

100

100 Holding Up Half the Sky ...



MAHILA
SAMAKHYA
KARNATAKA

Fire can burn
but cannot move

Wind can move
but cannot burn

Till fire joins wind
it cannot take a step.

Do men know
it's like that
with knowing and doing?

- Devara Dasimayya (10th Century, English translation by A.K. Ramamijam)

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STATISTICAL PROFILE

We are in Gulbarga (GLB), Bidar (BDR), Mysore (MYS), Bijapur (BJPR), Koppal (KPL), Raichur (RCH) and Bellary (BEL) districts

SL. NO.	WE ARE IN	GLB	BDR	MYS	BJPR	KPL	RCH	BEL	TOTAL
1	No. Of Taluks	6	5	6	6	4	3	2	32
2	No. Of Sanghas*	169	217	183	198	140	34	32	973
3	No. Of Sahayoginis	17	20	17	17	14	9	10	104
4	No. of Villages	169	217	203	198	140	70	60	1057
5	No. Of Women in sangha*	3968	4137	4500	3204	2085	655	865	19414
6	No. Of Sahayakis	331	832	420	396	226	68	64	2337
7	No. Of Registered Sanghas	160	47	15	116	45	9	-	392
8	No. Of Sangha Huts**	49	93	43	39*	27	3	-	254
	LITERACY IN MS*								
1	No. Of N.F.E Centres	18	64	11	48	-	-	-	141
2	No. Of students in NFE	337	1294	250	1200	-	-	-	3085
	Girls	201	653	-	596	-	-	-	1450
	Boys	136	641	-	428	-	-	-	1205
3	No. Of A.E. Centres/Kalika Kendras	-	76	-	-	-	-	-	76
4	No. Of Creches	19	37	5	14	-	-	-	75
5	No. Of Children in creche	288	-	165	370	-	-	-	823
6	Total no. of MSKs**	1	1	1	2	1	-	-	6
7	No. of students	33(34)	(195)	13	47	(232)	(11)	-	93 (472)
	EDP IN THE SANGHAS								
1	Sanghas that have started savings	167	200	80	198	105	27	3	780
2	Sanghas that have opened a/c	167	208	27	197	105	25	-	729
3	Sanghas receiving Honorarium	161	197	-	-	61	8	-	427
4	Total savings in the Sangha	1363108	580827	272928	1010851	480978	157861	2030	3868583
5	Amt. in sangha honorarium	1473600	2956800	2941760	907200	638400	52800	-	8970560
6	Amt. in sangha loan*	867219	354345*	-	277252	179312	87000	-	1765128
7	Amt. in loan from Honora'rium	492304	*	807940	488400	170000	10000	-	1968644
8	Amt. In loan from various govt. schemes	996200	321000	-	1598200	175000	36000	-	3126400
	WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE								
1	No. of women elected to Panchayat posts	33	28	53	59	30	7	-	210

* Please see additional note in page No. 35 for details on statistical profile

PREFACE



The 'Vachana,' on the inside front cover, by Veerashaiva poet, Devara Dasimayya points out, with simple but powerful imagery, the connection between **knowing** and **doing**. The rich field experiences of the Mahila Samakhya programme has led to considerable knowledge of the reasons for gender discrimination and of the strategies that will enhance the status of poor rural women. The programme has been concentrating on putting this knowledge into practice.

It is important to ensure that programme processes are taken up by sanghas and collectives of sangha women at cluster, taluk and district levels. The goal of the programme is the emergence of strong and self-reliant grassroot federations of poor rural women that can help them live a life of dignity. Mahila Samakhya Karnataka has been engaged since 1997 in understanding this vision in terms of 'practical' tasks and in taking up the tasks in a planned and consistent way. We have also put a lot of effort into planning our work so that there will be a logical flow from one year to the next.

The MS programme in Karnataka, as in the other states, has achieved notable success in bringing poor rural women together, in changing entrenched patriarchal biases, in taking up issues of gender discrimination, in helping to bring poor rural women into development and economic programmes initiated by the Government. The challenge in the past year has been to make these successes, which have been achieved in some sanghas and some districts, replicable in all project areas. The challenge has been to upscale the achievements of the programme, one may even say, to find ways of institutionalising the positive changes brought about by the programme. One successful strategy has been to work with representatives of all sanghas in district level melas. This initiative has enabled sangha women and the MS team to revisit the goals and objectives of the programme within the context of the lessons learnt. A broad common understanding of strategies for the future was developed through the melas. This is critical for the consolidation of the gains made in the past years and for going ahead. The melas provided a training ground to sharpen skills of sangha women and the MS team. The chapter entitled "The District Level Melas: Spreading the message" is devoted to this important initiative.

In the past year, we have focussed on bringing each of the programme initiatives closer to a stage, when the sangha can be self-reliant at the level of the sangha, cluster and taluk. While strengthening the gender perspective on various issues and strategies, sanghas have been linked to existing resources so that the grassroot collectives will be socially and financially viable. These efforts have been described in chapters 3 and 5.

As always, the writing of this report provides an opportunity for the MS team to thank the sangha women for sharing their time, experience and wisdom with us. We would like to thank the large number of friends of the programme who have enriched the quality of our work with helpful discussion and dialogue.

Revathi Narayanan

State Programme Director

3. EVOLVING STRATEGIES FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in the preface to this report, the challenge for the Mahila Samakhya (MS) programme at this stage, is to upscale and broadbase strategies that have proved successful at the level of individual sanghas. The critical first step is to evolve the broadest common understanding of goals and objectives, based on the shared knowledge and experiences of sangha women and the MS team. The next step is to evolve “acceptable and achievable” strategies and mechanisms to reach these goals within the project period.

The above tasks call for imaginative changes in planning and implementation, continuous monitoring and feedback of these processes. It means that each goal has to be understood and defined in terms of simple actionable points; planning the “who”, “when”, “how” and “where” of these action points. Resources of skill and time to implement these changes need to be identified. Gaps in programme implementation have to be identified and capacities built to fill them. These are the tasks we set ourselves. Our work during the past year can be divided into three distinct categories.

☛ ***Changing strategies for self - reliant collectives***

Strategies have been consciously changed to move closer to the goal of self-reliant collectives. These changes are based on the field experience of the previous years.

☛ ***Strengthening existing initiatives and action***

Initiatives in sanghas, like the NFE, AE, ECCE, are being rigorously evaluated and strengthened. Ways of linking these initiatives to existing resources and agencies are being explored and acted upon wherever possible. This is necessary for continuance of MS activities in the post MS project phase. For e.g. linking AE centres to the Continuing Education Centres (CEC) of the Saksharatha programme, linking the ECCE centres to the *anganwadis* wherever possible. Accessing existing resources in government and financial institutions for the sangha *mane*, for improving the economic situation of sangha women, is an important programme activity.

☛ ***Programme expansion***

In Bellary district and Manvi taluk of Raichur district, MS, Karnataka has moved into new geographical areas with new strategies.

3.2 CHANGING STRATEGIES FOR SELF-RELIANT COLLECTIVES

Various activities were taken up in the districts to strengthen the processes towards self-reliance.

- i. Strengthening the sangha through increased membership. Identifying and grading sanghas according to their strengths to facilitate inputs on various issues.
- ii. Facilitating regular *ghataka* and *taluk* level meetings to build vertical and horizontal linkages.

3.2.1 Strengthening the sanghas

The first task was to grade sangha strengths and identify the inputs needed to make them self-reliant.

For this purpose, a "SANGHA EMPOWERMENT STUDY" was designed and carried out in one *taluk* of each district. This *taluk* was selected for having the largest number of strong sanghas and was designated as the "withdrawal" *taluk* (Aurad *taluk* in Bidar district, Deodurga in Raichur, Basavanabagewadi in Bijapur, Kollegal in Mysore and Chitapur in Gulbarga).

The respective district teams, carrying out the study, were able to identify the inputs needed for sangha self-reliance. It helped to mark the sangha's position in the route to self-reliance. At the same time, it was an opportunity to reinforce knowledge among sangha women about the need for self-reliance. The implications, of the MS programme moving out of the older areas, were discussed in the sangha. It helped to build a new perspective about each of the sanghas, since different members of the district team were carrying out the study with the help of the concerned *sahayogini*.

Activities to strengthen the sanghas through various linkages have been taking place in all the districts. The last year was marked, in Gulbarga district, by a concerted effort to strengthen the sanghas, the *ghatakas* and various activities at *taluk* level. Women have participated actively to increase sangha membership. Older sangha members have been encouraged to participate in sangha activities, members have been persuading their relatives to join the sangha. Of the 167 sanghas existing in April 98, three sanghas have weakened and broken for various reasons. These are at Chinchansur, Aland *taluk*, Gawar, Jevagi *taluk* and Hosahalli, Chitapur *taluk*. However, after the district mela held in February 1999, five new sanghas have been formed, bringing the total to 169.

Similar efforts have been made in Bidar district. Table 3.1 below shows a ranking of Bidar sanghas according to the following criteria --- improved literacy levels among sangha women, ability of sangha women to access and handle economic development programmes at individual or collective level, perspective on issues of gender discrimination and so on.

Table - 3.1 Sanghas of Bidar district.

Sl. No.	Taluk (No. of <i>sahayoginis</i> in parentheses)	Primary Phase	Middle Phase	Strong Phase	Total villages
1.	Bidar (4)	08	15	18	41
2.	Bhalki (3)	07	10	11	28
3.	Humnabad (4)	11	11	20	42
4.	Basavakalyana (4)	06	13	21	40
5.	Aurad (5)	16	22	19	57
	TOTAL (20)	48	71	89	¹208

In 190 of the 217 sanghas, the *sahayakis* (sangha leaders) have been changed in the last year. The need for different sangha members, to assume leadership responsibilities, has again been emphasised in the sangha discussions. In 44 sanghas, the number of members has increased while 9

¹ Out of 217, remaining 9 sanghas in Bidar have not been taken into account because they are not very active.

new sanghas have been formed. However, sanghas in about 14 villages are not vibrant and women show little interest in spite of MS efforts. It may not be worthwhile to continue in such villages.

Table 3.2 A picture of the work done in Koppal district

Strengthening sanghas, increasing membership, expanding coverage

Sl.No.	Taluk No.of sahayoginis in parentheses	No.of villages covered	Already sanghas are formed	New villages	No.of villages with increased membership, No.of new members in parentheses
1.	Koppal (3)	30	25	5	- (-)
2.	Yelburga (5)	50	40	10	8 (32)
3.	Kustagi (3)	30	26	4	4 (15)
4.	Gangavathi (3)	30	22	8	1 (6)
	TOTAL (14)	140	113	27	13 (53)

While MS is working to form federations, all the previous steps, starting with the formation of the sanghas have to be kept going. A picture of the work involved can be had from the information in Table 3.3 on Raichur district.

Table 3.3 The following table give an overall view of the sanghas in Raichur district

Taluk	Mandal	No.of villages where MS is working	Sanghas organised	Sanghas in the process of being set up	Villages with problems in sanghas
Raichur taluk	Jagarkal Mandal	10	8	2	Siddarampura Halhimmapura
	Singanadi Taluk	10	7	3	Gowsnagar Appandoddi Vadavattithanda Singanadithanda Kadagandoddi
Deodurga taluk	Ramdurga	10	9	1	Amarapur Aldarthithanda
	Masarkal	10	7	3	Meeyapura Halajaldinni Buddini Jaradabandi Chinthalgunta
Manvi taluk		30	-	30	
TOTAL		70	31	39	

While it is relatively easy to predict the obstacles to sangha formation and strengthening, at each stage, it is not always easy to overcome them. In Deodurga taluk, the formation of sanghas has been difficult because of migration. Even so, the problems are not typical - for example, women in

Jaradabandi are keen on continuing sangha activities although they are out of the village for long periods of time. However, in Halajadaldinni, women who have the same problem show little interest in the sangha activities. In Amarapur and Meeyapur, gram sabhas were organised. Several sangha women participated along with village leaders. This was useful in strengthening weak sanghas and in getting help from village leaders. Bapur village is a Naxalite area where police are suspicious about the villagers. In this situation, women are not coming forward to organise themselves.

3.2.2 Building horizontal and vertical linkages : Making a regular feature of ghataka, taluk and district level meetings

The district teams concentrated their efforts during the last year in ensuring that cluster level meetings took place regularly in all the *taluks*. Sanghas sent their representatives to the cluster meetings. This is an important step in the empowerment process since sangha women take the responsibility of sharing the sangha activities in the cluster meeting and keeping their sangha informed of what happens in the cluster meeting. This is the first and critical step to the women taking over the MS processes. While this activity had started in 97-98, it was consolidated in the past year, discussions were more focussed and nearly all clusters have had regular meetings generally once in two months. To emphasise joint ownership of these meetings, women have begun to bear the travel costs for the *ghataka* meetings from sangha funds. They carry their "*buthi*" (some *rottis* and dry vegetable or lentils) for at least one meal. MS bears the other costs. Several discussions have taken place on how the expenses for these meetings can be borne without any contribution from MS. Sangha members are conscious that they should get ready to continue the empowerment processes with as little help as possible, from MS. In fact, in the *taluk* sabhas held in March'99, the attendance of sangha women was much more than expected. These are promising trends for the self-reliance and sustainability of the collectives.

A great deal of learning and sharing takes place at the *ghataka* and *taluk* level meetings. A range of issues are discussed in these meetings - Visits to Government Offices, Banks, NGO's, monitoring of institutions by sangha women (School, *Anganwadi* etc.), health issues like monitoring of PHC and uses of herbal medicine, visits to police station, lawyer etc. Social issues and strategies to counter problems are discussed. These issues are the crux of gender discrimination - Child marriage, Alcoholism, Caste-discrimination, *Devadasi*, Dowry, Property, land disputes and violence against women (rape, wife beating, bigamy, mental violence, harassment, torture).

As stakeholders in these processes, women have begun demanding more and more accountability during the meetings. Women insist that absentees are rebuked and given the task of convening the next meeting. This case study from Chamarajanagar, Mysore captures the *ghataka* meeting processes and how women use the opportunity to demand accountability and solve problems.

§ SOLVING THE PROBLEM TACTFULLY

Since the federation process is based on a long-term and co-operative relationship among members, women put in a lot of effort to find amicable and tactful solutions to problems. An episode at the Muneswara Colony (Chamarajanagar taluk) ghataka meeting illustrates this point. It was quite a success because women from six out of eight villages turned up. So did a rather embarrassing problem. The sangha representatives from Goremadu village reported that the sangha adhyaksha had mortgaged the sangha vessels to raise money for herself. Every time the subject was raised in the sangha meeting, the culprit became aggressive and a "big fight" took place. It was important to take her to task so that members did not get into the habit of taking sangha rules and decisions lightly. After a long discussion in the ghataka meeting, a solution was suggested that would recover the misappropriated vessels, send the right message to all sangha women and still save the culprit's face. It was decided that stock taking and spot checking of sangha assets (including vessels) would be done for the host sangha during the ghataka meetings. Since sanghas hosted the ghataka meeting by rotation, the one with the problematic President would take place three months from the day. "After all she is one of us. Let us give her a chance to set things right without being humiliated. At the same time, we will also recover the vessels and make sure that other women do not misuse sangha property."

MS has been studying the experiences of other organisations in forming federations. Koppal district, with the help of MYRADA, held a workshop on federation processes for MS sangha women with their counterparts from MYRADA who had formed a federation. As a result of this training, the *Okkutta* concept was demystified for sangha women and they were able to see that it was possible. As a first step they decided to invite more women to their sanghas and their trainings. They decided to put the federation concept on the agenda of the *ghataka* meeting and *taluk* meetings and explore various ways of forming such collectives.

In all the districts (excepting Bellary and Manvi *taluk* in Raichur district which are newer areas), every *ghataka* has had 3-5 meetings in the last year. Even in Mysore district, where there were several administrative problems caused by vested interests and outside groups, a number of meetings have taken place.

Table 3. 4 Ghataka and Taluk Mahasabhas in Mysore District

Date	Taluk / Ghataka Mahasabhas	Date	Taluk / Ghataka Mahasabhas
31/3/98	Hediyala Ghataka Meeting .	20/6/98	Banavadi Ghataka sabha (Chamaraja Nagar)
6/4/98	Hediyala Ghataka Meeting.	10/7/98	2nd Ghataka Sabha, Hallari (Nanjangud)
6/4/98	Hediyala Ghataka Meeting.(Nanjangud)	15/7/98	Gorasane Ghataka sabha (Kollegal)
11/5/98	Anehola Ghataka Sabha (Kollegal)	15/7/98	Kadebagur Ghataka Meeting (H.D. Kote)
15/5/98	Hosabervallu, 2nd Ghataka Meeting . (H.D.Kote)	10/8/98	Ambale Ghataka Sabha (Nanjangud)
20/5/98	Punajuru Ghataka sabha (Chamaraja Nagar)	15/9/98	Anehola Ghataka sabha (Kollegal)
10/6/98	Hallari 1st Ghataka sabha (Nanjangud)	26/10/98	Kongalli and Gowdarahundi Taluk Maha sabha (Nanjangud)
16/6/98	Yeshvanthapura, 3rd Ghataka Meeting. (H.D. Kote)	2/11/98	Kanchagalli 1st Ghataka Meeting. (Kollegal)

The *ghataka* meetings in Mysore district have helped to identify problems and to rejuvenate the sanghas. The latter are able to share their experiences and learn from each other. Acting as a pressure group, for women's issues, is more effective at this level than at that of the individual sangha. For example, women in the Yeshwanthapura and Hediya (B) *ghatakas* decided to stop arrack brewing in Kadubegur. Violators of this rule would have to pay a fine of Rs.1000/-, the problem has been solved to a large extent. In Deverammanahalli village of Kalale *ghataka*, women got together to see that a dowry death case was properly registered. When women found out that the accounts of the sangha *mane* construction in Echagundla village were not being properly maintained, the erring sangha was taken to task and they were compelled to render proper accounts to the DIU. Women of the Anehola *ghataka* have approached the Forest Department officials to get information about collection of small forest produce.

