

**Sahjani Shiksha Kendra**  
**April 2017 to March 2018**

**Introduction**

The Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (SSK) has been working with rural and Adivasi women on issues of their empowerment through education and literacy programmes at Lalitpur since the year 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 last one year women's literacy intervention along with information center was a major thrust of the programme in Sahajani Shiksha Kendra. SSK's work; Literacy centers and Literacy and Information centers which were regularized in first year of the programme were continued in this year. During this year, SSK adopted an approach of strengthening its existing work and promoting women's literacy through various efforts. Through mobilization, village and block level camps, bridge courses SSK enhanced its space in the community. Since last year was mid time for the programme hence qualitative and quantitative mid-term review of the programme were also done.

Since new teachers and other staff join the programme hence their capacity building has also been done to effectively run centers with a thorough understanding of the pedagogy, and by inculcating a critical gender perspective. These have been some of the core activities carried out during this period, to support and effective working of LICs and Literacy centers.

**Literacy through Centers**

**Literacy Centers:**

30 new literacy centers were opened during the period between April 2017 and March 2018. Members from Panchayat and at places Sarpanch provided their support in

conducting community meetings which were conducted to share the objectives of opening the center and motivated community members to send women to the center. Base line in these centers was conducted to assess the learning and empowerment levels of women enrolled at the center. 14 Literacy centers were closed; the centers completed basic phase of the programme. End line was administered in the centers that have completed 18 months. The table given below shows the status of Literacy centers and the number of women enrolled at the centers.

Literacy Center	Total no.	Women Enrolled
Presently Running	51	2376
Basic Literacy Center	23	884
Advance Literacy Center	14	720
Closed Literacy Center	14	772

#### **Literacy and Information Centers:**

One Literacy and Information Center was opened during the period between April 2017 and March 2018. Base line in this center was conducted to assess learning level of the women. During this period one Literacy and Information center was closed due to the unavailability of teacher. End line was also administered in the Literacy and Information centers that have completed 18 months. At present total of 26 Literacy and Information centers were running by SSK.

Literacy and Information center is visualized as a space which is available to all community members. With continuous efforts of the SSK's karyakartas it has been established as a space for community. Not only women come to the centers but men from the community also come. They read news paper and also take/get information regarding various government schemes, take forms and fill them. To develop understanding of adolescent girls discussion on social issues like early marriage, how early marriage impacts on women health and other health related issues in women etc. are done by the teacher or karyakarta. At places girls have shared their experiences about negotiating age

of their marriage with family. The centers are opened for boys also; boys come to the center, spend time in reading books from library and play in door games like carom board, badminton. Community has also started owing the center and in this continuation “support samitis” has been formed last year to take responsibilities related to the center and taking out issues to be discussed during the community meeting.

The table given below is showing the number of Literacy and Information centers; running and closed and the number of women enrolled at the centers.

Literacy & Information Center	Total no.	Women Enrolled
Presently Running	26	1434
Basic Literacy & Information Center	12	596
Advance Literacy & Information Center	14	802
Closed Literacy & Information Center	1	36

## Literacy in Camps

### 1. Village level Camps

In last one year total of 30 village level camps were organized in all three blocks. In these camps 916 women were participated among which 811 women were enrolled at the centers and 105 women were new. With the help of village level camp an environment of literacy within the village and presence of Sahajani Shiksha Kendra was established. The camps were also helpful in developing relationship with the community, so that help can be sought from the community when literacy work continues.

During the camps information regarding MGNREGA, RtE, Food Security Bill etc. were shared with the women. Women could negotiate with the cotedaar and get rashan on fair prices even during the camps only. Some of the women went to school and could

talk to the teachers regarding the mid day meal and discrimination their kids had to face in the school. Such steps were important in order to bring change and boost up women's confidence.

## **2. Block Level Camps**

The objectives of block level literacy camp is to strengthen the literacy skills of the learners who attend literacy centers and village level literacy camps, along with building an understanding on community/social issues. Sometimes the camp is planned and organized for women and adolescent girls who could not manage to give time to the centers and due to which they lag behind in literacy and numeracy skills.

**During the period three block level camps were organized in which 192 women participated.**

Initial assessment of learners was done through written test; based on results the women were divided in to three groups and literacy activities were done accordingly. By the end of the camp in first level women were able to write their name, husband's & village name, twelve letters and three *matras*. They could also read and write small words containing those letters and *matras*. In mathematics initially women could not write counting up to 9 but by the end of the camp they were able to read and write counting upto 100 and understood the concept of place value (tens and hundred).

