organizations, associates and well wishers to share our ideas, vision and initiatives towards fulfilling our vision. This edition shall take you across a brief overview about Federation's inception, its working model, mission and activities it initiates to support its co-operatives. We would welcome your suggestions and inputs over making this endeavor more resourceful for you.



Lalita Krishnaswami
President, GSWSCF

The Federation provides services to the co-operatives under three major domains:

Training Cell: The goal of the federation is to turn every co-operative member into proficient managers, capable of piloting as well as promoting the business activities of their respective co-operatives. Federation follows a structured training system for its members which includes co-operative training, management training, training for marketing and promotion, leadership, technical know how and capacity building.

Consulting Cell: In order to assist in the governance and improving the economic viability of the co-operatives, the Federation provides consulting services to the co-operatives. These primarily include co-operative registration, administrative back-up, account/book keeping, internal and external audit, design and development of new product or service, fund raising, branding, media services, computer literacy, proposal writing, market survey and research.

Marketing Cell: The Federation supports the establishment of four marketing outlets for its Three most active trades - Artisans, Vegetable (SHG) and Fishery (Matsyagandha).

SEWA Kalakruti:

Kalakruti is a result of collective marketing strategy which renders visibility to the products by women artisans of different co-operatives under one roof. The two outlets named 'SEWA Kalakruti' are located at *Goyal Tower* and *Sewa Reception Centre* to assist the artisans in not only marketing their goods but in design development as well as design diversification. It markets the products at local, national and international level directly to the end customers.

The premise has display facilities, exhibition arrangements and effectively laid out counters. The crafts featured include block printing, khatla*, aari,(embroidery),patchwork, badla, bead work, tie and dye etc. on a vast array of products. Sarees, bed linens, bags, apparels, stationery, jewelry and accessories gift items are some of the products displaying these crafts.

Shop no. 40 at APMC market:

It facilitates the farmers to sell their produce and receive reasonable prices through it. The Shop no. 40 at Jamalpur is situated in the Agricultural Producers Marketing Committee in Ahemdabad It is the only

women's shop in this wholesale market. The farmers bring their produce of vegetables to this outlet which is then bought by the co-operative vendors and sold to customers in various parts of the city. It also assists the SHG and farmers in the selection of seeds, fertilizers and techniques for higher quality produce.

Chamanpura Fish Shop:

The Federation assists the fish co-operative, 'Matyagandha Mahila Sewa Sahakari Mandali'. It has a marketing outlet at Chamanpura fish market. It helps its members to have its own distribution system. The catch is brought from Verawal and Porbander in Saurashtra, Gujarat directly from fishermen to this shop. The women buy it in required quantities to sell it directly to the customers.

DESIGN SEWA

With an objective of transforming artisans into designers, Sewa Co-operative Federation established Design Sewa as a common forum for artisans to source and exchange designs, skills as well as resources. The goal was to help them modify their traditional designs and adapt new ones to keep up with the modern trends. This facilitated them to gain multiple skills which could be employed for better sustainability.

The Federation conducts activities like trainings, meetings, workshops and exposure visits. These activities serve as a platform to upgrade and diversify the skills of its members. It also gives them an opportunity to interact and exchange skills for better viability.

Planning Meeting

A planning meeting at Sughad was organized in which 33 participants from different co-operatives discussed and presented their business plans for the year. Sustainability and work Methodology was also discussed.

Exposure Visits

- Study visit of Matsyagandha Fish Co-op.: This initiative exposed the co-operative members to supply chain mechanism in the modern fish markets and develop direct linkages between the producers and the vendors.
- Trupti Catering Co-operative's visit to Dabbawalas Mumbai: Members of the Catering Co-operative were made to visit the reputed Mumbai Dabbawallas to learn their efficient distribution system based on six-sigma.



Trainings

- F&B service training at IHM was organized by the Federation for young girls in association with SEWA Academy
- Capacity Building for Trupti, Artisan, Home Care, Matsyagandha, Vegetable and Smita Audhyogik Co-operatives
- Skill Training (Tie & Dye, Bead Work, Badla, Stitching) for Artisan Co-operative members took place to upgrade their skills
- Soft Skill Training for Saundarya Safai Mandali members

Gujarat has a total of 2445 women co-operatives out of which 102 are the members of Sewa Co-operative Federation.

Developments

Saundarya Safai Mandali about to complete 25 years!

Saundarya Safai Mandali (SSM) is in the process of completing its 25 years as a service co-operative. It started with 106 members in 1986, the year when the co-operative was registered and have now grown to 400 members. Today, women working in these co-operatives are not only earning a stable income but are also effectively contributing in making our surroundings a better space to live in.

From paper pickers to cleaning professionals in sophisticated ambiances, their socio-economic and quality of life has greatly improved. A co-operative member today enjoys better housing facilities, saves money at the bank and is able to provide better education to her children. SSM presently caters to 40 clients spread across Hospitals, Management Institutes, Residential Societies and Office complexes.

“The success set by the Federation’s initiatives towards improving the socio-economic development of these women and eventually kindling their self-confidence is the driving force that has been steering it along decades of its service to the community. It has been and will continue to endlessly endeavor in nurturing this precious human resource in better ways, beyond time lines as well as borders!” says Labhuben, MD, Sewa Federation.

Events

Sahakarita

Volume 1, Issue 1

Sewa Kalakruti showcased an assortment inspired by natural dyes and other textile based handicraft products and apparel. (July 30th – August 7th 2010).

3 workshops on paper jewelry were carried out at Design Sewa. The objective is to train the artisans in multiple skills of the craft.



Designed in a Paper
Design Sewa

Contact

Gujarat State Women's Sewa Co-operative Federation Ltd.

21/22, Goyal Tower, Near Jhanvi Restaurant

University Road, Panjra Pole

Ahmedabad - 380 015 Gujarat (INDIA)

Tel/Fax : +91 - 079 - 2630 6937/2630 1503

Email id: sewafederation@gmail.com

Website: www.sewafed.org