

ANNUAL REPORT

वार्षिक प्रतिवेदन

2023-24



Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS)



ग्राम भारती समिति

'Swachhta Hi Seva' campaign on Gandhi Jayanti

On the occasion of the 154th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri, honored to sweepers 'Swachhta Hi Seva' campaign across the country. As part of this, Kusum Lata Jain, Secretary of Gram Bharati Committee, along with sanitation workers, leprosy patients, senior citizens and councilors of Ward No. 1 and 2, donated labor. "Swachhta Hi Seva" fortnight is celebrated by the Government of Rajasthan and the Municipal Corporation of Jaipur. In this regard, the message of cleanliness and healthy India is propagated. Kusum Jain appealed to people to donate physical labor for cleanliness one hour a day from October 2 from 10 am.



Places around Amer Varahi Gate were chosen for today's campaign. Gram Bharati Samiti Secretary Kusum Lata Jain, Ward No. 1 Parshad Hanuman Gurjar, Ward No. 2 Parshad Anjali Brahmabhat, Senior Citizens Vinod Sharma, Mohan Lal Sharma, Ramji Lal Bhadana, Fatma Ji, Kanti Ji, Pallavi Sharma, Sangeeta, Ramchandra Saini , Rafat Khan, Moseen Khan, Shivgopal Sharma, Dr. Salimuddin and Dr. Manoj Soni of the Government Ayurveda Hospital, Mahaveer Niketan resident leprosy and cleaners were present in campaign.



All gave a message of cleanliness. Kusum Lata Jain felicitated 35 cleaners of the Amer region with garlands on this occasion. She said the country would be dirty if there were no cleaners. There is cleanliness around us every day. We should respect and support them. At the same time, Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated by garlanding the statue of Gandhiji at the Environment Center Gandhivan of Gram Bharati Samiti. The local youth did tree plantation and cleaning work with Gandhivan workers.



Bhawani Shankar Kusum remembered on the occasion of 76th birth anniversary

Today, on 01 November, 2023, the birth anniversary of former President and Founder of Gram Bharati Samiti, Late Shri Bhawani Shankar 'Kusum' was celebrated with leprosy patients at Amer office. Bhawani Shankar ji has a great contribution in the establishment of Leprosy Ashram in Amer. He freed the leprosy patients from begging and made them self-reliant. According to the ideals of Gandhiji, Bhawani Shankar ji considered the service of leprosy patients as service to the last person.



Secretary of Gram Bharati Samiti, Kusum Lata Jain told that Bhawani Shankar Kusum ji used to celebrate his birthday on the day of Karva Chauth. Today, Bhawani Shankar ji's 76th birth anniversary was celebrated with leprosy patients at the office of Gram Bharati Samiti in Amer. On this occasion, doctors of Government Ayurveda Hospital, common people of Amer and leprosy patients were present.



Biography of Bhawani Ji



Bhawani Shankar Kusum was born in 1947 in Jhunjhunu city of Rajasthan. Worked in Government Service Electricity Department for 4 years (4 years 1971-1975). Then participated in the Total Revolution Movement under the leadership of JP. Worked as a journalist for about twenty years. In 1985, he became a member of the National Committee and Rajasthan Coordinator of 'Bharat Jodo Abhiyan' organized by the famous social worker Baba Amte. Made complete arrangements in Rajasthan for 'Bharat Jodo Abhiyan' (bicycle march with 150 young men and women from all over the country) organized from Kanyakumari to Kashmir (1985) and from Arunachal to Okha (Dwarka) (1987). Under the guidance of Baba Amte, he worked to make 3000 leprosy patients in Rajasthan self-reliant through pension, medical treatment and self-employment.

He was awarded the Jamnalal Bajaj Award in 2019 for various works.

At the international level, he was a member of the United Nations institutions UNCCD, UNAIDS and the World Bank.

Foreign visits

Visited about 60 countries, which include - Indonesia, Netherlands, Germany, Britain, America, Canada, France, Sweden, Australia, Kenya, Zambia, Morocco, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Nepal, China, Pakistan, Burkina Faso etc.