The *ghataka* meetings are also a way of ensuring accountability of the field staff. Several problems caused by some *sahayoginis* (misappropriation of sangha funds, wrongly motivating sangha women against the goals of the MS programme, irregular field visits) came to light in the past year in Mysore district and steps could be taken to contain the damage to the sanghas.

In addition, *taluk* mahasabhas have taken place - Bijapur (14), Gulbarga (5), Raichur and Koppal (11), Bidar (5) - during the last year. Bellary district has already had 3 *ghataka* meetings during February and March '99. This is a conscious and useful change in pace of programme processes. These meetings provide a forum for sangha women and the MS team to explore linkages for sustainability of federation at various levels. Resource persons from other NGO's, financial institutions, co-operative societies, district and sub district officials are invited to discussions.

The next important step in capacity building for federation formation took place at the district level melas. (See Chapter 4) As mentioned in this chapter, the melas helped to evolve a broad understanding of sangha sustainability and self-reliance among representatives from about 850 sanghas of seven districts. It also helped the MS team to identify women's needs and sangha strengths and to correlate them with MS goals. They helped to identify the steps needed for formation of federations and to incorporate these ideas into the activity plan for 1999-2000.

3.2.3 Changing strategies to enhance literacy at sangha level.

Enhancing literacy levels of poor rural women who are burdened by poverty and overwork has been a challenging task, even for organisations like the National Literacy Mission, which are dedicated to this one issue. MS has tried various strategies. Despite serious efforts, the AE classes at sangha levels have not yielded the desired result. After several discussions, it was decided that the need for each sangha to be self-reliant, is to have a few women (about 20% to 25% of the members) able to handle the sangha documentation and accounts, get applications written, read letters and various kinds of resource material which will give information to the women. Many sanghas have a few members with basic literacy and numeracy skills that can be built upon. Thus literacy strategies in the past year have focused on achieving this goal. Different districts have adopted different strategies that are described later in this section.

Another conscious shift in programme strategy, has been to give literacy inputs to teenage girls (*Kishoris*) from the sangha villages. Most of these girls are dropouts from the regular schools. They are enthusiastic about attending the residential literacy camps. Contents include concepts about gender, sangha formation and the basic principles of women's empowerment in the MS

Programme. These girls absorb new ideas and learning and will be able, it is hoped, to bring about attitudinal changes in their natal and marital homes. Our experience is that even one 15-day residential camp can bring about distinct changes in their attitude and knowledge of gender issues. Some of them are able to help in sangha activities. The returns in the empowerment process for the efforts put in with teenage girls are high.

In Bellary district, the response of teenage girls in the sangha villages has been encouraging. In many of the villages where the MS programme has started, teenagers are either part of the women's sangha or have formed a sangha of their own. They have been consciously included from the first village meetings and this has yielded rich results.

Literacy work in Bidar District

Bidar district has put in meticulous work to enhance literacy levels in sanghas. The Bidar team worked on several strategies that are linked together in an overall plan to improve literacy levels in the sanghas. For rural women, who have been bypassed by formal education in their youth, and have little exposure to reading and writing as adults, it is important to use learner-friendly methodologies. This was identified as a gap in the adult education centres. An important strategy was to retrain AE teachers in methodology. A 15-day residential training camp was held to enhance the skills of the AE teachers. A similar camp was held for sahayoginis so that they could help in these initiatives. To ensure more accountability in students and AE teachers, a time limit of six months was given for each batch of learners. A detailed assessment of literacy levels in the Bidar sanghas was made. As a first step, one-day camps were held in all taluks. The participants were sangha women who have had some exposure in AE classes and in previous Saksharatha (NLM) camps. The number of women who participated in these camps is given in Table 3.5.

Table - 3.5

Sl.No.	Taluk	Total No.of villages	No.of women who participated in the literacy camps
1.	Bidar	20	88
2.	Aurad	34	158
3.	Humnabad	18	87
4.	Basavakalyana	14	76
5.	Balki	19	107
	TOTAL	105	516

From the above group, women who fulfilled the following criteria were shortlisted to participate in the 15-day residential camp.

- a) Should be in the 25 to 35 year age group and should participate actively in sangha activities.
- b) Should have at least minimum literacy and numeracy skills.
- c) Participants should be willing and be able to teach other sangha members after the training.
- d) Preference was given for women from villages where there was no AE centre.

Out of 24 women trained in one camp, 10 were able to write applications and maintain sangha documents by the end of the camp. The progress of the remaining 14 is good, but further inputs are needed.

✓ *What sangha women say about the literacy camp*

"Even if we had gone to school, we would never have been taught in such an interesting way using so many methods".

"I could understand easily because the teacher taught the alphabet using household items that we see or use everyday. Just imagine, we can write so many alphabets starting with the picture of a rotti".

"I feel like running back to the sangha to tell the other women what I have learnt".

A 15-day residential camp was held for teenage girls in the 12-15 year age group. They were evaluated at the beginning of the camp according to their skills in literacy and numeracy, general knowledge, sangha concepts and awareness of gender issues. A similar exercise at the end of the camp showed that a number of the girls had absorbed the new ideas and skills.

✓ *Enhancing literacy levels in the sanghas in Raichur and Koppal districts.*

Discussions in the sanghas in the last two years have been emphasising on sangha self-reliance and the importance of literacy in achieving the goals. About 35 women from different sanghas have been identified to take up sangha documentation tasks. As in Bidar district, these women are being given special training to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills.

Very detailed and rigorous work is being done in the residential literacy camps as can be seen in the table given below. The effort is to train a few women from each sangha so that they can handle the sangha's documentation needs.

Table 3.6

Taluk	Participants	Literacy Status
Gangavati	20 women from 5 villages	a) Women are writing letters b) Learnt vowels & consonants
Yelburga	36 women from 19 villages	1) 4 Women who are trying to read slowly 2) 2 Women who learnt spellings (ka, kaa ...) 3) 2 women are able to form the words 4) 28 women are trying to learn vowels & consonants fully
Koppal	25 women from 12 villages	1) 3 women are able to form the words & read 2) 22 women are trying to learn vowels & consonants fully
Kustagi	16 women from 5 villages	1) Only one woman can write reports if she tries a little hard 2) 15 women are trying to learn vowels & consonants fully

Samples of writing from the first and last day of the camp in Gulbarga district are shown on the inside back cover of this report. The pride of the sangha women knew no bounds when they found that they could write letters.

✓ *The first day in the literacy camp...*

We describe here the first day in the literacy camp for sangha women in Koppal district. Most of them could leave their houses for a long spell of 15-20 days only after answering questions like, "Who will cook and look after the children?"

"What will you do by learning to read at your age?"

Many of them have had to cry, persuade, tell lies and then leave home to attend the camp.

Most of the sangha women who come to the camp are apprehensive about their abilities on the first day.

And the "Class" starts ... the opening exercise goes like this...

☉ *Please think of something that you like. Write down its name, if you cannot write, please draw it.*

☉ *Can you identify the letters or the picture that you have written or drawn?*

This turns out to be a fun way of finding out how much women know. The Kannada alphabet has one very fortunate feature. A large number of letters can be built up around a simple '0' when the 0 is drawn on the board, most women identify it as a "Rotti", something that is very familiar to them.

☉ *The Resource Person then shows them the various things that can be done to the picture of the Rotti to make it look like the different alphabets.*

Half an hour into this session, women have forgotten that they found the alphabet mysterious and terrifying. By the end of the camp, most women are able to read simple text. And their achievement has led to a great sense of empowerment. They go home and display their learning, grumblings in the family become less . . . a major change has taken place in their lives.

Gulbarga District

A detailed survey was made in Gulbarga district and this showed that there were only 40 women who had some literacy skills. Literacy camps were held and follow-up programmes resulted in the number going up to about 200 by March '98 and a further 108 by March '99. Linking of literacy to the sangha self-reliance concept has given a fresh impetus to the process. EDP programmes have been linked to women improving their literacy levels. This has been a good motivator. An interesting example can be seen in the case of the *Pappad* making training for sangha women. A daily literacy class precedes their training session in *pappad* making over a period of three months. Women found immediate use for their new skills in maintaining accounts, marketing their products and so on. Their confidence has increased, as much by their ability to earn through their skills, as by their ability to read at the end of the training. (See page 40,41)

Sangha women as members of the Village Education Committee in Raichur and Koppal

An important way through which women are involving themselves in education processes is as members of the village education committees (VEC) set up by the DPEP programme. Sangha women members of the VEC in Masarkal, Ramdurg & Kutletcoor are participating effectively in the meetings. They have raised issues like the need for timely disbursement of scholarship, they monitor teaching methodologies in the schools and so on. Women from 5 villages in Singanadi have shown interest in joining the VEC. Sangha women in Raichur and Deodurga *taluk* have taken up the responsibility of motivating parents to enrol their children in the school. In Masarkal mandal, sangha women have sent their children to the 5 NFEs that have been set up under the DPEP

programme. Women have shown a lot of interest in enrolling children and in monitoring these centres. DPEP officials have expressed their appreciation of the women's attitude.

3.2.4 Health : More inputs for self-reliance

Expanding knowledge base on health issues

Much effort has been put into enhancing women's knowledge of health issues in the MS, Karnataka programme. The focus for several years was on the use of traditional herbal medicine. The reasons for taking up this work are linked to questions of women's status and empowerment. Poor rural women have traditionally been the keepers and users of knowledge about herbal medicine. Recognising this skill and building up on it, has gone a long way to enhancing women's status in family and community (examples cited in earlier MS Reports). Further, the access of poor women to mainstream healthcare, either in the form of PHCs or private medical practitioners is poor because of poverty and distance. Thus sangha women have made good use of herbal medicine knowledge to provide some level of healthcare for themselves and their families. The other advantage is that sangha women have been encouraged to discuss women's ailments which have earlier been regarded by them as "private" or "too shameful to discuss in public". This has led to a distinct change in many sanghas in the way women regard their own bodies, in their roles as wives and mothers and in their aspirations that the lives of their daughters will be different.

The challenge at this stage of the programme was to design a strategy that would enable discussions and action on various aspects of health, with a gender perspective. Could we design, with the help of sangha women, a simple and comprehensive training manual on health and gender which could be used in sangha discussions? The idea was that this would cover simple aspects of health, reasons for poor health and nutrition levels of women, the ill effects of early marriage and repeated childbearing, simple aspects of sanitation and hygiene. The document would suggest how poor women could achieve better health status given the obstacles of poverty, lack of resources and the poor response from Government agencies that are supposed to provide some minimum facilities.

Designing a health and gender primer

A 3 day pilot workshop was held in Bidar district to develop the health and gender manual. (October 27 - 29, 1998). About 40 sangha women from different *taluks* participated in the workshop. Women were first asked to describe their health problems in the past 3 months and to share what they did to overcome the problem. This helped the group to realise how patriarchy downgrades women's health problems. Because of this, women ignore their poor health status. Gender issues like poor nutrition given to daughters in comparison to sons, the evils of early marriage and so on have been incorporated into the manual. This is in a language and idiom developed by the sangha women themselves. The manual has then been field tested in the other MS districts with different groups of sangha women. The effort here is to produce material that can be used as easy learning material which can be used by sangha women and relatively inexperienced trainers. At the end of these workshops, sangha women have volunteered to serve as health committee members who will take up these issues further at sangha level. Apart from knowledge, they gave the women the confidence to stand up to their tormentors as this case study shows.

¶ *One of the participants at the Koppal workshop held in December'99 was Honnurbi of Abbigere village, Koppal taluk. The mother of ten children, Honnurbi was constantly harassed by her husband for giving birth to four daughters first. To add to her woes, he was having an affair with another woman and contracted STD. He kept blaming his wife for this added problem. However, at the workshop she learnt some basic facts about genetics and STDs. After the workshop, Honnurbi was able to stand up to his bullying "You are the one responsible for our not having more sons and you have got the disease by sleeping with some other woman. Don't keep blaming me for everything."*

Sangha discussions in several villages in Deodurga taluk focus on issues like personal hygiene particularly during menstruation and child birth, herbal medicine, the need to limit to number of children, stopping menarche rituals, etc.

Occupational Health Hazards faced by poor rural women : A new initiative

An important new health related initiative in Raichur district has been a pilot study on "Occupational Health Hazards faced by poor rural women", a collaborative project between MS Karnataka and PRIA, (Participatory Research in Asia) an NGO working in Delhi.

Poverty forces sangha women to take up occupations that are hazardous to their health. Many sangha women suffer from poor general health and from symptoms that can be correlated with their occupation. Being poor landless labourers, they bear the brunt of unhealthy and unsafe agricultural practices. Being forced by circumstances to undertake these occupations, they suffer from health hazards as described below. Their poverty, combined with poor access to healthcare, makes them vulnerable to several kinds of diseases. This is exacerbated by their low levels of nutrition, frequent child-bearing and a lifestyle that generally leads to poor health conditions.

The following case study came up during the pilot study carried out by researchers from MS (Amrutha, Leela, Dakshayani) and PRIA (Sumedha Sharma, Harsh Jaitli).

¶ *35 year old Basamma belongs to the MS Sangha in Mallapura village of Raichur District in Karnataka. Basamma, who belongs to the SC community, was deserted by her husband when she was 20. Desperate to earn her living, Basamma began working with the Woddar community. Her work consists of carrying heavy headloads of stones, jelly and similar material. Three years ago Basamma found that her vision was getting blurred. She could not see properly. She went to the Government hospital in Raichur town where, with treatment, her vision began to improve. But this was short lived and a week later she became completely blind. Her family took her to Hyderabad where a detailed examination was done. The doctor told her that the damage to her eyes was irreversible and had been caused by the heavy loads she used to carry for more than 10 years. This had led to the damage of the optic nerves. Today Basamma is completely dependent on others. Her daughter looks after the household while the young son earns what he can, to support the family.*

The findings of the pilot study were presented at a conference on "Women Workers - Gender concerns vis-a-vis Occupational Health". April 22 - 25, 1999 at Kathmandu, Nepal, organised by PRIA.

Since a very large number of sangha women are agricultural workers, this study will be a useful learning experience for MS (K).

Health as an issue for collective action : Using health issues as an entry strategy in Bellary District

In Arakanahal Village in Kudligi taluk, the water source is highly polluted. Villagers using it develop an itching sensation and with continued use, have all kinds of skin problems including rupturing of skin, blisters and wounds. Villagers became aware of this problem and found that everybody was affected, irrespective of age and sex. They suspect that the culprit was a nearby factory which may be releasing hazardous chemical effluents into the water source. A memorandum given to the district authorities many months ago has not received any response.

When the MS team was having a meeting in the village to explore possibilities of starting a sangha, the villagers brought up this subject and showed how badly they have been affected. On hearing how MS sanghas in other villages function as advocacy and pressure groups, people were enthusiastic about starting a sangha. The health problem could be a common binding issue for the formation of the sangha. Various ways of tackling the problem have been discussed.

The continuous assault on the health of poor women is brought out by this experience from MS(K) Bellary

¶ Are we living in the dark ages ? Violence to women's minds and bodies in Shivapura - Gollarhatti:

This is a village in the Kudligi taluk of Bellary district. Inhabited by about 120 households belonging to the Gollar community, the village is marked by abject poverty. Practically every household in the village has an average of seven to twelve children according to the survey conducted during the joint micro planning exercise of DPEP and MS. The MS team talked to several men and women in the village. Most of the younger women were undernourished and weak with repeated child bearing. The children were in poor health. The responses from some of the men were "How does it matter if we have many children ?"

When it was pointed out that repeated child-bearing was bad for the women's health, the men disagreed and could not be convinced that there was anything wrong. Another response was "We feel we have children only after five or six are born"!

When we spoke to the women separately, they said that they were tired of the repeated pregnancies but got no cooperation from their husbands to limit the size of their families.

Another difficult practice for women is the custom of isolating them during menstruation. In this particular village, women are forced to sit in the open near the main road right next to the village school. Women are uncomfortable and ashamed at this public display. They told us that although they were forced to sit in isolation, they got no respite from coolie work. If the number of women who were undergoing this enforced isolation was small, the village men guarded them from a distance during the nights. In any case, they had to suffer the cold, heat or rain. They were not allowed to bathe during this period and this, in turn, gave rise to discomfort and infections. This practice is physically and mentally traumatic for the women.

