

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



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SECRETARY'S PREFACE

2022 was a year filled with unprecedented global challenges in every corner of the world. As the COVID pandemic subsides, many countries are at war with each other, leading to a worrying increase in forced displacement and disrupting the fundamental rights of women and girls, LGBTIQ+ communities, and other marginalized groups. Threats to rights have increased, compounded by the global climate crisis.

The situation in India remains the same: people are losing their jobs due to COVID-19, crops are getting destroyed due to excessive rains and droughts due to climate change, there is a lack of creation of new jobs for women and vulnerable communities, and discrimination and violence against women and children are increasing. Due to minimal advancements in the health and education sectors, a significant number of girls have discontinued their education.

In the year 2022-2023, Shramajivi Mahila Samity decided to prepare a strategy plan for the next five years after the FCRA renewal and made a 5-year strategy plan with the consent of the board members of the organization who have acted as a guide in moving the organization forward.

In the fiscal year 2022-23, the organization has undertaken a committed to collaborate with the Azim Prem Ji Foundation on initiatives related to local governance. Additionally, SMS is actively engaged in projects focused on enhancing the dignity and inclusion of single women in partnership with IM Sweden. The support from AWS in Berlin, Germany, was instrumental in the Formation and Strengthening of the Federation of Women Workers in Unorganized Sectors, further bolstering SMS's efforts.

Women's safety and security in both rural and urban areas, as well as the elimination of gender discrimination and the provision of access to resources for marginalized women, are the primary issues addressed by SMS. The organization is actively mobilizing rural communities to assert their community forest rights, aiming to mitigate the impact of climate change. This initiative seeks to empower tribal and indigenous communities, along with economically disadvantaged women whose livelihoods are intricately tied to forests, by ensuring their rightful access to resources. The overarching goal is not only to secure their rights but also to enhance the overall environmental quality.

By effectively bridging the gap between communities and the region's most critical women's advocacy and security, humanitarian development, and human rights challenges, leveraging our shared values, financial commitments, innovative partnerships, and increasing support for local women's organizations in crisis situations, SMS aims to enhance the ability of rural women to cope with crises and create sustainable livelihoods for all.

We will persist in our efforts to end sexual and gender-based violence, uplift our communities from poverty, and combat all forms of discrimination with expertise, creativity, and determination.

As we look forward to the coming year, SMS will continue in piloting these program, fulfilling our crucial mission of serving women and girls and enhancing the quality and capacity of local women's civil society organizations in conflict and crisis situations. We are committed to tailoring it to effectively provide assistance. In solidarity with our network members, we extend our deep gratitude to our donors for their dedicated support.



Purabi Paul

Chief Functionary

SMS

The organization has conducted the following projects

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Vision and Mission of the organization

VISION – TO CREATE A JUST AND HUMANE SOCIETY

MISSION- ENSURE A COGNITIVE, EQUITABLE, AND ECO-FRIENDLY JUST SOCIETY.

Project -1

To establish the dignity and respect of single women through sustainable livelihood and gender equality -

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- To organize single women into groups, enabling them to come together and discuss their common issues. These groups will provide platforms for discussion, allowing them to collaborate for their collective improvement and understanding of their rights.
- To connect and link single women with resources so that their economic conditions get better and they can focus on their development.
- Increase in their inclusion and visibility in society.
- Change in qualitative factors like decision-making, discussion of their issues in the groups, and all the village-level forums.

The situation of single women in society is, as we know, quite dire due to the prevailing mindset associated with them. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented hardships, particularly affecting single women living far from their native lands and working in the informal sector in pursuit of income and employment opportunities. Gender inequalities and discrimination frequently limit employment prospects for women, compounding the challenges they face.

This project focuses on advocating for the rights of landless single women, facilitating improved economic conditions by connecting them with available livelihood options.

A community-based, cross-sectional study was conducted using a random sampling approach in November 2022 across each block in 12 selected districts. Twelve villages, rural communities, urban slums, and urban areas were chosen within each study block. The study commenced with a review of project documents to gain an understanding of the project objectives and expected outcomes. The survey was executed using Android phones through the Kobo App. A door-to-door survey was conducted, involving 50 women in each district. In total, we were able to cover 600 single women in the impact study. Various field stories and recommendations from the surveyors were collected during the survey.

