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Members of Matsyagandha Co-operative sell fish in the new fish market



Inauguration of Fish market

"A weak man is just by accident. A strong but non-violent man is unjust by accident."

- Mahatma Gandhi

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SAHAKARITA

Gandhiji was a co-operator by instinct and preached moral values, honesty, and sincerity which are the pillars of success of the co-operative movement.

For Gandhiji, co-operative was a weapon of achieving political and economic freedom with social justice. He emphasized the participation of young people. We should invest in their leadership and build their capacity as corporators to enable them to benefit them for employment opportunities.

This quarter, the focus is on capacity building and study visits of co-operative members especially the younger generation.

We launched our newsletter, "Sahakarita" on 7th September, 2010 – Elaben's Birthday. This year, Elaben inaugurates the fish market of the Matsyagandha Co-operative.

We thank the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation for allocation of space.

We wish in the coming years we launch more and more innovative programmes on this day.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ELABEN!

- Lalita Krishnaswami

President, GSWSCF.

Fish market inaugurated

Matsyagandha Co-operative inaugurated their fish market on 7th September. Elaben Bhatt, Founder, Sewa was the Chief Guest. The space under the Chamunda bridge was allocated by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC). We thank the Municipal Corporation for its infrastructure support and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust for its financial assistance. The fish market has now all the basic facilities of water, drainage, toilets, garbage collection etc. 53 women can now sell their fish in comfortable and clean environment in their allotted space.

The distribution centre of Matsyagandha Co-operative was also inaugurated on the same day. The co-operative will buy from wholesalers & producers and distribute the fish to the women for the retail trade at reasonable rate from this distribution centre.

Elaben Bhatt, Founder, Sewa said, "The Matsyagandha Co-operative buys fish from the producers and sells it to the customers. They are linked with Fisheries Corporation for their skills and technical support and the Municipal Corporation has assisted them in setting up the infrastructure. This combination of the three has resulted in setting up this fish market. I hope this trade will flourish."

Lalitaji said, "This is only a beginning. I am looking forward to the air conditioned distribution centre, from where there will be continuous supply of fish to the members of the co-operative."

Labhuben, Managing Director, GSWSCF said, "Many people refused to help us for the development of fish co-operative because they are vegetarian. They felt that it interfere with their religion. And also it has been a difficult task to work for the fish vendors as the community in general abhors them."



Co-operatives conduct AGMs

10 member co-operatives conducted their Annual General Meetings in the month of June. The accounts and annual reports were presented in the meetings. New committees were elected through democratic process. Planning was also discussed for the next financial year.



Work shops



Supply chain management work-shop

Supply Chain Management Workshop:

25 members from Fish, Vegetable and artisan co-operatives participated in the two days workshop.

“I had some information about Supply Chain. But I did not know that other factors like transport, packing, quality, grading etc. play an important role and that there is cost involved between the supply of products to the end consumers.”

- Dinaben. Coordinator. Vegetable Co-operative

Business plan workshop:

17 members from Rachayeeta co-operative, Homecare co-operative and Saundaya co-operative participated in the workshop on ‘Business plan’. At the end of the session, all the members of the co-operatives had to make business plan of 3-5 years of their respective co-operatives. The trades were discussed in detail for members to understand why business plan is necessary to make any co-operative successful.

“When a new co-operative is registered, such training should be given to the members so that the expenses and income are planned at the initial stage. Then there is less chance of co-operative making a loss.”

- Kantaben, Rachayeeta Co-operative



Business plan workshop

Trainings

740 members participated in 20 different training programs whereas 130 members participated in 8 skill development trainings like bead work, patch work, badlawork, door-mate making. The trainings were given by the master crafts women.

Writing skill training: 12 members participated in the writing skill training organized in collaboration with Sewa Academy at Akhbar Bhavan, Gandhinagar. They learnt the communication skills like writing news, reports, case studies and profiles.

“I didn’t know that there are format for commercial and official communication. We learnt the formats and easy writing methods for the same. I will use this formats and develop my writing skills.”

- Rashmi Gajjar, Accountant, GSWSCF.

29 Farmers from Vasna Khurd & Kheda Bhatha village received 50% subsidy for fertilizers and insecticide pumps.

The consulting cell of the Federation assisted Karyasidhh Paper Pickers’ Co-op. to get work order for 23 women to provide cleaning services at Narmada Nigam.

Study visits

Three study visits for 20 members from three co-operatives were organized. Artisans visited 'Kala Raksha', Kutch; fish members visited 'Marine Products Export Development Authority' (M.P.E.D.A.), Cochin and members of Home care co-operative visited 'Sewa – Kerala', Kerala.



Members of Homecare co-operative visited SEWA Kerala



Members of Design SEWA visited Kalaraksha at Kutch

Visit to M.P.E.D.A.

