

Mahila Samakhya

Andhra Pradesh

National Evaluation

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Evaluation Team

Ms. Kokila Gulati

Ms. Kalamani

Mr. M. Bharath Bhushan

Prof. V. Sudhakar

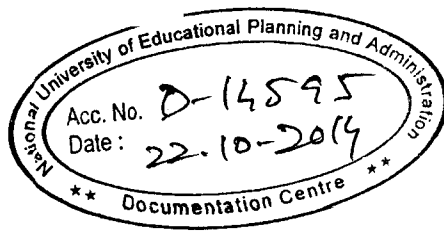
Ms. Vinalini Mathrani

Dr. Rama Baru Team Leader

NUEPA DC



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NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE MAHILA SAMAKHYA PROGRAMME: ANDHRA PRADESH MAHILA SAMATHA SOCIETY (APMSS)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Mahila Samakhya Programme was initiated in 1989 in response to the National Policy on Education, 1986. It envisaged education as a means to empower women in a few districts in the states of Karnataka, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. It is currently prevailing in nine states. The Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society was formed in 1992. It started its activities initially in two districts viz., Medak and Mahbubnagar in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. The Telangana is one of the three regions of Andhra Pradesh and in terms socio-economic development is poor compared to the other two viz., Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra regions. This region consists of districts that have been facing drought conditions for several years that resulted in severe hardships for small, marginal farmers and landless labourers. There are poor infrastructural and very little industrial development in this region resulting in high levels of poverty, adverse literacy and health status indicators as compared to districts in the other regions. It is however important to point out there are sub regional variations even in the relatively prosperous regions of Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra.

The socio-political context of Andhra Pradesh has changed during the last decade. This period has been marked by the mobilization of rural women into self help groups (SHGs) centered largely on micro financing initiatives, many of which are supported by the government. This was also a period when the regional party viz., Telugu Desam Party (TDP) that was in power during the nineties had initiated reforms in the economy and social sectors with the support of multilateral and bilateral agencies like the World Bank, DFID, etc. There has been a great deal of debate around the varying impact of reforms and its contrary implications for vulnerable sections. The multiplicities of NGOs, Community Based Organizations and range of government initiatives and schemes, which are sometimes available only at a price, have created a complicated context for APMSS to function within.

At very outset, it needs to be stated that the APMSS intervention in Andhra Pradesh is impressive. APMSS has succeeded in establishing a strong financial base. The MS ideology is clearly articulated by the sangham women in both spoken and written range of activities they are engaging in. The women came across as dynamic and confident. This programme has provided a space for rural women to come together and gain information. Across districts, the women view the sanghams as an institution that belongs to them and value its role in their personal and social life. It has empowered them with an identity that goes beyond their family and kinship networks. This constitutes the backdrop against which, the issues raised in the evaluation need to be seen.

2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The work of APMSS needs to be evaluated on both qualitative and quantitative parameters. Given the short duration of the evaluation period the team focused largely on the qualitative dimensions to obtain an indicative rather than comprehensive picture. The itinerary of the Evaluation Team is at Annexure-I.

Information was obtained from the following sources:

1. At the state level

- Focus group discussions with the core team and State Programme Director (SPD).
- Individual interviews with the Education Secretary.
- Interviews with representatives of NGO Networks -APACR, WASSAN and ASMITA.

2. At the district level

- Focus group discussions with the DPCs (where in position); Resource Persons (RPs), Junior Resource Persons (JRPs).
- Meeting with the government officials from the health, education and police departments.
- Meetings with district level NGOs.

3. At the mandal level

- Meetings with mandal level government officials.
- Meetings with APMSS federations.
- Interactions with children and teachers of the Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSKs).

4. At the village level

- Focus group discussions with sangham women.
- Focus group discussions with bala sanghams.

In addition to these qualitative data sets, we attempted to discern micro trends and assess the impact of programmes and interventions by consolidating and analyzing data collected by the APMSS. Due to incomplete and inconsistent data we could not undertake any meaningful analysis.

3. REACH AND EXPANSION

Presently APMSS is working in 9 districts across 2372 villages. It is the single largest organization working on gender and development in the state. As indicated in the introduction, it has its largest presence in the Telangana region, which is one of the poorest regions in the state. The programme began in Mahbubnagar and Medak districts (1993), followed by Karimnagar (1997), Nizamabad and Adilabad (1998) and finally Warangal and Nalgonda (2000). Over 1200 villages across 32 mandals have been covered in these districts and there has been an expansion into an additional 16 mandals during the last year. Two new districts were added to this programme last year i.e., Srikakulam and Vizianagaram from the coastal Andhra region. These are characterized by poor socio-economic and human development indicators especially a low female literacy rate.. (See Table below for details of expansion and coverage)

Expansion and Coverage 1993 to 2004

S.No.	District	Starting Year	No. of Mandals	No. of Villages	
1	Medak	1993	4	91	
		1995 - 96	3	44	
		Total coverage by Expansion	2003	7	200
			2004	2	65
		Current total	2004	9	265
2	Mahabubnagar	1993	2	73	
		1994-95	2	69	
		1997-98	3	112	
		Current Total	2004	7	254
3	Karimnagar	1997	4	153	
		1998	3	71	
		Current total	2004	7	274
4	Nizamabad	1998	3	105	
		Total coverage by Expansion	2004	3	130
			2004	4	120
		Current Total	2004	7	250
5	Adilabad	1998	2	71	
		1999	1	35	
		2000	1	34	
		Total coverage by Expansion	2004	4	140
			2004	3	132
		Current Total	2004	7	272
6	Warangal	2000	2	108	
		Expansion	2004	4	151
		Current total	6	259	
7	Nalgonda	2000	2	117	
		Expansion	2004	3	181
		Current Total	2004	5	298
8	Srikakulam Expansion	2004	4	250	
		Current total	2004	250	
9	Vizianagaram Expansion	2004	4	250	
		Current Total	2004	250	
	Total Coverage	2004	52	2372	

This expansion is creditable but nonetheless needs to be seen contextually.

1. APMSS is suffering from high turnover and numerous vacancies. The turnover can partly be attributed to the recent emergence of attractive job market in the development sector and higher paying options in Velugu and other government and NGO programmes. Expansion to two new districts will result in the diversion of the prevailing skeletal staff of the older districts to the new districts. This is likely to affect the progress of the programme in the older districts.
2. It needs mention that APMSS is not present in all the mandals of the districts mentioned above. In these seven districts, there are several mandals, which are more backward than the selected mandals from the new districts. These mandals were deliberately not selected because these contain small or far-flung hamlets, which become inaccessible, especially during the monsoons. Given the current staffing pattern, women of these backward settlements did not receive due attention so far.
3. With regard to the coverage of the SC population in the existing villages, majority of SC women in these mandals are sangham members. Women from the STs and minorities have not been included to such an extent. This leaves one with the scope to discuss as to whether one should seek to expand the programme to the unattended settlements as well as the STs and minorities in the existing villages of the current seven districts or should one expand to new villages and districts. Moreover, all the hamlets attached to the existing programme villages are not necessarily being covered. The poorest reside in these hamlets. Should women from these hamlets become the next focus area?

