

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21



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Vision

To establish an equitable society where there is no discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion and caste and which provides equal social, economic and political opportunities.

Mission

To mobilize women, poor, marginalised, and weaker sections into sustainable groups so as to achieve their social, economic and political empowerment.

Values

- Dedication and Professionalism
- Innovation and respect for the needs of our partners in change
- Social responsibility
- Honesty and transparency
- Accountability

Outreach

- Two states: Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand
- Two districts
- Eleven development blocks
- Over 600 villages
- Over 6 million people

Chairperson's Message

THE year 2020-21 was probably the most challenging one in living memory of all of us as we faced global coronavirus pandemic. The year began with the country well into the second week of the lockdown. Everything had come to a grinding halt. No one, including health professionals, knew what had to be done.

With no understanding of the virus and no treatment available, the only possible mean seemed to put a physical barrier so the virus spread could be contained. Maintaining physical distance between the people, putting on masks, repeatedly washing hands with soap, repeated application of sanitiser, and disinfection seemed to be the only way out.

Solemn appeal of the Prime Minister to help each other and not to throw out the workers from jobs failed to have an impact. With nothing to eat and no shelter over their heads, lakhs of people, including women and children, started moving on foot from their place of 'employment' to their native places, under scorching sun. While on one hand people were dying in the hospitals, many more were suffering on the roads. This was a migration of humans on an unprecedented scale.

Caught unaware, the Government came out with several measures, all aimed at reducing pain of the people. The most prominent of these was provision of free ration to the vulnerable sections, free refills of cooking gas, and direct cash transfer to the segments like daily wagers, vendors, small and marginal farmers, etc. Somehow, even these measures left out a section of the people to fend for themselves.

When the lockdown was lifted in phases, the impact was visible. There was a feeling of despondency everywhere. But as the year drew to a close, there appeared a silver lining in the shape of two vaccines being available against coronavirus. Vaccination has started for senior citizens over 60 years and for certain sections of citizens over 45 years.

But at the same time cases of coronavirus again started rising in March. Fear of second wave of the deadly disease loomed on the horizon. After all many countries all over the world were already grappling with the second and a few with third wave.

Let's keep our fingers crossed!



Poornima Jain
Chairperson

Secretary's Message

OUR Chairperson has succinctly summarised the situation arising out of outbreak of global coronavirus pandemic. The year 2020-21 began with closed offices of the organisation. The initial lockdown declared for 21 days extended to almost three months, throwing everything out of whack. The Government took everything under its control. No one was allowed to go out of home, and anyone trying to do so had to face wrath of the administration.

In these circumstances, role of voluntary organisations became quite restricted. As a grassroots organisation we know best where the vulnerability is most. But the money is always a constraint because funds are project tied. By the time a sudden development, like the one caused by the lockdown, takes place, the organisation has to seek approval of the donors to use funds for providing relief. As organisation we did what we could do with the sanction of our donors.

Despite the risk of being exposed to the deadly virus, we managed to provide ration kits to almost 700 poorest of the poor families. Our staff members in their individual capacities contributed in cash and kind for alleviating pain of the suffering. Though not allowed to move out of their homes, they created awareness on coronavirus disease prevention over mobile phones.

As everyone was confined to homes, workload on women and girls increased. Instances of violence against women increased. Even adolescent girls were burdened with household chores, so much so that when the situation eased, they would not turn up to the education centres. The staff had to go an extra mile to bring them back to the centres.

Doing planned activities during such a challenging time was a Herculean task. We accepted the challenge. We changed our strategies. We organised smaller events wherever possible in place of larger ones. We participated in many training and workshops through online mode, instead of physically attending them.

In the end, I thank our donors, who have reposed their faith in us and funded different projects. Next, I thank stakeholders like government officials and employees, bank officials and employees, local leadership, medical staff, etc., for their continued support. I also thank our staff members who have worked very hard in sun, rain and cold towards fulfilment of our vision. Lastly, I express my gratitude to the community members, who listen to us for their betterment.



KN Tiwari
Director

Programmes at Saharanpur

Tackling Violence against Women



VIOLENCE against women manifests in various forms domestic violence, mental abuse, physical abuse, rape, property dispute, etc. Most of the time, victims do not know whom to reach out for getting relief, do not have courage to do so, and do not have a helping hand.

In its area of operation, Disha is providing relief to the victims of violence. During the year under reporting, 80 women approached the organisation and 74 got relief through its intermediation. All these women were suffering from domestic violence.

Disha has a robust mechanism to intervene in cases of violence against women. The most prominent of this is the mechanism of Nari Adalat (Women's Court), organised on 10th of every month at Disha Training Centre. This is a supportive platform for women suffering from violence. If intermediation by Nari Adalat fails, recourse to other methods is taken.



Stories of Hapless Women

COVID Lockdown Forces Couple to Divorce, Almost

Heena, wife of Mustakeem, residing in Sultanpur town of Saharanpur district was patiently awaiting Mustakeem, a transporter, to return home after lockdown was clamped due to COVID. He was on way to Kerala to deliver a consignment but could not manage to reach there. Somehow, he started return journey, but his vehicle broke down. He spent whatever money he had on the repair of the vehicle and returned to home penniless.

This was the time when holy month of Ramdan was about to start and Heena was hoping to buy supplies for the month. A big fight ensued between Heena and Mustakeem and the latter thrashed the former. Tension increased so much that they started thinking of divorcing each other.

Information about the tension reached Disha workers. Defying lockdown they reached home of the couple and found that the issue was because of lack of money. They called responsible people of both the sides, spoke to them, and then counselled the couple.

The couple was told that because of pandemic it was a very difficult time, which could pass with mutual understanding. They realised their mistakes, promised to leave aside their differences, and lead a peaceful life.

Persecuted for not Delivering Male Child

Rita, daughter of Jogendra of Patni village, was married to Pawan, son of Jagdish of Kutubpur village, about four years ago. She is 30 years old and a graduate. Pawan works in a private firm and his father is a farmer. All was well in the life of Rita initially, but everything went wrong when she gave birth to second girl child. Pawan started abusing and thrashing Rita daily for not giving birth to a boy. He started threatening her to leave his house if she could not deliver a boy. She returned to her parental home.

