

MSSO NEWS 2015

Annual Newsletter of Maharashtra Seva Samiti Organization (MSSO)



Generous donors of Maharashtra Seva Samiti Organization (MSSO),
with matching funds from
the Department of Foreign affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD)
make a difference in the lives of many less fortunate

MSSO Vision

- To promote sustainable development, economic as well as social, of the less fortunate

MSSO Mission

- To create long term partnership of Canadian donors and hardworking, selfless, grassroots social workers for building the future and for responding promptly to emergencies
- To enhance the value of donations through careful selection of NGO partners and effective management of development projects
- To empower women to participate as equal partners in achievement of social justice and equitable development
- To promote balance between development and environment

Blindness Prevention among Rural Children, Dhule

At the request of the DFATD, program officer the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi undertook a monitoring mission to this project. Dr. T. Sampath Kumar conducted a four day mission from 8th till 11th January 2015. Jagannath Wani and Chandrakant Lad from MSSO joined the monitoring mission.



Chandrakant Lad, T. Sampath Kumar, Jagannath Wani, Vaishali Songire and a Sugandha Jain (Lioness Club president) interact with girls using prescribed glasses.

Dr. Sampath Kumar visited KSWMT and its facilities, *Sharda Netralaya*, site locations of the screening and testing of eyes of school children, and a slide show on awareness about eye diseases, eye care and gender equality. He participated in several meetings – a public meeting for distribution of spectacles, a meeting with the government representatives, a meeting with the project staff, a meeting with the KSWMT Board members, a meeting with the teachers and a meeting with parents. The following are some of his main observations.

1. The Project already reached a whopping number (167,890) of school children during the beginning of the third year against the target of 40,000 fixed for five years. Funded by DFATD with a modest amount of \$578,000, this project appears to be a well-partnered initiative fulfilling the needs of rural children by taking high quality eye care services to the villages in an efficient manner.

The unique feature of outreach is that, the screened cases needing follow-up are immediately fed to *Sharda Netralaya* for treatments. Thus, any gap between the diagnosis of the problem with eyes and treatment is eliminated through an in-built management system.

2. KSWMT made progress in integration of gender equality (GE) in project implementation. It developed good publicity materials: a power point presentation on GE for school children; catchy songs composed in local language (Marathi) on regular use of spectacles by children and against discrimination between boys and girls. Staff has been contacting dropout girls from schools to screen their eyes.

3. Sharda Netralaya (SN) is emerging as the most sought hospital in the area. As a result, pressure was building on its services. MSSO mobilized financial resources for upgrading SN. It is confident of raising wherewithal to such needs in Canada as and when required.

4. Meeting the Trust's Board members, looking at the staff's commitment and enthusiasm, knowing MSSO's creative means to raise funds from Canadian public, SN's cost recovery system by charging the affordable patients to subsidise services to the poor and non-affordable patients and growing linkages with local philanthropic organisations (Lions and Lioness clubs) gives a fair assurance that project will sustain beyond project period easily.

5. During a meeting with a group of parents whose children underwent eye surgeries for vision corrections, the parents shared their errands to private (commercial) eye hospitals. These hospitals not only charged exorbitant fees but also gave wrong advices. They gave wrong prescriptions to their children. Parents appreciated the project for its entire package approach and quality of services. The charges at SN are very modest (and therefore affordable) compared to commercial eye hospitals.

6. Meetings with different categories of government officials indicated their satisfaction on the work carried out by KWSMT. They assured cooperation in implementation of the project. Teachers are made aware of technical aspects of

eye diseases and the care through one-hour presentations – which now form integral part of their regular training programs. A couple of teachers took pro-active role in facilitating complicated cases of children in getting them to SN for vision correction through surgeries. They provided hand-holding to these children throughout the treatment.

The entire report of the monitoring visit is available at: <http://mssoonline.org/downloads/interim-reports/>

Partner Visits

In July 2015 two of our partners visited Canada to address meetings of MSSO donors and present the project progress reports. Vaishali Songire, coordinator of the DFATD funded Blindness Prevention project, visited Kelowna, Calgary and Toronto. Anuradha Bhosale, Vice Chairperson of MSSO funded AVANI project, appeared in Calgary, Toronto and London (Ontario). Her visit enlisted new donors for AVANI. Ajit Bapat, Secretary of the Toronto Chapter coordinated Anuradha's Toronto and London visits.



Vaishali and Anuradha with Ajit & Archana Bapat

From Toronto Chapter

The Toronto Chapter successfully raised funds to support the following nine social organizations in India.