Key Recommendations

- Reflection on the current context of APMSS is required prior to expanding the programme.
- Consolidation of strengths and redefining one's role as a policy influencing body might be of greater relevance rather than expansion to more areas. Expansion to help strengthen the movement and value addition by embracing challenging tasks of advocacy and policy interventions could be more significant than physical expansion that might only be taxing on the human and financial resources without any additional contribution.
- APMSS needs to pay special attention to the tribal dimension and governance in scheduled areas. Governance issue in tribal context has not been adequately acknowledged. One of the seven districts where the APMSS works is exclusively tribal i.e., Adilabad. The proposed expansion to Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts has this special situation and further demands attention to this area of focus.

4. THE SANGHAMS

4.1 Mahila Sanghams

Sanghams are the backbone of the APMSS. The foundation for empowerment in the MS programme was laid through the formation of cohesive Mahila Sanghams as instruments of collective action. The MS intervention has changed the trajectory of the lives of the sangham women. They are experiencing a high sense of self-worth. There is more to their lives than daily drudgery and insecurity. The older women particularly come across as active, animated and liberated. This can be attributed to a longer association with sangham processes and reduced responsibilities.

1. Across districts, the process of sangham formation has been similar, i.e., through discussions on their needs and concerns. **This process is often very time consuming and requires repeated visits to villages to motivate women to come together.** The testimonials of both the sangham women and the MS workers vividly bring out the struggles at a personal and organizational level towards the formation of the sanghams. The pace of sangham formation has varied across and within districts. Larger social, economic, political and cultural factors play an important role in determining the pace of sangham formation. Since the focus of the programme was on mobilizing the poorest of the poor among women, dalits and tribals dominate most of the sanghams, especially the older ones. In the newer districts, efforts at forming multicaste sanghams are underway, as non-dalit and non-tribal women also face oppression.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF SANGHAM WOMEN ACROSS DISTRICTS

Two thirds of the women of MS sanghams belong to dalit and tribal communities. Out of 33,807 members covered by the MS through Sanghams, SCs are 52% followed by BCs (28%), STs (14%) and OCs (5%). Medak and Adilabad districts have no representation of members from upper castes. They are predominantly dalit and tribal groups.

Nizamabad district also has one fifth of members belonging to STs. Adilabad being a predominantly tribal district has a mere 1.27% of Scheduled Caste members. Scheduled caste members are significant in Medak (84.54%), Karimnagar (74.57%), Mahbubnagar (52.28%) and Nizamabad (49.14%). Distribution of members by caste is different across the districts and reflects the local specific demographic conditions of select mandals or the stage of entry of the MS in the particular district. These differences pose challenges and demand attention of the MS in addressing the specific issues of the particular groups in addition to the issues of women in general.

Table 1 Details of Membership of the APMSS Sanghams and caste composition

Districts	Mandal	No.	of	Average	Social Composition of Members	Total	%	to
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	s covered s	Sangham s	size of Sangham	SC	ST	BC	OC	member s	total state
Medak	9	200	22.93	3876	123	586	0	4585	13.56
				(84.54%)	(2.68%)	(12.78%)	0	100	
Mahbubnagar	7	254	33.82	4491	833	2908	359	8591	25.41
				(52.28%)	(9.70%)	(33.85%)	(4.18%)		
Karimnagar	7	274	23.70	4842	282	1137	232	6493	19.21
				(74.57%)	(4.34%)	(17.51%)	(3.57%)		
Nizamabad	7	130	17.97	1148	497	641	50	2336	6.91
				(49.14%)	(21.28%)	(27.44%)	(2.14%)		
Adilabad	7	140	22.54	40	2949	166	0	3155	9.33
				(1.27%)	(93.47%)	(5.26%)	0		
Warangal	6	108	46.78	1798	119	2593	542	5052	14.94
				(35.59%)	(2.36%)	(51.33%)	(10.73%)		
Nalgonda	5	117	30.73	1460	75	1550	510	3595	10.63
				(40.61%)	(2.09%)	(43.12%)	(14.19%)		
Srikakulam	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vizianagaram	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Districts	56	1223	27.64	17655	4878	9581	1693	33807	100.00
Percentage				52.22	14.43	28.34	5.01	100.00	

2. The phenomenon of **multicaste sanghams** requires special attention of the MS. The field visits revealed that a properly integrated multicaste sangham is a chimera. In the newer districts of Warangal and Nalgonda where all sanghams are multicaste, women from all castes may be members but in real terms all voices are not heard. In Karimnagar, most sanghams are unicast. The multicaste ones again do not allow for equal participation. In the older districts (Mahbubnagar), some negotiations are underway but integration is yet to be achieved. This implies that in each village, there be might be more than one sangham in functional terms. This situation on the ground assumes significance in the light of the fact that while federating only one sangham representative enters the governing body. Which sangham will send their representative and thus will one set of women and their needs and contributions go unrepresented? On an average sangham have a range of 10 to 40 members. In the newer districts, efforts are being made to consolidate existing SHGs into a single sangham. It is evident that **very large sanghams are not really functional.**

3. Further the changed context in Andhra Pradesh during the last decade through government thrift and micro credit activities for women through DWCRA and Velugu has impacted sangham formation processes. Across districts there has been considerable amount of discussion among women in sanghams about the importance of inclusion of other caste groups but at the same time they have expressed concern about the power and social dynamics that are likely to arise.
4. **Mainstreaming seems to be an issue.** It needs to be acknowledged that in villages chosen for being developed as model villages, the Mahila Samatha philosophy extends beyond the SC hamlets. In these villages, committees including the Sarpanch, traditional leaders and youth groups have been instituted who are aware of MS. But there are a number of villages where we got the sense that the rest of the village is oblivious of what the sangham women are doing.
5. While speaking of **change**, it is evident that the women have acquired information on a range of topics, they have been exposed to training programmes and visits to different government offices and to other areas in the MS field to Hyderabad and even other states. This has contributed to change at all three levels: personal; family and community. It would be premature to state that the village as a whole has experienced changes. The capacities of sanghams are also varied but across districts it is evident and palpable that this process has given the members of the sanghams a great deal of courage and confidence; self reliance; a platform for collective action and enhanced self esteem. These were seen as the strengths and the fruits of the laborious struggle of women coming together to form sanghams. The sanghams were not only the platform for initiating collective struggles but also a space where women could discuss and get informed about a variety of issues.
6. The **leadership** in the sanghams is extremely well developed. The leaders possess clarity of concepts, a strong information base and good moderating skills. While this is acknowledged and appreciated, there seems to be a tendency to concentrate leadership in the hands of a few. In majority of the sanghams, the same leaders have been continuing since the beginning of the intervention.
7. **Decision-making seems to lie with the sangham women** as they take up programmes and issues deemed locally relevant. The programme gives a great deal of importance to the process of sangham building and in fact divides into four phases that includes those that are in the 'visit stage' followed by three stages of maturity. Decision making processes have been evolved and institutionalized in the sanghams and is a continuous process in their development. Several examples were cited by women about the hours of deliberations and discussions before making decisions and instituting action at the village, mandal and district levels. Actions covered a range of social, governance, livelihood and land issues. Since there is close association between the programme and government interventions, the sanghams have articulated their concerns and in some instances even pressurized the government agencies at the mandal and district levels for implementation and accountability.