Rita came down to Disha Women Cell on August 5, 2020, with her parents and told her story. The Women Cell team listened to her problem very carefully and promised to help her. After completing formalities, the team contacted Rita's in-laws in Kutubpur village and enquired about the case. They called both the parties to the Women Cell on August 12 to solve their case.

The team listened the problem and counselled her husband and mother-in-law not to discriminate between boy and girl. They were told that girls were not behind boys in any field, and if you properly took care of daughters, they could fly high in the sky. After the counseling both the parties reached an agreement and promised to forget their past differences.

Now Rita is living happily with her husband and in-laws.

Illicit Relations with another Woman Causes Much Trouble

Thirty-five years old Shaheen was married to Mansoor, son of Masoom, in Timli village of Vikasnagar block of Dehradun district in Uttarakhand. Mansoor started abusing and thrashing Shaheen soon after their marriage. He did not give her money for household expenses and abused and thrashed her for small things. He also did not allow her to visit her relatives and contact her parents. Her parents were taking care of her needs even after marriage. She was running

her family even after all these odds in her life.

Around six months ago, Dilshad started a grocery shop in Dharmawala. He developed an illicit relationship with some other woman while working in his shop in Dharmawala. Slowly, Dilshad stopped contact with his wife. When Shaheen came to know of the illicit relations, she caught both red handed on the spot, leading to serious fighting between the couple. Dilshad thrashed her very badly. Fed up with his behavior, her parents took Shaheen along to her parental house.

Shaheen and her maternal aunt contacted Disha Women Cell on November 6, 2020, and narrated her story. After listening and registering her case the Women Cell contacted her in-laws in Timli village to enquire about the case. Both the sides were called to the Women Cell on November 11, 2020. The parties were heard and Dilshad was counselled to live with his wife lovingly and peacefully. He accepted his mistake. Both the parties entered into a written agreement. Dilshad was warned not to abuse or thrash his wife in the future.

Follow up revealed that Shaheen was living happily with her husband.

Advocacy for the Rights of Women

DISHA regularly sensitises different stakeholders like government officials, health department, education department, police, print and electronic media to support the organisation's endeavour for promoting rights of women in its area of operation.

A one-day workshop was organised at Disha Training Centre on November 20, 2020, for the ASHA and anganwadi workers on prevention of violence against women and advocacy for the women's rights. Fifty-eight ASHAs and anganwadi workers and four resource persons participated in the workshop. The resource persons told the participants that women faced discrimination and atrocities in their lives from birth till old age. The women also faced various kinds of violence inside as well as outside their homes.

Detailed information about various laws challenging violence against women (like Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Female Infanticide Prevention Act, 1994, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, and Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017) and various helpline number (Woman Helpline No. 181, Women's Emergency Service No. 1090, Police Emergency Service No. 100, National Emergency Service No. 112, Ambulance Service No. 102, Accident Health Services No. 108, Fire Emergency Service No. 101, and Chief Minister's Portal No. 1076) was also given. Open session brought out some interesting dimensions, and the participants vowed to challenge violence against women wherever they saw.

Similar workshop was carried out with the members of school management committees (SMCs) on November 27, 2020. Thirty-six SMC members and four resource persons participated in the workshop.

A one-day workshop on this topic was organised for media persons and members of voluntary organisations. Around 50 media personalities and members of voluntary organisations participated in the workshop.



Promotion of Gender Equity and Equality

DISHA has devoted its 36 milestone years to removal of social curse of gender discrimination from the society by organising several social awareness activities like street plays and puppet shows, youth rallies, sensitisation workshops, exposure visits, interaction with government and non-governmental agencies, etc. Thousands of youths, local inhabitants, and others, in these years joined hands to end gender discrimination and promote gender equity and equality.

An art and speech competition on the issue of women's equity and equality was organised for the students in JJ Inter College, Sultanpur-Chilkana, on February 4, 2021. Sixty students of 9th to 12th standards participated in the competition. Manisha Kashyap of 11th standard, Farmani of 9th standard and Rishu of 11th standard stood first, second, and third, respectively, in the art competition. Shahreen of 10th standard, Anuradha of 11th standard and Minakshi Saini of 10th standard stood first, second and third, respectively, in the speech competition.

Another art and speech competition on the same topic was organised for the students of Government Inter College, Gumti, Saharanpur on February 25, 2021. Sixty students of 10th and 12th standards in the competition. Chhavi, Akash and Mahak stood first, second, and third, respectively, in the art competition. Anshika, Anjali and Nargis stood first, second, and third, respectively, in the speech competition.

Disha's communication team presented a play on the theme of "We Can" campaign and raised awareness of around 900 students on the issue of women's equity and equality. Certificates and prizes were distributed to the winners and participating students. Senior staff members of the organisation and colleges spoke on the occasion.

A meeting was organised at the Training Centre on the eve of International Women's Day, which is celebrated on March 8, 2021. Hundreds of rural women took active part in the celebration of Inter-

national Women's Day. The participating women shared their views on violence against women, women's equality, and women's rights. The programme was jointly presided over by about 20 village women.

The programme started with the feminist songs and all the women raised energising slogans, emphasising that all the changes were incomplete without the support of women and women were equal partners in the land of their marital home. Disha Director, senior programme workers, and community members shed light on International Women's Day and Disha's efforts to empower women. The volunteers of Baba Sahib Bhim Rao Amedkar Coaching Centre, Sultanpur-Chilkana, demonstrated yoga so women and girls could stay healthy and fit.

A memorandum was sent to the Prime Minister and Chief Minister through the district administration. The programme ended with the feminist song *Milkar Ham Nachenge, Milkar Ham Khushiya Manayenge* (together we shall dance and celebrate).



