

# ANNUAL REPORT

वार्षिक प्रतिवेदन

2016-17



**Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS)**

**ग्राम भारती समिति**

Following were the main activities implemented by GBS during the year 2016-17:

## **Women's empowerment**

The micro credit activities were continued to empower the rural women of backward castes in the villages of district Jaipur. In this context a meeting of the core team of GBS was organized at GBS office in Amber on June 04, 2016. Following decision were taken in the meeting after assessing the achievements of the past year:

- A well planned program should be developed
- Some reputed persons of the area should be nominated as patrons of the scheme
- Personnel should trained in computer operation
- Programs and activities should be implemented according to the schedule



*Discussion with rural women on their community based development*

While expressing satisfaction over the outcomes and achievements of the project it was decided to accelerate the pace of work.

## **Skill development among adolescent girls**

The project of non formal education and skill development among adolescent girls of backward castes was continued this year with support from the Global Fund for Children.

Following were the key activities of the project:

- Training 25 girl trainers and 25 volunteers
- Non-formal education to 395 girls
- Awareness among 400 girls on reproductive and sexual health, women's rights and HIV/AIDS through Focus Group Discussions (48), Peace Tiles events (4) and Camps (4)
- Vocational training to 150 girls on durry (cotton mats) weaving (50) and embroidery (100)



*Kusum and Sarita interacting with adolescent girls about their need and problems*

**Achievements**

Following were the key achievements of the project:

- The parents are very eager now to get their daughters educated, who were very reluctant earlier. Therefore, many more girls are coming forward to be enrolled at GBS non-formal education center. Also, many of them have joined Government schools
- Gender based stigma and discrimination has reduced extensively



*Girls depicting the situation of basic amenities in their villages on peace tiles*

- Cases of child marriage have been reduced extensively in the project area
- People have come forward to build toilets in their house with GBS support in order to avoid any kind of harassment or sexual abuse with their girl children and twenty of them have completed.



*Dhvani observing girls performing embroidery work on sarees in village Pawta*

Pinky and Rekha, the two girls of village Pawata who had confronted with physical harassment and sexual abuse while going to defecate to the field in the night some days back started crying during sharing with GBS their problems. They described the incident when Sarita asked them in detail to resolve the problem. It was decided after knowing this incident that people will build toilets in their house as soon as possible with support from GBS and no girl will go out alone in the night for defecation until the toilets are completed. The work was started with immediate effect and twenty units of toilets were built till the end of March, 2017. Now many other SHG women are planning to build toilets in their house. It is expected that whole of the village will be free from open field defecation soon.

### **GFC visits GBS**

Ms. Dhavni Doshi, Program Consultant of Global Fund for Children (GFC) for India visited GBS on November 22, 2016 to monitor the project 'Non formal education and skill development for adolescent girls of backward castes' supported by the GFC. Ms. Dhvani interacted with GBS staff on their experience of implementing the project, problems, if any and major outcomes. Ms. Kusum Jain, the project Coordinator and Ms. Sarita Yogi, Coordinator, women's empowerment program shared their experience of the project with Dhvani in the meeting organized in GBS office in Amber. Dhvani together with Bhawani and other GBS personnel i.e. Kusum, Sarita and Ramchandra participated in a meeting with adolescent girls in Village Pawata. Two hundred girls of Pawata and other target villages participated in the meeting along with their parents.



*Dhvani enjoyed discussing with adolescent girls in village Gopalyawas on their empowerment*

Responding Dhvani's questions the girls and their parents expressed their pleasure on the implementation of the project under which they were getting non formal education and training on embroidery and durry weaving.



*Dhvani cheered while presenting a gift to the winning girls for their performance*

She also visited GBS project of women's entrepreneurship development in village Gopaliyawas where she interacted with women and girls engaged in embroidery work. Later she visited the evening class being run by GBS for non formal education among the women and girls Koliyon ki Dhani. She appreciated the willingness of the women and girls in learning how to read and write. Dhvani also visited GBS project office in village Khawarani, where she interacted with the prohect staff working for developing entrepreneurship among the omen through micro credit programs in the rural areas Jamwaramgarh.

## Rehabilitation of mining workers

Three hundred poor rural people of scheduled castes (SC) working in marble mines in Andhi, Jhiri, Neemla and Ramyawala in Block Jamwaramgarh in district Jaipur for more than seven years were retrenched last year. Many of them have lost their limbs working in hazardous situation without any safety measures. Fifty eight among them were the children below 14 years. GBS provided one hundred thirty women with vocational training in weaving carpet and durry (Cotton mats). All of them were provided with sustainable jobs in producing finished articles. Now these women entrepreneurs are earning good income and supporting their families becoming self reliant.



