

Sahjani Shiksha Kendra April to September 2016

Introduction

The SahajaniShiksha Kendra has been working with rural and Adivasi women on issues of their empowerment through education and literacy programmes at Lalitpur since 2002. SSK is a women's organization that works with a feminist perspective with the women and girls from Dalit, Adivasi and marginalized communities. Various issues like children's education, MGNREGA, child marriage are addressed and information regarding different governmental policies is provided by the organization. The organization works towards inculcating leadership qualities amongst the women and encouraging them to raise their voice on different issues pertaining to their lives.

In the last six months, the focus was on running the opened Literacy & Information Centers and Literacy Centers qualitatively. Along with this increasing the participation of community members in Information Centers and opening the remaining Literacy and Information Centers was also in focus. During this period rallies were organized as part of strategy to mobilize community members and other methods were used to for mobilization of women and communities with an intention to increase their participation in Literacy & Information Centers and Literacy Centers.

The capacity building of staff has been done to effectively to run these centers with a thorough understanding of the pedagogy, and by inculcating a critical gender perspective among various levels of staff. In addition, residential camps at village and block level were organized. These have been some of the core activities carried out during this period, to support the opening and effective working of LICs and Literacy centers.

Summary of the outcomes

Indicator	Unit of Measurement	Means of Verification	Total Target	Achieved from April 016 to Sep. 2016	Total Achieved till Sep. 2016
Total number of villages covered	Panchayat	Baseline survey	75	28	78
Total number of Literacy centers	Village		50	19	45
Total number of women covered under Literacy Centers	Literacy center	Monthly report	3500	486	1597
Total number of women covered through Residential	Block	Reports	700	109	162

Camps					
Total number of Literacy and Information Centres (LIC) to be opened	Panchayat	Monthly Reports	20	9	23
Total number of women covered under literacy and information (LIC) centres	Panchayat	Monthly Report	2500	628	844
Total number of MGNREGA camps organized	Block	Monthly Report	5	3	3
Total number of schools covered	Village	Monthly Report	125	65	65
Mobilization of women for LIC (According to the number of LICs opened)	Village	Monthly	20	9	23
Total number of capacity building training of Teachers, Supervisors, LIC facilitators	Organizational	Six monthly report	5	4	7
Total number of women forums strengthened	Collective at village level	Six monthly report	40	50	50

1. Selection and Capacity Building of Program Staff

In the month of April 2016, the process of selecting teachers for the centers and information centers was undertaken and 101 women were interviewed for the same. Out of this number, 42 teachers were selected to teach at the literacy centers and information centers. Following this, a 6-day long training was conducted from 11th to 17th May 2016 for 42 teachers of the literacy centers and 11 field staff. The objectives of this training were to build an understanding on pedagogy, the women's literacy programme and its objectives, building an understanding of the centers (how they should run, what all, these should include), and on records to be maintained at the level of the centers and for the programme.

Further, a residential training workshop was conducted for a period of 4 days together with 38 participants comprising of information centers' teachers and supervisors, from 6th to 12th of June with the major objective of building an understanding of information centers; the records that are to be maintained for the same and building an understanding of the women's literacy programme. The aim was also for the participants to engage with and inform themselves of the issues of the community and build an understanding of how these can

be worked with. As part of the residential workshop, participants were also given information and knowledge with regards to the structure of the *Panchayat*.

Furthermore, training for building an understanding on ICT centers was conducted from 17th to 22nd of April wherein SSK staff comprising of computer center teachers and block coordinators participated. Two resource persons from *Sanadkatha, Lukhnow* joined the training as facilitators. The objective of this training was to build an understanding on how basic computer literacy should be taught at the centers, the essential requirements for an ICT center i.e., what the center is going to look like, what the environment of the center should be, the teaching-learning material at the center that should compulsorily be provided etc.