Education for Adolescent Muslims Girls

EDUCATION centres for adolescent Muslim girls being run in 15 villages remained closed from April 2020 to August 2020 due to countrywide lockdown enforced by the Government to tackle COVID-19 pandemic. But the teachers were in touch with the girls telephonically as far as possible to make them aware about coronavirus, social distancing, use of mask, sanitiser and washing hands regularly.

COVID-19 pandemic affected education centres for adolescent girls very badly. When the lockdown was eased and the time to reopen the centres arrived, the villagers started refusing to give space for the centres. The girls had lost interest in studies, and this was reflected in low attendance at the centres. Lockdown had increased household workload on the girls and parents were not keen to send them to the centres.

A number of measures were taken to resolve these problems. Parents were motivated to make the space available for running the centres. They were also motivated to send girls to the centres. Special efforts were made to develop a relationship with the girls not coming to the centres.

In August when the lockdown was relaxed considerably, teachers started teaching the girls in small group. The centres started functioning from September. A one-day refresher training of the teachers was organised on October 16.

Exams in 14 education centres were held in December. All the girls passed third standard and were



promoted to fourth standard. Examination at Meerpur Jadid education centre could not be organised due to poor attendance of students. The teacher at this centre had to be changed and a new teacher was asked to work hard to ensure normal functioning of the centre.

Parent meetings were organised every month in all the education centres for strengthening of the education centres. Issue of students' attendance, progress and management of centres, girls' health, gender, women violence, and women rights were discussed in the meetings. Parents were also made aware of government entitlements.

Extracurricular activities like henna application, showpiece, toy, flower, and flowerpot making, tailoring, knitting, games, etc. are conducted in all the 15 education centres. An inter-centre exposure visit was organised on January 22, 2021, at the education centre of Rasoolpur village. Nearly 200 adolescent girls, guardians, Disha staff and volunteers of five education centres of Rasoolpur, Asgarpur, Khushhalpur, Salempur, and Kheda Mewat participated in this programme.

Republic Day was celebrated on January 26, 2021, at the education centres. In all 1,292 people took part in the Republic Day function.

Health Interventions among Young Women and Girls

THIS intervention is being carried out in 10 selected villages on a pilot basis. In each village there is a group of adolescent girls and another of young women. Each group has 15-20 members. These group members meet once in a month to discuss their health problems and to get valuable knowledge about personal health and hygiene.

A health volunteer has been appointed for each village. These health volunteers organise awareness sessions in their respective villages to make the young women and adolescent girls aware of their health issues so they so they can take care of their health and hygiene for the healthy future.



One day refresher training for health volunteers was organised at the Training Centre on October 23, 2020. All the health workers and four resource persons participated in it.

So far about 900 adolescent girls and women have benefitted from the intervention. The pilot intervention is moving in the right direction as is reflected by the two stories of change.

Stories from the Field

Freedom from Excessive Bleeding and Pain

Neeshu is 18 years old adolescent girl belonging to a very poor family. She has three sisters, two brothers and parents in the family. Her parents work as labourers. She left the school after 8th standard because of very poor economic condition.

She was ignorant of issues related to adolescent girls and health facilities before joining the health group, a decision which her parents opposed, but later allowed when other members of the group intervened. Soon she learned about the government health schemes, anganwadi staff, ASHA worker and ANM. Later her mother and sisters also began attending the meetings.

With the help of ASHA and anganwadi centre, she got iron tablets, which she started taking. With continued use of iron tablets, excessive bleeding and severe pain during menstruation were controlled. Now she feels better and advises other adolescent girls to use them.

Poor Woman Gets Benefit of Health Schemes

Barkha is 32 years old and belongs to poor family. She was married around two years ago to Johny, a daily wage labourer. She was not aware of the government's health and family planning

schemes before joining this group. She got information of various health schemes of the government in the meetings of women health group. She came to know about Janani Suraksha Yojna, Prime Minister Matra Vandana Yojna and Kanya Sumangla Yojna through these meetings.

When she gave birth to a girl child, she registered for Kanya Sumangla Yojna because she was aware of this scheme. She got first instalment of Rs 2,000 after the birth of her daughter and second instalment of Rs 1,000 when her daughter became nine months old. She received total Rs 3,000 directly in her bank account.

She says she would have not got the benefit of this scheme if she had not joined women health group. She learned about health, hygiene, and various government health schemes through these women health groups.

Interventions with SHGs

TO provide livelihood opportunities at village level, economic empowerment of women and making them socially aware, Disha has formed self-help groups in the villages. SHGs play an important role in inculcating the habit of savings and providing easy loan to the women at village level.

Despite raging corona pandemic halting field activities for five months and thereafter restricting them 12 new SHGs were formed. Village level training were organised for the SHGs for strengthening them. Role of office-bearers and the members were mainly discussed for the successful operation of SHGs.



Stories of Change

Marked Increase in Financial and Social Status

Thirty years old Ruby, a resident of Raghunathpur village, is a member of Safar SHG. Because of poor economic condition of her husband, she wanted to do some income generation activity, but was not able to do so because of limited financial resources.

She got associated with the Safar SHG around four years back. She was very regular in meetings and group activities, always saving instalment and depositing the same in time. She learnt nuances of group running very quickly and became a very active member. She took a loan of Rs 4,000 for the electrical fitting work of her husband. Second time she took a loan of Rs 5,000 and opened a cosmetic shop. Now she is earning a profit of around Rs 200 every day.

At present her financial condition is much better compared to earlier and she has got social recognition also. She wants to expand her business in future.

Raising Nursery of Money in Field

Shakuntala, 48, is a resident of Katla Khurd village. Her husband was a daily wage labourer, and it was very difficult for the couple to run the family. She joined Gulab SHG. Her financial condition was very weak before joining SHG. After joining SHG she became a socially and economically aware woman.

She took first loan of Rs 10,000 from the group to improve the financial condition of her family. Then she took second loan of Rs 20,000 and started a nursery in her field. Now Shakuntala and her husband work hard in their nursery. Their financial condition has improved significantly along with her social awakening. She also plays key role in taking the decision of her family matters.

