

Fourth Joint Review Mission of Mahila Samakhya

(12th to 21st March, 2013)

Draft
AIDE MEMOIRE

Contents

Section 1: Process

- I. ToR for JRM
- II. Mission composition and States visited
- III. Minutes of Briefing meeting
- IV. Minutes of Wrap up meeting

Section 2: National Report

Section 3: State Reports

- I. Assam
- II. Bihar
- III. Jharkhand
- IV. Karnataka
- V. Uttrakhand

SECTION-1: *Process*

I. ToR for JRM

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Mahila Samakhya Programme was initiated in 1989 to translate the goals of NPE and POA into a concrete programme for the education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly of women from socially and economically marginalised groups.

The critical focus in MS is recognizing the centrality of education in empowering women to achieve equality. To move towards this objective, MS has adopted an innovative approach that emphasises the process rather than mere mechanical fulfillment of targets. Education in MS is understood not merely as acquiring basic literacy skills but as a process of learning to question, critically analysing issues and problems and seeking solutions. It endeavours to create an environment for women to learn at their own pace, set their own priorities and seek knowledge and information to make informed choices. It seeks to bring about a change in women's perception about themselves and the perception of society in regard to women's "traditional roles". This essentially involves enabling women, especially from socially and economically disadvantaged and marginalised groups, to address and deal with problems of isolation and lack of self confidence, oppressive social customs, struggles for survival, all of which inhibit their learning. It is in this process that women become empowered.

Women's collectives under the MS scheme, called Mahila Sanghas, play an active role in working towards removal of barriers to the participation of girls and women in education at the community level and play an active role in school management/running of alternate schooling facilities where needed.

1.1.2 The purpose of the current phase (2013-2017) of *Mahila Samakhya* is to consolidate and expand the programme and to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in a

total of 175 Districts across 11 Indian states¹. The objectives of the programme are as follows:

- To create an environment in which education can serve the objectives of women's equality.
- To enhance the self-image and self-confidence of women and thereby enabling them to recognize their contribution to the economy as producers and workers, reinforcing their need for participating in educational programmes.
- To create an environment where women can seek knowledge and information and thereby empower them to play a positive role in their own development and development of society.
- To set in motion circumstances for larger participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education programmes.
- To provide women and adolescent girls with the necessary support structures and an informal learning environment to create opportunities for education.
- To enable Mahila Sanghas to actively assist and monitor educational activities in the villages – including elementary schools, and other facilities for continuing education.
- To establish a decentralized and participative mode of management, with the decision making powers devolved to the district level and to Mahila Sanghas which in turn will provide the necessary conditions for effective participation.

1.1.3 MS is a national programme funded through national resources with additional external funding by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The programme provides for monitoring mechanisms including provision for an annual Joint Review Mission (JRM) each year. The JRM will include visits to five of the eleven states participating in the programme. This will be the fourth MS' JRM and it is scheduled from **12th March to 21st March, 2013.**

1.2 Mission Objectives and guiding principles

1.2.1 The main objective of the JRM is to review progress in the implementation of the programme with respect to programme objectives and to discuss follow-up action.

1.2.2 The guiding principle is one of a Learning Mission: (a) learning of progress made against agreed indicators and processes, as well as (b) cross sharing of experiences

¹ The programme is currently operational in 121 districts and 563 blocks in ten states: Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh. The state of Rajasthan was added to the MS programme in the Year 2012. The MS State Society has been formed and the field operations are to start in the year 2013-14

that highlight strengths and weaknesses with a view to strengthen implementation capacities.

1.2.3 The Mission will:

- (i) Review progress in overall implementation, particularly expansion and consolidation of the programme's coverage, especially through federations' autonomy and activities;
- (ii) Look at processes (at village/sangha, block, district and State levels) being adopted to achieve the objectives of Mahila Samakhya;
- (iii) Examine issues related to State and District implementation capacity – training, staffing/vacancies, infrastructure & security, etc.;
- (iv) Review financial management;

1.2.4 During their visits to the five states, the Mission would enquire, in detail, into the following aspects:

- Assess progress against the objectives and key indicators included in the MS' Results Framework (Annexure 1). A report writing Framework has been prepared by GoI based on the Results Framework. A copy is enclosed at Annexure 2.
- Appropriateness and quality of programme interventions, particularly those for education, overall development in the agency of women and reduction of violence against women & girls, and nurturing & strengthening autonomous federations;
- Programme management: staffing, training, participatory functioning;
- Financial Management: accounts staffing, post review of sample procurements, audit arrangements etc.

1.2.5 The fourth JRM for MS will make recommendations centered around the following issues based on the States visited:

- Assessment of progress towards MS goals and objectives, in particular: consolidation of work through strengthening/building autonomy of old sanghas & federations, expansion of programme coverage, increased participation of women & girls in education, and empowerment of most-marginalised women as reflected in their accessing of rights & entitlements (especially fighting violence against women & social discrimination);

- Assessment of programme management and implementation arrangements (including financing & procurement);
- An assessment of State, district and sub-district management and monitoring systems in place;
- Specific blocks, districts and states and/or strategic (programmatic/financial) areas requiring focused attention in remaining Plan period;
- Any other areas requiring attention.

1.2.6 The Joint Review Mission for MS will provide brief State reports on each State visited and one overall (National) report. All of these will be compiled together as an Aide Memoire.

1.3 MISSION PLAN

1.3.1 The Mission would comprise of 10 members. Members would be chosen in such a way that expertise would be available for all the major functional areas with, as far as possible, particular specialization of Mission members matched to the priorities of the MS Programme. The Mission would visit five States viz.: Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Jharkhand, and Utrkhand. Each State team will comprise 2 members (one GoI nominee and one DFID nominee on the Mission).

1.3.2 The Mission composition would be as follows:

GOI: 5 members including Mission Leader and one financial management and procurement specialist

DFID: 5 members including financial management and procurement specialist

1.3.3 Each State Team would submit a draft State Report (compilation of key findings of the Mission) on the State visited by them and obtain feedback on the same during a State level wrap-up with the Secretary, Education Department before departure from the State.

1.3.4 GoI will coordinate JRM. The Mission members led by the Mission Leader will be responsible for compiling the overall (National) report of the Review Mission on MS.

1.4 TIME FRAME

The Joint Review will be conducted from **12th March to 21st March, 2013**. For details of schedule, refer Annexure 3.

1.5 Documents shared with Mission members

1. A brief report from each MS State programme outlining: (a) progress in last five years, (b) key achievements and challenges/issues faced in implementation, (c) action taken against previous JRMs' recommendations, and (d) data reflecting programme status as against Results Framework;
2. State and district-wise approved work plans and budgets 2011-12 & 2012-13;
3. Information on Release of funds to states – 2011-12 & 2012-13;

Annexure 1: State Report Framework

Annexure 2: Programme Schedule

Annexure 3: MS' Results Framework

Annexure 1

(Suggestive) State/ National Report Framework for MS JRM 2013 (Max. 15 pages)

I. An Overview of State MS Programme

1. Background of MS in the State and districts visited
2. Coverage (data disaggregated by social category)
3. Major highlights of the programme in the districts visited
 - a. Achievements
 - b. Key issues, concerns
4. Summary of recommendations
5. List of persons/ organizations interacted with by Mission members

II. Extent of realization of the Results (as per Revised Results Framework)

1. Expanding outreach of the programme to reach more women and girls of most marginalised groups
 - a. Pace of growth of the programme during XI FYP -year on year growth in terms of physical expansion (no. of villages, blocks, women members, Sanghas, federations, etc.)
 - b. Extent and depth of Outreach to women & girls from most marginalised sections - (coverage disaggregated by social category)
 - c. Factors and forces facilitating and hindering inclusion; and adequacy of processes adopted for inclusion

- d. Recommendations on improving the situation
- 2. Facilitate increased information and access of women & girls to their entitlements, through various methods of capacity building
 - a. Level of awareness of members of Sanghas and Federations on issues related to their rights and entitlements
 - b. Level of access of Sanghas and Federations of rights and entitlements
 - c. Appropriateness and quality of training modules and other capacity building efforts
 - d. Quality of trainings faculty
 - e. Other observations and recommendations
- 3. Facilitating increased participation of women and girls in formal and non formal education through sustained engagement with them (lifelong learning/continued education)
 - a. Awareness and ability of Sanghas and federations in generating demand for literacy and education
 - b. Inclusion of Sangha members and girl children from their families in formal and non-formal education efforts
 - c. Involvement of Sanghas and federations in monitoring of functioning of schools (participation in SMCs, MDM, RTE compliance, Training of SMC members, Community mobilization and awareness on RTE, monitoring of classroom processes to ensure social inclusion among others)
 - d. Quality and adequacy of MS efforts to facilitate participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education
 - e. Recommendations
- 4. Building leadership of poor, most marginalised women, and autonomy of women's collectives
 - a. Understanding of MS team on need and role of the collectives (Sanghas and federations)
 - b. Extent and quality of support provided to Sanghas and federations by State MS programme
 - c. Quality of process of formation of federations; quality of capacity building modules and efforts

- d. Quality of federations – autonomy, internal processes, extent of achievement of objectives, ability to represent members’ issues in various forums
 - e. Sustainability of federations - programme wise, financial and resource support to federations from the MS States
 - f. Key issues and recommendations
5. Women’s agency to challenge social inequality, and to break discriminatory social practices (at individual, family, community levels)
- a. Awareness of Sangha members on issues of social inequality, discrimination and violence
 - b. Ability of Sangha members to deal with discrimination and violence at various levels especially on issues such as child marriage, female feticide/ infanticide, violence against women etc.
 - c. Participation in Panchayati Raj/local self governance
 - d. Livelihood improvement and work on health and nutrition (esp. women’s health, indigenous medicinal systems etc.)
 - e. Key issues and recommendations

III. MS institutional processes

1. Nature and quality of orientation/ capacity building programmes; extent of external training resources tapped
2. No of functionaries provided above mentioned inputs
3. Functioning of State office – systems and processes
4. Recruitment system, adequacy of functionaries including for accounting; and budget ,
5. Annual Work Plan and Budget formulation and tracking systems
6. Capability and efficiency of functionaries; understanding of results framework
7. Retention efforts, challenges – esp. turnover issues/causes
8. Feedback, reflection and monitoring processes in MS
9. Quality of performance appraisal processes, internal assessments
10. Key issues and recommendations

IV. Convergence and Resource support

1. Convergence mechanisms and coordination with other education programmes especially Sarva Siksha Abhiyan regarding KGBV and NPEGEL, Sakshar Bharat, NIOS

2. Participation in/implementation of other Government programmes
3. Networking with NGOs, women's groups, research institutions
4. Role of NRG, and NPO in supporting State programme
5. Key issues and recommendations

V. Financial Management

1. Fund flow from GoI and status of releases to districts from State
2. Status of audits and compliance
3. Financial rules and delegation of powers; procurement systems
4. Accounting and record keeping
5. Key issues and recommendations

VI. Good Practices and Innovations

VII. Conclusion

1. Summary of key achievements during the 11th Plan
2. Summary of key Issues
3. Summary of recommendations of JRM for State MS Programme

MS' Joint Review Mission, 2013

Programme Schedule

Dates	Location	Time	Activity
March 12, 2013	New Delhi	10:00AM - 12:00Noon (including tea Break)	⇒ Welcome ⇒ Briefing on JRM, 2013 by National Project Office
		12:00Noon- 05:30 PM (iIncluding Lunch and Tea)	⇒ Review of draft Framework (State /National Report writing Framework) by Mission Members ⇒ Finalisation of Report Framework ⇒ Discussions by Mission members on approach, field visit plans, pairing of teams etc.
13th March , 2013	Departure- to States	Morning hours Post Lunch	⇒ State-level discussions and briefings at SPO ⇒ Departure for district for field visits
14th-15th March, 2013	Districts/ Field locations of MS	Day Long	⇒ Discussions with various stakeholders (members of federations, Sanghas, Kishori Sanghas, SMCs, Nari Adalats among others) including Sahyoginies and other functionaries ⇒ Depart for SPO/ State capital
16th-17th March, 2013	MS SPO/ State capital	-do-	⇒ State level discussions ⇒ Preparation of draft State report ⇒ Wrap-up at State-level with draft State Report/key findings of Mission to be presented to the State Education Secretary (Chairperson of EC of State MS) ⇒ A copy of draft State report to be sent by e-mail to NPO ⇒ Depart for Delhi
18th - 19th March, 2013	New Delhi	-do-	⇒ Modification of State reports by Mission members (based on NPO & SPO information/ comments) and finalisation of State reports ⇒ Writing of draft National Report by Mission members
20th March, 2013	New Delhi	03:30PM- 05:30PM	⇒ Pre-wrap up NPO on draft National Report
21th March, 2013	New Delhi	02.30:05:00 pm	⇒ Wrap-up – including presentation/ sharing of JRM findings by Mission leader

MS' Results Framework

Narrative					
Goal	1. Women and girls of most marginalised groups empowered through education and accessing their rights and opportunities. 2. Education is key to enabling women's full and equal participation as agents of change.				
Purpose	Output	Measurable Indicators	Means of objective verification	Assumptions	Outcomes
1. Expanding outreach of the programme to reach more women of most marginalised groups	MS coverage expanded to an additional 21,000 Sanghas.	1.1 Sangha membership (EBB & district-wise), disaggregated by social group (caste, community) 1.2 Decentralized and participatory mode of establishment of MS programme in new EBBs 1.3 MS Programme Management structures delivering timely & relevant support to staff 1.4 Existence of a systematic and effective plan of expansion	No. EBB covered, Sanghas formed, No. of women leaders in existing Sanghas trained in expansion No. of awareness raising events held, visits made by these leaders, no. of leaders involved in community led expansion, and No. of groups formed through this process % of Sahyoginies, JRPs, CRPs trained-orientations, skills, exposure in supporting community led expansion (nurturing and supporting federation leaders in community led expansion List of the identified distt., blocks, Panchayats, villagesto be covered No. of potential Sanghas to be formed No. of Sanghas formed through Sangha/ fed leaders , No. of Sanghas planned to be formed by MS support staff	a) MS processes receive support in a wider programmatic & political context. Policies & programmes facilitate the processes of gender equality. b) Effective & timely support to staff	a) Impact on sangha women leads to a wider impact on non-sangha women b) created a pool of women who are oriented for non-hierarchical management styles & respect for transparency and abilities to work with rural women of most marginalised groups
2. Facilitate increased information and access of women to their entitlements, through various methods of capacity building	a) Enhanced information on issues concerning women's lives b) Women's action on these issues, and creating supportive structures for the same c) Linkages with other programmes & departments to achieve this	2.1 Articulated demand increases for knowledge and services to resolve issues concerning women's lives 2.2 Women's mobility increased 2.3 Increased awareness amongst other programmes & departments at village/block/district level about MS programme and/or sangha/federation 2.4 MS support in creating, and sanghas'/federations' running, of alternative structures 2.5 MS' support in building capacities of sangha members, & influencing accountability in	No of instances when women demanded information/ knowledge (issues wise categorisation, no. of issues, how many women involved, social categorisation of women demand info/ knowledge) No. of women visiting banks, block, Panchayats etc. (social category wise), visiting urban markets, No of events for raising awareness - workshops/seminars/meetings in which representatives of Govt/ other agencies participated No. of events in which Sangha/ Fed. Leaders were invited as guests, resource persons, etc. No of events by the Sanghas/Federation such as rallies/big meetings to raise awareness Quantum of communication material	a) MS provides training (perspective/skill) support to women b) MS functionaries are trained to provide this training for sangha members c) Support from administrative & programmatic bodies at various levels	a) Marginalised women realise their rights & entitlements, leading to change in their status b) Enhanced transparency & accountability of State to deliver rights & entitlements to marginalised women c) Articulation of marginalised women's own notions of equity & equality

Narrative					
		<p>implementation of programmes through participation on formal/institutional Committees.</p> <p>2.6 Benefits accrued & realised by women individually & collectively (e.g. schemes).</p>	<p>(brochures/posters/annual reports/success stories etc) published and disseminated</p> <p>No. of events (trng., exposure, orientation, w/shops etc.) conducted on Sangha formation, and management</p> <p>No. of women (including leaders) both from Sangha and Feds attended such trainings, workshops, exposures (social categorywise)</p> <p>No. of Sanghas / fed leaders participating in committee, No. of meetings attended, No. of committees</p> <p>No. of women realised benefits List (type of benefits)</p>		
<p>3. Facilitating increased participation of women and girls in formal and non formal education through sustained engagement with them (life long learning/ continued education).</p>	<p>a) Mahila Sanghas enabled to and actively assisting & monitoring/interfacing with all educational programmes in the villages including primary schools, Alternative and Non-formal Education facilities,etc</p> <p>b) Greater participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal educational programmes</p> <p>c) MS' own interventions/ forums for education of girls & girls, group level processes specific to life stage / different age groups</p> <p>d) Development of critical learning processes and pedagogies</p>	<p>3.1 Promotion of real and thematic literacies amongst girls and women</p> <p>3.2 Increasing girls' enrolment through MS efforts and interventions</p> <p>3.3 Increasing demand and value for education, and harnessing resources</p> <p>3.4 MS-developed/led collaborative development of diverse thematic curriculum, pedagogies</p> <p>3.5 Impacting education institutions and influencing curriculum of the same (Sangha's participation in VECs, MSS' collaboration with State edu. Deptt/ SSA)</p> <p>3.6 Formal and non-formal learning centres run by MS, functioning to full capacity</p> <p>3.7 Increasing capacities/importance to document and disseminate learnings from women's own learning</p> <p>3.8 Converting women's life experience to influence teaching</p>	<p>No. of literacy camps, MSKs, Kishori manchas, Jagjagies, Balika Jagjagi, Jagjagies, KGBVs run</p> <p>No. of girls enrolled (social category wise)</p> <p>No. of instances of Sangha women demanding for education</p> <p>No/ list of thematic courses developed by MS No./ type of pedagogies used</p> <p>% of Sangha representing in VECs, MDM, and other such committees No. of Sangha women (by social category) representing in educational committees</p> <p>No. / type of learning centres run by MS No. of participants (trainees) by social category) No. of days/ Months these centres were run</p> <p>No. of events conducted to build skills on documentation No. of Fed leaders, Nari Adalat committee members participated (by social category) No. of case studies, news letters, etc. prepared Type of incidences documented (women's own learning)</p> <p>No. of workshops, meetings, discussions (including ToTs) held on developing learning material/ methodologies at different levels</p> <p>No. of events held using local/ popular media to enhance</p>	<p>a) MS constantly upgrading own skills to work with higher levels of capacity building of federations and Sanghas</p> <p>b) Education department works in tandem with MS and integrates MS experience into own programmes, planning</p>	<p>a) The creation of a learning society that values education</p> <p>b) MS (including Sanghas and federations) becoming resource for 'gender in education' at all mainstream levels</p> <p>c) MS work to influence/ collaborate with mainstream academic institutions</p>

Narrative					
		<p>learning materials/methodologies at different levels (including ToTs)</p> <p>3.9 Harnessing local/popular media, cultural forms to enhance learning</p>	<p>learning</p> <p>No. of people participated per event</p> <p>List of issues on which these events held</p>		
<p>4. Building leadership amongst/of poor , most marginalised women and autonomy of women's collectives</p>	<p>a) Democratic processes and consensual decision-making within Sangha/federation</p> <p>b) Active participation of Sangha members in developmental activities & decision making at village and other levels</p> <p>c) MS enabling marginalised women to participate in electoral processes and facilitating inclusion of gender issues in local developmental agendas of elected representatives, especially PRIs</p> <p>d) Development of leadership in different domains (and second line leadership) within Sanghas and federations</p> <p>e) Sanghas and federations expanding outreach to more women, newer areas, and to other programmes/spheres in various capacities</p> <p>f) Sanghas and federations developing autonomous identity</p> <p>g) Federations/Sanghas breaking ground in entering new areas of work/interventions</p>	<p>4.1 Distributive (i.e. opportunity to all members) leadership in the Sangha and federation</p> <p>4.2 Sanghas and federations' self-reliance in programme management and planning</p> <p>4.3 Signatories for Sangha and Federation accounts limited to membership of these groups only, i.e. no external stake in managing/accessing accounts</p> <p>4.4 Reduced dependence on MS for financial support</p> <p>4.5 Increase in women's election and participation in PRIs</p> <p>4.6 Issue-based mobilisation and organisation of women (modes and numbers) by Sanghas and federations on their own, including issue-based membership</p> <p>4.7 Sangha and federations efforts in physical expansion into new areas (even within older districts/blocks)</p> <p>4.8 Changing nature of role and responsibilities between Sangha, federation and MS</p> <p>4.9 Mechanisms (process/procedural) to ensure democratic & consensual decision making</p>	<p>No. of training on leadership, facilitation role to Sangha, Fed. Leaders</p> <p>No. of women in these trainings (by social category)</p> <p>No. of Sangha/ fed leaders on various committees</p> <p>No. of women who play the role of CRP(Community Resource Person)</p> <p>No. of women other than the designated leaders who take part in representing Sangha, sit on committees , any other public role etc</p> <p>No. of sanghas running without MS support-a/c keeping, conflict resolution, and decision making,</p> <p>No. of cluster/ fed. meetings without MS support-proper meetings</p> <p>No. of Sanghas and fed who have resolved issues without MS support</p> <p>% Sanghas managing accounts (own and Bank) without MS / external signatories</p> <p>% of Sangha with no or reduced financial support from MS</p> <p>No. of Federations running without or reduced financial support from MS</p> <p>No. of Nari Adalats running without or reduced financial support from MS</p> <p>No. of women (as compared to last yr.) participated in Gram Sabhas</p> <p>No. of Sangha women elected in PRI (no. increased from last election)</p> <p>No. of Campaigns, rallies, representations carried out by Sangha women without MS support</p> <p>Type of issues taken up</p> <p>No. of Sangha women participated in action</p> <p>No. of Non Sangha women participated in issues based action</p>	<p>a) MS identifies & works on different aspects of leadership both within MS and in Sanghas & federations</p> <p>b) There is programme support to counter backlash against women emerging as leaders/taking leadership positions</p> <p>c) Programme support for political participation and representation of women at different levels</p>	<p>Changing modes of expression and practice of leadership women/ women's collectives</p>