2. Mobilisation and Jattha Rally

The process of mobilisation was undertaken in three blocks Birdha, Mandaavra and Mehrauni (14 Gram Panchayats were selected within these) as a precursor to opening new literacy and information centers within these. As part of the process of mobilisation, *jatthas* and rallies were taken out within villages in the blocks; literacy related slogans were raised in the rallies and these slogans were also written on walls. Communities are mobilized in this manner before centers are functional in an effort for a higher number of women to join the literacy centers and information centers, and for the men in the community to be supportive of them attending the centers. Through the *Jattha*, staff at SSK was able to communicate the objectives of the literacy and the information centers at length and in a substantial manner. During this process, communities supported said activities by providing space to carry these out and aided in the process of decoration at mobilisation-related events. The villages wherein mobilisation was done were selected in accordance with the needs of the community as well as the nature of prevalent issues; those villages were specifically chosen wherein literacy levels were alarmingly low and which were located in the interiors of the block.

3. Inaugurating Literacy Centers and Information Centers

In the month of May and June, 19 literacy centers and information centers were opened in 9 *panchayats* that are currently running and functional. Community members, *Pradhans*, *Panchayat* ward members were gathered together to attend the opening ceremony to inaugurate these centers. At this event, the attendees were given an introduction of the information centers and literacy centers, were spoken to about their objectives and the roles and responsibilities of the field workers and teachers. Subsequently, the enrollment of learners who wished to attend the centers was undertaken.

Literacy Centers

Block Name	No. of Gram Panchayats	Villages	Literacy Center	Number of Learners Enrolled
Mandaavra	6	11	11	351
Birdha	5	5	5	180
Kul	11	16	16	531

Information Centers

Block Name	No. of Gram Panchayats	Villages	Information Centre	Numbers of Learners Enrolled
Mandaavra	5	14	5	229
Mehrauni	4	5	4	136
Kul	9	19	9	365

4. Village level Literacy Camps

From the month of April to September 2016, twenty-seven 5 day long village level literacy camps were held in 27 villages, with 2100 learners attending these in total. The key objectives with which village level literacy camps were undertaken are to develop and facilitate an environment of literacy within the village, to establish the presence of SahjaniShiksha Kendra in the village and to develop a relationship with the community, so that help can be sought from the community when literacy work continues. Participation in the village level literacy camps was from learners belonging to tribal and lower caste communities.

Apart from the aforementioned objectives, the aim during these 5-day village level literacy camps was also hold open meetings with community members in the village where information on topics such as *KhaadyaSuraksha* and MNREGA is provided to everyone in the village in a systematic manner. The camp also provided a space for women to come together and undertake literacy activities collectively at the village level. Before undertaking literacy activities with learners, their capacities in language and numeracy were gauged to understand the learning levels at which they were. This information was also used for planning camp activities more comprehensively, keeping in mind the different needs of learners depending on the varying literacy capacities. Before beginning literacy activities at the camps, these capacities were determined through undertaking a basic test paper with learners.

After a preliminary evaluation, it was ascertained that learners from every village belong to three different learning levels; those with had no prior learning experience, with minimal preliminary knowledge of letters and numbers and thirdly, those who were school drop outs and studied till the 5th or 8th standards.

During these camps 1500 women learned to write their names, the names of their villages, the names of their fathers and husbands. Learners from the camp who had never studied before learned to identify letters from the first and second chapters of the primer and were able to write and count till the number 50. Further, 735 women had minimal preliminary knowledge of the letters in *Hindi* prior to the literacy camp owing to attending literacy centers/camps and/or undertaking brief schooling previously, were able to read from the first three chapters while also learning to construct small sentences. This section of learners learnt to count and write numbers from 1 till 100.

Additionally, there were 500 such women learners in the camp who had attended school till the 5th and the 8th standards and dropped out after. This section of learners within the camp had a good understanding of letters however, constructing words, sentences and using *matras* was a difficult task for them. By the end of the camp, they were able to write using *matras* from “aa” to “e”, make words from the *matras*, and learned to construct sentences. In numeracy, this section of learners learned to write and read numbers from 1 to 100 and do simple addition and subtraction.