She also started moving out and attending programmes, meetings and trainings organised by Disha. She is now very happy and has emerged as an aware woman. She wants to expand her nursery so her economic condition may improve even further.

Tinkling of Bangles Gets Money for Her

Masrufa, 32, resides in Manakpur village of Sarsawa block. She has five children. Her husband used to go to neighbouring state Haryana for doing wage labour. She wanted to help her husband in running the family but did not find a way. She wanted to start something of her own but was unable to do so as she did not have any money.

In this backdrop she became a member of Suhana SHG some three years ago. She started moving out for meetings and trainings after joining the SHG. She took a loan of Rs 5,000 from her SHG and started selling bangles. She is paying instalments of her loan and has also helped in meeting household expenses from the income generated by selling bangles. Now Masrufa is leading a very happy life.

After this loan is repaid, Masrufa wants to take other loan to start goat rearing in future. She also wants to expand her bangle business.



Producers' Organisation Development and Training

PRODUCERS' organisation can play an important role in economic empowerment of rural people. On June 12, 2020, a meeting was organised with Disha staff at the Training Centre with a participation of 27 staff. In this meeting, a plan was made to conduct a survey of 500 farmers in 15 villages to form a producer company.

On June 24, 2020, another meeting was organised with participation of 20 people. In this meeting it was finalised to form a women farmers' producer company. The name of company was decided as Progressive Women Farmers' Producer Company Limited (PWFPCCL). Apart from this, the selection of board members and their role and responsibilities were discussed. Along with this, documentation for the registration of the company was discussed and prepared.

First meeting of the board of PWFPCCL was held on October 24, 2020. Fifteen people participated in the meeting. It was a proud moment as everyone worked hard in the making of the company. Jahnvi Tiwari was appointed Chairperson, Suresho Devi Director and Tasneem Bano Chief Executive Officer. It was decided that the account of the producer company would be opened in Punjab National Bank, Chilkana, and jointly operated by Chairperson, Director and Chief Executive Officer.

A meeting of the PWFPCCL officials was organised with experts from Samunnati, Chennai, remotely. Various means of running the producer company were discussed with the producer expert. It was decided that the company can start with value chain, pulses, wheat, rice, vegetables, mangoes, and guavas. It was also decided that the company's aim should be to add at least 1,000 shareholder farmers with it. The experts advised that the company may also open shops of quality fertilisers, seeds, and insecticides for the welfare of the farmers after getting the licence. They said that NAB-ARD and Agriculture Department could help in this.



Strengthening of CBOs and Good Governance

MAHILA Mazdoor Evam Laghu Kisan Morcha (Women Labourers and Small Farmers Front) is the overarching organisation of the people in Disha's operational area. Under it there are Area Level Morcha Committees (ALMCs) and Steering Committees (SCs).

These community-based organisations are active all the time to serve the rural people by providing them timely and updated information regarding government schemes and policies like MNREGA, ration cards, right to information (RTI), right to education (RTE), widow and old age pensions, financial aid for daughter's marriage, financial aid for constructing house, farmers' registration for agriculture support, solar light, construction labour welfare scheme, etc. They are playing crucial role in ensuring access of people to their entitlements and keeping an eye over the selection of the beneficiaries for different government schemes and programmes.

During the year under reporting, they ensured entitlements to over 2,000 villagers and also ensured infrastructural development in the villages.

Morcha village level meetings are held every month in every village and Morcha central meeting is held on 24th of every month at the Training Centre. Issues and concerns of their villages are discussed, and strategies developed to deal with it in a reasonable time frame.

For strengthening the morchas, one day village level training were organised for 30 committees from December 16 to 30. A total of 1,153 members participated in the training. Roles and responsibilities of morcha committees and various government schemes and laws made for the welfare and development of the poor people and women were discussed. Information about the Food Security Act, MNREGA, Chief Minister's Mass Wedding Scheme, and ration distribution scheme was imparted.

Stories of Change

Gram Pradhan Pressurised to Fix Faulty Street Light

Streetlights of Kheda Mewat village were not working since last three months. Residents were facing immense problems and feared the danger of crime. The matter was discussed in the monthly meeting of morcha committee, and it was decided to approach gram pradhan for fixing dysfunctional streetlights. But despite approaching the gram pradhan thrice to repair the streetlights, he did not take any action. Then members of morcha committee applied to the Sar-sawa block office. Block Development Officer took prompt action and forced the gram pradhan to repair the dysfunctional streetlights as soon as possible. The gram pradhan arranged new solar battery, light and fixed them. People of the Kheda Mewat village got rid of darkness and felt secured while moving on that road. Now all the villagers are happy and they thanked Morcha committee for their efforts.

Morcha Committee Helps Poor Woman Get Back Money

Yashoda, a resident of Asgarpur village, became victim of defalcation in the name of digital banking. She approached Jan Sewa Kendra (Public Service Centre), Fatehullapur, to withdraw Rs 10,000 from her bank account having a deposit of Rs 12,000, as she needed money. The Jan Sewa Kendra person took her thumb impression in POS machine but did not give her any money. He asked her to come next day for money.

Yashoda went to Jan Sewa Kendra next morning, but the person said that her thumb impressions were not properly coming in the machine and that's why she was not able to withdraw money from her account. She got very upset and narrated her problem in the morcha committee. On the committee's advice she went to Mirzapur branch of State Bank of India and sought bank statement. She came to know that the person at Jan Sewa Kendra, Fatehullapur, had fraudulently withdrawn Rs 10,000 from her account. She registered complaint with the Police Station, Mirzapur with the help of morcha committee. Police took prompt action and arrested the person at Jan Sewa Kendra, Fatehullapur. Police team pressurised him to return the money to Yashoda. He returned Rs 10,000 to Yashoda within five days due to pressure of police.

Morcha Intervention Gets Work under MNREGS

Some people of Shahpur Gadda village were not getting employment under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS). This issue was raised by these people, who said they needed work but did not get any even after approaching gram pradhan and gram sewak. It was decided that committee members would approach the gram pradhan in this regard.