*Rural women those who left jobs in marble mines weaving durry (left) and carpet (right)*

Sixty children including forty girls were provided with non-formal education in evening classes and skill development on life improving issues at their community premises. The children were learning not only reading, writing and doing mathematical calculations, but got general knowledge on various topics related environment, health and hygiene, basic amenities available in their village and surrounding area, children's rights, women's rights, combating violence and sexual abuse against women and girls, child marriage etc.

## Knowledge Exchange workshop in Mumbai

Kusum Jain, joint secretary, GBS participated in the GFC's India Knowledge Exchange workshop organized by Global Fund for Children at hotel Sun N Sand Hotel, Mumbai in Mumbai from February 14-17, 2017.

### Issues were discussed during the three day workshop

- Sharing our work: Gallery Walk
- Ensuring accountability: How to build better Governance practices in nonprofit organizations?
- Financial Management Policies and Principles
- The Nonprofit elevator pitch: So What Does Your Organization Do?
- Networking and Interactions with Stakeholders
- Exploring Fundraising: What Can We Learn from Each Other?

- Ideas That Empower Young People in India
- Not Just People in White Coats: How Can We Promote Innovation in Our Organizations
- Learning More About GFC
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Learning from ATMA, Accelerator for Education: How Can We Multiply the Impact of Our Organizations?
- Trends in Working with Young People in India
- Introduction to Dance Movement Therapy
- Enlightened Leadership: The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas
- Debrief, Reflections and the Way forward

Representatives of thirty five NGOs from various parts of India participated in the workshop. Kusum presented the GBS is working among the adolescent girls in the village in district Jaipur in collaboration with GFC. She described the situation of the girls in rural villages in Rajasthan. Also, she answered questions raised by the participants of other countries.

## **Healthcare for women and children**

### **Health and nutrition camp**

Two training camps on health and nutrition were organized on September 30, 2016 in village Pawata and Gopalyawas in Block Jamawaramgarh in district Jaipur with support from HSHR and the Runnebaum Foundation, Germany.



*Nurse Sisly distributing medicines among the patients in the health camp in Gopalyawas*

## Village Pawata

The camp was organized in village Pawata in district Jaipur to train the women volunteers of SHG on health and nutrition. Mrs. Beena Mathur, health specialist and Dr. Renu were the chief guest of the camp to provide the women with basic knowledge on health issues. Ms. Kusum Jain, joint secretary, GBS facilitated the training whereas Ms. Sarita Yogi, Project Coordinator, GBS women's project organized the workshop. The workshop was held at the residence of Raju Devi, the President of the SHG in village Pawata. In the beginning Sarita Yogi while speaking on the objectives of the training introduced Prof. Beena Mathur and Dr. Renu to the trainees.



*Sartia describing to the women importance of their health*

Ms. Kusum Jain told the guests that in spite of these serious problems of potable water and lack of toilet facilities the women of the village are very energetic, bold and committed to bring a change in the village. Describing the situation of few years back she told that the illicit liquor was brewed and sold at many places in the village, so most of the men of the village habituated of having liquor everyday and would beat their wives. Sarita taking it as a challenge organized the women in the SHG and united to stop this damaging evil from the village. She succeeded to do this after a yearlong fight in collaboration with the women. Now the brewing of illicit liquor has been stopped in the village and most of the people have given up drinking. Now the women want to become economically self reliant and healthy at the same time in order to manage their livelihood systematic and pleasant.

Dr. Renu after listening the success story and courageous actions of the village women appreciated their bravery and boldness. She advised that it could be achieved only on having balanced diet. Asking number of questions with regard to their physical problems, Dr. Renu told that the joint pain is very common among the women, which could be cured without going to the

sophisticated and expensive hospitals based in the city. There are so many useful herbs that could cure this problem. For example chewing a few leaves of ‘*Sehajana*’ (*Moringa pterygosperma*) could cure the joint or flatulence pain in some days. Also she advised the trainee women to use more green vegetables available in their vicinity in their daily meals in order to stay healthy. Twenty six women got training in the camp. Twenty four women volunteers were trained in the camp.



*Dr. Renu describing the women to have low cost nutritious food*

### **Village Gopalyawas**

After accomplishing the camp in village Pawata the GBS team reached village Gopalyawas along with the guests, facilitators and Sisly, the nurse. The overall situation in village Gopalyawas looked a bit better than that of village Pawata. All the women of SHG and others related to them welcomes Dr. Beena.

