

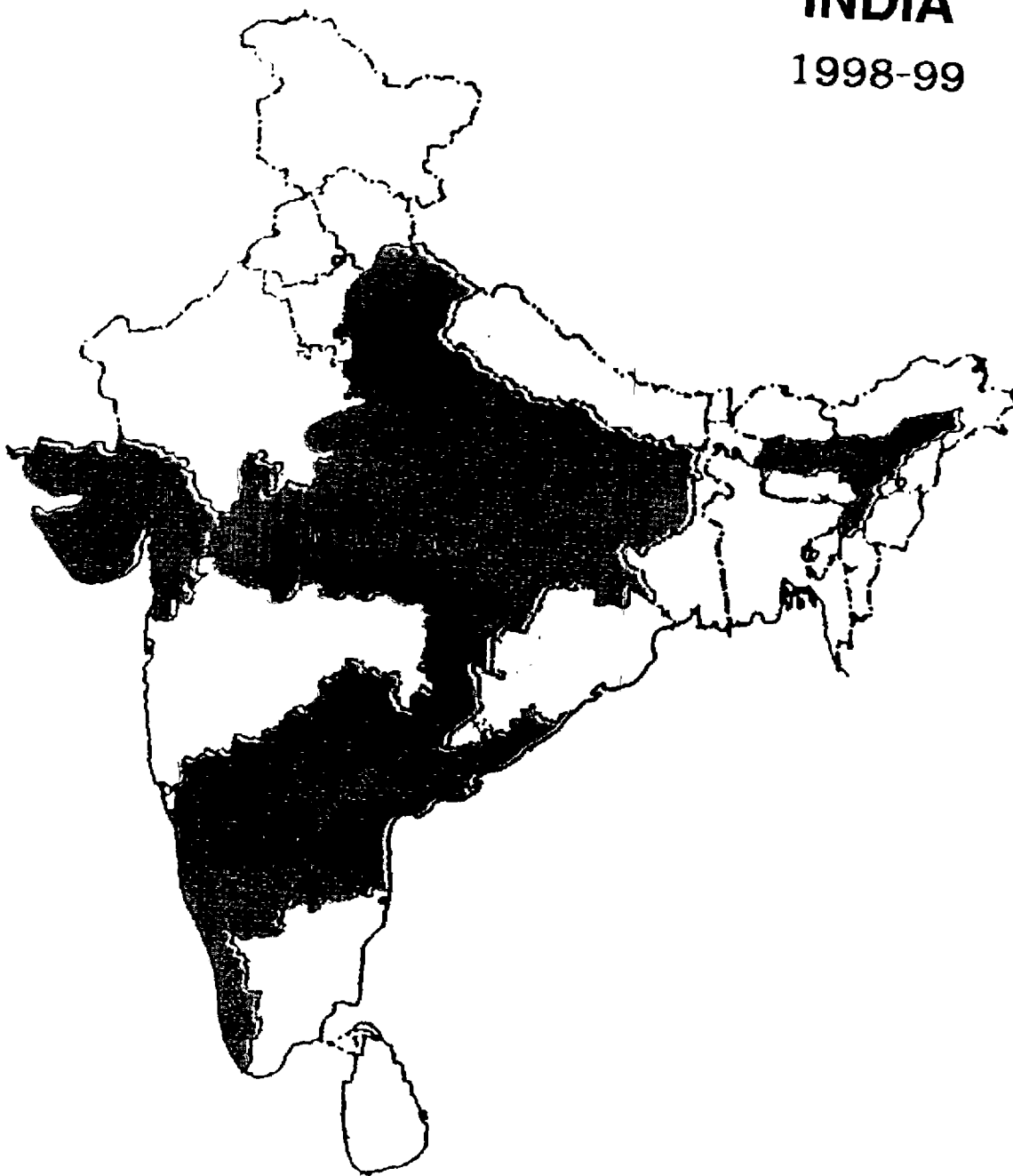
NEW CHALLENGES OF THE
NEW MILLENIUM



ANNUAL REPORT 1998 -99
MAHILA SAMAKHYA, UTTAR PRADESH

INDIA

1998-99



Mahila Samakhya State

A STATISTICAL PROFILE OF U.P.

**Table:1 TRENDS AND BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS:
UTTAR PRADESH AND INDIA**

Indicators	U.P. 1981	U.P.1991	India 1991
Population	11,08,62,512	13,91,12,287	84,63,02,688
% population increase (previous decade)	25.5	25.5	23.9
Density (population/sq. km)	377	473	273
Percent Urban	18.0	19.8	26.1
Sex Ration	885	879	927
Percent Scheduled Caste	21.2	21.0	3.8
Percent Scheduled Tribe	0.2	0.2	0.8
% Literate – Male	38.8	55.7	64.1
“ — Female	14.0	25.3	39.3
Crude Birth Rate	39.6	36.2	29.0
Crude Death Rate	16.3	12.8	10.0
Total Fertility Rate	5.8	5.1	3.6
Infant Mortality Rate	150	98	76
Life Expectancy – Male	51.1	54.1	58.1
Female	48.9	49.6	59.1

Source: Office of the Registrar General (1982,1985,1992,1993,1994)
Census Commissioner (1974,1976,1984,1987)

Table:2 SOME SOCIAL INDICATORS OF U.P.

Percentage of population below poverty line	38.9%
Mean age at marriage	16.7yrs
Differential School enrolment	587 girls / 1000boys

Source of data : UNICEF Annual Report 1996 -97



SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES **OF MAHILA SAMAKHYA U.P. 1998-1999**

171 libraries for rural people and neo-literates

30,000 women moving towards empowerment

264 cases of violence, land disputes and other issues resolved by sanghas and 5 'Nari Adalats'

Four residential literacy centres (Mahila Shikshan Kendras) for women and girls and four more planned

10000 women participating in various self-help groups for rural women's empowerment and 10000 more planned for the next year

News pages published from 10 districts composed by rural people in the rural dialect, covering village-level local news and issues

Rural illiterate village women functioning as trainers for hand-pump mechanics, for health, gender, panchayati raj issues etc.

Environmental initiatives for the conservation and restoration of natural resources. Four woman headed "Van Panchayats" formed and eighteen more proposed.

**Village sangha women controlled forest fires
and participated in tree plantation on a large scale**

Registration of three NGOs of Sahayoginis in 1998-99

Women mobilised people to donate land for sangha's 'thikanas' (hubs)

Sangha women have succeeded in getting land registered

**Sangha women managed to get Gram Sabha land registered in their
names for residential purposes**

**Successful economic development activities by sanghas e.g.,
co-operative farming, tent-house businesses, catering etc**

Sangha women have become stone quarry work contractors

**Motivated by successes of sanghas, 120 collectives
formed by 'kisanis' (adolescent girls)
on their own initiative**

Table:3 MAHILA SAMAKHYA (U.P.) PROGRAMME COVERAGE FROM 1-4-1998 TO 31-3-1999

	Varanasi	Chitra-koot	Tehri	Saharanpur	Pauri	Allahabad	Sitapur	Auraiya	Gorakhpur	Nainital	Total
Block	03	04	04	03	03	02	01	01	01	01	23
Village	194	170	230	230	150	155	70	81	75	80	1435
Sanghas	194	170	230	230	150	155	70	81	75	80	1435
Strong Sanghas	112	95	120	160	65	90	23	36	21	17	739
Approx no.of S.N.	2500	3500	5000	6000	2800	2000	2100	2025	1400	2400	29725
Sahayogini	12	14	20	22	15	10	07	09	11	08	128
Sakhis *	-	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37
Bai Kendras	32	15	34	53	-	20	-	03	03	-	160
Anudesikas	32	15	34	53	-	22	-	03	03	-	162
Saksharta Kendra	19	40	-	-	-	06	03	01	-	04	73
Saksharta Sahelis	19	29	-	-	-	06	03	01	-	04	62
Kishori Kendras	-	09	-	09	-	02	08	02	23	-	53
Kishori Sanghas	06	-	22	-	48	-	14	23	-	16	129
Kishori K. Sahelis	-	-	22	-	18	-	04	06	-	16	66
MSK's	01	02	2	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Libraries	20	35	-	53	19	09	10	11	05	09	171
MSK Teachers	04	08	-	04	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Thikana (huts)	02	04	27	02	-	-	-	-	3 **	-	35
Savings group	121	90	170	170	30	07	12	07	-	24	631
Sangha Fund	121	72	-	79	19	-	-	-	-	-	291
Health Workers	40	05	-	04	-	02	-	-	-	-	51
Trained TBAs (Dais)	25	37	30	20	02	-	-	-	-	-	114
Health Centres	02	-	05	03	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Nari Adalat	01	02	07	03	-	-	01	-	-	01	15
Hand Pump Mechanics	-	37	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	52
Masons	08	04	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12

MSK's = Mahila Shikshan Kendras i.e. residential literacy centres

* Sakhis to be phased by Sept. '99

** Land in the process of being acquired for 'thikanas' / 'thikanas' in the process of being

FOREWORD

The year 1998-99 has been a significant one for Mahila Samakhya, U.P. We have completed a decade of our journey and are now stepping firmly into the new millenium with the hope that this society will recognise the strength of women and enable them to develop their hidden potentialities for rebuilding of a new society, free from violence, ignorance, gender and social injustice.

This Annual Report is not a mere formality – it gives us the opportunity for looking at the past, self-valuation and setting guide lines for the future. Its documentation passess through the process of reviewing district quarterly reports, district news pages and magazines, discussion and workshops, with the staff deep thinking and analysis.

Some of the main achievements of MS U.P. in the past year have been : networking with other government and non-government agencies, trainings and workshops on gender, health, legal-literacy, thrift and credit, emergence of federations of village women raising issues of social injustice, establishment of women's courts and their budding influence, initiation of economic development activities, documentation and many such activities.

Steering the project towards sustainability was also one of the major thrusts of the project this year. However it was difficult to dissociate from the committed workers who advocated the philosophy and aims of Mahila Samakha for the past several years, in spite of the strong opposition from the family and society. In the last ten years they have grown as potential human resources for training and technical assistance for community based projects. We further believe that they could now be very valuable grass-root resource persons for other government and non-government organisations on gender, legal-literacy, health, IEC and Panchayati raj issues.

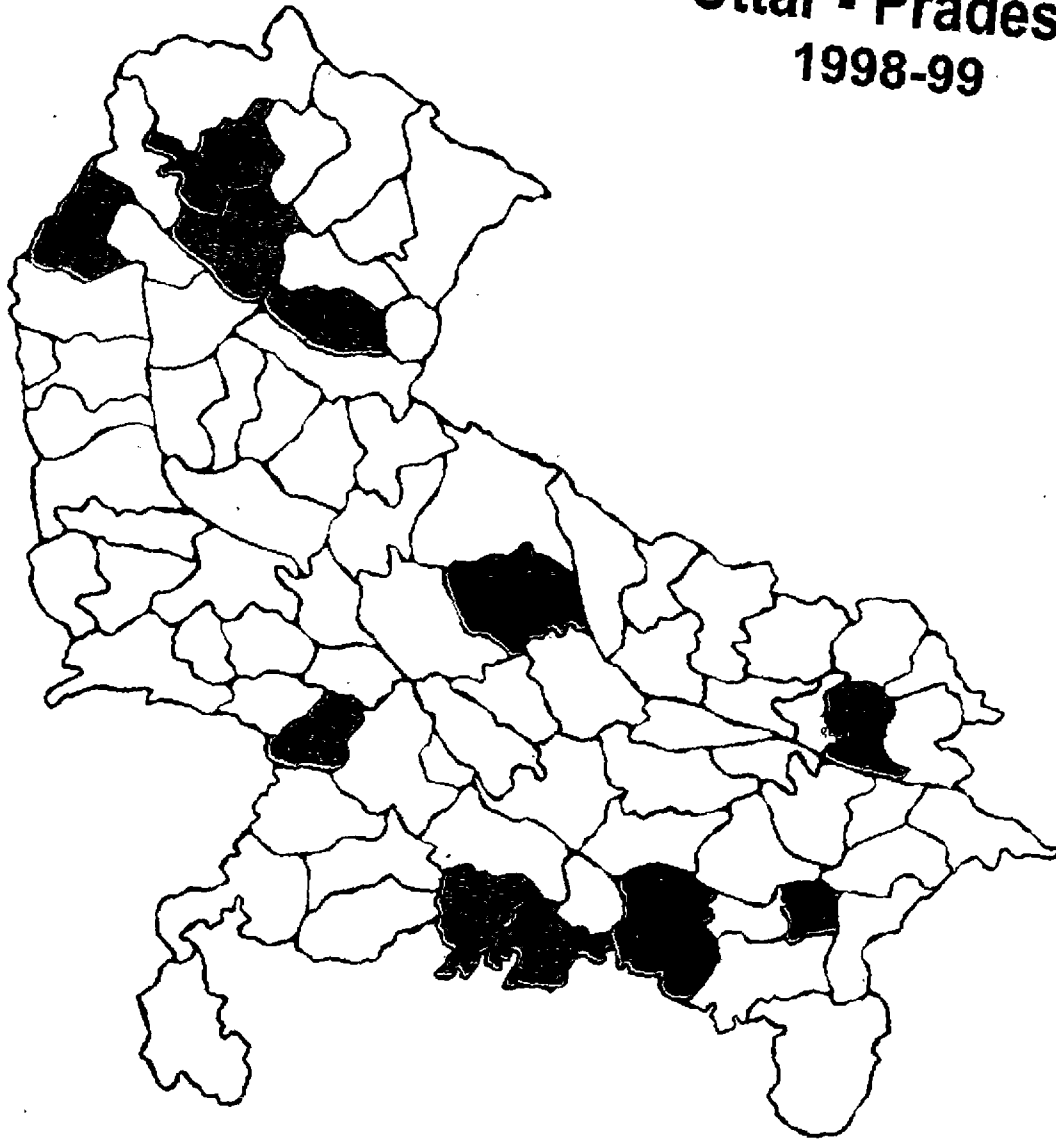
In the first year of the next millenium, the main objectives of MS U.P. are: development of management information systems, establishment of resource centres, formulation of training modules, registration of sanghas and federations, documentation and convergence with government programmes and schemes. We would also like to take the programme in a direction which would create sensitivity towards gender issues in Government policies.



Manju Agrawal

State Programme Director,
Mahila Samakhya, U.P

Uttar - Pradesh 1998-99



■ Mahila Samakhya Districts

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Women Trained as Masons

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A wise woman, who was travelling in the mountains, found a precious stone in a stream. The next day she met another traveller who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveller saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give



it to him. She knew that the stone was precious yet she gave it without hesitation. The traveller left, rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime. But a few days later he came back to return the stone to the wise woman. "I've been thinking," he said, "I know how valuable the stone is, but I give it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious. Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone."

— "The Wise Woman's Stone,"
Author Unknown

Mahila Samakhya (MS) envisions that all women should achieve the wisdom to critically analyse their lives vis a vis their family and society at large, question their attitudes and behaviour and take well thought out collective action to change their lives towards a better world.



STEPS TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT

Over the span of a decade of MS experience in U.P. (1989 - 1999), the philosophy of women's empowerment has become rooted in the **23 blocks of the ten operational districts of U.P.** (see Table:3 for the coverage). In these areas, MS has become established as a forum where women can have a voice and space of their own, support and help each other, laugh and weep together, struggle, learn and work towards a better future. Vibrant and strong collectives, called **Sanghas**, (see Table:4 and Fig:1) have developed at the village level. There are **1435 sanghas** in **23 blocks of 10 districts of U.P.** These, in time, are attaining independent identities. Women in these sanghas no longer feel alone in the strife of their existence. The evolutionary process of the sanghas is a rewarding

Table:4 CATEGORISATION OF SANGHAS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF EMPOWERMENT

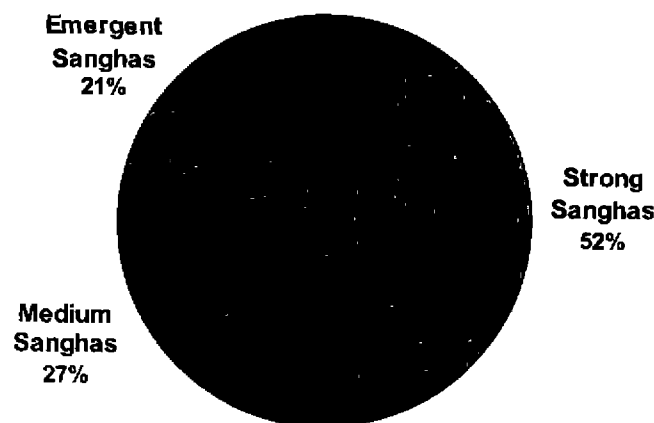
		D	I	S	T	R	I	C	T	S	
Category of sangha	Varanasi	Banda	Tehri	Saharanpur	Pauri	Allahabad	Sitapur	Auraiya	Gorakhpur	Mainital	Total
1. Strong Sanghas	112	95	120	160	65	90	23	36	21	17	739
2. Medium Sanghas	30	38	60	60	45	40	32	25	20	41	391
3. Emergent sangha	52	37	50	10	40	25	15	20	34	22	305
Total Sanghas	194	170	230	230	150	155	70	81	75	80	1435



Reflection of Empowerment : village women on the Mike

and learning experience for all those working in the area of women's empowerment. The process has been repeatedly analysed and evaluated, in order that the activities and processes employed towards the goal of effective empowerment of women are in accordance with the objectives and the non-negotiable principles laid down at the outset of the programme. The translation of the aims of women's empowerment at the community level has been challenging because of the problems peculiar not only to U.P. as a state, but to each district involved. The traditional patriarchal, feudal and caste-based attitudes prevailing here, come along with a very warped gender view, which constantly colours the community's perspective of women-related issues. Examples of other hurdles are, the mafia and dacoits in areas of Banda, Gorakhpur, Allahabad and Auraiya, the inhospitable terrain of Tehri and Pauri, backward, rigid and traditional values and beliefs in Varanasi, Sitapur and Gorakhpur in alcoholism and violence in Saharanpur. In addition to these,

Fig:1 PROPORTION OF STRONG, MEDIUM AND EMERGENT SANGHAS



vested political and financial interests are a major barrier everywhere. The project plans are tailored with these impediments in mind. MS facilitators have played the role of catalysts and nurtured the sanghas and the women therein. They are now empowered enough to challenge and change the practice of age-old rituals like "Gudiya Patakka" (doll-beating, which is symbolic of violence against women and girls) on the occasion of Nag-Panchami (the Snake God festival), to accord respect to widows in the community and mainstream them in the society, to activate public opinion about sexual abuse inflicted on adolescent girls by school-masters and to conserve and restore environment and natural resources. The **flexible nature of the MS project** has resulted in interventions varying from district to district depending on the need and demands articulated by Sanghas which emerge

ATTRIBUTES OF A STRONG SANGHA

- Has a strong collective identity.
- Takes initiative in identifying a common cause.
- Holds meetings regularly, with active participation by members.
- Women have developed leadership qualities
- Takes an independent decision on the course of action to be followed in resolving issues.
- Establishes linkages with village level institutions.
- Have acquired a 'social space' and status.
- Understands issues with a gender perspective.
- Women's ability to influence their own families and communities.
- Are aware of their rights and have the ability to access information.
- Operates as a pressure group.
- Are in a position to network with other sanghas.



Women sharing and enjoying each other's company

out of the culture and ethos of the area. In spite of this diversity at the interventional level, the **processes of working with the women have been almost identical across all the districts/states and the main objectives have not been lost sight of.**

Considering the various connotations frequently associated with power, it is imperative that we **distinguish between true empowerment and merely being powerful.** The former often means having the quality of discernment, so that one can question the power paradigm and acquire control over one's own life/situations for growth and development. The latter implies the indiscriminate and unscrupulous use of power as wielded in the usual sense of term. Empowerment means acquiring skills of analysis, the capacities and potential to take charge of one's life and address the issues inherent in one's condition and position. It also entails use of these skills and capacities for fair and just purposes and not merely to grab the reins of power. It has also been observed that **often, the aims of empowerment become confused with the vehicles used to acquire it.** For example, education and economic development activities may be necessary vehicles to attain empowerment but they are not the aims in themselves. Hence, though they are often an integral and inescapable part of the project, **"the core objectives of enhancing 'the self-image and self-confidence of women' so that they are emboldened to take informed decisions regarding their own development and that of society,"** are of paramount importance for their empowerment. It has been this goal that has spurred all MS activities.