Narrative					
		4.10 Sanghas & federations work with regard to governance (influencing accountability within govt. programmes, mobilising resources, negotiation and conflict resolution)	<p>No. of New Sanghas formed by Sangha and Federations (in old areas/ new areas) No. of meetings held/ visits made to new areas by sangha/ Fed leaders to mobilise women for Sangha formation</p> <p>List of roles predominantly played by all three-Sangha, Feds., MS</p> <p>Training, orientation and sensitisation for Sanghas-no. of women, no. of Sanghas and No. of events No of Sangha that have changes top leadership in last one yers Same as above(Fed)</p> <p>Committees membership No. of meetings of EC, Gen body of feds</p>		
5. Facilitating women's agency to challenge social inequality/unequal social relations/ , and to break discriminatory social barriers/practices (at individual, family, community & State levels)	<p>a) All interventions or programme processes geared towards inclusion</p> <p>b) MS functionaries as well as Sangha members, breaking social barriers in personal lives/practice</p> <p>c) Increase in women reporting violence against women, social discrimination</p> <p>d) Women's increased control over resources & decision-making power</p>	<p>5.1 Mixed membership of Sanghas and of general body of federations</p> <p>5.2 Women' voices/own articulations of identity (as agents of change) coming to groups, deciding on their own. Eg: if husband dies the devi word is no more used. Where she has gone against what people dictating her to do</p> <p>5.3 Cases/incidents taken up/ intervened in – e.g. VAW, prevention of child marriage, enrolling child labour back into school, rescue & rehabilitation of trafficked and dedicated children (i.e. of Devadasi/Jogini committees), inter-community/ caste marriages</p> <p>5.4 Cases dealt with/resolved by Sangha/federation (Nari Adalat) - data segregated by type, social group, involvement of sangha/non-sangha woman, etc.</p> <p>5.5 Increasing incidence of women's assertion of rights to services</p>	<p>Share of SC, ST, RM women in Sanghas & federations</p> <p>% of women participating in decision making at household level % of women going out of home, and purpose for going out % of women participating in Gram Sabhas,</p> <p>No. of women contesting elections, and holding office</p> <p>% of Sangha who took action against discriminatory / anti social traditional practices</p> <p>% of Sangha who reported existence of child marriage in the village</p> <p>% of Sangha reported existence of dowry in the village</p> <p>% of Sangha reported existence of female foeticide in the village</p> <p>% of Sangha reported of domestic violence in the village</p> <p>No. of cases dealt by Nari Adalats (type of cases, socially disaggregated data of women received help, break up of members/ non memebrs</p> <p>No. of women registering of job cards No. of women availing Janani Suraksha services No.of women benefited under various social security schemes</p> <p>No. Sanghas received contracts-</p>	<p>a) Development of critical thinking</p> <p>b) Support from MS programme for development of women's agency to challenge social inequality</p>	<p>a) Mapping social change & diverse ways of women affecting the same</p> <p>b) More gender-just, responsive socio-political environment</p> <p>c) Conditions for full expression of women's citizenship (linking the personal and socio-political) through the prevalence of equality in all spheres</p>

Narrative					
		& entitlements (as individuals & collectives) 5.6 Sanghas and federations acting as pressure groups and the variety of strategies used (e.g. campaign, advocacy, networking, protest) 5.7 Increased asset-ownership & access to financial services - savings mechanisms, credit sources, insurance etc. (individually and as collective)	fisheries, nursery, road construction, running PDS shops etc. No. of Sanghas organised dharnas, rallies, campaign, etc. No. of women having own income generating activities, No. of women having bank accounts No. of women which received bank loans No. of women covered under life/ health insurance		

1.2: Composition of Mission and States visited

S. No	GoI nominee	DFID nominee	State Programme visited
1.	Dr. Kanchan Mathur, Professor, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur (Mob): +91-94140-72405 Email: kanchan@idsj.org	Mr. Sanjay Sharma DFID (State) Representative MP State Office. (Mob) : 9826069111 Sanjay-sharma@dfid.gov.uk	Assam Mahila Samakhya Guahati, Assam Mobile: +91-9435102637 Email: assammahila@yahoo.com
2.	Dr. Shobhita Rajgopal Associate Professor, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur Mobile:+91-9414051273 Email: shobhita@idsj.org	Ms. Karuna Onta Social Development Adviser DFID Nepal (Mob): k-onta@dfid.gov.uk	Bihar Mahila Samakhya Patna, Bihar Mobile: +91-8987184893 Email: msbihar@hotmail.com
3.	Ms. Kameshwari Jhandhyala Consultant, Hyderabad Email:kameshwari@gmail.com Mobile: +91-9441597783	Mr. Sanjay Valsangkar Programme Manager, National Programmes (Mob) : 9899968845 s-valsangkar@dfid.gov.uk	Samakhya Karnataka Bangalore, Karnataka Mobile: +91-9483534845 Email: mstkarnataka@gmail.com
5.	Prof. Rakesh Chandra Lucknow University, Lucknow Mobile: +91-9839226303 Email:rakeshphilosophy@yahoo.com	Ms. Mamta Kohli Social Development Adviser, DFID India (Mob) :9810502834 m-kohli@dfid.gov.uk	Jharkhand Mahila Samakhya Ranchi, Jharkhand Mobile: +91-9955361774 Email: jmahila.samakhya@gmail.com
6.	Mr. Bharat Bhushan Consultant, Hyderabad Mobile: +91-9000677292 Email: mdbhushan@gmail.com	Ms. Alka Aneja Senior Procurement Specialist, DFID India (Mob) : 9717259766 a-aneja@dfid.gov.uk	Uttrakhand Mahila Samakhya Dehradun, Uttrakhand Mobile: +91-9412051745 Email: mahilasamakhya_ua@rediffmail.com

III. Minutes of Briefing

Date: March 21, 2012; 10 am to 4 pm

Venue: Fazal Hall, SCOPE Convention Centre, SCOPE Complex, New Delhi

Participants: Ms Vrinda Swarup, AS (SE), Dr Shobhita Rajagopal, Dr. Meenakshi Jolly, NPD, MS, Ms. Jyoti Pahwa, (US), Mr. Mahesh (SO), MS, Ms. Jagriti, Mr. V. Ganesh and Ms. Santosh Sharma (NPO Consultants), and 2 DFID officials (2)

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Vrinda Sarup, AS (SE) and Dr. Shobhita Rajgopal (in place of Mission leader)

The NPD (MS) welcomed the participants and gave a brief presentation on the MS programme as well as its progress/action taken since the last JRM, 2011.

AS (SE) started by welcoming the members and mentioned that it has now become a two year feature where independent views are sought by MS, from experts in gender and women empowerment. Referring to the presentation made by the NPD she said that it was difficult to capture the true essence of a MS kind of programme in a presentation. She said that at best the presentation can only provide an overview of the programme, but the real spirit of MS and how it has worked on the ground could only be understood through direct interaction with the core constituency of the programme, i.e., the Sangha women. It is the perception of the women that matters the most.

She added that the purpose of the Review Missions was to make qualitative difference at the field level and they were free to give constructive feedback and suggest any kind of improvements required.

She said that measuring impact in MS kind of programme was a big challenge and this had been a long debate within MS as what to capture and how to capture. There were no given pointers for empowerment that one could tick mark. Empowerment was an ongoing process which was relative and contextual. Hence paying attention to processes involved in MS' working was very important. Similarly, the issue of expansion of MS coverage had to be seen from the perception of it being process driven. Perhaps the Review Mission needed to look at this aspect critically.

Issues of human resources development such as recruitment, training, appraisals, building skills, knowledge and perspective needed critical examination. The Mission was requested to look at them closely. Monitoring was another area that the AS wanted the Mission to observe closely and provide input on.

There were a number of programs implemented by MS in collaboration with SSA like KGBV, NPGEL etc. The merger of MS with SSA was on the anvil as per recommendations of the B.K. Chaturvedi committee, yet the autonomy and identity of MS Societies would be protected.

The AS then invited questions and clarifications from Mission members.

Ms. Mamta Kohli of DFID wanted to know whether the GoI has issued any directions to the Societies regarding raising funds from other funding agencies. AS clarified that Societies were free to raise funds from external funding agencies however it was for the EC to take a decision in this regard. The GoI's only concern would be to ensure that the basic purpose of the funding was in alignment with the overall mandate of MS. Similarly, AS clarified that ECs were empowered to take a call on the selection of partners for convergence and collaboration. Convergence should not lead to MS being reduced to being a delivery agent. The partnership should add value to MS work, and *vice-versa*.

Mr. Sanjay Velsangkar wanted to understand the objective of the Baseline Survey. AS informed that the Baseline Survey was one of the activities committed under the MoU signed with DFID. The purpose was done to capture the current status of the programme on various parameters (identified in Results

Framework) which will help in measuring the impact of MS interventions at the end of the financial assistance i.e. March, 2014.

Mr. Bharath Bhushan wanted to know whether the NPO/ MS Societies would be in position to share with the Review Mission, data on the MS Societies' contribution to formal and informal education. Ms. Santosh clarified that the detailed data on MS' work both in formal and informal education was captured through half yearly progress report and the same would be shared with the Mission members.

Dr. Shobhita enquired about the status of the National Resource Centre. AS informed that the NPO was rethinking on the idea of setting up a National Resource Centre as there was already large amount of information available in the public domain. The members agreed with her views however reiterated the need to explore ways for processing grass-root learning and experiences and bringing to public domain. They were of the view that the rich experiences of MS were not adequately documented and placed for informing policy changes. The AS (SE) encouraged the Mission members to suggest effective ways to capture the grass-roots experiences of MS and influencing policy discussions.

As there were no further clarifications/ suggestions from the Mission members the AS (SE) invited Dr. Shobhita to lead the discussions on the next agenda items and took leave.

Highlights of the discussions on report writing format

Referring to the section on 'MS' contribution in formal/non-formal education' to be included in the report Dr. Chandra wanted to know as to what were the parameters against which quality of education was to be assessed. He enquired whether the MSKs run by MS were good enough to be compared with private schools.

Mr. Bhushan wanted to know whether any comparative study had been undertaken to understand the pattern of girl child participation in MS and non MS areas. The NPD responded saying that such comparisons were difficult to undertake through Joint Review Missions which were primarily for quick overall review of the programme however the proposed End-line survey would be looking for comparative studies both in MS and non-MS areas.

Ms. Santosh Sharma requested the members to list out 5 to 6 key questions under each of the key five areas on which MS review would be conducted. She said that Ms. Kameshwari wanted all the participants to do this exercise so that the Mission members developed a uniform understanding of what needed to be explored while interacting with different stakeholders in the States. After a detailed discussion the Mission listed out the following questions:

Key questions/ areas to be asked/ explored by Mission members as part of their visit to states:

1. Key policy impact at all levels—Panchayat, State, National
2. Examples of MS' visibility/ or the lack of it
3. Relationship with other major programmes such as SSA (and other educational programmes), NRHM, PDS, MDM, NRLM/SGSY
4. Sustainability and autonomy of collectives (Federations); exit policy/plans?
5. Composition of Sangha-s (members, leadership); outreach of MS out to most marginalised women/ girls; what is MS' understanding of "most marginalized"?
6. Role of Sahyogini (as perceived by herself, other programme functionaries and Sangha-s/federations)
7. Response of men/ larger community to MS programme
8. Relationship with and understanding of MS of women' movement

Finally, the logistics of the entire schedule were shared by the NPO consultants. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks.

IV. Minutes of Wrap-up

- Date: March 21, 2012; 10 am to 4 pm
- Venue: Mirza Ghalib Hall, SCOPE Convention Centre, SCOPE Complex, New Delhi
- Participants: Mission members, Secretary, (SE&L), NPD (MS), SPDs and APDs of MS States, DPCs of districts reviewed, Local NRG members, MS-NPO officials including Consultants, and DFID officials.

Dr. Meenakshi Jolly welcomed the Secretary (Se&L) and all the other participants. She then introduced all the Mission members, the Chairperson, MS NRG and Chairpersons of ECs of MSS, Gujarat and Karnataka.

The NPD (MS) invited the Mission leader to share the key findings of the Joint Review Mission and its recommendations thereon.

Ms. Jandhyala, the Chairperson, MS NRG, gave an overview of the design of the Review Mission, the states visited. She said that the Mission members interacted with various stakeholders including women of sanghas/ federations, adolescent girls and boys, SSA officials, Chairpersons of ECs of MS Societies, and MS functionaries working at different levels. The Mission spent five full days each in each of the States selected for review. The Mission visited almost all the key interventions of MS such as MSKs, Jagjagies, Nari Adalats, Sanjivini Kendras, and Information Centres.

The key highlights of the presentation made by Mission leader are as follows:

Achievements:

1. 12.8 lakh women are associated with MS on voluntary basis. This is no mean achievement especially in the backdrop of other govt. programmes which offer immediate tangible benefits (example of Micro-Credit and Livelihoods programmes) to women.
2. Convergence with various govt. programmes is on increase. Federations are being recognised as potential partners for monitoring and management of RSTCs, KGBVs, MDM etc.
3. Outreach of MS has broadened with inclusion of adolescent girls and boys as its key target group
4. Greater awareness of rights and entitlements among women and adolescent girls is witnessed.
5. The MS empowerment agenda broadly conforms to the empowerment indicators identified in the Beijing Conference.
6. Sangha role in addressing and resolving issues concerning women is clearly evident at the grassroots level.
7. More and more women are becoming aware of their entitlement of 50% reservation in Panchayats. This has resulted in increased participation of women in electoral processes.

Concerns

1. Expansion should be done with caution. Pace of expansion needs to be examined keeping in mind the existing capacities of collectives and other context specific issues.
2. Reaching out to marginalised communities is a major concern in MS. MS' understanding of various dimensions of marginalisation such as gender, caste, religion and culture is a matter of concern. Hence there is a need to refine the understanding of the staff on marginalisation and its attributes.
3. Profile of Sangha leadership is not very encouraging. The existing members and leaders of collectives have aged. Young women need to be encouraged to join Sanghas.

4. Question of exit strategy and autonomy of Federations needs to be looked into.
5. NPO and MS State offices need to look at the various convergence strategies adopted by the States.
6. Training methodology needs to be re-examined as the current training modules are out-dated and require changes now.
7. No consistent MIS of the program exists.
8. Research and documentation are insufficient
9. Salaries are low and there are no service benefits. The Societies are unable to attract good staff.

Recommendations

1. Refining MS' understand of 'marginalisation' and factors contributing to exclusion of certain communities
2. Syatematic training at Sangha and federation levels required
3. Legal literacy initiative to be strengthened
4. NPO and NRG to play more active role in facilitating convergence between MS programmes and SSA.
5. With the unfolding of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) the MSKs needs to be re-imagined, perhaps to provide vocational training. Merger with existing programme can also be explored.

The Mission leader then invited other Mission members to share state specific observations. The key observations shared by Mission members are as follows:

Dr. Shobita Rajagopal informed that she visited Kaimur and Rohtas districts of Bihar. She found the Sangha women and Sahyoginies very enthusiastic and positive about MS programme and the changes it has brought to their lives. She spoke about the 'Women Hand Pump Mechanic Model' promoted by BMSS and suggested that other MS States should replicate the same. Other key initiatives which she found being implemented at the large scale were KGBV, MDM and Kishori Sanghas. While the convergence between MS and SSA are have resulted in the supervision of the Mid Day Meal Scheme and a large number of KGBVs, the unequal relationship between MS and SSA is evident in the way the MS was being treated by SSA. The freedom MS used to have in selection of girls, teachers and in designing modules and other teaching materials was getting diluted. The convergence has to be built on equal footing. She urged the NPO to play an active role in facilitating and streamlining convergence.

Ms. Kanchan Mathur informed that she, alongwith Mr. Sanjay Sharma from DFID, visited Darang and Morigaon districts of Assam. She said that data exhibitions organised by Federations and Sanghas were one of the unique initiatives which was not only built on notions of rights and entitlements of citizens but also informed communities of the discrepancies in reported and actual results. She said these initiatives, if scaled up would ensure active participation by communities on governance of various flagship programmes and social security schemes run by govt. Referring to AMSS' incessant fights against child / unmatched marriages, trafficking of adolescent girls, and witch hunting she said that awareness on these issues was quite evident both among Sangha members and Kishori Manch members. However the grass-roots action against these social evils had not resulted into impacting policy at the State level.

Sharing her concern, she said that though AMSS is expanding to new areas as per targets, the consolidation the groups in older areas is also crucial especially in view of the limited capacities of federations. She said that MS should not follow the guidelines on expansion and withdrawal (issued in the 11th plan) on a verbatim manner. Following guidelines without thinking have negatively impacted the quality of the programme.

Prof. Rakesh Chandra who alongwith Ms. Mamta Kohli visited Jharkahnd MS programme said that the JMSS's work with adolescent girls and boys was impressive. The current situation of rampant spread of left wing extremism also makes it important to work with young people to attract them into the mainstream. He appreciated JMSS' work against human trafficking. The literacy centres run for adult women were a good initiative. He however said that teaching women how to sign without providing them functional literacy could be dangerous. Commenting on the total sanitation programme, Prof. Chndra said that the entire initiative seemed to be non-viable. Similarly innovations in agriculture did not seem to be forthcoming.

Talking about JMSS' engagement with other movements he said that the understanding of left wing extremism and its (JMSS') position on the same needs to be articulated. On MSK, he said that while the learners enrolled in MSKs really belonged to the most vulnerable communities the chances of them continuing their studies after having passed out of MSK were bleak. The reason cited by Prof. Chandra was the poor quality of teaching, inadequate learning materials and untrained teachers. He said that the learners coming out of MSKs hardly ever got admission in KGBVs due to their poor levels of learning achievements. He said that the course material used in these MSKs were sub-standard and outdated. Talking about the gender perspective in MS, including in training programmes conducted for Sangha members and functionaries, he said that an in-depth gender perspective seemed to be lacking across MS functionaries. Rather than gender being the underlying theme across, it was treated as 'one of the components'. Similarly, livelihoods agenda had been reduced to some vocational training without any linkages with markets. He recommended that these were key areas for GoI to revisit.

Ms. Kohli of DFID added that the MSKs should be structured level wise for learners. She said that a Sahayogini covered a large area (10 villages) and due to the unfriendly terrain at some districts found it tough to go to all the places. Thus, she could not spend quality time with Sangha-s and federations. She further suggested that the State Resource Centres should be developed by having a clear operational framework. She appreciated efforts by JMSS on violence against women and she said that a strong referral system for violence survivors should be explored within the framework of MSKs. She proposed that the End line assessment should be carried out in parts looking at various components of MS' work to evaluate the overall impact rather than it bring a one-time exercise.

Mr. Bharat Bhushan and Ms. Alka Aneja visited Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. They observed that the MS programme in Utrkhand had strong affiliation with local groups on the ground. Special efforts to engage Muslims and Dalit communities have been initiated during last couple of years especially after receiving feedback from JRM, 2011. The MS Utrkhand was found to be strong in convergence with other movements and like-minded organisations. The Mission said that the MS Utrkhand stands out as a strong programme with an unflinching gender centric approach in its work with women and adolescent girls. However, the Mission observed that the much of it perhaps was being driven from the top. Though a good number of federations were managing their day-to-day affairs on their own, their understanding on autonomy and democracy needed more refinement. The work with violence affected women and survivors was quite visible, however the rehabilitation of the survivors was an issue that remained unaddressed. Ms. Aneja particularly talked about MS' work with Panchayat Raj Institutions. She said a strong partnership between UTMSS and Panchayats for training elected representatives of PRIs was quite visible. Also, she pointed out that a good number of women were enrolled for NIOS certification. She said that this particular initiative had helped a large number of women in getting into service sector.

Ms.Kameshwari alongwith Mr. Sanjay Sharma visited two districts namely Mysore and Chikkbalapur in Karnataka. She said that Mysore was one of the oldest districts and field operations in Chikkbalapur were started in last 3-4 years. She highlighted MSKn's work with men and boys. She said that the women's movement all over world had realized the need to engage with men and boys as it was needed to change

their attitudes and mind-sets towards women and girls. She said that men and boys too were victims of patriarchy. On the relationship of MS with other movements she said that MSKn needed to do much more on this front. She said that neither has the programme been able to create much space for itself as a strong grassroots movement of rural poor women, nor has it been able to influence the policy making. She recommended that strategic partnerships needed to be explored with like-minded organizations. Talking about the potential of IT enabled village information centres initiated by MSKn she said that the same could be replicated in other MS States. She shared the about the Community Radio programme being managed by federations in Chikkbalapur district. She said that the community radio programme had a huge potential and should be taken up for scaling up. Though the KGBVs were being run and monitored by MSKn for a long period the strengthening of gender perspectives of both teachers and students was not taken up in an organized way.

The Secretary, Education, GoG talked about the potential of convergence of MS with various govt. schemes. She said that the model of 10 villages/Sahyogini might not be so relevant in current scenario. The scaling up of any tested and successful model such as MS should be done through convergence. She gave examples of Nari Adalats which have been formed in non- MS areas with the support of SWC. Similarly, she said that the ICDS centres should be converged with MS to tap the potential of already existing structures at the village level.

Annie Namala reiterated the criticality of bringing back MS focus on the most marginalized. She said one of the missing communities in MS sanghas were the Muslim women. MS needed to focus on them and it would not happen unless MS' own understanding of marginalisation increased. She said that the special focus on SC/ ST has made them come up. Similar focus needed to be provided to the Muslim community.

Ms. Malini Ghose said that MS' learning in the field of girls' education should be systematically mainstreamed into SSA. She said that despite being part of the school education and literacy department the MS' learning-s have not been integrated into other programmes working on the same agenda. She further said that there were a lot of areas in which Sanghas could have played an active role in monitoring the quality of education. She demanded that the Grievance committees provisioned under RTE should have representation from MS Sangha women. She said MS has to re-imagine the role of Sanghas and federations in the implementation of RTE.

Vandana Mahajan added that the service conditions of ground level functionaries of MS such as Sahyoginies, Junior/ Cluster Resource persons, considered as the backbone of Mahila Samakhya, were appalling. The pay scales were low with no social security provisions. She said that the low motivation among these functionaries and high attrition are due to such service conditions. She questioned whether empowerment was possible through MS with its functionaries working under such vulnerable conditions.

Nishi Mehrotra pointed out that the operational and functional autonomy were the Unique Selling Propositions of the program and both had to be retained. She said that women's education was an unfinished agenda and MS had to gear up for it. Referring to the comments by Ms. Malini she said that negotiation for spaces with respect to SSA and other departments had to be skillfully undertaken.

The NPD invited the Secretary (SE&L) to give his concluding remarks. The Secretary started by saying that he was delighted to be present and talked about how the entire discussion was learning for him too. He committed to prepare a road map for the way forward and said it would be done through a step by step process. He invited the NRG and the Mission members to suggest a process for preparing the roadmap. He said that the implementation of RTE was uneven and SMC was the main fulcrum for ensuring RTE. He emphasized that SMC's will be empowered, and MS' role in empowering SMCs was unquestionable. He asked the SPDs present to prepare Sanghas in order to question the authorities concerned at the village level.

The Secretary was keen to know why there were different levels of energy in two districts of Assam despite both being part of Assam Mahila Samakhya Society. He posed a query as to what makes two communities under the same programme differ from each other in terms of capabilities and appreciation for change. While the SPD AMSS attributed the low energy level among Sangha women to the lack of leadership at the DIU, Ms. Runu Chakraborty who had been in close touch with the AMSS attributed the same to the role of State Project Office. She said that Darang district had provided with handholding support from the SRP while such support was missing for the Morigaon district team.

The Mission Leader thanked all the Mission members and NPO team for their cooperation and support.

The wrap-up meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks by the NPD, MS.

SECTION 2: NATIONAL REPORT

Index

<i>Sl.No.</i>	<i>Contents</i>	<i>Page Nos.</i>
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Terms of Reference	2
III.	Overview	3
	(i) Achievements	3
	(ii) Issues and challenges	4
IV.	Emerging good practices/innovations	6
V.	Recommendations	9
	(i) Roadmap to address issues/challenges of XIIth Plan	14
VI.	Extent of realization of results	15
	(i) Pace of growth	15
	(ii) Outreach to women and girls of most Marginalized groups	17
	(iii) Facilitate increased information and access of women and girls to their entitlements	19
	(iv) Facilitating increased participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education	21
	(v) Building leadership of poor marginalized women and autonomy of women's collectives	26
	(vi) Women's agency to challenge social inequality and to break discriminatory social practices	27
	(vii) Convergence and Resource Support	29
VII.	Institutional processes	31
VIII.	Financial Management	34
	(i) Budgets, releases, utilization	35
	(ii) Audit and compliances	35
	(iii) Accounting and Book keeping	35
	Annexure	

I. INTRODUCTION

The 4th Joint Review Mission (JRM) for Mahila Samakhya undertook a review of the implementation of the Mahila Samakhya programme over the XIth Plan period. The JRM team consisting of nominees of GOI, Ms. Kameshwari Jandhyala, Team leader, Dr. Rakesh Chandra, Dr. Shobitha Rajagopal, Dr. Kanchan Mathur, Mr. Bharat Bhushan and nominees of DFID, Ms. Mamta Kohli, Mr. Sanjay Valsangar, Ms. Karuna, Ms. Alka and Mr. Sanjay visited the states of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Karnataka. During the State visits the JRM interacted with sangha and federation members, kishoris, programme personnel at state and district levels, MS partners, district and state education department officials.