3.2.5 Panchayat Raj

MS (K) has had important successes in the field of gender and governance. Sangha women have contested and some of them have won the last Gram Panchayat elections. Although their experiences at the end of the 5 year term have been mixed, there is no doubt that their experiences as sangha members and the sangha support to them during their term, has helped break barriers that at one time looked insurmountable.

Fifty-nine sangha women from Bijapur were elected to the PRI's in December'93. MS played an important role in motivating women to stand, helping with filing nominations, planning campaigns, pre and post election training. Gender issues and the need for clean politics were emphasised as the special reasons for having women in politics. Putting the perspective of poor women on the panchayat agenda, bringing their views into public spaces like the gram sabha ... these issues were emphasised.

In January'99, a study was conducted by Ms. Suman Kolhar, (former *Upadhyaksha* of the Bijapur Zilla Parishat and member, Executive Committee of MS, Karnataka). Discussions were held with thirty seven sangha women EWRs (Elected Woman Representative) and sixteen non sangha EWRs - individual as well as group. Differences could be seen in attitude to gender and community issues, levels of confidence and skill. Sangha EWR's were more aware of and responsive to community issues, prioritising, in particular, the issues of poor women. Non sangha EWR's were not able to break out of traditional stereotyping. This prevented them from voicing their opinion and asserting themselves as members. Because of her sangha experience and sangha support, the sangha EWR was confident in her dealings with the community, with officials. Differences were also discernible in the way they campaigned. Since they had sangha support, sangha women were much less dependent on the men in their families.

Although these successes are promising, we needed more ways by which poor women could influence the local bodies. The PRI's in Karnataka, as in other parts of the country, are engaged in a struggle for survival as genuine decentralised bodies that reflect the will of the community. Changes in the Panchayat Raj Act have reduced opportunities for poor women's participation. Discussions in the MS team reflected the need to broaden our work in the area of gender and governance. The opportunities for sangha women in the coming election will be much less because of the reduced number of seats (2500 vs 5600 in the 1993 Act). MS is aware that winning elections is only one part of the empowerment process. Contesting, voting, campaigning, questioning, seeking guarantees from candidates and elected members, participating in gram sabhas, demanding accountability from the PRI -- such experiences as voters, citizens and support groups are important in the empowerment process.

Therefore, the MS team decided to concentrate on these aspects as much as on the election of its sangha members. A good beginning was made in the district level melas to consolidate these ideas into a training module (Details on page 30)

Sangha women who are ready with their documents for contesting election in various districts.

Koppal: Koppal taluk (20), Kustagi taluk (11),Yelburga (18), Gangavati (15) **Bijapur:** Basavana Bagewadi taluk (19) Sindigi taluk (22), Mudhol taluk (18), Bijapur taluk (20), Indi taluk (18), Mudde Bihal taluk (18) **Bidar:** 60 members from 59 villages in Bidar district are planning to contest.

This also means that there have been discussions in these sanghas on the candidate's role and the role of the sangha. The process creates awareness in sangha women of their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

In April'98, the Gulbarga district unit helped to organise a comparative study of 12 sangha and 18 non-sangha women. This was part of the study on the experiences of women panchayat members that was carried out for the Royal Netherlands Embassy by Asha Ramesh and Bharathi Ali. It was found that the sangha EWRs were far more confident about their work and had benefited from the trainings organised by MS. The non-sangha EWRs present said that they had hardly any training during their five year terms. Most members felt that it could be helpful if the panchayat secretary posts were given to women.

The MS team in Gulbarga has put in a lot of effort to help sangha women identify candidates for the prospective panchayat elections. In January'98 a two day training programme was conducted by the MS team for prospective candidates. 71 women attended the training. Of them, 48 have decided to contest the polls, 13 were reluctant because of the hostile environment in their villages while 10 women wanted to discuss the matter further with their sanghas. Women discussed the role of party support in the election. This led to a discussion on the sangha as an alternative support system. Women also discussed the reservation of seats and how various obstacles were put in the way of their contesting. At the end of the training programme, the participants went in a procession to the DC's office and gave him a memorandum protesting the provision that any one wishing to contest the elections, should have a toilet in their homes. (See photograph and newspaper cutting at the end of this report).

The gist of the memorandum is given here. "We are women from different taluks of Gulbarga district who wish to contest the panchayat election. We would like to question the 'rule' brought in by the state government that those who do not have a toilet in their house cannot contest the election"

"The 73rd Constitutional amendment does not have any such provision. As a citizen, I have every right to contest the election"

"We are so poor that we do not have proper houses, the space available to us is so small that there is no question of constructing a toilet. Even the houses we have got from the government have no toilets or water facilities."

"We protest against this provision made by the state government and demand that it be withdrawn"

Several sangha women in Gulbarga district are preparing to contest the Panchayat election. Whether or not they are able to get a seat, contest and win, the process is itself empowering since it is challenging barriers of caste, class and patriarchy. Two case studies here illustrate this point.

✱ *Selecting their candidate*

The sangha in Korvaar village, Chittapur taluk of Gulbarga district has been preparing for the elections for the past few months. Discussions on who will contest are going on. Women selected the 36-year-old sangha president, Jagadevi as their candidate. However Anna Rao, the young man who is the MS NFE teacher is also keen to contest. Both belong to the SC community. After many discussions, women decided that Jagadevi must be their candidate since 1) it was important to have women projected in the election process 2) she would represent their problems better 3) the sangha would be both support and monitor if she was elected. Whether or not Jagadevi is finally elected, that the sangha has reached this level of debate is an important indicator of its strength.

✱ *Changing power equations in the family*

Revubai, sangha president in Rudrawadi village (Alanda taluk, Gulbarga district) comes from a 'political' family. Her brother-in-law won a panchayat seat in the last elections. However, inspired by her experiences and training in MS, Revubai wants to contest. She has convinced her husband that she will do so instead of him. An important step in changing traditional images of women as being outside political processes.

Table 3.7 Details of Gram Panchayat Training - Koppal district

Date	Taluk	Place	Participants	Resource Persons
14/12/98 to 15/12/98	Koppal	MS Office, Koppal	16 women 5 functionaries	² Hanumamma, Chaithanya Mahila Sangha, Dotihala
16/12/98	Kustagi	Sharanabasaveshwara Temple, Kustagi	10 women 4 functionaries	Hanumamma, Chaithanya Mahila Sangha, Dotihala
21/12/98 to 22/12/98	Gangavati	Gangavati	21 women 3 functionaries	Zilla Panchayat members, Chayadevi
23/12/98	Yelburga	MS Office, Koppal	7 women 5 functionaries	Hanumamma, Chaithanya Mahila Sangha, Dotihala
28/12/98 to 29/12/98	Yelburga	Heerevenkalkunta	24 women 5 functionaries	Hanumamma, Chaithanya Mahila Sangha, Dotihala

3.2.6 Gender

The MS strategies to gender-sensitise all aspects and activities of the programme have to be innovative. This poses a continuous challenge.

During 1998-99, there have been several initiatives to engender the programme. The gender session at the district melas (See page 29) was an important forum in which these efforts were re-energised. It helped MS (K) develop a simple and effective 3-hour training module for sangha women, where key gender concepts were linked to the daily lives of women.

Another exciting milestone was the development of a group of sangha women as resource persons for gender issues. One of the most effective inputs of the melas was the performance of AVVA by

² Hanumamma of Dotihala is a sangha member who was elected in the last gram panchayat election. Her sincere work as a member has earned her the respect of the community. With her experience of the past five years, she has become a valuable resourceperson for MS.

a group of sangha women from Koppal. This is a story in itself. *AVVA* is a song drama on the history of patriarchy written by noted poet, K.Ramaiah. It is based on discussions with sangha women in Mysore in the early days of MS (K). The powerful 30 minute performance rarely fails to move its audience. Starting with the high status given to woman many centuries ago, the song-drama deals with the insidious erosion of this status and traces the path to the commodification and oppression she faces today.

The group of sangha women from Koppal (Names below) were trained to present the play in a residential training camp in the Mahila Shikshana Kendra. The group performed '*AVVA*' very effectively at the Neer Manvi Jathra (See page 22) and then at the district melas. For other sangha women and the public, the effect was electric and far more effective than if it had been performed by the MS team. This was a wonderful example of skill building in sangha women and of programme processes being taken over by women from the MS team.

§ THE '*AVVA*' RESOURCE TEAM

The following sangha women make up this team.

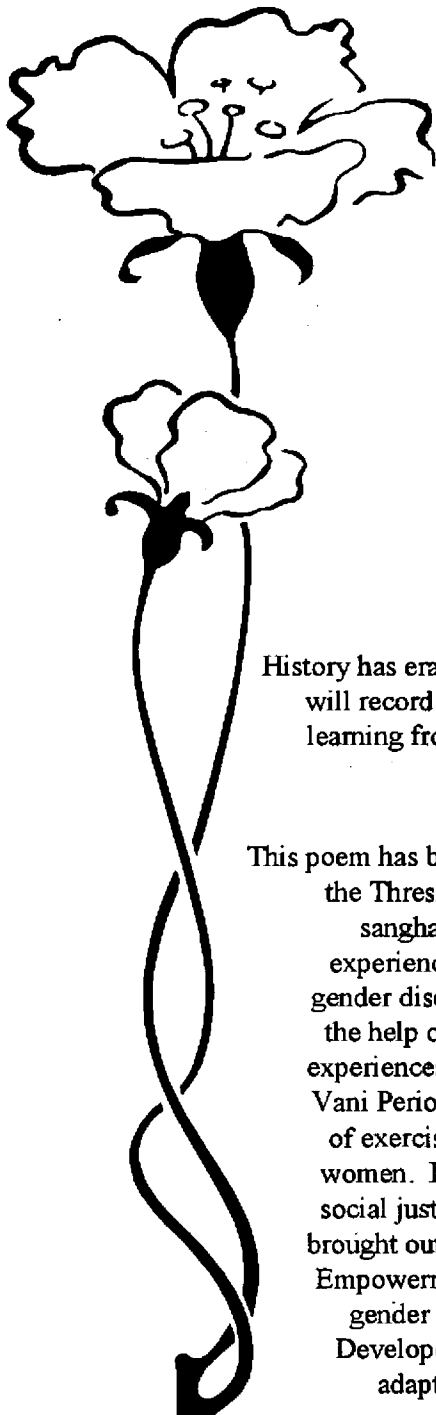
1) *Lakshmamma, Heeribidanala (Shirooru mandal), 2) Glemma, Hunasihala 3) Balamma, Heerevenkalakunta 4) Kempamma, Mataldinni 5) Balamma, Budakunti (Heerevenkalakunta mandal) 6) Durgamma, Ballottagi 7) Rathamma, Ballottagi Tanda 8) Hanumavva, Konasagara 9) Glemma, Bandi (Bandi mandal), 10) Kamamma, Balageri 11) Hanumavva, Balageri 12) Siddamma, Gaddigeri 13) Mariyamma, Guttooru (Chikkmygeri Mandal), 14) Gangamma, Thippanala 15) Kandakooramma, Gule 16) Yamunamma, Bodooru (Talakeri Mandal)*

Documenting our learning on gender

The other important initiatives are the development of the health and gender primer as resource material (See page 12 for details), and the gender manual, '*Hosilu Daatuvu Hejjagalu*' (The steps that cross the threshold) (See page 19 for details).

3.2.7 Economic Development of sanghas in Bellary

For the older districts, an honorarium was given to each sangha each year, if it was strong and met the required criteria. However with the growing credibility of the MS programme with financial institutions and other government departments, it was decided to adopt a different strategy in Bellary district. It was decided to make the honorarium amount available to a group of sanghas at taluk level rather than to individual sanghas. This will strengthen the '*Okkutta*' concept and facilitate women taking up programme processes from the very beginning. It will also help to make the federation process economically viable. However other inputs must be strengthened so that the gender perspective is strong.



“Are you listening to the sound of those steps?
We wish you would...(listen)
For, these are the steps
of women
Not just one or two
But hundreds... thousands
The (foot) steps of ordinary women
Marking their progress
(Foot) steps that can cross the threshold

History has erased the footsteps of women. The Samakhya vision is that we will record these steps, those in the past, present and future - growing and learning from them, rewriting a new history of women and of society that will spread indelibly in time and space.

This poem has been taken from Hosilu Datuva Hejjegalu (The Steps that Cross the Threshold), a gender training manual based on the experiences of sangha women. In the course of our work, we have come across experiences and anecdotes from sangha women that demonstrate how gender discrimination leads to a daily struggle for a life of dignity. With the help of sangha women, the MS team has linked and analysed these experiences with the theory of gender studies. The process, facilitated by Vani Periodi (gender trainer, researcher and activist) has resulted in a set of exercises that can be used for gender awareness training for sangha women. It can be adapted for wider use by various groups working on social justice issues. This is the third in the series of gender documents brought out by MS(Karnataka). The earlier documents are 1) Gender and Empowerment - Theory and Practice (it links MS field experiences with gender theory and is ideal for use by NGO workers); 2) Kusuma - Developed through a series of trainings of young rural men, it can be adapted for wider use. We hope these documents are a useful contribution to the literature on gender studies.

3.3 REGULAR PROGRAMME TASKS : SOME GLIMPSES

3.3.1 Educational Initiatives

Evaluation, Consolidation, Planning Future Linkages of NFE's, Creches, AE Centres in Bidar district.

Attempts are being made to link the AE centres with the Continuing Education Centres (CEC) of the Saksharatha Mission. Of the 42 creches in the beginning of the year, about 5 were closed after an evaluation. In many cases, the number of children was low. Most of the children of school going age among the sangha families had been admitted in school. Creches that were not running properly were closed. Attempts are being made to enrol these children in the *anganwadi* centres. Since there are *anganwadis* in nearly all the villages where the MS creches are being run, the effort of the MS team is to avoid duplication.

Table 3.8 below gives an idea of the number of children who have benefited from the creches in Bidar.

Sl. No.	Taluk	No.of Creches	No.of children	Male	Female	No.of children joined to Primary schools	
						Male	Female
1.	Bidar	07	200	92	108	30	23
2.	Aurad	13	326	168	158	122	150
3.	Humnabad	07	224	100	124	11	10
4.	Basava Kalyana	08	229	93	136	26	21
5.	Bhalki	02	48	20	28	09	-
	Total	37	1027	473	554	198	204

Table 3.9 Details of NFE in Bidar

Sl.No.	Taluk	No.of Centres	No.of children		
			Female	Male	Total
1.	Basavakalyana	07	69	58	127
2.	Bhalki	10	87	124	211
3.	Humnabad	07	86	54	140
4.	Bidar	17	188	172	360
5.	Aurad	23	223	233	456
	Total	64	653	641	1294

Educational initiatives in Bijapur district

As in the previous years, NFEs and creches are being run. In the past year, out of the 19 creches, 4 were closed because they were not working properly. However some creches are doing very well. For example, in Mugalnagoa and Sindagi, 43 children from 2 creches have been enrolled in local primary school. Here, the motivation by sangha women and the performance of the creches are very good. A rigorous evaluation of the 28 NFE centres showed that 10 were not working properly

and these were discontinued. About 21 children from the NFE centres have been enrolled in the local schools.

3.3.2 Economic Activities of sanghas

Sangha women in all the districts are getting increasingly confident about handling money. The savings of the women are collected and rotated constantly through loans. Most sanghas are strict about financial dealings of their members. The credibility of women with banks and other sources is high and increasingly, they are able to access resources from outside sources. This aspect of the programme is dealt with in some detail in the chapter on convergence and mainstreaming.

Bidar District

Table 3.10 Details of sangha huts (Since '94)

Sl. No.	Taluk	Grants given for sangha hut construction	Completed	Under construction	Stop construction	Proposed to start
1.	Bidar	17	11	05	-	01
2.	Aurad	30	22	02	-	06
3.	Basavakalyana	15	10	03	-	02
4.	Bhalki	13	09	04	-	-
5.	Humnabad	16	10	5+2 *	01	-
	TOTAL	91	62	21	01	09

* Started construction from savings amount.

District	Completed	Under Construction	Proposed to start
Bijapur (98 - 99)	9	12	3
Gulbarga (98 - 99)	2	5	3

3.4 PROGRAMME EXPANSION : RAICHUR AND BELLARY DISTRICT

3.4.1 Expansion in Raichur district

MS (K) has been working in Raichur district since 1992. With the reorganisation of districts in Karnataka state, Raichur district was bifurcated into Raichur and Koppal. An important change was made in the last year for programmatic and administrative convenience. Of the 180 villages of the old Raichur district where MS was working, about 140 came within the geographical area of the newly created Koppal district. It was decided to set up a new District Implementation Unit in Koppal. The advantages for the field programmes were many. Meanwhile, it was also decided to continue with the DIU in Raichur. This had several advantages because MS had built up a good rapport with Government agencies including the Education Department and DPEP, and NGO's in Raichur district. It was decided to expand the MS programme into Manvi taluk, which has the dubious distinction of having one of the lowest female literacy rates. (Since these changes took place only since December 1998, data for Raichur and Koppal districts are generally presented together in this report.)