To fulfil the above objectives, several steps have been taken. Firstly, MS has facilitated the **formation of collectives of women,** which hold meetings on a regular basis. Secondly, efforts have been directed towards **building capacities of both staff and sangha** women by holding trainings and workshops in relevant aspects. The knowledge imbibed changes their attitudes, which in turn brings change in behaviour and practices and this finally results in changing the outlook of the community towards them. Thirdly, great stress is being laid on **convergence and networking** for better delivery of services by the relevant agencies and departments at the village level. Once the sanghas crystallise into strong decision-making bodies, they initiate **savings and income-generating activities** to better their economic condition. Certain issues like

education, literacy, health, cases of sexual abuse, environmental degradation and so on, are addressed by **setting up of interventional centres at the village or block level** e.g. 'Bal Kendras and 'mahila shikshan kendras', health centres, women's courts etc. The sangha's need to magnify their voice and identify with other women who go through the same problems and struggles as themselves, leads to the **formation of cluster and district-level federations** which are in the process of being consolidated. This is especially important in the light of the fact that **decentralisation** is a method integral to MS functioning and sustainability.

With the idea of long-term sustainability through the generations and creating a cadre of responsible and proactive youth who will in turn become empowered adult women, this year has seen a **spurt in the programmes for adolescent girls (kishoris)**. Considerable progress has been made with regard to this target group and a few of them have become assured enough to even take up responsible duties in the project. (See Chapter 4). Due to the high drop-out rate of girls from schools and the fact that they have no time and space at home for personal study, four **Mahila Shikshan Kendras** (residential learning centres for women and girls) were established and have been running very successfully in Banda, Saharanpur and Varanasi. After seeing how successful and beneficial these centres have proved to be, exhaustive preparations are underway for the setting up of four more such centres in the newer districts of Sitapur, Gorakhpur, Auraiya and Allahabad. They will be fully operational by July - August '99. (See Chapter 3).

All these interventions were made possible because of the **unique partnership that Mahila Samakhya has with the State and Central Governments**. The **autonomy and degree of trust accorded to MS by the latter**, is instrumental in the creation of a body which is able to operate smoothly because of the lack of the usual bureaucratic and political constraints like rigidity, straight-jacketedness, excessive monitoring, financial bottle-necks, interference in everyday functioning and so on. The responsibility conferred on MS by the Government is further borne out in the relative autonomy of the project working at all levels - state, district, block and field level.

The investment of trust and confidence in MS functionaries and the high degree of nurturing, training and capacity-building that they have been given, has resulted in **the development of a cadre of workers who are committed to the project, much beyond the call of duty.** Organisational concerns are often given priority over personal and familial matters. They have struggled against societal and familial constraints for the cause of their work. As individuals and as a group, **they have enhanced their educational and other abilities towards the better functioning of the project, even if this has meant learning to ride a bicycle,** much against their families' wishes. The staff have developed qualities of empathy, compassion, analytical vision, tenacity and many other attributes to help them in their work. They have made tremendous sacrifices and initially endured ridicule and humiliation, because they are fired with the zeal of putting women at the cutting edge of development. In this process they have found a strength, identity and place of their own in the area in which they work and most of them are now very well-respected members in society.

For the proper development and functioning of the project the **directional role of the State Office is imperative.** It is the responsibility of the latter not only to give the programme direction, but also to co-ordinate efforts in all the ten districts. **Regular meetings and workshops are held with the DIUs (District Implementation Units), in which strategies are hammered out in a participatory manner,** for planning, management, expansion, decentralisation and sustainability of the project. **Financial and administrative inputs** are constantly being given to the DIUs and as far as possible, they are handled with **sensitivity and understanding.** **Visits are paid to the field regularly to give them technical assistance** in whichever aspect of the project that they need help with. Care is taken to meet all the different groups involved in the work, especially the community level workers and people. The state office also assists the field staff in the several other sectors like the **organisation of trainings and workshops, module development and research.** **Networking and linkages** at the state, national and international levels are also an important responsibility of the State Office. It is because of all these factors that MS functionaries feel so motivated to continue working inspite of the adverse conditions in the field and many who have left the project often come back to it, or remain associated with it.

संघ बने, हाथों में हथियार



चल वहना ताकत के साथ

STRENGTH IN COLLECTIVE ACTION

Issue-based Interventions in Sanghas

*If I can stop one Heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one Life the Aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting Robin
Into his Nest again,
I shall not live in vain.*

-Emily Dickinson

"The most basic change (in MS women) is in the domain of the self - in the way women perceive themselves. It is this change in self-image which provides a hope of sustaining and taking forward change at other levels and in other spheres."

— 'We Can Change Our World'

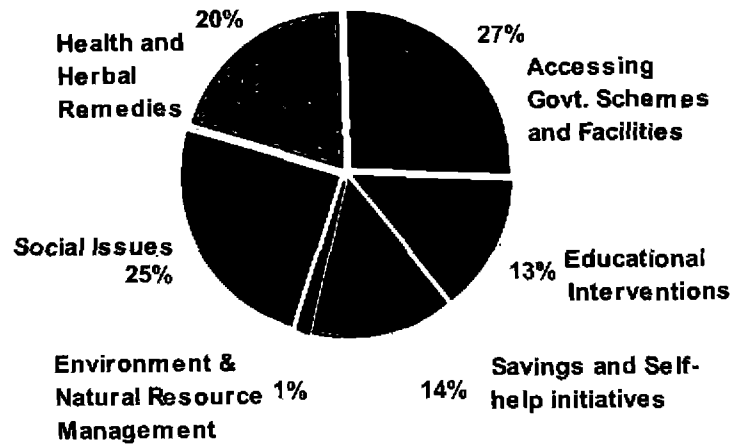
The women of the MS UP sanghas have come a long way in these ten years - they have emerged out of their 'ghunghat', glanced up from their normally downcast gaze to look people straight in the eyes, raised their voices as one against injustice and oppression and joined hands to fight against their personal and community demons. The education, information, training, sisterhood and nurturing that Mahila Samakhya has given them, has been instrumental in galvanising them to take positive steps towards rectifying their anomalous situations and that of the people around them. On their own, these sanghas have handled various issues : physical and sexual abuse, marital discord/divorce/separation, alcoholism and gambling, traditions and rituals detrimental to women, educational interventions, health and alternative medicine, economic development and savings groups, the panchayati raj system, land and wages, and environment and social forestry. The total number of issues raised by sanghas in different spheres is given in Table:5. The collectives in many blocks have become a force to reckon with and the women in them can no longer be dismissed as non-entities.

**Table:5 ISSUES (other than 'nari adalat' cases) TAKEN UP BY
SANGHAS IN 1998-99**

	Issues	Number of villages
1	Water	87
2	Education ('Kendras', enrolment etc.)	193
3	Wages	243
4	Savings Groups	192
5	Ration Card	160
6	Health	207
7	Pension	65
8	School Building Repair	7
9	Vet. Health	128
10	Self-employment	44
11	Van Panchayat	2
12	Forestry	9
13	Changing Traditions	152
14	Roads	10
15	Houses	10
16	Accessing govt. grant for pregnant and lactating mothers	70
17	Natural Calamities	10
18	Agitations ("Chakka Jaam")	12
19	Availing misc. govt. facilities	23
20	Intervention in school admin.	20
	TOTAL	1644



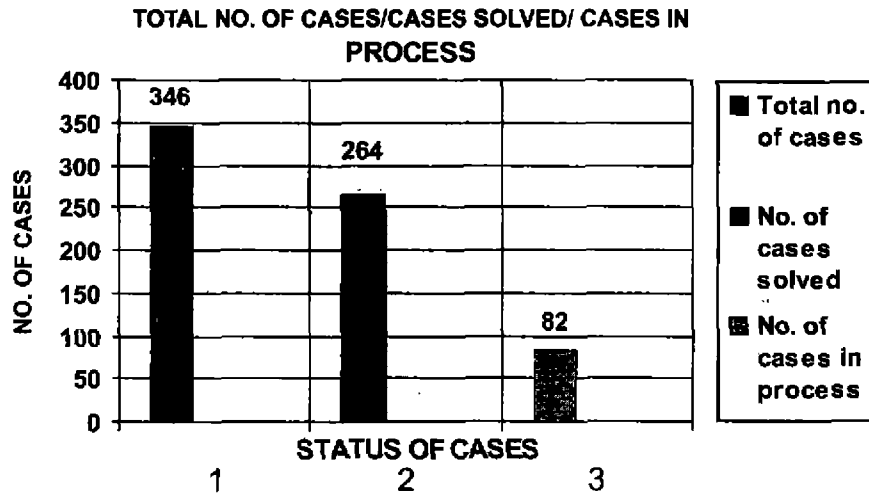
Fig:2 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ISSUES ADDRESSED BY SANGHAS IN 1998-99



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND MARITAL ISSUES

As the sanghas started evolving in the villages, they started realising that besides issues of survival, one of the most pressing problems was that of violence and abuse against women. Many cases of this nature began to come before them for arbitration. The women have devised different procedures of dealing with these cases. The usual way is to have several meetings at the village level with all the people involved till some sort of agreement is reached. But soon it was realised that these cases were not receiving the requisite amount of time and attention, because of the diverse types of issues that were being tackled by the sanghas. Therefore, sangha women, along with the sahayoginis, decided to allot a fixed time, date and space to meet and address these cases of violence and marital difficulties. These forums gradually came to be known as "Nari Adalats" or "women courts". The jury of these courts consists of sangha women and MS grass-root workers. They pass judgement in a fair and democratic manner and then work as a pressure group to see that the decision is actually implemented. This accounts for the success of the system of resolution. Fig:3 shows how many cases were dealt within this year.

Fig:3

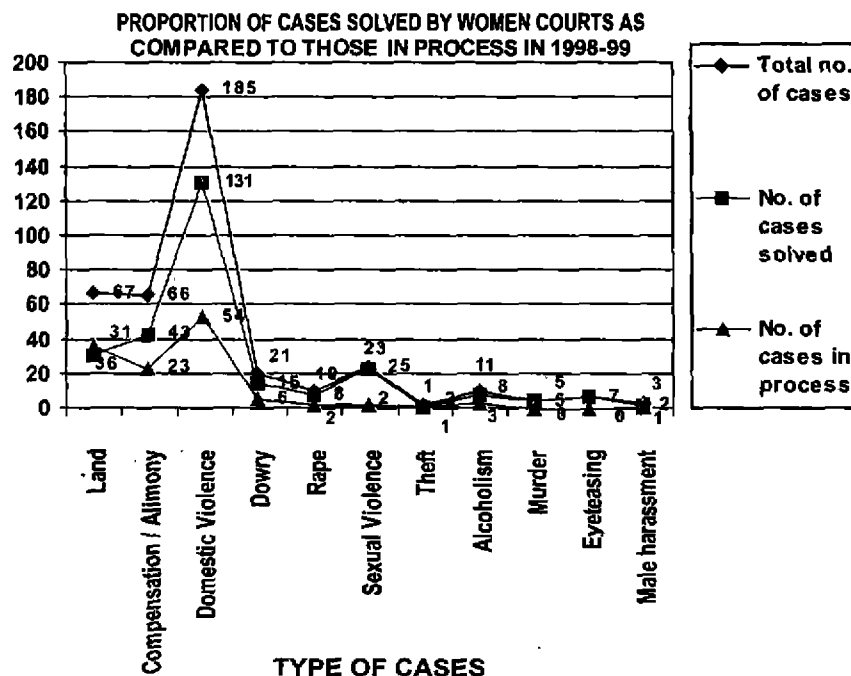


These courts have been able to generate trust in the community, so much so, that they prefer to bring their cases here rather than go to the panchayats, Lok Adalats (peoples' courts) and formal courts. Even the administration in Saharanpur and Sitapur have sent cases to these courts for consideration because of the trust they repose in the integrity of their style of functioning. The police and the district administration lend a willing hand to them whenever they can.

As these informal courts evolved, they realised that they needed the legal awareness to deal with such cases. MS addressed this demand by training 677 sangha women in para-legal matters. Many of the Sahayoginis (MS animators) and Sanghas are now quite adept in handling these cases. In five districts they are running women's courts (called "Nari adalats", at Varanasi, Banda and Saharanpur; "Sangatin" in Sitapur; "Sahara sangha" at Tehri) to decide such cases. The success of the sanghas in this sphere can be assessed by the fact that they are so well-known for this kind of intervention, that now even men, who had kept their distance from the programme for a long time and were very sceptical of it, often come for arbitration of their problems. Fig:2 shows the type of cases that come to the "Nari Adalats" for arbitration.



Fig:4



There has been a spill-over effect of MS activities around the project area. As a result people from outside the project areas approach MS for intervention in their personal cases. In these areas MS has neither the infrastructure, nor the presence of grass-root workers, which makes the work all the more challenging. This has not deterred their spirit and they have succeeded in garnering support from the local community and administration, towards the proper handling of these cases.

In Kotmanyar village of Tehsil Ditt, Ballamdei, was arrested for the murder of her husband. He was a chronic alcoholic and used to physically abuse his wife and children regularly. One night in alcohol inebriation, he seized an axe and tried to kill Ballamdei, but while she was trying to protect herself, the axe hit his temple and he died. Leaving behind four waiting children at home, she went to the police station to report the incident and give herself up to the law. Manji Samakhya came to know the case, discussed it with staff, who analysed the case and realised that Ballamdei was innocent and would be victimised for no fault of her own. Her own family refused to come forward to give the bail amount. Some witnesses even misrepresented facts of the case to prevent her from getting bail. As women are not independent owners of property, neither Ballamdei nor the sangha women could pay the bail. However, MS with its own networking managed to get legal advice for her. The lawyer, on a voluntary basis, fought her case and not only managed to get a bail order for her, but even managed to get the judge to rescind the sentence passed on her. MS went further to counsel her in-laws and got her rehabilitated at her own in-law's place, after she was released.

Sometimes, they use novel techniques like dramatising a situation to solve cases.

In Hussainpur village of Sitapur district, there was the case of Ram Dulari, who came to the sangha in a panic because she claimed that her husband tried to poison her. The sangha women got together and summoned the culprit and in front of him, pretended as if they were drafting an F.I.R., which they were going to lodge with the local police station about his serious misdemeanour. It scared him because the community is aware that these women have legal literacy and are capable of charging them with wrong deeds. The women made an elaborate charade out of it and the man got so intimidated by this gesture, that he immediately begged for forgiveness and vowed never to harass her or to attempt something like that in future. There has been no trouble between them since then.





Why do girls die before they are born, when the ultrasound report comes?

Why are only girls such a burden as soon as they are born?

Why do only girls die by burning themselves with kerosene oil?

Why do girls become the callouses on the feet of their fathers when they go out looking for a husband for them?

Why are people silent when girls are being raped and murdered in such huge numbers?

Maybe some day will come when girls will only be a memory and someone will ask what they looked like.

— M S Tehri



ALCOHOLISM AND GAMBLING

The bane of most rural women's lives are the two ills: alcoholism and gambling. In many districts like Nainital, Auraiya, Tehri, Pauri etc. sanghas rose against these evils, which are so deep-rooted in our society, that fighting against them is like beating one's head against a wall. Nevertheless, these depravities cause such havoc in the lives of their families, that the sangha women decided to do something about them. They undertook this at different levels - at the individual level they went out of their way to help women who appealed to them for help with alcohol-related abuse in their home situations; at the general level they took out rallies and processions raising public opinion against these vices and were instrumental in the destruction of several illegal liquor stills. They imposed penalties on men whom they found drunk in the village premises. This acted as a deterrent to them and they were scared to enter the village in an inebriated state. They agitated against the opening of liquor shops. Their fight against alcoholism started losing ground when Government authorities, instead of supporting their efforts, indiscriminately gave out liquor licences to all and sundry. Considering the huge amount of money and the vested interests involved, this success that a few sanghas have achieved in some areas, seem like a great triumph.



Gambling is also a very real problem in the villages and whole families are destroyed because of it. Hence, many sanghas felt the need to address this issue also. Different ways and means are adopted to address them, which are reflected in the case studies given below.

In Arthapur village in Sitapur district, the sangha had made repeated efforts to try and stop the men's gambling activities, but to no avail. Some 'goonda' elements from outside the village were also coming to participate in the game. One day there was a robbery and the villagers realised that the perpetrators were from among these outsiders. Using this as a rallying point, the sangha again appealed to the men and finally they decided to put an end to it. There was a symbolic ceremony held in the village during which the playing cards were burnt.



One day the men in Nagla Chainsukh village of Auraiya district were dumbstruck. They were witness to a strange sight. Their womenfolk, instead of attending to the usual household and agricultural chores, were calmly sitting under a tree and gambling. They had been begging their menfolk to stop gambling, but their pleas had fallen on deaf ears. So they chose this novel form of protest and it had the effect that the women wanted. The men were not getting their food on time! So rather than go hungry, they decided to stop their gambling.

CHANGING TRADITIONS AND RITUALS

The strong foundation laid by the initial conceptual training at all levels, with special stress on gender issues, is now paying rich dividends. Change in women's and in some cases the whole community's attitudes towards certain age-old traditions, rituals and superstitions is clearly perceived. The holistic approach followed by MS in implementing project strategy is fundamental to these changes. It is not a symptom-oriented philosophy, but one, which tries to deal with the root-causes of women's problems.

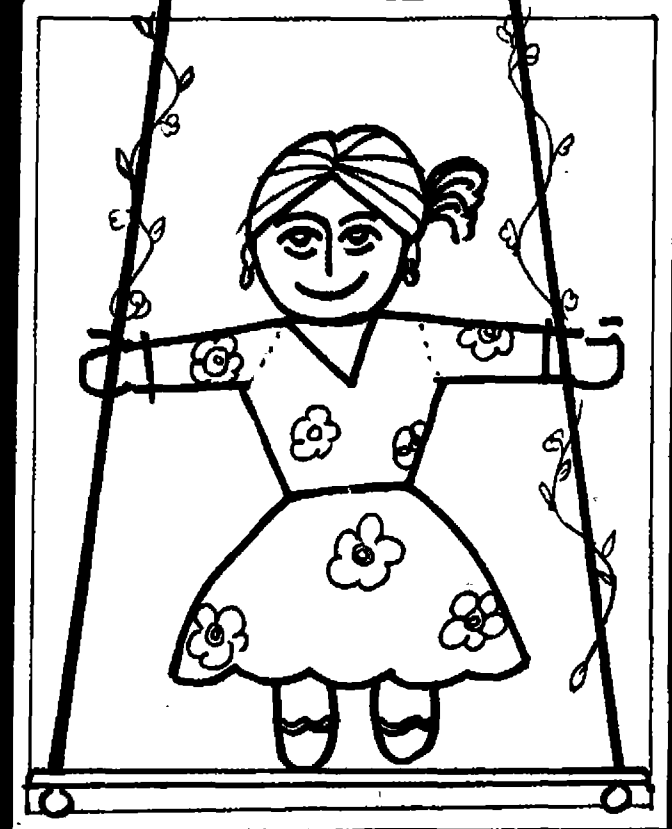
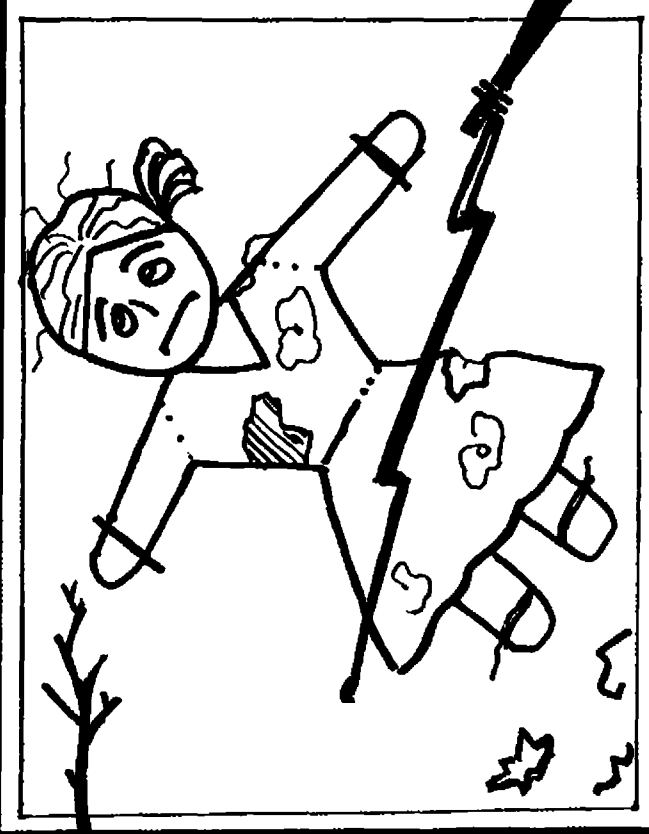
It is with this gender-sensitive perspective in mind, that sanghas started questioning certain norms and customs, which are intrinsic to the Indian fabric of society, but are definitely detrimental to the self-respect and worth of girls/women. The inhuman treatment of widows, the barbaric practice of child marriage, the indifference and even distaste that an infant girl's birth is usually greeted with and the hugely prevalent custom of dowry are only some examples of these customs. The sanghas, armed with their new-found knowledge and empathy decided to work on a few of these fronts and they have met with success in quite a few cases.