The key findings of the study for the single women are as follows: During the interview sessions, the women reported having very little to no income, making it challenging to repay debts. The majority of respondents also stated that they lost both their income and a portion of their land during the pandemic.

- The pre-existing inequalities associated with singlehood have exacerbated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic among single women. Widows and other single women have faced numerous disadvantages even in normal times, including limited access to government programs. The pandemic-induced lockdown further exposed these vulnerabilities.
- The most affected individuals are the children of single women, who have dropped out of school and begun working as child laborers.
- Poverty, debts, children out of education, and children's health concerns during the pandemic have contributed to depression among women. This has resulted in unsafe migration, leading to a rise in trafficking and becoming victims of the sex trade, exploitation, and bonded labor.

Major Challenges addressed during the Reporting Period

- Formation of the Single Women Group posed a significant challenge initially, as members felt hesitant to come forward and speak due to a history of rejection in the village.
- They lack the ability to share the required information for the survey data, as they do not possess proper knowledge and awareness about it.
- Many times, various government departments conduct surveys on schemes, assuring them of some benefits. However, in reality, they do not receive anything, leading to a reluctance to participate in such surveys.
- Time constraints also pose challenges, as they are the sole earners for themselves and their families.
- The inclusion of single women presented difficulties due to societal misconceptions.

Field story collection from the field was a routine practice. We gathered 30 case stories featuring single women, single women groups, and others, highlighting their livelihood practices, etc. We have compiled an e-book collection of these stories in both English and Hindi.

The major outcomes of the six months were as follows:

- The formation of single women groups was facilitated through regular intervention by the community facilitator. In total, 14 single women groups were established, comprising 172 single women as group members.
- Single women actively participated in and regularized monthly and federation meetings, recognizing the importance of these discussion forums.
- Leaders were selected from each group to act as representatives, also joining the women's federation.

- A document was prepared listing the discrimination faced by single women in the community, and these identified issues were discussed in the monthly meetings of single women groups.
- Mahila Gram Sabha was conducted in all the panchayats of Dumaria Block, with active participation from single women. Local informers (Dakua) invited all the single women to the event.
- PRI members and government officials supported the inclusion of single women by officially inviting them to all meetings and ensuring their active participation in the Mahila Gram Sabha.
- A total of 135 single women were linked with various government schemes, and single women leaders assisted 12 in obtaining death certificates for their widow pensions.
- The single women's group gained recognition in the community, with government officials highlighting the importance of their inclusion.
- The 16 days of activism for the elimination of violence against women were carried out with support from the DLSA, Block Pramukh, and Senior Inspector. They assured single women that they could easily report their issues and pledged their presence and guidance.
- The post-COVID-19 impact study covered 12 districts of Jharkhand, involving 600 single women. Experiences and conditions of single women in other districts were also documented.
- Different situations were encountered, such as Bal Vidhwa, issues and discrimination, tribal land rules for single women, etc.
- Ten single women groups with 121 members initiated collective farming. Ninety-two single women engaged in duck rearing and kitchen gardening. Ten single women received input support for opening small shops in the village.



Project 2

Sustainable livelihood in and inclusion of single women in six districts of Jharkhand.

Based on the last six months of work experience and the findings of a field study, it has been observed that a significant number of rural poor single women in Jharkhand are employed in the informal sector and often migrate for work. The situation of single women and their families has been severely impacted during the lockdown imposed due to the Corona pandemic. Women have faced domestic violence, social violence, and various other forms of abuse, and their daughters have become victims of child marriage, child labor, and trafficking.

In response to the above-mentioned issues, a project titled "Sustainable Livelihood and Inclusion" for tribal, Dalit, backward, and poor single women was initiated in six districts of Jharkhand.