Starting in Manvi taluk

As mentioned above, Manvi taluk has a very low female literacy rate. Further the low status of women in this taluk may be gauged from the wide prevalence of the Devadasi system. The annual *Yellamma Devi jathra* held in early February 1999 provided a good opportunity to launch the MS programme in the taluk. Under a scheme to encourage women entrepreneurs, the KSWDC (Karnataka State Women's Development Corporation) allocated grants to MS, Karnataka to set up stalls during the *jathra*, to highlight women's economic and other activities. MS, Karnataka co-ordinated this effort with the help of local NGO's. The MS team participating in the *jathra* consisted of 29 sangha women entrepreneurs, 39 MS functionaries and about 40 women from various sanghas. The 20 stalls available were used by sangha women to display and market their products which included herbal medicines, various food products prepared in the sangha. A group of sanghas from Gulbarga who were undergoing training in Pappad making, sent two sangha women to market their products. Some stalls were used to display MS material (posters, placards, books etc.) on the causes of gender discrimination. Sahayoginis and sangha women were also able to attract the attention of the visiting public by singing songs about the MS experiences. The real crowd-puller was the performance of the play, *AVVA*, on gender discrimination developed by sangha women.

§ A DEEP ROOTED EVIL : THE DEVADASI SYSTEM

The performance of AVVA was an important milestone in the history of MS Karnataka. It was the first performance of the play by a team of sangha women trained in the Mahila Shikshana Kendra. The attention it attracted was considerable because women and men visiting the jathra saw people like themselves performing the play on gender discrimination. This was all the more important, because the jathra is a big occasion for the dedication of young girls into the Devadasi system. The MS team protested to the local police as well as senior officials present at the jathra. However it was of no avail, the attitude of the officials was unhelpful and cynical. Even when it was pointed out that the dedications were against the law, the usual answer was, "This is all tradition, we cannot change it". The magnitude of the problem was brought home forcibly to the MS team when we found that immediately after the dedication ceremony, the girls were being auctioned and all "formalities" completed in tents put up behind a large rock. Officials and the public present at the jathra were well aware of what was going on but the apathy was total. Some women from the AVVA team were themselves former devadasis but our protest could not make a dent in what was clearly an entrenched custom during this annual jathra.

Thirty villages of Manvi taluk have been identified for starting programme work. The MS team has its work cut out in this taluk and will have to battle a variety of problems ranging from low female literacy rates to extremely high rates of Devadasi dedication. Women have shown interest in the MS programme; within a month of starting the programme, 8 women from Manvi attended the district mela in Koppal.

3.4.2 New strategies for Bellary district

In Bellary district, the programme has consolidated its work in 30 villages of Kudlagi taluk. However, mobilising women is proving difficult in Bellary taluk where they are constantly busy with agricultural operations. Several important programmatic changes have been made. One of the

most promising has been the formation of multicaste sanghas. This is mainly due to a different entry strategy at village level. Details are given in the next section. Women from as many as six widely differing castes have joined the sangha. More castes are represented in smaller numbers. These groups which have widely different social and religious customs, after some initial reluctance, are willing to be members of the same sangha. This is an extremely important milestone since the vision for MS is that women will try to challenge patriarchal barriers across divisions of class and caste. Age barriers are also being challenged since a number of teenage girls have formed 'Kishori' sanghas in the MS villages.

Microplanning as a new entry strategy for the MS programme in Bellary

The goal of the MS programme is to reach the poorest of poor women in the selected villages. In the early years of the programme, this process was initiated through discussions between the women and the sahayoginis assisted by the MS district teams. Since the poorest women usually belong to the SC/ST category and often live away from the main village, the sangha often became identified in the village as an SC or ST sangha. In some cases, poor women from other castes do join the sangha later. However, these numbers were not large enough to make a dent on the caste barriers in the village. There are also cases where an SC sangha woman gained the respect of men and women of other castes in the village through her performance as a panchayat member or as a herbal medicine healer. However, in villages where the sanghas have been formed as described above, it is difficult to get women to come together across caste lines.

After several rounds of discussions in the MS team, it was decided that MS should start its work in the Bellary villages through a process that would bring women together on problems that women faced, regardless of caste. Around the same time, the DPEP, Karnataka, was to take up microplanning exercises in several villages to identify gaps and raise awareness on education issues. A joint exercise was taken up by DPEP and MS (K).

Through this exercise, MS was able to record the following gains.

1) Raising awareness about reasons and consequences of low literacy rates among girls. 2) Linking the above to gender discrimination 3) Understanding and discussing women's issues and problems in the village. 4) Creating awareness about the MS programme in the community. 5) Capacity building for the MS team.

A gram sabha, held at the end of the rigorous four day exercise in each village provided a good forum. The microplanning exercise brought together women and girls of different castes and communities expressing interest in forming a sangha. It helped the MS team to understand the education scenario and village politics, build rapport with the community, the local officials, school teacher and VEC members. Thus the programme in Bellary district has made a good beginning.

Table 3.10 - Microplanning as an entry strategy for MS in Bellary : A joint exercise with DPEP, Karnataka

WHEN	NAME OF THE VILLAGE	WHEN	NAME OF THE VILLAGE
21/7/98 - 25/7/98	Training Girls Hostel, Kudligi Training on Micro planning for the team	18/09/98 - 19/09/98	Chikkasonahalli
03/8/98 - 06/8/98	Konanahalli	06/11/98 - 09/11/98	Devaragudda
04/8/98 - 07/8/98	Valase	07/11/98 - 10/11/98	Marabanahalli
05/8/98 - 08/8/98	Chikkobanahalli	09/11/98 - 12/11/98	Harkanaala
06/8/98 - 09/8/98	Devarahatti	11/11/98 - 14/11/98	T.Kallahalli
10/8/98 - 13/8/98	Ganagatte	11/11/98 - 14/11/98	Jangamasovinahalli
26/8/98 - 29/8/98	Gangammanahalli	10/11/98 - 13/11/98	Shivapura Gollarahatti
27/8/98 - 30/8/98	Madlakanahalli	17/11/98 - 20/11/98	Thuppakanahalli
28/8/98 - 31/8/98	Nelabommanahalli	18/11/98 - 21/11/98	Bylu Thumbaraguddi
29/8/98 - 01/9/98	Appayyanahalli Tanda	19/11/98 - 22/11/98	Ottanahalli
01/9/98 - 04/9/98	T. Kallahalli	20/11/98 - 23/11/98	Yarobayyanahatti
07/9/98 - 10/9/98	Palayannakote	23/11/98 - 26/11/98	K.Dibbadahalli
08/9/98 - 11/9/98	A. Dibbadahalli	11/12/98 - 14/12/98	Benakanahalli
09/9/98 - 10/9/98	Bheemasamudra	12/12/98 - 15/12/98	Ekkegundi
09/9/98 - 12/9/98	Arjuna Chinnanahalli	14/12/98 - 17/12/98	Obalapura
11/9/98 - 14/9/98	Hulikunte	12/01/99 - 13/01/99	Closing meeting in Kudligi

3.5 Capacity building for sangha women and the MS team

Regular trainings for sangha women have taken place in all districts on sangha and federation concepts, literacy, economic activities, Panchayat Raj, Health and other issues. Capacity building training and workshops for the MS team are a regular part of the programme. In the past year, the MS team has also had opportunities to attend international level workshops and trainings.

Table 3.11

International Conference on Gender and Governance	Harare, Zimbabwe 18 - 20 May 1998	Revathi Narayanan SPD, MS, Karnataka
First international course on Gender, Citizenship and Governance (GCG1)	Amsterdam, the Netherlands 6 - 24 September 1998	Nirmala Shiraguppi, DPC, Bijapur
Consultation Meeting on Gender and Governance	Amsterdam, the Netherlands 22 - 24 September 1998	Revathi Narayanan SPD, MS, Karnataka
Women Workers and Occupational Health Hazards	Kathmandu, Nepal April 22 - 25, 1999	Amrutha Consultant, SPO.



4. THE DISTRICT LEVEL MELAS : SPREADING THE MESSAGE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The highpoint of the programme during 98-99 were the four district level melas held between 22nd February and 27th March. The following table will give an idea of the enormous amount of work put in by the Mahila Samakhya team. Most of them will agree that it was an exhilarating experience. The melas provided a wonderful opportunity for learning, sharing, celebrating and planning for the future.

DISTRICT LEVEL MELAS

Dates	District / Place	No.of participants (Women)
22/2/99 to 24/2/99	Gulbarga - Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kotanoor	Gulbarga-600, Mysore-30
26/2/99 to 28/2/99	Bijapur - Junior College, Jayawadagi	Bijapur - 250, Bellary - 17
06/3/99 to 08/3/99	Bidar - Mylar Mallanna Kshetra, Khanapura	Bidar - 450, Bellary - 50
24/3/99 to 26/3/99	Koppal - Gavi Siddeshwara Mutt, Koppal	Koppal- 320, Raichur - 62 Bellary - 25, Mysore - 5

A total of 1809 women from 850 sanghas in seven districts attended the melas. The Mahila Samakhya programme is now entering its 10th year in the field in the older districts of Bijapur, Bidar and Mysore and the 8th year in the field in Raichur, Koppal and Gulbarga. The logic of the empowerment process suggests that there must be a marked shift in roles for the sangha women and the Mahila Samakhya programme. For sangha women, this shift means that they must play a proactive role in the empowerment processes. More and more sangha women need to take up the responsibility for various sangha activities in the fields of education, health, economic development, sangha documentation, accessing outside resources (especially government resources), ensuring that women like themselves have a say in decisions made by the community, the panchayat, the village school, health centre and so on.

It is critically important, that at the same time, the Mahila Samakhya team changes its role from the proactive to the facilitative. The programme in the older areas must now step back and gives space to sangha women to test the waters by themselves. For a year or two, MS will be standing by to assist the sanghas in their various endeavours. More and more, the Mahila Samakhya role should be that of a resource and training group and as facilitators.

If one considers these ideas in the light of enhancing the status of women, it is easy to see that this shift in roles will bring about a change in the status of sangha women as well as in the Mahila Samakhya team. The process will result in the enhancement of skills, capacities and therefore confidence and status of all those involved. New experiences will help change attitudes and perspectives about women, their role and position in society.

In the early years of the programme, the emphasis was on training and skill building of the Mahila Samakhya team. In turn, the latter had to pass on their learning and skills to the sangha women. This kind of cascade training is probably the only workable strategy in a large, geographically spread out, and human-resource-thin programme like Mahila Samakhya. However, at this point in the life of the programme, it is critical to broadbase the empowerment processes and the responsibilities that go with them. Our field experience has shown that in many sanghas, there is a tendency to allow the Mahila Samakhya team and a few sangha members to take on most of the responsibilities. Analyses of these experiences showed that it was important to evolve and state a broad common understanding of the empowerment processes; of the attendant tasks and responsibilities, of the role of sangha women and the Mahila Samakhya team. While discussions on these issues have been taking place continuously, it was necessary to reiterate them clearly, unambiguously and in terms of action points.

A need was felt to have a forum where these issues could be discussed with representatives from as many sanghas as possible. Therefore, district level melas were arranged in February and March'99. The Mahila Samakhya team went into a process of meticulous planning and preparation for this critically important event.

4.2 THE TASK

As stated earlier, 1809 women from 850 sanghas in seven districts participated in the melas. Since women from all the sanghas were present, there was opportunity for newer sanghas to learn from the older sanghas, for one taluk to learn from the experiences of another, and in some cases for one district to learn from another. This was particularly useful for the women from the newly formed sanghas in Bellary district. Women from Mysore sanghas attended the Gulbarga and Koppal melas. Women from Manvi taluk (Raichur district) were also present at the Koppal mela. The interest shown by the Manvi women was a particularly happy occurrence since Mahila Samakhya, Karnataka has started work in Manvi only in the beginning of February'99.

The photograph on page 27a shows about 500 sangha women of Raichur and Koppal districts with the Mahila Samakhya team. It was taken in March'99 during the District level mela. The summers in Koppal are fierce and the photograph had to be taken before the rock became unbearably hot. Some sangha women said that the rock represented the problems that women had to face in their struggle to be recognised as thinking, feeling human beings. It seemed symbolic of the efforts of Mahila Samakhya Karnataka to address the problems faced by poor rural women. "If we come together and stay united, we can solve our problems".

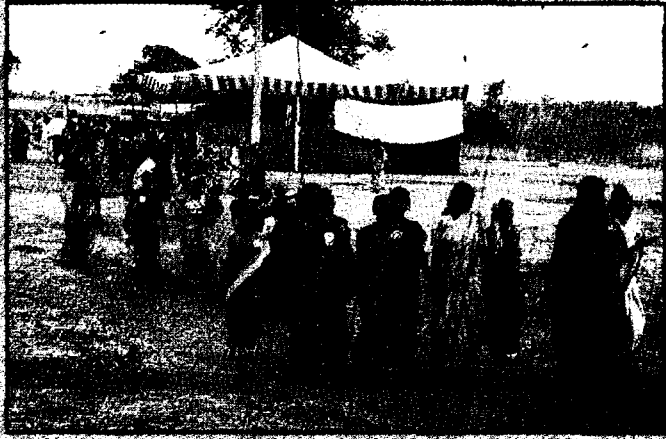
The Mela Mood

- ♣ *In Bidar, where the mela was organised in the beautiful Mylar Mallanna Temple, sangha women found out that a marriage was being conducted between a man in his late 40's and a teenage girl. They asked the girl if she really wished to marry a man so much older than her and lectured both parties on the unsuitability of the match. Both families were so taken aback that the marriage was stopped (at least for the present).*
- ♣ *At one of the melas, the husband of one of the women came in a drunken state and wanted his wife to return immediately. Other women came to the rescue and persuaded her to stay. The husband, who turned violent, was taken away by the policeman for the night. Needless to say, the wife stayed on till the end of the mela.*
- ♣ *In the session on legal literacy, women were empathising so much with the issues being discussed that in every session, some women were in tears because they said "It is as if a mirror has been held up to our own lives".*
- ♣ *In the session on Panchayat Raj, the Agnipariksha episode from the Ramayana was used to demonstrate how decisions are made when women are excluded from decision-making processes. This was linked to the need for women in the structures and processes of governance. In one of the sessions, one sangha women came up with the following case study about a modern day Agnipariksha. A man, suspecting his wife's fidelity, wanted her to pick a five-rupee coin from boiling oil! He refused to take her and their children back into the house until his wife passed this "test". This torture went on for several days until one of the sangha women protested and scolded the husband roundly and threatened to do something drastic to him if he did not treat his wife with respect.*
- ♣ *After the group photograph on a large rock, women, even the older ones, enjoyed sliding to the base of the rock.*
- ♣ *Women's interest in the session could be gauged by the fact that, i) They were ready in time for all the sessions ii) During the sessions, one could hardly see any of them outside, except, of course, the few who were unwell or whose children needed attention. Even in the gruelling afternoon heat, most women were enthusiastic about the sessions. In all the melas there were hardly any women who left early. The strategy of having the inauguration on the previous evening allowed for two full days for the sessions.*
- ♣ *There was time for song and dance, laughter and conversation in the evenings and nights. Campfires were organised and thoroughly enjoyed by one and all!*

Photographs on page 27 b capture the mela events :

- 1. Women moving from one session to the next**
- 2. Legal Literacy session : How many women have problems related to violence, property...?**
- 3. Sangha women performing 'AVVA'**
- 4. The "Women and Panchayat Raj" session : Mock election campaign by sangha women**
- 5. Sustainability and Self-Reliance Session : Sharing the Federation Concept**
- 6. Gender session : A song about gender discrimination**





4.3 TO WHAT EXTENT DID MAHILA SAMAKHYA, KARNATAKA ACHIEVE THE GOALS IT HAD SET FOR THE MELAS? :

4.3.1 Objective 1

To consolidate sangha women's learning through direct inputs on the following issues.

- a) Self-reliance and Sustainability of sanghas*
- b) Women in governance*
- c) Gender*
- d) Legal Literacy*

Women were divided into 4 groups and each group attended all 4 sessions during the course of each mela. Linkages were established between the 4 themes and these were related with the overall goals of Mahila Samakhya.

In all four sessions, the linkages to self-reliant and sustainable sanghas were explored. Evolving strategies in a gender sensitive framework is the distinguishing feature of the MS programme. While there are no illusions about the time and effort needed to bring about changes in entrenched gender discriminatory attitudes, the MS experience shows that lasting changes can come about by patient and continuous chipping away at the problems.

4.3.2 Session 1 - Sustainability and Self-Reliance of Sanghas:

➤ *What we planned:*

This is the core issue for the empowerment of sangha women. For the past three years, there has been continuous discussion at all levels of MS (K), of the strategies that can be used. The objective at the mela was to discuss this issue with representatives from all sanghas, to detail the follow-up action plan for the next few years, that would help women reach the goal of strong multi-level grassroots organisations of sangha women.

➤ *What happened in the mela:*

The session at the mela was used to discuss this core issue in a much larger group. From their participation, it was clear that most of the women had understood and accepted the need for change in the role of the sanghas as well as of the MS programme, if truly self-reliant grassroots women's organisations were to emerge.

This session had the most difficult messages to convey. The resource team did an excellent job of

1. Relating the concept of self-reliance to the present and future structure and activities of the sanghas at individual, ghataka (cluster) and taluk levels.
2. Of visualising the federations of the future.
3. Of showing how the roles of all concerned would change.