- ❖ *This year, seventy villages of Mishrikh block, as compared to fifteen last year, in Sitapur district celebrated the festival of Nag Panchami by ceremoniously rocking dolls in swings instead of indulging in the usual practice of whipping them to shreds. They distributed hundreds of flyers all over the district about this event and launched a massive poster and slogan campaign to popularise the concept. They also had a 'Gudiya Mela' in which 700 women and 300 men participated. Local government school children and staff also played a significant role in raising public opinion regarding this issue. The District Magistrate lent his support by symbolically pushing a doll seated in a swing.*
- ❖ *In twenty villages, in the same area, some fortunate brides were fed with 'mithai' instead of being beaten with a stick as is the usual observance called 'Shagun', when a bride enters her new home.*
- ❖ *Tilakpur village in Auraiya district witnessed a metamorphic change when a widow was allowed the pleasure of solemnising her son's marriage - a hitherto unheard of practice, as widows are considered inauspicious and are usually not allowed to come anywhere near a celebration of any kind. The widows themselves consider it an ill omen. So at first, their attitude also had to be changed.*

The above changes in the rituals and traditional practices definitely reflect the changes in the thought processes of the women in close association with Mahila Samakhya. The community is slowly but surely, translating these changed attitudes into their life's daily practices.

महिला समाख्या

सीतापुर



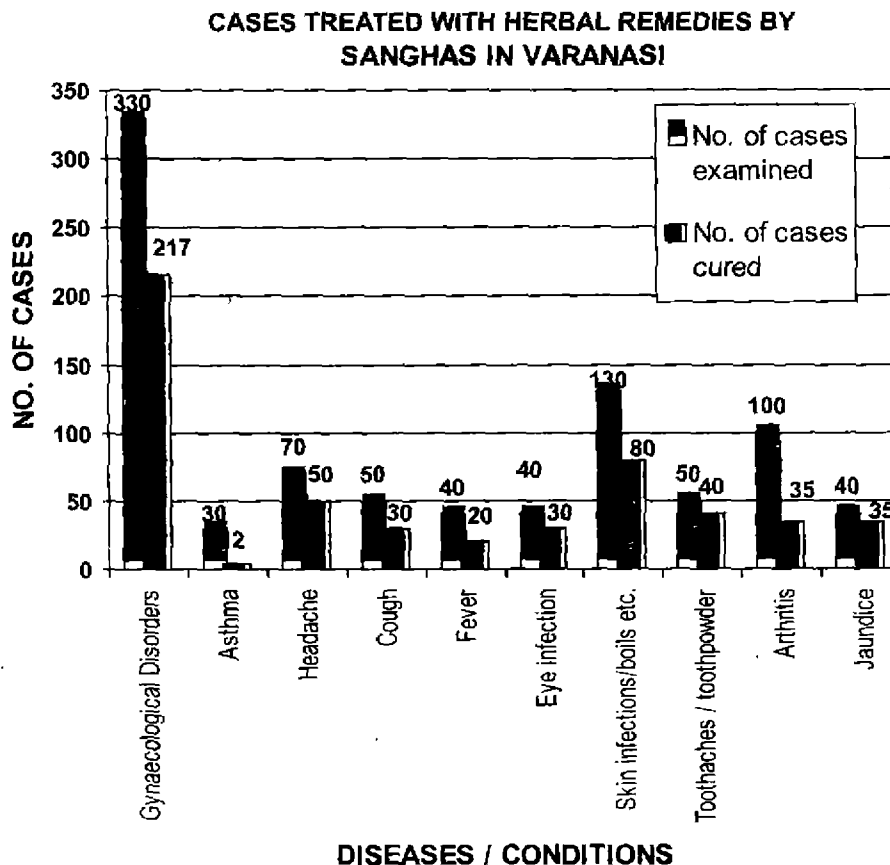
मुझे यूँ सताओ मत झूला मुझे झूलाओ अब

HEALTH AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

MS functionaries realised that rural women's knowledge of their bodies and their access to health services is so poor, that it becomes an impediment to their empowerment. This led them to address health issues in a major way. The trainings, workshops and information-dissemination in health is given entirely with a gender perspective and within the socio-cultural context. This enables women to comprehend the reasons behind the neglect of their health and nutritional status.

Awareness about health needed to be followed by services. Acute lack of access of health services in rural areas and need to restore traditional health practices led to trainings of sangha women in herbal medicine. In these trainings the traditional knowledge of women with regard to herbal medicines and their knowledge of local herbs was given due cognisance. The participant women also identified the locally prevalent

Fig. : 5



diseases and tried to develop medicines for them. After imbibing the training the women went and tried these medications on themselves or on other women suffering from the diseases for which they were learning to prepare the medicines. When they met with success, it gave them pleasure and recognition. Their enhanced **self-esteem** has motivated them to prepare herbal medicines in larger quantities and distribute them free of cost. Gradually, in Varanasi district, different sanghas have specialised in making medicines for particular diseases. During block-level meetings they take orders for preparation of medicines and use the same forum for distribution of the prepared medicines and for follow-up of the cases. Please refer to Fig. 5 for the number and types of cases that they have cured in this way. Table:6 below shows a similar pattern of success achieved in this activity in other districts.

Table:6 TREATMENT OF AILMENTS WITH HERBAL REMEDIES IN SIX DISTTS. IN 1998-99

Conditions / Diseases	DISTRICTS																	
	Varanasi			Tehri			Saharanpur			Pauri			Allahabad			Auraiya		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Gynaecological Disorders	115	330	217	240	305	109	80	109	32	28	33	27	60	175	116	13	25	18
Asthma	15	30	2															
Headache	35	70	50	46	22	16												
Cough	30	50	30				47	93	27									
Fever	20	40	20										20	150	60	8	15	10
Anaemia							70	270	77									
Gastric problems										27	90	50						
Dysentery/Diarrhoea																8	25	20
E.N.T. infections				76	76	58				14	24	24						
Eye infection	22	40	30													2	9	5
Skin infections/bells etc.	50	130	80													9	14	14
Toothaches / toothpowder	25	50	40							29	110	70				2	10	7
Backache							50	67	18									
Arthritis	50	100	35															
Sprains										26	78	78						
Bruises/Injuries										26	92	92						
Jaundice	20	40	35															
Rickets																2	2	2
Worm Infestation				90	64	39				15	80	50				3	5	4
TOTAL CASES	382	880	539	452	467	222	247	539	154	165	507	381	80	325	176	47	106	80

* Key for second row : 1 - number of villages, 2- number of cases seen, 3- number of cases cured.

The women are learning **the art of examining themselves** and becoming sensitive to the 'danger signs' of diseases like cancer and other prevalent conditions. **Infertile women** are also helped for treatment. Sometimes information about the natural cycle and ways to determine exactly when they are fertile has helped them to conceive. This is especially important in view of the fact that in most rural communities, barren women are usually treated with contempt and suspicion.

To take care of reproductive health of women, **traditional birth attendants' (TBA's) trainings** were conducted (Refer to Chapter 5 on Training), because in U.P. more than 70% of deliveries in rural areas are still conducted by TBAs ('dais'). Many of the Government TBA trainings have not been very successful, as the community did not accept the modern practices adopted by TBAs after the training. In case of MS areas due to community (sangha women) participation and interpersonal trust, the modern practices used by TBAs are easily accepted. Many of these 'dais' are very well respected and regarded as 'barefoot doctors'.



A TBA learning to tie a cord on a dummy

The whole of Chakia block in Varanasi district is now aware of "Sookha" doctor. She is an illiterate woman who had inherited some knowledge of herbal remedies from her father. She was identified by a sahayogini and given training on herbal medicine. Subsequent to the training, she made some potions at home, which she proceeded to try out on her patients. She achieved so much success in this that she is now highly sought after and in spite of her unlettered status, can rattle off the names of all the herbs that she uses and the exact amounts that constitute the medicines.

Shaita Devi, a 'dai' trained by MS Tehri was overwhelmed by tears when she saved a newly-born infant who was not breathing, by using the mouth-to-mouth resuscitation techniques that she had recently learned during the TBA training that she had attended.

The women articulated that it is not only their personal health that is important, but the well being of their dairy animals is also equally closely associated with their own well-being. Understanding the importance of their demand, districts like Varanasi, Banda, Tehri, Auraiya, Pauri and Saharanpur, organised trainings on vet-care for Sangha women. After these trainings for the women, who are the caretakers of the milch cattle, fewer animals are falling prey to diseases because of the attention they are paying to their regular inoculation. They are so encouraged by the results of this, that they themselves take on the entire responsibility of collecting the list of those people whose animals need the immunisation. They submit the list to the vet-care personnel and participate in the entire operation of inoculation and other vet-care operations on the appointed day.

When dealing with the health aspect, the curative aspect is tackled along with the preventive side. Sangha women actively participate in the immunisation programmes. Besides ensuring that their own children are immunised, they also voluntarily participate in publicity campaigns to sensitise the community to make best use of the opportunities like the periodically organised "Pulse Polio Campaign".

The trainings and workshops in the area of health have enabled the development of a core team of women village health workers, who not only attend to common ailments, but also hold training sessions to share their knowledge with the rest of the sangha members. This ensures the spread of the knowledge gained by the trainees and creates a ripple effect. The very fact that the women have a place where they can freely discuss their ailments, without being ridiculed and being labelled 'hypochondriacs', is a major achievement on the path to better health care.

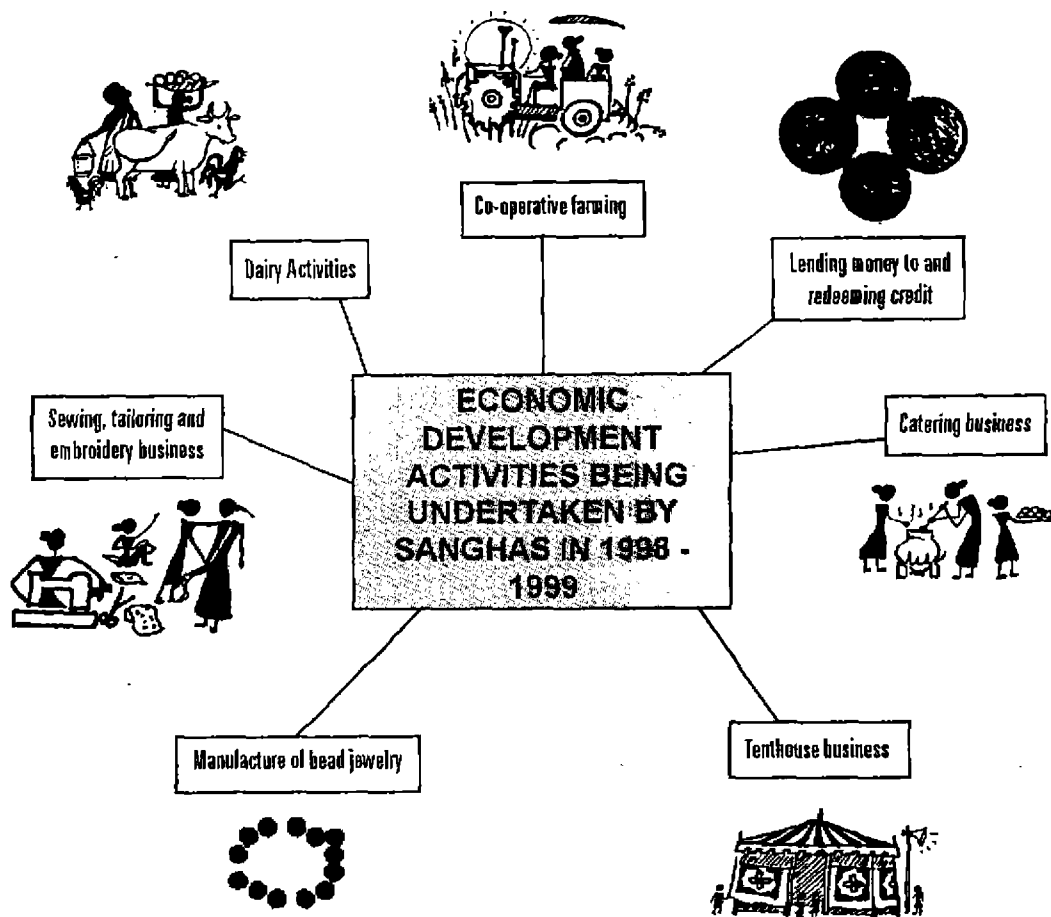
Devkumari, a woman from Kothi Daudpur, in Auraiya distt. was suffering from multiple cysts in her uterus, and there was no one to take care of her. When the sangha came to know about it, they decided to take her under their wing. They showed her how to douche herself with a potion made from 'neem' leaves boiled in water and then collected some money from each sangha member and took her to Auraiya hospital, where she was given suitable treatment. She is now fine.

SAVINGS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The positive outcome of a properly evolving sangha is the ability to prioritise the issues that they want to deal with and the drawing up of plans to implement their work agendas. After a sangha has reached a certain level of maturity and is able to take up financial responsibilities, they are assisted to start self-help/savings groups and activities which will generate income for themselves. The kinds of economic development programmes (EDP) followed are varied and rely on the demand and ability of the women involved. For these women, the amassing of some capital is significant, as they normally never manage to set aside any money to call their own. Many Sanghas have opened accounts in banks. (Please refer to Table 7 to see the number of savings groups and the amounts they have deposited in the bank account). They take great pride in the ownership of this savings account and, for many who have hardly been out of their village, the monthly trip to the bank to deposit their amount is an adventure in itself. Due to this heightened contact with bank personnel, their knowledge of matters pertaining to finance and banking has also increased, and they are using this information to help other women who face technical problems with banking procedures. This is a real triumph, as banking rules and procedures can be complicated even for the more enlightened and literate folk in the cities! Most of these sanghas have taken loans from banks which they utilise either for credit purposes or for starting EDP activities.

Table:7 DISTRICT-WISE SAVINGS GROUPS AND THE AMOUNTS DEPOSITED IN BANKS

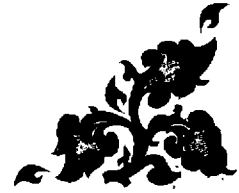
Districts	No. of savings groups	Total assets (in Rs.)	Total SHG's Accounts in bank	Total amount in bank (in Rs.)
Varanasi	121	115200	121	115200
Banda	91	484100	75	484100
Tehri	228	70000	228	70000
Saharapur	45	845000	45	845000
Pauri	23	315914	18	315914
Allabad	10	22000	10	22100
Sitapur	17	11125	6	7475
Auraiya	7	12380	6	10780
Gorakhpur	19	6279	--	--
Nainital	23	17154	23	17154
TOTAL	584	1899152	532	1896723



Wherever possible and according to the needs expressed by the community, MS has networked with other training and funding agencies to organise skill training programmes for the kishoris/women, for EDP activities. On attaining these skills, women realised that they needed some basic literacy abilities as well, if they wanted to be successful in any income-generating venture. Thus, along with the support of MS, they were motivated in their efforts to acquire these skills too.

For EDP activities networking and linkages with other agencies was imperative to access their services, funds and marketing expertise. DWACRA, NABARD, SEWA, banks are some GOs and NGOs with whom MS has networked for the above purposes.

The eighty young girls who underwent 'chikan-work' training from SEWA for three months, are very happy today because the middle-man, who was so far exploiting them, can do so no longer. When he was threatened with competition from SEWA, he decided to increase the wages that he paid to the girls from Rs. 50/- to Rs. 80/- per suit. Now the plan is to open a 'chikan-work' centre in Kutubnagar village, Sitapur, to facilitate the on-going job-work being done by these girls.



There is much yet to be done to render these activities sustainable and really productive. Capacity-building at all levels is necessary, especially with regard to procurement of raw material, marketing, and packaging. Jumping onto the 'self-help' bandwagon seems to be the 'in' thing these days, but without adequate spadework and training, it has numerous pitfalls, which need to be researched and addressed. It has been observed that thrift and credit is one of the most risk-free and profitable activities. Wherever sangha women have given out credit, they have been able to almost fully redeem it. They have formulated their own rules governing interest rates according to the purpose for which the loan is being taken. It is higher for economic activities, but lower for social and educational aims. The sangha women collectively decide to give credit even without charging interest in cases of atrocities or natural calamities, especially if they are women.

EDP Activities in Saharanpur

- ⌘ In Bahapur village the sangha has leased 5 'bighas' of land. They have planted poplar trees in one, doing sugarcane cultivation in two and growing vegetables in the other three. They have made a profit of Rs. 25,000/- in one year. But they have ploughed this whole profit amount back into the business.
- ⌘ The 25 women of Baseda village sangha have divided themselves up into groups of three and are running various businesses like operating a flour grinding machine, a grocery shop, buying wool at the wholesale rate and selling it on a retail basis and selling milk from the buffaloes they have bought.
- ⌘ Handloom-weaving is the craft that the women of Sarsina village sangha have chosen as their occupation.
- ⌘ The women of Nagli Mehnaaz village have formed a co-operative and are making brooms from the plants available in their area and selling them.
- ⌘ In Paniyali village, the women are tailoring petticoats at Rs. 3/- a piece and selling them not only in their own village but in other surrounding villages also.

LAND AND WAGES

The observation of Sangha women expressed in the above statement explains why women started taking up issues of land and wages, which are so fundamental to their existence. They are now armed with the weapon of knowledge of their basic rights, and have gained the courage to demand justice from the so-called powerful contractors who often have linkages with the mafia. They have become less tolerant of exploitation and willing to put at stake the social security and prestige in their fight against injustice. They try to spread the message in the entire community by participating in the open meetings held by the panchayat ('khuli baithaks'), by staging rallies and 'melas' and by printing the messages in the news broad-sheet locally published by their district MS unit. Unity and persistence are keys to win any fight and they have acquired both. They are not easily cowed down by the social pressures to give up their fight.

When the women in Varanasi agitated about low wages, the vested interests decided to

- *Block their way physically*
- *Administer poison to their cattle*
- *Increase the rate of interest on loans*

But this did not deter the irate women, and they refused to go back to work till their wages were increased from 1.5 Kgs. of grain to 6 - 8 Kgs. per day and their work hours were also curtailed.



In Benaru, landless Dalit families have been given small plots of land each, after the Sangha women pursued the matter with the local government administration.

In these fights, the male community also supports them from behind. Yet these struggles are fraught with dangers and threats from influential political and financial 'big-wigs'. Therefore the pace at which the success is achieved is not very encouraging. In many areas, women are still paid far less than the minimum wage. But the struggle has begun and is gaining momentum, especially as the MS sanghas are becoming part of a larger

block/district/state level federation and as such, their voices can no longer be ignored that easily.

The incidence of higher caste people encroaching on and capturing the land belonging to poorer, scheduled caste families is common in Allahabad. In this way, in village Naudia, Gulbasia's land was being usurped by a family belonging to the Patel caste. After the sangha women repeatedly put pressure on the local administration, the concerned functionaries came to the village and Gulbasia's land was formally registered in her name.

PANCHAYATI RAJ

"A major watershed in the process of women becoming confident participants in a larger world, has come with the legislation on Panchayati Raj and the provision for reservation of seats for women."

—We Can Change Our World

A major goal of MS is that all policy decisions should have a gender perspective. For this purpose, political participation of women at every level in the process of decision-making has been encouraged. This year MS strategy has centred around training and activating panchayat members, especially women. In all the districts and blocks where MS is operational, a detailed profile was made of each woman panchayat member, whether she was a sangha member or not, so that all the variables could be taken into account during their training. While interviewing these female members, some of the problems they face in the proper implementation of their duties, were enumerated:

- Ridicule and dominance from the male members of the panchayat and the community at large
- Other related government functionaries do not want to deal with them, but only with the men
- Exploitation and hesitation because of scanty knowledge of role, functions and benefits/schemes
- Poor participation in meetings because of heavy work-load at home and in the fields
- Often not intimated about meetings and other matters of importance because they are women

- Excessive corruption in the system, which does not allow for proper implementation of schemes
- Unable to correspond in connection with their duties due to illiteracy

All the trainings were designed with the aim of tackling these problems at the ground-level. The trainings were aimed at not only the elected women members of panchayat bodies, but also male members and Pradhans. These trainees were given information about their roles, rights, duties and responsibilities. Women were also encouraged to join the literacy centres/camps run by MS if and when they could. The outcome has been that they have improved their negotiation skills and bargaining power, which has ultimately resulted in the ability to carry out their roles more effectively. It may also be mentioned that wherever sangha women are pradhans or members, they are no longer only 'dummies' ('Pradhan patis'), but are trying to play an active role and assert themselves for the right cause.