5. Block Level Residential Camp

From the 22nd of June to 1st July 2016, a 10-day residential literacy camp was conducted at the SSK Office in Mehrauni where 52 learners from 3 blocks participated. The objectives of this literacy camp were to strengthen the literacy skills of the learners who attend literacy centers and village level literacy camps, and also build an understanding of community issues. The issues of early and child marriage were discussed at length and perspective was built around these, for the learners to work in collaboration with the samiti and begin a dialogue with the community on building and understanding around the issue.

Block Name	Number of Gram Panchaya	Number of Villages	Number of Camps	Number of Women Enrolled
Mandaavra	9	12	12	1138
Birdha	2	2	2	209

Mehrauni	13	13	1322
Kul	24	27	2668

6. ICT Centers- Mehrauni and Mandaavra

In the month of May 2016, in the blocks of *Mehrauni* and *Mandaavrat* two ICT centers were opened with a batch of 30 learners within each. The work at ICT centers has begun with adolescent girls who belong to the Dalit and backward castes that have never had the opportunity to engage with technology and learn it. The vision with which ICT centers have started to function are so said adolescent girls are able to access government services better and be able to utilize the opportunities available within private employment.

From May to July 2016 in both centers, learners were taught basic computer skills, English and Hindi typing, an understanding on printing documents, making folders and files, operating the internet, creating e-mail IDs, and sending out emails was built; together with conducting sessions for 2-3 hours for 4 days of the week in which the issue of gender was spoken about. Themes such as gender and work, challenges and aspirations of adolescent boys and girls, gender- discrimination in the context of accessing public spaces and opportunities were discussed. 60 learners were enrolled at the ICT centers and 70% attendance was recorded. A basic test was taken and 47 girls who were enrolled as part of the programme were given a certificate, acknowledging that they have attended the course.

7. Work in Government Schools

From the 3rd of July to the 4th of August 2016, a process of conducting *Shivirs* in 65 government schools was undertaken. These were done with children belonging to the primary and upper primary sections of the school. As part of the *Shivir*, village level mobilisation was done in order to assess the number of children attending school, thereafter urging families to send their children to school. The *Shivir*, which was conducted in each school for two days, comprised of conducting learning activities with students through games and activities, assessing the quality and manner of teaching, the quality of food and the whether or not required facilities exist in schools. Furthermore, feedback is given to schools within which the *shivirs* are conducted and a report is given to the block education officer about the assessments made on the quality of the teaching, facilities available and infrastructure.

Blocks	Total Village	Total Schools	Number Of Teachers	Total Enrollment	Present Attendance	Attendance for the after Camp second day?
3	42	65	244	9117	32	53

8. Information Centre

In Mehrauni and Mandaavra, at the level of 23 gram Panchayats, information centers were set up. These centers are open from ten to four everyday wherein women are able to devote 2-3 hours to studying on a daily basis. At the information center, information on government schemes is provided to the community; government officials, *aanganwadi* workers, *panchayatpradhans*, *panchayatmitr*, MGNREGA secretary, SMC members, schools teachers and any other community stakeholders are brought closer to the community, urged to bring in knowledge of schemes and use the center as a space to make communities aware about the same. At the information center, forms and formats of schemes are oriented to the learners by teachers, these include; pension schemes, *UjjwalaYojana*, MGNREGA, *KanyadaanYojana* for girls etc. Additionally, the information center is used as a space wherein individuals from the community, inclusive of adolescent girls, boys and men, read the newspaper.

9. Monitoring and Information System (MIS) for Literacy Programme;

To assess and record the initial literacy level of the women who join the center, the baseline of enrolled women is conducted. In the month of May and June 2016, baseline was conducted through the process of sampling for 307 enrolled women at the new centers. To monitor *Sahjani's* literacy programme on a monthly basis, a meeting was done with IMPACT to create an excel sheet wherein data about every supervisor, center, information centers data can be entered. In the next excel sheet, block level data can be entered, for everyone to be able to assess how the programme ran for that particular month and how many learners attended the centre in the month. Every three months tests will be taken of every learner, which will then be used to assess learning levels and plan ahead.