The general impression conveyed by women in all the 16 sessions was that many of them were eager for change and willing to take on new roles and responsibilities. They were ready to discuss the self-

reliance concept in their sanghas and take active steps in this direction. Women did display some anxiety but there was no mistaking their keenness to take things forward, they are looking forward to new initiatives and forms of action. This session also provided an opportunity to reiterate the MS role of helping women make informed choices and to clarify doubts about other kinds of “benefits” to the sanghas.

➤ *Contents of Session*

I. The concept of Self - Reliance

a) Objectives of Mahila Samakhya, b) Functional strategies of Mahila Samakhya, c) Status of sangha women in Mahila Samakhya, d) Necessity of federation at different stages, e) Conclusion

II. Changes and achievements at different levels

a) Individual, b) In the family, c) In the sangha, d) At cluster level, e) Taluk / District level
f) Identification, sharing and consolidation of problems, g) Identifying the extent (level) of achievement.

III. 1. Next phase of self-reliance

Duration and limitations of Mahila Samakhya

2. a) *Expansion of federation* - vertical/horizontal, b) Fund raising for federation, c) Economic development activities, d) Literacy - Documentation and audit, e) Consolidation and conclusion, f) To develop action points for sangha committees, for ghataka and taluk meetings.

➤ *Action points*

a) To increase sangha membership by persuading more women to join the sangha. b) To decrease dependency on Samakhya by forming issue-based committees of sangha women. c) To hold regular ghataka and taluk level meetings. d) To develop linkages with Government and Non Government agencies. e) To explore, and implement on a trial basis, the federation processes.

4.3.3 Session 2: Gender

➤ *What we planned:*

To achieve Mahila Samakhya's objective of enhancing the status of women, a keen understanding of gender issues and the ability to understand and analyse how gender discrimination works to diminish women's status, is essential. The contents of this session are based on the gender training manual "Hosilu Datuva Hejjegalu" (The Steps that cross the threshold - See page 19). The exercises have been developed from the experiences of sangha women and the MS team. The mela provided an additional opportunity to test the manual.

➔ *What happened in the Mela:*

Like the session on self-reliance, this session involved linking gender concepts to practical realities in the daily lives of sangha women. Sangha women found it possible to empathise with the stories and examples used by the resource team to illustrate various forms of gender discrimination. The women found the exercises from the new gender training manual interesting.

• *Contents of Session*

a) Introductory game - self introduction by surname, change in name after marriage, naming the person most dear to her. b) Analysis and interpretation of game. c) Women's mobility, how the restrictions to it curtail her access to knowledge and information. d) Analysing proverbs and abuses that are derogatory to women. e) Various exercises to explore the decision-making power of women, self-identity, recognise the strengths of women. f) Exploring how low self-worth and self-esteem help to perpetuate patriarchy, linking concepts to events and actions in daily life.

• *Action points*

For this issue, action points include those at family and community level. At the family level, women decided that they would a) Recognise their own strengths and contribution to the family. b) Not discriminate between their daughters and sons in education, nutrition and healthcare, household work. c) Would not use or allow the use of stories, proverbs and songs that are anti-women, in their immediate environment. At the community level, they would d) Protest against child marriage, *Devadasi* dedication and such issues involve more and more women and community members in discussion and action on gender discrimination.

4.3.4 Session 3 - Panchayat Raj

Facilitating the participation of sangha women in local governance processes has been an important part of Mahila Samakhya Karnataka's work. In the previous Gram Panchayat election held in December 1994, several sangha women contested and many of them won the elections. A few sangha women were members of the earlier mandal panchayats. In addition, many sanghas have been successful in accessing resources from their gram panchayats. MS (K) is aware of the importance of the sanghas in placing the agenda of poor rural women in the local bodies. It was decided to devote one session in the melas to this issue. This is doubly important in view of the fact that panchayat elections are due in Karnataka state and various attempts are being made by those in power to postpone the elections and diminish the role of elected representatives in panchayats. One such move is the recent ordinance increasing the population for the gram panchayats; an immediate fallout is the decrease in representation. Access to the panchayats has become more difficult for poor women because of factors like distance and lack of transport.

➔ *What we planned:*

This is a key session linking sangha self-reliance, women assuming decision-making roles in local bodies and women's status.

The role of sangha women as candidates, members, voters and citizens, the role of the sangha as a support group for women candidates (sangha and non-sangha), the role of the sangha in putting poor women's issues on the agenda of the gram panchayat and gram sabha are discussed.

➔ *What happened in the Mela:*

Women found the session very useful, particularly since the Panchayat elections are to be held in Karnataka in the next few months. Earlier trainings had focused on the sangha women's role as candidates. Participants were enthusiastic about the idea that the sangha could function as a pressure group that will put the agenda of poor women in the Panchayat planning and implementation. The session opened up a large number of possibilities for sangha women at individual and the collective level.

➔ *Contents of Session*

a) Small group discussion : To share experiences of members and sanghas with the PRI's.
b) Consolidation of small group discussions c) Geographical background to the issue of women in politics d) The difference between the old and new Panchayats e) Application of the reservation principles f) The sangha women as a candidate g) The sangha women as a voter and citizen h) This is a vigorous exercise when the entire group shouts slogans that cover all these issues. This also helps the participants understand the power of slogans. Songs are also used to reiterate the important messages of this session. i) Mock election campaign j) The sangha as a pressure group

➔ *Action points*

This set of action points focuses on the sangha's role in putting poor women's agenda into governance, to build capacities so that the sangha can act as pressure group before and after elections; sangha women's role as voters and citizens.

a) All sangha women must vote b) Sangha women must motivate families and other groups to vote, to ensure that those who have migrated for work come back to vote. c) Interact with candidates and get certain guarantees for action that will improve the lives of women. d) To insist that gram sabhas are held and that an official notice of each gram sabha be sent to the sangha. e) To campaign for the proper setting up of the social justice committee of the panchayat and get sangha women co-opted as members (since such a provision exists) f) To prepare at least one woman from each sangha as a candidate and learn through this process.

➔ *Action points*

For women, who want to contest elections

a) To understand the nomination process and make sure that they have all the documents required. b) To select promoters and seconders. c) To improve their literacy skills d) To conduct their campaigns in as decent a manner as possible, to appeal to voters through door-to-door and low cost campaigns. e) To learn from experiences of women representatives of earlier PRI's.

4.3.4 Session 4 - Legal Literacy

➔ *What we planned:*

An important reason for the exploitation of sangha women is the lack of knowledge of the law and legal procedures. Problems that are constantly faced by women are related to domestic and societal violence (including anti women customs like *Devadasi* dedication), marital problems like desertion and bigamy, property disputes, discrimination based on caste, class and gender. Women are unaware of the protection afforded by the law. They are also ignorant of simple legal procedures that can protect them. This lack of knowledge and information has led to several difficulties at the field level for MS, both for sangha women and for the MS team. This session aims to equip all concerned with basic legal and paralegal knowledge.

➔ *What happened in the Mela:*

This is one of the first attempts, in MS (K), to tackle legal literacy issues on such a large scale. The resource team put in a great deal of preparation with the existing material on women and law. They used the problems, often expressed by sangha women with law and the law enforcement authorities as the basis for the session. As in other sessions, a set of action points was developed to equip sangha women to deal with these problems.

➔ *Contents of Session*

1. Starting of session with stills representing the problems faced by women.
2. Listing of the common problems faced by women in village (in small groups)
3. Consolidation of the problems and classification of them into five groups.

Input session on the topics below with action points

- a) Violence and Rape
- b) Dowry and child marriage
- c) Family disputes, divorce, maintenance and custody of children
- d) Property rights
- e) Women and police, filing of a FIR. Conditions for Bail, etc.

5. Evaluation of the session and action points for sangha / individuals

➔ *Action points*

- a) To see that no girl faces sexual harassment or rape in the village. If such an event takes place, sangha to create awareness in the community to protest against such things, create an atmosphere for the victim to lead a normal life.
- b) To prevent child marriage in the village. No sangha women should allow child marriage or take dowry. If it takes place in their community or village, the concerned authorities should be informed.
- c) Sangha women should take the responsibility of getting a share of the husband's property for destitute women.
- d) Women should develop the practice of registering property in their name.
- e) Every sangha women should be aware of information about the nearest police station, the *Dalapati* in the village, whether he is helpful or not.
- f) To identify free legal aid cells and to make use of them.
- g) To find a group of lawyers in taluk or district level.
- h) To list out paralegal organisations to help women in times of crisis.
- i) To solve their problems either at

community/village level as far as possible. The court is the last alternative. j) To work with the Lok Adalat and bring problems of sangha women to this forum.

4.3.5 Objective 2

To develop from women's inputs the future plan of action for the MS programme. A set of action points will be developed in each session. These will become the basis of the action plan for the year 1999-2000.

Every session devoted a large part of the time listening to women's experiences of the particular issue. This feedback is a great help in the planning process. As stated earlier, in each session, action points were developed with the help of the women and these have become the basis for planning our work for the coming year. These action points are based on the following principles:

- a) Women will take on more and more responsibility in the sangha
- b) The sangha will become a pressure group for various issues in the village
- c) A structural framework will be set up in the annual plan to implement the action points.
- d) Existing sangha and MS resources will be used to the maximum possible, building on existing resources.

4.3.6 Objective 3

To carry out an appraisal of the learning levels of sangha women and effectiveness of the MS programme inputs.

Dr.Rameshwari Verma, Member, Executive Committee, Ms.Asha Ramesh, Gender Studies Unit, NIAS, Ms.Meera Menon, Gender trainer and consultant and Ms.Uma Mahadevan, Director, Mass Education, Member, Executive Committee participated in the melas as part of the appraisal process. Dr.Malavika Karlekar, Member, Executive Committee visited the Koppal mela and has given useful inputs to the appraisal process. Dr. Rita Moulik, Programme Officer on Gender at the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Delhi attended the programme in Koppal. Friends of MS (Karnataka) who attended the different programmes and gave us valuable feedback include Ms. Deepa Dhanraj (Feminist film-maker), Ms.Karin Kapadia (Social Development Unit, World Bank), Ms. Kalpana Sharma, Journalist (Special interest on women and development issues), Ms.Manimekalai Raja, Ms. Sangeetha Purushotham, Mr. Navroze Contractor (photographer with vast experience on development issues).

4.3.7 Objective 4

To develop training and resource material from the mela sessions.

MS (K) is collaborating with CHOWKI, a Mangalore based Resource and Training Group with several years of experience in gender issues. Members of CHOWKI were present at all the melas. A workshop was conducted after the Bidar mela (10th to 13th March'99) to document mela processes and to plan the training and resource material that could be prepared.

4.3.8 Objective 5

To help MS functionaries develop and use their training skills and abilities.

Over the years, MS has developed skills in participatory and rural women-friendly methodologies. The language and idiom of the session helps to build a very good rapport between the participating sangha women and the resource team. Songs, role plays, games, debates, case study analyses, skits and so on have been developed and used in the sessions.

The resource teams for the four sessions are drawn from the various districts. Each team consists of 8 to 10 multi-skilled Sahayoginis, Resource Persons and District Programme Co-ordinators. Each team worked extensively to prepare the contents and training methodologies for each session. Since each team handled a total of 16 sessions in the four melas, there was a continuous process of learning and innovation to keep on enriching the resource input.

The melas provided an excellent opportunity for skill building and the resource teams have expressed their sense of confidence and empowerment as trainers and resource persons. From session to session, the resource team was developing new ways of communicating with the sangha women who participated. The interesting innovation was that the resource teams were able to devise ways of communicating effectively to groups of 80 - 130 participants (the usual preference of most trainers is for groups not larger than 35 - 40 people).

4.3.9 Resource team members

1. Legal Literacy

Usha Rani - State Office, Uma Wodeyar - Bidar, Sheela Khare- Mysore, Chandrakala - Bidar, Shobha Joshi - Bijapur, Suguna - Gulbarga, Renuka Bomble - Raichur/Koppal, Deveeramma - Mysore, Jagadevi - Gulbarga, Yashodha Kolhi- Bellary.

2. Sustainability / Self-Reliance

Parimala - Mysore, Amrutha - Bangalore, Kamala - Mysore, Mahadevi Gudi - Raichur, Susheela - Bijapur, Lakshmi Bai - Bidar, Rajamma - Gulbarga, Shobha - Gulbarga, Mahadevi - Bellary, Rajamathi - Bidar, Sunitha - Bijapur, Mukthamma - Bidar.

3. Gender

Gowri - Bellary, Sowbhagya - Koppal, Savitha.N - Bangalore, Shankamma Hiremath - Raichur, Savitha Kumari - Raichur, Shyla.B - Bidar, Saraswathi - Bijapur, Gangu - Bijapur, Bharathi - Gulbarga

4. Panchayat Raj

Nirmala Shiraguppi - Bijapur, Jyothi Kulkarni - Gulbarga, Kalpana - Bellary, Neelamma - Bijapur,

Rasheeda - Gulbarga, Vimalakshi - Raichur, Shankamma - Raichur / Koppal, Kamala - Bidar, Indira - Gulbarga, Mercy - Mysore.

5. Overall planning and co-ordination of mela processes and sessions - Revathi Narayanan

6. Documentation : The process was facilitated by the CHOWKI team. Vani Periodi, Umashankar Periodi, Venkatesh Padakkanayya, Sumitra, Anthony, Devendra Kattimani.

Other objectives that have been achieved through melas are to help the larger public understand the programme. The melas were an opportunity to involve the press and media, local radio and the state T.V. Network covered them. The district authorities, NGO's and other interest groups participated in the mela. The Bidar mela was covered by Ms.Kalpana Sharma in her article in the Hindu of 4th April'99. (see last page of this report)

The melas were successful in revitalising the entire programme from the sangha to the MS team. Both sangha women and MS team are full of enthusiasm and ideas for carrying the programme forward.



*** Additional Notes on Statistical Profile (See Page No 1)**

1. We are in

* Reasons for decreased strength in sanghas and membership as compared to last year.

Due to rigorous evaluations during this year, some sanghas which are not active have been dropped.

The reasons include the following:

- a) Lack of interest among sangha members in continuing, membership very low
- b) Intervention by other NGO's.
- c) Too much political interference.
- d) Organised only to get some loans and benefits.
- e) Migration of all sangha members.

→ *Out of 48 sangha huts, 9 sangha huts in Bijapur districts destroyed by earthquake.*

2. Literacy in MS

* Reasons for decrease in NFE, AE, Creche centres and strength.

* As the mainstreaming process started in MS many NFE centres are being merged with DPEP, Creches to ECCE and AE to Saksharatha Kalika Kendras / CECs.

* During the evaluation, sangha women in some places said that they do not want the creche.

* According to MS norms, at least 20 children should be there in a centre. But in some places this has decreased to 4 - 5 because of migration, admission to regular school, marriage etc.

* Many anganwadi centres have been started recently.

** Figures in brackets shows the number of women attending short term for camps Literacy, Health, Panchyat Raj, etc.

3. EDP in the Sangha

* Amount in sangha loan has merged with loan taken from honorarium.

5. CONVERGENCE AND MAINSTREAMING : LINKAGES FOR SELF-RELIANCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The three principal indicators of empowerment of poor rural women are

- increased access to and control of resources
- ability to influence and change mainstream structures and institutions
- ability to influence and change dominant ideology that has led to the marginalisation of women

This chapter describes how women's collectives have been able to access mainstream development resources from government agencies and various financial institutions. Careful planning on the use of these resources (which are mostly financial and sometimes in the form of materials - cement for construction of sangha *mane*, utensils for the sanghas) is done in the sangha. Women are also conscientious about repayment of loans and they make the money go a long way.

The accessing of outside resources is preceded by economic activities at sangha level. These activities start with sangha members pooling small amounts that they save, into a sangha savings fund. This money is then available as loans to members under conditions and rules developed through discussion in the sangha. Once this activity has stabilised, a small amount is given as honorarium from MS to the sangha, provided it meets MS goals and objectives, especially acting as a pressure group on gender discrimination and various social justice issues. Women use the amounts from savings and the sangha honorarium for various activities.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show the amount in savings in two sample districts as of 31st March 1999. This gives an idea of how much money is in circulation among sangha members.

Table 5. 1 Economic activities in Koppal district sanghas (as of 31/3/99)

SL.No.	Taluk	Total savings	Loan	Money in Bank	Expenditure	Balance
1.	Gangavathi	109846	46305	51216	1783	10542
2.	Yelburga	233801	76961	112308	25482	19050
3.	Kustagi	56727	17506	19997	11001	8223
4.	Koppal	80604	35810	40089	12205	- 7500
	TOTAL	480978	176582	223610	50471	30315

Table 5.2 Details of savings in Bidar district (as of 31/3/99)

Sl.No.	Taluk	Total savings
1.	Bidar	1,37,572.00
2.	Aurad	1,28,611.00
3.	Bhalki	87,560.00
4.	Basavakalyana	1,06,765.00
5.	Humnabad	1,20,319.00
	Total	5,80,827.00

5.2 Most development schemes are designed for the poorest sections of the population. Poor implementation by the concerned agencies has led to the fact that the benefits hardly reach those they are intended for. The efforts of the MS programme in this direction indicate that this gap can be bridged. Equally important is the fact that through such interactions between sangha women and officials at various levels, better understanding of problems on either side can be reached. Many of the problems of poor implementation arise from the inefficiency of government agencies ; those among them who are efficient are often burdened with too many responsibilities. The attitude of some officials at the working level leaves much to be desired. A few examples in section 5.3.2 illustrate how poor women spend time and effort to solve problems only to be frustrated by delays from the concerned agencies. Implementation of many schemes are further hampered by top down planning. Conditions and criteria imposed cannot be met at the practical level. This provides an opportunity for corruption to flourish. Time and again MS sanghas have been denied loans under DWCRA and other schemes because they “question too much” and refuse to pay “commission”!