Panchayati Raj training being given to women

The sanghas are developing as pressure groups for the 'panchayats'. They are exhorting their community members to attend the 'open meeting' ('khuli baithak') that is supposed to be held by the 'panchayat' in every village and participate actively in them to get village development proposals presented and passed. Before they attend such a meeting, they plan exactly which issues to bring up before the 'panchayat'. Though the

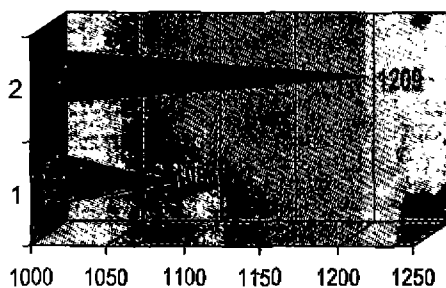
sanghas have pressurised the panchayats at some places to hold these “khuli baithaks”, unfortunately, their efforts are not very successful for the simple reason that ‘panchayats’ do not hold these meetings as scheduled, for fear of being questioned or nailed by the public. In some areas, the local newspapers published by MS, has managed to procure and print the statement of allocation of funds for certain villages, so that all are aware of the plans. This also acts as a deterrent to the ‘panchayat’s misuse of funds.

Due to the persistent efforts of MS functionaries, especially in the four older districts of Varanasi, Banda, Allahabad and Tehri, a large number of sangha women have been elected in local panchayat bodies as is reflected in Figs.7 a,b,c & d which show the relative representation of sangha women as against the total number of elected women panchayat members at every level. It should be noted that the number of sangha women elected as mahila pradhans is greater than those elected from among the non-sangha women.

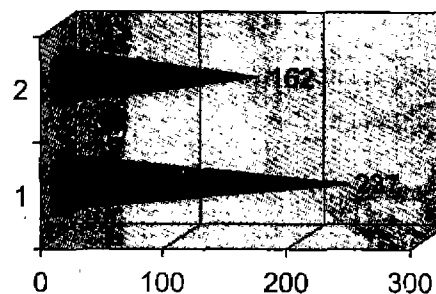
Figs:7 a,b,c & d.

PERCENTAGE OF SANGHA WOMEN REPRESENTED IN PANCHAYAT BODIES

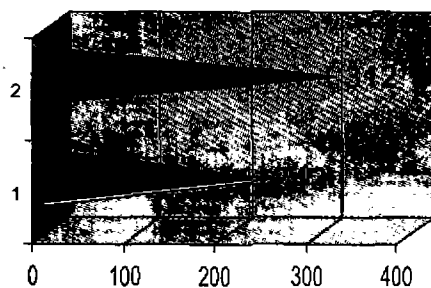
% OF SANGHA / NON-SANGHA MAHILA PANCHAYAT MEMBERS



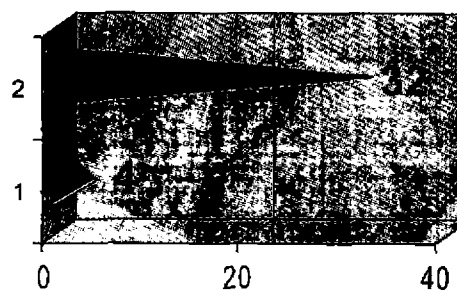
% of SANGHA/NON-SANGHA MAHILA PRADHANS



% OF SANGHA/ NON-SANGH MAHILA B.D.C. MEMBERS



% OF SANGHA/ NON-SANGH ZILLA PARISHAD MEMBERS



- Non-sangha women
- Sangha women

The women of ten sanghas in Banda decided to approach the 'panchayats' of their area for assistance in starting some income-generating project and attended all the 'Khuli baithaks'. Due to their persistence and persuasive powers, the 'panchayat' sanctioned them some funds through DWACRA and they were trained in various skills like making grass partitions ('taat patti'), basket-weaving, candle-making and sewing. Now they are in the process of deciding how to use these skills. Some want to do business on their own, and others want the safety net of a group. The account-keeping which they learnt due to the book-keeping of their savings activity, is standing them in good stead.

In the light of the fact that the State Government in U.P. has recently conferred numerous additional powers on the village 'panchayati raj' system, especially with regard to the implementation of the basic education programme in their areas, the women will have to play an even more vigilant and proactive role within these bodies. They will have to see that, besides corruption, dereliction and neglect of duty, the traditional gender bias does not affect its function.



Women taking part in the 'Khuli Baithak' of the Panchyat

**Table:8 DISTRICT-WISE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN PANCHAYAT BODIES
AT DIFFERENT LEVELS**

Districts	Blocks	Pradhans			Panchayat Members			B.D.C. Members			Zila Parishad		
		S	NS	T	S	NS	T	S	NS	T	S	NS	T
Varanasi	3	96	45	141	345	550	895	133	230	363	2	9	11
Banda	4	2	1	3	34	17	51	3	2	5	—	—	—
Tehri	4	44	4	48	—	—	—	24	10	34	1	5	6
Sabarapur	3	27	25	52	361	261	622	44	23	67	1	2	3
Pauri	3	19	50	69	78	38	112	—	22	22	—	16	16
Allahabad	2	16	7	23	32	—	—	18	3	21	—	—	—
Sitapur	1	1	7	8	33	67	100	2	—	2	—	—	—
Auraiya	1	5	5	10	36	110	82	4	1	5	—	—	—
Gorakhpur	1	1	17	18	37	121	158	—	—	11	—	—	—
Nainital	1	10	—	10	41	8	55	15	10	25	—	—	—
TOTAL	23	237	162	401	1081	1209	1917	243	312	555	4	32	36

* Key to second row: S= Members belonging to Sangha ; NS = members not belonging to Sangha;
T= Total

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL FORESTRY

The most innovative interventions are being made by the MS sangha women in the hill districts of Tehri, Pauri and Nainital, in the field of restoration and conservation of the natural resources. In the plains also, in Banda and Varanasi, the women are not far behind in doing their bit to further the cause of environment. The livelihood of the people living in these areas depends to a great extent on the flora and fauna of the forest and grasslands and it is entirely in their interest to protect it from getting destroyed. The sangha women have developed this realisation with MS inputs and have taken up this aspect as a priority area. Depending on their particular needs and circumstances, they have devised ways and means to preserve their environment in a more sustainable manner. These strategies are as follows:

- ✎ Workshops related to forest management were organised at the village level, leading to fruitful networking with the District Forest Office and the Panchayats.

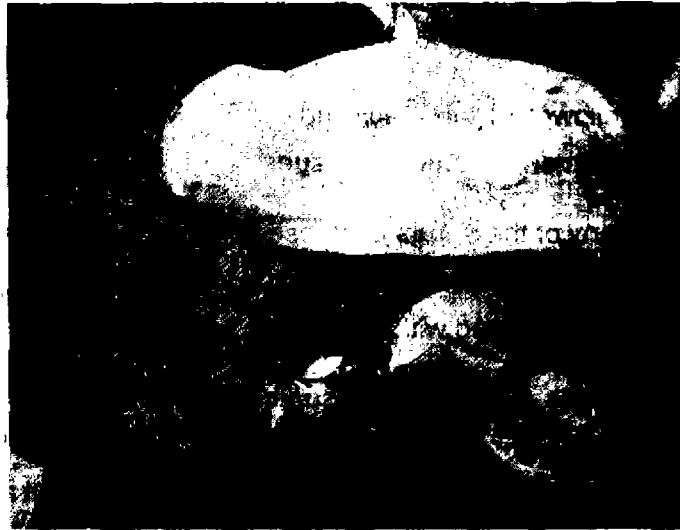
The government in Tehri appointed a woman ex-employee of MS, as a jungle "chowkidar" and she is in charge of protecting the lands surrounding three villages.

- ✎ The sanghas collective efforts were directed towards the **banning of illegal encroachments and felling of trees**. Penalties were levied on offenders as a disincentive.

Some women went to cut grass for fodder in the jungle neighbouring their village, Jayanti, in Tehri. They noticed that five trees had been felled. They went to the local forest authorities immediately to file a complaint. But the functionaries said that the felling was legal. In the meanwhile, five women kept vigil in the forest day and night, to see that the felled trees were not removed. When they saw that the lower-level forest officials were all hand-in-glove and protecting each other, they took a procession to the Tehsildar and the S.D.M. and staged a protest about the matter. Finally, an inspection was done by the higher officials, and it was found that the felling was indeed illegal. The offenders were going to be suspended from their jobs. But they pleaded and begged the sangha women to be spared, as they all had many mouths to feed. The sangha women agreed to let them off, but only after they paid a fine of Rs. 10,000/- and wrote an apology to all the women of the village for committing the offence and they promised never to indulge in this kind of misdemeanour again. The money paid as fine was deposited in the sangha fund account.

- ✎ The proactive stance of MS led to the revival of the defunct "Van Panchayats" (local governance bodies which are supposed to guard against forest misuse and arbitrate cases which arise from the same.) In Tehri and Pauri, there are four "Van Panchayats" which are headed by women from MS sanghas and there is a proposal to install 18 more such women-headed bodies. In the lands belonging to these bodies, the women are seeing to the plantation of grasses which is useful as fodder, instead of other trees which have no useful purpose.
- ✎ **Appropriate grass management** has proved a major intervention of the sangha women in the hill districts of Tehri and Pauri. **Their excellent planning and managerial skills have rendered an effective and productive fodder-cutting schedule**, which not only incorporates conservation techniques, but has also resulted in the saving of money and time. They are seeing to it that **panchayat land around their village is monitored** with regard to the grass-cutting, so that this resource is not unduly depleted.
- ✎ **Plantation of environment and conservation-friendly trees and medicinal trees** which help them with the preparation of herbal medicines, is being undertaken by sangha women. The care and maintenance of these trees are the responsibility of the collectives.

The analytical skills of the sangha women have been so well-honed by the MS trainings and inputs they have received that they decided to consciously avoid planting trees which are harmful to the environment. The forest department often plants trees like pine and deodars to fill the target and only with the commercial point of view in mind. These are sometimes detrimental to the preservation of the environment and a major cause of forest fires. The women make it a point to plant trees like amla and neem, which are much more useful and environment-friendly.



A woman planting a tree in her village

- ☒ Sangha women have drawn a fire-control line to contain these often devastating hill-fires. In all villages where sanghas are formed, the incidence of devastating forest fires is much less.
- ☒ For water conservation, women have been trained how to make a 'chahal' (pond) and ferrocement water tanks to collect and store rainwater.
- ☒ Hand-pump maintenance training has given the community access to water sources which were so far monopolised by the upper castes. Due to sangha pressure, Jal Nigam has undertaken digging of wells and installed hand-pumps.
- ☒ Environment Day and Environment Week is observed in some districts.

In Sitapur, in honour of Environment Day, sangha women visited their neighbouring sanghas and gifted each other trees, which they then planted ceremoniously.

- ☒ "Save Seed" campaigns were conducted to save farmers from depending on purchase of seeds as well as to save Indian varieties of seeds.
- ☒ Campaigns against the use of chemical fertilisers were also held to educate the community about its harmful effects

☞ For **building awareness about environmental and ecological conservation** a number of significant steps were taken at all levels:

- **Nature and eco clubs have been formed by the children and 'kishoris'** in Tehri and Pauri. They undertake a number of activities like having poster campaigns and rallies about environmental issues, digging of compost pits and cleanliness drives, and attending craft trainings in how to use waste materials to make utility items like wall-hangings, table-mats etc. The children go for nature walks to familiarise themselves with the environment.
- The **curriculum** followed in the 'Bal Kendras' and Mahila Saksharta Kendras' is **extensively based on environmental issues.**
- In the sanghas, many of the **songs** composed by the women and sung on festive occasions are **based on the beauty of their environment** and clearly brings out how closely they are entwined with it.
- **Environmental issues have been associated with religious and emotional sentiments.** For instance, in Pauri, 'Maiti Andolan' is a practice followed by the women of many sanghas, where the bride and bridegroom plant a sapling in each of their homes at the time of their marriage. of these saplings. Usually, after the initial activity of tree plantation the lack of care of the saplings results in numerous casualties. In this particular case, this does not occur, as the parents see to their survival because of the sentiment attached to their plantation.
- A great deal of **documentation** has been done in this field through the collation of workshop reports, the recording of audio cassettes of songs with an environmental theme, the articles in the local rural newspapers and the publishing of booklets about the relationship between women and the forest - eg. "Aurat Aur Jungle" brought out by MS Tehri

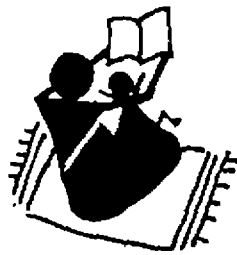
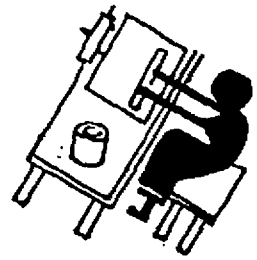
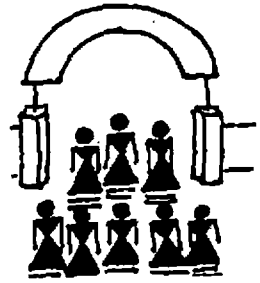
The above measures have been part of a concerted effort to make the preservation of natural resources an integral part of the women's and through them, their families' and community's lives. As they continue these activities, they are coming to realise more and more, that the importance of this mission is essential for their survival.

“THIKANAS – A SPACE WE CAN CALL OUR OWN”

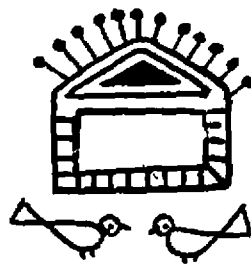
Sanghas usually have to depend on the goodwill of the community for a place where they can hold their meetings. The meetings are held in a variety of settings – under the village banyan tree, a room in the panchayat building, some woman’s courtyard, in the local school, in a mango orchard – any place where the community allows them to do so. But this kind of dependence on the community has its limitations and the weather also is not always kind, especially if the gatherings are held outdoors. Hence, **when the sanghas reach a certain level of maturity, one of their dreams is to have a space of their own to conduct meetings and other sangha activities.** As women, for so long they have been denied dignity, space, and time that they can call their own, that this is a way of asserting themselves in the community. But the process involved in this exercise of acquiring their own meeting-place, is nearly always a struggle. For one, land is never freely available for it and secondly, for building the structure, besides purchase of construction materials, a lot of co-operation in the way of manual labour on the part of the women and the community, is also necessary.

The initiative in this matter of building a ‘thikana’ comes entirely from the sangha women. They first discuss the matter in their meeting and then approach the local panchayat for the registration of a plot in the name of their sangha. This may take several months, depending on how co-operative the panchayat is and on the availability of land. **Sometimes, the sangha has mobilised the community to donate land for this purpose.** After the land is registered in the sangha’s name, the women approach MS for the initial building grant of Rs.30,000/-. They then divide the responsibilities regarding the actual building of the structure, between all the members. In some cases, like in Varanasi district, ‘Thikana Building Committees’ are formed from among the sangha members, and this committee is held responsible for the implementation of this work. The sangha members decide on how they are going to contribute their share towards the construction – whether it will be in terms of time, labour, money or material. If they happen to have a savings fund, with the consent of all the members, money is withdrawn from that fund also to supplement the amount that MS gives.

As of today, 32 sanghas have their own ‘thikanas’.



मेरा नाम
कमली
ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ



OPENING WINDOWS

Education as a tool of empowerment

At the community level, literacy is usually always perceived as 'buddhi' (brains or intelligence), and anyone who is 'illiterate' is considered an imbecile. This is considered all the more true in the case of women, due to the gender-biased perspective prevalent in society. They do not take any initiative nor do others allow them to participate in matters of their own, or their family's and community's development. Women themselves internalise these ideas, and feel that they are incapable of thinking, analysing or taking decisions. They end up with a dismally low self-image. MS facilitators found it quite a task to convince the women that their innate common sense, powers of intuition and ability to see logical relationships are all actually elements of "buddhi". Even without being literate, they can be intelligent. Literacy is only a tool with which they can express themselves in a better way.

When the MS programme started, literacy was not the felt need of the women. They were interested in issues of 'survival' - drinking water, ration, getting minimum wages, minor forest produce and violence. Once the sanghas started taking shape, there was a demand for information relating to these issues. Collective action was planned to address these problems. It was when women started to regularly interact with structures of power and governance, that they began to realise the value of literacy. They needed to write applications, access official documents, maintain records for income-generating activities and savings groups. All this required the ability to read and write.

Therefore, they started demanding literacy services and MS addressed these demands with the following literacy initiatives:

☛ **Literacy camps** are held for a duration of 3 - 10 days. Four types of camps are held for different kinds of groups depending on the needs expressed by the community.

The aims of these are as follows: -

- To teach basic literacy and numeracy skills to those totally unlettered
- To refresh and update the knowledge and skills of neo-literates and drop-outs
- To prepare potential candidates for 5th and 8th. std. school exams

- To prepare candidates before they join the six-monthly residential Mahila Shikshan Kendra

These camps are a wonderful opportunity for women and girls to get together, away from the cares and responsibilities of home and work. They learn and work together as a group. Sometimes, the camps are residential and at other times, they are organised only for the day, entirely at the convenience of the learners. MS functionaries and sangha women use their networking skills to procure a premises for the camps. The output of these camps is immensely positive because the women and girls coming to them are intrinsically motivated. **The words taught are related to their environments and the issues closest to their hearts. In Tehri, the first word taught is “Jal” because water is of paramount importance there, in Gorakhpur it is “Kalam” because lack of literacy is a major concern and in Allahabad the words are all related to land and wages because most sangha women are migratory labourers in stone quarries. Numerical literacy is related entirely to daily life, like counting money, time, people and other objects used everyday. Lessons are gender-sensitive and are worded in a respectful manner. “Paani laa” (Bring water) sounds like an order, not a polite request. Therefore, the lesson was changed with this in mind. Games, music, flash cards, stories supported by visual sequences (‘phuds’) and role plays are the major methods of teaching. They replace the traditional rote-learning methods and increase the pace of learning as well as make it more interesting.**

- ✍ **Literacy centres** have been established for women - **Mahila Saksharta Kendras**, adolescent girls - **Kishori Kendras** and children - **Bal Kendras**. These centres again follow a curriculum based entirely on the learners’ needs and according to their level. **Locally developed primers and educational material are used.** The newspapers published by the DIU are also an effective learning source. Sangha women feel that, if they themselves have not been able to read and write, why should their children, especially their daughters, lose out on the same also? If there are no schools around, and the people express a need to develop literacy skills, then a centre is opened for them. After an appropriate period of time, **when the learners have attained some**



Children in a Balkendra



Woman in a Mahila Saksharta Kendra

level of literacy, efforts are made to mainstream children and adolescent girls in local schools. If these efforts are successful, then with a view to sustainability and subsequent to eliciting the community's opinion about the matter, if necessary, centres are closed down. In the course of this year 39 centres have been opened and 20 have been closed. The women and girls attending the Kendras are not given any incentive to come here. Many of them want to become readers and writers in as short a time as possible. The intrinsic motivation for learning in these cases has done wonders to their performance. For the present status of MS literacy centres, please refer to Table:9.

Meena, 16 years of Sitapur district, was proudly displaying her reading abilities to a visiting review team. She was not distracted by any of the songs and other activities going on around her. Even after performing for the team, she kept on reading intently. In the space of three months, from being totally illiterate she had reached such a level, that she could read totally unseen material of a very advanced nature handed to her by one of the team members.

- Four Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSK or residential learning centres) - are already in existence and preparations have been made during this year, for four more which will commence functioning in the districts of Sitapur, Gorakhpur, Nainital and Auraiya from August '99.
- * Each MSK batch consists of 25- 35 girls/women and four teachers who look after the administrative work as well. The teachers also stay there day and night with the students. Hence it is a 24 hour learning cycle. Each batch runs for about six months. During this period the women and girls become infinitely richer, not only in terms of mere literacy skills, but are bestowed with a horde of information to develop a critical understanding of the social, gender, health and economic dynamics operating in their little part of the world.
- * MSK is a place where adolescent girls or women, for the first time in life, get an opportunity to live their own lives. For the first time there is no restriction on them to talk aloud, to sing, to dance and to laugh above all. It is a pleasure to see them enjoying themselves. They get so excited about everything that they refuse to go to sleep early. They have to be forced to do so.

During a conversation, MSK girls at Sewapuri started weeping saying, "Here we are called by our names, otherwise everyone including our parents call us by names which are actually colloquially used as abuses."