The JRM places on record its deep appreciation of the documentation, logistic support and open and frank discussions held during the review in all the states visited. In particular the JRM was enthused and impressed with the energy and commitment of the programme personnel and the sangha women in particular. The JRM would also like to thank the National Project Director and the National Project team for the cheerful and unstinting support extended to the JRM.

II. TORS OF THE 4TH JRM

- 1) The broad TORS of the 4th JRM were as follows (See annexure I for detailed TORs):
 - ⇒ Review progress in overall implementation, particularly expansion and consolidation of the programme's coverage, especially through federations' autonomy and activities;
 - ⇒ Examine processes (at village/ sangha, block, district and State levels) being adopted to achieve the objectives of Mahila Samakhya; Appropriateness and quality of programme interventions, particularly those for education, overall development in the agency of women and reduction of violence against women & girls, and nurturing & strengthening of sanghas, federations and autonomous federations;

- ⇒ Assess State, district and sub-district management and monitoring systems in place;
- ⇒ Examine issues related to State and District implementation capacity – training, staffing/vacancies, infrastructure & security, etc.;
- ⇒ Review financial management
- ⇒ Any other areas requiring attention.

III. OVERVIEW

(i) Achievements

Beijing conference (1995) indicators of women empowerment

Qualitative

- Increase in self esteem, individual and collective confidence.
- Increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness on health, nutrition, reproductive rights, law and literacy.
- Increase and decrease in personal leisure time for child care.
- Increase or decrease of work loads in new programmes.
- Change in roles and responsibilities in family and community.
- Visible increase or decrease in violence on women and girls.
- Responses to changes in social customs like child marriage, dowry, discrimination against widows.
- Increase in bargaining and negotiating power at home, in community and the collective increase in access to and ability to gather information.
- Formation of women collectives.
- Visible change in women's participation level, attending meetings, participation and demanding participation.
- Positive changes in social attitudes.. Awareness and recognition of women's economic contribution within and outside the household.
- Women's decision making over her work and income.

Quantitative

- Demographic trends: MMR; Fertility rate; Sex ratio; Life expectancy at birth; Average age of marriage
- Number of women participating in different development programmes.
- Create access and control over community resources, government schemes - crèches, credit cooperative, non formal education.
- Visible change in physical health status and nutritiona
- Demographic trends: MMR; Fertility rate; Sex ratio; Life expectancy at birth; Average age of marriage
- Number of women participating in different development programmes.
- Create access and control over community resources, government schemes - crèches, credit cooperative, non formal education.
- Change in literacy and enrolment levels

The achievements of the Mahila Samakhya programme can be well positioned in terms of the qualitative indicators of empowerment of women suggested at the Beijing conference in 1995. As prioritised by the Conference the programme can demonstrate increase in self-esteem of individuals and confidence of collectives in the form of sanghas and federations, increase in articulation of knowledge, health, nutrition, reproductive rights, law and literacy among poor rural women. Programme strategies and interventions have retained their focus on enabling this process. The sustained struggle of the sanghas against violence and discrimination against women is showing some results in terms of reported decrease in VAW in most areas. The change of attitude of society in the project villages is now reflected in more enrolment of girls, opening of dialogues on practices like witch hunting, addressing issues of trafficking and engaging with boys and men in the community and homes, homes through forums/ manchs, engagement with PRIs and others.

The programme can congratulate itself in terms of its contribution to enabling women's agency both within the programme and at the sangha level, expanding women's choices, enhancing capabilities and promoting freedoms. There are systematic thematic programmes which are addressing issues and hurdles which hinder women's freedom, from demands for roads and drinking water to voices against purdah, segregation, child marriage and the devadasi system. Sangha members report that their bargaining power at home and in public forums has been enhanced. However, individual women have complex journeys of struggling with violence, alcoholism, restrictions on mobility and lack of choices which they are negotiating self reflectively.

Music, dance, theatre and painting and other creative expressions have been part of the MS programme at an essential level. They bring their own stories and relieve their pain and anxiety through performances, they question histories, legal provisions, religion, state policies and individual actions of injustice and oppression. MS has created a rich body of communication material through reflection – posters, songs, slogans, broadsheets, street theatre, scroll painting, wall writing and videos using local forms and non-local inputs. These have had huge impact in social mobilisation, pressure building and change.

During the field visits the JRM was informed of changes and improvements in project areas on a variety of fronts- enhanced mobility and voice for women, decrease in MMRs, increase in institutional deliveries, improvements in sex ratios, improvements in nutritional status, advancing of age of marriage, more women in panchayats, greater control over community resources, and enhanced literacy levels. All these successes and emerging outcomes, however, are recorded episodically. ***The results framework is yet to be used strategically to build sound evidence of the exciting transformations taking place in the project villages. A sound MIS and greater research needs to be promoted to ensure that the valuable insights on women's empowerment, learning and agency and the social implications of this process are not lost and inform the discourses on women's empowerment and development in general.***

(ii) Issues/ Challenges

The successful mobilization, demonstrated agency of poor women, and the overall energy observed in the field areas, notwithstanding, there are many issues and challenges that confront the programme. Several of these are concerns that have been pointed by earlier reviews as well:

Expansion

While expansion is desirable to create a critical mass of empowered women, the JRM cautions against a rapid expansion of the MS programme. Currently the programme coverage is fairly large in all the states the JRM visited and requires time for consolidation. Further, the current problems of large numbers of staff vacancies and capabilities that need to be further strengthened may lead to a dilution of field processes with rapid expansion. In the current project areas ensuring reach to the most marginalized is a challenge both for the sanghas and the programme.

Sanghas and federations

The MS programme as a whole needs to revisit its core strategy of collectivization into sanghas and federations. What does autonomy for the federations mean and its

implications for programme implementation are thorny questions that need to be addressed across the programme.

At the sangha and federation level, issues of widening the pool of leadership and the relationship between collectives being facilitated by MS and the multiple women's committees/ structures that have come up at the village level needs serious attention and understanding.

Convergence: a double edged sword

While convergence is often suggested as a way of not only accessing resources but also as a means of influencing, there is every danger of the programme being sucked into service delivery as was seen in some areas. While sangha women need and are accessing their entitlements and perhaps need to do this in a more systematic manner, MS as a programme needs to be careful in deciding which programmes to partner with so that its learning and empowerment strategies are not compromised

Training, Pedagogy, materials

The key strength of the MS approach has been its training and pedagogy, with its focus on reflection, analysis and participation. Though this area was not probed in great depth given the short duration of the review, the JRM felt that that there was a certain routine manner in which some of the training was being transacted with a dilution of the reflective, learning process and thereby loss of a critical edge. This seems to be an issue both at the field level as well as in the training of staff. The whole area of training, pedagogy, materials need to be revisited and revised.

Long term Partnerships for research, documentation

Greater research and study of the rich MS experience on empowerment and women's learning is needed to inform the discourse on women's empowerment,

learning and development. This is a major lacuna and something the programme cannot do on its own. Currently the programme lacks partnerships with individuals/ organisations who could effectively support the programme in this area. This needs to be forged actively both at the state and national level

Organisational issues

There are several organizational issues such as enhancement of salaries, provision of service benefits that need urgent attention as this is impacting the ability of the programme to attract and retain staff.

IV. EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES AND INNOVATIONS

ASSAM

Stopping child marriages

Early marriage and mismatched marriages are common in a few villages of Darrang district, Assam that has a high concentration of Muslim population. A young girl of 16 years was forced to marry a 60 year old man of the same community. Sangha women, who received training on the adverse impact of child marriage on the sexual and reproductive health of young girls, pledged not to marry their daughters at a young age. They gave a letter to the *Kazi* of the community requesting him to not solemnize early marriages and informed the Commissioner and the District Collector (DC) of the action taken by them. The DC issued an Order that any *Kazi* found solemnizing early marriages would be severely punished.

Arresting child trafficking

The Assam Mahila Samta Society (AMSS) has been working with UNICEF support since 2007 on the issue of Child Protection in Sonitpur district of Assam. 25 Gram Panchayats in 4 blocks were initially selected for intervention. The situation of unsafe migration and trafficking was intense and most of the touts (middlemen engaged in trafficking) lived in the villages here. AMSS began to create awareness amongst the block and panchayat level federations on the issue of protection of girl child especially trafficking. The panchayat adopted this issue in their agenda and

paved the way for a community approach to address the issue. They began arranging programmes related to child protection on their own with the entire community including children both adolescent boys and girls, CBOs and government functionaries participating. This community involvement has resulted in reduction in child trafficking in the area. The project has been replicated in 56 villages of Udaguri district.

Data exhibition

In the year 2009 a Data Exhibition was initiated with an objective of fostering a better understanding on effective planning and implementation, and to ensure active participation of the community in PRIs. Sanghas and panchayat federation women took the leading role in data collection on some core parameters affecting women and girls such as ICDS, schools, various entitlements for women, etc. On a particular day, as decided by the sanghas, federation and community, data were exhibited either in community halls and/or schools or any other public places. Representatives from various government/non-government organizations were invited to see the exhibition. Sanhga women reported that in case data was not provided by the government functionaries they file an RTI for procuring the same. The data exhibition was a high point as it succeeded in underpinning the discrepancies in beneficiaries of various programmes listed by the government and the women themselves. 35 data exhibitions have been organised to date.

Jharkhand

Water and Sanitation

Jharkhand Mahila Samakhya Society (JMSS) is playing a critical role in 11 districts in partnership with UNICEF & DWSD to facilitate delivery of water and sanitation services at the grassroots level through the Mahila Samooh, Kishori Manch and Federations at the community, block, and district levels. The partnership includes training of frontline workers, capacity building of Village Health and Sanitation Committees and mobilization for “nirmal gram”. This is a good example of effective leveraging of government resources where MS leads and facilitates creation of community and household assets.

Anti-trafficking – Jharkhand is a “source” state from where several girls are duped into exploitative situations. JMSS is recognized as a lead agency and is frequently contacted by ChildLine and police to rehabilitate girls. Through its community based campaigns, the program has also traced several children back to their families as also reduced overall trafficking of girls – now more and more girls remain in village and finish their schooling. Admittedly JMSS cannot take entire credit for it and the overall campaign too needs to be nuanced, (distinction need to be made between trafficking, migration, child labour)and more holistic in its approach. Nevertheless it is a good start addressing a complex issue so prevalent in Jharkhand.

Karnataka

Sensitisation of men and boys

In order to sustain and ensure a gender sensitive environment and to consolidate empowerment of women, MS Karnataka has begun serious work on the sensitisation of men and boys. A gender sensitization module “Hosa Ale” training modules in graphic comic form have been developed. The Mission was informed that these are being translated into English for wider circulation. MS has forged partnerships with organisations such as Concern for Working Children for the sensitization of boys. A recent internal assessment revealed that there was a huge internal resource capable of handling the sensitization of men at the community levels in the large number of male staff of the programme.

Harnessing technology

An emerging innovative intervention is the work that has started to set up a community radio station at Bagepalli, Chikballapur district, Karnataka. The plan is to harness the reach of the radio that can be run by sangha women and kishoris and through it reach out to a wider public audience is commendable.

In Mysore district, in collaboration with IT for Change, 3 Mahiti Kendras run by women have been started at the taluka and cluster levels. These are information hubs, where information and applications for various schemes can be accessed at a nominal charge, all of which is IT enabled

Bihar

Call Centre run by federation

Chapakal Marrramati evam Swachta Samagri Kendra, ShivSagar Rohtas: This is a call centre which was set up by the Federation in Shivsagar block in collaboration with the PHED department and Action for Community Development an NGO to address the issues of handpump repair and maintenance in the entire block. 50 Women from the Sangha and Federation have been trained in the block. The call centres registers each complaint and a team of mechanics reach the village within 48 hours to attend to the handpump. The charges for repairing depend on the kind of handpump repaired.

Women journalists: Khabhar Lahiriya project of some federations

With support and inputs from Nirantar, members of 4 federations are being trained in becoming journalists and bringing out Khabhar Lahariya, a local newspaper, owned, published and managed by the federations.

Uttarakhand

Documenting the personal journeys of MS staff

Bol ke Lab Azaad hein Tere (Speak, that your lips are free) is a collection of life stories of 8 selected MS members (Karyakartas). These stories are not fiction but the life well.experiences of sahyoginis engaged in working for women's empowerment. These stories told by sahyoginis reflect the learning and growth trajectories and experiences of engagement in women's movements at grassroots. The stories cover the trials and tribulations these women have faced in their journey towards freedom from age-old shackles of the patriarchal society. The stories, selected from among the MS members, to inspire and motivate the existing and upcoming members of the MS. The book is published by MS Uttarakhand.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

❖ Expansion , outreach and inclusion

- It would be useful for each MS state to undertake an exercise to articulate the nature of marginality and exclusion in their project areas, map the pockets/groups that the programme needs to reach out to. A similar exercise would also need to be undertaken at the sangha and federation level and explore ways in which women who are most marginalised are brought within the empowering and learning processes of the sanghas/federations.
- In tribal areas the programme needs to give special attention to ensure that Primitive Tribal groups who are often the most excluded are brought within the fold of the programme.
- In order to deepen MS engagement with Muslim women, extending the programme to areas of Muslim concentration even in urban areas may be considered.

❖ ***Information, access to entitlements and capacity building***

- MS reports that the programme works with over 12 lakh women. The programme needs to assess what percentage of these women has a full grasp of basic information on women's rights, entitlements and how many are accessing them. At a very basic level this needs to be achieved across the board. This is critical especially in older areas with federations in place and where direct engagement with the field is being reduced.
- Given the complex nature of issues related to VAW, more support in addition to training is required. Regular interaction, rapport building with the police, legal system and health department may help. MS needs to expand its area of influence to include the above stakeholders. Linkages with Free legal aid board need to be established. Similarly linkages with Short stay homes and working women's hostels need to be forged.
- Vocational trainings need to be organised with better design inputs and marketing linkages. Existing resource available under the NRLM and employment generation schemes of the state departments especially the Khadi Board need to be explored.

- Gender trainings need to be revisited by including issues related to visibility of women's work, gender responsive budgeting, women and health, women and history, women's contribution to knowledge systems and women and media. Trainings materials/modules in MS need to include success stories of other MS states and other programmes as well.
- At the State level the programme could establish linkages with Women's Studies Centres, Colleges of Social Work, Education and University Departments of Education to seek assistance in assessment, documentation and research and at the same time advocate and mainstream the programme's insights and knowledge on women's learning, empowerment and development into the formal curricula.

❖ ***Women and girls education***

- A recurring theme in MS has been the concerns over women's literacy, an issue that is equally of concern to the federations. The time has come for MS to forge longterm partnerships with organisations working on literacy to address this need. The two State Resource Centres set up with support from NLM in Assam and Jharkhand could potentially become the hubs for mainstreaming of MS learnings on women's learning, empowerment and development. Here again MS would need partnerships with researchers and academics to enable this mainstreaming to happen.
- In the light of RTE and RMSA, recasting the Mahila Shikshan Kendra intervention needs urgent consideration. What would the role of the MSK be in this changed educational context? With more and more girls completing the elementary cycle, the MSKs could focus on effective vocational education and training and evolve models of how and what could be done. It is imperative that vocational education and training be distinguished from arts and crafts.
- MS has rich experience in providing life skills education which could be incorporated into the KGBVs. The Mission suggests that mechanisms be worked out so that in each State MS could play a resource support role for KGBVs in the

areas of life skills education in particular. This would require active facilitation by NPO.

- MS work with kishoris/kishori sanghas needs attention. The creativity and sensitivity that is evident in the MSKs is missing here. It would be useful to reexamine/recast the entire kishori strategy to ensure that kishori empowerment is effectively enabled. Lessons from the successful mobilization of sangha women as well as the rich experience of the MSKs can inform this process.

❖ ***On federations***

- Initiate a dialogue between the programme and with others working in the area of women's empowerment on the whole issue of women's empowerment, autonomy and implications for programme implementation to strengthen the programme's own understanding and strategies. At this juncture MS needs to have a clear understanding of how its approaches of mobilizing poor women for gender and social transformation can inform, strengthen build on, other development/poverty alleviation initiatives that are also organizing poor women .
- There is a need for a national level debate to evolve a coherent understanding on the whole exit strategy from older project areas and the mechanisms that need to be put in place to provide resource support to autonomous federations/sanghas.

❖ **Legal provisions and referral support**

- Addressing VAW is key activity of the sanghas and federations. The legal literacy component needs strengthening and constant reinforcement to ensure that all sanghas members understand and know the core legal provisions. There is a wealth of expertise and experience in the country and rich databases available. Common material and protocols on the provisions of selected key acts – Domestic Violence, Dowry, the new anti-rape bill and PCPNDT need to be developed or accessed. Further there is a need to build a more cohesive “end to

end” referral and response support especially for women and girls who have faced violence.

- The programme also needs to provide professional counseling for its own staff as well , many of whom are grappling with similar issues at a personal level.

❖ **Livelihoods**

- MS needs to develop a clear perspective on livelihood support and employability training for young people. Would the program respond to the grassroots demand and provide technical support and resources to the sanghas? Or would it build institutional linkages with programs such as Livelihood Mission, NMEW or other state level programs? If this emerges as a key priority for some states, then the respective state should focus on 2-3 product lines based on a market analysis and with backward and forward linkages in place.

❖ **Convergence and resource support**

- MS across the states requires to critically examine its engagement with other stakeholders and convergence to see whether it is strengthening MS agenda and how to make it more effective and regular. Similarly new spaces for convergence owing to changing needs of the girls and women need attention.

❖ **Organisational issues**

- Initiate an organisational development process for all players, sanghas, federations and Mahila Samakhya (State and National levels) to achieve greater clarity on structures, mutual roles and support and engagement with the external environment.
- With the expansion of the programme and the multiple demands being made by states for support (in planning, strategizing, monitoring/assessment, mainstreaming, etc) from the NPO, there is a need to increase the number of consultants at the NPO and to make appropriate budgetary allocations for this purpose
- The role of the NRG in the current context and the strategic role that individual NRG members can play in providing resource support in specific thematic areas needs to be revisited.

- HR matters require urgent re-examination to address issues like large number of vacancies and high attrition.
- Enhancement of honoraria , provision of service benefits need urgent attention and need to be brought on par with other national programme.
- In many states MS hires staff on annual contracts which is affecting the work of the staff. The Mission recommends that contracts should be of longer duration of at least a 2 year tenure.
- Eligibility criteria for various positions, especially at the sahayogini level need attention. MS needs to consider making flexible some of the educational requirements so that local women without formal certification but with good reading and writing skills can be recruited. In the past this has been the strength of MS—bringing in enthusiastic committed women to work for the programme and enabling them to improve their educational qualifications.
- Capacity building of staff and identification of trainings using external resources as well should be stressed rather than depending solely on internal resources.
- The structure, role and quality of output from State Resource Centres/ Gender Resource Centres needs to be reviewed.

❖ **Financial management**

- There is shortage of accounts staff at many locations. The Mission recommends that focused effort is put in to address staffing gaps especially in accounts and finance. The Mission also recommends exploring the possibility of implementing a rotation policy for accounts staff as an additional control measure.
- State offices appreciate the support provided by NPO in budget planning and monitoring. The Mission recommends that NPO continues with this support to improve planning, monitoring and utilization across all states.
- Parallel systems of book keeping (cash book and advance registers etc) are being maintained at most locations. The Mission recommends a quick review of the book keeping system. This should enable to identify and eliminate parallel records.

- A systematic way of tracking management responses for ‘internal audit’ observations does not exist. It is not clear if the NPO gets involved in clearing management responses. The Mission recommends that the NPO develops a system in consultation with states for tracking and disposal internal audit observations.
- Undertake an impact assessment of the grant in aid being given to federations to explore effectiveness and capabilities of federations in undertaking long term sensitization initiatives.

V.1 SUGGESTED ROADMAP TO ADDRESS ISSUES RAISED BY THE JRM AND CHALLENGES OF THE XIITH PLAN

Mahila Samakhya is at a critical juncture and requires imaginative approaches to address the challenges it faces.

- During the XIIth Plan with the possibility of MS being brought under the umbrella of SSA, the major concern is protecting the autonomy of the programme. Autonomy of operations and implementation is crucial if MS is to achieve its bold objectives of creating a social environment for women’s empowerment and learning.
- While there is a lot to celebrate in the programme, its pedagogy, strategies and interventions on core issues that the programme addresses need revisiting, recasting and redefined to meet the current needs of the field and the changed contexts in which the programme works.
- Another major challenge is of mainstreaming the vast and rich experience of the programme on a broad set of issues be it processes of women’s empowerment and learning, developing women’s agency to effect social change, processes of mobilization and organization around social agendas.
- The success of MS so far has been contingent on its ability to bring in women/persons from diverse backgrounds to support and reimagine the

directions of the programme. At this juncture MS needs to seek such support in a proactive way to address some of the challenges the programme faces.

A possible approach could be to work through working groups with clear TORs to not only suggest ways of strengthening the intervention but also to identify resource support that state programmes could draw on and to develop a 2-3 year strategic plan around the concerned issue. Some ideas for the working groups are as follows:

- ❖ One working group to examine the structural and organizational issues of bringing MS under the broad umbrella of SSA, and to make recommendations and suggest checks and balances to protect the operational autonomy of the programme.
- ❖ The JRM has made several comments and suggestions on various programmatic issues such as institution building of sanghas/federations, women's literacy and learning, issues of adolescent girls including Mahila Shikshan Kendras, legal literacy and mechanisms for addressing VAW. For each of these a thematic working group could be constituted.
- ❖ Identify 2 or 3 key issues for research study and seek the involvement of research institutions/ individuals for this purpose.

The composition of these working groups needs to be done carefully to ensure that there is representation from the field areas/ states, the NRG and other experts as well. This would ensure that whatever is being suggested or planned is grounded in field experience and is geared to meet the needs of the field

VI. Extent of realization of the Results (as per Revised Results Framework)

VI.1 Pace of growth of the programme

Starting in 1987 in the 3 states of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Karnataka the Mahila Samakhya programme is being currently implemented in the 10 states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The programme expanded to the state

of Rajasthan, where a MS Society has been registered in 2011-12 but field operations have yet to be operationalized. From the Xth Plan period there has been conscious expansion of the programme to educationally backward blocks.

The MS programme currently covers 11 states, 122 districts, 616 blocks and 39566 villages. In these project villages around 48273 sanghas (women's collectives) have been formed with a membership of about 12.7 lakh women. This latter number is of particular significance in that the programme has mobilized the voluntary participation of women to challenge and address gender barriers and issues at the individual and community levels

Out of the 5 states under review, 2 i.e. Karnataka and Bihar are states in which the MS programme has been implemented from a long time. Karnataka was one of the original 3 states along with UP and Gujarat where the MS programme was piloted in 1987 and in the VIIIth Plan the programme was extended to Bihar. In Uttarakhand the programme started in 1 district during the first phase in 1989 and 2 more districts were added in 1995-96 when Uttarakhand was part of undivided Uttar Pradesh. With the formation of Uttarakhand state in 2000, the MS programme too was set up as a separate Society in 2003. In Assam the programme started in 1996, The Jharkhand programme was set up as a separate programme in 2007 after the bifurcation of the state from Bihar.