It is these problems that are addressed by linkages between collectives of poor women and agencies that implement development schemes. Not only are women beginning to access these resources but they are also trying to change mainstream structures and make their functioning more responsive to the needs of poor women. These are important steps in the empowerment process. At the programmatic level, the goal of the time - bound MS programme is the formation of strong and self-reliant collectives and grassroots federations. For these structures to be viable in economic and social terms, they need to be able to access financial resources at individual and collective levels, to energise and mobilise dormant and/or presently inaccessible community resources.

5.3 ACCESSING OUTSIDE RESOURCES

Tables 5.3 and Fig 5.1 show the various ways in which sangha women have accessed and used available resources.

Table 5.3

Income generating Programmes/Schemes organisations													
Sl. No.	Districts	IRDP			DWCRA			SC/ST Corp			Ashraya		
		No. of Women	No. of Sangha	Total Amt.	No. of Women	No. of Sangha	Total Amt.	No. of Women	No. of Sangha	Total Amt.	No. of Women	No. of Sangha	Total Amt.
1	Guibarga				360	24	600,000						
2	Bidar				241	30	756,000						
3	Bijapur	60		586,900	40		65,000	3		151,200	83	30	560,000
4	Koppal					2	50,000				10	1, (10 houses)	
5	Raichur	2		16,000				2		10,000			
6	Bellary												
7	Mysore												
	TOTAL	62		602,900	641	56	1,471,000	5		161,200	93	31	560,000

Si. No.	Districts	SHG / DCC			KMF			DiC			DRP		
		No. of Women	No. of Sangha	Total Amt.	No. of Women	No. of Sangha	Total Amt.	No. of Women	No. of Sangha	Total Amt.	No. of Women	No. of Sangha	Total Amt.
1	Gulbarga	28	2	90,000	29	2	290,000	18	2	16,200			
2	Bidar	238	26	565,000									
3	Bijapur				6	1	36,000				12	8	150,000
4	Koppal		2	25,000									
5	Raichur											2	10,000
6	Bellary												
7	Mysore												
	TOTAL	266	30	680,000	35	3	326,000	18	2	16,200	12	10	160,000

*Sangha women (82) in Gulbarga have received individual loans from banks totalling Rs.2,00,000/-

* In Bijapur, 6 women have got houses through the Land Army (5) and Ambedkar Yojane (1). Sangha women in Bijapur were also able to get 11 bags of cement and utensils for the sanghas through the Zilla Parishat. In addition 88 sangha members have received 44,000/- as compensation from the Government. Three women have also been able to get Rs.26,250/- from the District Veterinary Hospital.

* The Bidar sanghas were able to get Rs.2,00,000/- from the Zilla Parishat for sangha mane construction.

5.3 Different district units of MS (K) have been successful in accessing resources from different sources. This information is presented in tables 5.4 to 5.10. These tables also show the various activities for which women have taken the loans. They describe the various schemes under which amounts have been accessed. In most cases, the process begins by sangha women visiting various offices and meeting officials. This is an important step in the empowerment process since women are gathering knowledge and information to improve their lives. They discuss the positives and negatives of each scheme, the conditions they have to fulfill. Women also help and monitor each other's activities through sangha discussions. Since they are aware of the details of the schemes, they are very clear that no 'commissions' need be given. This becomes an effective deterrent to corruption in government agencies. It is important to note that through these activities, sangha women are breaking barriers set up by caste, class and economic status. Barriers created by differential access to knowledge and information are being challenged. Sangha women are also setting up standards in terms of use of money, promptness of repayment. Women are making economic decisions. Their access to these resources has increased their decision-making power and status in the family and the community.

Sangha women, having gone through the sangha process, and through various discussions and action on social issues, have a very different perspective when they are able to access money. This is vastly different from that of the 'instant' SHGs set up by officials in their effort to reach pre-fixed targets. The women in these groups tend to be docile and unquestioning. Their improved economic status is unlikely to lead to lasting changes in the community as a whole, since existing injustice is not challenged. On the other hand, sangha women derive strength from their collective vision and group activities to question existing inequalities. However, MS processes must take care that the bonding on other issues remains strong at sangha and federation level. The interaction of sangha women with officials helps to identify gaps in the system. The problem areas are highlighted in section 5.3.2 on Raichur district.

Table 5.4 Loan from Bank

Sl. No.	Name of the village	Taluk	Activities	Bank	Members	Total
1.	Gobbur (B)	Afzalpur	Different activities like vegetable vending, setting up of petty shops...	KGB	50	50000
2.	Ashoknagar	Chitapur	-"	KGB	18	40000
3.	Kalhangarga	Gulbarga	Vegetable vending	Canara	2	10000
4.	Mugata	Chitapur	Buffalo rearing	KMF	8	80000
5.	Melkundha (B)	Gulbarga	-"	KMF	4	20000
	Total				82	200000

5.3.1 Gulbarga district

Table 5.5 The list of villages (sangha) which received DWCRA loan is given below. In each sangha, a group of 15 women receive a loan of Rs.25,000/-. A total of 360 women in 24 sanghas have received Rs.6,00,000/- for various activities.

Sl.No.	Name of the village	Taluk	Activities
1.	Sulepet	Chincholi	Chilli powder making machine
2.	Rutkal	-“-	-“-
3.	Vajragoa	-“-	Flour mill
4.	Kanakapura	-“-	Vegetable vending
5.	Harvall	Jevargi	Sheep rearing
6.	Revanur	-“-	-“-
7.	Naribolla	-“-	-“-
8.	Mandheval	-“-	-“-
9.	Janivar	-“-	Setting up of petty shop
10.	Javalga	-“-	Sheep rearing
11.	Mugalnagoa	Chitapur	Pappad making
12.	Petshirur	-“-	Chilli powder making machine
13.	Thonasanahalli	-“-	-“-
14.	Golla.K	-“-	Pappad making
15.	Malagathi	-“-	Stone quarrying
16.	Havanur	Afzalpur	Sheep rearing
17.	Gobbur	-“-	Individual activities
18.	Bidhnur	-“-	Sheep rearing
19.	Hirolli	Aland	Vegetable Vending
20.	Thirtha thanda	-“-	Sheep rearing
21.	Jumbga.R	-“-	-“-
22.	Kadani	Gulbarga	-“-
23.	Ganjalkhed	-“-	-“-
24.	Syedh Chincholi	-“-	-“-

Table 5.6 Training in pappad making - Linking EDP with literacy

Name of the village	Name of the sangha	No.of Participants	No.of participants received stipend	Total amount	Raw materials	Resource person fee for 3 months for 2 members
Shirdona	Shwetha MS Sangha	15	10	9000.00	5000.00	3000.00
Keribosga	Jnana Jyothi MS Sangha	10	8	7200.00	4000.00	2400.00
Total		25	18	16200.00	9000.00	5400.00

While planning the programme with the sangha women, it was decided that every training session would first have about 2 hours of literacy inputs for the women. This strategy proved both enjoyable and useful for the women. The training has really helped to improve the economic status of the sangha. Further, women have been able to market their products locally. Women have been able to repay 60% of the loan of Rs.9,000/- taken for raw material. The Gulbarga unit has taken the lead in collaborating with the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF). As a result, several sanghas have taken up dairying as an economic activity. This is proving both useful and profitable. In the past year, Milk Co-operative Societies have been formed in Hadagil and Kadani. The process of dairy farming has started in Mutuga. More animals have been purchased by the women and MS sanghas are becoming members of milk co-operative societies. The success of this venture has encouraged the Gulbarga team to see if it can be replicated in other areas.

5.3.2 Raichur District

Table 5.7 The following table shows the various Government Schemes and Department resources accessed by the Raichur District.

Village	No.of beneficiaries	Schemes	Offices/ Departments
Mustur	2	@ 16000/-	Gram Panchayat
Hanagundabada	6	Agriculture training	Agriculture department
Masarkal	2	10000/- loan with 50% subsidy for Devadasis	SC/ST corporation
Masarkal	5	Electricity(Bhagyajoti)	Gram Panchayat
Mustur	Sangha	SHG loan	³ TGB
Gejjebavi	1	Training in Tailoring	Gram Panchayat
Mustur and Hangundabada	Sangha	Sangha registration	Registrar's office
-"-	2	Houses	Gram Panchayat
Kakargal Amarapur Sunkushwaral Jinuapur	Sangha	Toilet construction	Tahuk Panchayat
6 villages	6 sangha	60000/- Drought relief fund sanction (released Rs.30000/-)	DC office
Singanodi	2	10000/- loan	SC/ST corporation
Yellabpur	Sangha	Pomogranate seedings	Horticulture Department
-"-	1	2000/-	LIC
Jegarkal Singanodi	2 sangha 8 women	Training in Mushroom and Fruit juice production	Horticulture Department

³ Tungabhadra Grameen Bank

Problems in accessing government schemes.

Many problems have arisen in trying to link MS sanghas with the various Government departments and a few examples are given here. In Katletcoor village, women were promised financial and material support to construct toilets. The women worked hard to dig the pits and start the construction work. However, the money that was promised by Government officials has not been sanctioned in spite of repeated efforts by women as well as the MS team. Government officials have shown total insensitivity to the women's efforts and to the fact that they have taken time out of their overburdened lives to try and get hygienic toilet facilities by putting in free labour. However, the same sangha women are harangued by officials for not availing of the toilet scheme provided so kindly by the Government. Further, poor sangha women are being told by officials that they cannot contest Panchayat elections if they do not have toilets in their houses, since an announcement to this effect was made by the State Government.

Eight orphans were identified by the sangha women and brought to the Government remand home. However, there were so many internal problems that the children had to be sent back. In Mustoor village, the Bank Manager agreed to give sangha women loan within 8 days of the meeting assuring them that they fulfilled all the criteria. This promise was made in February'99 but the money has not been received till the time of writing this report (July'99).

5.3.3 Bidar District

Table 5.8 Details of DWCRA programme

Sl.No.	Taluk and No.of sanghas	No.of members in sangha	No.of beneficiaries	Reasons for taking loan, status of loan
1.	Bhalki - 5 sanghas	100	-	Payment pending to women
2.	Humnabad - 6 sanghas	127	5	⁴ Payment pending to women. Purchasing of Buffaloes by 5 members
3.	Bidar - 6 sanghas	148	108	Purchase of Cattle
4.	Basavakalyana - 6 sanghas	118	55	1. Purchase of Cattle 2. Children's education 3. Purchase of seeds, fertilisers
5.	Aurad - 7 sanghas	130	73	1. Purchase of Cattle 2. Children's education, marriage purpose, medical expenditure etc. 3. Leaf plate making. ⁵
	Total	623	241	Rs.7,56,000 sanctioned

⁴ Result : Awaiting the decisions to be taken at the DWCRA meeting

⁵ Process of making plates out of leaves for eating purposes.

Table 5.9 Details of SHG beneficiaries

Sl. No.	Taluk	No. of sanghas	Total amount of loan	No. of participants	Purpose of loan	Total amount of loan repayment
1.	Bidar	5	1,10,000.00	39	1. Purchase of Buffaloes, cows and goats. 2. Purchase of fertilisers, seeds etc.	34,152.00
2.	Humnabad	8	1,55,000.00	99	1. Purchase of ration, seeds, fertiliser 2. Purchase of Buffaloes, cows, treatment of animals 3. Education, provision stores 4. Weeding of crops 5. House repairs and renovation, land leasing	1,06,063.00
3.	Aurad	10	2,30,000.00	70	1. Agriculture land fertiliser, chemicals 2. Daughter's wedding 3. Purchase of Buffaloes & Cows, seeds, fertiliser 4. Wood business, education, weeding crops 5. Land leasing, cycle shop	1,30,150.00
4.	Bhalki	3	70,000.00	30	1. Purchase of Buffaloes and Cows, 2. Purchase of fertiliser, seeds 3. Purchase of tailoring machine	17,175.00
	Total	26	5,65,000.00	238		2,87,540.00

5.3.4 Bijapur District

5.10 Other resources accessed by MS sangha women.

Sl.No.	Schemes	No.of women	No.of sangha	Amount	Material benefit
1.	IRDP	60	24	5,86,900	-
2.	DRP	12	8	1,50,000	-
3.	DWCRA	40	4	65,000	-
4.	SC/ST Corporation	3	3	1,51,200	-
5.	Ashraya Yojane	83	30	5,60,000	-
6.	Land Army	5	-	-	5 houses
7.	Ambedkar Yojane	1	-	-	1 house
8.	Government Compensation fund	88	-	44,000	-
9.	District Veterinary Hospital	3	-	26,250	-
10.	KMF	6	1	36,000	-
	Total	301	70	16,19,350	

5.4 OTHER IMPORTANT COLLABORATIONS IN THE VARIOUS DISTRICTS DURING THE YEAR 1998-99 HAVE BEEN THE FOLLOWING.

- a) Between MSK and the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) under the Support Training and Employment programme (STEP), collectives of poor women are being helped to take up dairying as an economic activity. This process eventually leads to the formation of milk societies. This is an economic activity that sangha women in all the MS districts are confident of taking up.

The advantages of this collaboration are

- It helps to build up economic linkages for the sanghas in order to sustain them as self-reliant collectives in the post MS phase.
- It helps to extend the MS philosophy particularly on gender issues into new groups and new areas. The STEP programme is conscious about having gender sensitisation programmes for its beneficiary groups and has expressed interest in taking advantage of MS experience for this purpose.
- This collaboration gives an opportunity for MS functionaries to continue their work in the post MS phase.

Very detailed programmes in the field have been set in motion in Gulbarga, Bidar and Bijapur districts. In Gulbarga district, 30 to 40 sanghas are already involved in reasonably profitable dairying activity. This has led to a strong sense of empowerment.

- b) In all the MS districts, MS(K) has been working closely with the DPEP on several programmes. These include training for the VEC members, raising awareness on education and gender issues through jathas, collaborating with the respective DPEP teams in village level microplanning. This work has been carried out by the district teams of Bidar, Raichur, Koppal, Gulbarga, Mysore and Bellary.

- c) Jathas for public awareness have also been taken up for the 'Kannada Naadu Shakshara Naadu' programme in Bijapur, Bidar, Raichur, Koppal, Gulbarga and Mysore.
- d) A study on the impact of the reproductive and child health (RCH) programme on rural women was carried out in Bijapur. This study was carried out by the Health Watch Group as part of the preparation for the CAIRO +5 conference at Amsterdam. (This was to monitor the situation 5 years after the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994)

5.5 MS AS A TRAINING RESOURCE FOR OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The MS experience in the field has been very rich and has resulted in building up the training skills of MS functionaries. As a result they are able to share their skills with several other organisations.

Table 5.11 below gives an idea of some of these efforts.