Objectives –

- To organize single women from the unorganized and disadvantaged sectors, especially agricultural, construction, and domestic workers, to enable them to raise their issues.
- Enabling single women to foster social and institutional leadership
- To advocate women's policies and programs, with special attention to single women's land, livelihood, labor rights, and social security, especially in the informal sector.

Areas Covered:

District	Block
Bokaro	Kashmar
East Singhbhum	Boram
Lohardaga	Kishko
Saraiikela-Kharsawan	Kharsawan
Simdega	Simdega
West Singhbhum	Sonua

The project has started in January 2023; hence, staff training and base line work have started under the project.

Outcomes

- Single women are able to make their voices heard in favor of worker recognition for them through their collective forum.

- Better representation of single women and socially excluded women in committees of village, block, district/state and influencing decision-making to protect their interests and priorities
- Single women exercising habitat and agriculture land rights given under the PESA, FRA Act, and government land distribution program for landless people

According to National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) data from 2008, women constituted 80% of the 327.7 million (32.77 crore) migrant population in the country (IDRC-CRDI, 2013). Unfortunately, no further data is available on this sizable number in terms of the sector of employment, migration routes, pull and push factors, etc. Despite the significant presence of female migrants, they have not been considered a relevant category for which data should be collected, hindering the development of gender-balanced policies.

Patriarchal norms and values compel women to work in informal sectors, and migrant women are no exception. It is estimated that approximately 93 percent of women work in the informal sector, rendering them invisible in national accounting. They lack the dignity of labor, social security, decent and timely wages, and, in cases such as domestic work and certain home-based occupations, even the right to be called a 'worker'.

During our interactions, a question arose about the process involved in the preparation of death certificates, now considered a vital document for access to widow pension. The women also expressed their need for small-scale businesses to provide them with resources to earn a living.

The importance of strengthening the single women federation was emphasized in the meeting, as it provides a platform for these women to discuss their issues and collaboratively devise solutions.

The objectives of the project were shared with all participants, ensuring the inclusion of single women in village-level committees. The project aims to establish the respect and dignity of single women by offering them livelihood options. SMS is implementing this project with core support from IM Sweden, organizing working single women to help them assert their rights.



Project 3

Women Workers Forum

Ninety-five percent of the women in Sonua sustain their families by engaging in activities such as working in brick kilns, participating in building construction, soil excavation, stone breaking, selling vegetables, labor for wages, collecting forest produce, and migrating for employment. Additionally, these women undertake household chores, care for animals, participate in farm work, and attend to the needs of both children and the elderly.



These women engage in various types of work to support their families, dedicating a significant portion of their day to these activities. However, when they face challenges, they often struggle to find assistance. Women's groups have been established in all the villages of Jharkhand under the National Livelihood Mission. Still, the discussions within these groups and village organizations rarely address women's work and labor rights. Recognizing this gap, Shramajivi Mahila Samiti has taken the initiative to organize working women.

GAATW-IS, in collaboration with various partners worldwide, has launched the Women Workers Forum (WWF) initiative to support a feminist change agenda led by and for women workers. SMS is part of this mission, actively aiding women workers in the Sonua block to form and strengthen the Women Workers Forum. This includes women currently working in destination countries, those who have returned to their villages after working in migration (with potential future migration), and women who are workers in their localities and have not migrated but have a migration history.

The initiative focuses on three key strategies: educate, agitate, and organize. The project aims to empower the groups by supporting their self-directed learning agenda, helping them understand the connection between individual experiences of abuse and systemic

discrimination. Furthermore, the project encourages women to foster solidarity among like-minded groups and raise their collective voice against injustice and unfair practices.

Area Covered

District	Gram Panchayat
West Singhbhum	Bari and Baljudi

The establishment of Karmjeevi Mahila Manch marks a significant development as 300 women workers joined forces to form their federation. The Forum has successfully introduced itself to various stakeholders, including PRIs, village-level traditional organizations, state and national-level CSO networks, issue-based platforms, state governments, and national institutions. Essentially, their goal is to expand their ideas and work, and we believe that their initiatives and insights could be beneficial to local CBOs and the community. SMS has facilitated the linkage of this platform with numerous other associations to introduce it on a larger scale.