Demonstration technique used for teaching the concept of volcanoes to MSK girls

- * After coming to MSK the women who have been, for ages, labelled as enemies of each other, have formed life-long bonds and relationships with each other and experienced the satisfaction of having a homogenous group, which they can identify and empathise with completely. They have been roused from their stupor, and many have become articulate and are able to assert themselves for their rightful demands - familial, public or otherwise. They have been spurred on to further heights by their learning: some have become teachers in MS "saksharta" and "shikshan kendras". Some have taken up posts in other projects like the 'anganwadi' scheme and some have joined more advanced courses. Most continue in their traditional roles of housewives and agricultural workers but with greater awareness and

Table:9 STATUS OF MS LITERACY CENTRES IN 1998-99

Type of centre	No. of dists.	No. of centres	No. of learners		No. of centres closed	No. of new centres	No. of learners admitted in schools		No. of learners who have passed a school board exam		
			Boys	Girls			Kendra learners	Other learners	5 th std.	8 th std.	10 th std.
Bal Kendras	7	160	1273	2942	18	39	971	231	-	-	-
Kishori Kendras	5	37	Girls 700	Women 72	2	-	38	46	-	-	-
Mahila Saksharta Kendras	6	72	654		10	13	42*	-	21	2	8

*Sometimes, according to the convenience of the learners, kishoris also study in the "mahila saksharta kendras". These kishoris are later admitted in formal schools.

understanding. They have developed an analytical perspective and have started questioning gender-insensitive attitudes in their families and communities, but this is not easily accepted in a patriarchal system. This is an aspect that MS is already looking into and as an organisation, it is committed to helping these women to seek solutions to their new dilemma. However there is no argument that some sacrifice, some conflict and chaos will precede any positive change.

It has been a great matter of pride that in Banda, when a person who has studied in the Mahila Shikshan Kendra, successfully passes her fifth standard school board exam, the state education authorities specify on her certificate that the institution from which she has passed out is the MS Mahila Shikshan Kendra. Therefore, it is now deemed a recognised and respectable centre of learning.

- ✍ **Mainstreaming of younger children in local schools** is also one of the main priorities of MS and this year much effort has gone into this aspect by:
 - * Organising 'bal sabhas' and village campaigns with the aim of raising awareness of enrolment in schools
 - * Individual counselling of parents by sahayoginis/anudesikas/other motivated parents from sanghas and kishoris
 - * Networking with school administration at the village, block and district levels and playing a proactive role in the functioning of VECs
 - * Besides MS 'kendra' learners, efforts are made to see that other non-school going children in the village are also mainstreamed.

- ✍ **Upgrading of educational status of girls/women/MS functionaries** is also an important MS strategy. For this, besides holding camps to prepare the candidates for exams, they are given other kind of support in the form of text-books etc. MS is sensitive to the needs of the staff while they are preparing for their exams and tries its best to see that they are not overburdened with work during these times. Support is also given to them in the forms of text and other reference books, which are kept for their ready reference in the library. Table: 10 below gives the level of educational upgradation of MS functionaries, from when they joined up to the year under report.

Table:10 UPGRADATION OF EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF MS FUNCTIONARIES

Educational level at joining time	No. of workers	Educational level at present time						
		5 th	8 th	10 th	12 th	Ba/BSc	BEd/LLB	M.A.
5 th	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
8 th	22	-	4	2	6	5	-	5
10 th	22	-	-	7	6	7	-	2
12 th	20	-	-	-	6	9	1	4
BA/BSc	3	-	-	-	-	2	1	-
M.A.	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total	71	1	6	9	18	23	2	13

Note: The above data represents the situation in three districts – Banda, Tehri and Saharanpur

☛ **The establishment and running of libraries** keeps the skills of neo-literates alive and also serves the reading needs of others in the community. These libraries not only meet the above needs, but are also an excellent method of eliciting the support of the local youth (males especially) in the project, as they are willing volunteers for the care-taking of the library. Their support then slowly extends to other aspects of the programme like awareness raising 'melas', rallies and other similar functions. **The number of libraries has gone up from 114 in 1997-98 to 171 in 1998-99.**

☛ **The newspapers** which are periodically published by the DIUs, are used for awareness-building on social and local issues and to keep up the learners' reading skills.

These educational strategies are being constantly being evaluated by MS, and the findings definitely result in soul-searching and redefining methods of operation. The MS education centres are not only monitored by staff, but more importantly, by the sangha women of the village, with respect to the attendance and the quality of instruction, in order

that they do not slip into the traditional method of rote teaching and learning. The heterogenous nature of each learners' group with regard to age, sex and ability, necessitates a high level of competence on the part of the teacher. The teachers' prevailing level of knowledge and the lack of difference between their background and that of their students' is also a cause for difficulties occasionally. **The 'anudesikas' and 'sahelis' are frequently checked and given on-the-job refresher trainings and workshops in order to deal with these aspects.** When the girls/children are mainstreamed in local schools, the newly admitted school-goers often drop out of the formal system because it is so different to the MS centres in terms of methodology and approach. In some cases of this nature, the sangha women or MS animators have contacted the school authorities and the problem has been dealt with. One other difficulty is the proper maintenance and upkeep of reading materials which are given to the learners to take home.

Girls/ women who have studied in the "Mahila Shikshan Kendras" are exposed to a lot of knowledge and are treated in such a different manner there, that once they go back to their home environments, they sometimes find it difficult to put across the new things that they have imbibed, to the other members of their family. MS and its functionaries are always looking for ways to get around these hurdles and **a fully participatory technique is used to hammer out solutions.** Only now, after a decade of experience, **the fact that education is not an end in itself, but merely a means towards attaining empowerment,** is firmly entrenched in all participants in the programme.

EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS MADE BY SANGHA WOMEN

It is relevant to mention how sangha women have made a difference at the community level with regard to educational services, especially for girls. Sangha women and MS staff try to conscientise the community about the inherent value of daughters and the importance of giving them opportunities for growth. This has resulted in the enrolment of many girls in schools or 'bal' and 'kishori kendras' or residential literacy centres run by MS. The sanghas also enlist the co-operation of the staff and students of the local schools for the organisation of large community-level functions like 'melas' and rallies eg. International Women's Day, Kishori "Ma-Beti Mela" (Mother and Daughter Fair), Environment Day celebrations and so on. In the light of the fact that the women are in

close touch with the authorities, in some places, they are co-operative enough to lend their premises for MS activities i.e. for running an educational centre for adolescent girls or children, or for conducting trainings and literacy camps. The information given about the role and functioning of VECs in monitoring the village level education system has

In the district of a male school teacher was transferred because the sangha women protested against the sexual abuse and he inflicted upon an adolescent girl in the school in the case of Sitapur district. The male school teacher was because the school master had refused to do. The sangha women took a public opinion to such an extent that the school authorities were forced to resign and it was soon closed.

been helpful for the women to be more vigilant with regard to their children's education. However, one can only take the horse to the water - one cannot make it drink. Sangha women succeed if the education administration and panchayat supports them, but they sometimes fail in their fight due to the indifference and corruption of the staff and administration.



Training to members of Village Education Committees

"An interesting revelation made by the study relates to the role of MS in activation and effectiveness of VECs. The performance of the VECs was found to be relatively better in blocks where this programme was operational. The general level of awareness and participation of women was high and the meetings were better organised. Some sort of resource mobilisation through local means had also taken place in these blocks."

— Study on "Sustainability in U.P. Basic Education Programme."

किशोरी संघ



एक बेटी की मांगे चार
शिक्षा समानता एक और प्यार



महिला समारख्या
उ. प्र.

EMERGING BUTTERFLIES

The Kishori Sanghas gain momentum

When the MS sanghas became stronger and more focussed in their interventions, the young daughters of the sangha women started attending the meetings out of curiosity. Gradually, they began to get interested in the changes that the MS project was bringing about in their mothers' lives. But they found that they could not adopt the same set of rules or utilise the same solutions, because their juncture in life was so different to that of their mothers'. **They wanted a forum in which they could express themselves without being silenced or suppressed and where they could be accepted for what they are.** Many of them are school drop-outs, and even if they are school-going, neither the curriculum nor their teachers are gender-sensitive, or conducive to the resolution of their particular problems. In most places, they are prevented from attending school or having any other outlet for their energy, because of the archaic views of their parents and the very real dangers of eve-teasing, molestation and rape. Their frustration and the example set by their mothers, led to their demand for a similar collective presence of their own and for information which would help them lead a better life. MS realised that these girls are the future of womanhood in India, and as such, their



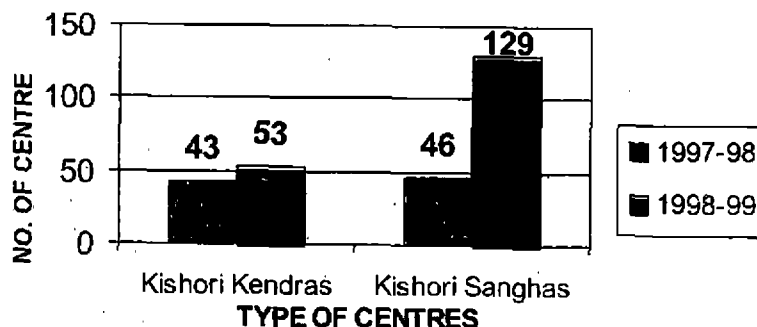
Adolescent girls at a kishori sangha meeting

flowering into responsible, educated and informed young women was of paramount importance. Therefore, their requests were acceded to and it was resolved that another front would be added to the movement - that of the 'kishori sangha' (collectives for the adolescent girls).

The trajectory of MS activities with adolescent girls has risen sharply upwards due to the success and therefore, the heightened demand for these services at the grass-roots level. This growth is represented in Fig.7. It may be noted that there is a sharp rise in the number of 'kishori sanghas' from last year to the year under report. In addition to the above factor of a naturally increased need for these sanghas, the fact that there was study tour by the DIUs and sahayoginis to Bihar to see the kishori centres in action there, provided more inspiration to them to give greater impetus to this activity. 'Kishori kendras' were started because there was a felt need among the 'kishori sangha' members to attain literacy skills or regain them, in the case of drop-outs. Ever since these 'kishori sanghas' and 'kishori kendras' were started in 1995-96, they have been instrumental in developing a cadre of young girls who are aware of their environment, health and who are highly motivated to strive for a better tomorrow for themselves. The level of enthusiasm and joie-de-vivre in them, inspite of their poor home environments and total lack of emotional support, is infectious. MS is dealing with both school-going and non school-going 'kishoris'.

Fig:7

GROWTH OF KISHORI KENDRAS AND SANGHAS FROM 1997 - 1999



For both the kishori kendras and sanghas, as far as MS as a project is concerned, the chief objectives are as follows:

- ☺ Providing a place for them to interact freely with each other without fear or hesitation
- ☺ Giving them information about their rights, duties, health and other social subjects pertaining to their overall development
- ☺ Laying the strong foundation of a gender-sensitive approach towards life and equipping them with life-skills which will help them to deal with conflicts and hurdles - both present and future, in all the spheres that affect them
- ☺ Maximising information dissemination for and greater exposure to others of their own age by organising 'health' and 'ma-beti melas'
- ☺ Raising their awareness of environmental and conservation issues
- ☺ Realisation of their potential abilities and hidden talents by organising competitions and involving them in activities in which they can play an active role, eg. publication of the local newspapers, wall-writing and street plays etc.
- ☺ Exposure to other environments so that they are able to look beyond their limited horizons for answers to their problems
- ☺ Developing leadership skills and analytical vision
- ☺ Enabling them to be mainstreamed in local schools and colleges
- ☺ The ultimate aim of forming sustainable collectives as women when they reach maturity

Literacy skills are given to non-school going adolescent girls as per their need and desire. MS has also strategised to further the literacy skills of drop-out school girls (Please refer to Chap. 3 for details of MS educational interventions)



Adolescent girls concentrating in their effort to achieve literacy skills

As a result of all these efforts the 'kishoris' are poised for concerted action and are active participators, not only in their own personal all-round development, but also in that of their sisters and the community at large. Many of the interventions made by kishoris are at their own initiative.

Some initiatives by kishoris

In Sitapur district, the designing and the publishing of the MS newspaper "Dehriya" is almost entirely the responsibility of the 'kishoris'. They are doing this on a voluntary basis.

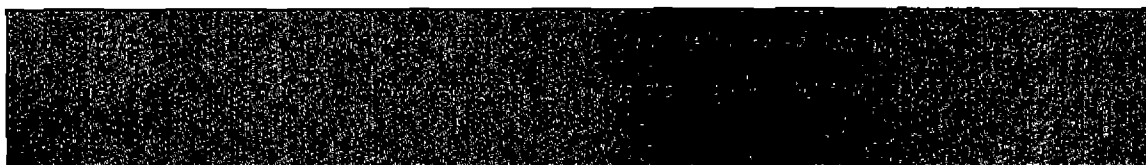


In Varanasi, the kishori sanghas have started their funds with their savings on their own initiative.

On Children's Day, 14th Nov. in Gorakhpur a 'Wa-Beti Mela' (Mother-daughter fair) was organised which was attended by 1000 participants. Besides the usual various kinds of stalls, exhibitions and programmes, there were also a 'Bambhaidam' exercise and a march against tetanus.

Kishoris in Gorakhpur are well aware of their rights regarding the age of marriage. A series of events held at the community level, raised public awareness about the high incidence of child marriages, and as a result, daughters are actually beginning to challenge their parent's right to marry them off below the stipulated age. In this way, in Niyamatpur village the sangha women stopped the wedding of a thirteen-year old girl.

It is this investment in these young girls which will pay rich dividends in the future and therefore, this component of the MS programme has become an integral feature, the contribution of which, can in no way be belittled.



मैं जीना चाहती हूँ
टहनियाँ और पत्ते
मेरा श्रृंगार हैं।



I want to live,
branches and leaves
are my adornments.



महिला समाज

AWAKENING THE STRENGTH WITHIN

Capacity Building Activities, Monitoring and Evaluation

Training and capacity-building at all levels is a strong empowerment process. *Sangha women have a distinct presence in their communities and are able to take a stand on issues only because of their need-based training, their subsequent imbibing of the same and later, the dissemination of information learnt and the practical use of it in their everyday lives.*

All MS trainings are participatory in nature where learning is a two-way process. Sangha women are considered as a training resource group and not only as mere participants. They also help in planning and management of training. Thus, trainings provide space to women to express themselves and help them to learn managerial and planning skills. **Some of these sangha women have evolved as trainers too.**

Many creative inputs have gone into making trainings interesting, relevant to the level of the trainees and comprehensible by them. IEC materials like colourful posters, models of clay and cardboard, items of everyday use, audio-visual aids like cassettes of songs which have been sung by village women themselves and suitable films are liberally used. "Phuds" or visual sequences of a story painted on cloth, are made to illustrate subjects like the Panchayati Raj system, environmental and health issues and so on. Most of these materials are developed in-house during special workshops held specifically for this purpose by the DIUs.

As one can see from the training and workshop figures given in Tables 11 and 12 below, this year, a few specific aspects have been given greater emphasis, because the staff and the women felt that they needed more inputs in them i.e. **fundamental sangha concepts, health and herbal remedies, panchayati raj, bio-diversity and environment and savings/self-help groups.**



Orientation Training

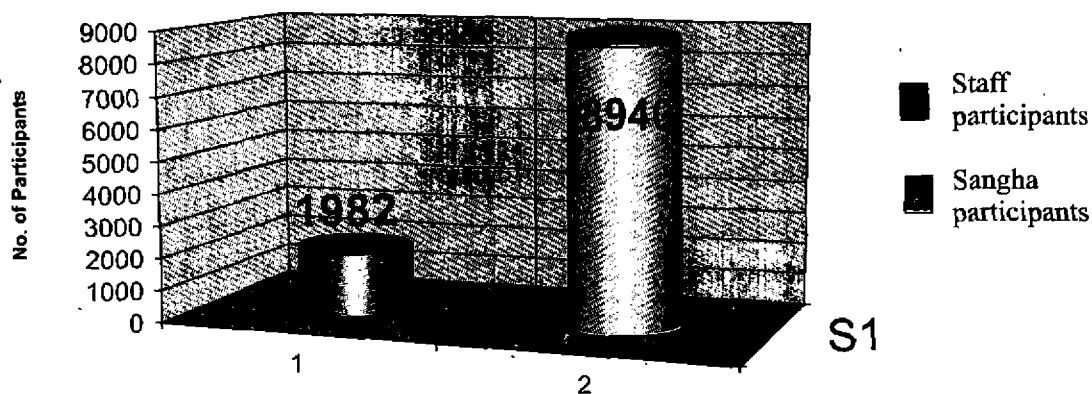
For functionaries: To familiarise the sahayoginis, anudesikas and sahelis with the MS programme, trainings are mainly on **conceptual clarity of women's issues with a feminist perspective**.

Table:11 TRAININGS CONDUCTED IN 1998-99

S.No.	Subject	Staff level		Sangha level	
		No. of trainings	No. of participants	No. of trainings	No. of participants
1	Sangha Concepts	4	55	44	2008
2	Education/Literacy	13	280	N.A	N.A.
3	Panchayati Raj	6	72	21	684
4	Legal	8	110	5	112
5	Health	20	232	14	426
6	Small Industries	2	24	15	232
7	Savings/Self-Help Grs.	7	55	14	535
8	Veterinary Health	N.A.	N.A.	6	147
9	Subject-wise trainings	N.A.	N.A.	1	140
10	Publication	2	8	1	14
11	PRA Mapping	2	37	2	226
	TOTAL	64	873	123	4624

Fig. : 8

Bar chart showing comparison of staff and sangha representation in workshops and trainings



These trainings have been instrumental in the **transformation of self** in the women. A feeling of sisterhood and empathy is imbued in them through the deep and personal level of sharing in the sessions. They become extremely articulate, conscious of their rights and internalise a high degree of motivation, which along with all the information

they imbibe, enhances the ability to perform their catalytic role. More and more efforts are being made to involve sahayoginis in the training of sangha women. They have rich field experience and good rapport with these women and as such, they are the most appropriate people to undertake this training. They use actual cases and instances to illustrate fundamental MS principles in action and to develop the women's analytical skills.

Table:12 WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED IN 1998-99

S.No.	Subject	Staff level		Sangha level	
		No. of workshops	No. of participants	No. of workshops	No. of participants
1	Panchyati Raj	4	41	7	174
2	Publication	23	130	1	14
3	Sangha Concepts	92	161	16	563
4	Health	10	59	47	1065
5	Law	4	39	15	565
6	Property Rights	2	13	N.A.	N.A.
7	Literacy	25	352	4	137
8	Savings	4	87	2	172
9	Sangha Concepts	1	15	N.A.	N.A.
10	Veterinary Health	2	22	4	67
11	Biodiversity/ Environ.	6	106	19	894
12	Van Panchayat	2	44	1	20
13	PRA	1	18	8	444
14	Kishori Sangha	2	22	13	301
	TOTAL	178	1109	137	4416

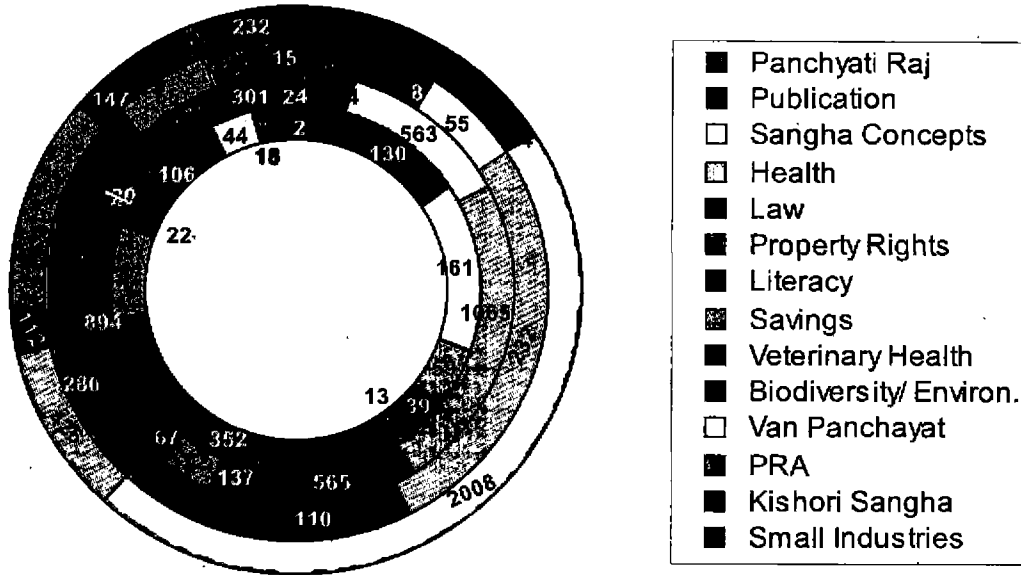
Orientation Training for the sangha women:

Orientation trainings are conducted for sangha women to develop a feminist perspective and concept of collective solidarity. These trainings essentially encourage women to discover themselves, learn through introspection and observation. The trainer's role is to guide women and draw out the core issues that affect them. Simple games and exercises help the women to identify their personal inhibitions and examine and question patriarchal norms. This kind of training is absolutely essential to enable these women to come out of their shells. It has been repeatedly observed, that usually, only trained women develop leadership qualities and tend to stand out as the 'movers and shakers' in the sanghas. Therefore, efforts are being made to increase the spread of such trainings to as wide a section of sangha women as possible.

