

THE SPIRIT OF THE COLLECTIVE

U.P. MAHILA SAMAKHYA EXPERIENCE 1997-1998



*From darkness lead us to light,
From ignorance lead us to knowledge,
From poverty lead us to self-sustenance,
From the shackles of bondage lead us to freedom.*

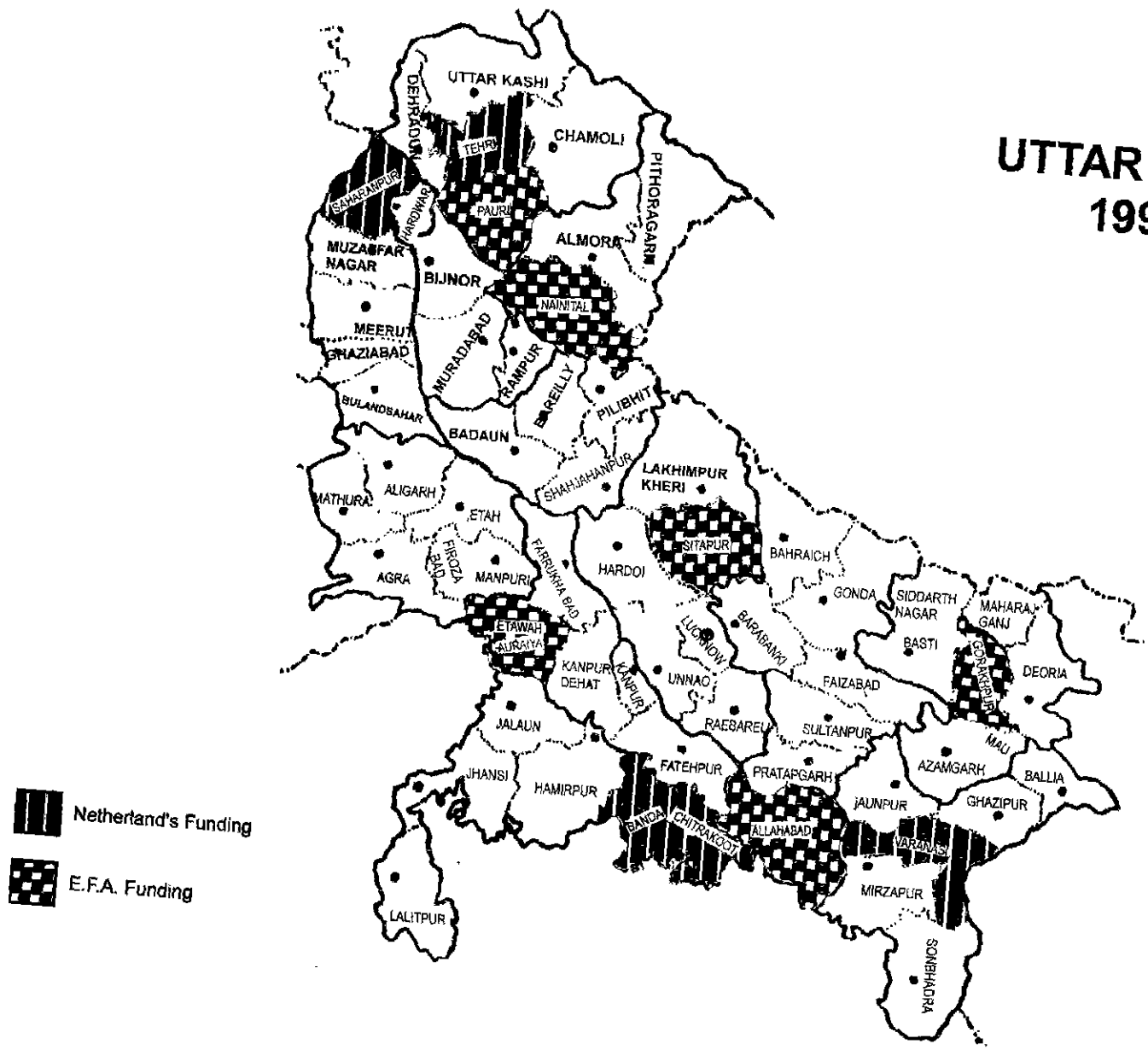
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"We will not take our fare for attending the meeting. The knowledge that we get here cannot be bought for a price."

UTTAR PRADESH 1997 - 98



COVERAGE 1997-1998

	Varanasi	Banda*	Tehri	Saharanpur	Pauri	Allahabad	Sitapur	Auraiya	Gorakhpur	Nainital	Total
Village	162	163	230	160	80	155	65	74	65	80	1234
Block	2	3	4	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	19
Sangha	162	150	230	160	80	100	65	74	65	80	1166
Sahyogini	13	17	22	15	8	11	8	9	7	8	118
Sakhi	119	78	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	282
Balkendra	73	14	35	27	-	12	-	2	1	-	164
Anudesika	73	10	35	27	-	12	-	2	1	6	166
Mahila Saksharata Kendra	50	36	28	4	-	12	3	6	5	8	152
Saheli	50	24	28	4	28	12	7	6	5	-	164
Kishori Kendra	-	-	-	17	-	-	4	6	12	4	43
Mahila Shikshan Kendra	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
MSK teachers	4	10	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Thikana	2	-	12	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Funds to sanghas	112	50	146	70	10	-	-	-	-	-	388

Note : 1. Total number of villages in the 4 older districts have reduced in the phase-out process.

2. * With the bifurcation of the old Banda district MS is operational in Shahuji Maharaj Nagar District.

INTRODUCTION

The last eight years saw Mahila Samakhya, Uttar Pradesh establish itself as a well defined programme. The processes have also concretised into focused interventions which are visible in a cadre of experienced and committed resource women personnel who have effectively established the empowerment process, strong collectives and tangible alternative educational centres of learning. The programme has expanded to cover ten districts, four older districts of Tehri, Banda (Shahuji Maharaj Nagar) Saharanpur, Varanasi funded by the Netherlands Government, and the remaining six districts of Allahabad, Pauri, Sitapur, Etawah (Auraiya) Gorakhpur, and Nainital supported by the World Bank assisted U.P. Basic Education Project. With the increase in number of the districts in the state, two of the MS districts Banda and Etawah underwent a change of name. It may be noted that in former Banda district the programme was operational in the sub-division of Karvi and in Etawah the programme took root in Auraiya Block. Hence with District Implementation Units already in operation there was no obstruction in implementation. While in Varanasi, Chakia Block came under the newly formed district of Chandauli, the management of this area continues through the DIU in Varanasi.

The year 1997-98 witnessed a new phase in the programme implementation. The programme strategies have been analysed in the light of the non-negotiables of Mahila Samakhya. This shows MS processes have proceeded as envisioned in the older districts; and accelerated and telescoped in the newer districts. The women's collective or the sangha at the village level is a nodal point around which activities are planned and implemented. For those associated with MS, the experience provided increased awareness of not only the local issues but developed capabilities to relate to larger issues. The newer districts of Nainital, Gorakhpur, Sitapur and Auraiya have a sense of direction, with personnel already familiar with the MS experience. This meant that strategies were worked out keeping the framework of the processes followed by the earlier four districts of Saharanpur, Banda, Tehri, and Varanasi as a reference point. The districts of Allahabad and Pauri, now three years with MS, have their pace, form

and content or activities geared and well founded. The flexibility of the programme allows each district to evolve its 'distinct identity' dependent on the local context.

In terms of direct impact, the programme has built a **strong cadre of women workers** at the grassroots level, with a sense of community ownership and involvement. The commitment of the sahyogini has been the primary strength of the programme. The shift in role of some sahyoginis to Junior Resource Persons at the block level is an indicator of the wider role they are taking on. Their role now includes management of a number of sanghas, organising different training needs for the sanghas while also liaising with the DIUs.

Further decentralisation of the programme's support apparatus to the block level has afforded easier access to women and the community. The trend indicates greater self reliance and confidence of sangha women in recognising their needs, planning strategies and accessing schemes available at the block office. The District Implementation Unit is increasingly being seen as a distant guide and the block office is emerging as the localised place of activity. The sanghas have started networking with each other leading to the formation of a manch or a forum at the block level. This would in turn link micro issues to macro concerns at the district level, and support the formation of a federation.

While recognising the fact that MS has given the rural women a space, an identity and collective solidarity to rally forward, their demand for knowledge and information was also fulfilled. The learning is inclusive of life skills designed with a holistic approach which affords the women an increased sense of self worth and bargaining power. The increased enrolment of teenage girls and adult women in the **Mahila Shikshan Kendras** and Kishori Sanghas, denotes an environment supportive of women's education. The popularity of the **Bal Kendra**, for example, is indicative of the effectiveness of the unique pedagogical inputs of the MS methodology.

Workshops conducted at the **National and State level** addressed the major concerns of finance, planning, education, gender, economic development programmes, and strengthening of the sanghas. The workshops were useful in exchanging ideas and

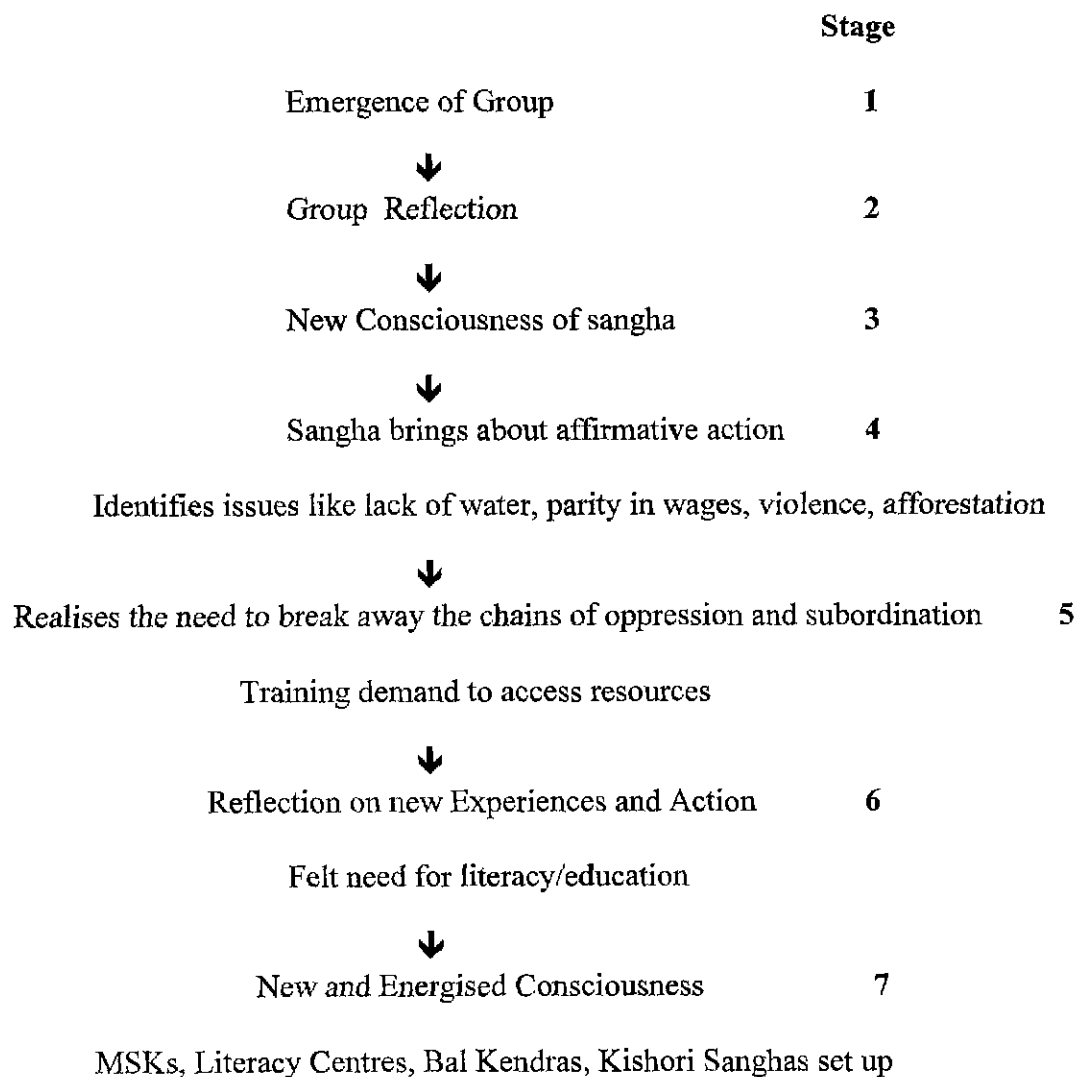
more significantly, gave a renewed direction in many areas for the second phase of the programme. It widened horizons and provided a forum for debate and dialogue. This conceptualised every intervention and interaction taking place in the project to be a microcosm of the larger process of change.