Outcome

The Karamjivi Women Forum comprises a cohesive group of 300 members, and the Forum has established five sub-groups based on their respective work profiles. These wings are identified by their distinct work roles. The members advocate independently at PRI, Block office, and community levels. Their active participation instigates a transformation in behavioral attitudes within both the family and the community.



Project 4

Empowerment of worker women to lead a dignified life and be able to make decisions-

"Empowering women to lead dignified lives and make independent decisions" is the focal point of our project. The objective is to enable single and working women to make decisions about their lives independently. Our focus area includes five villages across two panchayats, Baljudi and Bari, namely Belpos, Chandipos, Rakhasai, Tunia, and Brindawan. Shramajivi Mahila Samity, in collaboration with the working women of the village, initiated this process in April 2022.

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the organization of working women, fostering increased solidarity among women workers for both paid and unpaid work. The project also aims to raise awareness about labor rights and advocate for their demands from the village level to the block level.

Unorganized women workers are often invisible, and their labor is frequently undervalued and subordinated to that of men. Women's labor tends to be considered secondary to that of their husbands or male counterparts, and even when the government sets a minimum wage, women's earnings remain disproportionately low. The plight of women workers gained attention for the first time during the Covid-19 lockdown when they returned home. There was no organization at the local level for these women to discuss their problems. The project envisions establishing a robust organization of women workers at the village and panchayat levels, uniting women from all walks of life to collectively fight for and advocate their rights.

Five themes have been given more attention in this one year –

- ☑ Creating awareness
- ☑ Institution building
- ☑ Capacity Building (Leadership Building, Legal & Women Rights, Women Safety & Gender Equality)
- ☑ Solidarity and collectivism
- ☑ Advocacy with various stakeholders



Collective Actions by Workers Women Federation- Several activities were undertaken to enhance the solidarity of women workers. Due to climate change and global warming, the water bodies in the village are drying up, and the fertility of the land is diminishing. The forest has undergone changes, and crops are adversely affected each year due to a lack of timely monsoon. The Women Workers Federation (WWF) collected seeds from remote villages to plant traditional paddy, known as black paddy, in their fields. These seeds are typically planted only by the Kol tribals on their land, so they had to collect them from their homes. To protect it from diseases, this variety is cultivated alongside other types of paddy, using organic methods that make the soil fertile and prevent wastage of the land.

The Workers Mahila Sangathan applied to the Gram Sabha for community land for collective farming. However, the Gram Sabha (Village Body) stated that certain rules must be followed to allocate community land for agricultural work, requiring some time. Since the farming season for this year had arrived, the Gram Sabha suggested applying next year. In response, the women of WWF decided to engage in collective farming on their family land for the current year. The group initiated the process, and three families agreed to lease their land to WWF for two years. In writing, 17 bighas (6 acres) of land were allocated to WWF for three women groups (36 labor women) to conduct collective farming for two years. These three groups are from Raksai, Vrindavan, and Belpose villages, respectively. SMS provided vegetable and pulse seeds to these groups, along with bio-fertilizers and bio-medicines. Currently, 36 women from the three groups are preparing the land for organic farming and planting vegetables. Anticipating the upcoming monsoon, the three women's groups from five villages were seeking land to prepare for collective farming.

The concept of collective farming for women's groups, including single, migrant, and landless women without their own land, was pursued. These women sustain their families through daily wage labor. The groups applied to the village head to lease community land for three years. After convincing the community, two groups commenced selecting land for cultivation by combining their family's land with the surrounding area, facilitating collective farming.

Introducing Mahila Sabha

There was a recognized need for the establishment of the Mahila Sabha before the Gram Sabha because women required a platform where they could address issues related to gender inequality, social injustices, sexual and reproductive health, child marriage, livelihood opportunities, and domestic violence. Women hesitated to raise these concerns in the Gram Sabha in the presence of males, as their voices often went unheard. Participation in the Gram Sabha had consistently been an unattractive prospect for women. This is where organizing Mahila Sabhas at the grassroots level became an important tool to mobilize women.