When next day the committee members approached the gram pradhan with a request for work under the MNREGS the gram pradhan expressed helplessness as gram sewak and panchayat secretary were not listening to him. He suggested the members to approach the block development officer. Later, 12 women members of morcha committee went to the Sadholi Qadeem block office and raised the issue of not getting employment in front of the BDO in writing. The BDO assured them of work as soon as possible. All the 12 women got the 14 days' employment under the MNREGS within 10 days of submitting application. They were obviously happy.



31st Annual Sammelan of Mahila Mazdoor Evam Laghu Kisan Morcha

The 31st Annual Sammelan of Mahila Mazdoor Evam Laghu Kisan Morcha was organised on March 21, 2021, at the Training Centre. Hundreds of women, labourers, small farmers, craftsmen, and the members of voluntary organisations participated in the sammelan. Member of Parliament from Saharanpur Fazlur Rehman participated as the chief guest and graced the function.

The programme started with motivational songs sung by women staff members. They also raised slogans on the issue of women rights, inflation, corruption, communal harmony, and women farmers.

Disha Director said that voice for the rights of labourers and women was raised 32 years ago under the banner of this front. We have also got results in the shape of 33 per cent reservation in panchayats, various institutions, and several welfare laws and schemes. He said that we must be united and take the benefits of government scheme. He informed that now women have started getting the benefits of government entitlements directly in their name. Many others also spoke on the occasion.

Chief guest Fazlur Rehman thanked all the women and said that this sammelan was the symbol of strength and unity of women. He urged all the women to live in peace and harmony and motivated them to fight for their rights as well. He said that it is the need of today that all the labourers, poor, farmers, and women should unite and struggle for their rights. He also stressed on the unity of Hindus and Muslims and said that we all are one.

Akbar Qureshi, Chairman of Sultanpur-Chilkana Nagar Panchayat thanked all the participants and concluded the programme.



Folk Media Communication

UNDER this, the theatre group performs several theme-based plays in rural/urban areas of Saharanpur district for making people aware of different social issues, government policies and schemes, such as MNREGS, PDS, RTI, panchayati raj, communal harmony, women's land and property rights, self-help groups, gender and women violence, dowry, liquor and drug addiction, mother and child healthcare and adolescent Muslim girl's education. The team has 20 artistes.

During the reporting period, the theatre group rarely performed because of COVID pandemic. No activity could be held during the first five months (April to August) due to the lockdown. Even when the lockdown was lifted, mass gatherings were not allowed. From January again fear and restrictions started building up. In view of this, very few performances were held.

Social Harmony

DISHA'S operational area has a mixed population of Hindus and Muslims who have lived peacefully for most of the time. But the climate in India has become communally charged over the last few years which threatens the social fabric of the area we operate in. As an organisation working with every section of the society, it's our duty to maintain peace, communal and social harmony in the area. We organize many programmes, seminars and celebrate various festivals to build communal harmony in the area.

Due to raging coronavirus pandemic many events like Roza Iftari and Eid Milan could not be organised as they fell during the lockdown. But we distributed packets of Roza Iftari material on May 10, 2020 among 400 poor Muslim families in 20 villages. Each packet contained 1 kg sugar, two packets of vermicelli and 200 g dates.



When Iftari packet was given to Zubeda, a widow in Chako village with six children, she had watery eyes. In a choked voice she said her family had not eaten dates and vermicelli because they did not have money. She said even gram pradhan did not think about them, but Disha thought. She praised Disha's efforts.

But Holi Milan was organised on March 28, 2021, with great zeal at the Training Centre. Around 50 staff members, para legal and legal aid volunteers participated in the programme. The participants applied colour to each other and wished each other. The programme concluded with sharing of sweets.

Advocacy for the Rights of Women Farmers (Aaroh Campaign)

AROH Campaign is a programme designed for providing the status of "Women Farmer" to the women doing agriculture, their equal right in land and property, and joint name in land records and bank accounts to enable them to avail all the facilities available for farmers. Neither the society nor government recognize the women as farmers, though 80 per cent of agricultural activities are carried out by women farmers, but they are not recognised as farmer.

This campaign is being run in 20 villages of Sarsawa and Sadholi Qadeem blocks of Saharanpur district. Meetings are organised in the villages with women farmers on the issues of land rights and are given information on productive seeds, organic farming, equipment, soil test, vermi-compost, fertilisers, and insecticides. For supporting women farmers, a women farmers' resource centre has been established at Disha.

During the reporting period, about 150 women farmers have been directly benefited.



National Women Farmers Day Programme

National Women Farmers Day was celebrated in four Aaroh campaign villages Mandora, Patni, Ahadi and Danatpur on October 15, 2020. Meetings of women farmers were organized in the above villages and 205 women farmers and villagers participated in the programmes. With the joint efforts of all the social organisations, the Central Government declared October 15 as women farmers' day in 2016. Since then, Women Farmers' Day is celebrated on this date.

Exposure Visit of Women Farmers to KVK Dhanauri, Haridwar

A one-day exposure visit was organised for women farmers to Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Dhanauri, Haridwar on December 3, 2020. This visit was jointly organised by Disha and Krishi Prasara Bhawan, Saharanpur. Forty-two women farmers participated in the exposure visit. The visitors were apprised of the method of preparing paddy seeds and were taken around the seed plant. They also visited vermi-compost pits, poultry farms, nutrition garden, sugarcane fields and mango orchard.

One-day Capacity Building Seminar of Farmers

A one-day capacity building seminar was organised on January 12, 2021, at the Training Centre to increase the capacity of farmers. Sixty farmers participated in the seminar. Resource persons from Trimurti Plant Sciences Pvt. Ltd, Hyderabad, gave the information about the improved seeds related to farming. They also gave information about the process of seeding, preparation required, soil testing and the fertilizers.