Dr. Renu asked the women as what they were taking in their daily meals and advise as what to add in to it in order to make it a nutritious and healthy diet. She told them about some domestic formulas those are not very expensive and even then are very useful for their health. She asked the young mother as how long they breastfeed their new born. The answers were different from woman to woman. Dr. Renu advised them that all the mothers must breast feed their new born child in the first two hours and nothing else as that yellow viscous milk is very important for the child and it gives the baby the power to fight against any disease.

Dr. Beena Mathur advised the women to intake green vegetables, fruits, pulse etc. and described them the availability of medicinal herbs around their area and their usefulness for health. Sisly,

the nurse examined the women who were suffering from any kind of diseases and issued them the medicines they needed.



*Dr. Beena and Dr. Renu interacting with the women in Gopalyawas*

### **World Women's Day**

Meetings were organized with women of SHG promoted by GBS in Pawata and Koliyon ki Dhani in the remote of district Jaipur on March 08, 2017 on the occasion of the world women's day. Dr. Monika Boehm, President of HSHR, Germany was the chief guest in the meetings.



*Sarita describing to Dr. Monika the activities of women's empowerment in village Pawta*

### **Village Pawta**

While expressing their gratitude towards Ms. Monika for providing health services and facilities for the community people in their village, the women told about their problem of safe drinking water, link road and lack of toilet facilities in the village in the meeting in village Pawta. They said that there was only one hand operated bore well, which is not enough for whole of the village and that's why the women have to spend lot of time to get a few buckets of water every day. Also, the water is salty and not drinkable, so they have to fetch potable water from long distances. It was, therefore decided to establish RO machine to make the water drinkable. They were perturbed of not having a link road to reach the village and problem of the broken muddy tracks.



*Dr. Monika viewing awareness materials prepared by GBS on women's health*

Also, the women were concerned of lack of toilet facilities in the village. They said that the women and young girls have face sexual harassment and abuse while going to defecate on open field in the night or early in the morning. It is very difficult during rains. GBS assure its support for constructing toilets in the village with support of the households those who are prepared to contribute their manual labor. Five toilets were decided to be constructed in the first phase.

### **Village Koliyon ki Dhaani**

The women while welcoming the guests appreciated the health care services being provided by Dr. Monika. Their concern was over the low income of the community people and therefore they requested GBS to provide them with some alternative source of income, so, that more men and women could earn their livelihood.

Also, the women wished to link their village with a cemented/pakka road as they have to face lots of problems during rains as the track becomes muddy and there is no way to walk over it. Sarita advised them to request the local administration to link the village with a link road. Later it was decided to visit the SDM and district collector to request for the link road.

### Evening classes for women

The evening School initiated in 'Koliyon ki Dhaani' a village 45 km. away from Jaipur in India with support from Evangelische kirchengemeinde, Kobe-Osaka, Kobe Union Church and Onfilia Co., Ltd., Japan has now entered in its third year. When it was started two years before, the people particularly the male members of the community were very skeptical about the results. Many of them used to say that the women of this caste could not learn read and write in this age. But now a big change could be seen among these women after two years regular practice, though the pace is still slow.



*Dr. Monika observing how women are getting education at evening school in Koliyon ki dhaani*

### Women can do anything

The women of Koliyon ki dhaani have proved that they can do anything either it is designing, mapping and weaving a durry (cotton mat) or learning how to read and write. The women of thirty or forty years of age those who never went to School in their childhood and didn't know how to use a slate and chalk are now writing on slates and reading the charts and pictorials. Thirty to thirty five women of 15 to 50 years of age can be seen here studying under one roof. Ten girls of 13 to fifteen years of the dhaani (small village) those who could not get formal School education happily join the group of their aunts, mothers and grandmothers of forty to fifty years and study there.



*Dr. Monika looking at the women entrepreneurs weaving an artistic durry*

### **Mobile Health care Project**

The project aimed at providing the rural women of SHG promoted by Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS) in the villages of Jamwaramgarh block in district Jaipur continued during the year 2017 with support from the Runnebaum Foundation, Germany. Looking at the increasing demand of the community people, especially the women those who could not afford to go to the Jaipur based sophisticate hospitals; the mobile health care project was implemented in the villages GBS is already working in.