During the period under review the pace of expansion has been fairly slow except in Bihar where there has been a quantum leap in coverage of blocks and villages from 2010-11. Except one state Karnataka, all other states have expanded as per approved expansion plans. The Mission was informed that during 2012-13 the programme is slated to expand to an additional 3 districts in Karnataka as approved. The national norm of expanding the programme to Educationally Backward Blocks has been followed in all the states.

Table: Coverage 2007-2012

	No. of districts		No. of Taluks/blocks		No. of villages	
	2007-08	2012-13	2007-08	2012-13	2007-08	2012-13
Assam	9	12	37	57	2448	3612
Bihar	13	21	56	119	3934	8040
Jharkhand		11		76		4219
Karnataka	12	15	51	62	2562	3384
Uttarakhand	6	7	22	24	2507	2567

Currently the Mahila Samakhya programme has a reasonable presence in terms of the number of districts being covered within the 5 states reviewed as shown below:

	Table Coverage of districts and blocks		% coverage
	Total No. of districts in the state	MS coverage	
Assam	27	12	44
Bihar	38	21	55
Jharkhand	24	11	46
Karnataka	30	15	50
Uttarakhand	13	7	54

The scale and coverage of the MS programme in each of the states is currently fairly large and often not contiguous. The increased presence within a given state affords an opportunity for mainstreaming its learning's at district and state levels. At the same time the challenges of scale are equally enormous. There are huge challenges in creating the human resource, trained and capable of meeting this vast responsibility both within the organisation and at the field level as well. The Mission is concerned with the capabilities of the programme to maintain the quality of processes at the field level and also its own internal capability to manage a programme on such scale.

The relevance and effectiveness of the MS programme in creating an enabling environment for the empowerment and broad learning/ education of marginalised women and girls could bring it under pressure for rapid expansion in order to meet national goals of equality, universalization of elementary education, etc. The Mission urges caution in undertaking further geographical expansion. States are facing major problems in recruiting staff given the current salaries that are fairly low with no service benefits. Unless these are resolved, further expansion to new areas would only compound the

problems. However, in existing project areas the programme could deepen/saturate coverage.

VI.2 Outreach to women & girls from most marginalised sections

From the start of the programme MS has been clear that the focus would be to reach out to marginalised women and girls. Over the years a deeper and sharper understanding of the textures of marginalisation has developed. The focus on educationally backward blocks has sharpened an understanding of marginalisation and also reflected in the reach of the programme.

Table: Social profile of sangha members					
	Assam	Bihar	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Uttarakhand
SC	11.4	45		30	25
ST	26	4		18	10
OBC	31	37		24	13
Muslim		11		6	2
General	31.6 (Including Muslims)	3		22	50

Each of the states is now more alert to the need to enhance their understanding of marginalisation and vulnerability and to reach out to these women and groups. In Assam the programme has reached out to groups marginalised as a result of location. For example the programme has expanded to villages in the Char area (riverine areas) that are frequently devastated by floods and to Tea garden estate habitations where isolation increases marginalisation. In Uttarakhand there is now a greater focus to reach out to SCs and Muslims, a gap that had been pointed by earlier evaluations. In Bihar for instance though marginality has been addressed to a large extent, the Mission found that representation of Muslim women was not proportionate to their population. Jharkhand has made special efforts to reach out to Muslim women, girls and boys and the team met strong groups in urban/peri urban areas and in village of Ranchi district. However the groups' interactions with women who were not part of the sanghas and were in most cases poorer than the sangha members was limited. Either they were not able to convince them to join, or wanted them to start a separate group. Sanghas could consider opening up some of the issue based group meetings to others in the community so that the most

marginalised can benefit from the MS learning process. In Karnataka efforts have been initiated to deepen the programmes reach out to the most marginalized. A study by an external group is under way to assess and analyse the marginalised groups the programmes has reached and to identify women/groups that continue to be excluded. The attempt is to identify those groups and women within the broader social categories of SC and ST who the programme ought to reach out to.

Overall the Mission commends MS for its efforts in deepening both its understanding of marginality and its nuances and for making conscious efforts to reach out to the excluded. As noted by earlier Evaluations, MS's engagement with the Muslim community is limited. This is an area that needs a strategic approach and focused attention. The programme staff too would need inputs to develop a perspective on Muslim exclusion and the implications it would have for programme interventions.

Among the factors that have affected the programme ability to ensure complete inclusion of the marginalised in the project areas:

- MS itself lacking a nuanced understanding of marginality and vulnerability. An issue that is now recognised and being addressed in several states.
- Lack of understanding of issues of the Muslim community. In some states such as Karnataka the concentration of the Muslim community in peri-urban and urban areas where MS does not work makes inclusion difficult.
- Jharkhand has a particularly difficult terrain and sahyoginis find it difficult to provide quality support to 10 villages leading in some cases to inadequate reach to the most excluded.
- At the village level sanghas also lack a deep understanding of marginality and ways in which they could and need to be addressed.

Recommendations

- It would be useful for each MS state to undertake an exercise to articulate the nature of marginality and exclusion in their project areas, map the pockets/ groups that the programme needs to reach out to.
- Work with Tribal groups also need special attention to ensure that Primitive Tribal groups who are often the most marginalized are brought within the fold of the programme.
- A similar exercise would also need to be undertaken at the sangha and federation level and explore ways in which women who are most marginalised are brought within the empowering and learning processes of the sanghas/federations.

VI.3. Facilitate increased information and access of women & girls to their entitlements

Capacity building/training is a key to the success of the MS programme. A host of trainings on core issues that MS focuses on i.e. health, education, economic self reliance and legal and social issues form the basis of district and state plans. This is an on-going activity. A range of trainings for the sangha women and other functionaries are organised by the District units as well as the State unit. The themes among many others include:

- Building self esteem
- Team building
- Gender and education, girl education
- Violence against women, gender based violence,
- Issues in women's health , HIV-AIDS
- Legal rights/literacy including PWDV Act
- Livelihoods and Economic empowerment, national resource management, accessing entitlements, enhanced participation in National programmes such as MNREGA,
- Political rights, effective political participation

- RTE, RTI

Cutting across states/social contexts violence against women has emerged and continues to be a key area of intervention in MS. Several trainings for sangha and federation women on issues of VAW/G have helped create awareness, a sense of social responsibility among women to support and stand by women and girls who face gender based violence. Nari Adalats organised at sanghas and federations also reveal high level of efficacy and awareness about women's rights.

The trainings are participatory and are usually conducted by State Resource Group, District Resource Group and activists/women's groups working in the area of gender equality and women's rights both within and outside the State. Discussions with State teams pointed out that the DRGs have been trained and are capable of delivering trainings on issues related to social analysis and community mobilisation.

In Bihar training to women in non traditional professions like masonry and hand pump repair has enabled them to break stereotypes. The JRM team met with four women hand pump mechanics of the 'Chapakal Maramati Evam Swachh Samagri Kendra' who were part of the team undertaking repair of hand pumps in Shivsagar block of Rohtas district. The women remarked that today they command greater respect in the community and people often comment that - "Istri se Mistri ban gaye hain". This gain in both status and skill has been rewarding as women have achieved greater confidence levels and spending power. They expressed the need for other technical training such as diesel pump repairing, mobile repairing etc.

During the JRM it was evident that older and more mature sanghas and federations have a clear grasp of issues, rights, laws and entitlements, the situation is not as strong across the project areas. In some of the districts visited by the Mission members where retaining sahayoginis has been a problem, the mobilisation and organisation of sanghas in some clusters has suffered and consequently the basic information levels too have not been built to the same extent. In the absence of any

evaluative assessment mode, it would be difficult to conclude on the status across the project area.

While the JRM team did not have an opportunity to observe any training, or assess the quality or content of the inputs being provided given the short duration of the field visit, the impact can be assessed across all levels in increased self confidence, articulation and increased knowledge about rights and entitlements as well as skill enhancement resulting in employment/incomes.

The awareness of sangha and federation women regarding their entitlements including access to existing government schemes/ programmes related to health, education, PDS, RTI, RTE, PRIs, MGNREGS and social security schemes like widow and old age pension was found to be fairly high. The involvement of sangha and community women was also observed in monitoring and demanding improvements in implementation of various schemes like PDS, MDM, MGNREGA, FRA, etc. However, the issue that needs to be highlighted is that their involvement in the same is not on a regular basis. Mechanisms to ensure regular access to and monitoring of entitlements need to be developed.

Over the years both the programme and sangha women have developed strong linkages with various programmes that could benefit women. Banks, schemes of NRLM, horticulture, health, rural development, panchyati raj have been accessed by women. This is one area where the programme has facilitated strong linkages between the sanghas and various departments/ programmes and fairly large numbers have accessed their entitlements.

Recommendations

- Given the complex nature of issues related to VAW, it would require more support in addition to the training. Regular interaction, rapport building with the police, legal system and health department may help. MS needs to expand its area of influence to include the above stakeholders.

- Linkages with Free legal aid board need to be established including space in common campuses. Short stay homes and working women's hostels also need to be set up.
- Vocational trainings need to be organised with better design inputs and marketing linkages. Existing resource available under the NRLM and employment generation schemes of the state departments especially the Khadi Board need to be explored.
- Gender trainings need to be revisited to include issues related to visibility of women's work, gender responsive budgeting, women and health, women and history, women's contribution to knowledge systems and women and media. Trainings materials/modules in MS need to include success stories of other states from MS and other programmes.
- Assistance from WS centres, Social Work and Education departments of the universities need to be utilised.

In Karnataka it was evident that older and more mature sanghas and federations have a clear grasp of issues, rights, laws and entitlements, the situation is not as strong across all the project areas. In some of the districts visited by the Mission members where retaining sahayoginis has been a problem, the mobilisation and organisation of sanghas in some clusters has suffered and consequently the basic information levels too have not been built to the same extent. In the absence of any evaluative assessment mode, it would be difficult to conclude on the status across the project area. While the JRM team did not have an opportunity to observe any training, or assess the quality or content of the inputs being provided given the short duration of the field visit, the impact can be assessed across all levels in increased self confidence, articulation and increased knowledge about rights and entitlements.

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sanghas and various departments/ programmes and fairly large numbers have accesses their entitlements as well as skill enhancement resulting in employment/incomes.

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However, gaps in their knowledge and access are a matter of some concern. For instance there was little understanding or linkage with Rashtra Swastha Bhima Yojana that can potentially help women mitigate their health related out of pocket expenditure. Mechanisms to give complete information about the provisions and processes of key entitlements and to ensure regular access to/ and monitoring need to be developed. In Jharkhand the Mission encouraged MS to develop a common program with another DFID supported program PACS that focuses on entitlements for marginalised groups.

Recommendations

- Given the complex nature of issues related to VAW, it would require more support in addition to the training. Regular interaction, rapport building with the police, legal system and health department may help.
- Linkages with Free legal aid board need to be established including space in common campuses. Short stay homes and working women's hostels also need to be set up. MS needs to expand its area of influence to include the above stakeholders.
- Vocational trainings need to be organised with better design inputs and marketing linkages. Existing resource available under the NRLM and employment generation schemes of the state departments especially the Khadi Board could also be explored
- The sangha women have enthusiasm and need regular reinforcement and information about the key entitlements and legal acts. Each state could identify 3-5 themes that it would regularly reinforce with the program staff and with members.

The program also needs to explore appropriate technology platforms for training to supplement/substitute the more traditional training of trainers model.

- The training modules need to be better, more detailed with additional references material and should draw on success stories of other states from MS and other programmes.
- Gender trainings need to be revisited by including issues related to visibility of women's work, gender responsive budgeting, women and health, women and history, women's contribution to knowledge systems and women and media. Women Study centres, Social Work and Education departments of the universities can be a very accessible resource.

VI.4 Facilitating increased participation of women and girls in formal and non formal education

MS has maintained a focus on generating demand for education and facilitating educational opportunities for women and girls in all the program states through literacy camps, Mahila Shikshan Kendras, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Residential Bridge Course, Kishori Sangha/Manch, Jagjagi/Jagruti centres and strengthening the schools under NPEGEL. Not only have these efforts enhanced the academic base for women and girls but have also provided comprehensive support for extra-academic issues.

In formal schools the demand generation is well reflected in efforts of school enrolment. Interactions with women of the Sangha and Federation in the states the Mission visited revealed that they had made efforts to ensure that all girls in their respective villages were in school. In Karnataka Sangha women's linkages with formal education is being fostered by encouraging mothers to become members of the SMCs. However, the Mission was not able to assess the effectiveness of their participation in formal structures.

Sangha women have become members of School Management committees and are monitoring attendance of teachers and quality of MDM in all the states covered

during the JRM. In Uttarkhand schools several villages serve 'peela baath/ jarda' (only rice with little dal or sabji). In Assam gender training is also being imparted to VEC, SMC and members of Mother's Group by MS groups. During 2010-11 with the financial support of SSA the Assam programme conducted training for 62,896 mother group members on RTE and equity issues.

In the villages the Mission visited, sangha women proudly reported that child marriages have been stopped and that the age of marriage has gone up.

However despite motivational discussions with parents, regular attendance, transition, drop out continue to be a problem. many girls do not get mainstreamed or drop out and successful completion remain as challenges. Though socially disaggregated data is available with MS offices, they have not been analysed.. Such analysis would help the functionaries to define targeted strategies for particular pockets and community where lesser girls are being mainstreamed.

Literacy

I appeared for class 8th exam along with my grand-child and I could clear the exam with better grades than him. Initially my grandchildren made fun of the fact but when the results were out, they became speechless. – Pushpa, Sangha member from Tehri, Uttarakhand

In all the States under review MS has also been involved in the literacy drives and campaigns for adult women. Some of these drives focus on getting the women to write and sign their names. The team shared its concern that teaching women to sign without the capacity to read may create a false impression when documents are signed as it is assumed that they have agreed to what is written

In Assam Sangha women expressed the need to be literate for many reasons i.e. to help their children study, do calculations so they decided that each of the literate sangha women would teach a few non-literate sangha women in jagriti kendras. The AMSS encouraged them to use the primers prepared by Adult Education

department. One supplementary reader was also developed by AMSS to include components on gender and legal issues. The Shakshar Bharat Mission covers 7 districts of AMSS. Therefore no budgetary provision is made for these districts for jagriti kendras. Instead thrust is being given for taking the resources and monitoring the sangha women's involvement in the literacy drive.

In Bihar many examples were shared with the team of women/Girls who studied in Jagjagi Kendras and have become achievers- Pushpa Rana is now a singer, another girl in Rohtas has been selected in the state police department.

In Karnataka Sangha women's literacy continues to be an area of concern despite the fact that women are conscious of the need for literacy and MS-K has over the past several years made many efforts. A variety of approaches have been adopted, campaigns, camps/centres at village and taluka levels. A specific programme, sakshar samakhya has been launched, with the goal of making all women literate.

In Uttarakhand the number of registrations with NIOS is increasing and women of all ages are writing these exams and clearing with good results.

However the opportunities for continuing literacy for older women were unstructured and raised a concern about relapse of new learners back into illiteracy in the absence of regular practice.

KGBV and NPEGEL

One aspect of partnership with SSA in the MS States centres around running of KGBVs and strengthening the NPEGEL schools. In two States visited by the JRM(Bihar and Karnataka) MS runs KGBVs. In Bihar 24% of the KGBVs in the state i.e 105 out of 436 KGBVs are run by MS. In Karnataka 45% of the KGBVs in the state i.e 32 out of 71 KGBVs are run by MS.

In the KGBV in Chenari, Kaimur district in Bihar visited by the Mission the girls were confident and eagerly wanted to share their achievements in various extra-

curricular activities. They shared that their mothers had never been to school and they wanted to continue their studies. All the girls requested that the KGBV be upgraded to Class X. The women also shared that since children with disabilities are also enrolled in schools it presents new challenges.

In Karnataka while the Mission did not visit any KGBVs, it suggests that MS-K consider providing life skill education across KGBVs in Karnataka. They have the experience and capability to do so. This would be one concrete way of influencing the mainstream and mainstreaming MS insights in life skills, building the confidence and self-esteem of vulnerable first generation learners. This is a niche that should be explored in all MS states as well.

MS has been intervening in NPEGEL schools in all the 5 states covered during the review. However in Jharkhand MS no longer manages NPEGL. The major intervention of MS is to provide life-skill education, and inputs to build the self confidence of girls, strengthening their decision making abilities, and coping with socio-psychological needs of adolescent girls. The Meena Manch has also been activated in these schools. Vocational skills have also been imparted including skills related to repairing bicycles, and tube-wells are also imparted(Assam).

There has been increase in girls' participation in self defence activities because of the karate/self defence training imparted in the NPEGEL schools.

Mahila Shikshan Kendra (MSK)

MSKs are residential training centres that provide 8-11 month training to drop out/non enrolled adolescent girls and older women in the age group of 16-35 years. The number of girls per MSK is 30 who are reportedly selected through a fairly rigorous process. In Assam since the enforcement of RTE in 2009 the MSKs have been converted into residential special training centres (RSTC) where learning materials/books prepared by SSA are used. Unlike other MS states in Karnataka the girls in the MSKs are at class 9 and 10 levels, and are trained to take the 10th board

exams. In addition to the state approved curriculum, MS-K has also developed a more gender sensitive curriculum and pedagogy on child rights, rights of women, etc.

With its focus on trafficking, MS in Jharkhand started its MSK for trafficked children, referred mainly by ChildLine at Kunthi. Most had worked as domestic help in exploitative situations and a few had also been sexually violated. Some of the girls shared their traumatic experiences with the team. They felt settled, safe and protected at the MSK but were extremely apprehensive about continuing their education and becoming 'self-reliant' beyond MSK. The MSK had the prescribed staff but did not have a counselor nor had the program conducted gynae check-ups – both essential support for a special center for trafficked survivors.

Not all girls who passed out of MSK are admitted into KGBVs. Several different reasons are given for it – the girls exceed the age criteria as per the RTE, they are too outspoken and not a good influence on the others, they do not meet the required academic standards. In Jharkhand, the program tries to link the girls who are not admitted to NIOS, but is not always successful. The team met a young divorcee and a survivor of domestic violence. She had passed out of MSK the previous year and was awaiting admission to a KGBV for over a year. In the interim she worked as a cook in her alma mater MSK and prayed for admission somewhere anywhere so that she could be independent. MSK works with some very vulnerable girls in Jharkhand and must ensure that their integration and rehabilitation is not a temporary 11 month illusion but a life time commitment.

In Bihar in the MSK visited by the team in Bhabhua, Kaimur there were several married girls who had been enrolled in the MSK as well as a child widows, most of whom belonged to poor marginalised families.

With RTE in place and RMSA unfolding, the Mission recommends a careful analysis and re-strategizing for MSK to – a) continue transitional training for older girls in the 11-14 years to rejoin the mainstream; b) take the students up to secondary level

and provide employability and vocational training. This requires careful probing to understand the ground requirements in order to recast the MSK initiative. The MSK could, like KGBV ask for up-gradation or /and tie up with NIOS and become a centre to prepare students for NOIS exams of different levels.

Kishori Manch/Sanghas

The kishori manch/sanghas are forums for nurturing adolescent girls in the community. In all the states under review Kishori Manch have been formed in large numbers e.g. in Bihar has a total of 8674, Assam 1477, Karnataka 2651 and Jharkhand 1207. Uttarakhand had a lesser number of Kishori Mancha of 277.

In the Kishori sanghas, trainings and capacity building have been the main strategies. Life skill trainings is also imparted to these girls as well as gender training. Many of the girls give tuitions to younger kids or teach illiterate wome in their communities. However the creative approaches being used in the Mahila Shikshan Kendras or the attempts at breaking gender stereotypes through the training of girls in karate or as in Mysore Karnataka in the Kamsaale performance done by girls (which traditionally is done by men) do not seem to have been integrated into the kishori strategy. This is an opportunity that is likely to get lost. It was observed that most students so far show high levels of confidence, team spirit and articulation in MSKs but cognitive competence data is either not available or questionable.

Jharkhand has a large number of Kishore manch of young boys. They have not received much training. They take on more “external” and “public’ services such as cleaning of ponds, maintaining water sources or oragainising games. One of the key activities in their portfolio is running a “Village Resource Centre (VRC)”. The one the Mission saw was very nascent with no significant books or material, the center regularly organizes sports events for boys and was seen as a resource for boys only. The VRC has the potential to become a “informational” hub for the village and serve the information and learning needs for both girls, boys and adults. Another structure to reach 6-12 age group children is the Shishu Vikas Kendras (SVK) for both school and non-

school going children for their all round development. Kishoris are taking an initiative to run the SVKs.

Recommendations

- A recurring theme in MS has been the concerns over women's literacy, an issue that is equally of concern to the federations. The time has come for MS to forge longterm partnerships with organisations working on literacy to address this need. The two State Resource Centres set up with support from NLM in Assam and Jharkhand could potentially become the hubs for mainstreaming of MS learnings on women's learning, empowerment and development. Here again MS would need partnerships with researchers and academics to enable this mainstreaming to happen.
- In the light of RTE and RMSA, recasting the Mahila Shikshan Kendra intervention needs urgent consideration. What would the role of the MSK be in this changed educational context? With more and more girls completing the elementary cycle, the MSKs could focus on effective vocational education and training and evolve models of how and what could be done. It is imperative that vocational education and training be distinguished from arts and crafts.
- MS has rich experience in providing life skills education which could be incorporated into the KGBVs. The Mission suggests that mechanisms be worked out so that in each State MS could play a resource support role for KGBVs in the areas of life skills education in particular. This would require active facilitation by NPO.
- MS work with kishoris/kishori sanghas needs attention. The creativity and sensitivity that is evident in the MSKs is missing here. It would be useful to reexamine/recast the entire kishori strategy to ensure that kishori empowerment is effectively enabled. Lessons from the successful mobilization of sangha women as well as the rich experience of the MSKs can inform this process.

VI.5 Building leadership of poor and most marginalized women and autonomy of women's collectives

The sanghas are the bedrock of the MS programme. Mobilization and collectivization of marginalized women have been the strengths of the programme and is evident in the leadership, zeal for learning and wanting to grapple with complex social and gender issues of mobility, challenging established attitudes and practices, voice and participation in the public domain that the JRM teams reported from their field observations. This has been possible due to the sustained inputs on a variety of issues, information and knowledge building that the programme has provided. An important dimension of this process has been in enabling the agency of poor women to be heard and to act to bring about changes in their lives and the community.

A concurrent process that started from about the late 1990s was the process of federating the sanghas at block levels to become the solidarity forums for the sanghas, to be able to raise and address issues at a broader level. The JRM teams have reported that the federations, especially the more mature ones are playing a critical role at the block level.

Table No. of sanghas, membership, federations districts and blocks					
	Total No. of villages	Total No. of sanghas	Sangha membership	No. of federations formed	No. of autonomous federations
Assam	3158	3612	190465	27	21
Bihar	7996	9217	183670	13	11
Jharkhand	4219	9422	143824	19	0
Uttarakhand	2567	2507	56892	18	5
Karnataka	3357	5457	205174	42	0

There are, however, several issues that face the sanghas and federating process. At the sangha level issues of inclusion of the most marginalized is a challenge. Sustaining and deepening the understanding of the sanghas/federations on changing political and economic environment to able to cope and address the challenges it throws up remains a weak area. This lacuna is felt at the level of the MS team as well that facilitates this process.

The major issue troubling most of the MS projects visited is the whole exit strategy, issues of autonomy, independence of the federations, the role and linkages that MS would maintain with the autonomous federations. There is a great deal of anxiety especially with the exit issue as it not only one of programmatic strategies but is also linked with the livelihoods of the staff who would also be withdrawn.