With MS developing into a mature programme, some of the issues taken up earlier required further specialised skills to carry it forward. **Nari Adalats** (women's court), and alternative medicine were the outcome of previous initiatives. Women felt that areas related to their health, social justice and rights needed to be formalised and systematised. The need to build linkages for economic programmes and relate it to income generating schemes were explored this year. Representing the trend towards greater self reliance, saw the formation of an independent society (**Gramras**), initiated by a group of sahyoginis in Varanasi. Given the present socio-political environment where women are entering spaces reserved for them (33 percent reservation for women in panchayats in the 73rd Amendment). Training in **Panchayati Raj** has helped women exercise their right to vote and hold office in the Panchayat responsibly and effectively.

Training in MS refers not to an event or series of events, but to a complex progression of several interconnected and ongoing collective learning processes. Training has been an integral part of the activities, with the expansion of the programme demand for trainers within MS has risen considerably. The core teams of MS have been invited as trainers to other states, and have played a key role in grounding the programme in the new districts.

Having consolidated itself to a certain extent, the MS initiative in UP is now at the stage of diaspora, with the key objectives of reaching out while attaining self-sustainability in the present sphere of operations.

EMPOWERMENT PROCESS AS SEEN IN MS UP



- Women make : informed choices.**
- Women have : increased bargaining power.**
- Women access : information and knowledge.**
- Women have : control over her labor.**

PROGRAMME STRATEGIES

While examining the dynamics of expansion and sustainability in the older districts and sangha formation and consolidation in the newer districts, we can see that in UP, Mahila Samakhya is operating at two different levels of strength. MS as a programme has positively altered gender roles, redefined women's capacities and shattered the myth of subordination. The processes set in motion have provided a way of 'understanding' the world. To arrive at a reasonable state of conscientization, in the collective group (sangha) as a whole, the programme has invested in a women's participatory training at the centre of its processes. The programme strategy is need-based and local specific. Building group solidarity in the sangha is the core strategy around which several other processes and activities are initiated.

Viewing the different steps required to complete the objectives of MS, it could be stated that most sanghas have evolved to varying degrees of empowerment, and a certain confidence and self esteem colours all those who have come under its purview. The struggle to build a woman centred perspective and a methodology of collective learning at the sanghas, has led to women questioning and challenging assumptions which they had earlier taken for granted (Stage 3 - New Consciousness). In certain districts where literacy and the economic situation has been less burdensome, as in the case of Tehri, the sangha women have developed a sense of solidarity, a space, and have linked their issues to a larger local women's movement much sooner. Yet, in other districts like Banda, where poverty is pervasive, building collectives to merely reflect and rally on issues, were more difficult to build upon. It was seen that the women of this area rather reflect on means of improving livelihood, as it was a primary need.

A noteworthy factor towards 'awareness creation' is that in all areas of operation, education as a key focus intervention has emerged. And, this felt need has usually arisen in Stage 6. Experience in Banda informs that only after the completion of the non traditional technical skill of hand pump training did women realise the need for lettering. Here literacy inputs were contextualised around water and wages. In Tehri the

curriculum revolved around *jal, jungal, jameen* in literacy centres and Bal kendras. Contextualising learning has proved a much more effective tool of 'understanding' than using regular adult literacy material which has no relation with the lives of women.

Therefore, in the older districts, the need for literacy came up as a felt need; but much later on in the process of empowerment. (Stage 7). The need for literacy arose subconsciously while building towards a new consciousness in the sanghas : to want to read a letter, write an application or read a signboard. In the process, they have gradually overcome their subordination to men, to their caste and to their gender. Collective efforts have led to women procuring ration cards in their name, local schools have incorporated the mother's name in the guardian's column. The lone woman who was once penalised for her fate now lives a life of self respect. Widows are no more confined to a spartan diet or attire and can be seen wearing *bindis*, bangles and coloured *saris*, emulating the examples of *sakhis* and *sahyoginis*.

The level of empowerment, that has been attained in the older districts has caused a new set of specific demands to emerge. The issues that lay at the centre of the empowerment process have evolved to a higher level of articulation: such as, the transition from paralegal training to establishment of Nari Adalat and bolstering the enhanced self esteem with better economic opportunities. Strategies have therefore been developed to meet the challenges thrown up by the new level of awareness (Stage 7). The priority areas the programme has focused on this year have been :

- ☆ Nari Adalats,
- ☆ Health support systems,
- ☆ Economic development,
- ☆ Self sustaining groups - Gramras Society.

Nari Adalats

Cases of dowry deaths, rape, land litigation, inheritance and property rights, required *sahyoginis* to have a substantive knowledge of law and legal procedures. Sangha women were taking up conflict resolution to deal with social injustices in their everyday lives. Nari Adalats were their initiatives as a means to carry forward the process of

attaining social justice in public village forums. The initial training included a basic understanding of law with a feminist perspective. This was followed by a short course of two - three months for women of the sanghas in the Mahila Shikshan Kendras. Nari Adalat acknowledges that "extensive discrimination against women continues to exist". It's aim was to set up a forum for women to address "any violation that goes against the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity". Subsequently specialised trainings on different subjects of the law were organised by the DIU through the assistance of Jagori and local lawyers.

These courts set up by sangha women act as regular counselling centres at block and village levels in Saharanpur, Tehri, Banda and Varanasi. Many cases are settled at the counselling stage, saving money and energy for women and the community. Cases with the Nari Adalat have been filed in the District Courts and the former acted as a pressure group to expedite hearings. Recognition of Nari Adalats has brought easy registering of cases at the local Police Station.

Nari Adalats were first formalised in Saharanpur, where violence had been taken up as a major issue. Belief in the inherent integrity of the statement given by the woman was the premise the Nari Adalat acted upon. This was a crucial change in perspective. It was decided that cases would be registered on two fixed days in a month. From September '97, 15 cases were registered out of which 8 were resolved. Notably, some cases before the Nari Adalats are also filed by men. The impact and spread of these 'informal' courts is recognised beyond the district as is evident by the number of cases registered from neighbouring districts like Meerut, Hardwar and Muzaffarnagar.

Roshni initially approached the sangha to solve the dispute regarding the land left to her, which had been cultivated by her late father. The land was claimed by a sadhu who said that he had given it to Roshni's father. The Nari Adalat pressurised the sadhu to give Roshni a share of the sale proceeds (5% which was Rs. 75,000.) when he won the case for ownership of the land in the District Court.

In Tehri, using the newsletter Rant Raibar, public opinion and awareness was generated on varied issues like environment, child marriage, rape, accountability of local government officials and child labor. The Sahara Sangha (or the Nari Adalat), started on 29th December 1997, at Jhakoli. Women from around thirty to seventy villages form a sahara sangha and meet at a particular village. There are eight such groups, meeting on the 8th of every month, discussing broad based issues, and are emerging as pressure groups. The first case reflected the trauma of a 11 year old girl, raped by a ward boy when she went to the hospital to get innoculated. Being the daughter of a widowed, poor Harijan, she had no recourse to fight her case. The women of the sangha mobilised 150 women to protest against the heinous crime. Consequently, the ward boy was transferred. But the case was closed for lack of evidence. Rant Raibar's publicizing of this case, effectively advocated against such violent acts.

Preparations for a child marriage was prevented in village Nageli, by a sahyogini who felt that this was possible only because of the collective support she received from the sanghas at the village. Parents of the girl signed a declaration saying that they would not get her married before she was 18. (See annexure I for copy of the letter). In another instance, women of the sangha found that the local Pradhan did not display the expenditure on notice boards, against grants provided for development schemes as per the Government Order. The women, being aware of the orders, made the Pradhan acknowledge their demand.

Protecting the environment is a major commitment in Tehri. Protest marches by children, rallies, an appeal to the District Magistrate have been organised to limit the use of plastics. Through the efforts of the sangha, the use of polythene is banned in four villages in Pratapnagar block.

Alternative Medicine

With the popularity and easy availability of allopathic medicines, the traditional systems of medicine were getting overshadowed. Gradually the women realised that though allopathic medicine provided quick remedies it had serious side effects and were expensive. In this context it was felt, that herbal medicines which were non-toxic, should be developed in a more viable form. Considering that most of the women, who were

from the poorer sections, were already familiar with traditional practices and home remedies, reviving these would be in their interest. Varanasi and Tehri are specially active in the field of health.

A three pronged approach was developed :

- identify, preserve and document properties of local healing herbs to prepare a pharmacopea and their local preparation by sangha women training as herbalists.
- training women as efficient midwives where no adequate government maternity care is available, especially in remote areas.
- helping women to understand their bodies and have control over them so that they can pay attention to their gynaecological problems.

Locally available plants already in use were identified and categorised according to their medicinal properties. They were further classified for use in seasonal ailments and gynaecological disorders. The medicines were prepared as oils, pastes, powders or pills and used within the sangha. Others also tested and used them realising what they had abandoned was after all readily available and useful. Information about them was also disseminated through health melas, posters, booklets, and sangha meetings. A herbarium has been developed and successful cases in herbal practice have been documented to validate the use of certain herbs for specific illnesses.

Nari Sanjeevani Kendras or health centres have been established in Sewapuri and Chakia blocks of Varanasi. The kendras have sensitised women towards herbal care. Women are able to access gynaecological check ups. Trainings have equipped the *dais* to deal with child birth and related complications. Thirty five *dais* have been further trained and are recognised as 'barefoot gynaecs'. The collection of herbs and preparations of medicines are executed at the kendra. Sale of *kajal*, tooth powder and herbal oils has already started.

Economic Development Programmes

Mainstream economy has marginalised poor rural women who were existing on subsistence level with low wages and poor working conditions. It was felt that the lack of

adequate economic empowerment from the perspective of its role in maintaining and perpetuating social inequities, had to be addressed. Mahila Samakhya had given the women access to education and information but they still had limited bargaining power. With improved economic status, would come better conditions at work, decision making powers within the household, and release from continuous debt and penury.

MS has been releasing funds to strong sanghas since August '96. This amount would be given for a period of three years. In the older districts sanghas were given only Rs.200/- per month (which was paid to the sakhi as honorarium) out of Rs.400/- allocated. MS UP took a conscious decision of not transferring funds to sanghas in the early stage of formation. This was to allow sanghas to consolidate themselves and to help them evolve as decision making entities aligned with local women's issues. Many of the sanghas have collected substantial amounts through their own savings and grants from MS. The sanghas are in the process of determining the appropriate use of funds.