Key Recommendations

- The labour intensive process that is needed to build sanghams has to be duly recognized. In order to sustain and upscale activities of the sanghams, the inputs in terms of capacity building through trainings, exposure activities and other such means is critical. This capacity building training is underway but the impact needs to be assessed regularly. The output of these processes cannot be always be quantified but could be subjected to qualitative evaluations periodically. This would be an important feedback to the respective sanghams as well as the programme.
- Wherever efforts are being made for unicast sanghams to evolve into multi-caste sanghams there is need for support and guidance from the federations and the MS staff. It is suggested that some mechanisms should be evolved to differentiate newer members from the older ones. For example, the sanghams can consider having different categories of membership viz. permanent members, associate members and new members. This may help to resolve some of the dilemmas and apprehensions expressed by sangham members regarding the induction of newer members, especially from other castes. There was a suggestion that categories of membership – permanent, temporary and new, could be adopted to facilitate the induction of members.
- It is useful to think in terms of more than one sangham per village if required, to ensure real participation. This would help have greater cohesiveness, belongingness, and participation of the members, as the group size is moderate unlike very large size single sanghams in the new districts.
- It would be useful to undertake an exercise across villages to assess whether the MS approach is an isolated phenomenon. **Mainstreaming** is an important goal for us.
- It is crucial to develop a second rung of leadership especially in the light of the upcoming federation model. With the departure of the karyakarthas there will be the need for internal checks and balances. Data should be collected and analyzed on leadership status.
- Given the presence of Velugu and DWCRA and their potential for economically improving sangham women's life situation, collaboration stretching from the state to the village level is strongly recommended.

4.2 Bala Sanghams

Bala sanghams are collectives of boys and girls who come together once every fortnight to discuss social issues and other interests. The practice of girls and boys working together in rural areas is rare and must be acknowledged and appreciated. Bala sanghams provides the organizational space and promote participation rights of children, an area that did not receive the attention as much as protection, survival and development rights have been comprehended by both public and private agencies across the country. It is interesting to note that the boys approached the MS staff for obtaining entry into these sanghams rather than vice-versa. These groups hold the potential for women's

empowerment in the future. Membership to the bala sanghams will enable these young boys to grow up as collaborators rather than adversaries of their counterparts.

These sanghams are more prominent in Warangal and Mahbubnagar districts. In both Mahbubnagar and Warangal districts the bala sanghams took up the task of motivating children who are not enrolled to join schools. They also work on other issues like sanitation and health, child labour, child marriage, gender discrimination and alcoholism. There have been training programmes at the cluster and mandal levels for members of bala sanghams.

Key Recommendations

- The concept of bala sanghams is innovative and they can be given more information regarding the academic and vocational options after the seventh and tenth classes.
- Information regarding reservations and scholarships available for SC, ST and backward classes may motivate children to consider options available.
- Training on gender sensitivity and life skills will have a long-term positive impact.

5. MAJOR INTERVENTIONS INCLUDING ALTERNATE STRUCTURES OF THE APMSS

Across districts, the interventions addressed by the sanghams include dealing with cases of violence against women, child marriages, gender relations in the family and community, education for out of school children, especially older girls, demanding greater accountability from government institutions and welfare programmes. The sangham women related some achievement in checking absenteeism of teachers in schools, demanding entitlements from Panchayats and ensuring that ANMs and other health staff perform their duties.

Five major areas that have been addressed by the programme include:

- Education of women and children
- Health
- Social and gender equity
- Natural resource management and asset building
- Women's participation in panchayat raj institutions

5.1 Education and Empowerment of Women and Children

Education is one of the key areas of intervention of the programme, which is seen as a means for empowerment. Education is seen as a means of access to knowledge and also as means to gain status and power. It is seen as a vehicle to securing jobs or key positions in the community. Education helps the members to challenge the constraints imposed by structures of caste and gender that exclude from positions, status and mobility. A range of activities have been undertaken to address this objective and these include literacy activities, setting up of alternate structures like the Adult Literacy Centres (ALCs), Mahila Sikshana Kendras (MSKs), Bala Mitra Kendras (BMKs) and more recently the Residential Bridge Course (RBC). All these alternate structures are seen as ways of educating women and including children who have dropped out of school and with the help of these can be mainstreamed into regular schools.

5.1.1 Adult Literacy Centres

In most of the APMSS villages, adult literacy centres were initiated. Village youth were enrolled as teachers. Sangham women assemble every night to acquire functional literacy. Given the volume of their other work, this is a difficult proposition. Despite this, we observed women in a number of villages outlining their names, detailing their addresses and even adding up small numbers. They derive immense pleasure from their achievements. But in a number of villages, the ALCs have poor attendance. As a redressal measure, short term Mahila Shikshana Kendras were developed. With the transition to federations requiring self reliance of the Sanghams on the anvil, capacity building of the sanghams with functional literacy requires greater attention in terms of a programme priorities and methodological issues. Low literacy among Sangham members calls for a clear plan of action for the long march to be undertaken seriously.

5.1.2 Short Term Mahila Sikshana Kendras

MSKs provide for literacy and numeracy skills along with a curriculum that provides information and analysis of social situations in health, district level programmes, and literacy lessons based on discussions. These are ten-day programmes. During the last three years, the strategy has been to conduct short-term residential camps in three phases. The curriculum for the camp approach is based on Paulo Freire's model of learning, which takes real life contexts as its learning domains.

Some concerns about this programme are that the strategy and the curriculum seem ambitious especially considering that there is a high dropout of women from one phase to the next. These camps are too short to provide adequate input and practice to acquire literacy and numerical skills, therefore the input into sanghams may not be adequate. There is no impact evaluation to assess this aspect. The areas where there seems to be a positive impact is around issues of empowerment, handling finances and accounts.

5.1.3 Mahila Shikshana Kendras

The MS philosophy is well translated into the content of MSK. It provides for accelerated learning opportunities to the never enrolled and dropouts in the age group of 12-18. In some districts, there is flexibility in the age group, with some MSKs enrolling eight and nine year olds. The curriculum is innovative and covers the syllabus at the primary school level, social issues, personal hygiene and health, vocational education, self- defense, etc. It currently uses a combination of learning material that includes an adapted version of the Rishi Valley material, government school textbooks. The core group, who has been trained by external resource persons, trains the teacher. There have been occasional inputs from DIETs who have strengthened the capacities of the MSK teachers.