Women Farmers Fair under Mishan Shakti Campaign

Farmer's fair was organised by the Agriculture Department on January 13, 2021, under Mishan Shakti Campaign at the premises of Sarsawa development block office. This fair was organized to



enhance the capacity of women farmers. Seventy women farmers participated in the farmers fair on behalf of Disha.

Farmers' Fair and Exhibition

A farmers' fair and exhibition was organised by the Agriculture Department of Saharanpur on January 21, 2021, at the premises of Sadholi Qadim development block office. Around 600 women and farmers of the region participated in the farmers' fair. Around 200 women farmers, staff members and volunteers participated in the fair on behalf of Disha.

One-day Capacity Building Seminar of Farmers

A one-day capacity building seminar was organised on January 28, 2021, at the Training Centre to increase the capacity of the farmers on the issues of agriculture and animal husbandry. A total of 53 women farmers participated in this seminar. Resource person from the Agriculture Department, Saharanpur, said that vanishing of traditional things including seeds, fertilisers and insecticides caused imbalance of nature. He stressed on the need of conserving soil and said that we should do organic farming and use homemade manure. He said only women farmers could do this work.

Exposure Visit of Women Farmers

A one-day exposure visit of women farmers was jointly organised by Disha and Agriculture Department, Saharanpur, on March 3, 2021. Forty-two women farmers from the organisation's operational area were taken to Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Agriculture University, Modipuram, Meerut. The visiting farmers were briefed of the process of cultivating mushroom, types of mushrooms and their properties. They were also shown mature mushroom. The visitors were also given detailed information about the poultry farming.

Stories of Change

From Labourer to Proud Farmer

Financial condition of Premo of Patni village was very bad. Premo's husband, children, and she herself worked as labourer to run the family. Premo joined Aaroh Manch and gained adequate knowledge and courage for farming. She took two bighas of land on lease and cultivated rice and wheat on it. She got good yield.

Overjoyed, Premo again took five bighas of land on lease and cultivated wheat and rice crops. As the crop was good, she earned good profit. She purchased small buggy from that profit for her son, who started ferrying sand from the Yamuna River. Now all the members of her family are self-employed, while Premo and her husband work in the fields.

Proper Knowledge of Technique Makes Land Productive

Sunita is a hard-working woman farmer in Patna village. She has five children and seven bighas of land in her husband's name. They both worked in their fields, but because of inadequate knowledge of farming practices, they were not able to grow enough grains and had to work as labourer in others' farms to feed their family.

After joining Aaroh, she thought of starting business of nursery on her own land. She got the opportunity of visiting Krishi Vigyan Kendra after joining Aaroh and collected all the necessary information of planting and nursery from the agriculture experts. She started cultivation of lemon, tulsi and marigold saplings in her field. She got good profit and saved some money.

She continued her work of nursery and in the meantime started the business of animal husbandry from her savings. Now her husband is not going anywhere for hardship and is working in his own nursery. Recently she has purchased two bighas of agriculture land in her name.

Human Resource Capacity Building Training

IT is important to enhance capacity of the project staff from time to time in various aspects so that they can perform at optimum level. Because of coronavirus pandemic only a few trainings could be organised.

A one-day refresher training for the project staff on documentation and case studies writing was organised on October 13, 2020. In all, 24 project staff participated.

Another one-day refresher training was organised for para-legal volunteers on October 19, 2020. Twenty volunteers and five resource persons/coordinators participated in the training.





COVID Relief

COVID-19 started gripping India in February 2020 and on March 24 the Prime Minister ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, affecting the entire 1.3 billion population of the country. The lockdown was justified by the government and other agencies for being pre-emptive to prevent India from entering a higher stage, which could make handling very difficult and cause even more losses thereafter.

Poor people suffered a lot during lockdown, as they had no work. Daily wages workers, rickshaw pullers, drivers, shopkeepers, and poor families suffered a lot. Disha came forward in helping poor families during the lockdown and distributed ration kits through the Police Station, Chilkana, on April 7, 2020, among 125 extremely poor and helpless families of town Sultanpur, Chilkana and Dumjheda village. Each ration kit contained 5 kg flour, 5 kg rice, 1 kg sugar, 250 g tea, 1 kg salt, 2 kg pulses, 1 litre oil, 2 bathing soaps and 1 washing soap.

Disha also donated Rs 5,000 to Nagar Panchayat, Sultanpur-Chilkana, for supporting community kitchen for poor families.

Later 650 ration kits were distributed among as many extremely poor families in 50 villages of Sar-sawa, Sadholi Qadim and Punwarka blocks between July 2 and 10, 2020. Each ration kit contained 5 kg flour, 2.5 kg rice, 1 kg sugar, 100g tea leaf, 1 kg salt, 1 kg pulses, 0.5 litre mustard oil, 2 soaps and 1 packet sanitary pads. Along with this, 1,100 face masks and 600 bottles of sanitiser, each of 100 ml capacity were also distributed.

The government had come out with a slew of measures to help the people tide over difficulties due to lockdown. The staff created awareness among the masses over telephone about their entitlements. Risking their lives, the staff members helped 4,012 people through various acts. They extended personal cash support of Rs 14,540 to the needy.

Disha staff members also helped in the following:

- Community kitchen was run for 15 days in Barthakayasth village for migrant labourers. About 200 migrant labourers from Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were fed daily at the community kitchen.
- Arranged accommodation for 2,000 migrant labourers in the Government Inter College, Pachkuwa, Sarsawa. They were later sent to Radha Swamy Satsang Bhawan, Pilkhani, Saharanpur.
- Arranged tea and refreshments for the migrant labourers coming from Ludhiana, Punjab with the support of local people of Sultanpur-Chilkana.
- Few anti-social elements were not allowing a Muslim to sell vegetables in the Mandhora village of Sarsawa block. They were abusing and thrashing the vegetable seller. Rescued him from the anti-social elements and sent him safely to his Manakpur village, Sarsawa block.
- Arranged food, tea, and refreshment for 14 migrant labourers with the support of Gram Pradhan and locals of the village Patna.