There was also a clear understanding at all levels including sanghas that economic activities would only be undertaken when

- Sanghas clearly understood accounting and banking procedures / processes.
- Developed their own rules and regulations.
- Are equipped with adequate training for the desired economic activity.
- Are able to conduct feasibility analysis to prepare themselves to undertake the activity.
- Develop some experience about thrift and credit within the sangha and with other sanghas.
- Develop a network with local agencies, groups, departments to access what is available.

Economic activities had so far been confined to thrift and credit. Sanghas use the amount saved to provide small loans for emergency needs, setting up small enterprises like nurseries for forestry, herbal collection centres and also for developing skills to provide services for the community like learning to become *dais*, para-legals and para-

vets. Operating on a small scale, the sanghas are learning the intricacies of accounting, how to develop rules and regulations, and are in the process of conducting feasibility analysis for the kind of activities to take up. The position was further strengthened when some sanghas could decide on the utilisation of non consumption loans specifically for education of girl children, health, redeeming credit and for collective activities. Trainings and workshops with bank functionaries, organisations involved with self help groups, accountants from the DIU, strengthened sanghas competency, and made sanghas who have not received these inputs, want to acquire these skills. There is also a demand for greater literacy skills, and information so that sanghas can access credit from banks and avail of government schemes.

To initiate economic development programmes an analysis of local needs, women's existing skills and the productivity of such enterprises is being examined. To make economic activities feasible, locally available resources are being identified. Use of organic manure, herbal medicine, grain banks and other environment friendly options are being encouraged. Self reliance and sustainability requires further strategic planning to facilitate effective production and marketing. The State and District Offices have to play a proactive role to strengthen sanghas to prepare for economic activities that they are interested in taking up, and create linkages between sanghas and local resources (other NGOs, banks, training and financial institutions). The development of a federation in the future would enable the sanghas to network for better marketing techniques and information, both intra-district and inter-district. In Banda on an experimental basis ten sanghas in Manikpur block are being assisted to collectively sell *mahua* directly in the market instead of going through intermediaries. In Tehri, the experiment of fodder grass management enabled the sangha women to increase their income collectively through the judicious sale of grass.

The Trajectory of the New Districts

Establishing six new districts was comparatively a smoother process, as the processes adopted had the benefit and experience of the older districts. Added to this, four of the six districts have District Programme Coordinators, who have been associated with the programme for a long period of time.

As opposed to the process adopted in the older districts, wherein education followed as a consequence of conscientisation, in the newer districts 'girls and women's education' became the launching pad of the programme strategy. Earlier education became a central issue of the programme only in Stage 7, whereas in the new districts It was felt that the programme intervention would gain better acceptability through a neutral non threatening and visible intervention like education. As the need for education was generally recognised by women, and the community it became a useful rallying point for the programme. This also helped to build alliances with the men for the generation of a suitable environment to set down roots.

In Allahabad and Auraiya, the women were not only highly exploited but faced the constant threat of caste violence. Instead of directly confronting the patriarchal forces, a wiser strategy through a more favourable intervention was adopted. In both districts Bal kendras were established and in Auraiya women's health was also addressed.

In Gorakhpur too, education became the entry point for Mahila Samakhya. However, here a conscious effort was made to take up the cause of education of Muslim girls. To make an impact in this area, considerable effort was required on account of the stiff resistance posed by traditional beliefs.

The problem of alcoholism in the hills is a rallying point for the struggle by women to consolidate their forces. The experience in Tehri showed that men were invariably antagonised when this issue was taken up. Hence in Nainital education became the focal point of the initial phase of the programme. A large number of girls in the district, were found to be practically illiterate, although they had completed primary schooling. The programme aimed at improving the competencies of these girls. Subsequently, alcoholism and other social issues of women's everyday lives were also addressed.

In Pauri, the survey conducted in the initial phase of the programme showed that teenage girls (480 were identified) needed a coaching centre to help them complete their schooling. Kishori sanghas facilitate this need, where guidance and academic coaching is provided. Considering the better socio-economic conditions of women in

Pauri, a need for effective participation in local self governance was raised by the women. Subsequently trainings were given in Panchayati Raj to sangha women. Out of 90 gramsabhas in Yamkeshwar block 37 mahila Pradhans were elected of which 8 were members of mahila sanghas.

Programme interventions in Sitapur, on the other hand followed the old path. In the initial stage, primary attention was devoted to issues of patriarchy. For instance, the practice of beating a female doll with a broom to ward off evil influence (*guddiya patakna*) which carried with it negative images of girls, was taken up as an important means of improving the status of women. On Women's Day, fifty villages participated in a rally at the block headquarters and raised vociferous slogans against alcoholism and gender disparities. Unlike the other new districts Sitapur has chosen to follow the course of education through the broader process of awareness creation. Though this has threatened the position of men, they have come forward to participate in a positive way.

Past experiences provided the basis for future direction. The districts developed according to a pattern different from the earlier years. An acceptable entry point was education. Sangha women found it easier to deal with a non threatening activity than resolving conflicts that arose from questioning patriarchal controls. This was also in consonance with the political upheaval and instability in the state. At this juncture linking up women's issues directly would mean backlashes and political repercussions particularly in Auraiya, Allahabad and Gorakhpur.

In the newer districts the sanghas function without a sakhi and the sahyogini is able to visit the sangha only about twice a month. The trainings have been so designed, that a particular sangha benefits from a more holistic training schedule, covering specific needs and demands, in a shorter time frame. Earlier all women were trained in a particular subject for e.g. health. Now, women attend trainings that they have an aptitude for. For example, in a sangha, two of the women may be trained in health and another two in legal literacy; in this way a resource pool is built at the sangha level, with an indepth understanding of concepts and issues. Thus a sangha is geared to becoming multi-dimensional, with resources and capacities available locally. The core

Thus a sangha is geared to becoming multi-dimensional, with resources and capacities available locally. The core team while engendering the programme in the new six districts has clearly set about this task with the aim of running the programme as self sustainable : an idea that evolved much later in the older districts.

ISSUES / ACTIVITIES 1997-98 - NUMBER OF SANGHAS

ISSUES	Sahran pur	Varan asi	Tehri	Banda	Pauri	Allaha bad	Sitapur	Auraiya	Gorakh pur
Law/violence	30	100	150	55	2	35	25	14	
Health	45	160	80	25	20	10	15	22	30
Vet.care	20	162	40	22	7			30	
Education	44	200	200	45	40	24	55	20	12
					Kishori Sanghas				
Savings	14	117	230	27	22	10		1	
Panchayati Raj	35	85	100	40	35	10			
Eco. Activities	14	6		30		15			
Land	5			35	2	24		4	
Wages	18	162		35		20		2	8
Thikana		2	12						
Forest			145		8				

EDUCATION FOR EQUALITY

Education for equality has matured into tangible initiatives, which are reflected in its various Alternative Learning Centres, i.e. Balkendras (for the age group 6-14 years, both boys and girls) Kishori Kendras (teenage girls), Women's Literacy Centres, Camps, and Mahila Shikshan Kendras. The Centres provide a supportive environment for the needs of girls and women. Moreover, it enables women to demand education for themselves and their daughters.

All forms of educational initiatives establish a definite gender perspective in terms of curriculum, teaching materials, and pedagogy. It also reiterates that it is in the field of education that Mahila Samakhya has made a systemic contribution. Education in the broad sense : where importance is given to women's past knowledge and experiences, and where children who could not avail of an education have been provided with an alternative place for learning. The vision that Mahila Samakhya has in the educational arena include :

- * a respect for women's priorities for learning.
- * the creation of time and space for reflection and respect for individual uniqueness and variation.
- * participation of mahila sanghas in community and village level educational activities.
- * educational initiatives irrespective of mode is gender sensitive.
- * an environment supportive of girls and women's education.

In view of the large literacy gap of 30 points separating the male literacy level of 56 percent, from female literacy at 26 percent in UP, MS initiatives in alternative learning practices has been significant. The Bal Kendras in the 10 districts have provided a space for children, especially girls who have not been able to avail of an education in the mainstream. Girls are now able to access an education that has flexible timings, and the presence of a local female teacher has contributed to girls enrolling in large

numbers. The setting up of four Mahila Shikshan Kendras, women's literacy camps is seen as an important landmark in women's education.



" Becoming literate has given us self - confidence and respect in our families."

Bal Kendras

Curriculum and pedagogy for the Bal kendras is a living experience. While evolving curriculum the girl child was the main focus. Ways to increase the student's self esteem is woven into all aspects of teaching. Every 'skill in a child' is looked upon as a resource. Each of the districts developed its own curriculum/syllabus, keeping minimum levels of learning as the bench mark and adapted it to the local milieu. Thus the Bal kendras at Varanasi came to be known as Udan Khatolas (flying chariot) in Tehri - Buransh (rhododendron flower) and in Saharanpur - Hindola (hurdy gurdy). Subsequently, in the new six districts Bal kendras and Kishori kendras (for teenage girls) have been established, taking each district's needs into consideration while using the curriculum.

The anudesika (teacher at Bal kendra) is selected from the sangha, with a minimum qualification of Class V. She is assessed after she teaches at a kendra for ten days. Her interest, sensitivity, sense of commitment, educational status, and regularity towards running a centre is gauged. The centres are monitored periodically by the sahyoginis and the sangha women. Monthly meetings are held as a forum for the anudesikas to discuss and sort out problems. Her training equips her to build a relationship of trust with the learners and create an environment of learning with dialogue.

The Bal Kendras which were operational since 1990 at Varanasi, Tehri and Saharanpur have set-up alternative education centres for about 7500 children of which 80 percent are girls. Subsequently in the older districts some centres have closed down as the children have reached Class V competency and have mainstreamed into local primary schools. The closing down of centres is part of the programme strategy of phasing out process of Mahila Samakhya, as it was thought appropriate since many of them had completed five years. At present there are 164 Bal Kendras operating, of which Tehri has 35 Buransh centres, Varanasi has 73 Udankhatolas, Saharanpur has 27 Hindolas, 12 Bal kendras in Allahabad, 14 in Banda and 2 in Auraiya and 1 in Gorakhpur.

Kishori Kendras

In Saharanpur, in addition to the Bal kendras 17 centres with around 10-15 girls each, have been started for Muslim girls and the attendance is encouraging. Bringing them out of the environment of seclusion and motivating them to join the Kishori Kendras, is a tribute to the sahyoginis' and anudesikas' commitment. Their perseverance is reflected in the achievement of the girls' capability, as 65 of them have completed their Class V examination in the local primary school. Their moving out of the boundaries of *purdah* was seen by their parents as an infringement of propriety. Constant dialogue with the guardians of the girls by the sahyoginis has helped overcome these reservations which had confined them to their homes.