Table 2 : Coverage of Long Term MSKs by Social Group Over the Years

	SC	ST	BC	OC	Total
1997	46	2	12	1	61
1998	62	1	7	2	72
1999	86	3	23	3	115
2000	130	6	38	4	178
2001	134	18	69	10	231
2002	184	48	62	8	302
2003	362	88	129	13	592
2004	159	45	49	5	258
Total (%)	1163 (64%)	211 (12%)	389 (21.5%)	46(2.5%)	1809

A total of 1809 girls in the age group of 12-18 have been covered between 1997-2004. Of them 64% were from SC communities, 21% from BC, 12% ST and 2.5 % from other castes. The Muslim girls attending the camps are covered under the category of BC girls. The MSKs are run in six districts, i.e., Medak, Mahbubnagar, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Warangal and Nalgonda. MSKs are run only at district level in Warangal and Nalgonda districts. Whereas in the five districts, MSKs are run by DIUs at both district and mandal levels. Data regarding the total number of children who stayed for the entire duration, completed class 5 and mainstreamed was not available across districts. Data of two MSKs at Warangal district suggests that about 75% of girls who enroll in the MSK complete the programme successfully.

During the visits to the MSKs, we encountered a group of healthy happy children who possess a well-rounded view on life and themselves. They bring out a weekly newsletter, which reveals both their creative talent and their intellect. It needs mention that most children come from SC/ST communities.

5.1.4 Bala Mitra Kendras

These institutions are located at the village level for child labourers and school dropouts below fifteen years. The strength of the Bala Mitra Kendras (BMKs) is that they have a positive learning environment and there is a good rapport between the students and teachers. The BMKs have been one of the most successful initiatives of APMSS.

Bala Mitra Kendras reveal the relevance of the multi pronged and pluralistic perspective towards child labour and universalisation of elementary education. A blend of strategies like enrollment into government schools, transition schools in the evening for working children or dropouts, short term intensive residential schools etc are examples of the pragmatic approach adopted by the APMSS. Demand for the BMKs in the MS operational area reveals the need for innovative approaches to address child rights of households from vulnerable communities. Success of enrolment campaigns and effective mainstreaming of children from the BMKs into government schools over the past five years with remarkable participation of the community in elementary education has led to reduced need for the BMKs in some areas.

Table 3 Coverage of Children across years in Bala Mitra Kendras

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1997	132	5	137
1998	NA	NA	498
1999	NA	NA	1577
2000	NA	NA	1960
2001	969	404	1373
2002	2033	1302	2033
2003	105	596	1655
2004	926	418	1344
Total -01-04	4256 (66.5%)	2149 (33.5%)	6404

1) A total number of 10,577 children have been accessed through the BMKs. The sex-disaggregated data for the first few years is not available, however looking at the data from 2001, it can be said that nearly 67% of the children are boys. The disaggregated data based on social backgrounds is not available.

2) The Karimnagar data reveals the success of this venture. There were 8 centres in 1998, which went up to 26 in 2000. These came down to 12 in 2002 and currently all the centres have closed because all the children have been reinstated into the formal school system. This is an achievement. In addition to this 3 of the BMKs have been converted into open school centres and adult women are seeking re-entry into the formal school system through this.

3) The teacher's honorarium is a meager Rs 300. Delivering education content effectively (as some children continue in these schools up to class 5) requires serious planning. Most

of the centers are run in the evening for two hours, very much like the Non Formal Education centers. The limitations of such schools have been widely recognized. The criteria for grouping children, how suitable the learning materials are and the future of children who are enrolled in these institutions need to be considered.

5.1.5 National Programme For Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

One component of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (central government universal literacy programme) is the NPEGEL. Across the country, Mahila Samakhya has been authorized to implement the NPEGEL in all the districts where it is present. This entails developing a model school in each cluster, which will serve as a resource for all the other schools in the cluster. They are also responsible for ensuring 100 per cent enrollment and retention of all the children (especially girls) in the mandals APMSS works in. They also have to train teachers; impact the curriculum and teaching methodology; and develop and maintain school infrastructure. To implement this programme the government has only provided for one cluster coordinator.

The preparatory work in the different mandals has just begun. The field visits revealed very little coordination between the mandal level officials and APMSS staff in this venture. The former seemed to have very little knowledge of what is happening in the APMSS mandals. Authorities are hesitant to involve civil society and not open to the participatory process. They also did not display very much faith in APMSS' ability to effectively implement this programme.

Key Recommendations

- An independent assessment is required to assess the learning levels as defined by the curriculum in all the learning initiatives described above.
- An in-depth impact study of girls who have passed from the centres during the last five years needs to be done. The data regarding children who are mainstreamed and those who continue education should also be maintained so as to assess the impact of this strategy.
- APMSS has acquired enough experience to now influence policy in education. It is desirable to consolidate the MSK experience and present it as a model by clearly articulating curriculum and pedagogy. A systematic analysis of the programme and also other bridge courses needs to be undertaken towards impacting policy.
- APMSS needs to strengthen the curriculum and teacher's capacities in language and mathematics in the MSKs. They need to be oriented towards the identification of learning difficulties and evolve mechanisms to respond to them.
- Efforts should be made to bring more children from the non-SC/ST category into the MSKs. Living in close proximity for a one year period will help erode caste barriers in the long-term.
- With regard to the NPEGEL there are several recommendations. Firstly there is the need for additional staff as the current staff is already overstretched with existing responsibilities. In addition to the already provided cluster coordinator, there is the need for at least one person for two mandals; one at the district and

state levels. The need for vertical linkages is critical for the success of such a programme.

- The attitude of the mandal officials is a cause for concern and needs to be addressed by directives from the state and national level.
- APMSS may need to collaborate with an external educational resource group, which will assess whether they possess the wherewithal to implement the programme and act as a sounding board for issues arising in the course of programme implementation.

5.2 Social and Gender Equity

A number of initiatives have been taken by the sanghams regarding stopping child marriages, child labour, the initiation of women as joginis, addressing concerns about consumption of liquor, violence against women, struggles against caste discrimination, land rights and access to housing and other basic needs. These have been some of the issues that all sanghams have addressed and see this process as empowering them with knowledge regarding various issues. This understanding of issues has been the basis for their struggles at the village, mandal, district and state levels. It is evident that the sangham women and the staff of MS have internalized this understanding and therefore they articulate how this process has brought about fundamental changes in themselves and their immediate environment. As many of them observed: *“the Velugu and DWACRA groups are only concerned with how women can save money but Mahila Samatha gives us information about various social issues and we learn a great deal through discussions. Because we have these discussions in the sanghams we get a lot of courage when we have to deal with people in our village and outside.”* (Meeting with Sangham women, Hanwada Mandal, Mahbubnagar District).