The second level women who initially were able to identify some letters and *matras* could write words and small sentences in language. In mathematics they learned writing number in hundreds and the concept of place value (tens, hundred and thousand). These women were also able to do simple and carry over addition and subtraction and reading calendar as well.

The third level women who initially had difficulty in reading and writing 'sanyuktakshar' and words with *matra*, they were able to read and write paragraph with comprehension. In mathematics they learned doing carry over addition and subtraction of 1000 numbers. Women could also do multiplication and division.

### **3. Bridge Course**

The Bridge course is organized for two categories of adolescent girls; one who are enrolled in the schools but could not attend that due to house hold responsibilities and another who are dropped out from the school. The course was organized for 10 days wherein mostly girls from dalit and adivasi communities participated. This year two bridge courses were organized in which 150 adolescent girls participated. The objective of the course was to strengthen girls' competencies in language and mathematics along with building understanding on issues related to gender, caste, child marriage and misconception related to menstruation etc. For this purpose curriculum was designed accordingly.

The girls who were dropped out had very low level of literacy skills hence they were in focus of the teacher and emphasis was given on their comprehension. During the course health primer and school books were used for teaching girls.

### **Other Activities**

#### **1. ICT Centers – Mehrauni and Mandavra**

Objective of the ICT center is to link scheduled caste and schedule tribe adolescent girls with computer skills. Also there is high demand from adolescent girls for learning computer as their parents do not allow them to go at the district level to learn such skills. They also feel that in absence of computer skills they lag behind to many opportunities. Hence many girls from villages come to the block to learn computer.

This year the course is designed for 6 months; basics of computer like computer parts, doing painting, making file and folders, typing; Hindi and English, creating e-mail id and how to keep check on e-mails etc. are part of the curriculum along with building understanding on the issues like child marriage, gender and sexuality etc.

Total of 2 ICT Centers were running in which 2 batches were conducted; 52 girls were enrolled during the period. The girls who completed the course were also awarded with certificate.

First level of girls i.e. 32 learned doing painting in computer along with typing in MS word; girls were able to type 600-700 words in English, they also learned typing in Hindi but require help in doing it. After learning this much 23 girls were dropped out and could not enhance their learning.

34 girls moved ahead from this level and learned MS excel and power point as well, they were in second level. 21 girls were in third level; among these 4 girls could make mark sheet in the MS excel, they also learned using photo shop and internet surfing.

## **2. School Shivirs**

**With an objective to regularize the children's attendance shivirs were organized in 65 schools wherein 4367 students from** primary and upper primary sections participated. The *Shivirs* were 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. Feedback is given to schools within which the *shivirs* are conducted.

During these shivirs open meetings were conducted with SMC and community members. To increase students' interest in studies some activities were conducted with them, as a result it was seen that students came to schools in more numbers. In order to build children's understanding on the issues related to gender some quizzes were also organized.

## **3. Mobilisation**

Mobilization is a regular activity done under the programme. During the last one year mobilization was done for different activities like block level and village level camps, bridge course and opening for the new centers. Mobilization was done in a way so that interest within women and adolescent girls can be created for learning reading and writing and then they can be linked to the centers, camps or bridge course.

Mobilization was done in 20 villages of Birdha, Mehrauni and Mandavara block. The mobilization focused on spreading awareness about literacy centers, literacy & information centers, bridge courses, block level camps among others. Women and men

from Dalit and tribal communities were involved in the meetings during the process of mobilization. Village level meetings were conducted to create a dialogue about women and adolescent girls' literacy. A lot of learning was derived from the rounds of mobilizations. Though, the parents of the girls are willing to educate their daughters but they are still unsure about their safety. A positive outcome from such mobilization is that the girls are gradually beginning to demand and negotiate for their own education from the parents.

#### 4. **Community Meetings**

In past one year sixty-two community meetings were conducted in Mehrauni and Mandavara blocks with 2000 women. Issues of child marriage, child rights, MNREGA, Pension and food security were the highlight of these meetings. It was drawn from these meetings that women have begun to create a dialogue with the Kotedars (PDS vendor). To quote an incident, a kotedar in Mehrauni block did not provide sugar to a woman but had entered that in the ration card. The women realized this loophole and took a firm stand and went back to the kotedar, to demand their ration. It is not easy for women to negotiate and demand their rights as Kotedars in some places get very irritated, resistant and challenge the knowledge of women which allows them to demand their rights. In 30 villages, women ensured school dress distribution to 300 children, talked about the quality of food and distributed milk, fruits on two weekdays.