*Sisly, the nurse distributing medicines among the women*

### **Health problems among the women**

It was notified during the visits of the nurse that the women are generally sick of ENT (ear, nose and throat) problems, abdominal issues, cough, white discharge, skin diseases etc. whereas the children have the problem of itchinness, stomach, liver, night blindness, diarrhea etc. Some of the women of the area were found infected with gynecological problems, so they were advised to SMS Hospital or Zenana Hospital.

### **SEZ Pawta Project**

Looking at the success of the project of first phase in village Koliyon ki dhaani, many women entrepreneurs approached GBS to implement such a project in their areas also. Then after discussing with GBS Executive committee, a proposal of the project was developed for village Pawta in consultation with HSHR and submitted to SEZ with a request for financial support.

### **Aims of the project**

Following were the main aims and objectives of the project:

- Improvement in economic and Social conditions of the rural women entrepreneurs

- Improvement of ecological conditions of the area
- Improving overall quality of life of 100 trainee women and their family members



*Construction of work shed in village Pawta to provide the women with training*

### **Focus of the project**

Focus of the project remained on:

- Developing basic infrastructure for training,
- Vocational training,
- Awareness on women's rights, reproductive & sexual health and health seeking behavior,
- Skill and design development in embroidery work,
- Creation of jobs,
- Environment education,
- Cleanliness of their habitats



*Dr. Monika viewing entrepreneurial skill of embroidery of women*

## Outcomes of the Project

Following were the key outcomes of the project:

- One hundred women entrepreneurs of backward castes were provided with training in embroidery.
- The skill and designing of Rajasthani handicraft improved
- Income of the women artisans increased to a good extent
- Handicraft of embroidery popularized in the area and metro city of Jaipur
- Sustainable jobs created for entrepreneurial women of the area
- The level of knowledge of the women of the target area upgraded on their rights, literacy, health and violence against women etc.
- The women were provided with health care services at their doorsteps.

## Toilets for women in Pawta

None of the women of backward castes in village Pawta like other several village of the area have toilet facilities in their house, so they have to go for defecation on open fields. Normally they move to the fields in the evening and early in the morning. The women and girls face very embarrassing situation when they have to go in day hours and it is very difficult during rains. There are number of incidents when the women and young girls were sexually harassed and abused.



*Toilets constructed for the women entrepreneurs in village Pawta*

While describing the cases of their sexual abuse many of the girls cried in the meeting organized by GBS to discuss their key problems. Looking at the seriousness of the problem GBS decided to support 10 women to construct toilets in their house in the first phase. The women getting this support promised to contribute manual labor in digging pits and construction of the toilets. Women were very much happy to have toilets in their house. Now other women are requesting GBS too to support them for constructing toilets in their house. It will be taken up in next phase when enough financial support is there.

## **FK Exchange for women's empowerment**

Gram Bharati Samiti has entered into an agreement with FK Exchange, Norway to empower the women entrepreneurs by exchanging volunteers with Dalit Welfare Association of Nepal and China Green Foundation, China. Bhawani Shanker Kusum and Ramchandra Saini participated in the introductory seminar organized by FK Exchange, Norway from February 13-15, 2017 under this project.

- The Story of FK Norway, the FK model, its principles and values
- Planning an FK Project Partnerships: Division of Roles and Responsibilities
- Project cycle, outcomes and indicators
- Recruitment and Leadership of FK participant
- Outcomes and Indicators Cross-cutting issues
- Financial Management Principles Budgeting, reporting and auditing
- Partnership planning, wrap-up and evaluation

## **Expectation from the volunteers**

Activities for the volunteers **coming to Nepal** from India and China

- Upgrading traditional handicrafts
- Exploring opportunities for promoting national and international market for handicrafts
- Research on socio-economic and cultural status of women engaged in handicrafts
- Transfer of knowledge to the young generation



*Bhawani participating in the introductory seminar organized by FK Exchange in Mumbai*

Activities for the volunteers **coming to India** from Nepal and China

- Study on socio-economic and cultural aspects of the women engaged in handicrafts
- Research on handicraft of cotton mats, upgrading technology, skill and market

- Developing/upgrading website and brochure
- Exploring opportunities for e-business and international market



*A group discussion in the intro seminar with partners from China and Nepal*

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- Exploring opportunities for promoting national and international market for handicrafts
- Research on socio-economic and cultural status of women engaged in handicrafts
- Transfer of knowledge to the young generation

## Environment

### Gully plugging for soil erosion

A project '**Improving water management and checking soil erosion at Gandhivan, India**' was implemented at Gandhivan with support from the HSHR and Daimler, Germany.



