

SEWA Bharat in Rajasthan

BIKANER

SEWA Bharat started work in Bikaner, Rajasthan, in 2001. SEWA Bikaner was set up after a survey was conducted amongst 802 women *papad* workers in the slum areas of Bikaner city in order to assess their economic and social condition. Currently, SEWA Bharat works in ten slums in Bikaner city and has a membership of 2694.

Following is a description of the activities undertaken by SEWA Bikaner during the year in certain key areas of its work.

1. Micro-finance

The micro-finance programme was started to inculcate the saving habit among the self-employed *papad* rollers in the slums of Bikaner. Initially, these women had to depend for loans on the local moneylenders, who charged them high rates of interest. The commencement of the micro-finance scheme has, however, helped to mitigate the financial problems of these women. Till December 2007, 596 women had formed 50 SHGs. Their cumulative savings touched Rs. 14 lakhs, and the amount of cumulative loans distributed was over Rs. 26 lakhs. In an attempt to enforce strict discipline in borrowing and paying off loans, the SHG members have themselves decided to impose penalties members for late attendance and payment default. Of course, the earnings from these penalties also go towards augmenting the group fund.

This year, the team of SEWA Bikaner participated in one micro-finance workshop conducted by the ISMW. Two training programmes were also conducted for the staff by MCRIL in order to teach them how to maintain the accounts of the groups and data related to the SHGs. Trainings were also provided to the SHG members of 21 groups to enable them to ensure discipline and sustenance of the group, and to explain how to develop linkages with the banks.

We had organized a three-day Micro-finance training session in Bikaner for the staffs of Bikaner and Jaipur in December 2007. The main aim of the program was to educate the staffs on the concept of SHG and its importance, so that they are able to train the SHG members in their respective fields. The training began with a “trainees expectation” session. In this session, the staffs had variety of questions. This Training was very interactive session. The participants had got a nice chance to solve all the Micro-finance related queries in this training. This capacity building program was great leaning experience for our new staffs and at the same it acted as refresher course for other members of our team.

2. Social Security

SEWA Bikaner began to extend SEWA’s social security approach to its members in the form of life and house insurance under the VIMO SEWA initiative in the year 2005.

Under this programme, a total of 375 members have been insured during the year 2006-07. A training workshop was organized by VIMO SEWA for the SHG leaders, who can now further educate the other members of the group to avail of the facility of insurance provided by SEWA to its members. During the year, there were 28 approved claims, resulting in a total reimbursement of almost Rs. 20,007.

3. Collaboration With RUIDP

SEWA Bikaner, with the support of SEWA Bharat, has entered into an agreement with the Rajasthan Urban Infrastructural Development Project (RUIDP) and JFPR to jointly work for the development of the slum infrastructural facilities. So, the development work has started in two *bastis* (settlements) of Rampura (covering 150 houses) and Bangla Nagar (covering 350 houses), where the proposed project entails the construction of roads, pipelines, toilets, and waste management and drainage pipes. Community-based organizations (CBOs) have been established in each of these two locations and 12 members from each *basti* have been made a part of these bodies in order to encourage community ownership and participation. The women are being trained to carry out monitoring and supervision of the raw material and the construction work being done.

4. SEWA Orientation Training

A movement requires an ideological framework and a clear direction that is understood by all its members. All participants in the movement must have a common understanding of the vision and the strategy of the movement, for which member education is fundamental.

In order to increase awareness among its members, a four-day training programme on SEWA Orientation was organized by SEWA Bikaner in partnership with SEWA Academy, Ahmedabad. 32 participants attended this programme from nine SEWAs of different states. The content of the training included the history of SEWA as well as the goals, values and eleven principles of SEWA. The training methodology included a mixture of educational games and discussion sessions. The training was highly appreciated by the participants, almost all of who claimed that the four days had brought about significant positive changes in them, and averred that such training programmes should be conducted frequently.

Two of the members also participated in the “Training of Trainers” on SEWA ideology Ahmedabad in the month of December 2007. These trainings was conducted to train the trainers for imparting the ideology training in the fields level. 30 women were given ideology training in Bikaner office on 30th Dec 2007.

5. Celebration of Mahila Shramik Mahotsav:

SEWA Rajasthan organized “**Mahila Shramik Mahotsav**” on 8th December 2007 at Moolchand Mohta Ground of Bikaner. Around 1200 members got together from different parts of Bikaner to celebrate this event. Some our members had come all the way from Jaipur to take part in this celebration. Women from different groups showcased their talents in the form of songs, bhajans etc.