Jnana Probodhini, Pune – Adolescent women's health issues
 Jnana Prabodhini, Harali - Education of tribal Girls
 Ramkrishna Math, Belur - Nepal Earthquake relief
 Helpers of the Handicapped, Kolhapur –Student sponsorship
 Vivekanand Hospital, Latur –Cancer treatment Unit
 Lok Biradari Prkalp, Hemalkasa –Tribal Medical clinic
 Lokmanya Charitable Trust, Dapoli, –Children's education
 Vanasthali, Pune –Development of Rural women & Children
 Sassoon Hospital (SOFOSH), Pune – Care of Orphans

The Chapter held its tenth annual fundraising dinner on March 21, 2015, at St. John's Presbyterian Church, in support of three MSSO campaigns, the Gift-of-Sight, the Gift-of-Knowledge and the Gift-of-Education. Margaret Joshi is the anchor person for this annual event. Her family and the chapter executives ably assisted her in planning and coordinating the fund raising dinner. The annual dinner is a highly popular and eagerly awaited event for friends and neighbours. The next annual dinner will be on 9th April 2016.

This year's dinner was attended by about 120 donors and guests including elected officials from all the three levels of the governments. Guests of honor also included the chief operating officer and the Branch manager of the State Bank

of India (Canada). As the usual tradition, towards the end of the dinner a well-stocked table of prizes were won at the raffle. It was a fun filled evening which raised over \$4000 for the above three campaigns.



Raffle prizes procured as donations by Margaret Joshi

MSSO Board Members

The general meeting of MSSO held on March 14, 2015, unanimously elected the following to the Board of Directors.

Jivan Kayande	President
Ramesh Aggarwal	Vice President
Vidita Pande	Secretary
Chandrakant Lad	Treasurer

Dr. Jagannath Wani continues to be the President Emeritus.

Financially assisted organizations

Since the release of the last newsletter, MSSO (main office) provided financial assistance to the following sixteen organizations.

AVANI – Prevention of Child Labor
 Care Foundation – Education of slum children
 K.S. Wani Memorial Trust –Blindness prevention
 Kalinga Inst of Social Sciences –Education of tribal children
 Mauli Seva Pratishthan – Mentally ill destitute women
 Nachiket – Libraries for rural areas
 Parivaar – Education of deprived children
 Rotary Club of Kelowna – Rotary International project
 Sakal India Foundation – Bursaries for post graduate studies
 Samata Pratishthan – Education of Hearing Impaired
 Schizophrenia Awareness Assoc – Rehab of mentally ill
 Snehalaya – HIV Affected children and women
 SRUJAN – Sponsoring a student
 Student Welfare Association – Residence for rural students
 Swadhar – Life skill education of underprivileged girls
 Vikasganga Samajsevi Sanstha – Drought relief

Mother and Child Health

SRUJAN (Society for Rural and Urban Joint Activities, Nagpur) is working in tribal belt of Yavatmal district since 1997. Its initiative on mother and child health began 15 years ago in 2000 covering 25 villages with population of 24000 tribals. Using trained village health workers they reduced the child mortality rate from 108 (per 1000 live births) in 2000 to 58 in 2014. SRUJAN is particularly active in helping the vulnerable tribal group - Kolam.

Ganga Naitam joined SRUJAN in 2006 when she was in her early twenties. She takes pediatric care of newborn babies and imparts health education to their mothers. There is not a single newborn death under her care.

Manjulabai Yedme (Pardhan tribe) is a traditional birth attendant serving Mahadapur and nearby villages. She and Ganga form an ideal team - Manjulabai concentrating on the wellbeing of the mother while Ganga caring for the health of the newborn.



Jagannath Wani with Ganga Naitam, Manjulabai Yedme, Yogini Dolke and Sangita Atram

Sangita Atram joined the program right from its initiation in 2001. Since 2006 she is supervising the neo-natal care of SRUJAN. She is a health rights activist as well as a crusader of women's cause in her community. The villagers address her as 'Doctor Madam'. She is also an advocate for people with mental illness and fights for their rights. Her work has been recognized at various forums in Maharashtra and Delhi.

MSSO is assisting SRUJAN in its project for sponsoring disadvantaged girl students who have been residing in government hostel for girls with no family.

Samata Pratishthan, Yeola

The Pratishthan runs Maiboli Residential School for hearing impaired students from deprived sections of the society. After schooling these children need to acquire vocational skills to become self-supporting. MSSO is currently assisting the Pratishthan in the construction of a two story vocational training center. MSSO also connected the partner to two other organizations, Caring Friends in Mumbai and Arpan Foundation in U.S.A., for financial assistance.



Vocational training center construction in progress

Care Foundation

Care Foundation's Emmanuel School provides education along with healthcare services to underprivileged children from slums in and around Kondhwa, a suburb of Pune. Jagannath Wani visited the school and interviewed a few students to know their family background. He was shocked to know about horrific conditions at their homes - abusive alcoholic fathers, single mothers and suicide incidences. Mr. Bakhtawar Singh and his family have devoted themselves to transforming the lives of these children, who otherwise would have fallen prey to societal menaces such as gambling, alcoholism, pick pocketing and prostitution.



MSSO provided assistance to Care Foundation for education of the students in their school.