Van Mahotsav organized in Gandhivan

Van Mahotsav was organized at Gandhivan, Environment Center of Gram Bharti Samiti on Sunday, 16.03.2023. Employees/officers of Bank of Baroda, Tripolia Bazaar, Jaipur and All India Jain Bankers Forum, Jaipur participated in the program. Ananya Corporation, Ahmedabad Institute had a significant contribution in organizing this program. 100 saplings were planted during the program. A target of planting 5000 trees has been set under this program. Plants are being prepared in Gandhivan Nursery for 30 consecutive years. Secretary of Gram Bharti Samiti, Kusum Lata Jain told that everyone was present in Gandhivan at 11 am and the program was started by garlanding the statue of Gandhiji. Various types of plants were brought for plantation like banyan, peepal, neem, hibiscus, jackfruit etc.



All the visitors planted trees and each one took a pledge to plant 11 saplings every year. Office Secretary of the organization Ramchandra Saini told that the result of the efforts of the former president of the organization, late Shri Bhavani Shankar Kusum ji, is that lakhs of trees have been planted in Gandhivan since 1991. Today Gandhivan has taken the form of a dense forest. In the beginning, there was not a single green tree here, there were only sand dunes. The organization has been awarded national/international awards for this unique work. These mainly include Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra Award, Ford India Company Award and Jamnalal Bajaj Award etc. Gandhivan Project Patron Shri Dharmendra Jain told that the following have participated in the Van Mahotsav - former councilor Lalit ji Pareek, subject advisor Dheeraj Sharma, Bank of Baroda, Tripolia Bazaar, Manager Shri Amit Hada's team and All India Jain Bankers Forum, Kamal Jain's team of Jaipur and local villagers etc.



Kusum Lata Jain speaker at JJK, Jaipur

On June 05, 2024, a dialogue program was organized by Bharat Seva Sansthan and Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur on the occasion of World Environment Day. In which Kusum Lata Jain participated as spokesperson and shared the success story of Gandhivani project with everyone.



Workshop on World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

A workshop organized at Gandhivan on June 17th, 2024 the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, focused on the theme "Her Land, Her Rights," emphasizing the importance of women's land rights for achieving gender equality and land degradation neutrality.



Key messages

- Desertification, land degradation and drought disproportionately impact women and girls, as they often do not have access to and control of land resources. They are most affected by reduced agricultural yields and increased water scarcity.
- In the vast majority of countries, women have unequal and limited access and control to land. In many regions, they remain subject to discriminatory laws and practices that impede their right to inherit, as well as their access to services and resources.
- When women are empowered, entire families and communities benefit. In addition to being on the frontlines of land degradation and climate change impacts, women can also be at the forefront of global efforts to restore land back to health and boost drought resilience. Gender-responsive land restoration is a pathway to reduce poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.
- Investing in women's equal access to land and associated assets is a direct investment in their future and the future of humanity. Securing women's land rights can help advance global gender equality and land restoration goals, and contribute to the achievement of broader Sustainable Development Goals.



Workshop on “STRENGTHENING THE CSO’S NETWORK IN ASIA AND WOMEN FARMER’S ROLE IN MITIGATING LAND DEGRADATION”



ORGANIZED BY: DEVELOPMENT WHEEL (DEW) IN A COLLABORATION WITH CHINA GREEN FOUNDATION AND GRAM BHARATI SAMITI (GBS), INDIA

SUPPORTED BY: UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)

Introduction

Land degradation is the gradual deterioration of the quality and productivity of the soil due to natural or human-induced factors such as deforestation, overgrazing, and excessive use of chemicals. It is a complex problem that requires urgent attention from all stakeholders. The consequences of not addressing this issue can be catastrophic for the region's food security, water resources, and biodiversity.

Land degradation is a serious issue affecting many countries in South Asia, including India, Bangladesh, and China. It is caused by a combination of factors. The effects of land degradation can have significant impacts on the environment, economy, and society. One of the major consequences of land degradation is reduced agricultural productivity. This can lead to food insecurity, which is already a pressing issue in many parts of South Asia. In addition, land degradation can also contribute to climate change by releasing carbon into the atmosphere and

reducing the ability of land to absorb carbon dioxide. India, Bangladesh, and China have all implemented various approaches to combat land degradation.

The government has launched several programs in India, such as the National Afforestation Program and the National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas. These programs focus on afforestation, soil conservation, and water management. However, implementation of these programs has been slow due to bureaucratic hurdles and lack of community participation.