The field staff made the people aware of the prevention and protection from coronavirus to reduce its ill effects. They made people aware of social distancing, avoiding crowded places, not venturing out of their house unnecessarily, cleaning of hands repeatedly, use of sanitizer and facemasks. They requested the people to visit a doctor if they had fever and cough, and helped the government in Corona survey and inspired the outsiders coming to their villages for investigation of corona virus.

Miscellaneous Events

- Celebration of Independence Day on August 15, 2020
- Celebration of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri Jayanti on October 2, 2020
- Participation in Mission Shakti Campaign of Uttar Pradesh government from October 17 to 25, 2020
- Celebration of International Human Rights Day on December 19, 2020
- Celebration of New Year on January 1, 2021
- Get together for domestic violence survivors and rising gardens on February 14, 2021

Disha Networking

DISHA networks with like-minded NGOs and CSOs across India:

- Voluntary Action Network of India (VANI)
- Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Action Network (UPVAN)
- Sa-Dhan, Delhi
- Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (AALI)
- National Alliance for Peoples Movement (NAPM)
- MAKAM Network
- AMAN Network

We could not attend the programmes and meetings of the like-minded organisations physically due to corona pandemic. However, we attended events remotely through webinars for exchange of learning.

Programmes at Haridwar

Project Aarohan



1. Self-help Groups

During the year under reporting, 21 new self-help groups were formed in the project area. These SHGs have 231 women members. Out of these, 15 SHGs have opened their bank accounts in respective banks. The cumulative number of SHGs reached up to 430, comprising 4744 members. Thirteen old members left SHGs for their personal reasons.

Coronavirus pandemic affected savings of women for couple of months. Many SHGs could not save money during the lockdown period, but a few SHGs continued with savings even during the lockdown period. This year, Rs 37,04,420 were saved bringing total savings to Rs 2.95 crore. Rs 13,01,700 were distributed by SHG members from their savings. The cumulative amount distributed from the savings reached Rs 1.38 crore.

This year, a total of Rs 58,41,700 was fetched by the SHG members for various purposes, e.g., education of children, medical treatment, paying electricity bills, spending in marriages and other occasions, and arranging inputs for their IGAs etc.

2. Income Generation Activities (IGA)

175 SHG women have availed credit from different sources for their income generation activities, out of which 26 women availed a total of Rs 9,98,000 from bank CCL, 47 women availed a total credit of Rs 13,00,000 from the project, 99 women availed a total credit of Rs 19,74,000 from their SHGs for their income generation activities, and three women availed a total credit of Rs 80,000



from village organisation. All of 175 women have also invested a total of Rs 25,03,000 from their own resources. Among these 77 income generation activities were the first enterprise of the entrepreneurs, 45 enterprises were the second, third, or fourth enterprise of the women, and 53 enterprises were expansion of existing enterprises. So far, 3,864 enterprises have been established by the women entrepreneurs.

3. Revolving Fund

The pandemic period badly affected the recovery of the revolving fund from the women entrepreneurs as the women entrepreneurs spent more than two months in total lockdown. In turn, the lockdown affected the repayment of the revolving fund instalments. However, women started repaying their instalments in July 2020. Keeping in mind the effect of pandemic over the income generation activities of the women, a three-month moratorium was given to all the borrower women and hence no interest was collected from April to June 2020.

This year, 47 women entrepreneurs availed a total revolving fund of Rs 13,00,000 for setting up their income generation activities or expanding their existing enterprises. The cumulative amount of revolving fund availed by 3,155 women reached up to Rs. 4,14,71,000

During the reporting year a total recovery of Rs 25,86,656 was collected of which, the principal amount was Rs 22,76,400 and the service charge amount was Rs 3,10,256.

The cumulative amount of recovery since inception of the project reached up to Rs 4,16,07,357 including the principal amount of Rs 3,69,05,350 and service charge amount of Rs 47,02,007.

This year, 68 borrowers repaid their final instalment of the loan of Rs 15,30,000. So far, out of 3,155 disbursed numbers of revolving fund, 2,688 loans of Rs 3,05,11,000 have been successfully repaid and the number of active loans was 467 as on March 31, 2021.

4. Kitchen Garden

Kitchen gardens are being promoted to improve the nutritional diet of the women of the self-help

groups and to ensure the availability of chemical and pesticide free organic vegetables at doorstep. As a pilot project 110 women were selected from 10 villages to intervene with. The women, having interest in growing green vegetables and suitable piece of land in their backyard, were selected for kitchen garden. The activity started with 10 women but later on 100 new women were added.

To make the women aware of the nutrition garden, a one-day training programme was organised by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Dhanauri, on September 23, 2020. Seeds, saplings, and plants of fenugreek, spinach, radish, coriander, beans, chilis, tomato, and lemon were provided to the women for free.

The vegetables grown by the SHG women were totally organic, i.e., no kind of fertilizer or pesticide were applied to grow the vegetable. The women showed their keen interest in nutrition garden. They took care of the saplings and plants and protected them from wild animals. Therefore, women got enthusiastic results and amazing production of vegetables.



The total investment was Rs 29,053 and within four months the programme recovered its cost. These women produced 1,110 kg fenugreek, 1,350 kg spinach, 1,300 kg radish, and 212 kg coriander, which cost Rs 86,719 at the price of local market rate.

5. Federation of SHGs

One new village organisation (VOs) of the SHGs was formed in the project area. Kranti Gram Sangathan was formed in Delna village. Eleven SHGs out of 17 have become member of this VO. Total number of VOs has reached up to 22 in the operation area. The objectives of the formation of the village organisations of the SHGs is to strengthen cohesiveness among SHGs, maintain continuous flow of developmental information, and promote collective efforts for income generation activities.

Ekta Village Organisation, Udalheri, has been running the Atal Annapurna Canteen successfully at SDM office campus since May 2019. The head of the canteen Ms Soniya Nagar took initiative to provide food to Covid-19 quarantined people with the support of local administration. She deployed seven support staff to prepare 150 to 200 food packets every day for almost one week. The food packets were distributed among the COVID-19 quarantined people at NIH, CBRI, Ganpati, and Vedanta institutions. Nearly 1,500 food packets were distributed among the quarantined people.