Gorakhpur district has also made inroads into the *purdah* world of young Muslim girls. There are 2 centres for Muslim girls and 10 kendras have a mixed group. Each kendra

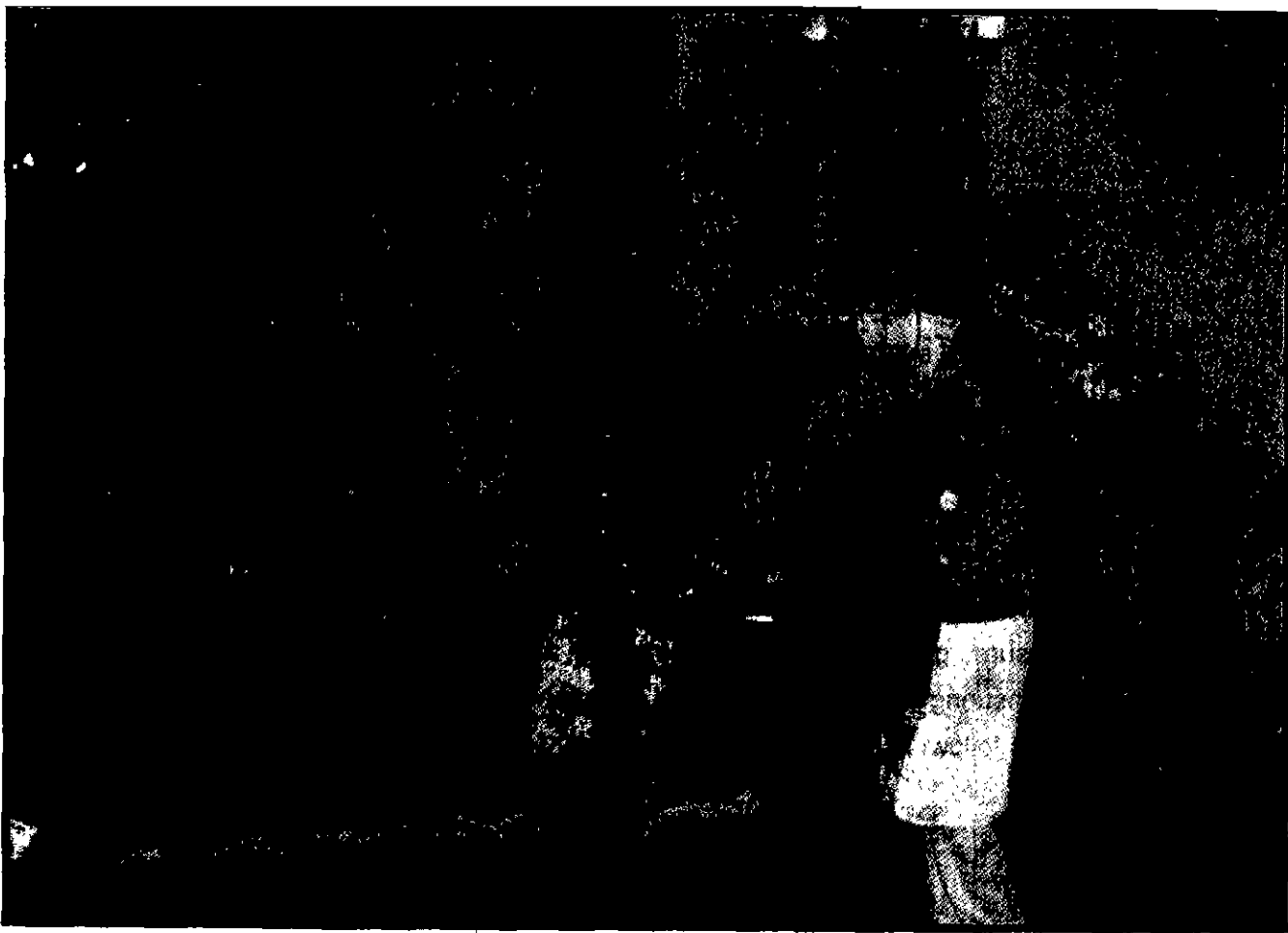
has an average of 25-30 girls. In the last one year small workshops have been organised for the teenage girls to understand health and hygiene and bring about an awareness of themselves. This has created a desire to know more about their environment and their lives within the community. The teenagers were taken on a tour of Gorakhpur city which helped them widen their horizon. These kendras are popular as there are no schools in the vicinity. To encourage girls to join schools, two literacy camps were organised where 54 girls participated.

In Nainital there are 4 Kishori Kendras. In block Betalghat, a preliminary survey revealed, that though a number of girls had attended regular school, their literacy level was inadequate, and the drop out rate was high. It was found that most schools had a large number of students with very few teachers. Moreover, the inaccessible terrain led to teacher absenteeism. The MS initiative started as a felt need for alternative learning centres. Most of the girls enrolled want to improve their reading and writing skills and use these centres to facilitate entry into mainstream schools. An interesting case was that of an anudesika, deputed by the sangha women to a primary government school to teach, while being paid an honorarium by the sangha and students. This validates the need for collective action of women if they want to regularise or make space for a new endeavour.

Sitapur has 4 Kishori kendras and Auraiya has 6 Kishori kendras. In each of these districts there is an average of 8 libraries. This complements the neo-literates need for knowledge and information.

Kishori Sanghas

"Today's girls are the hope of tomorrow" was the belief that initiated Pauri's Kishori sanghas. They have set up 40 Kishori sanghas and have 480 girls attending. These centres provide coaching and guidance to girls to complete their primary and high school exams. Trainings in conceptual clarity, legal literacy, and enhancing basic skills are conducted at these centres. Information on bodily changes, hygiene and health is also imparted.



"Playing games helps us to solve our problems"

Activities of Bal Kendra's

A Kishori Sangha Workshop - Pauri



Bal Sabha (held at weekends) - Saharanpur

The major change in their outlook is that women now want their children educated and even monitor their progress. (Primary School Teacher, Chakia, Varanasi)

Models - Bal Kendras

Reviews of Bal Kendra developed three approaches to children's education. The first was the unique MS model which gave out-of-school girl children, especially, an alternative platform to express themselves. The second model emphasises pedagogical aspects to a greater extent, and strengthened teaching competencies of anudesikas, aimed at imparting minimum levels of learning to bring students upto Class V level.

The third approach to education sought to mobilise women to foster a sense of ownership of the community in school activities. The MS functionaries work as an effective pressure group to improve teacher attendance, enhance class room transactions, ensuring a more girl friendly atmosphere for improved attendance and retention. MS is following this model effectively.

Anudesikas' interface with government school teachers

In Varanasi, at the monthly meetings of anudesikas the local government teachers are invited to assist anudesikas in subjects where they face a problem like maths and science. This interaction has influenced the government teacher to incorporate the creative aspects of learning and use teaching aids like Gulak and Pitara (primer and broadsheets used by the Bal kendra) in their pedagogy. Other cases of anudesikas' and local primary school teachers interaction have been reported in Allahabad, Tehri, and Saharanpur.

Women's Education

Women were denied access to educational structures by the isolation of their lives and their endless struggles for survival as well as the pressure of their work, in and outside their homes. Towards understanding the key issues for women's education and empowerment in MS, the essence was to move away from the view that 'literacy equals education'; the focus being on enabling women to gain access to information, to build a critical understanding of their situation and to undertake collective action.

Education for women in MS evolved at three levels. To this end the first initiative was **literacy camps**. It spread over three ten day camps during a period of three months. Camps were organised during the lean agriculture periods, so that women could attend. The camps were popular as women found it easier to attend continuously for a period of time. When the programme started, literacy was not experienced as a need. Women were interested in issues of survival, drinking water, violence, etc. In time demand for information relating to these issues arose. They needed to write applications and access official documents. Also, new roles the women were entering recognised the value of literacy. A region specific curriculum was used in each district. The learning level included basic reading, writing, comprehension, addition; subtraction, tables, etc. The residential camps allowed women to learn in an environment free from the daily pressures of work. 170 camps were conducted in MS districts. The limitations of the duration of a camp and minimal competency levels achieved, have led to infrequent literacy camps being held in the districts.

From the level attained at literacy camps, efforts were made to sustain education further. To this end **women's literacy centres**, catering to the needs of women to follow up learning were created. To enhance the quality of education, teachers of the centres were exposed to workshops to source better knowledge and innovative methods of teaching. Much of the material used here have been developed within the programme, Varanasi, Banda, Tehri, Allahabad. They also use books like *Sabala* published by Jagori, *Pitara* published by Nirantar, broadsheets like *Mahila Dakiya* and *Kahi Suni*. There are 152 centres which run for eighteen months, for a period of two to

four hours a day. The number of hours is decided by the women according to their needs and requirements. Sahelis who teach here, provide basic literacy and a broad education to increase the women's capabilities in coping with their lives. The centres are very much an activity of the sanghas in that the women come together to learn in an environment that suits them and fulfills their learning needs.

In the third phase of the education programme for women, a concrete long term strategy was worked out to incorporate growing educational needs, of women and teenage girls in the form of **Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSK)**. The residential course at the MSK is designed for six months, initially for a period of three months and after a short break for seasonal harvesting, they return for another three months, to complete the course. The educational centre transacts curriculum for rural women. It provides the women with a broad based educational programme which takes them beyond literacy. Innovative teaching methods were combined to make the lessons come alive at the MSKs. Discussions, making clay models, experiments, songs, stories, books were used frequently in the class. Dialogue became the way of teaching and learning became a joyful activity. Developing and transacting the curriculum is a collaborative exercise between the teachers and learners and resource persons.

Evolving the curriculum had the interests of rural women informed by a feminist participatory pedagogy as the core focus. Land, water, forest and village community were the subjects around which the curriculum was woven. The design of the curriculum tried to integrate the micro realities of the village (social, economic, political) with the macro understanding of these issues. MSKs approach to learning decoded the working of systems required by the learner to understand the 'past as a window to the present.'

The teachers were mainly sahelis who began as sakhis with MS. Many had acquired literacy skills through literacy camps, others had participated in writing and producing newsletters. This past experience of learning equipped the saheli to participate as an important resource for developing lessons at the MSK. As the education work evolved, effort was made to upgrade saheli skills. Literacy was linked to the process of

empowerment, so the sahelis were given inputs to develop the gender perspective on education. Apart from the regular curriculum woven around *jal jungal jameen*, and health-physiology, there has been a demand to include life skills and vocational training like tailoring, maintenance and repair of gadgets etc. to strengthen their economic positions. The learning is not restricted to the classroom and excursions within the city and other places has afforded them an increased world view. Their enthusiasm for new experiences is palpable as is evident in their interest in learning to ride a bicycle.

An MSK was first started in Banda in 1995, with a group of 28 learners (women and girls) who attended the centre for a term of six months. It was a novel experience for both the learner and the teacher and provided a role model for other learners. Presently in UP there are four MSKs functioning. Two in Banda - one in Karvi catering to the demands and needs of women, and the other in Tindwari for teenage girls. The other two in Varanasi and Saharanpur also cater to adolescent girls. In Saharanpur, three months was initially devoted to upgrading teacher competencies for anudesikas/sahelis. In the regular course, out of 31 enrolled at Saharanpur MSK 14 girls had studied at Bal kendras (Hindolas) for three to four years, and wanted to complete the Class V examination. They viewed the MSK as a stepping stone to furthering their educational skills. In Varanasi, the first batch of 27 students studied to achieve competencies to appear for the Class V exam. The second batch was a one month course held to enhance skills in herbal medicine, for a group of twenty women already having basic training in herbal medicine preparation. In Banda 60 girls have mainstreamed into the primary school after studying in the MSK. Attending the course has also helped in delaying the age of marriage. Issues like child-marriage, alcoholism, and violence are also discussed at length. Thus, it can be seen that each of the MSKs are evolving according to their own specific needs.

"My confidence has increased and I am able to talk to the SDM without fear." - Chameli (Varanasi).

"I have learnt to look up and speak." Tabassum (Saharanpur).

"Today we can sing and dance, as from tomorrow we have to return to our work." Surajkali (Banda).

"I feel a great sense of achievement when girls receive their certificates." Nagina (Saheli, Banda).