In 2022, the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in Jharkhand announced the establishment of Mahila Sabhas through a circular dated September 30, 2022. The objective was to include decisions made by women in the Mahila Sabha for discussion in the Gram Sabha. After discussion, these decisions would be incorporated into the annual Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). NGOs like Shramjivi Mahila Samiti and Jagori work towards the same cause, aiming to bring women into the mainstream by increasing their participation at local governance levels. The concept of Mahila Sabha emerged from the findings of the "Women's Safety and Security Audit" report, which highlighted the significant concern for the safety of local women.

Reasons to Promote Mahila Sabha:

- Empowering women to express their concerns with confidence and assertiveness.
- Encouraging increased involvement of women in Gram Sabha discussions and decision-making processes.
- Sensitizing men and society at large to the specific needs and challenges faced by women.

16 Days Campaign on Violence Against Women

A 16-day campaign was conducted from November 25th to December 10th with the purpose of creating awareness and raising voices against violence towards women. The program commenced at the block level on November 16, 2022, with the enthusiastic participation of a total of 72 women. On November 28, 2022, a program focusing on "The role of men in the prevention of violence against women" involved 58 male participants. Subsequently, from December 6, 2022, to December 12, 2022, programs were organized at the Panchayat level, drawing the attendance of 218 villagers and effectively raising awareness against violence.

Local officials, including BDO, CO, Police Station, DLSA, Mukhiya, Munda, Pradan, and JSLPS, cooperated to make the program impactful. Women and villagers actively voiced their opposition to present-day violence.

Linkage and Convergence efforts were made, including the submission of applications to connect excluded women from the five villages to various government schemes. This included obtaining 5 ration cards, 4 PM Awas Yojana beneficiaries, 38 widow pensions, 14 old age pensions, and 8 disabled pensions. Additionally, 4 migrating families, including 4 women, were registered for labor cards. Five excluded women-led families in the village were identified and linked to job cards and labor cards.

Throughout the year, through the organization and government welfare programs, awareness was increased by setting up camps at the village level. Women deprived of government schemes benefited from various schemes online and offline, and the relevant documents were uploaded to the Panchayat's portal.

OUTCOME –

- 150 women have garnered community support to fortify themselves and the organization.
- 48 women have emerged as leaders in the organization, gaining insights into the challenges faced by women.
- Women have gained awareness of their rights, contributing to the reinforcement of gender equality and women's rights at the local level.
- The solidarity among women has contributed to a reduction in violence against women.
- Approximately 80% of the women have been connected to social security, enabling them to access labor rights.
- A culture of collectivism has been instilled and promoted among women, resulting in progress among workers and volunteers. This progress has allowed them to provide timely support to the organization and the community, and some have emerged as leaders in documenting advancements.

CHALLENGES - The community is grappling with financial constraints post-pandemic, particularly impacting single women, landless women, and migrant women who have returned from work, losing their wages. These women, occupied with work throughout the day, face challenges attending organization meetings. Their limited awareness of their rights and detachment from the village governance system, such as non-participation in the gram sabha and other government meetings, hinder them from voicing their demands.

Women continue to be victims of violence, especially gender-based and domestic violence, along with instances of caste-based violence. Women engaged in migration work face discrimination, and single women are subjected to disrespect, often labeled as witches. Despite residing in the community, these women remain highly vulnerable.

A significant challenge for women workers is gaining recognition for the Women Workers Federation (WWF). The male-dominated social structure rejects women's individual labor and skills, and both the community and government fail to acknowledge women as workers, farmers, traders, and producers. Establishing a worker's organization of this nature is a lengthy process. Additionally, issues such as minimum wages and equal wages for women pose substantial challenges, further complicated by the lack of recognition for women engaged in this labor.

Project 5

Empower Adivasi and other vulnerable communities to access public service deliveries and claim their entitlements and forest rights by strengthening Gram Sabha and Governance Structures in 90 villages of Dumaria Block, East Singhbhum Districts.