Nari Adalats

The concept of a women’s court or nari adalat was adapted from the UP model and the motivation for it was based on the fact that justice was not assured in the regular courts or the caste based institutions. The nari adalat is a forum where women are able to find solutions to a range of issues affecting their lives. This is definitely seen as a form of empowerment and they also have acquired information on the legal dimensions through training programmes. A concern that came up during the discussions with the MS staff is dealing with sexual harassment from men at the village, mandal and district level in the course of work. The staff articulated their insecurity in working on social issues, which are likely to incur the ire of traditional leaders. They are not clear about the kind of support they can obtain and expect from the national level.

Key Recommendations

- The evaluation team strongly feels that 'need based' training should be given to women on legal issues and they should also have access to a network of lawyers and others who can be drawn upon for advice at various levels.
- There is a need to set up a committee against sexual harassment for women working in the programme, as stipulated by the Supreme Court. The constitution of this committee and procedures for redressal and punishment need to be worked out. National office could facilitate a process to set up such committees in other state programmes in consultation with lawyers and NGOs who have been involved in doing similar work with other institutions. This would play an important role in providing security to the staff and also act as a deterrent against harassment both verbal and physical.

5.3 Health

Health has emerged as an important concern for sanghams. Due to a range of training programmes they are able to recognize the relationship between their poor living conditions and ill-health. They do articulate their concerns regarding excessive workload, poor nutritional status and lack of other basic necessities with their poor health. There has been an effort to create awareness regarding diseases, environmental and personal hygiene by the programme. The sangham women expressed their anger with the lack of responsiveness of the public health services. There have been instances of sangham women questioning doctors at different levels (Primary Health Centres, community health centers and district hospitals) but on the whole it is a frustrating experience. The shared perception amongst members is that the public sector is callous and they take bribes.

1. MS has partnered with government for disease control and immunization programmes. HIV and AIDS control training has been undertaken by the MS team as well as by some federations. Due to lack of adequate data it is difficult to assess the impact of these training programmes.
2. Initiatives like the revival of traditional practices and herbal medicine are important and need to be encouraged. It is however important to study the extent to which these are used by women and also the conditions for which they use them.
3. The training of private practitioners has focused largely on the use of safe needles and also some aspects of safe motherhood. This is an important area of intervention but it would be worthwhile considering the inclusion of topics like the rational use of drugs, following standard regimens for the treatment of communicable diseases, referral of cases as and when required and ensuring that irrational practices like giving injections to hasten labour in deliveries are avoided, in the training programmes. The process, content and duration of the training has to be worked out in consultation with organizations that have undertaken similar exercises in other parts of the country.

4. According to the health officials, some districts are on the brink of malaria and dengue epidemics. These are easily preventable if women in the villages take action and could also act as a pressure group to alert the government health services.
5. Andhra Pradesh is gaining a reputation for medical malpractices where unnecessary hysterectomies are commonplace. There is a nexus between the local private doctors, pathologists and large hospitals. The nexus even extends to Hyderabad.

Key Recommendations

- There is a need to evolve a strategy for the interventions in the public sector. At this point the emphasis has been on awareness building but it is time the programme undertakes an exercise at the sangham level for prioritizing the 'felt needs' and then evolving suitable strategies.
- The training material and pedagogy requires needs to be critically evaluated. The impact of these training programmes also needs to be assessed.
- The training of private practitioners is a very useful input. The scope of this programme can be expanded by incorporating additional inputs.
- The problems in the public sector need to be addressed at the state level. While pressure must be put on doctors at the local levels, it maybe useful to take some of the systemic concerns at the state level. It would be advisable for MS to partner with other organizations and include concerned doctors in the public sector as a broad alliance to address the inadequacies of the government hospitals.
- The MS could also play an important role in highlighting malpractices in the private sector and act as a pressure group along with other concerned organizations for regulating this sector.
- The district level officials see a key role for sangham women in controlling epidemics and becoming resource persons for implementing services of the public health care system.

5.4 National Resource Management

Natural resource management (NRM) is a critical component in addressing livelihood issues. In some of the sanghams, the women took the initiative of engaging in collective farming. This yielded food grains for consumption and a little surplus for sale. This initiative became the inspiration for the Samatha Dharani programme.

The Samatha Dharani programme is designed for agricultural and economic improvement. It is a three-year programme. The objective of this programme is achieving food security by bringing fallow lands under cultivation and gaining recognition as women farmers. The sanghams have received Rs 35,000 as revolving fund for agricultural operations. Apart from these funds, farm implements and tools were also provided and women received training in sustainable farming methods. The programme enabled the construction of vermicompost troughs and grain bins that serve as grain banks.

The programme has met with mixed responses across districts. In some of the districts women expressed satisfaction at gaining some assets and converting the fallow land into a productive asset. In several sanghams, they had produced food crops that were stored in grain bins and the process of borrowing from the grain bank had been initiated. Many of the women felt that this programme had changed their lives since they had acquired concrete assets. The sanghams showed maturity in handling accounts, had evolved systems for borrowing and paying back from the revolving fund and the grain bank.

In other districts, there was a deep sense of frustration due to lack of control over external factors like drought for instance in Mahbubnagar. In these areas, one could sense hopelessness and sadness among the women who felt that they had put in so much effort but had got no benefit.

Key Recommendations

- The conceptualization of the Samatha Dharani programme for only three years is in our view shortsighted. The process of acquiring the land, preparing it and then seeing some benefits from it, takes a great deal of time and effort. There is a need to have some scheme that provides continuity to this programme that is just about consolidating itself in some areas.
- The MS staff should reflect upon the experience with the Samatha Dharani programme. They have played a key role in creating the scheme. Given their close association with the field and knowledge of the local situation, they should have ensured that this scheme had a more realistic time frame. *As APMSS is gradually evolving into a policy body, it needs to be careful that certain non-negotiables are woven into the programmes in all its policy initiatives, in other areas as well to make for greater efficiency. This is essential for the perspective building process at this stage in the programme.*
- There is a need to tie up with ongoing programmes for watershed management, community forestry management and comprehensive land development programmes.
- APMSS as the single largest women focused group has potential to critique the NRM policies and participatory process to make them gender sensitive. APMSS needs to engage actively in Van Samrakshana Samithis, Water User Associations, and Watershed Programmes etc. Owing to its presence in seven districts and of hundreds villages in each district it could play significant role in improving the livelihoods, employment and better utilization of state funds in these NRM activities. MS could play the key role as committee members of these NRM related CBOs or as PIAs. NGO networks in the NRM field in the state also look towards the MS for such inputs.

5.5 Women's Participation in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs)

The APMSS data shows that over time there has been an increase in the participation of women in PRIs. Sangham women have initiated and demanded their entitlements from the panchayats and even higher authorities. There are issues of financial flows into panchayats and their utilization that needs to be understood and appropriate interventions demanded at the village level. Women are aware but this could be strengthened with appropriate capacity building initiatives. Sangham women who had managed to enter local governance during the reign of the TDP, suddenly found themselves denuded of their positions. Some headway was made during the nineties, which is now slipping back. Moreover, the field visits revealed that mere membership is not adequate for actually influencing decision-making processes. The MS staff declared that out of all the intervention areas, least progress has been made in panchayat raj.