UP Basic Education Project - partnership with MS

Since 1994 MS has gradually extended its operations into six districts of the UP BEP. It had been envisioned that the UP BEP - MS relationship would crystallise to be a symbiotic one. The BEP institutional framework, on the one hand would provide a support structure to MS, and MS in turn would create an environment for girls education and influence the project towards gender sensitivity. Block Resource Centres and District Implementation of Educational Training Centres provides a space for MS activities when required. Large scale campaigns for girls education were conducted in June 1997 which helped in substantial increase in the enrolment of girls in the new academic year.

Jathas are a popular mode of mobilising people's participation and environment building at the village. Commonly, *jathas* take the form of a procession through the village culminating in a meeting of the entire community to discuss local issues. A considerable amount of planning is required to organise a successful *jatha*. *Jathas* are normally conducted at the inception of the programme as an awareness building strategy or, to focus on specific issues like girls education, dowry and gender bias. Village women, men and children join the *jathas* enthusiastically, carrying banners with pertinent slogans. At the village level meeting, men too participate in large numbers and interactive session is conducted to identify pressing issues and strategise towards resolving them.. Village mapping and micro planning exercise is also undertaken. Trained MS personnel participate as facilitators. In addition an external group like the Indian People's Theatre Action Group (IPTA) may also be invited to provide motivational inputs. *Jathas* have been instrumental in lending a gender perspective to the programme and have been successfully held at Sitapur, Auraiya and Gorakhpur.

The Village Education Committee has been constituted under the BEP to ensure the effective functioning of the education component in the villages. It is mandatory for the committee to include 2 women from MS sanghas where MS is operational. The sangha

representatives of the VECs help provide the atmosphere for a participatory involvement of the village community though In most VECs women representatives are 'silent'. The participation of sangha women has changed the character of some of the VEC's to be more assertive. It was expected to facilitate opportunities for the girl child's enrolment and retention in the school. Other initiatives included mobilisation towards parent-teacher's association and better mother-teacher interaction. However, the linkages are not uniformly strong. In Sitapur seven sahyoginis attended VEC trainings conducted in ten villages, denoting close networking between MS and UPBEP. In Gorakhpur and Auraiya too the relationship has been cordial. In Allahabad in village Mahuria, the sangha women who were members of the VEC found that in the local primary school there were 150 children with only one teacher. The sangha intervened and managed to get one more teacher for the school.

MS and District Primary Education Programme Interface.

As MS is not working in any of the 17 districts covered under the DPEP, there was no question of grass root convergence but provided technical support in the form of trainings, seminars, workshops and help in the development of modules on gender sensitivity. MS consultants and resource staff have provided support in reviewing the mainstream curriculum at State level workshops.

A Workshop on Gender Sensitivity was conducted with DPEP personnel, to develop a gender perspective; to plan strategies for training / gender sensitisation; and to develop a framework for gender sensitisation modules. Concepts were defined through games and exercises which helped examine societal norms and traditions.

Many MS personnel have been selected and appointed as Gender Coordinators with the DPEP. They take with them the MS ethos which would help in developing gender sensitivity at the village level as well as in their interaction with project staff. Mahila Samakhya's involvement with DPEP will help in the design and planning stages to ensure flexibility with the inherent rigidity existing within governmental structures.

TRAINING AND DOCUMENTATION

Training lies at the core of the MS learning process. The actualisation of an awakened consciousness from a 'culture of silence', required an intensive, interactive exercise aimed at a change in the mindset, beliefs, attitudes of the trainees. In the initial stages of the programme these 'orientation trainings' were conducted by external experts. Now, however, capacity has been developed within the programme to conduct such intensive recursive training.

With the expansion of the programme geographically, there has been an increase in the number of trainings. Attempts have been made to evolve creative methodologies to handle the need of larger numbers of women, while not compromising on the quality. Strengthening conceptual clarity of gender continued to be the centre of the training strategy, and skill development was also addressed in an intensive manner.

- ◆ The focus of training in all the districts has shifted from capacity building for sakhis to trainings at the sangha level.
- ◆ Training is more subject based and specialisation on issues for sahyoginis.
- ◆ In house training capacities have been strengthened.
- ◆ *Focus on development of a feminist consciousness remains with the addition of skills like communication, conflict resolution, planning and monitoring.*

The formation of district training teams of sahyoginis and resource persons is done on the basis of period of experience in the programme, internalisation of MS values and aptitude and skill for imparting training. This role shift as trainers is an affirmation of capacities built up to become effective facilitators in the learning process. Over a span of six years, a number of sahyoginis have evolved to take on a more responsible position in MS. Two of the present District Project Coordinators in the new districts had been a sahyogini and an office assistant. Six sahyoginis have become Junior Resource Persons and are competent trainers on Panchayati Raj, for the formation of self help groups, on health, legal literacy and education.

The last couple of years has seen the development of state teams and sahyoginis with specialised skills to become trainers. This was made possible by inducting women who had a base of experience and expertise in a particular subject included as trainers, or by focused capacity building of individuals who moved from being 'generalists' to 'specialists'. Accordingly, sahyoginis were grouped into categories of specialisation and experience.

- Experienced sahyoginis as resource persons / consultants. - 20 (have moved on to other programmes)
- Sahyoginis with specialised skills and knowledge - 57.
- New sahyoginis - 67

Orientation Training

Trainings for sakhi / sangha women (in districts started from 1996) have mainly been given on building relationships, collective solidarity and feminist perspective. Trainings are usually conducted in three phases for the sangha women - the first being the foundation training at the district level with two to five women from each sangha (about forty participants) the second is the consolidation at the block level and the third phase is conducted at the sangha level to ascertain and identify potential women trainers in different fields like health, literacy, Panchayati Raj, veterinary care, and legal awareness.

The orientation trainings essentially encourage women to discover themselves, learn through introspection and observation - from their own and each other's experiences. The trainers role was to guide women on this journey and draw out the core issues that affected them. Simple games and exercises helped the women recognise their subordination. The trainers helped women develop a plan of action dependent on the social, economic, cultural, and political ethos. The trainings emphasised the need for collective strength and at the same time develop individual abilities. On an average each district conducts about 15-20 orientation trainings in a year, covering all the sanghas in the district.

An orientation training on feminist concepts was held at Lucknow in August '97. The trainers were Abha Bhaiya from Jagori and Kalyani Menon-Sen, who were associated with trainings from the inception of the programme. The workshop examined patriarchy and its control over institutions such as family, religion, economic institutions, etc. This also included newly selected personnel who were being inducted into MS, before being posted to the districts.

MS Training Manual

The increasing pressure for a formal codification of a training manual has been felt in MS for a long time. Runu Chakraborty associated with the programme from the beginning, has written a training manual which elaborates training methods for sakhis, sangha women, sahyogini and anudesikas. Importantly, the manual has outlined and systematised training processes and concepts. It is interspersed by useful games and exercises which help women trainers handle the manual with ease. Reflective exercises aid women to understand their subordination and means of overcoming them. The manual will lessen the dependance of MS UP on outside agencies while inhouse trainers will have a ready text in Hindi to expand their outreach.

Panchayati Raj Training

The changes introduced in grassroot level institutions through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, constituted a particular challenge to Mahila Samakhya. Since 1995, MS had been creating an awareness among women of their potential role in local self government. In the current year, a sharper focus has been provided to the active participation of women in decision making processes. Training programmes were arranged for elected women members to enable them to make a greater impact on local decision making, and; on the other hand the village community, (including men) were educated about the significance of effective female representation. In the training programmes, the innovative use of the *phad* (scroll) brought out the effect of good governance on improving the quality of village life, through the local idiom.

REPRESENTATION OF SANGHA WOMEN					
Dist	Women Pradhans	BDCs	Zila Parishad	Panchayat	Sangha women elected
Pauri	8				8
Saharanpur	8	31			39
Tehri	18	5	1 (Resource person)		23
Varanasi	61	39		410	510
TOTAL	95	75	1	410	580

Specialised Trainings

Para legal - Basic knowledge of law is given to the sangha women by sahyoginis. In addition to lodging an FIR, and dealing with cases of dowry, property, etc. this year saw the formalisation of procedures in legal literacy, like the Nari Adalat. Local lawyers, MS - Gujerat, and Jagori helped facilitate trainings with follow up workshops.

Health - Women's health has always been an important issue in MS. Trying to revitalise traditional practices and knowledge about herbal medicines saw the setting up of Nari Sanjeevani Kendras at Sewapuri and Chakia in Varanasi, and in Tehri. 40 women, who were familiar with herbal medicine, were given supplementary training for a month at the MSK, Varanasi. *Dai* (midwife) training was imparted to 35 sangha women most of whom already had some experience attending to the health problems of women.

Accounts - Periodic refresher courses are conducted for the accountants, DIUS, and Resource Persons where they discuss the accounting problems faced at the district. This has enabled them to standardise procedures. The planning process has been examined *vis a vis* MS and the sanghas. Planning and budget processes are coordinated within a time frame with given resources. Internal audit conducted by the State accountants has also helped clarify rules within MS. Accountants are sensitised to the programme ethos, as they also guide and train sangha women.

Computer - Training is given at all levels to familiarise personnel with the use of computers. Most of the districts maintain profiles of sahyoginis on the computer. Accounts are maintained and activities documented as quarterly reports on the computer.

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Skill development - Specialised inputs were given according to the demand and local context for sangha women. At Tehri, nursery raising and rearing angora rabbits; in Banda, masonry, catering and hand pump mechanics; in Varanasi, herbal medicine; in Allahabad, hand pump mechanics; in Pauri, repair and maintenance of stoves, pressure cookers, cycles. (See Annexure III)

Workshops

❖ Orientation training was held in May '97 for 70 sahyoginis (new and old) in two phases, at Haldwani and Kotdwar. The training was conducted by Resource Persons, Junior Resource Persons, Sahyoginis and Consultants of MS UP.

❖ A programme personnel review workshop was conducted in May '97 by Kameshwari and Gita Menon, National Consultants. The reflections led to more defined roles and responsibilities for MS personnel at the State and District levels.

❖ In July '97 a workshop on Education - Training and Planning was held, with 30 participants consisting of anudesikas and education core team from four districts along with consultants and resource persons. Teaching material and anudesika competencies were assessed. Further training requirements for anudesikas, especially in maths and science were planned. Incorporating minimum levels of learning in the present teaching materials was adapted. The Resource Persons were Runu Chakraborty, Gita Kumar, Rakesh Chandra and Anuradha Joshi.

❖ In August '97 a workshop on Conceptual Clarity on Gender held at IMDUP, Lucknow, was conducted by Abha Bhaiya of Jagori, Kalyani Menon-Sen, Akhila Shivdas from Media Advocacy Group and Nishi Mehrotra. There were 28 participants from the 10 districts and a few new personnel of MS. It examined patriarchy, feminism in the context of empowerment of sanghas towards sustainability.

❖ In December '97 a Review Workshop on MSK was conducted by Malini Ghosh and Renuka Mishra, both from Nirantar. It was decided to include vocational training and income generating activities in the MSKs based on context and needs.

❖ Health - trainings were given by MSK Varanasi to sahyoginis from other districts specialising in herbal medicine and health care.

❖ Jagori and MS, Gujerat held a workshop at Saharanpur, UP for planning Nari Adalats. There were 20 participants. The course, content, methodology and the procedures for setting up Nari Adalats were discussed. 10 persons from MS UP went to Baroda to see the working of the Nari Adalat. This workshop focused on instilling legal validity to the existing literature on legal procedures.

National Workshops

Apart from the trainings conducted within MS UP, four National Workshops were held to deliberate on the direction MS was to take. The proceedings were made available at the state level and discussions were held on ways to share this information to the sangha level. These workshops were viewed in the context of the processes of consolidation, expansion and withdrawal of the programme, education, financial planning and management and viability of EDP in MS.