This year, 2571 sangha women and 231 staff members have been trained in fundamental sangha concepts.

Fig:9

SUBJECT-WISE REPRESENTATION OF STAFF AND SANGHA PARTICIPANTS IN TRGS. AND WORKSHOPS



Starting from outermost circle:	
1 - number of sangha-level participants in trainings	— 4524
2 - number of staff-level participants in trainings	— 873
3 - number of sangha level participants in workshops	— 4416
4 - number of staff-level participants in workshops	— 1109

Specialised trainings:

Health:

Poor health amongst women was a rallying point of discussion and talking about the basics of health and hygiene was a common feature at meetings. Therefore, organisations like Jagori (Delhi), Action India (Delhi) and Sahyog (Almora), have conducted several trainings on health issues. Action India has trained village women directly, whereas the two other organisations have mainly trained MS functionaries, who in turn have trained and developed health core teams and sangha women. The health issues covered were:

- ☞ Reproductive health, techniques of self check-up and setting up of health centres
- ☞ Revival of traditional practices using herbal medicine.

- ✓ Setting up of herbal medicine centres and herbal nurseries.
- ✓ Safe delivery practices to both old and new trained birth attendants (TBAs)

Excerpts from a report of a Dai Training in Tehri Garhwal, written by the trainer, Diane Smith

On what the trainees have gained from the course :

Bardevi : " My village is very poor and very, very far away from any medical help. After learning things here, I feel that I will be so helpful, if I can save the life of a woman or a baby, I appreciate how I was heard and respected for everything I shared and said. That meant a lot to me."

Dashani : " Earlier I thought that I wouldn't learn anything here due to my illiteracy, but I have learned so much. I came here half a person, and am going away whole."

Follow-up of all these trainings are also done at regular intervals.

The outcome of these trainings can be seen by referring to the "Health and Alternative Medicine" section in Chapter 2.

Altogether 1782 women and functionaries have been covered by 91 trainings and workshops in health and alternative medicine.

Para Legal

All legal literacy trainings have a gender perspective. Participants are made to recollect cases of their area and analyse them, so as to be able to state which particular item of the penal code applies in each instance. The trainings have been conducted by MARG and independent consultants. They have been held in three tiers. The first dealt with civil law, the second with criminal law and the third was a revision of the previous two and also included the development of a training module for sangha - level training. These trainings have been attended by sahayoginis and the DIUs, who have in turn trained core teams of sangha women. These inputs help the women to actively participate in the resolution of cases at the sangha level or those brought before the women's courts. Trainings are also being given in the techniques of setting up of Nari Adalats in more districts. These act as powerful pressure groups solving many cases without having to go to a court of law. Booklets like 'Nyay ki seedhi' etc. support the trainings.

This year, 677 sangha women and 149 staff members were trained in legal matters.

Environment

The denudation and destruction of the natural resources in the hills of U.P. has always been a cause of grave concern and the women in these areas have been known for their activism with regard to the restoration and protection of these precious assets. But this struggle needs focus and direction and this was provided by the workshops and trainings given to the women and kishoris this year in the following topics:

- Forest management - clarifying the classification of forest land and maintenance of protected areas like sanctuaries and so on
- The rules regarding and the formation of "Van Panchyats" and their formation. MS Tehri has taken the initiative in this by simplifying the rules of these bodies so that they can be comprehended and acted upon by the local people.
- Afforestation (social forestry and raising nurseries).
- The ills of pollution, (recycling plastic and making compost pits, setting up of eco clubs).
- Water management (building ferro-cement water tanks).

This year 894 women and kishoris and 150 functionaries have been trained in this field.

Skill Development

The fact that many women have collected a considerable amount of savings in their sangha's savings groups, they have now started exploring ways and means to start some economic development activities, either on an individual or on a group basis to supplement their family's income and become self-reliant. In most cases these ventures cannot be initiated without some skill development training. Therefore, the women have been trained in the following skills this year:

- ✦ 'Chikan-work' embroidery by SEWA in Sitapur
- ✦ TRYSEM sewing courses in Saharanpur

- ☛ "Dhari" (rug)- weaving and handloom weaving in Saharanpur
- ☛ Hand-pump mechanic training in Banda.

The capacity enhancement of the women trained as hand-pump mechanics can be assessed from the fact that outside agencies like UNICEF invited them to conduct trainings in other areas.

Other skill development trainings

- ☛ The DIU staff were given training in computers as most of the districts maintain profiles of the staff on the computer. It is also used to maintain accounts and document activities. The quarterly and other reports are also compiled on the computer.
- ☛ Trainings on village mapping and PRA are an essential component for the successful working of the programme, as databases are collected in this way, before the programme commences functioning in a particular area.

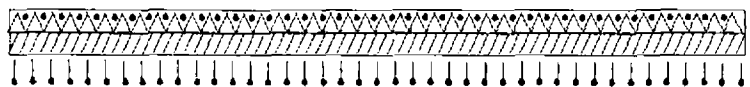
770 sangha women and 55 staff members were trained in PRA mapping this year.

- ☛ Publication workshops were conducted on how to bring out newpages, diaries, planners. Women were taught screen printing and layout presentation.



- ☛ Trainings were also given to sangha women on importance of savings and on how to start and maintain savings groups. The trainings also entailed maintenance of accounts and records, networking with bank officials, operation of bank accounts, how to avail of loans and so on.

707 sangha women and 142 staff members were given training in how to run savings groups this year.



Panchayati Raj Training

Trainings are organised for both elected members of the Panchayat, especially women and pradhans, and for non-elected members also. Both groups are made aware of what the rights, roles and responsibilities of panchayat members are towards good governance. The former group is trained with a view to enable them to exercise their roles effectively and the latter group is trained to ensure that it happens so. The trainings also give the women members a gender perspective to deal in the right spirit with women and other social issues.

This year 858 sangha women and 113 staff members have been trained in the intricacies of the panchayati raj system.

Training of anudesikas and MSK teachers

A number of trainings were held for MSK teachers, where emphasis was laid on the methodology to be followed in the 'kendras', on the development of gender-sensitive primers, and on their own roles within the MS framework. 'Nirantar' trained them specifically on creative teaching methods and how to draw up lesson plans. The anudesikas were sensitised to child-centred, non-formal teaching methods using minimum levels of learning and how to supplement their lessons with plenty of games, songs and other creative inputs. They were taught to develop a curriculum based on local variations and appropriate teaching aids. For the purposes of enrolment, retention and mainstreaming, techniques of convergence and networking with the local schools and educational administration were also emphasised. Refresher courses were organised for those who have already been in the programme for a while, especially to guard against their lapsing back into the conventional rote method of learning.

This year 632 functionaries were trained in the fields of education and literacy

STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL WORKSHOPS:

- ☞ A State workshop on "Decentralisation of Sanghas" was conducted from Aug.3 - 6, 1998, at the Dayanand Ashram in Rishikesh, for which the resource persons were Ms. Nishi Mehrotra, Ms. Runu Chakravarty and Ms. Kameshwari.
- ☞ A workshop on "Direction and Strategies of Kishori Sanghas" was held from 21 - 29 Sept. '98, in Landsdowne, Pauri. Th resource persons were Ms. Runu Chakravarty, Ms. Ganga Sharma and Ms. Geeta.
- ☞ "Planning for the new Mahila Shikshan Kendras" was the subject of the workshop held in Lucknow on the 4th and 5th. of December, '98. The resource persons were Ms. Manju Aggarwal and Ms. Ganga Sharma.
- ☞ A workshop on "Sustainability and Phasing Out" was held from 17 - 20 February, '99 for all the DPCs and sahayoginis of the older districts of Varanasi, Tehri, Banda and Saharanpur.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

All evaluations are so-called reviews with an aim to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and based on those, to give it future direction. Being a process-oriented programme, the monitoring and evaluative aspects are an inherent part of it, and as such, they are an **on-going mechanism of reflection and action**. They are done at all levels and by all the groups of people involved in the project. The group of people that MS is most accountable to is the sangha. Therefore, in addition to sahayoginis and MS staff, **sangha women also take the responsibility of monitoring the programme, especially with regard to the proper functioning of all the literacy centres**. External resource persons and review teams are called upon from time to time to conduct reviews of the project. Reports, observation visits, exchange of verbal and written views, information given in MIS formats, training feedback, reviews, regularly scheduled and impromptu evaluations and meetings and so on are some of the techniques utilised for review and monitoring of the programme. Time-bound and practical actions are drawn up on the basis of these evaluations and the results of incorporating these suggestions are often evident very quickly.

This year, besides the routine monitoring and evaluations done by the DIUs of their functionaries' performance and that of the sanghas, a **mid-term review was done of Sitapur district in March 1999**. The project in this district started in '95-96. It has made a positive impact in the areas of operation in a relatively short period of a little less than three years. Learning from the experiences of older districts has shown them the way towards more constructive and effective implementation of project objectives. In consultation with the DIUs and other functionaries involved, the review team shared some measures for more effective implementation. Briefly, these were:

- ⌘ **It is crucial to involve men more in sangha community-level activities**, so that their erroneous perceptions of the programme are corrected and they work in tandem with their womenfolk towards a more gender-sensitive society.
- ⌘ **The evaluative and analytical abilities of sangha women have to be enhanced**, so that their capacity for decision-making is improved.
- ⌘ **They need more exposure to other strong grass-root level community-based projects**
- ⌘ **Training should permeate all levels and not stagnate at the functionary level.**
- ⌘ **Proper management information systems are required for effective monitoring at all levels of the programme.**
- ⌘ **Macro-level changes in gender-sensitive attitudes have to be translated at the micro-level of the home.** For example, in Sitapur, though the custom of "Gudiya Patakka" has stopped in many villages (refer to Chapter 2 under 'Changing Rituals and Traditions'), this has not filtered down to change in attitudes towards women and girls at home.
- ⌘ **Convergence and networking at the community level has to be given much more emphasis and impetus**, if sustainability has to be expedited.



सामाजिक विरोध गांव में
 बनाकर इनके खिलाफ
 बैठक में इस मुद्दे को
 लोगों की सामाजिक रा

अंक-2 • वर्ष-1 • गोरखपुर • मार्च - 1998

किशोरी केन्द्र की झलक

पंचायत राज संघ

ग्राम - अकजलाल
 किशोरिया की संख्या 22
 कुशी कुशी सुम्न
 लाल के किशोरी

अनुदेशिका- कुशी

आज के संविधान संशोधन
 महिलाओं को ग्राम प्रधान, कार्य
 अधिकतर काम
 बालबोध की गई
 उनका कठना या
 हमारा सारा काम या
 हमें करनी पड़े

जोड़ेगी तब मा

माफिकता डाक

अंक-40

संपादन

कुवणा, शकुन्ता
 महिला समारोह
 जिला सहारनपुर

जून 1998

ये कैसा कानून ?

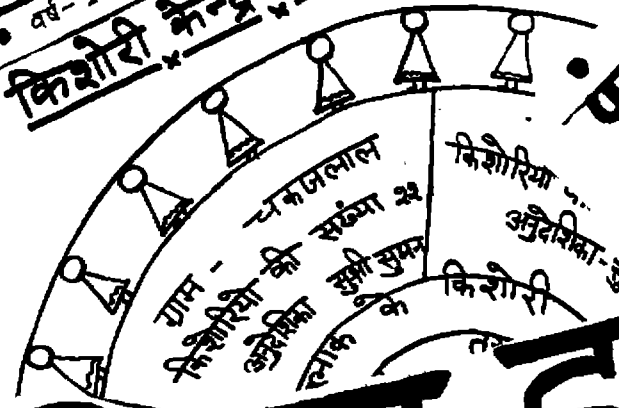
नई टिहरी
 गलातों की

आखिर कब और कहाँ मिलें
 सुरक्षा हमारी बेटियों की.....
 स्कूलों में शिक्षादायक 1998

अख व्लाक में एक गांव है खर
 गांव में स
 यी। प्रभारी
 ने से रिपोर्ट लि
 पुलिस पहुंच
 मिले। तब पु
 हुई औरलों
 रतों के न ब
 और गालि
 रि पुलिस के

इसके अलिखित ग्राम सभा यह भी तय

व्यक्त का
 गांव संघों में सहयोगि
 यन्त्री की गयी। तो बह
 किया कि हम मजदूरी
 है। लेकिन बचत कर
 जौरा संघ की महिलाओं



ONE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

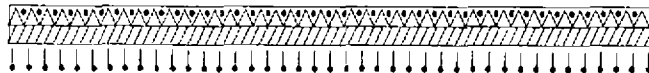
Documentation, Publication and Newspages

One of the key elements in the empowerment movement is the documentation of the programme processes and its output. The periodic preparation of these documents:- reports, studies, reviews and publications, are necessary for analysis, monitoring, evaluating, planning, teaching, training, advocacy and reflection. Process documentation, publication and reporting skills in MS have been honed through the years, and efforts are still going on in bringing about a sound management information system as well. This would provide a systematic record of programme implementation.

In this way, various kinds of documents are created in MS. They are as follows:

REPORTS AND PROCESS DOCUMENTATION:

- ⇒ The MS Annual Report 1997-98 - "**The Spirit of the Collective**" recorded the progress of the project based on the information received from the DIUs. Reports from the DIUs helps the state office to plan and evaluate its activities and budget for the programme as a whole.
- ⇒ **Quarterly reports** are sent to the State Office from the DIUs. These reports are systematically divided into different sections covering each and every aspect of the programme. Efforts have been made to improve the quantitative aspect of the reporting to support the descriptive part by developing MIS formats and to streamline the descriptive matter in a more interesting and user-friendly manner.
- ⇒ A draft report on **Environment and Social Forestry** initiatives has been prepared to put on record the contributions of MS and the Sangha women in this field, especially in the hills, where their livelihood is so dependent on the forest and grassland resources.
- ⇒ The empowerment processes from the inception of the MS Sitapur programme in June 1996 up till June 1998, were studied and recorded in a document titled "**Moving Towards Empowerment**".



- ⇒ A preliminary effort was made to develop **MIS formats** for monitoring and planning of the project and to maintain flow of information from field level to national level. These are now in the process of being refined and field-tested.
- ⇒ The DIUs maintain **books of accounts, sahayogini profiles, lists of sanghas and their activities**. Village profiles developed through PRA exercises are also maintained. They are also documenting **case-studies** for future reference.

TRAINING, EDUCATION AND IEC MATERIALS:

- ⇒ A draft Module of Training in the Concept of Sangha and for Training of MS 'Kendra' Teachers has been developed.
- ⇒ **Process reports of the trainings and workshops** conducted at all levels constitute valuable information about the capacity-building efforts of MS. They help to improve future training programmes and to develop modules out of them. For example after the training on legal literacy, this year, a module will be carved out of the detailed process report of the training.
- ⇒ During their campaign to revive the defunct system of "Van Panchayats" in Tehri, they published a simplified version of **Van Panchayat Rules** published by the government. It really helped village people to understand and implement the rules.
- ⇒ **Diaries, planners and table calendars** are designed and published both at the state and district levels. Each year an innovative idea is tried out.
- ⇒ **Apan Geet** and **Geetika** are **song books** brought out by the MS grass-root functionaries and the sangha women. They are extensively used at meetings, trainings and other functions at all levels.
- ⇒ **Photo documentation** of activities and celebration of events are maintained along with **video films** of functions, melas, jathas and trainings.
- ⇒ **IEC materials like posters, flash-cards, picture stories painted on cloth (phuds), flyers etc.** are designed and printed on subjects like health, education, breaking of rituals and so on.
- ⇒ **Educational materials like primers, workbooks, charts and games** are developed in consultation with the MS staff for use in the literacy centres. They are prepared with the level of the learners, the local language, local conditions and culture in mind. The primers e.g., 'Au se Aurat' (Saharanpur), 'Sun re Sakhi' (Varanasi), 'Banda ki Batian' (Banda), 'Ka se Kalam' (Allahabad), 'Meri Pothi' (Tehri), 'Mili Jhuli' (Sitapur), which

were prepared earlier, were reviewed this year and improved upon on the basis of evaluations conducted by the MS staff and learners. Attempts are being made to cull out all the best parts of each primer and collate them into one consolidated, standardised literacy primer for all MS literacy centres and MSKs.

PUBLICATION OF RURAL NEWSPAGES AND MAGAZINES:

One of the most powerful methods of communication that the women of this project have established in the ten districts, are the rural newsletters or newspapers (see list below) that are being published regularly.

These rural newspapers are written in the local dialect. They are a storehouse of information, a feast for the neo-literate's eyes and also pressurise people who are being corrupt, inactive or crime-prone, to act in a more responsible manner, because they report the truth about their misdemeanours. Besides the above, another factor which makes these papers so important is that they provide a perfect forum for the rural voice to be heard by all. The women and girls often write letters about whatever's affecting them. Some of these are selected for publishing and it makes them feel on top of the world to see their name in print. There is a wide coverage of the programme in each district, and these pages act as advance announcers and campaigners of special events like Health Melas or the celebration of International Women's Day and so on. The information given in these pages about Government Schemes, herbal remedies, Panchayat "Kull-Baithak" dates and funds allocated for public works in the villages is of immense value and has often proved a springboard to the women for concerted action on certain issues that are bothering them.

Sangha women and kishoris are actively involved in the layout, designing and content of the newspapers brought out in the districts. The list of these is as follows:

- **Mahila Dakiya** (Banda) is a bi-monthly which won the Chameli Devi National Media Award in 95-96. It covers issues on economic activities, savings, and interestingly a price index of the local market.
- **Rant Raibar** (Tehri) is a quarterly, which was initially a children's newspaper, but has grown to cover pertinent issues like child labour, women's rights, stories and profiles, and the environment.

The rural newspaper published by MS. Jais, called "Rant Raibar" has been accorded the importance of being produced and quoted as a court document during the trial of Ballandei of Kotmanthi village.

- ⇒ **Hindola** (Saharanpur) is published monthly, and carries information and articles written by children and teachers. Each issue is reflective of the spirit of the time. For example, the August issue had innovative graphic details of the monsoon accompanied by poems and individual experiences. It also gives remedies for the ailments of the season.
- ⇒ **Kahl Suni** (Varanasi) is a monthly publication brought out for neo-literate women. It covers festivals, happenings in the field, provides information about Nari Adalats, and women's rights.
- ⇒ **Gulak** (Varanasi) is brought out monthly, and focuses on the activities of children studying in the Udan Khatolas. It is filled with anecdotes of interest to them. Bal sabhas and other important functions are covered by it. Local herbal remedies with illustrations also feature in it.
- ⇒ **Guiyan** (Allahabad) is a monthly publication. It brings out success stories of first generation learners. News items depict the local conditions highlighting the plight of exploited women. The local dialect and illustrations add to the authenticity.
- ⇒ **Dehriya** (Sitapur) is a bi-monthly newspaper, and concentrates on the educational intervention in the district. It mobilises opinion on the functioning of the government schools and centres. Articles on the breaking of gender-insensitive rituals and customs are also given a lot of emphasis.
- ⇒ **Beni** (Nainital) is brought out monthly with the idea of sharing information on health, education, and women's rights.
- ⇒ **Sakhi** (Gorakhpur) is a newspaper which took shape as there was a need from sangha women to see their literary efforts in print.
- ⇒ **Mitra** (Auraiya) was initiated this year mainly as news material of interest to neo-literate women.
- ⇒ **Muhboll** (Saharanpur) is a newspaper brought out every three months, and has articles of interest and information for rural women.