*The project Gully plugging at Gandhuvan: training of the members of PIMC and workmen*

## Activities of the project

### Identification, designing and mapping

Sixty gullies were identified by the Project staff in consultation with the PAC around the Gandhivan area. Filling of these gullies with mud bunds mulched with grasses and bushes etc. was designed.

### Erecting trench cum bunds

The trained workmen filled in the deep gullies by erecting different sizes of mud walls stabilized with bushes i.e. *kuncha* planted over them.



*Erecting mud wall (right) and trees planted in the gullies: an indigenous technique of checking soil erosion*

### Saplings planted

25,000 saplings i.e. *Prosopis cineraria* (*Khejari*), *Vachellia nilotica* (*Babul*), *Ailanthus excels* (*Ardu*), *Millettia pinnata* (*Kraunj*), *Azadirachta indica* (*Neem*), *Acacia* (*Siras*) etc. were raised in the nursery and planted in the gullies to lower the speed of flowing of the rain water and checking soil erosion.

### Outcomes and achievement

Following were the major outcomes of the project:

- Sixty deep gullies were plugged with mud bunds and mulched with grasses
- Twenty thousand bushes/shrubs of indigenous species planted in the gullies
- Endangered species of several medicinal plants are being regenerated
- Problem of fuel and fodder of 100 community people will be solved after 1-2 years
- Level of underground water be raised in the wells of adjoining area
- Soil and moisture conserved at 1,000 hectare land will help growing vegetation
- Ten youth volunteers and women trained on environmental issues
- The land of the fields around the Gandhivan area protected from the rain water flowing from the Aravalli hills and the fertile surface soil of their land checked

## **Forest-water workshop**

Bhawani Shanker Kusum participated in the workshop ‘**Understanding the Forest-Water Nexus: Monitoring Framework for Forest Landscape and Water-related Ecosystem Services**’ organized by Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) in collaboration with FAO, at SIWI, Stockholm in Sweden from September 27-30, 2016.

Objective of the workshop was to develop a monitoring framework and tool to measure, monitor and quantify forest-water interactions. The framework that provides standardized indicators, protocols and field methods to be adopted by forest, water and other natural resource management projects.

An online tool enabled practitioners to customize how they monitor for forest-water interactions, analyze and report on their data. The online tool eventually provides aggregated and synthesized data that can provide local, national, regional and global information to be used to inform integrated forest, water and landscape management practices and policies.

### **Monitoring framework discussed in the workshop**

- Stocktaking exercise to determine what is being measured, where and how?
- Analysis of survey feedback;
- Preliminary discussion on indicators and methods based on thematic topics;
- Workshop to standardize indicators, protocols and field methods;
- Development of an online tool and guide for users;
- Capacity development program to promote the application of the framework.

### **Forest-water topics discussed in Groups**

1. Bio-physical
  - a. Forest hydrology
  - b. Water cycle
  
2. Management considerations
  - a. Watershed/land-use planning
  - b. Riparian, wetland, coastal management
  - c. Agro forestry
  - d. Storm water
  - e. Forest fires
  - f. Water supply, accounting and budget
  - g. Soil management/restoration
  
3. Socio-economic
  - a. Incentives for forest ecosystem services
  - b. Livelihood development
  - c. Private-public partnerships
  - d. Integrated forest-water policy

## UNCCD

### Meeting of CSOs of India

A meeting of CSO/NGOs accredited with UNCCD (**United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**) organized on June 06, 2016 at GBS office in Amber, Jaipur. The representatives of CSO congratulated Bhawani Shanker Kusum on his selection as CSO panel member in the UNCCD for Asia by offering him flowers. Bhawani thanking the friends of CSO described to them the constitution, mandate and programs and activities of UNCCD and its importance in the context of problems of desertification, land degradation and drought in India. Twenty eight representatives of CSO engaged in various activities related to land degradation, harvesting rain water and combating drought participated in the meeting. Many of them shared their activities being carried out on these issues and expressed their interest in working with UNCCD.

There was a consensus on strengthening the network of CSO/NGOs working in these areas by encouraging more CSO for accreditation with UNCCD and participate in its activities. Bhawani told them that Ms. Monique Barbut, the executive secretary, UNCCD had given all the panel members of UNCCD to add new 100 CSO from each region, and he was expected to work for whole of the Asian region including India as well to achieve the target of 100 CSOs for accreditation. The participants of the meeting assured Bhawani to support him in achieving his target by mobilizing CSO/NGOs in Rajasthan and other states of India as well.