Everyone during observing a minute's silence as a tribute to Mr. Bhawani Shankar Kusum

In Bangladesh, the government has implemented the Hillside Agriculture Development Project which focuses on soil and water conservation practices. Additionally, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a significant role in promoting sustainable agriculture and raising awareness about the importance of soil conservation. However, despite these efforts, land degradation remains a serious issue in Bangladesh.

In China, the government has implemented the Sloping Land Conversion Program which aims to convert steeply sloping farmland into forest or grassland. This program has been successful in reducing soil erosion and increasing vegetation cover. However, it has also led to the displacement of farmers and loss of agricultural land.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) efforts in China, India, and Bangladesh have made significant strides in minimizing land degradation. By implementing successful initiatives such as reforestation, soil conservation, and sustainable agriculture, these countries have shown that it is possible to preserve the environment while also improving human livelihoods.

However, there is still much work to be done. Climate change continues to pose a threat to our planet, and it is up to all of us to take action. By supporting the UNCCD and its efforts to combat land degradation, A collaborative approach can make a difference and create a better future for ourselves and generations to come.

Objectives of the workshop

- To share knowledge and experience on LDN in China, India, and Bangladesh perspective which will help small women farmers in agriculture to combat land degradation for improving farm productivity and enhancing productivity.
- Strengthening Asian CSO's network through collaborative activities

Speakers

- Tahmina Yeasmin, Additional Deputy Director, Department of Agricultural Extension, Govt. of people republic of Bangladesh.
- Kusum Lata Jain, Secretary, Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS), India.
- Mr. Cong, Wang, China Green Foundation, China.
- Shah Abdus Salam, Executive, Director, Development Wheel (DEW)
- Shanti Pada Saha, Manager Finance and Admin, Development Wheel (DEW)
- Subhatun Nur Prithy, Program officer , Developmet Wheel (DEW)



Mr. Shah Abdus Salam, Executive Director, DEW sharing a brief presentation about the Development Wheel

Day 1

Workshop Sessions:

Mr. Shah Abdus Salam formally started the workshop by offering thanks to CSO panel UNCCD for the approving the project. He also expressed gratitude to UNCCD for support in organizing such kind of workshop. He also thanked Gram Bharati Samiti, India and China Green Foundation for the collaboration and joining the workshop. He also thanked all the participants for attending. After that he gave an introduction of all the guests and speakers. He also shared a brief about the purpose of the workshop. Then he requested our chief guest Additional Deputy Director, Department of Agricultural Extension, Tahmina Yeasmin to formally inaugurate the workshop. Before going to the main event Mr. Shah invite everyone to observe a minute's silence as a tribute

to Mr. Bhawani Shankar Kusum founder Gram Bharati Samiti, India for his lifetime efforts towards humanity and environment.

Kusum Lata Jain, GBS, India Proposed action points to strengthen Asia's NGOs and women farmers' network, LDN. She highlighted the efforts of Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS), in reducing the desertification of the area. She added how successfully they able to decreased water scarcity, increased soil fertility of arable land, forests, and biodiversity in the project area. She also added how they enhanced livelihoods and developed pasture areas. She also shared a Case study of Gandhivan, an environment Prototype: 3 Decades of productive efforts by GBS. Through her presentation she described the main causes of land degradation, LDN and women in India, how



Kusum Lata Jain, GBS, India sharing her insights in the workshop

women are contributing in achieving LDN goals by practicing different technologies with the support of GBS. She visualized few pictures of dramatic achievements they gained in reducing soil desertification, their tree plantation program. She ended the speech by giving few recommendation to prevent the land degradation and desertification. She purposed that Exchange of knowledge and good practice is crucial to combat land issues from our countries such as India, China, and Bangladesh. Field and exposure visits will provide a broader sense to the farmers of the selected countries about the technologies that are using beyond the borders.

Mr. Cong, Wang, China Green Foundation introduced of Million Forest Projects to show how the project is contributing in changing the life and livelihood of the local women farmers in China. He also shared how the project is working for 14 years and expected to continue more as it is playing

an active role in produce greenery in desert. He added, that China Green Foundation's activities to support women farmers in preventing desertification and land degradation. He said the project is working for promoting the development of the local community through developing environmental education, by adopting different technologies like planting shifting-sand control forest, by developing eco-tourism in the desert and by creating online sales channels for local agricultural products. He also shared how technology can help in breaking down information barriers and can play a vital role in empowering women farmers. He expressed that the foundation is optimistic about taking a collaborative approach to combat the land degradation in the three partnering countries.