QUARTERLY MAGAZINES

- ⇒ **Pallavi** (Pauri) is a bi-monthly printed magazine, mainly targeted for teenage girls or kishoris. Information given in it includes better health practices, environment awareness, organising Bal Panchayats, plus stories and anecdotes by the girls with illustrations.
- ⇒ **Jano Behno** (Pauri) is a quarterly compilation of articles of importance to women on issues relating to them and affecting them. This provides invaluable information on avenues for redressal of injustice.
- ⇒ **Sanjeevani Patrika** (Varanasi) has articles and information on herbal medicine.
- ⇒ In MS Tehri, as part of their magazine series “Behno Ka Raibar”, their latest quarterly issue has been devoted to the subject, “Aurat Aur Hinsa” (Woman and Violence)

The above measures of documentation and publication have played a catalytic role in the rural scenario. It has not only resulted in spurring the neo-literates to even higher levels of learning, but it has also given wide publicity to the adoption of gender-sensitive practices, increased the information level of the readers manifold and made many social offenders cow down to the collective voice of reason. People are becoming addicted to reading these newspapers and magazines, so much so that, if the copies of the newspaper do not arrive in time, there are enquiries made as to the reason for the delay. It has given an opportunity to young girls and other village artists to display their talents at drawing, poetry and writing. Many of the 'kishoris' studying in the 'kendras' are taking active interest in this activity. Some who have done courses in screen-printing are using their talent for the design and publication of the newspapers.





Moment to share and enjoy together

Women who are Mahila Samakhya in Media



Mahila Samakhya members in conference in the state capital on Thursday

Women urged to assert rights

Women activists urged to assert their rights in a meeting held in Lucknow. The meeting was organized by Mahila Samakhya, a programme funded partly by the Government and the Netherlands. The meeting was held in the presence of several women leaders and activists. They discussed the various issues related to women's rights and the role of Mahila Samakhya in empowering women. The meeting was a success and the participants agreed to work together to improve the status of women in society.

Women's Day - why th...

WOMEN'S DAY is celebrated every year on March 8. It is a day when we remember the contributions of women to society and the world. It is a day when we celebrate the achievements of women and the progress they have made. It is a day when we recognize the strength and resilience of women and the role they play in shaping the future. Women's Day is a day of pride and inspiration for all women everywhere.

Women take the initiative

Women are taking the initiative in various fields, from education to business. They are breaking barriers and setting new standards. Women are becoming leaders and role models for the next generation. They are proving that they are capable of doing anything they set their minds to. Women are the backbone of society and their contributions are invaluable. We must support and encourage women to continue to take the initiative and make a difference in the world.

UP's backward areas

UP's backward areas are the focus of Mahila Samakhya's efforts. The organization is working to improve the living conditions of women in these areas. It is providing them with access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Mahila Samakhya is also helping women to form collectives and cooperatives, which will enable them to support themselves and their families. The organization is committed to the empowerment of women and the development of backward areas.

Neo-literate women celebrate fr...

Neo-literate women are celebrating their achievements. They have completed their literacy courses and are now able to read and write. This is a significant milestone for many of these women, as it opens up new opportunities for them. They are now able to access information, participate in community activities, and improve their standard of living. The success of these women is a testament to the effectiveness of the literacy programmes and the dedication of the women themselves.

Advertisement for 'SAR' featuring a large graphic of the word 'SAR' and a small illustration of a person. The text is partially obscured but includes the word 'SAR' in large, bold letters.

TOMORROW IS A DREAM THAT WILL LEAD US ONWARD

Future Vision: Decentralisation towards sustainability

The whole idea behind empowerment is that once the women attain a position of strength, they should have the momentum to carry on their collective agenda without a major need for any external impetus or inputs. In all its activities MS is guided by this aim of rendering the women into thinking and decision-making individuals who are able to take their destiny into their own hands as far as possible and make a positive difference to their own lives and that of those around them. Once this process starts the sustainability of the project is unquestionably ensured. **The sanghas are assessed with reference to indicators of self-reliance and if they have attained it, MS then considers the thought of gradually phasing out from them.** It may be mentioned here that **withdrawal is not a time bound activity in MS. When and how to pull out, is discussed and decided in a democratic manner, with both MS staff and sanghas.** However, some well thought and well-planned strategies are adopted to decentralise the programme preceding its withdrawal:

1. The practice of hiring **community based women to work as sahayoginis** who would continue to maintain links with the sanghas and support them in any plausible and possible manner even after MS leaves the area is one such strategy.
2. **Capacity-building** is another major strategy employed towards sustainability and has been dealt with in detail in Chapter 5. Here, it is sufficient to say that, without the concentrated inputs of conceptual and other trainings which were given to the staff and the sanghas over the years, phasing out and sustainability would only be a dream. It is a myth that women are ignorant and stupid and therefore, extremely hesitant to talk to people in positions of authority. In order to explode this myth, an important technique that MS has adopted, has been for **sangha women to hold meetings with administrative officers like BDOs, CDOs, Tehsildars etc.** in order to push their own causes ahead. The confidence-building and training inputs that they have received, have emboldened them to go out armed with the information they have gleaned and state their cases, which is what sustainability is all about - holding your own in a hostile world.

3. Besides trainings and workshops, a great deal of emphasis has been given to the **development of leadership qualities at the sangha-level**. At every stage, MS functionaries try to function only as facilitators and encourage the women to take the leading roles in the collective. This motivation has led to the creation of an inspiring group of initiators in the community, which has enabled the project to carry out their phase out schedule, with the faith and hope that the momentum picked up by the collectives will not be lost.

4. In all the districts, the sanghas of different villages are coming together to form bigger sanghas, not only in terms of the larger representation in numbers but also in terms of the geographical area. The MS staff facilitate in the formation of the bigger sanghas first at the **cluster level** i.e., sangha representatives of 10-30 villages, who usually on rotation basis meet together once in a month on a fixed date. Gradually sanghas are further facilitated to form **block level** structures which are given different names in different districts, e.g., "mahasanghas" in Varanasi, "Sahara sanghas" in Tehri etc. This flowering into a more meaningful and formidable presence is a significant step in the direction of self-reliance and denotes a sense of collective strength. These

Table:13 CLUSTERS AND MAHASANGHAS FORMED BY SANGHAS

S.No.	Name of District	No. of clusters	No. of mahasanghas	Special activities at meetings
1.	VARANASI	13	1	Exchange of herbal medicines
2.	BANDA	25	2	Functions as a 'nari adalat'
3.	TEHRI	6	1	Addresses issues of social injustice
4.	SAHARANPUR	23	1	" " " "
5.	PAURI	6	1	" " " "
6.	ALLAHABAD	10	1	" " " "
7.	SITAPUR	4	1	Functions as a 'nari adalat'
8.	ADRAIYA	9	—	Inter-sangha activities and visits are planned
9.	GORAKHPUR	8	1	Takes up social issues
10.	NAINITAL	12	1	Training and sharing activities
	TOTAL	117	10	



Women at a mahasangha meeting

groups are now meeting more regularly, at a fixed date, time and place that all the women know about in advance. They have more determined and specific agendas. For the women these meetings **constitute a place of refuge, redressal, valuable information dissemination, sisterhood, neighbourhood networking, and some space for enjoyment beyond the drudgery of daily chores.** Not only that, the issues of social-injustice (e.g., violence, property matters etc.), community development (e.g., construction of roads, access to government schemes etc.) are raised in these cluster level and block level federations. **In these meetings the sangha members discuss and decide the collective action plan, divide roles, delegate responsibilities, as well as follow-up resolutions made in the previous meetings.** A case of Tehri district is worth reporting in the context of the importance of these structures in the facilitation of taking action in cases where village level sanghas are not able to take initiatives due to local pressures and politics.

In a village of Tehri district a widow became pregnant. She was ostracised by the community. In hill districts, there is a custom that women can do all farming work except ploughing the field - only men can do that. As a result the land of this lady was not ploughed. Farming being the only source of food and income in her case led to her starvation. Village sangha women discussed this case but could not take any action due to local pressure. This case was then raised in cluster level meetings. The women analysed the case, and though the woman had committed a wrong act, they questioned the fact that only the woman was punished, and why the man, who was equally responsible for this wrong deed, was not also ostracised. He was not given any kind of punishment while this woman was on the verge of starvation. 250 women of this cluster decided to plough the land of this woman and save her from the victimisation of a punishment meant for women only. One day, these women together ploughed her land. At that occasion the village sangha women felt guilty and also gathered courage to go against the village decision to boycott her. From the next season she was accepted and the men of that village only ploughed her land. This case study is exemplary in many ways. It shows that the women have developed the skills to analyse cases with a meaningful gender perspective and secondly, the large collective strength has enabled them to fight against irrational harassment of women.

These meetings are not only attended by sangha women, but by anybody who has to raise or to solve some particular issue. Attendance of men is increasing in these meetings due to their faith in the perspective and justice driven role of these bodies. A significant indicator of self reliance is reflected in sangha members undertaking of nearly all meeting related activities e.g., drawing up of an agenda, conduction of meeting, writing of minutes etc .

Grass-root level structures are gradually emerging in the areas where MS is operational. These bodies usually take the form of a forum, a society or a federation. Some efforts have been made by sangha women and MS grass root level animators who are also the residents of the same community, to establish an NGO of their own. Such a structure should be useful because these NGO personnel will not only be aware of the MS philosophy and MS style of functioning, but would also have accountability to the community with whom they would have a very good rapport. MS tries to strengthen such structures in

different ways – giving funds in the establishment phase, expertise in formulation of project proposals, capacity building, guidance in implementation and above all, the social and emotional support that they require to carry out their agenda. These experiments have been found to be quite successful e.g., “**Grameen Mahila Rachnatmak Chetana Society**” or “**GRAMRAS**” set up by sahayoginis of Sewapuri block in Varanasi district. MS is gradually withdrawing from this block, and in this period Gramras has grown into a well-established NGO. MS is funding it to run an MSK in Sewapuri block itself. With MS experience in the background, Gramras has generated support from organisations like UNICEF and 'Education for All' to work on projects of trainings and child labour. They have been appreciated for doing trainings of members of Village Education Committees. The women of the area continue to approach Gramras whenever they feel the need and Gramras continues to offer them the support they require. **This structure is and will continue to spread MS philosophy.**

Three other grass roots organisations have been registered this year by sahayoginis and sangha women: ‘Sangatin’ – Sitapur, ‘Mitra’ – Saharanpur, ‘Sathin’ – Gorakhpur.

6. Some other alternative structures have also evolved effectively during the last few years e.g., Nari Adalats (women courts) at Saharanpur, Nari Sanjeevani Kendras (women herbal medicine centres) at Varanasi. All these have the potential to become sustainable structures at grass root level and function as support centres even after the MS finally withdraws from the area.
7. Efforts are made to develop resource centres at every level. For this purpose, core training teams are developed of sangha women, sahyoginis, DIUs and state office staff. Depending on the interest, choice, willingness and ability to be mobile, sangha women are trained to become trainers and animators in specific subjects. These women, voluntarily go to other village sanghas to train them, conduct meetings, disseminate information and facilitate them to become strong sanghas .
8. The following policy statement in the Mahila Samakhya Ninth Plan Document (1997-2002) reflects MS UP's strategy of strengthening convergence and networking at the community level towards sustainability:

"The MS Programme assists and enables the Mahila Sanghas to effectively access, harness and utilise resources available at the village, block and district levels, specially government sponsored programmes for women like DWCRA, ICDS, MSY, IMY, RMK..... To sustain such access, a functional convergence at village level will be facilitated by forging links between Mahila Sanghas and Government grass root level women workers, other development programmes, and women's groups."

Notwithstanding the many disappointments and frustrations that accompany the women's and the functionaries' efforts at this convergence and networking at all levels, it continues to be a major thrust of the programme and the successes have been promising. Fig:10 shows these accomplishments in a more graphic manner.

9. During meetings with sanghas, they invariably demand some income-generating activity prior to the phase out of MS activity from their area. Significant achievements have been made in this area as described in Chapter 2 (Savings and EDP programmes). It is **noteworthy that many of the EDP activities are done collectively and the profits are deposited in the sangha savings fund, which is a positive indicator of sustainability.**

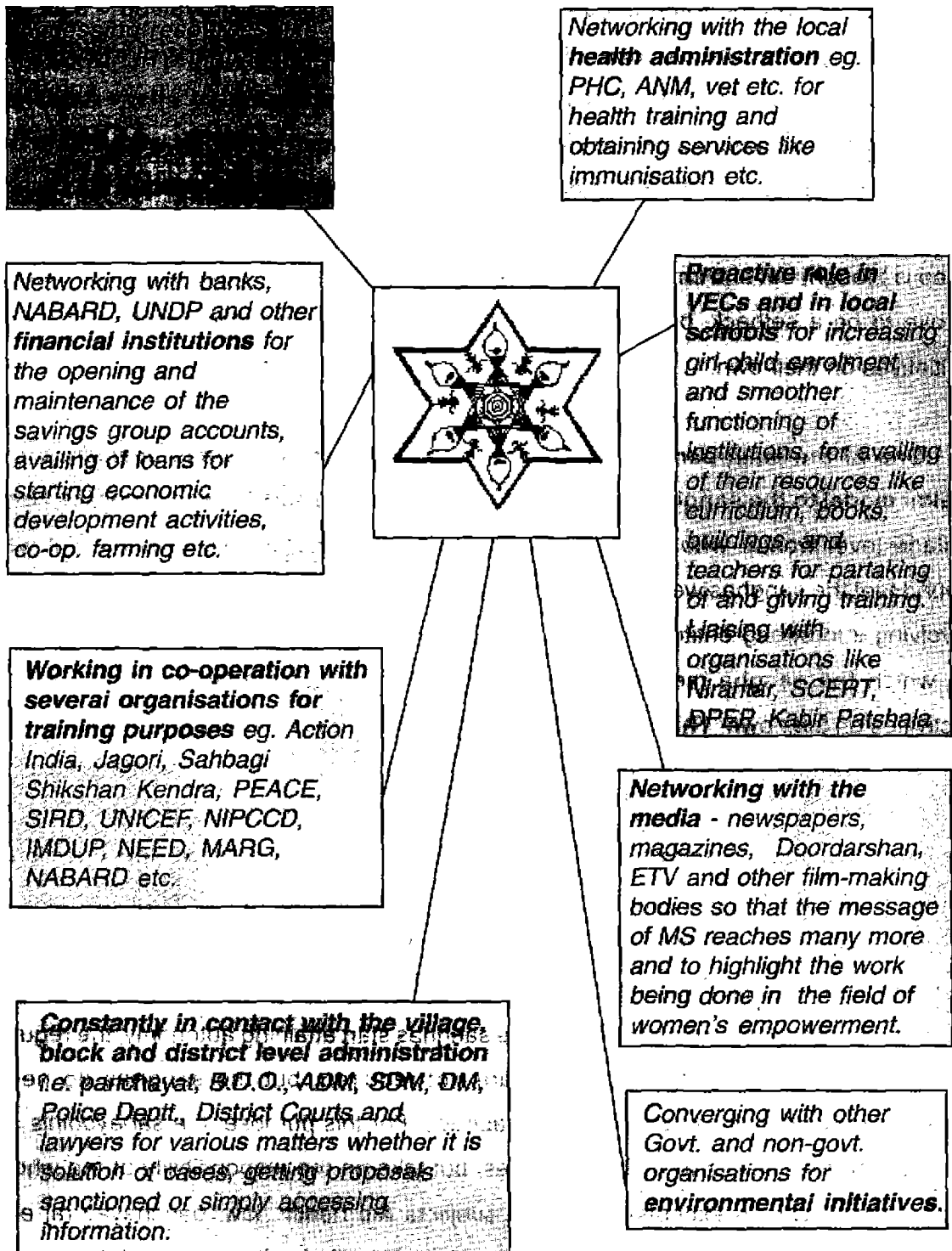
10. In the areas from where MS plans to phase out, **sanghas are encouraged to mobilise resources to run centres and manage them.** For example, in Saharanpur, 12 Kishori Kendras are running without MS support. The girls are giving a fee of Rs.20 per month to the anudesika for her services.

THE PHASE OUT PROCESS

The decentralisation of the project is inextricably linked with its sustainability and ultimately its phase out. The phase out process has been going on from 1996 onwards in the districts of Varanasi, Tehri, Saharanpur and Chitrakoot. The villages/blocks in these districts, which have been phased out of the project so far, have been targeted for mainly two reasons. Firstly, the villages where the sanghas have become strong and self-reliant and can manage their activities on

Fig:10

CONVERGENCE & NETWORKING AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL



their own have been selected. The other reason for rolling back from some villages is that they have proved difficult to work with for some reason eg. political interference, non-co-operation, caste-biases etc. **This roll-back process is not a time-bound one. Every step of it is dialogued and debated a great deal with all those involved – staff and sangha members. One example of discussion was the decision about whether the sakhis should continued to remain as paid workers and if so, from whose funds are they going to be paid.** As per the sangha's decision, different strategies were adopted in different sanghas/ districts, eg. in Banda some sanghas are paying salaries out of their own sangha funds and in the rest of the districts, sakhis are now voluntary workers. Each step is thought out and implemented with great care, so that the whole exercise does not prove to be a setback, but actually propels the collectives into the direction of taking initiatives on their own.

One of the main paradigm shifts in the MS project in U.P. has been from the sakhi model to the sangha model. In the sakhi model, the sangha was supervised by a village level worker who was paid by MS. When this model was evaluated, it was found that the sanghas were becoming too dependent on the sakhis and hence were not evolving into strong entities. Thus, the programme then shifted to the sangha model, in which the sangha members voluntarily undertake the management of sangha activities on their own. **This shift to the sangha model, has resulted in changes in the roles of sakhis vis a vis the project and the sanghas.** Once they were phased out as paid workers, the sakhis became sangha members and started taking leadership in the sanghas and other MS activities that required organisational skills like block-level functions, 'melas', 'jathas' and so on. Some of them started income-generating activities and took along other sangha members with them. Others went back to their original roles as housewives and agricultural labourers. As a consequence of the phase out process, **the role of sahayoginis also changed.** As the sanghas start attaining autonomy, the regular and concerted efforts of sahayoginis are not required, but the sanghas do need strengthening of their capacities and capabilities. For this purpose, the sahayoginis do not confine themselves to their ten villages, but take on the responsibility of the whole block. They develop expertise in certain subjects like health, law, panchayati raj etc. and form core teams to give their training inputs to the villages in any aspect that needs

DISTRICT WISE PHASE OUT ACTIVITIES

VARANASI:

- Gradual phase-out process started in Sewapuri block in 1997, during which 28 village sanghas and in 1998, 10 village sanghas were considered self-reliant and thus phased out of the programme.
- By March 1999, all sakhis and sahayoginis became members of sanghas. Some of them set up their own society i.e. GRAMRAS (which has been written about earlier). Others have been upgraded as Resource and Junior Resource Persons.

TEHRI:

- Phase out in this district is village-wise and not block-wise
- During 1996, 30 villages (20 from Jhaknidhar block and 10 from Bhilangana block) were phased out
- From 1997-99 the process of phasing out a further 40 villages (from Jhaknidhar, Pratapnagar and Bhilangana blocks) which have attained self-reliance, has been going on.
- By March 1999, all sakhis stopped drawing the honorarium from MS

SAHARANPUR:

- Partial phase out in Nangal block
- All sakhis of this block have stopped drawing their honorarium since September 1997 and by December of the same year, 15 villages were phased out
- By October 1998, all Bal Kendras were closed as most of the students were mainstreamed
- From January 1999, sanghas are initiating activities including training and meetings

CHITRAKOOT:

- In 1996, 35 villages were assessed as self-reliant, and MS support to them was reduced
- In 1998 45 sanghas of Tindwari block were considered strong enough to be rolled back from and minimal MS support has been extended to them since then
- By December 1998, all sahayoginis of Tindwari block were phased out. However, an MSK is still running in Tindwari block and as such, it cannot be said that MS is totally out of this area.
- Some sakhis are still working, but are paid from the sangha fund, at the discretion of the sanghas themselves. But they also will stop drawing this honorarium by July 1999.

strengthening before the project pulls out of the area. This is necessary if the sanghas have to carry out the role of aware and active groups, willing to take up fights even with established power structures against any kind of injustice or for taking a proactive role in development initiatives. Once the programme has rolled back from then area, the



Male Participation and Support from administration

sahayoginis, depending on their abilities and choice, have either been upgraded to the level of Resource persons and Junior Resource Persons Within the MS framework, or they have formed their own society/grass-root organisation. Some have also become freelance consultants and are in demand for training purposes in various organisations including MS.

It must be emphasised that the relationships that MS has developed in all its project areas are so deep, that inspite of roll back activities, these bonds remain strong and they are never totally severed. In various ways, DIUs are continuing to support the villages and blocks where sahayoginis and sakhis have stopped working full-time:

- Facilitate cluster and mahasangha meetings, nari adalats and other bodies formed by the sangha members
- Support sanghas if demanded, in analysis, collective decision-making and initiative in cases of social injustice and violence against women
- Provide sangha funds for a certain period and support thrift and credit activities
- Help in networking with village, block and district level Government and other agencies like schools, NABARD, banks, VECs, anganwadis etc.
- Facilitate and give support in the organisation of kishori kendra activities by the sangha members

SOME CONCERNS:

"The word 'sakhi' may be phased out, but her work contribution and her identity can never be wiped out."