The primary objective of the program is to support tribal communities in strengthening local institutions to achieve socio-economic well-being through active and culturally dynamic participation in decision-making bodies, specifically Gram Sabhas. The focus is on sensitizing these communities to the needs of the most vulnerable members. Tribal communities face heightened vulnerability and marginalization due to their poor socio-economic conditions, impacting their work participation and access to various eligible government entitlements and social security schemes.

While all 90 villages in the block have a Gram Sabha system, it is not as robust, transparent, and inclusive as necessary. Challenges persist in the villages due to irregular monthly Gram Sabha meetings, and the legally mandated quarterly Gram Sabha meetings often lack sufficient participation, sometimes failing to meet the required quorum. This low engagement is primarily attributed to a lack of awareness among the people regarding the importance of Gram Sabha meetings, leading to their neglect. The project is actively working to encourage regular monthly Gram Sabha meetings, and there has been some success in this endeavor. Approximately 20 villages are now showing willingness to conduct regular Gram Sabha meetings and are actively organizing these gatherings.

Objectives

- Empowerment of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat.
- Adivasi Collectivization and engagement with tribal culture and traditions.
- Claim in FRA Community Forest Right (CFR) and (IFR) in 30 villages.
- Ensure ration, pension and employment through social security schemes and MNREGA in 90 villages
- Build alliance/ network for advocacy and policies

Area of work

Location	Dumaria, East Singhbhum
Target Area	10 Panchayats, 90 Villages

The project commenced in March 2023, and as a result, staff selection and orientation were conducted in this fiscal year.

Outcome

The tribal community of Dumuria has initiated Gram Sabha participation where discussions encompass the Gram Panchayat development plan and public welfare schemes. SMS is actively supporting them in accessing the entitlements of these public welfare programs in their respective localities. The community is leveraging the Forest Rights Act (FRA) to protect the forest and utilize its products for their livelihood. Currently, 30 villages fall under the purview of FRA, and the community is actively pursuing their claims.

With the support of the Azim Premji Foundation (APF), SMS is establishing an advocacy network for tribal well-being.

Project 6

Promotion of Women's Safety and Security in Panchayat and Mahila Sabha before Gram Sabha.

In 2021, Shramajivi Mahila Samity, in collaboration with Jagori in Sonua block, conducted an audit on the safety and security of women and girls in rural villages and public places. The findings revealed that women and girls' mobility in their communities has been restricted in an attempt to ensure their "safety," primarily due to violence. Consequently, many girls are compelled to discontinue their education after middle school, as venturing outside the village is deemed too risky for their safety. This restricted mobility results in unequal access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and participation in civic engagement, undermining efforts to empower women and girls and address poverty.

In 2022, a campaign was launched in the area to organize Mahila Sabha, taking inspiration from other states where government instructions have been issued to organize Mahila Sabha. Meetings for women's protection and safety were organized before the Gram Sabha in 44 villages across 6 Panchayats in the Sonua block.

The Mahila Sabha took place from October 8th, 2022, to October 17th, 2022, in 5 panchayats spanning 17 villages. The participating women came from different social groups, including Ho, Mundari, Mahato, Dass, Nayak, and Kumhar.

The concept of the Mahila Sabha expanded, leading to the second Mahila Sabha in 6 panchayats across 44 villages from January 2023 to February 28th, 2023. A total of 1193 participants, including women workers, ward members, anganwadi workers, sahkayas, and upmukhiyas, attended the Mahila Sabha. This Mahila Sabha was specifically introduced in the village to address the concerns of single women, migrant women, disabled women, and vulnerable primitive women. The Mahila Sabha was organized by field volunteers.

DECISION/FOLLOW-UP –

- Ensure active participation of all communities of women, including single, migrant, disabled, primitive vulnerable, tribal, or any other women in Mahila Sabha periodically.
- An elected woman leader should compile a list of all women's issues and present resolutions in the Gram Sabha, as discussed in Mahila Sabha.
- Regularly update the panchayat in the e-Gram Swaraj portal.
- Conduct Mahila Sabha periodically to maintain active women's participation.
- Address discussions about women's safety in public places and raise awareness during Mahila Sabha.