Mr. Cong Wang, China Green Foundation sharing his experiences from Million forest project

Day 2

FGD's in the field to find out LDN situation in Bangladesh

Focus Group Discussion

The next day a field trip including a focus group discussion was held at Village: Anondipur, Upazila: Sadar, and dist.: Mymensingh on 22nd September, 2023. Kusum Lata Jain, Secretary, Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS), Mr. Cong, Wang, China Green Foundation, China, Shah Abdus Salam, Executive, Director, Development Wheel (DEW), Subhatun Nur Prithy, Program officer , Development Wheel

(DEW) joined the field trip. Our participants' women farmers actively attend the field focus group discussion.

During the focus group discussion, participants shared their concerns about the effects of land degradation on their communities. Many expressed worry about the loss of soil fertility and the impact on agriculture, which is a major source of income for many families.



Focus Group Discussion



Group Photo after the FGD session

Overall, the focus group discussion emphasized the urgent need for action to address land degradation and protect our planet's natural resources.

Field Visit

After the focus group discussion, local women farmers took us to visit their land which helped us to observe firsthand the effects of land degradation on the environment. As it was rainy season no remarkable barren wastelands is not seen. However, the farmers were sharing their experience of reduction of crop production as a result of reduced soil fertility. During our visit, we noticed villagers indiscriminately cutting trees for selling which is a concerning issue. Many places were heavily polluted with plastic waste and other debris. This pollution not only affects the aquatic ecosystem but also poses a significant threat to human health. It was disheartening to see how human activities have caused irreparable damage to the soil and environment.



Field Trip at a glance

Outcomes of the Workshop

After a long workshop, focus group discussion, and field trip the knowledge and experience-sharing workshop identified a few major areas to collaborate both three organizations based on their long and significant experience in combating land degradation in India, China, and Bangladesh.

A collaborative approach can be an effective one to combat land degradation in India, China, and Bangladesh.

- A multi-faceted strategy that addresses the root causes of this problem in the areas is required.
- Working with local communities to promote sustainable land management practices that are tailored to the unique needs of each region is an urgent need.
- Capacity-building training programs to educate the local women farmers to adopt techniques to reduce land degradation are demanded by the women farmers.
- Agriculture education camp where exchange visits can be facilitated for the local farmers to have practical experience of the partnering countries also requested from the farmers end.
- A replicable training module for capacity building training that can be used for similar training in both three countries.
- Engaging young women farmers to lead the groups of beneficiary farmers is crucial for the sustainability of the work.
- Measures such as reforestation, soil conservation, and crop diversification is recommended.
- Awareness program to prevent deforestation, excessive irrigation, and plastic pollution is important
- Providing tools/equipment to the farmer group to encourage them to continue their environment-friendly crop production approach such as organic fertilizer and pesticide preparation can add value to the work.
- Engage with policymakers at the national and international levels to create policies that incentivize sustainable land management practices and discourage harmful activities such as deforestation and overgrazing in India, China, and Bangladesh. By working together, we will be able to create a regulatory framework that supports long-term environmental sustainability while also promoting economic growth and social development.

Action need to be taken: Develop a multi country development project for women farmers on LDN in South Asia.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have seen how land degradation is a significant problem in India, Bangladesh and China. The current approaches being used to combat this issue have their strengths and weaknesses, but a collaborative approach is necessary to achieve sustainable results.

Our proposed collaborative approach involves working together across borders and sectors, sharing knowledge and resources to restore degraded lands and improve the livelihoods of local communities. By taking action now, we can prevent further degradation and ensure a more sustainable future for generations to come.

Renovation of Women Training Centre shed in village Koliyon Ki Dhani

Implemented by Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS)

Supported by: The Runnebaum Foundation, Germany

GBS, the implementing organization

Gram Bharati Samiti is a voluntary organization formed by some Gandhians and social activists in 1984 with an objective of 'establishing society based on humanitarian, democratic values and ecologically balanced habitat. It has engaged in various rural development programs with specific focus on women's empowerment.