STATE OFFICE

Sl. No.	Organisation / Programme	Participants	Place	Trainer
1	Gender sensitisation and plan of action (2 days)	RWSSP project implementation staff of Bijapur district	Bijapur	Savitha, Sowbhagya
2	Training the trainers of IMY in group formation (1 day)	ICDS Project CDPO's from South India	Kodaikanal	Amrutha

RAICHUR AND KOPPAL

Sl. No.	Organisation / Programme	Participants	Place	Trainer
1.	Training for Anganwadi functionaries	Anganwadi Functionaries	Deodurga, Raichur & Manvi	Samakhya team
2.	Training for Anganwadi functionaries	Self - reliance members	Raichur	Samakhya team
3.	Training for Anganwadi functionaries	Group organised by Bank Officers	Raichur , Koppal	Samakhya team
4.	Jatha, DPEP / KNSN	Village community	Raichur	Raichur Team
5.	Jatha, DPEP	Selected villages	Raichur	Raichur MS team with teachers

BIJAPUR

Sl. No.	Organisation / Programme	Participants	Place	Trainer
1.	Indira Mahila Yojane Training (2 days)	Anganwadi Teachers	Orphanage, Bijapur	Nirmala Siraguppi
2.	Mahila Arthika Swawalambane Yojane Training (5 days)	Group members	Kannurmalth	Uma Wodeyar & Nirmala Siraguppi
3.	Awareness Camp (2 days)	Scouts & Guides Students	Scouts & Guides Building	Nirmala Siraguppi & Uma Wodeyar
4.	Women's organisation Convention (3 days)	Field workers of Women's Organisation	SEARCH, Bangalore	Nirmala Siraguppi
5.	DPEP Training (3 days)	VEC members	Mudhol	Nirmala Siraguppi
6.	Gender Training (3 days)	Primary School Teachers	DIET, Ilkal	Nirmala Siraguppi
7.	AIDS Awareness Camp (2 days)	College Students	Employees Association Building, Bijapur	Nirmala Siraguppi
8.	Jatha , DPEP / KNSN	Village community	Bijapur	Bijapur Team

BIDAR

Sl. No.	Organisation / Programme	Participants	Place	Trainer
1.	Gender training for Teachers (2 days)	Primary School Teachers	DIET	Uma Wodeyar and Shaila Shetty
2.	Jatha, DPEP / KNSN	Village community	Bidar	Bidar Team
3.	Jatha , DPEP	Selected villages	Bidar	Bidar MS team with teachers

GULBARGA

Sl. No.	Organisation / Programme	Participants	Place	Trainer
1.	Gender sensitisation workshop for KMF staff	STEP	Gulbarga	Gulbarga MS team
2.	Jatha, DPEP / KNSN	Community	Gulbarga	Gulbarga Team
3.	Street theatre, DPEP / KNSN	Women from slums	Bangalore	Gulbarga MS team

MYSORE

Sl. No.	Organisation / Programme	Participants	Place	Trainer
1.	Gender sensitisation workshop for KMF staff	STEP	Mysore	Sheela Khare
2.	Jatha, DPEP / KNSN	Village community	Mysore	Mysore Team

BELLARY

Sl. No.	Organisation / Programme	Participants	Place	Trainer
1.	Gender sensitisation workshop for KMF staff	STEP	Bellary	Gowri
2.	Jatha, DPEP	Selected villages	Bellary	Bellary MS team with teachers

Note on Abbreviations

KMF	- Karnataka Milk Federation
DPEP	- District Primary Education Programme
KNSN	- Kannada Naadu Sakshara Naadu
RNE	- Royal Netherland Embassy
ICDS	- Integrated Child Development Services
CDPO	- Child Development Project Officer
NGO	- Non Governmental Organisation

**Fig. 5.1 SANGHAS ACCESSING MONETARY BENEFITS
FROM GOVERNMENT OR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

BIDAR

TOTAL SANGHAS 217 26%

SANGHAS THAT HAVE
ACCESSED 56 (26%)
OUTSIDE FUNDS

GULBARGA

TOTAL SANGHAS 169 18%

SANGHAS THAT HAVE
ACCESSED 31 (18%)
OUTSIDE FUNDS

RAICHUR & KOPPAL

TOTAL SANGHAS 147 15%

SANGHAS THAT HAVE
ACCESSED 22 (15%)
OUTSIDE FUNDS

BIJAPUR

TOTAL SANGHAS 198 24%

SANGHAS THAT HAVE
ACCESSED 47 (24%)
OUTSIDE FUNDS

Economic linkages in Mysore district are still in process. Economic activity and capacity at sangha level needs to be strengthened before outside resources can be accessed.

Since Bellary is a new district, such linkages are now being explored.

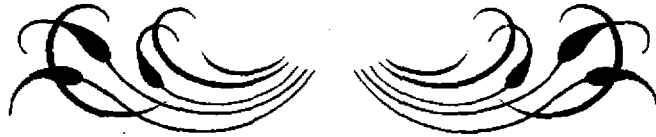
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MAHILA SAMAKHYA KARNATAKA**

SL. NO.	NAME AND DESIGNATION	STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP
1.	SRI. GOVINDE GOWDA Hon'ble Minister for Education Government of Karnataka BANGALORE.	PRESIDENT GC
2.	SRI. V. MADHU I.A.S. (until Sept.'98) SRI. SANJAY KAUL I.A.S. (Sept.'98 to date) Secretary Primary and Secondary Education Department Government of Karnataka M.S. Building BANGALORE.	CHAIRMAN, EC & MEMBER GC
3.	DR. REVATHI NARAYANAN State Programme Director Mahila Samakhya Karnataka No.68, 1st Cross, Ind main, HAL III Stage, J.B.Nagar, BANGALORE - 75.	MEMBER - SECRETARY, EC & GC
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11.	Dr. MALAVIKA KARLEKAR Editor, Centre for Women's Development Studies Consultant & Editor, Indian Journal of Gender Studies, 25, Bhaivir Singh Marg, Near Gole Market, NEW DELHI.	MEMBER, GC, EC & NRG NOMINEE
12.	Ms. UMA MAHADEVAN I.A.S. Director, Mass Education, IMA Building, AVR Road, Chamarajpet, BANGALORE - 560 018.	MEMBER, GC & EC
13.	Ms.RENUKA CHIDAMBARAM I.A.S. (25th May to 11th Nov'98) Mr.C.N.SEETHARAM L.A.S. (11th Nov. to 8th Jan'99) Mr.N.C.MUNIYAPPA I.A.S.(8th Jan.'99 to date) Director, Women & Child Development Dept. Government of Karnataka, M.S. Building, BANGALORE.	MEMBER, GC & EC
14.	Ms. S . RAMESHWARI VARMA Ex Director, Centre for Women's Studies, Mysore University, 46, Ist Main Road, Jayalakshmi puram, MYSORE - 570 012	MEMBER, GC & EC

15.	Ms. SOBHA NAMBISAN I.A.S. Managing Director, Karnataka Handicrafts Development Corporation, BANGALORE.	MEMBER, EC
16.	Mr.VIVEK KULKARNI, I.A.S. Finance Secretary - II Vidhana Soudha, GOK, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, BANGALORE.	MEMBER, EC
17.	Ms. ANITA KAUL I.A.S. State Project Director, DPEP, Next to Govt. Press Building Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, BANGALORE.	MEMBER, EC
18.	Dr. SHANTA MOHAN Fellow Gender Studies Unit, NIAS, IISC Campus, BANGALORE	MEMBER EC
19.	Ms. LEELA HIREMATH State Level Resource Person, DPEP, & Lecturer, Junior College, RAICHUR	MEMBER EC & DRG member, Raichur
20.	Ms. SUMAN KOLHAR Ex. Vice President, Zilla Parishat Behind Godavari Lodge Shastri Nagar, BIJAPUR	MEMBER EC, DRG member, Bijapur
21.	Ms. V.VANAJA Research Officer, Centre for Women's Studies Manasa Gangothri, MYSORE.	MEMBER EC, DRG member, Mysore
22.	Ms.NIRMALA SHIRAGUPPI District Programme Coordinator Mahila Samakhya Karnataka 190, "Sai Hrudaya", Shastri Nagar, Behind Godavari Lodge, Sainik School Road, BIJAPUR.	MEMBER, EC & GC
23.	Ms. UMA WODEYAR District Programme Co - ordinator Mahila Samakhya Karnataka No. 8-6-145, Bishan Mansion, Upstairs Syndicate Bank, Udgir Road, BIDAR.	MEMBER, EC & GC

24.	Dr.C.P. PARIMALA District Programme Co - ordinator Mahila Samakhya Karnataka No. 976, Geetha Road, Chamarajapuram, MYSORE.	MEMBER, EC & GC
25.	Ms. JYOTHI KULKARNI District Programme Co - ordinator Mahila Samakhya Karnataka No. 94, KHB Colony, MSK Mill Road, GULBARGA.	MEMBER, EC & GC
26.	Ms. SOWBHAGYAVATHI District Programme Co - ordinator, Mahila Samakhya Karnataka, No.88, Maruthi Colony, Kinnal Road, KOPPAL.	MEMBER, EC & GC
27	Ms. LEELA KULKARNI District Programme Co - ordinator I/C Mahila Samakhya Karnataka No. 1-9-3, Azaad Nagar, RAICHUR.	MEMBER, EC & GC
28	Ms. GOWRI District Programme Co - ordinator (IC) Mahila Samakhya H.No. 30, A.C. Street, Gandhinagar, BELLARY.	MEMBER, EC & GC
29	Sahayoginis - two (by rotation)	MEMBER, EC



GLOSSARY

Adhyaksha	President
AE	Adult Education
CEC	Continuing Education Centre
Dalapati	Villager who acts as link between community and police
DIU	District Implementation Unit
DPC	District Programme Co-ordinator
ECCE	Early Child Care Education
EDP	Economic Development Programme
Ghataka	Cluster of 10 Villages
Jathra	Fair
Kishoris	Teenage girls
Mahasabhas	Large meeting
Mane	House
MS (K)	Mahila Samakhya Karnataka
MSK	Mahila Shikshana Kendra
MYRADA	Mysore Resettlement And Development Agency
NFE	Non Formal Education
NLM	National Literacy Mission
Okkutta	Federation
Pappad	Wafer made of lentils
PHC	Primary Health Centre
Rottis	Chapathi made of Jowar
RWSSP	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project
SHG	Self Help Group
Upadhyaksha	Vice President
VEC	Village Education Committee



I.S.PRASAD & CO.,

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

PHONE: 2216749/2219069

FAX: 080 2219069

I.S.PRASAD, B.Sc., LL.B., F.C.A.

47, J.C.ROAD,
SEETHARAMA BUILDINGS,
BANGALORE-560 002.

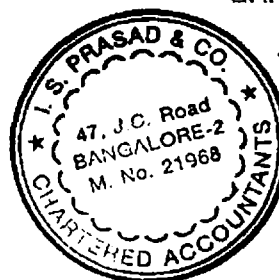
A U D I T O R ' S R E P O R T

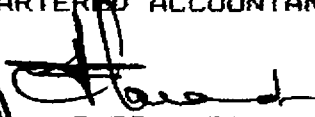
I have examined the attached Balance Sheet of Mahila Samkhyā - Karnataka as at 31st March 1999 and the Statement of Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date and report that:

1. I have obtained all the information and explanations which, to the best of my knowledge and belief were necessary for the purpose of the Audit.
2. Proper books of accounts have been kept by the Society so far as appears from my examination of the Books.
3. The Balance Sheet and the Statement of Income and Expenditure referred to in this report are in agreement with the Books of Account;
4. In my opinion, and to the best of my information and according to the explanations given to me, the said accounts, subject to observation report, give a true and fair view:
 - i. In the case of Balance Sheet of the state of affairs of the Society as at 31.03.99 and
 - ii. In the case of the Statement of Income & Expenditure, of the excess of Expenditure over Income for the year ended on that date.

Yours Faithfully,
for I.S.PRASAD & CO.,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

PLACE : BANGALORE
DATE : 01.09.1999

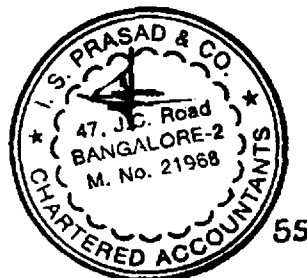



(I.S.PRASAD),
Propreitor.

MAHILA SAMAKHYA KARNATAKA

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 1999

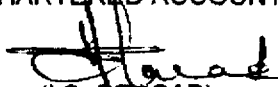
	AS AT 31.03.99 Rs.	AS AT 31.03.98 Rs.
SOURCES OF FUNDS:		
CAPITAL FUND:		
As per last Balance Sheet	5,188,255.61	11,087,103.44
Add: Grants received from GOI	-	9,000,000.00
: Towards Capital Expenditure from GOI	<u>865,332.00</u>	-
	6,053,587.61	20,087,103.44
Less: Excess of Expenditure over Income for the year	<u>3,190,650.65</u>	<u>14,898,847.83</u>
	2,862,936.96	5,188,255.61
UN-UTILISED LOCAL GRANTS:		
Grant from HKDB, Gulbarga	-	135,000.00
Grant from CBCS, Raichur	-	3,382.00
TOTAL	<u><u>2,862,936.96</u></u>	<u><u>5,326,637.61</u></u>
APPLICATION OF FUNDS:		
FIXED ASSETS: (As per schedule)		
Gross Block	5,350,924.20	4,699,512.20
Less: Depreciation	<u>3,137,347.20</u>	<u>2,687,949.20</u>
Net Block	<u>2,213,577.00</u>	<u>2,011,563.00</u>
CURRENT ASSETS, LOANS & ADVANCES:		
Cash and Bank balances:		
Cash on hand	23,935.25	13,128.15
with Scheduled Bank in Savings Bank accounts	<u>514,949.71</u>	<u>1,953,758.46</u>
	<u>538,884.96</u>	<u>1,966,886.61</u>
ADVANCES & DEPOSITS:		
Advances	166,449.00	779,212.00
Interest accrued on Deposits	-	288.00
Prepaid expenses	<u>20,971.00</u>	<u>15,367.00</u>
	<u>187,420.00</u>	<u>794,867.00</u>
DEPOSITS:		
with Scheduled Banks	-	75,000.00
Others	<u>558,137.00</u>	<u>576,337.00</u>
	<u>558,137.00</u>	<u>651,337.00</u>

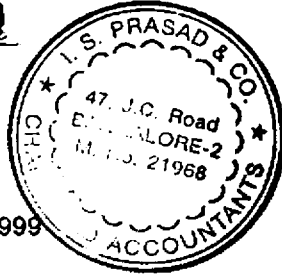


Total Current Assets	1,284,441.96	3,413,090.61
Less: CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Outstanding Liabilities	635,082.00	98,016.00
NET CURRENT ASSETS	649,359.96	3,315,074.61
TOTAL	2,862,936.96	5,326,637.61

AS PER MY REPORT OF EVEN DATE

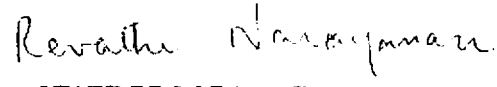
For I.S. PRASAD & Co.,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT


(I.S. PRASAD)
PROPRIETOR
M. No.21968



Bangalore
Date : 1st September, 1999

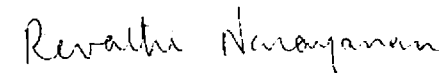
For MAHILA SAMAKHYA KARNATAKA


STATE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
State Programme Director
Mahila Samakhya (Karnataka)

ANNEXURE

Total Grants received from GOI during this financial year	1,74,00,000-00
Amount utilised towards Capital Expenditure	8,65,332-00
Amount utilised towards Revenue Expenditure	1,65,34,668-00
	<u>1,74,00,000-00</u>

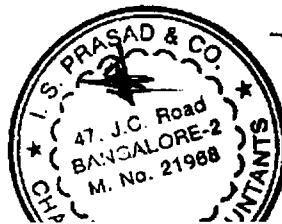



State Programme Director
Mahila Samakhya (Karnataka)

**MAHILA SAMAKHYA KARNATAKA
STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR
THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 1999**

	YEAR ENDED 31.03.99 Rs.	YEAR ENDED 31.03.98 Rs.
INCOME:		
Grants received from GOI towards)		
Revenue Expenditure)	16,534,668.00	-
Local Grants	219,800.00	132,602.00
Interest received:		
on deposits with banks	47,189.00	254,481.00
From Savings Bank accounts	31,353.60	131,205.30
Profit from sale of assets (Vehicle)	16,436.00	69,608.00
Miscellaneous Income	6,328.00	4,135.20
Sangha Honorarium	52,800.00	-
Sangha Hut	15,000.00	-
CBCS Grants	33,382.00	-
KWDC Grants	30,000.00	-
TOTAL	16,986,956.60	592,031.50
EXPENDITURE:		
Payments to Staff		
Honorarium	3,604,167.00	3,214,258.15
Leave encashment	-	30,318.00
Provident Fund	821,237.00	-
PF Arrears	2,201,685.00	-
P F Administration charges	74,895.00	-
Reimbursement of medical expenses	129,765.45	26,816.65
Rent Paid	602,908.00	578,000.00
Fee and honorarium	6,971.00	113,724.00
Repairs and Maintenance:		
Vehicles	500,354.05	528,286.50
Computers	12,376.00	19,855.00
Postage and Telephones	459,711.80	444,862.83
Printing and Stationery	169,234.10	184,072.30
Books and periodicals	-	17,758.80
Travelling and Conveyance:		
Local Conveyance	-	67,903.00
Travelling	-	505,840.50
Electricity and water	83,350.00	73,379.00
Advertisement Expenses	33,715.00	6,240.00
Bank charges	4,458.50	4,455.00
Audit Fees	20,000.00	10,000.00
Office Maintenance/Contingency	417,299.35	409,287.05
KWDC Expenses	39,702.00	-
Depreciation	644,554.00	573,980.50
ACTIVITY COSTS:		
Training and documentation	328,809.80	630,672.30
Workshops and Meetings	2,526,139.90	1,754,364.20
Child Care facilities	906,329.00	738,126.40
External concurrent Evaluation	-	79,160.00
Publication of Information	107,978.10	238,242.55
Resource Centre	54,579.00	68,734.00
CBCS Workshop	33,382.00	62,185.00
Grama Sevaki Salaries	-	25,704.00
Saksharatha Jatha	-	43,500.00
TOTAL	14,280,978.80	10,449,725.73

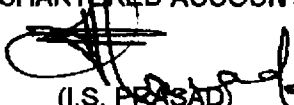
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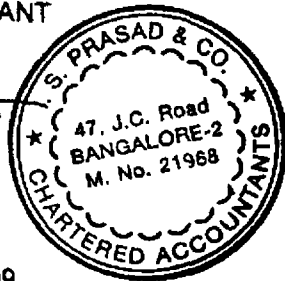