Women in small groups sang the songs whose lyrics were developed by themselves. It described the work of SEWA and it basically was inspiring to other women to get associated with our organization. Some of the aged women sang their famous bhajans, which automatically made the audience chant along with them from their seats. The audience cheered throughout the programs and appreciated the artist's performance with a big round of applaud. Post lunch program was the next thrilling event of the day. It was the "*sports session*". All the members gathered in the field to take part in the various events scheduled. We had events like *Jalebi race*, *Spoon and marble race*, *breaking of earthen pot* and *musical chair*.



These women hardly get any chance to celebrate themselves as workers. This Mahotsav definitely gave them a platform to do so and they all came together to make this program a magnificent one. Everybody went back home with great smiles and memories to cherish lifelong.

6. Mobile van classes for Adolescents:

45 days classes of computers and English were organized for the adolescent girls and boys of our members in three of our basties of Bikaner namely Sarvodaya colony, Rampura Basti and Indira Colony. These classes were taken on three mobile vans provided by Rajasthan Urban Infrastructure Development Program (RUIDP), which has the facilities of computers in it. Two teachers were appointed by the District Education Officer (D.E.O) Of Bikaner. The classes began from 1st July'07 in each of the colonies and continued till 15th August'07. The participation of the girls was higher in all the three colonies for the sessions. Total of 104 kids participated in this 45 days interactive computer learning sessions

JAIPUR

In June 2006, a survey was conducted in the slums of Vidyadhar Nagar and Civil Lines in Jaipur to assess the situation of informal sector women workers, particularly the construction workers, women involved in stitching, *sitara* work, and gardening, maids in the houses or vendors or *pheriwalis*.

Community meetings were organized in each of these *bastis* by SEWA Bharat to educate the people about SEWA Bharat, its programmes and the SEWA movement. In addition, 300 women became members of the SEWA Union.

1. Microfinance:

During the year, 51 women have joined together to form 4 SHGs. So far, they have accumulated savings of Rs 10,455 and Rs 6000 has been disbursed as the loan amount to two members of the groups for the purpose of an electricity connection and Repayment of other loans respectively.

2. Participation at the Dharna in Jaipur for implementation of National Policy on Street vendors:

National Association for street vendors of India (NASVI) had organized a Dharna on 27th October near the Collectorate's office of Jaipur for implementation of National Policy on Street vendors. This rally was taken out from the Shahid Smarak of M.I.Road to Collectorate office. The rally was followed by the dharna outside Collectorate's office. Various workers and union leaders of unorganised sector attended this Dharna. Around 30 of our women cloth vendors even took part in this dharna. Basant Hariyana of "Mazdoor Kisan Wah Khudra Vyaysai Bachoa Abhiyan" and Ghansham Kotwani of NASVI along with Kirti Ben of SEWA Jaipur submitted their petition in the name of the Honourable Chief Minister of Rajasthan, immediately after the dharna.

4. Cleanliness drive in the Saturday Market

The vendors have a very hectic and tiring job in which they wander in different colonies to sell their utensils in exchange of old clothes. They do this tedious job for five days in a week and on the sixth day, i.e. on Friday they take off from their daily job to take care of the next set of task. They wash, mend and iron the old clothes to make them for the sale in the market on Saturday known as "Chandi ka Taxal". This market is a place where they actually get value of their weeklong sweat and that too if they get a place to sit. But day by day it was becoming difficult for our vendors to occupy the place as it was getting really dirty because of the rotten smells from the leftover vegetables as this place is a vegetable market too. After seeing this terrible condition and also by getting requests from the members for the regular clean-ups of the area, we submitted a proposal for the same to the C.E.O of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC). Now this mandi is being cleaned on every Saturday morning and thus providing a better place of vending for the different clothes vendors of the areas.

5. Letter for representation in State and zonal level vending committees

Rajasthan Government has passed the implementation of National Policy on Street vendors in Jaipur. And for this the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) has to form state and Zonal level Committees for the proper implementation of the policy. As per Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) public notification, SEWA Jaipur has given a letter of representation to JMC. Thus through our representation in the committee, we will be able to ensure a better and sustainable future to the vendors in Jaipur.