*CSO of India accredited with UNCCD discussing land degradation in India*

Another meeting of CSO accredited with UNCCD was organized on August 10, 2016 at GBS office wherein 30 CSO representatives participated from 13 districts of Rajasthan. AS decided in the past meeting many more NGOs applied for accreditation from Rajasthan and other parts of India.

Bhawani described to the participants the program of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and constitution of LDN Fund announced by UNCCD. He told that programs of restoration of degraded lands will be supported under the LDN in developing countries. Since India and especially Rajasthan has serious problems of land degradation, we the NGOs accredited with UNCCD engaged in such activities, should develop a collaborative project and submit before the LDN Fund for financial support. He suggested that those who have such experience and willing to work on this idea should develop their concept notes as soon as possible so that a collaborative project could be submitted to LDN Fund. Most of the participants agreed on this idea and agreed to send their concept notes earliest possible.

### **Participation in CRIC15**

Bhawani Shanker Kusum visited Nairobi (Kenya) to participate in the meeting of Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC15), held on October 16-20, 2016.

Following key issues were discussed in the CRIC:

1. Implementation experiences
  - Experience in the optional reporting exercise
  - Land degradation neutrality target setting exercise
2. Future implementation of the Convention
  - Initial findings from the Intergovernmental Working Group
  - Overall reporting procedures and modalities for reporting by Parties
  - Financing the implementation of the convention: opportunities for increased financing and options for tracking
3. Consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention
  - Formulation of the comprehensive report of the CRIC to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations
4. Adoption of the comprehensive report of the CRIC to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations

Bhawani made a presentation in the conference on the UNCCD's Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal on behalf of CSOs engaged in the implementation of the convention. He said that there may be no doubt that many of the solutions to the challenges of sustainable land use lie in the knowledge economy, from the high-level decision makers to the farmers in the fields. He thanked the Secretariat for its initiative in this regard, the Parties for requesting and supporting the development of the SKBP, WOCAT for offering access to its invaluable knowledge management tools and the Swiss Government for funding their development.

He said 'whereas the draft portal available on the website provides access to the knowledge products of a number of networks and organisations via hyperlinks, it is best suited to the researchers and professionals, rather than the farmers and practitioners. We propose that the portal should be designed in a more intuitive manner to easily direct the users to appropriate knowledge products. Specifically, we would like to see that:

- Access to information via the portal must be more users friendly, and there should be a direct link to the WOCAT site, but currently the site simply offers links to a range of knowledge sites, without providing any guidance as to what they offer. There needs to be a

simple path to guide users to different sorts of information designed for different audiences. The WOCAT video series is a good example of the sort of material that farmers can easily relate to and learn from.

- More of the many success stories on best practices implemented by CBOs/CSOs and the individuals should be made accessible through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub.
- Programs/plans for training for the community people/land users should be disseminated in such a manner that the members of marginalised groups such as youth, women and particularly land users could get benefit from it. Direct links to relevant training materials are needed here.
- Adequate Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and training materials related to these themes should be accessible via the CBMP site in UN languages so as to be useful for land users. The site could also facilitate translation into local/national languages to make it more useful for the community people at grassroots level.
- Contact details of the Universities hosting UNCCD courses, organizing competitions, exhibitions etc. should be made available for the users on different forums/networks, websites etc. so that the students or the people from any segments of the society could get full advantage of them.
- In order to effectively popularize ‘World Day to Combat Desertification’ and involve people from all walks of the society in the various events/campaigns to be organized online and on the ground in various ways on the day, resources must be allocated to CSOs rooted in land using communities
- We appreciate the crowd funding and donation page, as this can help CSOs to raise funds on the basis of the stories about their work, including the challenges and the successes that they have achieved. But it needs to be modified to make it more users friendly and interactive.’

### **CSO panel meeting in Istanbul**

Bhawani Shanker Kusum participated in the UNCCD CSO Panel meeting held in Istanbul (Turkey) on December 13-15, 2016. Work Program for CSO panel for 2017 was discussed and finalized in the meeting.