Entrepreneurship development

A project for empowering the rural women of backward castes by providing them with vocational training was implemented in village Koliyon ki dhani in district Jaipur with support from SEZ and HSHR, Germany. Following were the main activities:

- Providing One Hundred fifty women and girls entrepreneurs of backward castes with training in weaving durry
- Increasing income of the women artisans substantially



File photo: Dr. Ramji Singh Senior Gandhian and Ex. MP inaugurating the work shed



Moolchand, the master Trainer instructing the trainee girls

After damage

In many states including Rajasthan, damage has also been caused by thunderstorms and stormy rains.

Our Women (Cotton mat) training center at Koliyon ki Dhani in Block Jamwaramgarh, District Jaipur, Rajasthan also damaged (teenshed todally damage).



Restoration of woman training center

Women training center's teen shed restoration work complete with the support of The Runnebaum Foundation, Germany.

Following will be the main outcomes of the project:

- a. Women Training Centre divided in two parts with the support of middle wall construction. One for cotton mat weaving and other one for meeting or Masala unit (start in coming days)
- b. 150 rural women and young girls could get training in cotton mat.
- c. Women trainees became economically self-sustained and able to live a respectful and dignified life.
- d. Self-esteem and confidence raised among the poor women of backward classes and castes.
- e. The women who has always been neglected both in the family and society would empowered and their status upgraded.
- f. A sentiment of respect towards the women folk spread throughout the area.

Under construction work



After restoration





Cotton Mat training work restarted






Meeting with new trainees



Women's Training Center
Koliyon Ki Dhani

Restoration and Repairing work of shed

Supported by:
The Runnebaum Foundation, Germany



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Stepwell Cleaning and Renovation



Supported by
Gram Bharti Samiti

Implemented by
Nath Sanskriti Seva Sansthan



1. Chuli Bawadi Village Sarjoli

Before



After



2. Bagichi Bawadi Village Bhanpur Kalan



Before



After

Health camp for women and children organized in village of India

Venue: Village Handipura, Amber, Jaipur **Date:** 08 February, 2024

Supported by: The Runnebaum Foundation, Germany and NIA, Jaipur

Health camps were organized in village Handipura, district Jaipur on February 08, 2024 with kind support from National Ayurveda Institute, Jaipur.

Health care situation is poor in the village both in terms of facilities and services available and awareness among the people, particularly the women.

Logistics and welcome

Mr. Ramchanda Saini, Office Secretary of GBS informed the women of SHG, girl volunteers and other community leaders in Amber. Whereas Dr. Puneet Chandel encouraged the women to participate in the camps.

Doctors and nurses

The paediatrician, gynaecologist and eye specialist doctors having expertise in their areas and 6 female Doctors and nurses were requested to deliver their services in the camp.

Sarita Yogi introduced Doctors to the participants of the camp and Mr. Lalit Pareek, Community Leader on behalf of the village Handipura, Amber welcomed Doctors and Nurses.



Photos of Camp, Amer

Dr. Poonam asked the women in the beginning of the camp about the kinds of their health problems, length of the diseases, possible causes thereof etc. Then she spoke to them on general terms of health care, Breast cancer which was very encouraging for the women.



Total 150 in village Handipura, Amber women and girls children were benefitted from the camps. Community leaders and women members of the SHG of the village were very much happy for organizing the camp in the villages.



Kalu's Daughters Marriage

As you are aware that GBS is in the forefront in proving employment and other related need based services to the marginalized sections with the support of well-wishers and philanthropists for the last four decades under the dynamic leadership of Shri Bhawani Shanker (Late) and Kusum Lata Jain.

In this regard, Mr Kalu Ram Nayak has been associated with Gandhivan, a social forest protection and development program for the last 30 years. GBS extended its support to Ms Priyanka and Pooja in completing their 14 years of education with the kind support of many well-wishers. Recently GBS facilitated marriage of Kalu's two daughters at Gandhivan on 5 May 2023.



GBS is extremely grateful to all guests for the Blessings to new couples at Gandhivan, Jaipur, on the day of marriage. With the support and guidance of all friends, the marriage function was successfully completed. In spite of your hectic schedule you took time to bless the new couples which not only inspired entire GBS team but also the new couples to lead a blissful life. Dear friends, your cooperation in this mission is highly regarded and solicited.

GBS wishes to thank you and convey our gratitude for all your good support. We hope and wish that your blessings will continue forever on GBS to render community and social development activities for the benefit of adivasis and marginalized sections.