Outcome

The women in the villages are clear about the objectives of Mahila Sabha. They have gained awareness of the facilities they can avail of and have become acquainted with their rights. Mahila Sabha is conducted before Gram Sabha, and as a result of strong women's participation in Mahila Sabha, changes were seen in all six panchayats. The women were able to take control of governance and express their views on political and social issues. A significant movement of women's participation is observed in all six panchayats. Women themselves raised issues of domestic violence, community violence, girls trafficking in the name of marriage, and the safety and security required in the village.

A total of 236 ST women and 201 OBC women participated from all six panchayats, and the number is seen increasing in these sabhas. It was a success to see women communicate their difficulties and demands to the Panchayat Samiti. The Gram Sabha sanctioned issues related to roads, lights, water, and toilets. Numerous lights, poles, and solar lamps were

established in the streets of four panchayats, namely Taira, Sonua, Sonapos, and Chandni Chowk. Several deep boring wells were installed, toilets were constructed in public places and schools of Sonua, and a spacious bus stand with well-shaded seats and proper lights was constructed at Jhargaon. Bushes were cleared from the way to ensure safe mobility for women, and roads were constructed in Kasurva and Binka.

It was observed that women have started participating voluntarily in Mahila Sabha and Gram Sabha from time to time. They raise their issues freely in the presence of men, and their opinions are taken into consideration. Women are called upon in Gram Sabha to express their views on decision-making. They have realized the importance of exercising their powers in Gram Sabha.

16 Days activism on VAW - Globally, violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread, persistent, and devastating human rights violations. Often, these violations go unreported because in a patriarchal society, most violence cases are considered normal in the name of traditions and customs.

An international campaign named "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence against Women" was first launched in 1991 by the Women's Global Leadership Institute to raise awareness against violence against women and girls. The campaign is active between November 25, the International Day Against Violence Against Women, and December 10, International Human Rights Day.

Under this objective, Jagori and Shramjivi Mahila Samiti initiated a 16-day campaign program against violence against women. On November 26, 2022, a one-day orientation program was organized with women leaders from six panchayats under the 16-day campaign against violence against women at the Forest Guest House, Sonua, West Singhbhum.

Male engagement, both nationally and internationally, aims to address the issue of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The majority of perpetrators of violence against women and girls are men. Yet, when it comes to gender issues, working with men goes far beyond just addressing violence.

Under this perspective, the second program in the 16-day violence against women campaign was held on November 28, 2022, at the Panchayat Bhavan of Baljudi Panchayat on the "Role of men in the prevention of violence against women." Amrita Thakur and Akanksha Kumari from Jagori New Delhi and Mr. Milind Chauhan, a gender expert, and advocate from Pune, Maharashtra, participated.

The third program, a Panchayat level workshop, was organized in six panchayats of Sonua Block, such as Bari Panchayat on December 6, 2022, Devangir Panchayat on December 7, 2022, Golmunda Panchayat on December 8, 2022, Bhalurungi Panchayat on December 8, 2022, Sonapose Panchayat on December 9, 2022, and Baljudi Panchayat on December 10, 2022.

All the women expressed that their Mahila Sabha has become an organization where all women can voice their views, and they are receiving great support. They pledged to strengthen this organization so that all women can benefit from it.

Under the 16-day campaign against violence against women, the Munda and the chief assured the women of ending violence in Sonua block and pledged cooperation in making villagers (women/men) aware.

Women took the oath with some decisions in the program - whether it is a meeting of the village organization or SHG, decisions should be taken in all the meetings by discussing ending violence and bringing awareness among women.

- **Women should cease tolerating violence and amplify their voices.**
- **Mapping should be conducted with the safety of women in the block in mind.**
- **Issues related to women's safety should be deliberated upon in Mahila Sabha.**

In conclusion, everyone expresses their cooperation, and the program concludes with gratitude to everyone.



FIELD STORY

"Resilience and Leadership: The Journey of Kunti Dongo Munda"

Kunti Dongo received education up to matriculation. After marriage, she assumed the roles of a daughter-in-law and a mother. Over time, Kunti became the mother of six children, including three sons and three daughters. She actively participated in local government elections twice as a ward member and secured unopposed victories.