The International Women's Day was celebrated by SHG women with great enthusiasm on March 08, 2021. Several activities were organised at the village organisation level. Women shared their success stories of enterprises how they increased their family income. They also shared their experience how they developed their confidence and how they could be able to speak in outside world.



6. Support from Other Institutions

During the pandemic period support from other institutions was sought out for providing training to SHG women. In this regard, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Dhanauri (Haridwar) and Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI), Kankhal (Haridwar) were approached to provide training support to SHG women.

7. ED Training for SHG Women

This year, two entrepreneurship development training were organised for the SHG women so as to develop entrepreneurship among the SHG women. The first training was organised at Delna village on March 18, 2021, benefitting 21 SHG women. The second training was organised at Thaska village on March 22, 2021, benefitting 22 women. The participants learned different aspects of entrepreneurship through mock business.

8. Online Workshop with Market Mirchi Dot Com

A day-long online workshop was conducted at project office Jhabrera on March 17, 2021, for the women entrepreneurs. The workshop was aimed to orient the entrepreneur about uploading their advertisement of income generation activity over 'marketmirchi.com'; a portal which provides platform for rural entrepreneurs to upscale their business on internet. There were 12 women from different income generation activities. The women tried to build their advertisement over the website through mobile.

IIMPACT Project

THE IIMPACT Project was badly affected by worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Since the programme is providing remedial education to the rural girls of age group 6 to 14 years. They were at high risk during the pandemic. It was decided to adopt alternative methods to provide the primary education after lockdown. The government primary schools remained closed during the lockdown and post-lockdown and children were going away from the studies. Therefore, it was

decided to run the programme by adopting some new methods:

A. ALA (Alternative Learning Arrangement)

Under this the group of 30 girls was divided into four groups of 7, 8 and 7, 8 girls. These groups of girls were provided education on alternate days for two hours every day in an open space following COVID protocols.

B. Study Circle

To maintain the continuity of learning of the teachers, it was decided to run study circles by the supervisors. Under this, each supervisor called five to seven teachers at the nearest centre so as to address their teaching problems during ALA mode. If supervisors got some new instructions regarding the teaching, the teachers were also made to understand these instructions during the study circles.



During the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic the ALA mode and Study Circles were also stopped keeping in mind the safety of the girls. To maintain the learning process of the girls and keeping them in touch with the studies three new activities were introduced:

A. Junior Scientist Programme

The Junior Scientist Programme was introduced during second wave lockdown of COVID-19 pandemic. It was a discovery method of learning. Under this programme the girls were encouraged to improve their questioning power, curiosity, and research propensity. The girls preferred their own topics from their surroundings and prepare a set of questionnaires and find their answers by themselves.

B. Child Engagement Programme

The child engagement plan was introduced among the girls of 1st and 2nd standard. It was aimed to keep them engaged in the learning process so that the girls could improve their skills and competencies. This initiative was not very different from the programme Junior Scientist. This programme encouraged the child to understand the community and its processes and through which she would be more sensitive to the community in future, e.g., the volunteers could make them learn counting by pebbles, leaves, seeds, etc., or the children could learn different shapes and colours from their surroundings.

C. Suno Kahani Guno Kahani

This programme was introduced to improve the creativity and reciting skills of the girls of the learning centres. The girls were encouraged to prepare stories and record them in their own voice so that



this recording could be propagated among other children across all the centres under the girl child education programme running in all the states. For this, a YouTube channel “Suno Kahani Guno Kahani” was also launched by IIMPACT (The funder) so as to benefit other children of the same age group.

COVID-19 Relief Material Distribution

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected livelihoods and financial condition of the people in India and same has been happened to the learning centre communities. The families of girls are facing tough challenge every day, hampering girls’ education. IIMPACT has conducted a needs assessment of these communities and it was identified that the primary need is food material and sanitation.

Titan Company Ltd, a donor organisation for IIMPACT came forward to support the learning centre girls and they donated an amount of Rs 1,24,200. The fund was used to distribute food and sanitation material for families of girls in the Titan Company Ltd. sponsored learning centres in Haridwar and Saharanpur.

Resource Providers and Networks

Our Donors and Resource Providers

- MISEREOR, Germany
- Oxfam India Trust
- Youth Reach and AIS Glass Ltd. (CSR Project)
- NABARD
- TARA Livelihood Academy and Godrej
- IIMPACT

Our Networks

- Voluntary Action Network of India (VANI)
- Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Action Network (UPVAN)
- Women Power Connect (WPC)
- VAMA Network
- Sahyog Network
- Sa-Dhan
- Sustainable Agriculture Network, Uttar Pradesh
- CIVICUS
- CWLR

Governing Body

Ms Poornima Jain, Chairperson

With a master's degree from Delhi University, she has been associated with Disha since its inception. She has a wealth of experience in international development and media.

Mr KN Tiwari, Secretary

Founder secretary and director of Disha, he has more than 35 years of experience in social work. He is nationally and internationally famed for his contribution to the empowerment of small farmers, women, dalits and religious minorities.

Mr Mohit Mittal, Treasurer

He is a postgraduate in commerce and an MIS expert. He took over as Treasurer in this year.

Mr Rajive Jain, Member

Founder of CENDIT, working on development media and communication, he has wealth of experience in the development sector. He has donated land and building to Disha.

Mr Rehtu Lal, Member

He is a local farmer and has been associated with Disha for more than 25 years. He currently manages the Training Centre of Disha.

Ms Rajjo Devi, Member

She is a local activist and has served in the local council and is associated with Disha for the last 25 years.

Mr Riyasat Ali, Member

He is a local farmer and is associated with the organisation since its inception. He is one of the founder members of the organisation.





“Disha Training Centre is a place of hygienic, natural and healthy atmosphere and with boarding and lodging facilities for 60 people, where you can organise your meetings, workshops and training”

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