There are other equally troubling issues of the multiplicity of structures for women that have come up at the village level. What is the place of MS organized collectives in this process, and the linkages across these various structures. This is an area that the programme needs to come to grips with.

Recommendation

- Initiate a dialogue between the programme and with others working in the area of women's empowerment on the whole issue of women's empowerment, autonomy and implications for programme implementation to strengthen the programmes own understanding and strategies.

VI.6 Women's agency to challenge social inequality and to break discriminatory social practices (at individual, family, community level)

Building women's agency is a core investment for Mahila Samakhya and the JRM teams captured several examples of how women had challenged social inequality and discriminatory social practices. Federations and Sangha members that the teams met recounted their own personal histories of family negotiations and change – more mobility, recognition within the community and increase in their own self-esteem and confidence.

Awareness of the members on social inequalities and discrimination that women face was high. Violence against women is a central theme for all the states and issues such as alcoholism that affect women the most have the greatest resonance across the states. Other common issues are child marriage, education for girls, and dowry. Jharkhand and Assam also have trafficking and witch hunting as their thematic priorities. Across the states the JRM noticed that girls from Kishori Manch were oriented more in health, nutrition and hygiene and not on inequality and discrimination issues .

Sanghas **intervene** in cases of domestic violence, child marriage at the village level, drawing on Nari Adalats for support and for more challenging issues such as desertion, divorce, land rights, rape and bigamy. Sangha members identified dowry as one of the most difficult issues to address.

Linkages with law enforcement agencies, referral networks and legal redressal varied across states. Karnataka and Uttrakhand had these linkages in place, Assam found cases involving upper class particularly challenging, while Bihar and Jharkhand found Nari Adalats to be most effective at dealing with family level issues. Discussions with the staff, trainers, sangha and federation members revealed that several of them continued to face violence and discrimination at home, and have not been able to negotiate their personal space.

Across the states JRM teams reported systematic approach to building women's political knowledge, participation and leadership. **Political participation** is high with all women actively participating in panchayat elections and a large number of sangha women contesting and winning elections. The elected representatives were trained and were reportedly working well, without the "sarpanch pati". Sangha members reported that they participated in gram sabhas.

Livelihoods support has the highest demand but is perhaps the weakest aspect of the program. Income generating programs across the states are old school, episodic and lack business orientation. The increasing number of young girls and boys associated with the program want employability training and/or livelihood support. Both Jharkhand and Uttrakhand have herbal medicine units that are often showcased as successful examples of livelihood. However, they are not profitable. JRM teams raised concerns about the scientific reliability of the formulations in the absence of any testing. Jharkhand also had a sanitary napkin unit and a jute cooperative but did not have any business plans in place.

Women were not fully aware of the MGNREGS and its provisions and wages earned were reported as low. other activities reported included hand pump repairing and masonry in Bihar, fish cultivation in Jharkhand, and small enterprises in Karnataka.

Recommendations

Legal provisions and referral support

- Develop common material and protocols on the provisions of selected key acts – DV, Dowry, the new anti-rape bill and PCPNDT. States may identify additional areas. Regular reinforcement of key provisions, using available technology platforms, and as part of the capacity building calendar.
- Build a more cohesive “end to end” referral and response support specially for women and girls who have faced violence.
- counselling services for staff.

Political participation

- Train women on budget tracking and mock gram sabha to build their confidence to raise issues in gram Sabha.

Livelihoods

- MS needs to develop a clear perspective on livelihood support and employability training for young people. Would the program respond to the grassroots demand and provide technical support and resources to the states? Or would it build institutional linkages with programs such as Livelihood Mission, NMEW or other state level programs?
- If this emerges as a key priority for some states, then the respective state should focus on 2-3 product lines based on a market analysis and with backward and forward linkages in place.

VI. Convergence and Resource Support

Mahila Samakhya with a mandate of education for women’s empowerment was designed to have its programme interventions informed by issues of concern raised by poor women at the field level. These have been categorized broadly into six core areas viz., education of women and girls, women’s health, livelihoods, violence against women and law, natural resource management and women and local governance, especially, Panchayati Raj. Given this broad canvas of concerns, MS has been forging functional linkages with various programmes for women and girls. The success of MS interventions can be further strengthened through strategic

convergence with programmes for women and various National Missions that have been set up in the recent past..

MS is working closely with the education department or the “parent department” in several areas. These include: a) community mobilisation for improving access to and quality of educational interventions for the girls and adolescent girls; b) participation in School Committees/ VECs, monitoring Mid Day Meals and other provisions of RTE. More than twenty nine thousand sangha women are members of SMCs and c) direct implementation of several educational interventions like NPEGL centres (5470), ECCs (1374), KGBVs (184), MSKs/RSTCs (96) and alternative learning centres (25,495) across the country.

In states that the JRM visited such as Assam and Jharkhand strong linkages with Sakshar Bharat have been forged and in both states the MS programme has been awarded the project of setting up the State Resource Centre with NLM funding. While on the one hand this is a positive recognition of the potential of MS to play this role, there is some concern on the in-house ability/capability of MS to critically influence and impact Literacy approaches and materials. This is an opportunity that ought not to be lost. The Mission suggests that MS seek inputs from experienced groups/individuals to review and recast literacy materials in the light of MS experience of women’s empowerment and learning

States also report on strong relationships with other key departments. In Jharkhand and in Bihar MS has partnered with the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan for facilitating access of community to water and sanitation services. Linkages with the Sabla program of WCD and the adolescent programs were also seen in some states such as Jharkhand. MS involvement and engagement with SSA is high. However, feedbacks from the states suggest that convergence with SSA needs to be improved to ensure that MS is seen and acknowledged as an equal partner. Some MS state programmes find that SSA is not adequately cooperative despite the fact that MS is implementing large number of NPEGL or other activities. It is necessary to examine why convergence is relatively not meaningful despite engagement with SSA.

Several other collaborations were seen across the states – for PDS, old age and widow pension, training of elected representatives. Though the awareness of the

entitlements is high, access and participation is inconsistent and irregular. Women need regular reinforcement to fully absorb the various provisions, their rights as well as their duties. Only then will be able to effectively participate and audit/monitor services on the ground.

Livelihoods, vocational training, employability training all remain a weak area of MS. This is one area where MS needs a clear approach to leverage several ground level programs of National Rural Livelihood Mission which works mainly with women's groups and has a strong social empowerment agenda and the agriculture and horticulture boards of the state. Every state now has the National Skills Development Mission/Council that can help MS plan for skills training and placement for the adolescents.. Role of banks and Khadi Board/ Jute Promotion/ Handlooms & Textiles departments etc in programmes related to handicrafts is noticed to be very poor.

Recommendations

- MS needs to articulate a clear convergence strategy – which are the core programs it will work with, what will be the role of each partner, what are the resource implications and how will it be monitored. This will ensure that MS does not fritter away the groups' energy and becomes a service delivery platform but more as well defined partnerships. These relationships can be spelled out at the national level and can be adapted by the state. Livelihoods and financial inclusion are clearly two areas where a more coherent approach needs to be articulated. Convergence should not be limited only to ground level implementation but also to build evidence to inform and influence policies, programs and budget allocations. MS across the states requires to critically examine its engagement with other stakeholders and convergence to see whether it is strengthening MS agenda and how to make it more effective and regular. Similarly new spaces for convergence owing to changing needs of the girls and women need attention.

VII. Institutional Processes

Role and Functioning of State Office

Staff at state offices across the country is reported to be experienced and motivated. The programme management systems are strong and record keeping is reported to be good in all the states. Staff at all the states was found to be motivated in spite of low wages and complex nature of their work.

Staff recruitment, retention

Recruitment process is lengthy and results in many posts remaining vacant for a long time. Because of low salaries, absence of social security measures and attractive options available in the market, MS does not attract or retain high calibre staff. Presence of any retention mechanisms is not reported from any of the state. Staff attrition rates and vacancies are reported to be high in all states except in Assam and Jharkhand.

Table: Vacancy position	
State	Status of vacancies
Bihar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11 districts have Accounts Officers post vacant• 70 positions have been filled recently
Uttarakhand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More than 50% posts are vacant at all levels.• Attrition rates among the new staff is very high
Karnataka	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of vacancies at various levels – 7 out of 17 at State office & 75 out of 383 at District office.• Critical vacancies are 17 CRPs, 27 Sahyaginis & 10 JRP posts are vacant among others.

Capacity Building of Staff

There is a broad understanding of results framework in all the states. However, reporting based on the framework is not understood clearly or found to be difficult by staff at different levels in several states.

Annual work plan/ budget formulation

Annual work plans are prepared on time with inputs from all levels of MS functionaries (bottom up approach), and submitted for approval to NPO. Delay in release of funds from NPO is reported from all states, thus delay in disbursement to the district offices remain a concern.

Monitoring and tracking of budget and expenditure has become more systematic and financial management and procurement policy in place with inputs received from the NPO. However in some states, the financial management capabilities especially at the state levels need to be strengthened.

Data capturing and MIS

The capacity to capture the data and convert it into a robust MIS system is missing in all the states. Lots of information is captured about the activities of MS, however, this is not converted into usable data, and comprehensible reports / MIS. Thus, the availability of reliable data for planning and review for improvements of mid-course corrections remain elusive.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Feedback mechanisms are present in all states, although varying between state to state from 360 degree feedback in Karnataka to self –assessment in Uttarakhand. The feedback is linked to capacity building and training needs assessment. Appraisal systems are systematic and take places annually.

State Resource Centre/ Gender Resource Centre (SRC/ GRC)

SRCs can play a strategic role in providing a strong research base and evidence to facilitate policy formulation. However, the objectives of SRCs are not clear or not worked out in any of the state eg. Uttarakhand has an independent SRC, but no dedicated staff. There is overlap of the role of Gender Resource Person and consultant. The quality and capacity of GRCs need to be reviewed.

To summarise the key Issues are high attrition rate, low staff salaries and absence of social security systems, recruitment and retention mechanisms, absence of MIS at all levels of MS programme and the need to boost utilisation of funds vs the approved budget that remains relatively low in all the states

Role of NPO

The role of NPO that includes both the National Office and the National Resource group is critical in providing strategic leadership, direction and support to enable MS state offices work in tandem with other state agencies. The Mission appreciates the adherence to the principle of decentralization and autonomy of State Societies.

However, the nature and role of the MS programme has changed in time with greater convergence and linkages with various government departments and programmes being forged. In this context, State programmes are at times unable to resolve or cope with some thorny issues of mutual understanding and coordination. The autonomous structure of MS vis-à-vis NPO and relationship with SSA and State Education Department makes the structure complicated and delays the programmatic support. In instances where State offices are not able to resolve some issues on their own or the problems are persisting for a long time, it is imperative that the NPO to take a proactive lead in resolution of issues so that the programme does not get adversely affected.

The assumption here of course is that the NPO in particular will be sufficiently staffed to be able to provide such strategic support. Given the current very lean staffing structure this would not be possible. It may be useful to relook at the staffing patterns at the NPO in the light of the scale of the programme and make appropriate allocations for this purpose.

Recommendations

- Enhancement of honoraria , provision of service benefits need urgent attention and need to be brought on par with other national programmes
- In many states MS hires staff on annual contracts which is affecting the work of the staff. The Mission recommends that contracts should be of longer duration of at least 2 year tenure.
- Eligibility criteria for various positions, especially at the sahayogini level need attention. MS needs to consider making flexible some of the educational requirements so that local women without formal certification but with good reading and writing skills can be recruited. In the past this has been the strength of MS—bringing in enthusiastic committed women to work for the programme and enabling them to improve their educational qualifications.
- Capacity building of staff and identification of trainings using external resources as well should be stressed rather than depending solely on internal resources.
- The structure, role and quality of output from State Resource Centres/ Gender Resource Centres needs to be reviewed.

VIII. Financial Management

VIII.1 Budgets, Releases and Utilization:

Statewise / Yearwise budgets, releases and utilization over the 11th plan period is as per following tables:

Mahila Samakhya -11th Plan Budget v/s expenses (Rs in akhs)

S.No	Name of state	2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		Total for five years		Five year Utilization
		AWP&B	Exp.	AWP&B	Exp.	AWP&B	Exp.	AWP&B	Exp.	AWP&B	Exp.	Budget	Exp.	
1	Andhra Pradesh	680	441	570	525	840	602	730	682	802	814	3,622	3,065	84.61%
2	Assam	545	314	583	396	768	417	522	509	572	455	2,991	2,091	69.93%
3	Bihar	731	381	754	518	900	542	626	479	687	531	3,698	2,451	66.27%
4	Chhatisgarh	0	0	0	19	256	74	169	83	186	346	612	523	85.43%
5	Gujarat	300	169	336	206	538	231	348	265	440	112	1,962	983	50.11%
6	Jharkhand	345	127	837	434	760	364	656	480	651	529	3,249	1,934	59.54%
7	Karnataka	695	509	782	648	795	502	700	627	810	672	3,783	2,958	78.18%
8	Kerala	185	83	254	181	416	238	304	282	340	299	1,499	1,083	72.27%
9	U.P	880	692	1,309	841	1,605	876	883	692	897	717	5,576	3,818	68.48%
10	Uttarkhand	384	326	538	387	593	459	526	416	467	393	2,509	1,980	78.94%
TOTAL		4,746	3,043	5,964	4,155	7,473	4,304	5,463	4,516	5,853	4,869	29,500	20,886	70.80%

Mahila Samakhya - 11th Plan Amounts Released against Annual Work Plan and Budgets

S.No	Name of MS state	2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
		AWP&B	Releases	AWP&B	Releases	AWP&B	Releases	AWP&B	Releases	AWP&B	Releases
1	Andhra Pradesh	680	500	570	485	840	522	730	642	802	736
2	Assam	545	350	583	342	768	480	522	394	572	428
3	Bihar	731	500	754	347	900	544	626	541	687	599
4	Chhatisgarh	0	15	0	22	256	100	169	93	186	74
5	Gujarat	300	230	336	175	538	250	348	222	440	368
6	Jharkhand	345	105	837	425	760	311	656	576	651	520
7	Karnataka	695	550	782	577	795	453	700	632	810	762
8	Kerala	185	50	254	153	416	211	304	293	340	317
9	U.P	880	735	1,309	855	1,605	854	883	760	897	735
10	M.P				15						
11	Uttarkhand	384	335	538	370	593	450	526	419	467	434
TOTAL		4,746	3,370	5,964	3,766	7,473	4,175	5,463	4,573	5,853	4,973
Release as % of Budgets			71.01%		63.13%		55.87%		83.70%		84.97%

Cumulative utilization is about 71% against the cumulative budget for the five year period. However, it ranges from as low as 50% for Gujarat to 85% for Andhra Pradesh and Chattisgarh. Utilization has substantially improved up from about 58% in 2009-10 to about 83% in FY 10-11 and 11-12. The position of 'release of funds' from GoI to the states has improved from 56% in 2009-10 to 85% in 2011-12. The trend indicates substantial improvement in overall funds release and utilization. NPO support in financial management , where available, has been appreciated. This seems to have contributed to the betterment in funds release and utilization. Uttarakhand reports the need for strengthened NPO support for improving funds utilization.

The overall allocation for the MS programme as per the XI plan document was Rs. 20,960 lacs. Utilization at Rs.20,886 lacs is almost 100% of this allocation.

VIII.2 Status of Audit and Compliances

NPO reports that statutory audit for all 10 states for the year 2011-12 have been completed and reports received. The process for appointment of auditors for the current year (2012-13) is currently on. This is directly handled by the state offices. States visited have reported that the internal audits for 2012-13 are in progress (having completed it for the first half of the year). In Karnataka, the audit reports for the first half year were still under scrutiny and pending distribution to the relevant districts. Management responses had not yet been compiled. The Mission did not observe a systematic way of tracking compliance with audit observations. In the absence of such a system it is difficult to provide a status of outstanding observations.

VIII.3 Accounting and Book Keeping

Accounting and book keeping is on Tally. However it was noted that parallel cash books and other subsidiary registers are also maintained at most places across the implementation structure. At some places these do not tally with the ARIES balances. The Mission strongly feels that parallel systems should be avoided. Maintenance of Accounts on Tally with proper checks and balances as per the

finance manual and delegation of financial authority will provide the necessary assurance of correctness.

None of the states visited reported any large or old outstanding advances or loss of funds through misappropriation or theft etc.

Shortage of accounts staff was reported by a number of states at various levels. This has the potential of affecting the completion and quality of accounts. Reasons for such staff shortage should be looked into and addressed as expeditiously possible. On the other hand, many staffs continue to hold accounts positions for very long durations at the same place. This has inherent control risks.

VIII.4 Key issues and recommendation

1. There is shortage of accounts staff at many locations. The mission recommends that focused effort is put in to address staffing gaps especially in accounts and finance. The Mission also recommends exploring the possibility of implementing a rotation policy for accounts staff as an additional control measure.
2. State offices appreciate the support provided by NPO in budget planning and monitoring. The Mission recommends that NPO sustains this support to improve planning, monitoring and utilization across all states.
3. Parallel systems of book keeping (cash book and advance registers etc) are being maintained at most locations. The Mission recommends a quick review of the book keeping system to identify and eliminate parallel records.
4. A systematic way of tracking management responses for 'internal audit' observations does not exist. It is not clear if the NPO gets involved in clearing management responses. The Mission recommends that the NPO develops a system in consultation with states for tracking and disposal internal audit observations.

Section 3: State Reports

Assam Mahila (Samata) Samakhya

Acknowledgement

The two member Joint Review Mission team Dr. Kanchan Mathur and Mr. Sanjay Sharma acknowledge with gratitude the support and help extended by the AMSS team (from field to state level) for their warm hospitality, time and facilitating meetings and interactions at different levels and forums. We also wish to thank the state and district level officials from Department of Elementary Education, Department of Adult Education and representatives from partner organizations/networks for their time and valuable inputs during the discussions. The JRM has been an energizing experience for us due to the rich interactions with all the women and girls in both the districts visited by us despite the language barrier and translations. We thank them all for the time they spared us and for the insights they provided.

The team members arrived in Guwahati on March 13th 2013. In the post lunch session the State Project Director (SPD) along with her team at the State Office updated the team members about the current status of the programme and various processes adopted and achievements made so far. On day II the team members visited eastern district of Morigaon, day III was spent visiting Darrang district which falls in the middle of the state. The rationale for the selection of districts was made by the AMSS on the basis of the fact that the districts fall in Phase -I of the programme and would provide an insight into the processes put in place by the AMSS and because prior to the visit of the present team no JRM had visited them. In Morigaon district the Mission members visited the Mahila Shikshan Kendra (MSK) and interacted with the students, teachers, staff. Later they had brief meetings at the District Implementation Unit office with the cluster resource persons, State Management Committee members, elected women representatives, members of one Nari Adalats and counseling centres and Kishori Manch. Post lunch the Mission members travelled to the field and had discussions with members of Janakalyan Bhurbandha block federation and the Deepshikha Mahila Samata Sangha in Doloisuba village.

In Darrang district the Mission members met the DIU staff, had discussions with district level officials especially representatives of different government and NGOs and met the cluster level resource persons (CLRPs) at the district office. The team then left for the field where 3 main meetings were organised. The first meeting was with the federation members of the Paschim Mangaldoi Kamlakunwari block Mahasangha. The second meeting was with the members of Milijuli Sangha of Chotathiabari village and the last meeting with the Nari Adalat of Sipajahr block, Dipila panchayat, Dipila village.²

On day-IV the mission members met representatives from selected partner organizations/network viz VHAI, UNICEF, SSA, Regional office NIPPCD, State Resource Centre, SCERT, Centre for Women's Studies Reach India, etc.

On the last day the Mission members held a state wrap up meeting at the AMSS office, Guwahati. The chairperson of AMSS was unable to attend the meeting. However, the Secretary Education, one EC member of the MS and one NRG members attended the meeting, The entire State office team was present in this meeting. The JRM Mission members shared the key findings related to the programme emerging from their visit as well as their recommendations with the group.

Introduction

1. Coverage and Outreach of AMSS



AMSS was registered in 1996 and the field level interventions started in 1997. Initially work was initiated in only three districts of the state. In the last 15 years the programme has spread to 12 districts covering 3158 villages of 57 development blocks. Three new districts (Lakhimpur,

² Please refer to Annex 1 for Itinerary with list of people met

Dibrugarh and Barpeta) have been introduced in the last five years under the XI FYP.

Details of geographical coverage during XI Five year Plans are given below:

Year	No. of district covered	Name of District
1996 - 1997	3	Darrang, Dhubri, Morigaon
1997 - 1998	2	Sonitpur, Goalpara
2003 - 2004	1	Nagaon
2006 - 2007	3	Tinsukia, Dhemaji, Udalguri
2008 - 2009	1	Dibrugarh
2009-2010	2	Barpeta, Lakhimpur
Total	12	

With the XI FYP, the key expansion strategy was to work in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB) herein DISE data was taken as the basis for selection. Other criteria for selection of areas were :

- Flood ravaged areas
- Districts with discriminatory practices against women and girl child.
- High dropout rate and poor attendance of girls in primary schools.
- Presence of tea/minority communities etc.

While selecting the new districts, AMSS has also considered reaching out to different regions (upper, lower and central Assam) and proximity of the existing districts to promote convergence and mutual learning among district programmes.

AMSS is using a cluster approach to cover approximately 10 % of villages. The programme has currently reached out to the most backward and marginalized women from the SC/ST, OBC and Tea tribes and from the Muslim community and where there are gender gaps in education and high incidence of violence and trafficking.

Details of the community wise membership of disadvantaged groups in Sanghas are as under:

Membership pattern in Sanghas	
SC members	11.4%
ST members	26%
OBC	31%
General including muslims	31.6%

Building leadership amongst poor & marginalized women and autonomy of women's collectives/Federation

- 70% BPL category women associated with sangha
- 182 villages covered in char areas(Riverine area)
- 306 Tea garden lines(Habitation of tea community) covered
- 16 ST dominated Blocks covered
- 12 Muslim minority dominated blocks covered
- 1 SC dominated block covered in one MS district. (Though we covered 11.4% SC women but they are scattered in different blocks)

Given the socio-economic and political situation of the State the AMSS feels that there is a need for expansion of its interventions. It is, therefore, planning to expand the programme in 25 blocks of 5 new districts under XII FY Plan. A proposal in this regards has already submitted to GoI for approval.

Key achievements

- Strong sangha and federations formed at village, panchayat and block level
- Participation of marginalized communities has been ensured to a large extent
- Strong institutional mechanisms have been put in place for redressal of VAW/girls through the Nari Adalats
- Convergence with government programmes like SSA, Shakshar Bharat, NRHM and Adult education is evident
- Strong linkages with some partner organizations/networks like UNICEF, VHAI, SWC, NIPPCD etc have been established
- AMSS team at both the state and district level has a good understanding of the programme and displays commitment

Key issues/concerns

- Programme impact is not uniform across the districts
- Withdrawal of the MS from 14 identified blocks and expansion of the programme to 5 districts over the next five years needs to be planned with caution

- Low visibility of the programme at the state level was expressed by some partners
- Low salary of staff and functionaries as well as lack of social security benefits i.e. PF/insurance
- Financial management systems are weak causing delays in transfer of funds from GoI to the state and downwards to the district
- Gender resource centre needs to be strengthened with adequate staff and budget

II. Extent of realization of the Results (as per Revised Results Framework)

1. Expanding the outreach to include more women and girls of most marginalized groups

At present the total number of Sanghas in the state is 3612 and the total numbers of block federations is 26 in 12 districts. The Sanghas are formed in the areas that are socially and economically backward. Through these collectives the programme has been able to reach out to 190465 women across the 12 districts

Details of geographical coverage of MS in the state during XI Five year Plans are given below :

Geographical coverage details			
	<i>March 2007</i>	<i>Progress in XI FY Plan</i>	<i>Progress up to Dec 12</i>
Districts			
Development Block	37	20	57
Villages	2448	1453	3612
Blocks/federations	14	12	26*
Sanghas	2448	1453	3612
Women covered	125354	65111	190465

At the block level federations of Sanghas (Maha Sanghas) are formed to give a collective strength to the Sanghas and to work as advocacy and pressure groups to deal with issues like health, education, domestic violence, discrimination and access to delivery services.