*Bhawani with a group participating in the CSO Panel meeting in Istanbul (Turkey)*

CSO Panel guiding principles, operational rules and procedures, mission, vision and values discussed in the meeting include:

- CSO Networking Targets
- CSO Panel Funding and Finance
- Strategic Framework 2018-2030 and LDN
- LDN Finance
- Gender, Youth and Indigenous people
- Communication Strategy and Plan
- UNCCD Events

**Also, following operational rules discussed:**

- Annual review
- Accountability and Reporting
- Decision making
- Election of the chair
- Responsibilities of the Chair
- Division of Labour within the Panel
- Funding and Financial transparency
- Oversight and Ethics Committee
- Expansion of the CSO Panel



*Bhawani with members of CSO panel discussing LDN Fund in the meeting held in Istanbul*

## Elections of the representatives of the UNCCD CSO

- Submission of required documents
- Period of operations of at least 3 years
- Executive staff and experience in program/project implementation,
- Accredited organization and member of an existing network
- Sound financial and accounting systems.
- Representative
- Senior person with experience of management and policy issues

## Traditional healers visit Gandhivan

A team of twenty students of National Institute of Ayurved (NIA) visited Gandhivan, GBS's environment centre led by a senior Professor Dr. Meeta Kotecha on September 28, 2016. Also Dr. Rammurti, Dr. Mohanlal Jaiswal, Dr. Sumit Natthani and two gardeners of NIA having expertise in medicinal herbs joined the team. Kusum Jain, Joint secretary, GBS welcomed the team of the students seeking their Post Graduation on identification of qualities of the herbal medicines at Gandhivan.



*Ayurvedic traditional practitioners searching for medicinal plants in Gandhivan*

The professors of NIA introduced to the students various herbs and plants of medicinal value during their four hour long visit. They identified following herbs and plants grown by GBS at Gandhivan:

- |             |                 |             |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| • Van Tulsi | • Rajbala       | • Dhav      |
| • Ram Tulsi | • Shallaki      | • Gujja     |
| • Bala      | • Jangal Jalebi | • Snuhi     |
| • Batibala  | • Khairi        | • Sharpuran |

- Mustak
- Erand
- Ashmantak
- Dhuli Kadamb
- Shuamak
- Wasa
- Ratnajot
- Guggul
- Vrihat Gokhur
- Darbh
- Shar
- Kaas
- Hulhul
- Kakjangha
- Amalki
- Artgal
- Tanduliyak
- Ingudi
- Gangeruki
- Shatmul
- Patha
- Amalki
- Raktapunarnava
- AdhahPushpi
- Apamarg
- Utmarni
- Madhuk
- Babul

Dr. Meeta Kotecha the leader of the team of the visiting students appreciated GBS work of growing medicinal plants at Gandhivan that has become a very valuable treasure of herbal medicines to be used in Ayurvedic (an ancient traditional healing system of India) treatment. Also, she thanked GBS and Kusum Jain for providing them with such opportunity to visit Gandhivan.



*Students of Ayurvedic College showing herbs found in Gandhivan*

### **Memorial tree plantation**

#### **Bela Jain memorial**

A memorial tree plantation event was organized on December 22, 2016 at Gandhivan in the memory of Bela Jain, a senior member of GBS who passed away of cardiac arrest on November 29, 2016 in Ahmadabad. A reverential homage was paid to Bela Jain in a meeting organized at Gandhivan.

Bhawani Shaker Kusum, secretary, Gram Bharati Samiti speaking in the meeting told that Bela was a good tree loving volunteer who would very often visit Gandhivan whenever she happened to come over to Jaipiur. She was very eager to plant trees. So, creating a ‘small garden’ and planting trees will be a very appropriate homage to her. Shivika, Bela’s daughter-in-law while offering homage to Bela, her mother-in-law said she was a great mother who was too much affectionate not only towards her, but whole of the family.



*Event organized on the occasion of establishing Bela Jain memorial Park at Gandhivan*

Later an all region prayer was performed by all those present in the meeting. It was unanimously decided to establish ‘Bela Jain Smriti Park’ at Gandhivan in Bela’s memory and plant tree every year on Bela’s birthday to keep her memory alive for a long. One hundred trees of various species were planted by family members, friends and colleagues on this occasion.



*Family members and friends planting trees in the memory of Bela Jain*

## Tree for Ian and Louise McCoy



Ms. Louise McCoy of U.K. visited GBS together with her mother and two of her sons in November, 2016 and dropped in some toys and pens for the children GBS is working with. She was very happy to know about tree plantation at Gandhivan. She promised to support this work of GBS and contributed some money on the occasion of Christmas.

Louise told us briefly about her husband Ian Rowe. Ian is a wonderful man. He is married to Louise McCoy with two sons and adopted two more sons. He was engaged in preserving the environment and of course his beloved Arsenal football club! After gaining a degree in environmental science he worked for the environment agency, ensuring our rivers are kept clean and unpolluted. He loved being out in the fields with nature.