Mauli Seva Pratishthan

Detailed information of the activities of the Mauli Seva Pratishthan was given in MSSO NEWS 2014. To support their cause, a local well-wisher donated three acres of prime land to construct a hostel for mentally ill women deserted by their families, and hence, forced to live on streets. To protect the land from encroachment and to make it safe for the inhabitants, MSSO provided significant financial assistance to construct a wall compound around the donated land. This project was partially supported by Alberta's Community Initiative Program for international development.



Part of the compound wall and the main gate

Rotary Club of Kelowna

The Rotary Foundation approved the global grant application to fund Bhagini Nivedita Gramin Vigyan Niketan's project providing a reverse osmosis water filtration plant and 300 toilets to homes in two villages - Bahadarpur and Shirsode, (Jalgaon District). The application was jointly submitted by

RC Chalisgaon and RC Kelowna. MSSO donated funds to the Rotary Club of Kelowna to help meet their contribution quota. The total project cost is \$91,000 in U.S. currency.

Fundraising Event in February

MSSO will hold a fundraising Casino at the Casino Edmonton on 6th and 7th February 2016. This is MSSO's major fund raising event. Krishan Chawla, casino chairperson, assisted by Rohit Desai, has taken on the responsibility of organizing the volunteers for this event. If you can assist please call Krishan Chawla at (780) 463-3516.

MSSO gratefully acknowledges assistance of

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in the production of MSSO News.

Monitoring Visits

Jagannath Wani, President Emeritus, gave courtesy visits to many Indian partners funded by MSSO in the past. Notable amongst them are Dr. Prakash Amte's Lok Biradari Prakalp in Hemalkasa, Dr. Chandrashekhar Sankurathri's charity eye hospital (SriKiran Institute of Ophthalmology) and Sarada Vidyalayam in Kakinada, Nileema Mishra's Bhagini Nivedita Gramin Vigyan Niketan in Bahadarpur and projects of K.S. Wani Memorial Trust in Dhule and one in Pune.

Hemalkasa

A *Mitramelava* at Hemalkasa from 25th till 27th December 2014 was attended by over 700 eminent guests and tribal people. The purpose was to commemorate birth anniversary of Baba Amte and dedication of newly constructed hospital at the hands of Shri Chandiprasad Bhatt, the pioneer of Chipko movement and winner of various prestigious awards like Magsaysay award, Gandhi Peace prize. As part of the celebration a book called *Yugamudra* based on Baba Amte's memories was published. Amongst the cultural programs the most memorable was *Karunopnishade* a prose and poetry program based on the literary works of Baba presented by the famous actress Sonali Kulkarni.

Accommodating 700 guests in a remote village of Hemalkasa was a daunting challenge. The Lok Biradari Prakalpa team accomplished the job successfully.

MSSO provided significant financial assistance to complete constructions of half a dozen buildings with matching funds from Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA, now part of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development) and Alberta's Wild Rose Foundation.

Kakinada

MSSO organized at least two fund raising events in Calgary in support of the work of Dr. Chandrashekhar Sankurathri. Though several MSSO members had been to Kakinada, Dr. Jagannath Wani visited Dr. Sankurathri for the first time on 2nd and 3rd December 2014. It was a pleasure to see many large scale activities including a charity hospital (SriKiran Institute of Ophthalmology) and Sarada Vidyalayam, a school for deprived children in and around Kakinada. It was amazing to see how Dr. Sankurathri turned a calamity into an opportunity to help thousands of the less privileged.



Jagannath Wani, Chandrashekhar Sankurathri & Shashikant Dhamne (Treasurer K.S. Wani Memorial Trust)

Bahadarpur

MSSO helped Nileema Mishra's Bhagini Nivedita Gramin Vigyan Niketan (BNGVN) in constructing its main activity center and head office building in 2006. Since then MSSO connected BNGVN with many other donors. MSSO twice procured invitations for Nileema to address public meetings in U.S.A. providing her an opportunity for fund raising. With the available funds, every household in Bahadardspur now has a toilet and the villagers do not relieve themselves in the open anymore. This has improved sanitary conditions in the village. The activity center provides work to many women to become earning members of the family.

Dhule

With matching funds made available by CIDA and the Wild Rose Foundation, the K.S. Wani Memorial Trust (KSWMT) completed many projects in Dhule including charity eye hospital, vision testing of school children in the entire Dhule district, school and residence for hearing impaired students, school for printing technology and science exploratory for school children. All the projects are self-supporting.

Pune

KSWMT has a major self-sustaining project in Pune jointly operated with Schizophrenia Awareness Association (SAA). The activities of SAA have been recognized at the national and international levels. The Government of India appointed Amrit Bakhshy, the SAA president, as the member of the Institutional Board (Apex Body) and the chairperson of the Hospital Management Committee of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). He is a resource person for the International diploma in mental health law and human rights supported by the World Health Organization. SAA was consulted in the drafting of the proposed new mental health act by the Government of India.

Donations to MSSO are eligible for tax credit
(Charity registration No. 10765 4410 RR 0001)

You may donate online via Paypal or by mail to:
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More than a dozen videos on MSSO projects available on
<http://mssoonline.org/videos>