○The National meet on Educational Initiatives in MS held at Baroda in April '97 reviewed the on-going educational initiatives of the programme which relate to literacy, non-formal education, early childhood care and education, and Mahila Shikshan Kendra. The sanghas were to manage and monitor the initiatives as the sustainability of the programme depended on them. Consequently, MS UP is working on the following initiatives :

- Conceptual clarity on education for girl children.
- Making women and communities sensitive to girls education.
- Enhancement of the role of sanghas in the area of education.
- Bringing formal and non-formal education within reach of children.
- Creating gender sensitive pedagogy.
- Teacher's training both inhouse and with Education Department.
- Role changes for sanghas, anudesikas and sahyoginis.
- Facilitation and support for the above by the State Office.

Following this a new education policy framework for the second phase has been evolved.

- ◆ Where primary schools are within 1-2 kms of a village, MS will not open a Bal Kendra.
- ◆ The Bal Kendra will gradually be run by the sangha, who will contribute to the salary of the anudesika and funds for educational material.
- ◆ Phase out Bal Kendras that have already run for five years.
- ◆ Develop plans for the kishoris of the Bal Kendras with the sanghas, anudesikas and the education core team in the district.
- ◆ Define a training programme with a time frame (20-25 days per annum) for anudesikas.
- ◆ Interface with the education system for mainstreaming the children of the Bal Kendras.
- ◆ Develop a plan for the training stages and parameters for each stage.
- ◆ Link all the above points with the MS vision for education and empowerment.

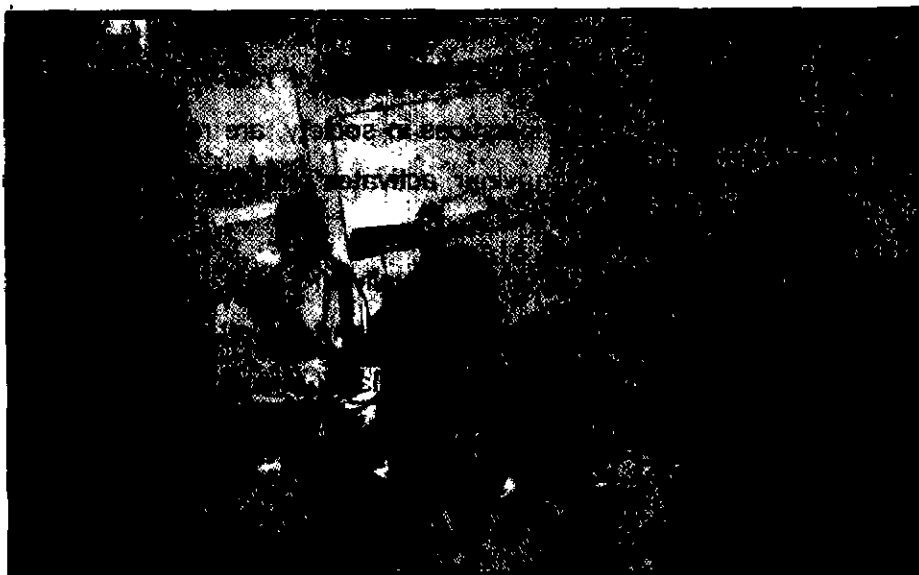
■ The National Workshop on Strengthening of sanghas and issues of decentralisation and withdrawal, was held at Hyderabad in July '97. The status of sanghas in various states was reviewed and parameters developed to assess the sanghas. Issues of phasing and withdrawal; plan for autonomous and independent functioning of sanghas, and work out modalities of operationalising this process within a time frame, were explored. (See Annexure IV for MS UP roll back plan)

■ The National Workshop on Financial Planning and Management was held at Lucknow in Dec. '97. The present rules and regulations, financial and administrative problems were discussed, and roles and responsibilities at all levels were defined. Planning activities, preparing the annual budgets and monitoring the flow of funds was to be done within a time-frame in the context of the programme. Sangha capacity for self management and personnel management were also examined. MS UP took the initiative to formulate

- Delegation of powers at all levels with specific details.
- Guidelines for committees and sub-committees.
- TA, DA, and Leave Rules.

- Contributory Provident Fund Rules codified and a Board constituted with sanction of EC.
- Fee and Honorarium rates formulated and later revised.
- Training of strong sanghas in financial management and book keeping.
- Sensitising accountants to programme ethos.

■ The National Workshop on Economic Development Programmes was held at Bangalore in Jan. '98. Economic empowerment would increase subsistence levels and improve the bargaining power of the women at the grassroot level. Group enterprise was to be encouraged. A thorough analysis would have to be made of local needs, women's existing skills, marketability and accessibility of raw materials. Initially, it would be a better option to venture into enhancing the productivity of the existing enterprises that women are involved in. (Refer to Economic Development Programmes under Programme Strategies for MS UP's initiatives).



Puppet Workshop - Etawah

Documentation

Experiments in production of material in partnership with neo-literate women and children has been enriching and provides basic insights into MS processes. Many training programmes include a component of skill building in writing - for instance, during sahyogini trainings, participants take turns to write a report of the days proceedings. Almost every district brings out broadsheets, newsletters, magazines, for which news items, happenings, recording of activities and letters are woven together over a three day workshop at the district headquarters. The contents are contributed by sangha women, teachers, kishoris, and children from Bal Kendras on a regular basis.

These newsletters / magazines serve a great need for communities devoid of any reading material as alternative media that is locally produced. The broadsheets provide **qualitative information and awareness** to a wide variety of development and gender issues, currently relevant in the villages. Moreover, when activities undertaken by the sangha are reported in the papers; and women who are unlettered are told about it, it creates the need, to want to learn reading and writing. Stories, profiles, case studies of particular sahyoginis, sangha women, sakhis, figures prominently in them, which again boosts the individual's image and provides alternative role models. Cases of errant teachers, inactive village pradhans, injustices in society, are reported. This pressurises those in the wrong to rectify their behaviour, activates public opinion and social action.

The circulation of the printed materials is usually around 2000 copies. Each district distributes its literature to the various MS districts and in their respective regions to local schools, Bal Kendras, prominent people of the village, Government offices, and is slowly moving into the precincts of the Village Education Committees. (UP BEP has requested MS to circulate its local papers to all VECs constituted in an area common with MS). This moderate circulation within a confined village community, communicates MS interventions in the area. In certain districts it has been reported that members of the community (not associated with MS) want the news letter to print 'news items' concerning them and local advertisements. This is a positive step towards integrating MS activities with the village community. It speaks of a certain recognition and acceptability bestowed on MS by the community bringing with it social ownership and participation.

The various kinds of documents created in MS are :

- ✕ reports of trainings, workshops, camps.
- ✕ literacy material, primers, workbooks, charts, games.
- ✕ newsletters / broadsheets.
- ✕ photo documentation of activities.
- ✕ video films of functions, melas, jathas and trainings.
- ✕ diaries, planners, posters.
- ✕ making of *phads* (narration of issues on yards of cloth in drawn picture form)
- ✕ village profiles developed through PRA exercises.

Mahila Dakiya (Banda) a bi-monthly which won the Chameli Devi National Media Award in 95-96, covers issues on economic activities, savings, and interestingly a price index of the local market.

Rant Raibar (Tehri) a quarterly, initially a children's newsletter has grown to cover pertinent issues like child labor, women's rights, stories and profiles, and the environment.

Hindola (Saharanpur) published monthly, carries information and articles written by children and teachers. Each issue is reflective of the spirit of the time, for e.g. 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.

Kahi Suni (Varanasi) 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) brought out monthly, focuses on the activities of children with anecdotes of interest to them. Bal sabhas and other important functions are covered. Local herbal remedies with illustrations also feature.

Guiyan (Allahabad) a monthly publication, 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) a bi-monthly newsletter, concentrates on the educational intervention in the district. It mobilises opinion on the functioning of the government schools and centres.

Beni (Nainital) is brought out monthly with the idea of sharing information on health, education, and women's rights.

Sakhi (Gorakhpur) the first issue took shape as there was a need from sangha women to see their intervention in print.

Sahkar (Etawah) is a compilation of various activities, stories and poems.

Pallavi (Pauri) is a bi-monthly printed magazine, mainly targetted for teenage girls or kishoris. Information 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.

Apan Geet, Geetika (Pauri) are song books.

With the publication of printed material, sangha women, sahyoginis and DIU personnel have learnt about planning and designing. The layout is developed by the in house team and the choice of content, language and artistic embellishments is made with enthusiasm. Screen printing techniques are being used and the women are aware that such inputs along with colour combinations enhances the appeal and hence readability of their magazines. These are read by their families and the community and is a source of encouragement for continuing education to the neo-literates and larger community.

Most activities at the village level are photo documented by sahyoginis and core teams. Audio recordings are made of songs, writings etc. by the sangha women, and trainers. The effectiveness of a jatha, or a mela is brought out on video, which is handled by MS staff trained in videography. A film has been made by Vasudha Joshi on the genesis of the sangha in two districts - Tehri and Varanasi. It traces the formation of a sangha with the sakhi. It depicts the activities and issues taken up as the sangha matures and how the women collectively exert a presence in the village

Feminist Training : Precepts and Practice written by Kalyani Menon-Sen and Abha Bhaiya has been published by MS UP. This document is primarily a reflection on the theory and practice of the training perspective in Mahila Samakhya. It reflects the feminist vision, the shift in the focus of training, the changing role of trainers, training at the sangha level and building inhouse training capacity. It also discusses the outcomes and lessons of training and the impact of training on women's capacities.

Details on rural women's development programmes in UP has been collated in Hindi by Hitaishi Singh. This can be used as a reckoner to give information about all the government schemes and programmes for women, at the sangha level when they need it. A number of booklets have been translated into Hindi which include 'We can change our world', and 'Empowerment through Mahila Sanghas.'

A Review of Pauri and Allahabad was conducted by Anuradha Joshi and Soma Parthasarathy. The review provided a comprehensive insight into the functioning of the District teams and afforded suggestions for resolving the difficulties and dilemmas faced by the districts. The team felt that the programme is losing out the opportunity to provide space for women's priorities and struggles and is instead becoming 'input' and 'programme' driven instead of 'process' and 'need' driven. The DIU and sahyoginis need more exposure on women's issues, networking with other activist organisations, and discussion in women's groups. They need to further develop their analytical skills.

Trainings are given at all levels on formatting reports and keeping accounts of workshops and activities. Profiles of sanghas, case studies, the processes of learning especially in the Mahila Shikshan Kendras are maintained systematically as records integral to the programme. Constant follow up is done to hone this process further.

MOVING TOWARDS, SUSTAINABILITY - THE SANGHA EXPERIENCE

The sangha lies at the cutting edge of the MS strategy. Sanghas act as fora for women to address critical issues and to act collectively for their redressal. The sangha serves as a body to collectively counter the powerlessness of women and alter their self image. The constitution of the sangha into an organic unit lies at the heart of the MS empowerment process which attempts to discover strength of commonality and bonds of solidarity to initiate joint action. In this process the sakhi played a key role of catalysing discussion and action. The sakhi model of sangha formation was successful in creating an effective empowered pressure group.

By and large, the effectiveness of a village sangha depended on the initiative and dynamism of the sakhi. This however, in some instances had an adverse effect, in that the personality of the sakhi overshadowed the collective identity. It was in this light that it was decided that the sakhi model need not be the only model. The decision to pay the sakhi her honoraria or to merge the money with the sangha fund depends on the collective. In Tehri there are 89 sakhis, Varanasi has 220, Banda has 78, and Saharanpur has 107. In Saharanpur, there has been a gradual withdrawal of sakhis over the last four months. Alternatively, many sakhis found competent have been absorbed as anudesikas and sahelis.