Unfortunately, he suffered several strokes at 37 and was left in a coma for several months. He was diagnosed brain dead and the family turned off his life support. They prayed and sent healing to Ian every day. Miraculously he has defied medical science over the last 10 years and learnt to breathe unaided and to eat food again. He is a strong man willing to see his family grow. Though he can't speak, but Louise and the other family members know when he is happy. He still loves to be outside with the elements.



*Bhawani planting a tree on behalf of Mr. Ian Rowe and Ms. Louise McCoy of U.K.*

When Louise told him all about the Gandhivan project and showed the pictures after visiting GBS he listened attentively and nodded his head as saying 'it's a wonderful project'. GBS came

to know about Ian's physical inability and his great awakened state of mind, planted a tree at Gandhivan. When a photo of planting the tree was sent to him with his name plate, Ian expressed his joy with his brightened eyes. It is matter of great pleasure for GBS also to make a friend of environment happy.

### **International symposium in Ankara**

Bhawani participated in the international symposium organized by the Öz Orman-İşTrade Union in Ankara against the terrorist coup attempted in Turkey on March 2-5, 2017.

The goal of the international symposium entitled 'July 15 Coup Attempt: Global Chess' was to prevent the international efforts and studies which are targeted on the Turkish Democracy and its elected legitimate administration, and convey and put forth the truth of coup of July 15.



*Bhawani in the meeting organized in Ankara against terrorism*

One hundred thirty representatives of NGO, media and Government leaders participated in the symposium. Bhawani, speaking as representative of CSO from Asia in the UNCCD told that civil society is the set of civic rights, including primarily everyone's right to participate in public life. Civil society must also have foundation in a mature democracy and a mature political culture. It can be built only if there is widespread determination on the part of society to demand respect for, and observance of, individual rights, and popular will to hold accountable anyone or any institution, which violates them.



*Bhawani with Mr. Settar ASLAN, Vice President of Hak-İş Confederation and Union Leader of Öz Orman-İşTrade Union*

He said that without a lively Civil Society Organization scene, many ills in society may continue unchallenged. Civil society derives its strength from the Gandhian tradition of volunteerism. The voluntary or Civil Society Organizations could fill in the gaps left by the government in the development process.



*Bhawani with participants of Pakistan and Bangladesh*

Bhawani told ‘I, in my personal capacity and on behalf of Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS) the CSO I am working with, strongly condemn the violent coup of July 15, 2016 against Turkish Government and extend our absolute cooperation and solidarity with the Government and the people of Turkey to fight against the coup and all kinds of violence.

### **Gandhian conference in Champaran**

Bhawani Shanker Kusum participated in the annual conference of Sarva Seva Sangh, the national organization of non party, non political forum of Gandhian volunteers believing in peace and non violence formed by Vinoba Bhave, the great disciple of Gandhi held in Champaran on March 23-27, 2017. Champaran is the place where Mahatma Gandhi had initiated his first non violent satyagrah against the British rule to compel the farmers of Bihar forcefully to cultivate ‘neel’ (indigo plant). Over one thousand Sarvodaya volunteers from all around the country participated in the conference.



*Mahdev Bhai, President, Sarva Seva Sangh honoring a senior Sarvodaya leader Shri Ramdayal Khandelwal*

Bhawani was nominated as election officer to observe the impartial election of President of Sarva Seva Sangh. He performed the work of election officer by electing Mr. Mahadev Vidrohi, the President through initiating a consensus among all the voters peacefully. Many issues related to corruption in politics and bureaucracy, problem of safe drinking water in rural areas, unemployment etc. were discussed widely in the conference.

### **GBS initiated work in U.P.**

GBS initiated to work in Bundelkhand (U.P.) in collaboration with in collaboration with Bharat Uday Mission – another non-profit organization based in Bundelkhand and SEED Foundationm, a California, US based organization.

Key projects initiated include:

- Residential school for underserved communities in rural areas with focus on character with inner development in students;
- Supporting farmers in organic farming, fruit orchards development, organic vegetable farming and dehydration of organic vegetable for longer shelf life and availability around the year
- Establishment of a new holistic growth center at village Garha near Banda for plantation, organic farmers training and organic products development, promotion and marketing; women empowerment and health, child growth etc.



*A ceremony to lay foundation for the women's training center*

Mr. Shiv Vijay Singh, a senior Gandhian has been nominated as GBS Convener for GBS unit in U.P. who will in collaboration with a team of volunteers and involvement of local village people.

“Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky.”

— Kahlil Gibran



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