Some of the other forums which were later introduced at the Sangha level as an extended arm to support various activities at the village, panchayat and block levels are the School Management Committees, Kishori Manch and Naari Adalats.

Ranking of Sanghas			
Time	March'11	March'12	Dec 12
Strong	1263	1391	1562
Medium	1030	977	1030
Weak	1005	1051	884
Newly formed	26	45	136
		Grand total:	3324

As the Table shows the sanghas are categorized into three categories – weak, medium and strong. Out of the total 3324 sanghas reviewed in

December 2012, 1562 are strong, 1030 are medium and 884 are ranked as weak. This categorization is done at the federation level and gets consolidated at the district level (monthly) and at State level on quarterly basis by the AMSS.

While considering programme guidelines AMSS does not take economic status of women as a criteria for selection and Sanghas membership was open for all women in the area (31 percent Sangha women belong to the General category) with a belief that increase in number would strengthen the women's groups and prevent discrimination and violence against them. Number of members in one sangha is also flexible depending upon the local context a sangha could have 30 to 100 members.

Women reported that they feel empowered to be a part of the sanghas despite initial pressures and resistance from their families. According to them, Sanghas have enhanced their status in family and increased respectability in the community, has impacted their confidence levels, mobility, exposure and self esteem. Women who joined Sangha at a later stage said that they have been attracted to join Sanghas because of their 'high visibility' and power to influence key issues concerning women.. There are several successful examples where women have received justice because of Sanghas which is also one of the motivating factors for women to connect with Sanghas

However, there are many factors which hinder women's participation and inclusion in the Sanghas like – wage labourers not finding time to attend meetings regularly, responsibilities at home/household work, limitation of time and in some cases pressure from family members.

Recommendations

- There are about 10-15 percent members at various levels who are not participating in sanghas actively due to various reasons cited above. JRM review team recommends that AMSS develops a strategy to ensure maximum inclusion of women members in the Sanghas.

- The team did not observe a strong caste based division in the Assamese society but a large number of sangha members belong to SC/ST/OBC and minority community. To ensure their equal 'voice' and inclusiveness in sangha processes the AMMS should evolve mechanisms whereby such communities are ensured equal participation in sangha meetings.
- Out of a total of 3324 sanghas 1914 sangha are ranked as medium or weak which highlights the need for greater inputs and handholding support to these sanghas.
- Five out of twenty six block federations are as yet not registered. The AMMS has to facilitate the process of their registration.

2. Facilitate increased information and access of women and girls to entitlements through various methods of capacity building

The JRM team asked the sangha and federation women several questions to assess their understanding on issues related to their entitlements including access to existing government schemes/ programmes related to health, education, PDS, RTI, RTE, PRIs, MGNREGS and social security schemes like widow and old age pension. The women were also asked to respond to issues related to violence against women especially the PWDV Act and rights guaranteed by the constitution. The sangha and federation women had a good understanding of issues and their knowledge and information levels regarding the same were found to be moderate to high. It is apparent that the four core committees formed within the AMSS i.e. education, health, legal and social issues and economic and self reliance committees help create awareness and increase information levels of women/girls on access to their entitlements and service delivery. Frontline service delivery providers like Asha sahyogini, ANM, AWW etc are invited to the meetings for better convergence and to ensure access to service delivery. The sangha women have also learnt to raise their voice against existing anomalies to ensure better access to service delivery (See box).

Box 1: Anomalies in PDS

The women of the sangha found several anomalies in the distribution of rice, kerosene and sugar under the PDS scheme. The village community was invariably receiving lesser quantity than their entitlement. Also if the poor people could not buy the goods within a couple of days of the supplies arriving in the village they were informed that the supplies were no longer in stock.. The women first

demanded fair distribution of goods under the scheme. When there was no response to their demand from the authorities they held several meetings and decided to take out a rally and gave a petition to the District Collector. This finally led to regularity in supply of goods and also women writing about the supply of goods received and the prices of each item on the walls of the fair price shop. Similar incidents have taken place in Goalpara, Darrang, Dhubri, Dhemaji and Nagaon districts

Discussions with sanghas and federations women revealed that several trainings have been provided to them including health and sexual and reproductive health, gender and sexuality, gender sensitization training, gender based violence, rights issues, RTE, RTI, advocacy and lobbying etc. The AMSS team has made a concerted effort to ensure that women at all levels receive these trainings. They have sought the help of external resource persons as well as resource agencies in conducting trainings and developing training modules and materials. The knowledge level of women regarding the above issues was found to be fairly high. This can be taken as an indicator of success of trainings. However, due to paucity of time the JRM team could not review any of the training modules or meet with the external resource persons.

Other observations and Recommendations

- Federation members requested they be provided training on livelihoods and linkages with other institutions. AMSS should develop a strategy for the financial enhancement of the groups. This would also go a long way in sustaining the groups post withdrawal of MS.
- AMSS could tap the existing resource available under the NRLM and employment generation schemes of the state department to ensure linkage of sanghas with these programmes

3. Facilitating increased participation of women and girls in formal and informal education

AMSS is involved in several interventions like literacy camps, Jagriti Kendras, MSKs, SVKs, Kishori manchs, NPEGEL and programmes on RTE which have been providing educational opportunities to women and girls to facilitate their participation in formal and non formal educational processes. Not only have these efforts enhanced the

academic base for women and girls but have also provided comprehensive information on a range of extra-academic issues.

In keeping with demand for MSKs, one new MSKs (Nabajivan Mahila Shiksha Kendra) has been opened in last one year (2012). Since the enforcement of RTE in 2009 the MSKs have been converted into residential special training centres (RSTC) where learning materials/books prepared by SSA are used. At present the number of girls per MSK is 30. And the budgetary head for food items has been increased as per KGBV norms to Rs 30 per girl per day.

Though no NPEGL centres were running in the districts visited by the JRM team the state AMSS informed that it is implementing NPEGEL scheme in 55 clusters of 6 blocks covering 900 schools. There has been increase in girls' participation in self defence activities because of the karate/self defence training imparted. The major intervention of MS is to provide life-skill education, decision making, negotiating, goal setting and coping with socio-psychological needs of adolescent girls. Besides this, other skills related to repairing bicycles, and tube-wells are also imparted.

The team was informed about a set of three primers, developed by Adult Education Department which was being used earlier by the AMSS to enhance learning skills of sangha women in accelerated learning mode. Based on field experiences these primers were consolidated into one by the Adult Education Department that made them more accessible, easy to handle and readable. One supplementary reader was developed by AMSS to include components on gender and legal issues.

Some sangha women have become members of village education committees (VEC) and are members of formal school level committees where they ensure effective delivery of the educational services viz. teachers' regularity, quality of MDM etc. Gender training is also being imparted to VEC, SMC and members of Mother's Group.

The AMSS has been involved in the literacy drive for adult women. Sangha women expressed the need to be literate for many reasons i.e. to help their children study, do calculations so they decided that each of the literate sangha women would teach a few non-literate sangha women in jagriti kendras. The AMSS encouraged them to use the primers prepared by Adult Education department.

The Shakshar Bharat Mission covers 7 districts of AMSS. Therefore no budgetary provision is made for these districts for jagriti kendras. Instead thrust is being given for taking the resources and monitoring the sangha women's involvement in the literacy drive.

Kishori Manch is an offshoot of mahila sanhgas as the sangha women felt the need for empowerment of their daughters. Now this is a regular strategy used by the AMSS for empowerment of adolescent girls. At present there are 1477 kishori manch's where 36869 kishori's are involved. AMSS organizes life skill trainings for these girls. To date 6543 girls have taken this training.

Another structure to reach 6-12 age group children is the shishu vikas Kendras (SVK) for both school and non-school going children for their all round development. Kishoris are taking an initiative to run the SVKs.

Under the RTE during 2010-11 with the financial support of SSA the AMSS has conducted training for 62,896 mother group members on RTE and equity issues. During 2012 AMSS also organized awareness programme for SMC women members on the same.

With its limited coverage, AMSS could not have changed the overall educational status of the district but it has certainly made a definite shift in the non-formal educational system and has contributed to the quality of school level service delivery

Recommendations

- Sustainability of MSKs needs to be ensured. One option that could be explored is the merger of MSKs with existing educational programmes. Also greater effort is required at the community level to reduced the number of drop outs.
- Retention of women in Jagriti Kendra and sustaining their interest is a major challenge for the programme. There is a need to enhance the literacy skills of women in Jagriti Kendras on a continuous basis in order to ensure access to better life opportunities.
- Despite motivational discussions with parents, many girls do not get mainstreamed or drop out of schools before completing primary education. Socially disaggregated data is available with the office, but they have not analysed dropping out trend on the basis of social categories. Such analysis would help the functionaries to define targeted strategies for particular pockets and community where lesser girls are mainstreaming
- Kishori sanghas are seen as the second generation of sanghas. But presently more inputs need to be given to them regarding gender and life skills. This has been a constraint for the programme as there is no specific budget line for training of girl child.
- There is a need for organizing refresher trainings on leadership, gender, documentation and life skills for women and girls in different programmes as the last round of trainings on these issues was organized around four years back.

4. Building leadership of most marginalized women and autonomy of women's collectives

A well thought out process has been applied to establish sanghas and federations as democratic and sustainable institutions at the village and block levels. The AMSS team has ensured following all due processes like - selection of members, rotation of executive councils to build a strong and sustainable institution at the ground level. The institutional processes of these federations have been discussed during the State level Sangha Convention in 2006-07. Thereafter four issue-wise sub-committees were formed on Education, Health, Legal Issues and Economic Empowerment to ensure effective planning and monitoring at the federation level. A series of workshops have been conducted and handholding has been done on issues like- group formation, data

collection, report writing, information on government schemes , grant management and project development. AMSS has also supported exposure visits of the group members to other nearby districts to learn the working of successful federations. In the year 2011-11, based on recommendations of the last JRM, a role demarcation workshop was organized at the state level to clarify the roles of different level structures.

The state unit of AMSS has identified 14 such block federation which have reached near self sustainability level and can operate independently without much support. There is a plan to withdraw from such 14 federations and make them autonomous by September 2013.

In last few years a series of capacity building exercises have been done to capacitate the sanghas and federations on women's empowerment issues and promote community leadership for collective action. These trainings have paved good results in terms of building the confidence of members and represent women's issues in various forums. Some of the initial successes are:

- Public hearings on issues like PDS, MGNREGS, Dowry and enrollment of out of school children.
- Special meeting of panchyat were organized on women and girl child issues In Darrang and Morigoan districts.
- Thirty eight women were selected as para legal volunteers under legal service authority.
- Six federations were selected to organize mass campaigns on RTE with SSA support.
- Four community women received national leadership Award from National Foundation of India.
- 35 data exhibitions organized.
- Two Federations selected as field NGOs under NRHM

Sangha women in public domain/ collective leadership	
Sangha participated in Gram sabha	1990
women Elected PRI	524(503 - last elections)
Sangha members in VCDC	123
Sangha involved in MDM	2953
Sangha working on PDS issues	2581
Sanghas involved in TSC	2413
Saga women as SMC Members	8006

The JRM team visited two districts (Darrang and Morigoan) and observed that Sanghas and federations have a good understanding on their roles. However, the team felt that the level of confidence of members to raise issues is not uniform across the districts despite of same inputs and project duration. In

Darrang the groups were vibrant compared to the groups in Morigoan. The understanding and articulation of issues among sangha/federation members in Darrang was visibly better than in those of Morigoan.

Key issues and Recommendations

- AMSS should undertake a systematic study to understand the reasons for non-uniformity of the programme across districts.
- There was a high level of enthusiasm due to the success of the data exhibitions. Such efforts should continue on a regular basis and replicated in all districts.
- There is a need to strengthen the convergence of Nari Adalats with legal service authority to further strengthen their understanding/action on legal issues

5. Women's agency to challenge social inequality and break discriminatory social practices

Sangha women are involved with issues of violence and discrimination against women. They have primarily been working on witch hunting, trafficking of women/girls for marriage and prostitution, domestic violence, dowry demand and murder, rape and child labour. The collective strength of the sangha has enabled them to put up a resistance to social inequalities existing at the level of the family and community. Many of the women who were earlier facing battery at the hands of the husband, fathers,

father-in-law or sons have begun putting up a strong resistance to it as they are assured of the backing of the collective. Many women reported that their spatial mobility has been enhanced because they attend sangha meetings in different villages/blocks and have learnt to spend their small savings/earnings on their own needs. Overall they seemed to display high confidence levels and an ability to take decisions and make informed choices regarding their own bodies and health.

Nari Adalats have emerged as strong forums to address issues of violence against women at the panchayat level. The Nari Adalat is a free/low cost justice forum for rural women. It is an alternative to the traditional judicial system, a women's court that arbitrates on cases of VAW and consists of representatives from several village collectives. The NA meets at a specific date and place every month. The decision of the NA has no legal binding, however, the mode of its dealing with issues has made legal mechanisms rely on it or take its support on some types of cases. The Nari Adalats in the state have worked systematically on issues of child marriage, polygamy, illegitimate relationships, domestic violence, dowry related torture, trafficking and witch hunting.

When the team visited Dipila gramya Nari Adalat in Sipajahr block (Darrang district) they were greeted by the Nari Adalat. The team was surprised to see one woman dressed in a man's clothes. The welcome was quickly followed by a role play where the same woman enacted the role of a drunkard husband who beat up his wife regularly. Here his mother asked him to stop beating the wife by informing him about the setting up of the Nari Adalat and later threatened him of dire consequences at the hands of the latter if did not do so.

Box 2: Nari Adalat's fight for property rights

Champa Deka the wife of Sadullah Deka of Sholmari , Kochgaon in Morigaon district lost her husband After the demise of her husband, Champa's brother -in-law Ajit Deka started torturing her physically and mentally. He even captured Champa's property, which was her only source of income. Finding no other way Champa approached the Nari-adalat for help. She registered a case in the Nari-adalat stating all the details. The

women of Nari adalat held several meetings with both the parties and tried to convince Ajit that he was wrong. The Nari-adalat members also collected the foodgrain growing on Champa's field and handed it to her. After repeated counseling Ajit agreed to return Champa's fields back to her.

To ensure women's effective participation in community based institutions and local governance institutions sangha women also stood for panchayat elections and a total of 542 sangha women were elected in the last panchayat elections held in January 2012. Almost all of the sangha women reported having cast their vote in the recent elections. Overall 1990 federations have participated in panchayat meetings.

Key issues and recommendations

- There is a need to enhance the knowledge levels of Nari Adalat members on legal provisions. AMSS should organize a series of trainings on legal issues and redressal systems for all sangha/federation women and members of Nari Adalats
- The reach of the Nari Adalat is up to a certain class only. Most of the cases pertaining to upper class /rich families unleashing violence on lower class/poor women are still outside the purview of the Nari Adalat.
- In many cases the success of the decision of the Nari adalat is dependent on the support received from the Officer in In-charge at the local police station. Some mechanisms need to be developed to ensure that action on cases does not get hampered due to the change of individuals
- No clear linkages seem to have been established with livelihood and nutrition programmes despite a demand from the women in sanghas and federations
- Although the sangha women reported that frontline service providers (Asha, AWW, ANM etc) attend their meetings. However, no clear evidence of the joint planning and monitoring of services was found

III. MS institutional processes

AMSS follows a strong programme management system to facilitate the objectives of the programme on the basis of the FYPs. The MS approach in Assam was found

decentralized and bottom up, women's federations plan their own agenda and have autonomy to implement the programmes by their own.

The AMSS recruit staff at state, district and block levels. For state and district level recruitment a committee consisting of representative of state government, of NRG and of GoI take part in the selection process, whereas for district and below the SPD and Govt of Assam nominees recruitment personnel. Staff attrition is minimal with only one position of a consultant vacant at state level.

Details of staff status is given below:

	Sanctioned	Post filled up	Vacant Post
State office	15	14	1 (consultant)
District office	89	88	1 (DRP)
/ CRLPs	240	240	0
	344	342	2

The SPD reported that AMSS has sufficient number of positions to effectively deliver the activities planned under the work-plan but they need

more training and capacity building on areas like developing collaboration and linkages, and communication skills to increase AMSS visibility at state level. With the introduction of the Gender resource centre the AMSS has additional recourses to hire need based consultants in the specialized areas.

Interactions with staff revealed that work culture and environment at AMSS is good and job satisfaction is high, although there are issues related to low wages and absence of other social security benefits insurance and pension.

AMSS does not have any staff retention policy. The staff working with AMSS is experienced, although the attrition turn out rate is not very high but the society should think of developing a policy to retain the staff working with them since long. AMSS should also develop an appraisal system at all level which is currently absent.

The feedback, reflection and monitoring system in AMSS is also effective. There is a provision of monthly review meetings at state, district and block levels in addition to the field visits. These review meetings are not only for planning & documentation rather helps to understand the issues and build capacity. State Review Meeting is held once in two months and is attended by the state and district units. The State Resource Persons

and consultant working at the state level are assigned the responsibility of 3-4 districts to provide handholding support to the district units.

The annual work-plan and budget of AMSS is in accordance with the national guidelines. A participatory and need based approach based on the requirement of the programmes is followed. District units are free to choose the interventions and develop their plans in consultations with CLRPs and federations. The annual plan and budget also includes expansion/ withdrawal strategy and budget requirement for additional recourses. The approval of the EC is sought in each financial year and reappropriation is done according to GOI guideline. The annual work plan and budget of year 2012-13 has focused on the trainings, grants to federations to work on issues identified by them, and for strengthening SRC. Based on last year's experience AMSS is now planning to strengthen autonomous federations, MIS, convergence with different partners/organizations and organise special drives on issues like PDS and MNREGA in 2013-14 plan.

Key issues and recommendations

- AMSS needs to plan an HR policy to critically think of HR needs and plan to develop staff capacities for delivering results. The policy should include retention of staff, salary and benefits and appraisal system to review the staff performance.
- The role of State resource persons and consultants seems to be overlapping. There is a need for greater clarity in their roles.
- There is a need to build the capacity of Gender Resource Centre. Some thought also need to be put into the functioning of the centre by providing additional resources on advocacy, networking, research and documentation and training. SRC should play a strategic role in providing a strong research base and evidence to facilitate policy formulation related to trafficking, witch hunting etc. in coordination with the State Women's Commission.
- The SPD and APD could play an important role by visiting the field on a regular basis apart from their regular work

IV. Convergence and resource support

AMSS has been converging with selected partner organizations/network viz. VHAI, UNICEF, SSA, Regional office NIPPCD, State Resource Centre, SCERT, Police department, Centre for Women's Studies etc. Although they have a good working relationship with all their partners they are closely associated with UNICEF and VHAI and SSA.

At the district level the DIU is working closely with the SSA, Shakshar Bharat, police department, district administration, handicraft and textile department and other NGOs.

While some partners see MS as an implementing agency other view them as a technical support organization for training and capacity building.

Most of the partner organisations at the State, district and block level were appreciative of the work the MS and expressed a willingness to work with MS in the future. However, they also asserted that a greater visibility of MS is required at the state level.

Key issues and Recommendations

- The issue of MS visibility at the state level needs to be clearly defined. Though JRM team feels that greater visibility at the state level could be counter productive the team recommends that the EC take an initiative to ensure that MS is involved in all policy discussions related to women's empowerment issues in the state.
- AMSS should have a policy for partnership policy to ensure that partnerships in small pockets should contribute to the overarching goal of women's empowerment.

V. Financial Management

The external Audit of the AMSS is carried out annually by a Chartered Accountant (CA) with permission from the Chairperson. The last audit for the period of 2011-12 revealed the need for greater capacity building of financial staff at state and district level. It also highlighted the need for improving financial records and timely submission of

expenditure statements. The AMSS team has complied with the audit demands and submitted it to the EC. At district level audits have been completed till 2011-12..

The account staff has received training on financial management and procurement by the national team and a local audit firm. The district level staff receives support from the state office on financial management and monitoring of records usually 3-4 times a year.

Year wise financial progress of AMSS in XI FYP			
Year	AWP &B (Rs)	Expd.	%Utilization
2007-08	54533000	31446547	76%
2008-09	58347000	39599923	89%
2009-10	76806000	41661207	79%
2010-11	52218000	39004499	77%
2011-12	57169000	45536457	80%

The AMSS reported a delay in receiving funds from GoI in the month of March 2013 which caused further delayed in transfer of funds to districts leading to a delay in disbursement of honorarium to staff and CLRPs.

In the last five years the AMSS has not been able to spend more than 89 percent of the total budget disbursed to them. The overall capacity for utilization of budgets is weak. For year 2012-13 they have been able to spend 5.05 Cr out of total INR 6.72 Cr allocated to them.

Key issues and recommendations

- Financial capacity of the state needs to be enhanced.
- Annual budgets need to be planned in better way to ensure 100 percent utilization of funds.

VI. Good practices and innovations

Stopping Early marriage

Early marriage and mismatched marriages are common in a few villages of Darrang district which are Muslim minority dominated. A young girl of 16 years was forced to marry a 60 year old girl man of the same community. The sangha women who received training on health became aware of the adverse impact of child marriage on the sexual and reproductive health of young girls. Some of the sangha women pledged not to marry their daughters at a young age. They also gave a letter to the *Kazi* of the community requesting him to not solemnize early marriages and informed the Commissioner and

the District Collector (DC) of the action taken by them. The DC issued an Order that any *Kazi* found solemnizing early marriages would be severely punished. There are many such cases where Sanhga women have taken initiative to stop early marriages.

Stopping child trafficking

The AMSS has been working with UNICEF support since 2007 on the issue of Child Protection in Sonitpur district of Assam. 25 GPs in 4 blocks were initially selected for intervention. The situation of unsafe migration and trafficking was intense and most of the touts (middlemen engaged in trafficking) lived in the villages here. The AMSS took an initiative to create awareness amongst the block and panchayat level federations on the issue of protection of girl child especially trafficking. The panchayat machinery adopted this issue in their agenda and paved the way for a community approach to address the issue. They began arranging programmes related to child protection on their own and the entire community including children both adolescent boys and girls, CBOs and government functionaries becoming involved with the issue and resulted in reduction in child trafficking in the area. The project has been replicated in 56 villages of Udalguri district.

Data exhibition

In the year 2009 a Data Exhibition was initiated with an objective of fostering a better understanding on effective planning and implementation, and to ensure active participation of the community in PRIs. Sanghas and panchayat federation women took the leading role in data collection. On a particular day, as decided by the sanghas, federation and community, data were exhibited either in community halls and/or schools or any other public places. Representatives from various government/non-government organizations were invited to see the exhibition. Sanhga women reported that in case data was not provided by the government functionaries they file an TRI for procuring the same. The data exhibition was a high point as it succeeded in underpinning the discrepancies in beneficiaries of various programmes listed by the

government and the women themselves. 35 data exhibitions have been organised to date.

VII. Conclusion

It is apparent that strong sangha and federations have been formed at village, panchayat and block level and participation of marginalized communities has been ensured to a large extent. The AMSS has succeeded in putting in place strong institutional mechanisms for redressal of issues of VAW/girls through the Nari Adalats. However, there is a need for advanced training on legal provisions and establishing linkages of Nari Adalats with the police and legal justice systems.