4 members of Fish co-operative visited Cochin to see the activities of Marine Products Export Development Authority (M.P.E.D.A.) in Cochin. The members visited net producing unit and a fish storage factory at Aleppy. They saw a large ship owned by MPEDA for fishing.

“The automatic system of the machine at the fish factory was very interesting. Appropriate amount of ice based on the weight of fish is transferred to the box and sealed automatically. Then it goes to the cold storage. We have never seen such a large machine before. We should buy this kind of machine for our members.”
- Joitiben - Fish Co-operative.



Visit to Kala Raksha

Kala Raksha is a grassroots social enterprise, dedicated to preservation of traditional arts. They perceive it broadly as holistic and encouraging the creative capacity of the artist.

8 members from Design Sewa visited museum of traditional crafts & arts, saw types of embroideries, studied the production & storage methods. They also visited the marketing unit.

“It is very interesting for me to see that the illiterate women can make any design freehand without drawing or printing!”
- Sairaben, Master Crafts Person, Design Sewa.

“Their documentation system is so good that even a blind person can find anything. We must replicate the system.”
- Mariamben, Design Sewa

Visit to SEWA Kerala:

SEWA Kerala is a women's membership organization initiated in 1983 in Trivendrum. It provides a common platform for women to collectively grow and socially respond to issues that poor women face in society. There are presently over 1000 members.

SEWA grew out of the need of women who lose their work in traditional industries like agriculture, basket making and fish vending. Despite struggles through their existing unions to safeguard their employment, eking out a livelihood in such occupations is increasingly difficult. Encouraged by the 'decade of women', a few women activists made this attempt to help marginalized women find work collectively in the growing service sector.



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The adoption by International Labor Organization (ILO) on June 16, 2011, of a new groundbreaking treaty to extend key labor protections to domestic workers will protect millions of people who have been without guarantees of their basic rights. Governments, trade unions and employers' organizations that make up the ILO overwhelmingly voted to adopt the ILO convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which establishes the first global standards for the estimated 50 to 100 million domestic workers worldwide, the vast majority of whom are women and girls.. Indian government is still to ratify.

At the moment, the labor ministries' task force on domestic workers is finalizing a policy on domestic workers.

8 states of India had notification for minimum wage. GUJARAT IS NOT AMONG THE 8 STATES.

17 women from Homecare co-operative visited Sewa Kerala. They saw the gober gas plant, water purifier and natural farming techniques used in Kerala. They also visited paper recycling & computer unit. But the Homecare co-operative had specially gone there to see the domestic workers' union.

"I very much liked that the domestic workers get insurance, pension and minimum wage in Kerala. I will now make area wise group leaders and organize them into Home-care co-operative for better wages."

- Bhartiben, Coordinator,
Home-care Co-operative said,

Updates



Lokswasthya co-operative inaugurated new medical store opposite L.G. Hospital.

India is a land of homogeneous cultures. The month of August is a month of festivals and celebrations. Apart from Independence Day, Navroz, Paryushan, Ganesh Chaturthi, Janmashtami and Eid (Muslims) were celebrated this month. Vimo Sewa organized a 'Sneh Milan' to celebrate the multi religious festivals.

At the same time, it launched its new product, 'Saral Suraksha Yojna', which has insurance coverage for the whole family during hospitalization.

Sewa Kalakruti organized an exhibition of handicrafts items made by artisan co-operatives at Goyal Tower for 12 days. The artisans demonstrated their skills in hand block printing, badla work and mehndi. The artisans interacted with customers and received many orders on the spot.

The next exhibition is on 7th September, 2011 at Goyal Tower.



Shradhhanjali

We send our heartfelt condolence to the family of Deepikaben Vyas, a member of Home-care Co-operative on her sudden demise.



Jaylataben was one of the founder organizers of SEWA. She also organized the Bamboo Workers. Once she was returning home in a bus. She accidentally touched a woman, sitting beside her. Jaylataben asked her name and occupation. She was making products like baskets from bamboo and living in Biscuit Gali. Jaylataben along with her visited the Biscuit Gali and organized the women into Bansari Co-operative. With Sewa's help issues of Bamboo Workers were represented to the government and a G.R. was issued that the bamboo products made by the women will be purchased by government office without any tender formalities.

Later on, she was unable to do any field work. She joined the health project and became the manager of the medical store of Health-care Co-operative. The store started earning profit within an year!

We worked together for many years in organizing the exhibitions and marketing the products of Bamboo Co-operative. She was always affectionate, cooperative, truthful and a smiling personality, loved equally by colleagues and Sewa members. I found that her heart was full of love and affection for poor women. We will miss her.

- Lalita Krishnaswami.

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