Key Recommendations

- Capacity building in this area is crucial. Focused training in PRI is strongly recommended.
- There is the need to strengthen the hands of the sangham women who are panchayat members, in other ways through vertical linkages, as mere membership does not assure empowerment.
- APMSS has to also understand the women and Panchayat issue with reference to the Scheduled Areas and tribal self-rule. This aspect has not received the attention in APMSS so far. Work in agency areas has not been focused in the local specific context, which gives attention to the special amendment to Panchayati Raj legislation.

6. CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING OF STAFF

Capacity building and training is a key component of APMSS programme intervention. The staff has been exposed to a range of training programmes and exposure visits in all the key intervention areas described earlier. It is undisputed that these have been of value given the vibrancy in the field. Yet the actual impact of these cannot be ascertained in the short duration of the evaluation as to whether the inputs have translated into concrete action resulting in the change of a life situation.

The programme is now at a stage when it is consolidating and expanding simultaneously, therefore additional capacities will have to be built. In-depth discussions with the karyakarthas and programme staff shows that the capacity building process has been instrumental in bringing about transformations in their understanding, attitudes, capacities and confidence levels to deal with gender equity issues.

The challenge in capacity building is the expansion and high turnover of staff. The energy that goes into orienting a new recruit is wasted if they leave or are appropriated by another NGO.

Key Recommendations

- There is the need for an area wise evaluation of training programmes, which will examine both content and methodology of training programmes to assess where further inputs are required.
- It will also be useful to engage in an assessment of needs that should be prioritized in the future.
- The interface with the government is likely to increase. APMSS will begin functioning as both as a policy making and implementing body. Special training inputs are required for dealing with this enhanced role.

7. FEDERATIONS: PROCESSES AND STATUS

The process of several sanghams coming together and federating into autonomous bodies at the mandal level has already begun. In some districts, the federations have registered themselves while in others they are still in the process. The details regarding the process of federation formation is amply described in the Annual report. The following table gives some insight into the present status of federations across districts.

Table 4: Number of Registered Federations Across Districts- 2004

District Covered	Number of mandals Covered	Number of Federations Registered
Medak	9	5
Mahabubnagar	7	4
Karimnagar	7	2
Nizamabad	7	2
Adilabad	7	1
5 Districts	37	14

The women feel that they have become a force to contend with through their federations. At the very outset, it needs mention that the women's sangham identity is clearly established but they are still in the process of developing their federation identity.

The evaluation team emphasizes human resource inputs that are required to build and sustain the process. The members articulated the importance of federations since they feel that there are issues that go beyond an individual case and a village. Here, the role of federations as facilitators gains importance. The perception of members of the federation is that "it takes up issue at the mandal level and strength of the federation is that it gives courage and this gives us hope." They see multiple roles for themselves in consolidating and taking forward the MS philosophy, forming new sanghams and strengthening the old sanghams. Financial independence is of concern for all federations. We had long discussions with the federation members and the state team regarding this issue. The

collections made by the federations are too meager for holding meetings and any other activity. As one of the federation members observed:

“neelu unnappude Chapalu Bathukuthai (fish survives when there is water in the tank.)”

The water refers to the inputs, financial, human resources and technical, given by the APMSS. Several of the members of federations opined that “We can run our activities on our own like holding meetings and forming new Sanghams in the neighboring villages. There is no problem if the Karyakarthis are removed. But we cannot support the expenses of these activities. We are not fully grown up to be on our own” (Ms. Ch Venkamma of Kurumapalli village from Nalgonda).

Key Recommendations

- The pace and direction of the process of federation formation should not be forced nor under the pressure of MS phasing out as prescribed in the tenth plan. The process of federation formation is a labour intensive process that requires human and technical inputs of the MS team at all levels. There is also variation in the capacities of sanghams who are currently under the process of federating.
- In several federations, there is an issue with financial support. Therefore they do require some core support funding in order to consolidate their efforts while encouraging them to explore alternate sources of funding for the future. The APMSS must play a mentor’s role in these processes and help federations to apprentice in order to acquire skills. Representatives of federations and state team estimated annual requirements of federations to understand the magnitude of financial assistance required to sustain activities. Around Rs 1.75 lakh per annum is the approximate requirement of each federation while they have less than a ten thousands raised their contributions at present.

Consolidated Annual Estimate Per Federation

1. EC meeting	Rs. 12,000
2. Governing Body Meeting	Rs. 7,500
3. Cluster Meeting	Rs. 46,800
4. General Body Meeting	Rs. 94,500
5. Mahila Court Meeting (optional)	Rs. 9000
6. Other Activities	Rs. 5,000
Total :	Rs. 1,74,080

- The federations require capacity building on various aspects and the MS team is to play a critical role in this.
- The relationship between the MS staff and the federations can be an evolving one but a cessation may result in the premature collapse of the programme.

8. STATE RESOURCE CENTRE

The state resource centre is the next key venture for APMSS. The centre is likely to represent a consolidation of past efforts and training material. This will be available to NGOs and government. This will help extend the MS philosophy to areas beyond the mandals it is currently working in. It will also become a research base for APMSS to examine and evaluate its on going programmes. There is a need for this in order to build data systems, document and provide some research input in programme planning. This is related to the issue of perspective building of the programme. The resource center can provide an opportunity for APMSS to draw on individuals and organizations working on related themes to contribute in terms of capacity building, training and research. It can approach state level institutions, network with other state programmes and the national office and members of the NRG. The importance of documenting and analysis of the programme is absolutely essential at this stage. The data will be essential to assess the impact that these processes have had on the community and the government structures.

As stated in the methodology the evaluation team made an attempt at evaluating the impact of the different interventions by analyzing the existing data. This proved futile for a range of reasons. Firstly, the data is collected in actual numbers rather than percentages. This throws very little light on progress. Secondly, all the data lack denominators. Thirdly, the data is not compiled contextually. This prevents one from obtaining a picture on the actual coverage of the programme or the magnitude of the impact.

Key Recommendations

- The evaluation team supports the idea of a state resource center but feels that the scope and content needs to be deliberated more concretely.
- Through the state resource centre there is a strong need to build a systematic MIS that will help APMSS experiences and struggles influence policies and other sections of the society including NGOs. A database on the trends and status of varied groups of population in the 7 plus districts covering 2500 villages would mean a great strength to speak and press for changes in programmes and policies. MIS that enables APMSS to not only implement development interventions -like BMK, Bala Sanghams, MSKs, reproductive health, Samatha Dharani common land programme, Panchayat Raj, drought and PDS, Nari Adalat, etc- but critique the existing policies based on experiences and suggest changes to address the constraints and obstacles to the effective participation of the marginalized sections in the schemes. It could be thus be a resource centre which has the strength of database. It could be the focal point undertaking pilot studies, surveys and conducting dialogue and designing alternative for policy and civil society.
- The evaluation team was of the opinion that there must be separate staff for the resource centre who work with the core team and districts. It would be useful to have an advisory committee who would help the centre chalk out its activities based on the needs of the programme.