The four core committees on health, education, social and advocacy and economic self reliance formed at the sangha level help federations to effectively plan and monitor the activities. However, the JRM team suggests regular follow up of capacity building of the core groups to make them sustainable.

The AMSS seems to be having a good working relationship and convergence with other government programmes like SSA, Shakshar Bharat, NRHM and Adult education. They have also established linkages with partner organizations/networks like UNICEF, VHAI, SWC, NIPPPCD etc.

The JRM team found that the programme impact is not uniform across the districts and recommends that a study be commissioned to understand the reasons for the same.

Withdrawal of the AMSS from 14 identified blocks and expansion of the programme to 5 districts over the next five years needs to be planned with caution

The issue of MS visibility at the state level needs to be clearly defined. Though JRM team feels that greater visibility at the state level might be counterproductive the team recommends that the EC take an initiative to ensure that MS is involved in all policy discussions related to women's empowerment issues in the state.

Bihar Mahila Samakhya Society

Acknowledgement

The Joint Review Mission team members Dr. Shobhita Rajagopal (GOI nominee) and Dr. Karuna Onta (DFID nominee) are grateful to the Bihar Mahila Samakhya Society (BMSS) for facilitating the Review Mission from 13-17th March 2013. We would like to thank the Sangha/Federation women, girls in Mahila Shikshan Kendras and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, the District Project Coordinators and district teams in Rohtas and Kaimur and the Mahila Samakhya State team members who gave their time, shared their experiences and supported us to carry out this review. The interactions at all the levels were extremely energising and a learning experience. We are also grateful to the Secretary Bihar Education project Council, Government of Bihar for sharing his views on Mahila Samakhya with us.

Introduction

The Fourth Joint Review Mission of Mahila Samakhya visited Bihar from 13th March-17th March 2013. The two member team visited Rohtas and Kaimur districts as well as interacted with the BMSS, State team in Patna from 13-17th March. At the district level discussions were held with a range of stakeholders i.e. Sangha /Federation members, girls enrolled in KGBVs and MSKs, Kishori Manch, District Project Coordinators and DIU teams. At the State level meetings were also held with Secretary, Bihar Education Project Council, who is also the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Bihar Mahila Samakhya Society (see Annexure 1 for detailed list of persons).

This report presents the main findings of the JRM and puts forward some suggestions for the State team to consider and may help to consolidate future action and strategies

An Overview of State Mahila Samakhya (MS) Programme

Background of MS in the State and districts visited

Mahila Samakhya programme was launched in Bihar as a component of the Bihar Education Project (BEP) in 1992. In the beginning the project was initiated in four districts namely Sitamarhi, Rohtas, Ranchi and West Champaran. After 14 years of inception, MS in Bihar achieved an autonomous status in 2006 and the Bihar Mahila Samakhya Society was

established. The programme has been working towards empowering socially and economically marginalised women and ensuring their access to rights and entitlements. Empowerment of women is seen as a critical precondition for the participation of girls and women in the education process. Through the years MS has tried to address a range of issues- education, health/hygiene, violence against women, women's access to resources and changing discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls. The grassroots level processes have enabled Sangha women to challenge patriarchal norms and exploitative structures/practices and get their voices heard.

The report of the first JRM of MS in Bihar (2008) notes that *"the strength and distinguishing feature of MS in Bihar is putting education for girls and women at the centre and as a precondition for empowerment. The Jag Jagi Kendra exclusive to Bihar has proved to be successful in many ways. All the sanghas and federations that the Review team met asserted that education was a central part of their activities. The MS representatives claimed that Amas block in Gaya had attained 100% enrolment and retention. The quality of MS can be seen as dependant on nurturing womens and girls participation and capabilities over a long period. However MS faces a number of adverse geographical and infrastructure difficulties in operating in Bihar such as poor roads , lack of electricity , transport and modern communications. Some of the recommendations put forth by the first JRM included:*

- *Encourage Jagjagi activity; review funds available and if necessary increase budget to enable more JJ units*
- *Review team considered the indicators detailed for setting up Federations. These indicators deserve to be emulated in other states.*
- *Enable the programme to progress by filling up vacancies without further delay.*
- *Raise levels of remuneration for accounts and support staff*
- *Provided UNICEF can help identify NGO partners, MS to scale up its formal education activities for girls by monitoring and quality assuring standards of KGBVs and MSKs run by these partners.*

(State Report of MS JRM, 2008)

Coverage (data disaggregated by social category): Beginning with four districts MS is currently working in 21 districts out of 38 districts in Bihar. The expansion of MS has been carried out in 6 phases. In the year 2011-2012 there was an addition of three district, five blocks and 373 villages. In terms of womens collectives there was an increase of 411 collectives. Currently, MS is covering 119 blocks and 8040 villages of the State. The total number of Sangha women who are covered are 1,83, 670 of which 45 percent are Scheduled Caste; 4 percent Scheduled Tribe; 37 percent are Other Backward Castes /Backward Caste ; 11 percent belong to muslim minority and 3 percent belong to general/forward castes.

Major highlights of the programme in the districts visited:

Achievements: The JRM team visited two districts - Rohtas and Kaimur during the review. Rohtas was one of early districts where MS was introduced in 1992 and in Kaimur MS is being implemented since 2001. Both these districts fall in South Bihar³ and are drought prone areas(BMSS, Annual Report, 2011-12).

In both these districts it was evident that the women's groups (sanghas) were strong and their collective strength was clearly visible. There is a heightened awareness on Rights and Entitlements and the notion of gender justice is clearly articulated and visible both in action and behaviour. The women were confident, articulate, and fearless and demonstrated immense leadership qualities. They had raised their voice on all forms of discrimination and have been working as a pressure group. The Sangha /Federations have defined roles around social issues -health, education, VAW/ Legal issues, Panchayati Raj and economic empowerment. In Rohtas it was interesting to observe that the MS platform being shared by two generations- the mother-in-law and the daughters-in-law. The struggles of the first generation members of the Mahila Samoohs have made it easier for

³ According to Census 2011 the overall literacy rate in in Rohtas was recorded at 75.59 percent, with male and female literacy being 85.29 percent and 64.95 percent respectively. While adult sex ratio was recorded at 914, the child sex ratio dropped from 951 in 2001 to 925 in 2011. In Kaimur, the literacy rate in 2011 was recorded at 71.01 percent compared to 55.09 of 2001 and male and female literacy were 81.49 per cent and 59.56 percent respectively. The sex ratio in Kaimur, stood at 919 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 902 . The child sex ratio stood at 939 girls per 1000 boys compared to figure of 940 girls per 1000 boys of 2001 census data.

the daughters-in-law to join the movement. Women also shared that they have more say in decision making at the household level especially on issues related to girls education. MS had also prepared them to stand for Panchayat elections and many of the Sangha members got elected as independent candidates during the panchayat elections.

Education is seen as going beyond schooling and awareness on rights and entitlements as essential part of educational process. All girls in KGBVs/MSKs were articulate and aspired to pursue further education. Many examples were shared with the team of women/girls who studied in Jagjagi Kendras and have become achievers- Pushpa Rana is now a singer, another girl in Rohtas has been selected in the police etc.

As the programme has reached out to the most marginalised, there has been a breaking of caste barriers. One of the leading examples is of federation women (who are mostly from SC groups) have been contracted to cater food for 7000 persons during the Bihar Diwas programme as well as for the KGBV sports meet being held in Patna.' The women shared that today no one asks "*who has cooked the food*". The Sangha women the team met also shared that upper caste women also sought their help in cases of domestic violence. The womens groups have also expanded their livelihood options and pursued non traditional profession such as Handpump repair.

The BMSS has been networking and collaborating with several government departments/programmes and non-government agencies. These include departments like PHED, Education/SSA), MidDay Meal Scheme, Agriculture (Menthol farming), Rural development / MNREGA), Women and Child Development. The BMSS Annual Report 2011-12 of BMSS also notes that several federations have also initiated convergence programmes with NABARD, UNICEF and AJIVIKA Society. In Chibili sangha women were involved in the construction of the Village Resource centres- Mahila Kutir on government land.

The silence around issues of VAW has been broken and MS intervention in legal literacy has brought about awareness among women on issues of domestic violence. The Nari Adalats have been active in resolving local issues. The issues addressed include domestic violence,

rape, dowry, child marriage, trafficking and so on. Currently 46 Nari Adalats are functioning within MS.

Nine Federations have attained autonomous status and registered themselves as independent organizations in Rohtas, Sitamarhi, West Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Gaya, Sheohar, Bhojpur, Darbangha and Kaimur.

Over the years each District Implementation Unit as well the Federations have been involved in the Publication of various newsletters for information sharing. Publication of a rural newspaper Khabar Lahariya by MS Federation women in Sitamarhi and Sheohar has also helped in sharing information across MS districts.

The team observed that the commitment of the staff was high going beyond their tasks- some pointed out that they were ATMs (Any time machines). The current SPD is dynamic and has overall charge of the programme. She brings with her the experience of working at the district level. It was observed that field level functionaries had succeeded in competing for district and State level positions. Some of the functionaries had also been exposed to international experience.

The MS has been implementing Hygiene and Sanitation Promotion (HSP) programme in 3132 villages of 14 districts in the state with UNICEF support(Annual Report 2011-12). Women of Sangha during discussions reported to have organized various campaigns including global hand-washing day at the community level. Several MS villages had received 'Nirmal-Gram' award in 2012.

Key issues, concerns

The autonomous structure of Mahila Samakhya was based on the premise that there would be greater flexibility and openness in the non-government structure while drawing upon the legitimacy of the government. While the state MS has been able to support many activities at the field level in recent times several challenges have emerged. These include the near absence of regular monitoring by NPO/GOI or NRG and delayed programmatic support (for example: delayed fund release).

A concern articulated by both the field level functionaries and State team members was the relationship with BEP/SSA. As the BMSS is coordinating and running 105 of KGBVs in 13 districts and giving inputs in 1105 Model Cluster schools NPEGEL in 9 districts the SSA functionaries do not treat the MS functionaries as equal partners. The DPCs reported that the SSA functionaries treated them as subordinates despite show-casing MS successful interventions, whenever visits take place. MS feels that due recognition is not given by the state-level stakeholders. The MOU between the SSA and MS is often overlooked.

While there is a presence of the multiple women's groups in the village supported by other programs such as Jeevika and ICDS, the MS groups have restricted themselves to their own groups.

The engagement with men and boys seems to be confined within their own family members. Limited efforts have been made to engage with wider constituency of male members.

The Sangha members articulated that they sometimes had to use physical force to settle issues. This came up while discussing issues related to excessive alcohol consumption by men and women's efforts to destroy brewing of illicit liquor.

There seems to be a gap in a comprehensive understanding of Women Empowerment despite a wider space available.

The new areas of interventions need to be based on evidence based planning for example issue of declining sex ratio (0-6 years) and training. Networking with organisations with experience of working on this issue may help.

Convergence with line departments continues to be a critical area of concern at the state and district level.

The MS program coverage in relation to the available human resource is reported to be inadequate. Staff technical capacity was not updated. The State monitoring was also reported to be not of the required level.

Absence of social security for MS staff of all levels was expressed as a major concern. The Salary structure was also reported to be not at par with other similar program run in the state. This has led to high staff turn-over particularly of the technical staff i.e. accountants. It also has affects on their motivation and morale.

II. Extent of realization of the Results (as per Revised Results Framework)

Expanding outreach of the programme to reach more women and girls of most marginalised groups

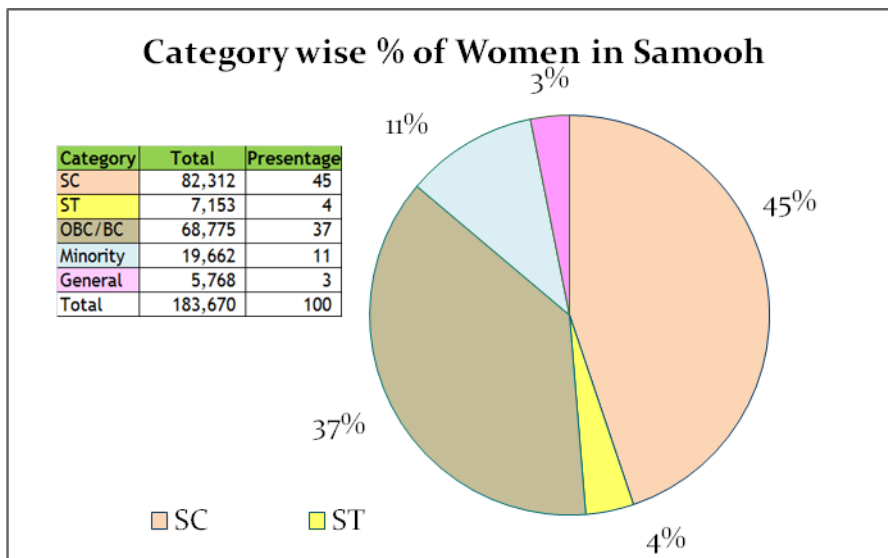
The pace of growth has been gradual and as per planning. Over a period of six years (2005-06 to 2012-13)MS spread from 9 districts to 21 districts covering 8040 villages. The number of women in the Samoohs/Sangha increased from 75686 in 2005-06 to 183670 in 2012-13. There are 13 Federations formed of which 9 have gained an autonomous status. There has been an eightfold increase in number of Kishori Sanghas from 1184 to 8674. The year-wise growth in terms of physical expansion is given in the Table1 below:

Table 1 :Coverage and Expansion of Mahila Samakhya

Year (up to)	District	Blocks	Panchayat	Village	Samooch	No. of Women in Samooch
2005-06	9	34	516	2,267	3,114	75,686
2006-07	13	43	610	2,975	3,496	79,779
2007-08	13	56	770	3,934	4,442	98,017
2008-09	13	71	1062	5,574	5,407	1,14,471
2009-10	14	72	1076	5,647	6,935	1,42,811
2010-11	14	73	1085	5,701	7,897	1,63,753
2011-12	17	77	1085	6,074	8,308	1,70,465
2012-13 Up to Dec-12	21	119	1618	7,996	9,217	1,83,670

As per the mandate of Mahila Samakhya, participation of women from the most marginalised communities is higher than other caste groups. The participation of women from forward caste is negligible. See Figure 1

Figure 1:Categorywise percentage of women in the Samooh



The field level observation and interactions with Sangha women revealed that most were drawn from the most marginalised communities –SC/ST and OBC/BC. The representation of Muslim minority women was however not proportionate to their population. According to the Sahyoginis/DPC the effort is to select women from among the poorest and most marginalised. In order to gain confidence of the women repeated interactions and home visits are made by the District teams. The initial discussions with these women largely focussed on their lives and issues of their interest and specific entitlements i.e PDS, literacy/ schooling and health issues and lack of mobility. The Sangha women shared that initially they faced resistance from their family members particularly the male members, and were stopped from going to meetings and were seen as transgressing the social norms/framework. But slowly they started stepping out and also gave up observing *purdah*. Gradually shared forum was created for women to get together and express their concerns. The women coming together as a united group has helped in break existing stereotypes and existing social norms.

The only concern is whether other women (upper caste who may be facing worse situations) are being excluded.

Facilitate increased information and access of women & girls to their entitlements, through various methods of capacity building

Capacity building/training is a key to the success of the MS programme. A range of trainings for the sangha women and other functionaries are organised by the District units as well as the State unit. The themes include- Gender and Education, Legal rights, Economic and Political Rights, Self Esteem and team building, RTE, RTI, CLTS, HIV-AIDS, MNREGA and so on. While the JRM team did not have an opportunity to observe a training, the impact can be assessed across all levels in increased self confidence, articulation and increased knowledge about rights and entitlements. For e.g. in village Dulhapur the sangha women (mostly SC and who are involved in wage labour) recounted how the local PDS shop never opened regularly and the shopkeeper would sell the rice and kerosene in the open market. When it did open, the shopkeeper would throw their kerosene cans and said he wouldn't supply them kerosene and rice. All the sangha members then decided to write an application to the district collector and requested him to intervene. Taking cognisance of the complaint the shopkeeper was reprimanded and now the shop opens regularly and the supply of kerosene and grains is regular.

The trainings are participatory and the training team usually consist of SRG, NRG, DRG, and activists/womens groups working in the area of gender equality and women's rights both within and outside the State. The discussions with State team pointed out that the DRGs have been trained and are capable of delivering various trainings on issues related to social analysis and community mobilisation.

The training to women in non traditional professions like masonry and hand pump repair has enabled women to break stereotypes. The review team met with 4 women hand pump mechanics of the '*Chapakal Maramati Evam Swach Samagri Kendra*' who were part of the team that repairs handpumps in Shivsagar block of Rohtas district. They remarked that now people in the community give them respect and often comment that –“ *Istri se Mistri*

ban gayei hain". The women have gained a status and a skill which has been rewarding. As a result of the confidence gained they expressed the need for other technical training such as diesel pump repairing, mobile repairing as well as repairing of bicycles.

During the consultation with all the DPCs, they felt that the training on VAW has helped create awareness, a sense of social responsibility among women to support and stand by women and girls who face gender based violence. However given the complex nature of issues related to VAW it would require more support in addition to the training. While district teams have made efforts to sensitise the police officials regular interaction, rapport building with the police, legal system and health department at the State level may help.

The team appreciates the efforts made towards capacity building but also notes the need to build capacity to address the new emerging challenging i.e. declining child sex ratio.

Other observations and recommendations

Given that VAW is a key area of work for the women's groups regular rapport building with police and legal systems at the State level is also required. MS State team can expand its area of influence and also collaborate with the police training Institutes and have regular sharing meetings with police department at the State level on challenges emerging from the field.

The teams need capacity building for addressing new challenges like declining sex ratio

Facilitating increased participation of women and girls in formal and non formal education through sustained engagement with them (lifelong learning/continued education)

In Bihar there has been a continued focus on generating demand for education and facilitating educational opportunities for women and girls through literacy camps, Mahila Shikshan Kendras, KGBV, RBCs and Bal Jagjagi centres. MS is also working towards strengthening the schools under NPEGEL. According to data provided by the MS State office a total of 9085 girls are enrolled in the 105 KGBVs and 4529 girls have passed out of from the 103 KGBVs being coordinated by MS. Currently, there are 404 girls enrolled in 13 MSKs

in 13 districts and 1757 girls have also been enrolled in RBCs in 11 districts. Many of the girls who have passed out of KGVV or MSK have been mainstreamed into formal schools.

Interactions with women of the Sangha and Federation in Kapurbwa Niranjapur Rohtas and Dulhapur, Kaimur revealed that they had made efforts to ensure that no girl child is out of school and all girls in their respective villages were in school. They also helped to identify girls to be enrolled in the MSKs and KGBVs. In the MSK visited by the team in Bhabhua, Kaimur there were several married girls who had been enrolled in the MSK. There was also a child widow. Most of the girls belonged to poor marginalised families. The MS has been able to gain the trust of parents and in laws to send these girls to these institutions. The MS has been involved in the selection of teachers, wardens of MSKs. The members of the Sangha have also become members of the School management committees(SMC), supervising functioning of the schools and the MDM.

The KGBVs managed by MS transact the State curriculum and it is supplemented and augmented through various activities and skills programme. In the KGBV in Chenari, Kaimur visited by the team it was evident the KGBVs had provided a encouraging environment to the girls and had been able to nurture their inherent talents. The girls were confident and enthusiastic and eagerly wanted to share their achievements in various extra-curricular activities like martial art and other competitions. They also pointed out that their own mothers had never got an opportunity to attend a school and they wanted to continue their studies. All the girls requested that the KGBV be upgraded to Class X. The women also shared that since children with disabilities are also enrolled in schools it presents new challenges.

According to the district team, capacity building for monitoring quality aspects in schools especially the academic levels of girls was essential. This is also required in the context of RTE. Given that the teachers have to manage a large number of girls in the KGBVs, developing managerial capacity to look after institutions like KGBV is required. Also the teachers need inputs in management of children with special needs. MS can also link up with Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Mission for upgradation of KGBV upto Class X.

It is evident that the nature of relationship between

Building leadership of poor, most marginalised women, and autonomy of women's collectives

There seems to be a clear understanding of MS teams at all levels on organizing women from the poor and excluded communities in groups to act collectively and fight against gender and caste based discrimination and violence. Democratic processes and consensual decision-making within Sanghas and Federations were reported by MS team members from the field. Social issues raised by the women in collectives are discussed and activities to address the issue are organized. The JRM team observed two such activities. One was rally of about 200 women in Chainpur Kaimur shouting slogans on 'Nasha Mukti' to stop alcohol sale and consumption. Consumption of alcohol was reported by women to be strongly linked with wife beating. During the rally, a police van was present, meaning that the district administration was aware of the protests made by women. Another event that the JRM team observed in Devran Panchayat was the celebration of the birth of the girl child (beti janmotsav). About 200 women had gathered for the function in the Panchayat Bhawan and were singing and dancing with abandon. Around 50 men were also seen nearby watching the proceedings. The Sangha women also gave small gifts to the child and the mother and restated the importance of saving the girl child.

The JRM team also met the group from which three women had been elected independently to the Panchayat. In Kapurbwa, Niranjapur of Rohtas district, the members of the federation were observed to be well informed and had led several protests to voice their concerns. The influence of women federations are reported to extend to schools, the Panchayats and in the community. One woman member who was elected independently in the Panchayat mentioned that earlier the school teachers were not coming on time to school. But now with the intervention of women's groups the teachers are keeping to time. This is resultant of women acting as collective. The Sanghas and the Federations report to have succeeded in expanding the outreach to more women in new areas in various capacities.

Another example of women's collective strength has been their action against illicit liquor selling. Such actions have been taken up by MS across all districts. The group met in Kapurbwa Niranjapur women shared how they decided to physically destroy the local shops brewing and selling liquor. Women reported that while doing so, local police, interfered and asked to stop the destruction. In response to the interference, women threatened the police personnel also and destroyed four to five liquor shops on the GT highway. This action created a sense of fear among the local shop owners and many stopped brewing and selling liquor fearing womens collective action.

For the Federations that have been phased out, MS programme provides technical and oversight support. Financial support is generated by the federation themselves. The JRM team visited a Federation Office in Chilbili, Kaimur, which was built on the land donated by the government. All women of Federation reported to have their independent bank accounts, but most women reported using the savings for family needs- childrens education, repairing of the house and livelihoods

Federations and Sanghas are strengthened through regular trainings and needs assessments, wherein sahyogini, DRG and Federation members participate and interact. The JRM team observed that the Federation were also promoting production and marketing locally made products including madhubani art fabrics, spices and other items.

Though the review team could not go into details about the quality of processes related to formation of federations, it however, observed that the federations were carrying out their work with confidence. The federation members seemed fairly organized in identifying their leaders by following the set of rules. The autonomous federations were keeping their independent accounts, all of the federation were run without financial support from MS. Some indicators of quality of Federation can be ascertained from the fact that about 743 Sangha women have been elected into PRI. The Federation in Shivsagar visited by the review team had started the call centre for repair of handpumps. The fact that they had become masons and handpump mechanics is an outcome of effective processes and capacity building efforts of federations.

Another example of success of the MS Federations activity is that they have approached by the State government to arrange and cater food for about 7000 people during two events: the Bihar Diwas and Inter-school sport competition. The Secretary education, whom the review team met, was confident in women's ability to deliver this service. Most women from the federation are from the scheduled caste. This changed role of Women Federation has expanded to a domain which was primarily held by male contractors. Discussions at the State level also revealed that over the years this task is given to MS groups as they have established credibility for quality service. Two Federations are also implementing MS programme in two districts.