#### **Capacity Building**

Capacity building of teachers was emphasized during the period and hence various trainings; gender and caste, perspective building of the new teachers, refresher training of the teachers and training for running centers in advance phase etc. were conducted.

**Gender and Caste Training:** Two consecutive trainings on Caste and Gender were organized wherein 68 teachers participated from SSK. These trainings were helpful to understand the system of hierarchy that exists because of the caste discrimination. The

discussion on gender being a social phenomenon along with caste also pushed participants to reflect on their own socialization.

**Teachers' Training for Advance Phase:** Since in last one year 14 Literacy centers and 14 Literacy and Information centers completed basic phase of literacy teachers' training for running the advance phase centers were organized wherein 56 teachers participated. Panchayat Module was introduced and shared with the teachers; sessions were conducted on how the module will be used by the teachers for developing learners' understanding about role and work of Panchayat.

**Teachers' Training:** For newly opened centers and due to leaving of some teachers, new teachers were appointed and a six days training for them was organized for building their perspective and pedagogical skills. Operational aspects of running centers like maintaining records and creating live and engaging environment in the center were also in focus.



**Refresher Training of the Teachers:** Refresher training conducted for the teachers who had already gone through a basic training and were teaching at the centers. While teaching they face many issues and problem hence this training was a platform to address all those issues and brushing up the previous concepts. 33 teachers participated in the training who had run the centers for 8-10 months. These teachers were mainly struggling with word pedagogy.

**Teachers' Sammelan:** A two day teachers' sammelan was organized in the month of Nov. 2017 with an objective to appreciate and awarding teachers working in the area of adult education since 2012. 200 teachers from 18 organizations from 5 states participated in the sammelan. Their own educational level are not too high but they shared that while working in this programme they learned a new pedagogy which is different from the pedagogy used in the mainstream education which enhanced their capacity as well. Even

school education teachers whom we had invited appreciated the effort and shared that such event has encouraged them as well to motivate teachers.

**Mid-term Review of the Programme:** The SSK's literacy programme completed half of its journey last year hence the midterm review of the programme was planned and conducted. The objective was to understand the progress of the programme and areas of improvement for future progress.

During the review literacy centers and literacy and information centers were visited and discussion with learners was done to check their learning level. In one of the villages during the meeting with teacher it came out that women/parents got aware about their children's education during the school shivirs (an activity conducted in government schools by SSK) and now some of them have started sending their girls to block school for their education. Some excerpts are as follows:

"...fair degree of confidence that SSK seems to be on course in meeting the objectives of its literacy programme in both the quantitative and qualitative terms...."

....SSK has strengthened its women's literacy programme with the ICT and IEC components. Being new and relatively unskilled to implement the information, communication and technology components in their adult women's literacy and educational interventions, SSK team needs sustained inputs from outside....."

## **Issue Based Work**

As SSK focuses on empowering women through literacy it also does it through enabling them to access their rights, entitlements and builds their understanding on different social issues. One tangible output of SSK's work is seen as that 10 women were ready as social worker and started working and 2 women started working as mGNREGA mate. Along with the work entailed above this year SSK built awareness on Food Security Bill, Right to Education Act, MGNREGA, ill effects of early and child marriage etc. For this purpose meetings were held with community members, to discuss the issues, meetings were conducted with parents to discuss the issue of early and child marriage. The number pertaining to the outreach made is given below:

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Issue persuaded</b>	<b>No. of Villages</b>	<b>No. of Members</b>
<b>1</b>	Demand followed under MGNREGA	30	721
<b>2</b>	Work Under MGNREGA	30	1000
	Payment under MGNREGA made available	30	600
<b>3</b>	Awareness on Food Security Bill	50	1055
<b>4</b>	Rashan card on line	50	410
<b>5</b>	Pension made available		100
<b>6</b>	Awareness on issue of early marriage	65	1300 girls
<b>7</b>	Bank account opened	100	4082
<b>8</b>	Jani Adhikar Samiti meeting	62	2200
<b>9</b>	Pradhanmantri Nivas Yojna		50
<b>10</b>	Toilet Construction under Swachta Abhiyan		7865