"You are leaving us. It feels as if my husband is deserting me."

"This 200 Rs. made us self-confident and along with it, came a sense of freedom to go anywhere and make our own decisions. The value of the money is inextricably linked to our independence."

"You may be leaving us and going away, but our relationship will always stay alive."

The above-mentioned reactions of sakhis and sahayoginis reflect the difficulties inherent in phase out activities. The pulling out of the project functionaries like the sakhis and sahayoginis from these sanghas has been quite traumatic, not only for themselves, but also for the sangha women whom they had been interacting with for the past so many years. In addition to the strain that their emotional ties suffer, they also undergo tremendous financial and social insecurity. After earning respect from the community by functioning with dignity under the MS banner for so many years, they suddenly find themselves bereft and alone, and are afraid to face social ridicule. Some of them have not imbibed a proper understanding of the philosophy behind the roll-back activity and therefore, they are trying to impede its implementation in certain areas. But these kind of misunderstandings are few and far between and they are being tackled as effectively as possible. On the whole the process of decentralisation has been running fairly smoothly.

FUTURE VISION

In keeping with the above-mentioned plans for decentralisation towards sustainability, MS U.P. has assessed what has already been done towards achieving the same. Simultaneously, plans have been drawn up for the realisation of the objectives that have yet to be attained. These achievements and future plans are shown in a concise manner in Table:13.



Table:13 Achievements and future vision of MS U.P.

VISION OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT	ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN FOR DECENTRALISATION AND MAINSTREAMING	ACTIVITES TOWARDS DECENTRALISATION IN THE NEXT YEAR 1999-2000	MEASUREMENT INDICATORS
<p>1. SELF RELIANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong collective identity • Awareness about legal, reproductive and social rights • Positive self-image and self-confidence • Independent decision-making • Leadership capabilities • Ability to access information and resources • Formation and registration of federation • Awareness of self, analytical vision and articulation <p>2. LINKAGES & NETWORKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking with administration • Networking with other sanghas, government and voluntary organisations • Information dissemination to community and other sanghas <p>3. FAMILY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and control over financial and other resources • Gender-sensitive perspective and behaviour within the family 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sanghas were evaluated in the four old districts 2. Based on these evaluations, sanghas were strengthened through trainings / workshops 3. Need-based training to sanghas on health, vet-care, law, panchayati raj, savings and EDP activities 4. Capacity-building of functionaries and sangha women as trainers 5. Regular technical assistance from state office 6. Networking & linkages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised meeting of sangha women with local administration/BDO/NGOsPra-dhan/PHC staff and other locally influential people 7. Sanghas encouraged to act as pressure groups for gender and social injustice 8. Encouraged to act as pressure groups for implementation of government schemes such as widow pension, ration card, wage injustice, water 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue the activities initiated in the previous year 2. Network with district-level and other NGOs 3. To develop resource centres at all levels (State, district and sangha) 4. Prepare training details of each sangha and ensure that they receive the basic and need based trainings. 5. Organise social mobilisation campaigns on various issues 6. Develop Issue-wise core teams of sangha women 7. Further network with NGOs and government organisations to receive and impart trainings 8. Harness the services of strong sanghas in the strengthening of weak ones 9. Develop modules for Gender issues, Sangha Concepts, Family Life Education, Legal Awareness, 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SELF-RELIANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanghas conduct meetings even without MS staff support • Able to identify matters of social and gender injustice eg. Cases of dowry, child-marriage, domestic violence, wage exploitation etc. • Ability to conduct meetings about identified issues and take collective decisions and draw up an action-plan to fight them • Make efforts to exercise or demand reproductive rights (decisions about birth control/spacing/ sexual relations/ medical check-ups) • Make efforts to exercise their legal rights (Compensation on separation, guardianship, share in property etc.) • Awareness of government schemes (Widow's pension, JRY, CCA, IMY etc.) • Awareness about existing resources and services (health, education, post office, BDO, police at all levels) 2. EFFORTS AT FAMILY

VISION OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT	ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN FOR DECENTRALISATION AND MAINSTREAMING	ACTIVITIES TOWARDS DECENTRALISATION IN THE NEXT YEAR 1999-2000	MEASUREMENT INDICATORS
<p>4. SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to identify matters of social and gender injustice and fight collectively against them • Sensitise the community on social and gender injustice issues • Take initiative to make Government services and facilities effective at the community level • Interventions for social and community development • Create physical and psychological space for women <p>5. MOVEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes the form of a movement • Spill-over effect in the neighbouring areas • Development of gender-sensitive perspective and interventions in adjoining areas • Influence policy decisions at every level beginning at village/ 	<p>management, health services and other local issues</p> <p>9. Encouraged to actively participate in the village education committees (VECs) and open meetings of panchayats</p> <p>10. Motivated to hold meetings at cluster/ block and districts levels</p> <p>11. Sanghas were trained and supported to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run women's courts (nari adalats) • Run herbal medicine centres (nari sanjeevani kendras) <p>12. Sangha women activated towards formation of federations/ mahasanghas</p>	<p>Panchayati Raj, Government Schemes etc.</p> <p>10. Sensitise the Government and other concerned organisations/ personnel on gender issues</p> <p>11. Sahayoginis of blocks undergoing 'phase-out', to work as consultants / resource persons in their own blocks / districts and states</p> <p>12. Develop monitoring tools and generate a "Data Bank"</p> <p>13. Conduct action research and impact studies for future direction of the programme</p> <p>14. Review of programme in the districts where it is necessary</p> <p>15. Strengthen the state-level team as a resource group for training and technical assistance</p> <p>16. Stress on documentation (films/ reports) of success stories / case studies and sharing them with other appropriate personnel/ agencies</p> <p>17. Efforts to develop a forum of women's organisations</p>	<p>LEVEL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Against gender-insensitive practices like child-marriages, dowry and so on • For positive attitudes towards the girl-child (with regard to education, health, domestic work, celebration etc.) • For interpersonal relations with other female members • For share of property rights to girls • For some control over family income • Towards having a say in selling/ purchasing <p>3. SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence social environment to be more gender sensitive. • Strong sangha representatives plan and help to strengthen weak sanghas • Sangha women evolve as trainers and grow as a resource group • Resolve conflicts especially related to women issues. • Share information at all levels • Participate at village/ block/ district-level meetings with other govt. – non-govt. departments

VISION OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT	ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN FOR DECENTRALISATION AND MAINSTREAMING	ACTIVITIES TOWARDS DECENTRALISATION IN THE NEXT YEAR 1999-2000	MEASUREMENT INDICATORS
<p>panchayat level.</p> <p>6. ACCESS AND CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire control over saving and expenditure of family income. • Access sangha fund • Access Govt. schemes for any kind of financial support • Involve in savings and EDP activities 		<p>18. Convergence with other agencies whenever necessary eg. NABARD, UNDP, Media, DWACRA, UNICEF</p> <p>19. Mobilise women to participate in the expenditure of money in the MPLAD scheme</p> <p>20. Participate in the CCA programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative/ demand for making 'thikanas' <p>5. MOVEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information dissemination and spread of awareness about MS philosophy in MS operational and adjoining areas • Approach by non-sangha members to sangha/ MS personnel for intervention • Attendance in Nari Adalats from MS and other village/ block/ states • Intervention in rituals and its impact on other neighbouring villages/ blocks/ non-operational areas <p>6. SANGHA FUND/ SAVINGS AND EDP ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability to handle savings and appropriate usage of sangha funds • Income-generating activities according to local resources and needs • Use of profit for themselves. • Impact of EDP activities on women themselves and it's 'ripple effect' in the village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management and profits - marketing

MAHILA SAMAKHAYA, UTTAR PRADESH
3/8-9, PATRAKAR PURAM, GOMTI NAGAR, LUCKNOW
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH '1999

LIABILITIES	AMOUNT (Rs.)	AMOUNT (Rs.)	ASSETS	AMOUNT (Rs.)	AMOUNT (Rs.)
A Fund Account		13469127.78	A Fixed Assets		
I Govt of India			I As Per Schedule 'A' annexed		5344882.04
Balance as on 1st April 1998	2687765.14		GOI assets	2737113.47	
Add- Excess of Receipts over Expenditure	2055134.88		EFA assets	2607768.57	
Balance as on 31st March 1999	4742900.02				
II Education For All, U.P.			II Store and Usable items		1013037.45
Balance as on 1st April 1998	7537896.79		Balance as on 1st April 1997	907830.30	
Add- Excess of Receipts over Expenditure	1188330.97		Add Purchases during the year	105207.15	
Balance as on 31st March 1999	8726227.76				
B Contributory Provident Fund, MS, UP			B INVESTMENT :		
Balance as per last account	299400.00		National Saving Certificate	600.00	
Add- Contribution received during the year	917730.00		Fixed Deposits for CPF Funds	1150000.00	1150600.00
Add- Interest during the year	35652.00				
	1252782.00		C Current Assets		
Less - Paid during the year	35880.00	1216902.00	I Advance Recoverable		156123.88
			Staff Advances against TA/DA	102773.89	
C CURRENT LIABILITIES			Deposit With Land Lord	16250.00	
I Sahyogini Fund		26510.00	Security Deposit With D.O.T.	6000.00	
II Security Deposits			Security Deposit With Electricity Dept.	1500.00	
(a) Accountants	25857.20		Other Advances	29599.99	
(b) Others	2000.00	27857.20	II Cash & Bank Balances		7233992.74
III Miscellaneous Payables		158239.13	Balance with Banks	7201059.29	
			Cash in Hand	32933.45	
Total		14898636.11	Total		14898636.11

AS PER OUR REPORT OF EVEN DATE
for G. P. GUPTA & CO.
Chartered Accountants

Place : LUCKNOW
Date : 22-9-99

(G.P. GUPTA)
Partner

(MANJU AGARWAL)
STATE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
& MEMBER SECRETARY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MAHILA SAMAKHAYA, UTTAR PRADESH
3/8-9, PATRAKAR PURAM, GOMTI NAGAR, LUCKNOW

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH '1999

RECEIPTS	AMOUNT(Rs.)	AMOUNT(Rs.)	PAYMENTS	AMOUNT(Rs.)	AMOUNT(Rs.)
To Opening Balances		4087045.11	By Purchase of Fixed Assets (Schedule 'A')		780428.07
Cash In Hand	43234.55		By Purchase of Stores & Useable Items (Schedule 'A')		105207.15
Balance With Scheduled Banks	4043810.56		By MANAGEMENT EXPENDITURE :		
To GRANT RECEIVED FROM :		26500000.00	Office Staff Honoraria (Salaries)	3976646.15	
Government Of India Fund	16500000.00		Employer's Contribution to CPF	458865.00	
On Education For All Project, U.P. Fund	10000000.00		Office Expenses	3274235.25	
To BANK INTEREST RECEIVED :		103873.99	TA/DA Expenses	827824.00	
On Government Of India Fund / Units	40637.70		Contingencies	186043.75	8703614.15
On Education For All Project, U.P. Fund	63236.29		By ACTIVITY EXPENDITURE :		
To MISCELLANEOUS RECEIPTS		49894.95	Workshop & Seminar, Trainings, External Evaluation		3390491.70
Contribution received from employees		917502.00	Newsletter & Liabrary, Documentation & Publications		1091597.85
under Contributory Provident Fund, MS			Child Care Centre Expenses		2282503.10
(Including Interest accrued thereon)			Sahyogini Expenses		2986717.06
To Receipts under Sahyogini Fund		255.00	Mahila Sangh Expenses		39382.50
To Security Deposits		10000.00	Technical Vocational Trainings		1708482.33
To Recovery from other Advances (Net of Payments)		3978.44	Mahila Shikshan Kendras		800000.00
			Grant To N.G.O's		1021073.62
			Innovative Educational Programme		357065.90
			Kishori Sangh Expenses		1150000.00
			By Fixed Deposits for CPF		
			By OTHER PAYMENTS & ADVANCES :		
			Security Deposit With Electricity Dept.	1500.00	
			Payment of Misc. Payables	1613.26	
			Advances to Staff for TA/DA (Net of Recovery)	18880.06	21993.32
			By CASH & BANK BALANCES :		
			Cash In Hand	32933.45	
			Cash with Scheduled Banks	7201059.29	7233992.74
TOTAL		31672549.49	TOTAL		31672549.49

AS PER OUR REPORT OF EVEN DATE
for G. P. GUPTA & CO.
Chartered Accountants

Place : LUCKNOW
Date : 22-9-99

(G.P. GUPTA)
Partner

(MANJU AGARWAL)
STATE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
& MEMBER SECRETARY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MAHILA SAMAKHAYA, UTTAR PRADESH
3/8-9, PATRAKAR PURAM, GOMTI NAGAR, LUCKNOW

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 1999

PARTICULARS	AMOUNT(Rs)			PARTICULARS	AMOUNT(Rs)		
	GOI	EFA	Total		GOI	EFA	Total
MANAGEMENT EXPENDITURE :				By Grant Received			
To Office Staff Honoraria (Salaries)	1972928.15	2003718.00	3976646.15	Government Of India	16500000.00		16500000.00
To Employer's Contribution to CPF	242090.00	218775.00	458865.00	Education For All Project U.P.		10000000.00	10000000.00
To Office Expenses	1503263.19	1770972.08	3274235.25				
To TA/DA Expenses	441435.25	386388.75	827824.00	By Bank Interest Received	40837.70	63236.29	103673.99
To Contingencies	59448.35	106595.40	166043.75	By Misc. Receipts	91379.67	27944.40	119324.07
ACTIVITY EXPENDITURE :							
To Workshop, Seminar, Trainings, External Evaluation, Documentation, Publication,							
(a) State Office	314943.22	472414.83	787358.05				
(b) Distt. Implementation Units	1368608.09	1234525.56	2603133.65				
To Child Care Centres	948064.50	143533.35	1081597.85				
To Sahyogini Expenses	1364702.80	917800.50	2282503.10				
To Mahila Sangh Expenses :							
(a) Expenses on Activities	1214313.01	141912.05	1356225.06				
(b) Cont. to Sangha Fund	1520300.00	110192.00	1630492.00				
To Technical Vocational Trainings	0.00	39382.50	39382.50				
To Mahila Shikshan Kendras	1708482.33		1708482.33				
To Grant To N.G.O's	800000.00		800000.00				
To Innovative Educational Programme	582471.80	438601.82	1021073.62				
To Kishori Sangh		357065.90	357065.90				
To Depreciation (As per Schedule "A")	535832.00	582972.00	1098804.00				
To Excess of Receipts over Expenditure carried over to Fund Account	2055134.88	1188330.97	3243465.85				
TOTAL	16632017.37	10091180.89	26723198.06	TOTAL	16632017.37	10091180.89	26723198.06

AS PER OUR REPORT OF EVEN DATE
for G. P. GUPTA & CO.
Chartered Accountants

Place : LUCKNOW
Date : 22-9-99

(G.P. GUPTA)
Partner

(MANJU AGARWAL)
STATE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
& MEMBER SECRETARY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MAHILA SAMAKHAYA, UTTAR PRADESH
3/8-9, PATRAKAR PURAM, GOMTI NAGAR, LUCKNOW

SCHEDULE OF FIXED ASSETS AS ON 31ST MARCH, 1999

A. GOI ASSETS

Sl.No.	Name of Asset	Rate of depreciation	W.D.V. as on 1.4.98	Additions during the year	Total	Depreciation	W.D.V as on 31.3.99
1	Vehicle	20%	1119520.90	328120.77	1447641.67	289528.00	1158113.67
2	Furniture & Equipments	10%	810722.45	166494.20	977216.65	97721.00	879495.65
3	Audio Visual Equipments	15%	147897.65	0.00	147897.65	22184.00	125713.65
4	Computer	40%	132786.08	16985.00	149771.08	59908.00	89863.08
5	Video Camera	40%	17820.00	0.00	17820.00	7128.00	10692.00
6	Library	10%	457281.02	14280.40	471561.42	47156.00	424405.42
7	Generator	20%	23600.00	37437.00	61037.00	12207.00	48830.00
Total			2709628.10	563317.37	3272945.47	535832.00	2737113.47

B. EFA ASSETS

Sl.No.	Name of Asset	Rate of depreciation	W.D.V. as on 1.4.98	Additions during the year	Total	Depreciation	W.D.V as on 31.3.99
1	Vehicle	20%	1112265.18	1413.50	1113678.68	222735.00	890943.68
2	Furniture & Equipments	10%	1072557.45	125573.60	1198131.05	119813.00	1078318.05
3	Audio Visual Equipments	15%	187886.15	11680.00	199566.15	29934.00	169632.15
4	Computer	40%	341495.00	64139.50	405634.50	162253.00	243381.50
5	Library	10%	210786.09	14304.10	225090.19	22509.00	202581.19
6	Generator	20%	28640.00	0.00	28640.00	5728.00	22912.00
Total			2953629.87	217110.70	3170740.57	562972.00	2607768.57

Grand Total (A+B)			5663257.97	780428.07	6443686.04	1098804.00	5344882.04
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Signed For Identification
for G. P. GUPTA & CO.,
Chartered Accountants,

Place : Lucknow
Date : 22-9-99

(G.P.GUPTA),
Partner

(MANJU AGARWAL)
STATE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
& MEMBER SECRETARY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

GLOSSARY

Sanghas	Women's collectives at village level
Sahayoginis	MS grass-root functionaries, each in charge of ten village sanghas
Sakhis	MS grass-root functionaries, each in charge of one village sangha
Bal kendras	MS literacy centres for children
Anudesikas	Literacy centre instructors
Mahila Saksharta Kendra	Literacy centre for women
Kishoris	Adolescent girls between 12 - 18 yrs.
Kishori Sanghas	Collectives for adolescent girls
Kiishori Kendras	Literacy centres for adolescent girls
Kisori Kendra Sehelis	instructors in literacy centres for adolescent girls
MSK	Mahila Shikshan Kendra - a residential learning centre for women and girls
Thikanas	Huts built by sanghas for their use for meetings and any other purpose they deem fit
Dais	Trained / untrained village birth attendants
Nari Adalat	Informal courts administered by women at village and block levels
Mahasanghas	Federation of many sanghas at the block level
Panchayati Raj	Existing system of local village governance bodies
Van Panchayats	Local governance bodies constituted for the control and management of forest resources
Gram Sabha	Group of villages clubbed together for revenue collection and governance purposes
Nag Panchami	Festival honouring the Snake God
Gudiya Patakka	Custom of beating dolls on "Nag Panchami"
Chakka jaam	Preventing vehicles from plying on the roads, as a form of protest
Ghunghat	The part of the "sari" draped over the shoulder and often used to cover the head

Lok adalat	People's courts
Mela	Village fair
Mithai	Indian sweets
Neem	A popular tree species that grows in India and is well-known for its medicinal value
Amla	A tree species that produces a sour fruit which is famous for its medicinal value
Chikan	A form of embroidery famous in and around Lucknow
Bighas	A unit of measurement of farmland
Khuli Baithaks	Open meetings of the panchayat in which village development matters are discussed
Pradhans	Local village panchayat headman
Zila Parishad	District Panchayat Council
Chowkidhar	guard
Aurat	woman
Buddhi	brains / intelligence
Jal	water
Kalam	pen
Phud	Stories with a social message painted on cloth
Bal sabhas	large gathering of children
Jathas	processions
"Nyay ki Seedhi"	"Steps of Justice"

ABBREVIATIONS

MS	Mahila Samakhya
MSK	Mahila Shikshan Kendra
DIUs	District Implementation Units
EDP	Economic Development Programmes
DWACRA	
NABARD	National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development
SEWA	Self-employed Women's Association
FIR	First Information Report
BDC	Block Development Council
VEC	Village Education Committee
PRA	
JRY	Jawahar Rozgaar Yojana
PHC	Primary Health Centre
ANM	Auxiliary nurse-cum-midwife
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
SCERT	
PEACE	
SIRD	State Institute of Rural Development
IMDUP	Institute of Management Development, UP
NEED	
BDO	Block Development Officer
ADM	Assistant District Magistrate
SDM	Sub-divisional District Magistrate
DM	District Magistrate

MAHILA SAMAKHYA, UTTAR PRADESH

State Office :

Mahila Samakhya, Uttar Pradesh
3/8-9 Patrakarpuram, Gomti Nagar,
Lucknow-226 010
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Fax - 0522-397062

District Implementation Units :

Mahila Samakhya, Allahabad
83/63 R.B. Ramcharandas Road,
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Mumford Ganj, Allahabad.
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Fax -0532-441813

Mahila Samakhya, Saharanpur
17, Vishnudham, New Madhav
Saharanpur-247001
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✓ **Mahila Samakhya, Auraiya**
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Shivpuri,
Sitapur-261001
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Long View, Tallitai,
Nainital
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