An exercise was conducted to assess the relative strengths of sanghas in the four initial districts. Sanghas were categorised as 'empowered', 'emergent', and 'amorphous'. Among the emergent sanghas regular meetings are convened and action is usually initiated on specific issues like building of a thikana. The sangha women are capable of visiting the block office on their own initiative. Whereas in the amorphous sanghas women rallied together when issues concerned them but thereafter there was no regular forum for discussion. The attributes of a strong sangha were broadly outlined by sanghas themselves as having

- A strong collective identity.
- An ability to identify issues and take up struggles, even if it means conflict with the men and community.
- An ability to access information.

- A strong women's perspective.
- Capability of independent decision making.
- Strong leadership.
- Established linkages with village level institutions.
- Capability of networking with other sanghas.

The exercise revealed the divergent trend of sangha formation among the districts and, even within each district. The results are summarised below :

DISTRICT	EMPOWERED	EMERGENT	AMORPHOUS
Saharanpur	56	44	38
Varanasi	76	62	63
Tehri	94	84	75
Banda	66	38	109
Allahabad	40	30	20
Pauri	45	40	30
Gorakhpur	35	18	12 (new)
Etawah	27	24	27 (new)
Sitapur	4	28	32
Nainital	30	30	20

From the results of the study it emerged that while the empowered sanghas should be encouraged to delink from the MS structure, the weaker sanghas needed reinforcement. Rolling back of support from the 'strong' sanghas is an important strategy of MS. There is a growing recognition that the empowerment of women is best achieved through enabling sanghas to be independent and autonomous through capacity building. Moreover, in view of the fact that the MS programme is of a limited duration, it is

imperative that self supporting and sustainable village level groups must be formed, with the principles, beliefs and ideology of MS.

On the basis of classification of strong - weak sanghas the position with regard to 'rolling back' in the older districts is as follows :

Varanasi : 38 of the strong sanghas were identified for phasing out. While the sahyoginis of the neighbouring villages would continue to monitor their progress provide periodic support, the empowered sanghas are expected to sustain and support themselves. Alongside the rolling back process, the programme is also expanding into the neighbouring villages of Chakia block and a social assessment is being conducted to target villages.

Tehri : In Jakhnidhar 30 villages have been phased out. Discussion has begun on phasing out strategies in 30 villages of Bhilangana block. Although sahyoginis do not interface with these villages directly. When sahyoginis' meetings take place in adjacent villages, the phased out sanghas are also invited to participate. Thereby the link between sanghas and sahyogini is maintained and received a degree of external reinforcement.

Chitrakoot : In 37 villages the phasing out process has been initiated. In most villages, the focus was on service delivery like training for hand pump mechanics or masonry. Some strong sanghas have already delinked from the mainstream and are managing on their own. MS Banda is examining the possibilities of expanding into neighbouring Pahari block.

Saharanpur : For various reasons, the pace of expansion has been slower than other districts. However, many sanghas have been found to be inherently strong. In Nangal block, the phasing out process has begun. In the block Bal kendras have been established with a substantial degree of success. Three Bal Kendras have closed down, while five have been started for muslim girls. The experienced sahyoginis are examining possibilities of setting up a women's dairy cooperative, and take on weaving of dhurries, etc.

Federation

In many areas, the sanghas have started networking with each other leading to clusters of empowered sanghas. While sanghas federate they would also share information on health, panchayati raj, government schemes loans etc. This would help expand their network and tackle issues on a wider platform and federate towards regional action. This is expected to facilitate a grassroot level movement or a *manch* or a *mahasangh* (a loose federation of sanghas at the block level). It is envisaged that these *manchs* would link the micro issues to macro concerns and form a pressure group large enough to be taken cognisance of at the district level. The modalities of creating a federation is still rather fluid. The formation of the *manch* has helped sangha women to take decisions on their own without being too dependent on the sahyogini or the MS programme as a whole.

The concept of a federation has taken root in Tehri and to a certain extent in Varanasi. In Banda the bonding amongst the sanghas has been weak, hence the concept of a federation has not really percolated outwards. On the other hand, in Saharanpur individual sahyoginis were found to be very resourceful and each sangha self contained. So not many cases are evident where groups of sanghas have aligned on specific issues.

Decentralisation

Block offices have been set up in the four older districts as part of the initial phase of decentralisation. The focus was on setting up of an administrative unit where planning and management of activities will be at its optimum. This would also require minimal resource support from the District office. The setting up of the block office facilitated the sahyogini's role as a Coordinator to extend support to sanghas through localised activities, with guidance from the DIU. Activities conducted at the block level include anudesika trainings, monthly meetings of sahyoginis and workshops and trainings of sanghas. The sangha women participate in preparing the budget along with their activity plans at the block level. For e.g. in Lambgaon, Tehri, the office has also conducted trainings for *daís* and hopes to begin training in herbal medicine and basic medical aid. In Tehri the Block Office has been opened at Pratapnagar, in Varanasi at Chakia and Sewapuri, in Banda at Manikpur, Chitrakoot, in Saharanpur at Nangal.

New role of sahyoginis

In the evolution of the MS programme, the sahyoginis (who is in charge of a cluster of ten villages) has emerged as an important functionary of the empowerment process. Most of the sahyoginis have developed a field of specialisation which qualify them to assume different roles with greater management skills, outreach and more responsibility. The specialised skills of the sahyogini facilitate capacity building among sangha women. Sahyoginis found capable of greater responsibility have been given a new role as Junior Resource Persons who are responsible for managing an entire block. The JRP monitors, strategises, trains and supports the women in their monthly meetings. She also interacts with the core teams to formulate reports and identify potential women for various trainings. The group of senior sahyoginis in a block are emerging as a resource group for sanghas to fulfill their needs of information, training, networking and support.

With the sahyoginis taking on this new mantle of responsibility, the earlier villages that they were in charge of operate on their own. They function as independent collectives, drawing support from each other and the sahyoginis group. Where once there was a dependency on the sahyogini, there is now a spirit of self action and support to other women and other sanghas - inter sangha and intra sangha, developing mutual solidarity. (See Annexure V for Roles of MS functionaries).

Mahila Samakhya - NGOs

With the evolution of the programme, experienced functionaries have started to examine the possibility of establishing their own sustainable groups. This has been particularly successful in the case of Vanangana, which grew as an offshoot of Mahila Samakhya in Banda. Similarly in other districts, like Saharanpur and Tehri, especially in the context of rolling back experienced functionaries are exploring possibilities of setting up their own organisations..

Vanangana is a registered society of rural women in Manikpur, SM Nagar. It consolidated the work of the hand pump programme (an initiative of MS) into an independent organisation. The collaboration with Vanangana has helped many MS

women find new avenues of growth. Vanangana provides training to MS personnel in alternative skill development, income generating activities, and hand pump maintenance and repairs. It also takes on contracts from other departments and agencies.

Grameen Mahila Rachnatmak Chetana Society or **Gramras** was started in Sewapuri block of Varanasi. This was started by a group of experienced sahyoginis and sangha women. They work with women and children in 50 villages in the field of capacity building for health, education, law, and panchayati raj. Periodic surveys are conducted to examine the educational needs of the area. They have also taken up the issue of child labor and child rights to mobilise people to educate their children.

In Orai Block (adjacent to Sewapuri) 52 savings groups have started in 48 villages and bank accounts have been opened. A six-month training programme has been planned with UP BEP in facilitating active participation in Village Education Committees. Two trainings and a follow up has been conducted on health. The establishment of Gramras may be seen as a positive step of Mahila Samakhya initiatives towards sustainability.

MS gives a grant in aid to the Society for the Integrated Development of the Himalayas (SIDH) based in Mussorie. Alternative Learning Centres with a sensitive curriculum and a meaningful pedagogy is being sustained by them in 30-40 villages in Jaunpur block of Tehri.

Future Vision

The UP programme has reached a watershed with the phase-out process gathering momentum and the strengthening process of the six new districts underway. Both the old and the new have had the opportunity to interact and learn from each other. While the older districts had the flexibility of going deeply into processes and rooting the programme as it was designed, the newer districts had an accelerated pace to put down roots to start processes for establishing the District Implementation Units.

Given the changing demands of the programme, there is a visible trend towards a greater degree of systematisation and structuring in order to maintain its identity. However, capacity building will be a major agenda for the programme in the current

phase for all levels. The investment at the sangha level has to be maximised with their burgeoning needs for autonomy and self-reliance. Further, the programme needs to develop and strengthen networks and alliances with other programmes, projects, organisations, institutions and government departments. This would enable the scope for learning within the programme with fresh inputs from alliances. At the same time it would assist the autonomous and federated sanghas to develop as local organisations in a few years.

A positive affirmation of the programme has been its investment in human resources. This factor has been developed with constant training to sustain a grass roots level women's movement. The changing role of MS as a facilitating mechanism in supporting women's empowerment processes has implications for the investment in capacity building and professional development of the staff at all levels. Notably, MS has created a unique space for women 'within a social environment' that offered virtually no autonomous space for women to express their individual and collective identity.

MAHILA SAMAKHAYA, UTTAR PRADESH
3/8-9, PATRAKAR PURAM, GOMTI NAGAR, LUCKNOW
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH '1998

LIABILITIES	AMOUNT (Rs.)	AMOUNT (Rs.)	ASSETS	AMOUNT (Rs.)	AMOUNT (Rs.)
A Fund Account		10225661.93	A Fixed Assets		
I Govt of India			I As Per Schedule 'A' annexed		5663257.97
Balance as on 1st April 1997	6806399.11		GOI assets	2709628.10	
Less - Excess of Expenditure over Receipts	4118633.97		EFA assets	2953629.87	
Balance as on 31st March 1998	2687765.14				
II Education For All, U.P.			II Store and Usable items		907830.30
Balance as on 1st April 1997	8608175.88		Balance as on 1st April 1997	718799.55	
Less - Excess of Expenditure over Receipts	1070279.09		Add Purchases during the year	189030.75	
Balance as on 31st March 1998	7537896.79				
B Contributory Provident Fund, Mahila Samakhaya, U.P.		299400.00	B INVESTMENT :		
			National Saving Certificate		600.00
C CURRENT LIABILITIES			C Current Assets		
I Bandā Payjal Pariyojna		40088.20	I Advance Recoverable		139977.26
II Funds from UNICEF		22445.07	Staff Advances against TA/DA	88127.27	
III Security Deposits			Deposit With Land Lord	16250.00	
(a) Accountants	15857.20		Security Deposit With D.O.T.	6000.00	
(b) Others	2000.00	17857.20	Other Advances	29599.99	
IV Miscellaneous Payables		193258.24	II Cash & Bank Balances		4087045.11
			Balance with Banks	4043810.56	
			Cash in Hand	43234.55	
Total		10798710.64	Total		10798710.64

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

--- sd ---

Place : LUCKNOW
Date :