B/f	14,280,978.80	10,449,725.73
SAHAYOGINI'S EXPENSES:		
Salaries	1,961,084.50	1,597,135.40
Stationery and books	3,180.00	84,310.95
Contingencies	46,345.00	61,982.25
MAHILA SANGHA:		
Honorarium	-	-
Hut Construction	918,000.00	41,000.00
Hut Construction - H.K.D.B	135,000.00	-
Hut Construction - Z.P.	200,000.00	-
Stationery and Contingency	15,857.00	124,161.00
Books and Journals	688.00	3,109.20
Durries, desk etc.,	48,750.00	172,580.00
Musical Instruments	-	117,040.00
ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION:		
Salaries	469,137.25	629,878.20
Training/Vocational courses	-	7,929.00
Stationery and Contingency	190,197.00	204,414.05
Educational Materials	14,966.00	-
MAHILA SHIKSHANA KENDRA:		
Salaries	532,784.00	544,934.60
Rent	366,158.00	249,587.00
Contingency	124,319.30	156,395.05
Maintenance Expenses	606,628.75	714,919.80
Educational Expenses	75,465.05	138,251.10
Medical facilities	60,334.35	43,942.25
Stipend/Fee etc.,	127,712.25	149,583.75
TOTAL	<u>20,177,607.25</u>	<u>15,490,879.33</u>
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME	<u>3,190,650.65</u>	<u>14,898,847.83</u>

AS PER MY REPORT OF EVEN DATE


For I.S. PRASAD & Co.,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT


(I.S. PRASAD)
PROPRIETOR
M. No.21968



Bangalore
Date : 1st September, 1999

For MAHILA SAMAKHYA KARNATAKA

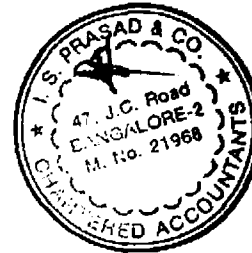

STATE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
State Programme Director
Mahila Samakhyas (Karnataka)

MAHILA SAMAKHYA KARNATAKA**SCHEDULE OF FIXED ASSETS**

(in rupees)

Description	GROSS BLOCK			DEPRECIATION					NET BLOCK	
	Cost as on 1.4.98	Additions during the year	Deletions during the year	Cost as on 31.3.99	Upto 31.3.1998	On deletions	For the year	Upto 31.3.1999	Written-down value as on	
									31.3.1999	31.3.1998
Vehicles	1,892,209.00	788,943.00	213,000.00	2,468,152.00	1,230,433.00	194,342.00	362,681.00	1,398,772.00	1,069,380.00	661,778.00
Office equipment	1,353,729.55	31,432.00	920.00	1,384,241.55	948,212.55	814.00	107,303.00	1,054,701.55	329,540.00	405,517.00
Computers	775,375.60	-	-	775,375.60	265,540.60	-	127,459.00	392,999.60	382,376.00	509,835.00
Furniture and fixtures	678,198.05	44,957.00	-	723,155.05	243,763.05	-	47,111.00	290,874.05	432,281.00	434,435.00
Total	4,699,512.20	865,332.00	213,920.00	5,350,924.20	2,687,949.20	195,156.00	644,554.00	3,137,347.20	2,213,577.00	2,011,563.00
Previous year	3,997,769.70	855,242.50	153,500.00	4,699,512.20	2,253,976.70	140,008.00	573,980.50	2,687,949.20	2,011,563.00	1,743,793.00

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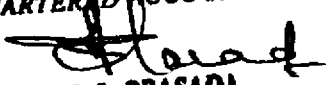
MAHILA SAMAKHYA KARNATAKA

A. Significant Accounting Policies:

1. The Accounts have been prepared as per historical cost convention and on accrual basis. Except Grants-in-Aid received, which is accounted on actual receipt basis and what ever Capital expenditure incurred, the equivalent amount considered in the Capital Fund and the remaining considered as revenue grants as the grants are received mainly for Activities account only.
2. Fixed Assets are disclosed in the accounts at historical cost less accumulated depreciation.
3. Depreciation on all assets is computed on the written down value and provided at the rates prescribed by the Income-tax Act, 1961.
4. Previous year figures have been regrouped/rearranged wherever necessary to suit the Current year's presentation.
5. Prior period Expenditure like PF are accounted on the date of determination of Liability.

B. Notes and Accounts:

1. During the year, since the Provident Fund is implemented the amount shown in Income & Expenditure of Rs.30,22,922/- includes arrears related to previous years also of Rs.20,01,685/-.
2. No Physical verification of Fixed Assets done in the absence of the Fixed Asset register.

For I. S. PRASAD & CO.
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

(I. S. PRASAD)
Proprietor

SUGGESTIONS:

To

The Director
Mahila Samkhya Karnataka
State Project Office
Bangalore.

We suggest the following Registers to be maintained/Procedures to be followed:

(1) Fixed Asset Register shall be maintained in the following Format, so as to verify the asset during course of Audit.

<u>SL.NO.</u>	<u>DATE OF PURCHASE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF ASSET</u>	<u>INVOICE NO.</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
---------------	-------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------	---------------	-----------------

(2) Programme Register indicating the nature of Programme, Date and Venue with initiate of SPD along with Photos taken during conducting Programme.

(3) REGARDING AMOUNT PAID TO VILLAGE SANGHAS TOWARDS HUT CONSTRUCTION:-


Photography of the HUT after completion duly certified by the Head of Village Sangha and utilisation Certificate to be obtained to ensure Proper utilisation of the amount disbursed to them.

(4) As per guidelines stores register to be maintained in respect of Stores/Capital assets etc., purchased, issued etc., as per the format prescribed in guide lines. We have observed that no such Register is being maintained.

(5) TDS shall be deducted as per Income Tax Act, wherever it is applicable noncompliance of TDS leads to penalty etc.,

Any further clarification required in any matter please feel free to contact us.

Yours Faithfully,
for I.S.PRASAD & CO.,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS


(I.S.PRASAD),
Propreitor.

ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಮುಖ್ಯದಿಂದ

“ಘಟಕ ಮೇಳ”

ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಮುಖ್ಯ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗಾಗಿ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳನ್ನು ಹಮ್ಮಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಆ ನಿಟ್ಟಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಸಮುಖ್ಯವು ಒಂದು ತಿಂಗಳ ಕಾಲ ೧೦ ಘಟಕಗಳನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಈ ಮೇಳದಲ್ಲಿ ನಾನಾ ಹಳ್ಳಿಗಳಿಂದ ೧,೧೨೬ ಜನ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

“ ಈ ಮೇಳದಲ್ಲಿ ಪಂಚಾಯತ ರಾಜ್, ಲಿಂಗತ್ವ, ಕಾನೂನು, ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ, ಸ್ವಾವಲಂಬನೆ ಮುಂತಾದ ವಿಷಯಗಳ ಕುರಿತು ಚರ್ಚಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಸಾಕ್ಷರತೆ, ಆರೋಗ್ಯದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸುದೀರ್ಘವಾಗಿ ಚರ್ಚಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಇಂಡಿ ಮೇಳ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಗಾರ ತರಬೇತಿಯಿಂದ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ತಮ್ಮ ರುಜು ಮಾಡಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಯಿತು” ಎಂದು ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಮನ್ವಯನಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ನಿರ್ಮಲಾ ಶಿರಗುಪ್ಪಿ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ನಗರವಾರ್ತೆ
 ೨-೭-೯೯ | ಪ್ರಜಾವಾನಿ |
 ವಿಜಯಪುರ, ಜುಲೈ ೭

ಘಟಕ ಮೇಳ

ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಮುಖ್ಯದ ವತಿಯಿಂದ ಈಚೆಗೆ ಒಂದು ತಿಂಗಳವರೆಗೆ 10 ಘಟಕ ಮೇಳಗಳನ್ನು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಐದು ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಮೇಳ 1126 ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿದ್ದರು ಎಂದು ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಮುಖ್ಯ ವಿಜಯಪುರ ಘಟಕದ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಸಮನ್ವಯನಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ತಿಳಿಸಿದೆ.

ಘಟ್ಟವರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಜಾಯವಾ ಯಲ್ಲಿ ಜರುಗಿದ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಟ್ಟ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಮೇಳದಲ್ಲಿ ತಿಳಿಸಿದ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್ ರಾಜ್, ಲಿಂಗತ್ವ, ಕಾನೂನು ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಮತ್ತು ಸ್ವಾವಲಂಬನೆ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ಘಟಕ ಮೇಳದಲ್ಲೂ ಸಮನ್ವಯವಾಗಿ ತಿಳಿ ಹೇಳಲಾಯಿತು.

GULBARGA SANGHA WOMEN WHO PLAN TO CONTEST THE PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS TAKING A PETITION AGAINST THE “ TOILET SCHEME (See page...for details)



ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯತಿ ಚುನಾವಣೆ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧಿಸಲು ಶೌಚಾಲಯ ಕಡ್ಡಾಯವಾಗಿರಬೇಕೆಂಬ ಸರಕಾರ ನಿಯಮ ವಿರೋಧಿಸಿ ನಗರದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಮುಖ್ಯ ಸಂಘದವರು ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಮೆರವಣಿಗೆ ನಡೆಸಿದ ಚಿತ್ರ.

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Breaking th

While urban India is hurtling towards liberalisation as it always has. Yet, something is changing.

KALPANA SHARMA highlights an i

seem unaware of the import

"Our young daughters had to sit on the laps of the Gowdas (upper caste men) in our village and remove the money the men were clenching between their teeth."

"An old man in our village raped an eight-year-old Harijan girl because he had been told by the government doctor that he would be cured of a sexually transmitted disease in this way."

"The Gowdas would taunt us and say that even if we educated our daughters, who would give them a job? Better send them to us."

THESE stories are not unfamiliar. You read about them and see programmes about them on television. Yet each time they are reported, you are surprised that while urban India is hurtling towards integration with a global economy, large parts of rural India remain untouched. Life here goes on, as it always has. Centuries of caste divisions refuse to be erased even if mud has given way to plastic and bright yellow and green plastic waterpots and *lotas* have replaced their mud and brass originals.

Yet, something is changing, albeit slowly. It is not one single process contributing to the change but probably a combination of several. Some of the changes are so dramatic that they represent a virtual social revolution. Yet, the

people caught in the middle seem blissful. They are unaware of the import of what they are in

On March 8, International Women's Day, Kalpana Sharma talked to Lalita from Banur, Humnabad taluka of Karnataka. Lalita was one of over 400 women who had gathered on the grounds of the Mallana Mandira in Kharwad, Karnataka, for a literacy programme, Mahila Mandira.

"For years," said Lalita, "I was forced to give my young girls to the Gowdas to make them dance, take them to their laps. They use their mouths to take the money clenching between their teeth."

Three years ago, the Pratha Sangha of which Lalita is a member, decided to stop sending their daughters to their aid, the police first. Lalita and other women why they were refused. Lalita and other women also decided to break the custom that required *dalit* women to perform certain rites connected with the temple.

Retaliation was inevitable. Twelve of the *Sangha* women

Navroz Contractor



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and complained: they managed to get the water restored and the mill opened. "If it hadn't been for the *sangha*, we would have been doing the same thing even today," says Lalita.

Making women believe that they have the power to change the circumstances into which they were born is the first step to these changes. The programme - Mahila Samakhya - that has facilitated the process, is different from other government programmes because it recognises the importance of this. Thus, it was designed to approach literacy, for instance, not as an end in itself, but as a tool which women would use as and when they felt the need for it. It began deliberately, by providing women the space to meet and talk about their problems. Through these discussions, different needs were expressed and a variety of initiatives and programmes emerged.

Literacy was a by-product of this process. Bamma from Hirevenkelkunta in Raichur district acknowledged that she realised she needed to be literate after she stood and won a seat in the panchayat in the last elections. She was asked by three men to sign a meeting notice. As she did not know the contents, she affixed her thumb impression. Only later did she realise that she had signed withdrawal papers for the election for the chair of the panchayat. A man was elected.

Continued on page II



Breaking the shackles

Continued from page 1



(Left to right) Lalitha, Balamma and Chandramma ... their stories illustrate what "empowerment" means.



Neelamma is another woman panchayat member who suffered because she did not know how to read and write. From Nilkunda village in Bidar district, Neelamma, who is a landless labourer, says that she realised she could not ask questions about the budget because she could not read. All the three women elected to the Panchayat are illiterate. Now she has learned how to sign her name and has made sure that all her children are educated. "Before panchayat raj, we never got anything. We used to feel afraid to go to the *gram* panchayat. But now we are not afraid and we go and sit on the chair in the *gram* panchayat," she says with pride.

Kalavati from Netur B in Bidar district, a fiery 22-year-old who heads the local *sangha*, told the tale of the old man who had raped the eight-year-old *dalit* girl. The *sangha* women took the girl to the same doctor the old man had consulted, oblivious to the role he (the doctor) had played. When they found the old man and took him to the police, he confessed. The doctor too was arrested, but managed to get out on bail and is still practising in the village. Although Kalavati is incensed about what had happened, she feels helpless about dealing with the doctor. "He is a brahmin and

his father is a lawyer," she says by way of an explanation.

Kalavati is exceptional in that she is young. Many of the *sangha* women are older, already grandmothers, who have decided to take on the upper castes in their villages. Most of the *sanghas* are almost entirely made up of *dalit* women. Neither women from other castes, or other creeds, are part of the *sanghas*. For instance, there are hardly any Muslim women. When I ask Kalavati why she has not tried to approach the Muslim women in her village, she says they do not want to come.

So while the *sanghas* are tackling one set of rigid divisions, they are leaving others untouched. Perhaps that will be the next step, if they feel the need.

Ms. Revathy Narayan, director of MS in Karnataka says that programmes evolve according to the needs of the *sanghas*. Because MS chose to begin with the most marginalised amongst the women, it has become predominantly a programme that works with *dalit* women. It has made no real effort, except in one of the newer districts where it has just begun its work, to widen the caste base of the *sanghas*.

Mahila Samakhya (MS) has now completed

eight years. It began as a five-year-programme, wholly funded by the Dutch government, in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. It has had several extensions and its present state of funding is expected to end in another three years. Will the programme be able to sustain itself?

Although it claims to work like a non-governmental programme, in fact it is a top-down programme but with a difference. It was conceived outside the villages in which it works, yet its basic structure ensures that what it does is dictated by the women at the bottom of the structure. Thus, it varies crucially from other government programmes. It also differs from non-governmental programmes because it has a structure and has the funds to spread out and extend its reach. Many well-intentioned NGOs remain limited because of the absence of either or both these elements.

What is evident when you meet the women who have been part of the programme these last eight years or so in Karnataka, where the programme has been more successful than in some of the other States, is that the process of making women realise their power cannot be reversed too easily. Whether it is physically beating up drunken men, or tackling wife beating,

or caste problems, the common theme that emerges is the fact that these women now feel strong, they have the courage to do things they would never have done in the past. And all of them recognise the importance of education, especially educating their daughters.

Chandramma from Chambal village in Bidar district says that her educated daughter came home after a bad marriage. In her village, when a Gowda passed by, the women had to cover their heads. Now they tie their *paloo* around their waists. And as for her daughter, she has come back now, is working and is not interested in marriage, saying, "My job is my husband. I don't want or need a husband." Chandramma never went to school, yet of her three daughters, one has graduated and the other two are in school.

In many parts of India, through a variety of programmes and processes like Mahila Samakhya, we are beginning to hear the voices of women like Lalitha, Kalavati and Chandramma. They need support, of the kind the *sanghas* can give them. They also need recognition, and participation in governance through the Panchayati Raj system. These are the stories that illustrate what is really meant by the over-used term "empowerment". ■

LEARNING TO WRITE - RESIDENTIAL LITERACY CAMP FOR SANGHA WOMEN

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STRIVING FOR GENDER JUSTICE

About Mahila Samakhya Karnataka...

Mahila Samakhya is a programme of the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The programme was born out of the emphasis given in the New Education Policy of 1986 to the need for education programmes to play a "positive, interventionist role" in bringing about women's equality. The programme started in Karnataka in the year 1989.

MS Objectives

- *To create an environment where women can make informed choices and determine their own destinies.*
- *To facilitate a process of societal transformation through collective reflection, analysis, learning and action with a gender perspective.*
- *To enhance women's bargaining powers as members of society by increasing their access and control over household and societal resources*
- *To augment women's economic roles by optimum utilisation, redistribution and rejuvenation of community resources*

The MS Strategy

The basic strategy of the programme is the building of village level collectives or "sanghas" that are not merely activity oriented, but which enable women to raise their self image and confidence and recognise their own strengths. The programme includes initiatives in literacy for adult women, non formal education and creche centres, mahila shikshana kendras for young girls, initiatives for women in health awareness and legal education, participation in local governance bodies, of rural women; demanding accountability from mainstream structures and institutions...

MS, Karnataka is today working with 25,000 women in 1020 villages in 7 districts of Karnataka (Bidar, Bijapur, Mysore, Raichur, Gulbarga, Bellary and Koppal).

MAHILA SAMAKHYA, KARNATAKA

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