Tragedy struck when her husband passed away in 2014. Following his death, Kunti faced significant violence as she vied for the position of the village head. Male villagers attempted to take over the Munda post, subjecting Kunti to accusations of witchcraft and threats of bodily harm. Undeterred, Kunti bravely fought back. She mobilized women, reported the violence to the police and administration, and eventually gained acceptance as the Munda by the entire village.

In her role as the Munda, Kunti consistently supported women in the village facing difficulties.

On one occasion, she intervened when a woman was being unjustly expelled from the village on charges of witchcraft. This act of resistance led to an attempt to burn Kunti's house, and she was pressured to leave the village. However, Kunti remained resolute, advocating for the rights of these women. She reported the incident to the block and garnered support, leading to a meeting where decisions were made in Kunti's favor. In 2020, Kunti's elder son, Balendra Dongo Munda, assumed the post.

Undeterred by challenges, Kunti re-entered Panchayat elections and secured an uncontested victory as a member of the Panchayat Samiti. She actively participates in the activities and programs of the organization, and her elder son, Balendra Dongo, remains engaged in the women's organization's activities while serving as the Munda.



Field Story -2

Bamboo brooms become a source of income, Sabar women are becoming self-reliant

China Sabar, Pati Toongru Sabar, Village Barunia, Tola Lupangdih Panchayat Dholabeda Post Bhagabandhi Police Station Dumariya District Purbi Singh Bhum Jharkhand.

Background; – The Panchayat team of Village Self-Governance Campaign that was held in the Tola meeting in Sabar Tola of Dholabera Panchayat. In this meeting, China Sabar faced financial issues. She did not have anything, somehow, She earned her living from selling forest fruits, flowers, wood, teeth, and leaves. She ran the family with great difficulty, Sabar used her skills to deal with all these problems.

The women of Lupungdih Sabar Tola of village Barunia under Dholabeda Panchayat of Dumaria block started making brooms. This proved to be a good source of income for the Sabar community. The women of Lupungdih Sabar Tola started making brooms by bringing bamboo from the forest without any capital. Sabar women make 8 to 10 brooms every day. The women of Sabar Tola have become a source of inspiration for the art of traditional broom making.

Under the Village Self-Governance Campaign project, the Dholabeda Panchayat team conducted a field visit to Lupungdih Sabar Tola of Barunia in which social and economic survey of Sabar Tola was conducted. All the Sabar families were introduced in the Tola Sabha in one Sabar Tola. A meeting was scheduled in which the work and objectives of the Village Self-Governance Campaign were explained. After that, through group discussion in the Tola Sabha, we learned about the problems of Sabar Tola, family problems, livelihood, education, health, ration, pension. Sabar woman China Sabar told that she makes brooms by bringing bamboo from the forest and earn their livelihood from this. Sabar women were inspired from China Sabar and she portrayed the will power of a woman to change her life and a lesson to use traditional method can be used by women so that the family can provide some financial assistance

China Sabar is earning thousands of rupees from her efforts. China Sabar expressed that, she created a cultivable field. She also bought two bulls, which she now does farming along with making brooms. The total after selling brooms has changed a lot. She earns about Rs 15,000/-

Making Bamboo brooms are a good initiative in the direction of building resource along with sustainable living in Sabar community. China Sabar teaches the art of broom making in her community by inviting everyone to her house and has tried to reach out to all the people of her community. She visualizes that Sabar women should not remain idle, they can easily earn good money by making brooms without any investment and selling them in the village, hamlet or market. Now all the families of Lupungdih are learning the art of making brooms. Women of Sabar are becoming self-reliant

Sabar community In the future, all Sabar families, every house, every woman will expand the art of making brooms. There will be a lot of change in the economic condition of Sabar women. Women of Sabar community will make brooms on a large scale and sell them to villages, haat markets and traders. Sabar women's broom will also prepare a network for marketing. It will expand in the coming days, which will increase the income and the bamboo broom will make Sabar women self-reliant, which will help a lot in financial assistance.



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