--- sd ---
(G.P. GUPTA)
Partner

(VRINDA SARUP)
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 1998

PARTICULARS	AMOUNT(Rs)			PARTICULARS	AMOUNT(Rs)		
	GOI	EFA	Total		GOI	EFA	Total
MANAGEMENT EXPENDITURE :				By Grant Received			
To Office Staff Honoraria (Salaries)	1498708.55	1519709.20	3018417.75	Government Of India	9000000.00		9000000.00
To Employer's Contribution to CPF	101500.00	53000.00	154500.00	Education For All Project U.P.		7000000.00	7000000.00
To Office Expenses	1507134.46	1755663.40	3262797.86				
To TA/DA Expenses	453987.36	417800.93	871786.29	By Bank Interest Received	106571.62	193167.62	299739.24
To Contingencies	66890.00	103958.08	170848.08	By Misc. Receipts	55918.20	19159.00	75077.20
ACTIVITY EXPENDITURE :				By Excess of Expenditure over Receipts	4118633.97	1070279.09	5188913.06
To Workshop, Seminar, Trainings, External Evaluation, Documentation, Publication, innovative Education Programme				carried over to Fund Account			
(a)State Office	677695.63	950012.85	1627708.48				
(b)Distt. Implementation Units	2043027.85	1120822.15	3163850.00				
To Child Care Centres	1051434.45	30721.45	1082155.90				
To Sahyogini Expenses	1186381.52	600310.00	1786691.52				
To Mahila Sangh Expenses :							
(a) Expenses on Activities	1262151.95	105108.55	1367260.50				
(b) Cont. to Sangha Fund	770540.50	51866.00	822406.50				
To Technical Vocational Trainings	43415.00	93846.20	137261.20				
To Mahila Shikshan Kendras	1330490.57		1330490.57				
To Grant To N.G.O's	300000.00		300000.00				
To Innovative Educational Programme	434593.95	594807.95	1029401.90				
To Kishori Sangh		196341.95	196341.95				
To Depreciation (As per Schedule "A")	553172.00	688637.00	1241809.00				
TOTAL	13281123.79	8282605.71	21563729.50	TOTAL	13281123.79	8282605.71	21563729.50

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

--- sd ---

(G.P. GUPTA)
Partner

Place : LUCKNOW
Date :

--- sd ---
(VRINDA SARUP)
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 '1998

RECEIPTS	AMOUNT(Rs.)	AMOUNT(Rs.)	PAYMENTS	AMOUNT(Rs.)	AMOUNT(Rs.)
To Opening Balances		9777381.25	By PURCHASE OF FIXED ASSETS . (As per Schedule 'A')		1348384.74
Cash in Hand	55983.10		By Purchase of Stores & Useable Items		189030.75
Cash With Scheduled Bank	9621398.15		By MANAGEMENT EXPENDITURE :		
Draft in Transit	100000.00		Office Staff Honoraria (Salaries)	3018417.75	
To GRANT RECEIVED FROM :		16000000.00	Employer's Contribution to CPF	154500.00	
Government Of India Fund	9000000.00		Office Expenses	3262797.86	
On Education For All Project, U.P. Fund	7000000.00		TA/DA Expenses	871788.29	
To BANK INTEREST RECEIVED :		299739.24	Contingencies	170848.08	7478351.98
On Government Of India Fund / Units	106571.62		By ACTIVITY EXPENDITURE :		
On Education For All Project, U.P. Fund	193167.62		Workshop, Seminar, Trainings, Con.& Ext. Evaluation, Documentation, Publication Innovative Education Programme		4791558.48
To MISCELLANEOUS RECEIPTS .		75077.20	Child Care Centres		1082155.90
To Contribution received from employees under Contributory Provident Fund, Mahila Samakhaya, U.P.		299400.00	Sahyogini Expenses		1786691.52
			Mahila Sangh Expenses		2189667.00
			Technical Vocational Trainings		137261.20
			Mahila Shikshan Kendras		1330490.57
			Grant To N.G O's		300000.00
			Innovative Educational Programme		1029401.90
			Kishori Sangh		196341.95
			By OTHER PAYMENTS & ADVANCES :		
			Payment to UNICEF	282213.55	
			Payment of Security Deposits (Net of Received)	14520.00	
			Payment of Misc. Payables	180428.23	
			Advances to Staff for TA/DA	22372.62	
			Other advances	5682.19	505216.59
			By CASH & BANK BALANCES :		
			Cash In Hand	43234.55	
			Cash with Scheduled Banks -	4043810.56	4087045.11
TOTAL		26451597.69	TOTAL		26451597.69

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

--- sd ---

(G.P. GUPTA)
Partner

--- sd ---

(VRINDA SARUP)
STATE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
& MEMBER SECRETARY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Place : LUCKNOW
Date :

GLOSSARY

<i>Anudesika</i>	Teacher at children's literacy centre
<i>Bal Kendra</i>	Children's Literacy Centre
<i>Dai</i>	Midwife
<i>Jal</i>	Water
<i>Jameen</i>	Land
<i>Jungal</i>	Forest
<i>Kajal</i>	Herbal eye liner
<i>Kishori Sangha</i>	Collective for teenage girls
<i>Kishori Kendra</i>	Study centre for teenage girls
<i>Mahila Saksharta Kendra</i>	Women's Literacy Centre
<i>Mahila Shikshan Kendra</i>	Women's Residential Educational Centre
<i>Mahua</i>	A local flower
<i>Manch</i>	Forum
<i>Nari Adalat</i>	Women's Court
<i>Purdah</i>	Cloak worn by muslim women, covering from head to toe
<i>Saheli</i>	Teacher at women's literacy centre
<i>Sahyogini</i>	A woman co-ordinator of ten villages
<i>Sakhi</i>	Friend (a village level woman worker and a leader of the sangha)
<i>Sangha</i>	Collective / group (at the village level)

FUNDS TO SANGHAS

Empowered sanghas have received funds from MSUP from April '96 only.

PROCESSES FOR TRANSFER OF FUNDS :-

- ◆ Clear assessment of sanghas by sahyoginis and DIU upon parameters outlined.
- ◆ Training of sanghas for thrift and credit / accounts.
- ◆ Training of sanghas in banking processes.
- ◆ Encouragement of personal / complementary contributions to sangha funds.
- ◆ Evolution of own savings and operational rules / regulations etc. (sangha specific).
- ◆ Demands for trainings by sanghas - health, law, violence, literacy, panchayati raj, construction, accounts etc.
- ◆ System for knowledge acquisition and dissemination within sangha.
- ◆ Participation in rotation in sakhi meetings.
- ◆ Financial contribution to social issues.
- ◆ Funds to sanghas only for 3 years.
- ◆ Sanghas to pay honorarium for sakhis / anudesikas in new phase (and monitor them).

EMPOWERED SANGHAS HAVING ACCOUNTS, FUNDS FROM MS

<u>DIST.</u>	<u>TOTAL NO. OF SANGHAS</u>	<u>MS FUND</u>	<u>OWN MONEY</u>
1. Banda	46	1,13,000 (from July '96)	72,190
2. Varanasi	104	2,37,600 (from April '96)	1,45,695
3. Tehri	132	2,20,800 (from April '96)	1,27,170
4. Saharanpur	65	29,700 (from April '97)	1,22,000
Total	347	6,01,100	4,67,055

TRAINING INPUTS FOR SANGHAS FOR EDP ACTIVITIES

<i>DISTRICTS</i>	<i>NO. OF TRAININGS</i>	<i>NO. OF WOMEN TRAINED</i>
1. BANDA	Hand pump mechanic	50
	Masons	22
	Savings credit accounts keeping	130
	Cycle repairing	8
	TOTAL	210
2. VARANASI	Health workers	52
	Vocational training-masonry	20
	Savings credit accounts keeping	143
	TOTAL	215
3. TEHRI	Rabbit farming (Angora wool production)	25
	Plantation/forestry/nurseries	123
	TOTAL	148
4. SAHARANPUR	Dari weaving	45
	Dairy (milk production)	30
	Cot weaving	60
	Savings credit accounts keeping	30
	TOTAL	165
TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN TRAINED FOR EDP ACTIVITIES		738

Annexure IV

PHASE - OUT PROCESSES OVER TWO YEARS (1997-99) IN 4 BLOCKS OF VARANASI, TEHRI, SAHARANPUR, BANDA

LEVEL	STRATEGIES	TIME - FRAME
1. Sakhi / Sangha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - phase out weak sakhis - empowered sanghas phased out sakhis - empowered / emergent sanghas to pay sakhi / anudesikas honorarium - local networking / focal activities of sanghas on issues - local block / inter block network / federation of sanghas (in process) - self management / organisation of activities by sanghas, autonomous working at village & block level 	<p>before start of 2nd phase.</p> <p>6 - 12 months.</p> <p>upto 6-12 months.</p> <p>6-18 months.</p> <p>latter half of 2nd year.</p>
2. Sahyogini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sahyoginis develop as trainers / specialists as per needs of sanghas - senior sahyoginis to play role of resource group for issue based activities and education of sanghas. - sahyoginis when functioning as resource group will not be looking after their 10 villages. - intensive inputs by sahyoginis at sangha level with allegiance towards sanghas - sahyoginis to plan, organise, train and empower sanghas as per needs, initiate local movements around issues. - Gramras. - plan, share, facilitate / access resources locally & through DIU monthly/ quarterly basis. - get weaned from DIU to learn to work independently at block level with local sangha network. - support expansion into new areas - two districts. 	<p>6 months.(done)</p> <p>6-18 months-mid '99</p> <p>6-18 months-mid '99</p> <p>"</p> <p>"</p> <p>started in '98</p>
3. DIU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - extend administrative, financial & resource support. - extend support in ensuring training of sahyoginis through state office / district level. - ensure extension of autonomy to sanghas gradually (in process) - expand into new areas with support of sahyogini resource group. 	<p>upto 12 months.</p> <p>6-12 months.</p> <p>12 months-'98 end.</p>
4. State Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capacity building DIU / sahyoginis training. - monitoring review. - Grant-in-aid. - documentation. 	

ROLES OF MS FUNCTIONARIES IN THE OLD DISTRICTS

SANGHAS

- information sharing/gathering.
- leadership.
- initiative taking.
- accessing need based requirement from various local agencies.
- inter-sangha network.
- pressure group at village level.
- activating social justice system.

**BLOCK LEVEL CONSULTANTS/
RESOURCE PERSONS**

- training sangha women.
- reporting/documentation.
- organisers and planners.
- co-ordination with DIU, consultants, resource persons.
- dist./block networking.
- translating MS perspective within local activities of sanghas.
- administrative/management support to DIU

SAHYOGINIS

- facilitating.
- training- developing material.
- planning.
- reporting/documentation.
- information dissemination - sangha/sakhi
- local networking.
- facilitator of sangha autonomy.
- accessing resources for local programmes of sanghas.
- specialised resource persons.

DIU

- Plan management and administration with sangha in focus.
- Identification of sangha needs.
- Ensure resource inputs for block level.
- Enhanced linkages for activities / resources.
- Facilitation role increased for sanghas.
- Intensive documentation of processes.
- Exposure and learning from others (institutions and organisations).
- Intensive/extensive networking
- Encourage sahyoginis to become specialists in focal areas, eg. education, law, panchayat raj, health, vet-care
- Develop monitoring and review systems for activities and levels of personnel.

MAHILA SAMAKHYA, UTTAR PRADESH

State Office :

**Mahila Samakhya, Uttar Pradesh,
3/8-9 Patrakarpuram, Gomti Nagar,
Lucknow - 226 010.
Ph. 391394, 397062
Fax- 0522-397062**

District Implementation Units :

**Mahila Samakhya, Allahabad
83/63 R.B. Ramcharandas Road,
Mumford Ganj, Allahabad.
Ph- 0532-440724
Fax- 0532-641508**

**Mahila Samakhya, Saharanpur
17, Vishnudham, New Madhav Nagar,
Saharanpur - 247001
Ph- 0132-729431
Fax-0132-723218**

**Mahila Samakhya, Auraiya
93, Thathrai,
Near Shubhia Pharmacy
Auraiya.
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