- There is the need for vertical linkages, i.e., there should be district resource centre, which will feed into a state centre to enable advocacy at all levels.
- Synergies between the federations and the resource centres should emerge.

9. CONVERGENCE AND COLLABORATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT AND NGOs

Given the wide-ranging agenda of MS, both collaboration and convergence of APMSS with the government and NGOs is likely and required. This is an area that needs serious review and given a fresh direction for the future. Our discussion with various NGOs regarding APMSS suggests that the latter is playing a passive role. There are good reasons for this. Given the amount of energy that the staff has been putting in to build the programme there is probably less time for collaborative activities. Despite these constraints APMS has been collaborating with government programmes and NGOs at the state level.

The NGOs collaborate with APMSS largely in the form of receiving and providing training. APMSS is highly respected for its mobilizing capacity and its ability to provide an interface for the other NGOs with grassroots. Vasanta Kannibaran from ASMITA spoke of APMSS' work in glowing terms and held that the sangham women had developed the ability of critical thinking. She also reiterated the need for them to be continuously exposed to training inputs and outside information to keep the programme vibrant. WASSAN, a watershed management NGO network also appreciated APMSS' field base.

However, an active engagement of the APMSS as a member of the networking is in the area of child rights. It has been active member of the Andhra Pradesh Alliance for Child Rights (APACR), a statewide network of child focused NGOs. APMSS has been part of the national campaign for constitutional amendment for free and compulsory elementary education, transformation of Children's Day on 14 November to Child Rights Week in AP and community mobilisation on UEE. It has taken lots of energies of APMSS in Karimnagar and Nizamabad districts where it played the key role as anchoring and coordinating efforts of several other NGOS in the districts. Networking has also been responsible for promotion of Bala Sanghams from the Cheli Sanghams that they were initially. It is the first and most significant collaborative effort of the APMSS with other groups at district and state level for the past few years. "APMSS has the unique status of governmental and non governmental structure and wide field base through Sanghams in hundreds of villages in several districts. They have the strong advantage of community mobilisation and also enlisting the participation of the authorities. In APACR it is this combination of forces that was effective in enlisting participation of the authorities and elected representatives as well as community on child rights because of groups like APMSS along with other. It played the key role bringing together several NGOs on CRC issue because of its unique status as a quasi-governmental body " observed Mr. Ramesh Shekar Reddy, Convenor of the APACR.

The staff felt that APMSS tended to function with an almost ‘false sense of modesty’ and that they needed to project their work and contributions more strongly if they are to impact policy. Some of the district level NGOs felt the while APMSS had excellent mobilizing skills; it needed to concentrate in equipping itself better in specific intervention areas.

9.1 Education

Some of the **government officials** in the education department were familiar with the MS philosophy and interventions. They saw MS’s strength in mobilizing and motivating communities and through the alternate structures were helping in enrollment of children. However, their technical capacities were not cited as an area of strength. Although APMSS has evolved strategies for learning, adapted teaching materials etc. they have not impacted on state curriculum. The ownership of the education programme even in MS areas lies with the SSA department at the state and district levels. APMSS has little say in the planning process of NPEGEL model clusters and this is going to be a real issue in the future. It is still not too late for the APMSS to renegotiate and define its role in the NPEGEL programme. Issues pertaining to convergence with education department have already been raised in the intervention section.

The KGBV in AP will be focusing on upper primary education and acting as a bridge between the RBCs and the secondary schools. It does not plan to take never enrolled girls. Therefore this provides an excellent opportunity to extend all MSKs to class seven which means that MSKs will have to be prepared to run upper primary schools. There is a need for constant dialogue with government officials at all levels.

9.2 Health Programmes

The health department sees APMSS as an important player in community mobilization activities. Given the vertical programming of health interventions there is little scope for a real partnership between government and the APMSS. The government is seen to set the agenda and seeks help for specific inputs. Evaluation team found that they are not receptive at all to the suggestions made by APMSS and in fact doctors can be quite rude in their interaction.

The APMSS has to strategise their role in the various government programmes and could play a role as representatives of the ‘felt needs’ of the most vulnerable and also articulate the inadequacies of the public services as perceived by the people. This is an area, which is going to pose difficulties because the bureaucracy is very fixed in its mindset. Issues pertaining to effective collaboration with the health department have been presented in the intervention section.

9.3 Samatha Dharani- National Resource Management/Livelihoods

Samatha Dharani programme aimed at facilitating the livelihoods and food security through sustainable farming practices with women as the focus reveal the constraints and challenges inherent in collaboration with government structures. It was envisaged that extension officers would be placed by the Agricultural Department to work in collaboration with the APMSS on this innovative women farming project. However, it was a major disappointment as there were no extension officers placed by the department to work for the project as collaborators and also no inputs of any nature to the programme by the department. Line departments have rigid walls and are blind to the demands of the civil society and other responses. The lack of response of agricultural and horticulture departments in five districts for three years has not created a potential collaborative space for an innovative programme undertaken by the APMSS with UNDP inputs. The hope of building synergies with the expertise of the agriculture department so that the lessons can be applied to wider society has not been realised. "That seed of collaboration did not germinate at all," observed Ms Kiranmayi, the Agricultural Resource Person of Samatha Dharani at Mahabubnagar sharing her frustrations at enlisting partnerships with the authorities.

Key Recommendations

- This section reveals that the relationship between APMSS and the government at different levels is shaky. Convergence against this backdrop will prove to be problematic. Hence there is the need for directives from the national office detailing the locus standi of APMSS. These directives need to be communicated vertically from the state to the mandal level government officials. The earlier section on intervention reveals the negative attitude of the mandal level officials, which is a cause for concern and must be addressed.
- Across all interventions, there is the need for workshops for gender sensitization and orientation to the APMSS programme for government officials at different levels.
- The APMSS needs to review and define the nature and scope of its collaborations with both government and non government organizations. It needs to play a more pro active role in raising issues of policy concern from its very rich and wide field experience. There is a need for evolving strategies for collaborations.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES

Given the labour intensive nature of the programme, the availability of staff at all levels of the programme is of immense concern. The MS programme in Andhra Pradesh is at a critical juncture where some districts are in the process of federating while in others it is still consolidating and during the last year new districts have been added. The evaluation team recognized the immense amount of time and energy that goes into building processes in order to realize the goal of the Mahila Samakhya programme. The processes need to be built and also sustained, both of which require tremendous human resources.

1. Staff availability and retention is a serious concern in the programme. There are staff vacancies at all levels. Across districts, there is a shortfall of karyakarthas and at present those in the programme are overworked. Discussions with karyakarthas revealed the kind of workload they possess. A karyakartha has to cover ten villages but due to shortage of staff they are covering 20-30 villages. For holding a meeting, the karyakarthas have to make at least 4-5 visits and this is above the sustained contact that they need to maintain with communities and sanghams. In some districts, the karyakarthas have to walk a few miles before reaching the village, which can be strenuous for the workers.
2. There is an extremely high staff turnover. A number of reasons are responsible for this and they are related to the workload described above, the salary structure, personal issues and competition from other NGOs who often pay better than the MS programme. These are issues at all levels of the programme from the village to the state level.
3. With regard to the salary structure the gap between the salaries of junior resource persons and karyakarthas is very wide. The evaluation team felt that there must be an enhancement of the emoluments given to karyakarthas and also rationalize the salary structure of all personnel.
4. Given the differential needs of the programme, shortage of staff is affecting the health of the existing staff. The evaluation team came across several staff members suffering from repeated bouts of illnesses and exhaustion. This we believe is due to the demands made by the job where they are unable to allocate enough time to their personal lives. These issues are important reasons for a high turnover of staff at all levels.
5. Job and personal security are also important issues that influence availability and retention of staff. The contractual appointments do not offer job security but more important is the issue of personal safety of workers at all levels of the programme. There have been some ugly incidents when MS workers have incurred the wrath of a section of the villagers for stopping a child marriage in Mahbubnagar District. Another dimension is sexual harassment by people who may not be connected to the programme.

Key Recommendations

- Given the philosophy of this programme, human resources are critical for building and sustaining it in future. Apart from understaffing at all levels there is a concern regarding staff turnover with many being absorbed by other NGOs and government programmes. There is need to review salary structures, incentives and workload of these workers to ensure retention.
- At this stage, there is need for perspective building within the programme, which will provide directions for the future. Perspective building is itself a process that will require an assessment of the key areas of intervention and also build on issues to be addressed in the future. APMSS needs to play a more pro-active role at the state level by drawing upon persons who will be a resource for various needs of the programme. From the national level, the state programme must draw on the NRG members and the staff from the national office to help in the process of perspective building.
- The need to strengthen human resources is critical for supporting the sanghams, federations and also the advocacy at the mandal, district and state levels.
- The range of issues have increased and therefore it maybe useful for resource persons to be in charge of specific themes, especially at the state level.
- There is need to create structures to address the security concerns of the staff. A committee to deal with sexual harassment, especially from third parties, needs to be set up. The evaluation team was of the opinion that this is an issue that is of concern and needs to be addressed by the National Office. It was suggested that a committee against sexual harassment be addressed with support from lawyers and other NGOs who have expertise in this area.
- The state team needs to be expanded and it is suggested that a combination of a resource person and consultant for each issue may help in strengthening the programme.
- The medical insurance cover must be provided to workers at all levels and PF also be restored as a part of security of workers.

11. IN CONCLUSION

This report seeks to reiterate that the work of the APMSS has had far reaching consequences. The dedication and the commitment of the staff members are evident from the response of the sangham women. This team has internalized empowerment notions and is efficiently communicating these in the field. Changes in many dimensions are apparent. At this juncture, there is the need for APMSS to take stock: assess its strengths and weakness; take its strength areas into policy construction and address the limitations and handicaps. The time has come for APMSS to consciously evolve and reinvent itself as a policy creating entity. APMSS is expected to undergo now this metamorphosis. We realise that is not going to be an easy process because of the very large number of people that form part of the MS and the “GOI structure” that the MS carries, which is both an advantage and a constraint.

It requires a higher degree of creativity and flexibility to respond to the demands of the civil society and devise suitable strategies and mechanisms that facilitate the women and sanghams to play an active role independent of and autonomous from the MS. It calls for identification of varied sections in the civil society with whom APMSS could ally and take forward their empirical experiences to have the benefit of forcing changes in the policy level. APMSS playing the role of AP's one of the large field based gender sensitive groups in reflecting women's perspective for changes in the policies and programmes aimed at community development, education, and natural resource management in particular and women in development in general. The APMSS is required to play a pro active role in the networks of the NGOs and varied forums of the civil society engaged in addressing different aspects of the social crisis in the contemporary society.

Acknowledgements:

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Annexure: Itinerary of Evaluation Team

- 13.12.04 Arrival of Evaluation Team
Meeting of Evaluation Team on Evaluation parameters and to decide the evaluation process
Briefing and interaction at the State level
- 14 .12.04
to
- 16.12.04 Field visits (Details given below)
- 17.12.04 Interactions at State level with teams of districts not visited
- 18.12.04
to
- 19.12.04 Interactions with NGOs, Government Officials and APMSS State Team
- 20.12.04 Debriefing at State Level
Finalizing framework of Report
- 21.1.2.04 Departure of Evaluation Team

Field Visit Itinerary 14.12.04 to 16.12.04

Mahabubnagar District- Dr.Rama Baru & Mr. Bharat Bhushan

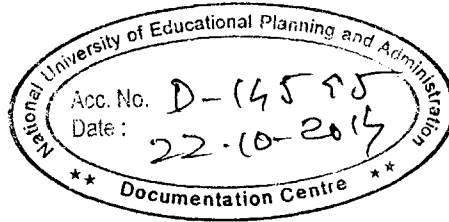
- 14.12.04 Meeting with the DIU team
Federation meeting at Makthal
Visit to MSK at Makthal
Sangha meeting at Karne
- 15.12.04 Interaction with DPEP officials
Federation meeting at Hanwada
Visit to PHC
Visit to BMK at Koilkonda and Ibrahimnagar
- 16.12.04 Sangha meeting at Lingampally, Hanwada
Meeting with MS team
Visit to district MSK
Interaction with DM & HO

Karimnagar District- Ms.Vinalini Mathrani & Ms.Kalamani

- 14.12.04 Meeting with the DIU team
Visit to District MSK
Sangha meeting at Nawabpet, CHMD
Visit to cluster hut at Kondapur
- 15.12.05 Sangha Meeting at Pattikavulapally, Gangadhar mandal
Interaction with mandal officials
Federation meeting at Gangadhar mandal
Visit to MSK at Husnabad
Sangha meeting at Manchinillabanda
- 16.12.05 Interaction with district officials
Federation meeting at Bijjenki
Interaction with district team

Warangal District- Ms.Kokila Gulati & Prof. Sudhakar

- 14.12.05 Meeting with the DIU team
Follow up meeting on safemotherhood
Sangha meeting at Pidicilla
Gender training at Mogulapally
- 15.12.06 Sangha meeting at Raghavpur, Chityala
Visit to school
Interactions with mandal officials at Chityala
Ist phase health training for sanghas women at Chityala
- 16.12.06 Interaction with MS team of old and new mandals
Programme of MSK children
Interactions with DPEPofficials and NGO
Visit to district MSK



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