Key issues and recommendations

While appreciating these efforts, the review team expresses concern over the marketability of some of the products produced by the Sangha women. MS Bihar will need help from other government institutions and agencies to successfully market these products and ensure their quality.

There is a need to invest in capacity building of the Federation members to take up new challenges such as declining sex ratio. It is important that the group members understand all aspects of sex determination, role of State and unethical medical practices, use of technology and implementation of PCPNDT act. Linking up with groups that have experience of sustained work on this issue may help.

There has to be some process of continuous support to the Federations and strengthening federation capacities in terms of management, resource mobilisation and networking.

Women's agency to challenge social inequality, and to break discriminatory social practices (at individual, family, community levels)

As mentioned in earlier sections, women from Sanghas and Federations are aware of their issues and have been able to challenge gender discriminatory level at the individual, household and community level. Most women that the review team met had their own personal histories of facing various forms of discrimination and violence. By being a part of

women's collective, these women have succeeded in amplifying their voice. They have addressed issues related to dowry, rape, domestic violence, child marriage and trafficking. The Nari Adalats organized by the Federation have dealt with various complex social issues.

MS has been able to successfully implement hand-washing campaign, health and hygiene interventions in all the villages. From 2005-2007, several MS Panchayat received the 'Nirmal Gram Puraskar'. They have also linked up with the health services at the village level and monitored the visits of Auxilliary Nurse Midwives. The nutrition education messages were promoting intake of 'tiranga' (food of three colors) food.

The review team met with several federation women who had been involved in cultivation/production of menthol with support from the agriculture department.

Key issues and recommendations

Women Sanghas and Federations were observed to be working in their individual groups effectively. They however need to expand their partnership with other stakeholders to work on very complex gender based issues.

III.MS institutional processes

The team was in a position to assess the quality of orientation or capacity building programs only through the interactions held with the staff at the state and field level. Most of staff felt that despite the complex nature of their work, they had been able to raise the issues, build strong allies with several women's group to address their concerns and face the challenges. They felt that the trainings they received had been supportive to take up the field level challenges. The BMSS had also approached various external resource groups like NIRANTAR, New Delhi to help them with training. The regular reflections meetings held every quarter also helped plan and review strategies as well as carry out mid course corrections. The State Task force meets to develop the State , district and Monitoring work plan. A zonal meeting is held for 7 districts falling in a zone. During this meeting the district plans are discussed and shared with the State Resource person.

The current SPD took charge in 2011 after the position was vacant for almost 2 years. 70 positions have been filled only recently. It was reported that 11 districts have vacancy of accounts officers. The recruitment process was reported to be lengthy. Given the low salary structure and no social security (no PF) it does not attract highly qualified candidates.

The Annual work plan and budget are formulated using a bottom up approach. It starts from Samooch to cluster, cluster to unit, unit to block and from block to district and district to the state. At the District level the planning meetings are held with CRP, Sahyoginis and Federation members. Similarly at the State level meetings are held with DPCs, DRP, Accountants and Federation members.

While it was reported that capacities had been built to understand the Results Framework, in the short time available to the JRM members it was not possible to gauge the level of understanding of the Results Framework at the district /field level.

A recurring issue that was reported was related to low salary structure(as compared to other government institutions)and lack of social security measures. The staff particularly (the accounts sections) is constantly on the look out for better prospects leading to high turnover.

The feedback and reflection takes place at State and District level. At the State level there is a State Task Force meeting followed by Monthly Zonal Meetings (SRP,DPC, Accountant, office Assistant) Quarterly reflection meetings (DPC,DRP, SPC and SRP). At the DLO level the District Task Force meeting takes place (DPC, DRP, DRG, AT &Office Assistant). Monthly reflection meetings are held at the unit/cluster level with CRP, Sahayogini, sangh and federation members.

Following is the list of internal assessment processes:

- EC meeting (Quarterly)
- Monthly Progress report introduced for primary knowledge of data.
- Data analysis helps to know the real situation of the districts.

- Event based reports shows special achievement.
- Success stories tell about strength of functionaries
- Half yearly budget vs achievement started from last year.
- Yearly appraisal of CRP /Sahyognies/JRP .
- Annual appraisal of MS Functionaries with NRG member.

Financial documents shared during the JRM visit showed that new financial system was introduced. Feedback from the previous audit was taken into account for improvement. The state team leader was solely responsible for managing overall accounts.

Key issues and recommendations

The State team reported that the district consolidation processes (phasing out) and support mechanisms are not clear and there is a need for collective reflection at the National level.

During the interactions with State team the JRM team could sense some underlying tension among the team members. The current SPD was earlier part of a district team in the 1990s. After a gap of several years she joined back MS as the State coordinator. The other State team members have had a very long association with Mahila Samakhya both at district and state levels. This often creates differences in opinion among the individuals. It is suggested that team building exercises be initiated for institutional strengthening and improving interpersonal relationships.

IV. Convergence and Resource support

Mahila Samakhya has a formal MOU with BSPP in MS district for running KGBV, NPEGEL & RBC and other programme. The funds come from SSA and are transferred to the DIU's through TT/RTGS etc. Utilisation and auditor report is submitted to BSPP.

The present position of KGBV and NPEGEL :-

105 KGBV – 13 District

1105 MCS NPEGEL – 9 District

40 RBC – 12 District

One of the critical issues regarding convergence with SSA is related to the dynamics of their relationship. It was reported that the SSA functionaries view and treat the MS functionaries as subordinates rather than equal partners. This hinders the quality of outputs. The DPCs also shared that they are approached only if a benefit is seen with MS involvement. Whenever an external team has to visit a KGBV, the MS supported KGBVs are showcased. The SSA functionaries also see them as adversaries, who are grounded on core principles not equally shared by them. The review team recognises the value addition in processes provided by MS in SSA. However given the tenuous relationship between MS and SSA there is an urgent need to address these issues.

Another barrier is also the fact that MS coverage is seen as insignificant as compared to other programme coverage. Similarly the support from NRG and the NPO was seen as insufficient.

Key issues and recommendations

There is a need to revisit the MOU with SSA and organise Consultation meetings at different levels with Principal Secretary and Secretary, Education to help resolve partnership issues. Likewise the support of the NPO and NRG must be enhanced.

The capacities of the district and State teams need to be upgraded to effectively address the programmatic, coordination and management issues.

V. Financial Management

Fund flow from GoI and status of releases to districts from State: MSS Bihar State request GOI to release funds, after approval of the budget by EC for a financial year. GOI releases the funds in three instalments to BMSS. The funds from BMSS to the district is released as per the demand of funds through TT and RTGs. The funds to the districts are released within 2-3 days of the request.

Status of audits and compliance: The appointment of Internal Auditor and Statutory Auditor is decided by the EC. The IA conducts the audit of District Implementation Unit (DIU) and State Level Office (SLO). The audit reports of the DIU are carried out on a

quarterly basis and the report is submitted to SLO and the DIU (which is audited). The DIU takes action to meet the compliance requirements on the issues raised in the internal audit report.

The SLO consolidates the audit reports of all the districts and their annual accounts to the Statutory Auditor for Audit and Comments. The Statutory Auditor conducts audit as per the terms of reference issued by EC of BMSS.

The Internal Audit for the financial year 2012-13 is under progress. Half yearly internal audit report has been submitted by the internal auditor.

Financial rules and delegation of powers; procurement systems: BMSS reports to follow the Financial Rule as approved in the 1st EC of BMSS in 2006. The Travel Allowance (TA) rule of Government of Bihar as approved in the Financial Rule and Delegation of Financial Power of BMSS is followed. The BMSS reported of receiving feedback last year to improve their financial procedures, based on which they have made some improvements.

Accounting and record keeping: BMSS is functioning in 21 districts, which includes 2 districts run by Federations with support from BMSS. These two districts are Vaishali and Motihari. In order to maintain the accounts and record keeping, BMSS has installed Tally ERP 9 in all 21 districts. This new system is helping to obtain computer generated report in Accounts. From 2006-07 to 2011-12, the program was using Mercantile System. The new system was reported to be more transparent and can be centrally monitored. Tally ERP9 procedures were computerised for easy access and monitoring.

Key issues and recommendations:

BMSS reports of acute shortage of staff managing accounts and finance. The reason was said to be GOI salary structure. Staff turnover among the finance team was reported to be high because of the non-lucrative salary structure. Staff reported that other Societies such as BSPP, JEEVIKA and Health society, active in the same districts offer higher compensation than BMSS.

The team did not spend time in comparing salary structures of other societies. We however learnt that Accountants working in the 5 districts are managing the accounts of 10 district.

The team recommends to seriously look into the salary structure and social security provisions of MS staff.

VI. Good Practices and Innovations

Chapakal Marramati evam Swachta Samagri Kendra, ShivSagar Rohtas: This is a call centre which was set up by the Federation in Shivsagar block in collaboration with the PHED department and Action for Community Development an NGO to address the issues of handpump repair and maintenance in the entire block. 50 Women from the Sangha and Federation have been trained in the block. The call centres registers each complaint and a team of mechanics reach the village within 48 hours to attend to the handpump. The charges for repairing depend on the kind of handpump repaired.

VII. Conclusion

Overall, the MS Bihar State Program has been able to position itself as a credible Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality program despite the fact that area of influence is small. The core strength of this program are the Women's Sanghas and Federations. With a range of empowerment trainings on gender equality and discrimination issues, the women have been able to unite themselves in groups and take forward the issues of gender based discrimination and women's rights. It is obvious that wherever the MS input has gone, the women and girls are extremely confident. They are unafraid, able to articulate themselves well and demonstrate strong sense of responsibility to address the gender equality issues. Their solidarity and collective action have resulted in significant achievements.

The importance of education has been internalized by women in the Sanghas as a core component of all their actions. The broad based approach to Education has enabled

women to address a range of issues. Class room education and other education through training etc have obtained equal attention and importance.

The MS team from state to the district level and below is observed to be highly committed. While State level leadership is strong and dynamic they need to utilise their potential to the fullest. Moreover, despite such high levels of commitment, the acceptance of MS program within the State has not yet succeeded in getting due space.

The Key issues and concerns emerging from the discussions and observations are illustrated below:

- The programmatic and management issues arising from the autonomous structure of Mahila Samakhya.
- The near absence of regular monitoring by NPO/GOI or NRG, delay in payments has impacted the programme level activities.
- The partnership with SSA not on equal footing
- The circle of influence outside the MS framework is limited
- Connecting the micro level to the macro/state picture for uniform level of understanding on issues-RTE
- Programmes/activities need to be driven by evidence based planning- E.g Declining sex ratio (0-6 years), trafficking
- Involvement of men and boys is weak
- Convergence with line departments continues to be a challenge at State and District level
- Human resource, capacity, social security provisions, salary structure not at par with other similar organisations. expansion.

Recommendations

The recommendations are presented under four broad headings:

Partnership, Coordination and Linkages

- Review of MOU between MS and SSA with support from senior officials within the State and NPO.

- Review convergence strategies with line departments in view of field realities-e.g. linkages with the police and judiciary, NRLM
- Tapping government institutions and other agencies for marketing products produced by the Sanghas and Federations
- Renew and strengthen linkages of women with the State and National Women's Movement
- Work on a strategy to engage with other women (who are either members of the other or no groups) and men/boys.

Planning and Monitoring

- Need to envision the future of MS/Federations in the medium and long term and their linkages with other institutions
- In the context of RTE there is a need to monitor quality of pedagogy and curriculum in the MSKs and KGBVs
- Ensuring regular district and state level monitoring for enhancing programme quality

Enhancing Capacity of MS team at State and District level

- Training of staff on new emerging issues such as declining child sex ratio and trafficking.
- Improving management and financial skills of the Federation for effective performance and ensuring credibility
- Translating MS results framework at the field level during implementation and monitoring.
- Revising training modules to better accommodate the needs to the second generation leadership

Strengthening MS institutional processes:

- Revisiting salary structure and social security provisions of MS staff.
- Organizing team building interventions to for better interpersonal relationships among MS staff.
- Need for guidance and collective reflection on consolidation and phase-out processes both at State and National level

List of Persons Met in Bihar during the JRM-13-17 March 2013

MS State Personnel

- Ms. Shubhraj Singh, State Programme Coordinator
- Ms. Pushpa Priyadarshi, State Resource Person
- Ms. Urmila, State Resource Person
- Dr. Shantwana Bharti, State Resource Person
- Ms. Sungita Dutta, Consultant
- A.S.Mangeshkar, Account Officer
- Mr. Vikarant Kumar, Office Assistant
- Mr. Alakh Niranjana, Office Assistant

MS Kaimur District Personnel

- Ms. Upma Rani, District Programme Coordinator
- Ms. Rajeev Ranjan, Accountant
- Office Assistant

MS Rohtas District Personnel

- Ms. Manjari, District Programme Coordinator
- Office Assistant

Other DPCs met in State Office on 16 March 2013

- Mahiya Anam DPC Darbhanga
- Ruby Kumari DPC Bhojpur
- Rita Kurmai DPC Banka
- Anita Das DPC Shyohar
- Punam Kumari DPC Betiah
- Suparna DPC Gaya
- Sharfunisha DPC Purnia
- Amrita Kumari DPC Katihar
- Satima Begum DPC Jamni
- Poonam Srivastav DPC Supoul
- Rahul Singh, Secretary Education GoB

Jharkhand Mahila Samakhya Society

Acknowledgement

On behalf of the 4th JRM of Mahila Samakhya, Mamta Kohli (DFID representative) and Prof Rakesh Chandra (GOI representative) undertook a review of Mahila Samakhya, Jharkhand from 13 to the 17th of March 2013.

The Mission would like to thank the SPD and the MS team at the State and District levels for open and frank discussions, the detailed documentation provided and for all the logistical and warm support extended to the Mission. The Mission in particular would like thank all the Sangha, federation and Kishore-Kishori Manch members and MSK students of Ranchi, Khunthi and Chatra districts for sharing their insights, ideas and suggestions with us.

The Mission met state and district level functionaries, district officials of various departments, members of the State Resource Group, members of Sanghas and members of federation' executive committee, members of Nari Adalat , teachers and learners of MSK being run exclusively for rescued "trafficked" girls, members of Kishori Sanghas, representatives of UNICEF, SSA, and officials of WCD, GOJ. The field visits were particularly rewarding as it enabled the Mission to gain an insight into the successes of the program interventions, field challenges and ability to reach the poorest and most marginalized women. The Mission also met the Secretary Education and shared their observations and views on the programme. (Detailed itinerary of the JRM is at Annexure-1).

The Mission members are conscious of the very difficult geographical terrain of the region and the complex movements of insurgency and would like to record its deep appreciation and respect for the program.

I. An Overview of State MS Programme

The Jharkhand Mahila Samakhya Society (JMSS/MS-J) covers 11 districts, 76 blocks and 4219 villages. Around 9422 Sanghas have been formed with a membership of about 143,824 women. About one third of the members are organized into savings and credits groups. The state has 11 federations.

Beijing conference (1995) indicators of women empowerment
Qualitative

- Increase in self esteem, individual and collective confidence.
- Increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness on health, nutrition, reproductive rights, law and literacy.
- Increase and decrease in personal leisure time for child care.
- Increase or decrease of workloads in new programmes.
- Change in roles and responsibilities in family and community.
- Visible increase or decrease in violence on women and girls.
- Responses to changes in social customs like child marriage, dowry, discrimination against widows.
- Increase in bargaining and negotiating power at home, in community and the collective increase in access to and ability to gather information.
- Formation of women collectives.
- Visible change in women's participation level, attending meetings, participation and demanding participation.
- Positive changes in social attitudes. Awareness and recognition of women's economic contribution within and outside the household. Women's decision making over her work and income.

Quantitative

- Demographic trends: MMR; Fertility rate; Sex ratio; Life expectancy at birth; Average age of marriage
- Number of women participating in different development programmes.
- Create access and control over community resources, government schemes - crèches, credit cooperative, non formal education.
- Visible change in physical health status and nutritional level.
- Change in literacy and enrolment level

Over the past 2 years the program has enhanced its focus to include: a) the expansion of work with young girls and young boys. Around 1,207 Kishori Sanghas have been formed with around 15,273 girls as members and 219 Kishore clubs with 3,346 boys as members; (See Annexure-2 for further details); b) campaigns and networks on Child marriage, Human - trafficking and witch hunting; (JMSS has develop its own brand name SAKHI for its work on trafficking) and c) convergence with DWSM, PHED, Unicef and NRHM.

As the action taken report indicates, JMSS has responded well to the recommendations of the last JRM in 2009-10. In particular, the state

program has reached out to Muslim women and built strong field partnership with other agencies, academic institutions and departments.

One of the districts that the team visited, Chatra, lies deep in the Left Wing Extremist (LWE) belt. Discussions with the state and district government officers revealed the social, cultural and other barriers they face in bringing people together and introducing new behaviors and practices (such as cropping patterns). The program has a good presence, enjoys people's support and has the confidence of the government as well. JMSS has a real opportunity to demonstrate an inclusive model of integrated development in a block/Gram Panchayats that may then be scaled up by the state governments.

1.1 Major highlights/achievements of the programme and the districts visited

Women's empowerment: As a programme which is process oriented, respectful of quality and has clear non-negotiables, JMSS is a clear winner. The achievements if positioned in terms of the qualitative indicators of the Beijing Conference will be seen as remarkable. Achievements in terms of expanding women's choices, enhancing capabilities and promoting freedom are heartening. The hindrances to freedom from fear, want and discrimination are being systematically addressed and there is patient self-reflection on all issues.

The JMSS programme has most successfully addressed Self-esteem - How do we feel about ourselves? How do we value our worth? Who am I irrespective of what I do? Our self-esteem moves from our feeling of incompetence to competence, despair to triumph, shame to pride, acceptance to rejection....our self-assessment reflects in our behavior which is expressed as shy, confident or cautious. Almost unexceptionally MS women seem to have higher self esteem.

Researches show that happiness spreads more consistently through networks which are also a key strength of MS solidarity efforts. The music and performance are happiness enhancing and bonding cues. On parameters of emotional quotient, understanding self, managing self through self restraint, understanding others through empathy and managing others through social skills, the programme appears successful. However, a systematic study of emotional quotient, happiness, self esteem and self concept would be rewarding as evidence building for the success of the programme.

Both in older and newer project areas, the sincerity, enthusiasm and energy of the sangha and federation women in the districts the Mission met was inspiring.

Lives of young girls and boys are changing: During the field interactions, sangha women reported positive trends in girl's education in their villages and in their families - all girls are in school, many are pursuing secondary education, and that girls get married after the age of 18.

JMSS has a large number of active Kishore and Kishori Sanghas who are taking small steps to respond to the village development needs such as repairs of water resources, cleanliness campaigns, celebration of festivals etc. All the youth group members that the mission met were providing remedial support to young students. Kishore Sanghas were also in-charge of the Village Resource Center which has the potential to develop into a vibrant resource hub though the one that the Mission members saw was at a very nascent stage and meant only for youths. The Mission saw public performance by Kishore Sanghas around trafficking in the villages and considered it as a very positive trend.

Special campaigns: JMSS has launched campaigns on anti-trafficking and witch hunting and has set up a state level network with other partners for a coordinated response.

With its focus on trafficking, the MS in Jharkhand started its Sakhi MSK for trafficked children, referred mainly by ChildLine , CWC and other network members at Khunti. Most had worked as domestic help in exploitative situations and a few had also been sexually violated. Some of the girls shared their traumatic experiences with the team. They felt settled, safe and protected at the MSK but were also apprehensive as they approached the end of the eleven month course in March 2013.

Partnerships: The Water and sanitation Mission is highly impressed by the honesty, commitment , motivation and monitoring potential of the MS. JMSS has been involved at all levels of planning, training and monitoring cashing on the community based efforts. Micro planning is done with their support and a new initiative is proposed to seek support to maintain hygiene and drinking water supply at bus station in urban areas as well. This demand came from the Sanghas/ federation and this will be constructed by the women

mason and also being run and managed by the federations. Most important thing is that federations in federation blocks and Sanghas in non federation blocks have been involved in the implementation of the activities. Even the Sanghas and federations have been recognized as important key stake holders for the department and JMSS is only trying to facilitate them from convergence at state level. In all the training and meeting federation led trainer, also a Sanhgas member have been invited to take the class and DWSM has recognized them as their modal.

1.2 Key issues, concerns, recommendations

Reach: MS-J needs to consider innovative approaches to reach out to poor women. Sanghas could consider opening up some of the issue based group meetings to others in the community so that the most marginalised can benefit from the MS learning process.

MSK Rethink: With RTE in place and RMSA unfolding, the Mission recommends a careful analysis and re-strategizing for MSK to – a) continue transitional training for older girls in the 15+ years to rejoin the mainstream; b) carefully evaluate their learning level for the equivalency c) take the students up to secondary level and provide employability and vocational training. Apart from the fact, the team also told that there is a huge demand from the girl's mother to expand the class from primary to secondary level so that their daughter will continue their education at least up to secondary level.

The above may apply to other states as well but MS-J needed to respond more swiftly than others mainly to ensure continuity for the girls who were trafficked and came from extremely precarious family backgrounds. The Mission wishes to place its appreciation for MS-J on record for taking immediate action and designating the MSK in Ranchi as a center for class 6-8.

Deepening response to trafficking to VAW: MS-J needs to provide a more complete response that includes linkages for counseling, referrals to police and others, legal services and rehabilitation.

For rescued girls, special counseling by professional is essential to equip them to handle their trauma as well as regular health checkups that include gynecology review.

The campaigns of MS are unique in Jharkhand addressing issues of trafficking, child marriage and witch hunting. The publicity material needs to be simpler with bolder print and more careful in its letter and spirit. Reference to culture and civilization are problematic. Phone numbers of district, state and block level nodal persons need to be flashed. In plays, role plays and Nukkad Nataks MS presentations as a saviour is simplistic. Good communication material with more complex and nuanced presentation is available at national level and must be utilized and adapted.

Sanghas/federation: The programme is grappling with the whole issue of relevance and autonomy of federations and what if any would be the relationship between MS and autonomous federations. This lack of clarity was seen in various degrees within the MS team as well as the sangha and federation members. Clarity of approach to SHGs and Savings and credit groups is also important given that the national and state governments are actively promoting them.

Livelihood support: There is an urgent need to look at the livelihoods in a focused manner and promote enterprises/options that are viable. Similarly vocational skills taught to girls in MSK needs very careful scrutiny and must be distinguished from art and craft classes which are for expression and adornment. Market research and product line choice which is economically viable must be encouraged.

Convergence: The Mission endorses JMSS approach to converge with several government and non-government partners to achieve its mandate – it facilitates easy access to basic services and it gives JMSS a “presence” in the state. However, the mission would like to also flag the risk of spreading the programme energy and efforts too thin and maintaining quality. It recommends that JMSS prioritizes and builds more comprehensive and intensive partnerships in a few selected areas.

Perspective and capacity building: There is a need to revisit the entire perspective building and content of training of both staff and sangha women to continue to build their perspective on women's empowerment and agency; deepen their understanding of the various laws, changed ground realities, new developmental policies and initiatives etc are incorporated.

Relationship with SSA: With the arrival of the new Secretary the recent impasse between SSA and MS-J appears to be over. MS-J needs to present its work; its impact and the results achieved to SSA and re-initiate a dialogue to explore areas of support. These could include teacher training; material development and running KGBVs if the state changes its policy and considers MS-j as its subsidiary.

The MS State Office is apprehensive about losing its autonomy once it is subsumed under SSA. The older staff and ground reports however seem to suggest that the undivided state with a common leadership of education SPD had created a vibrant ground of women's agency and solidarity and a common SPD may not necessarily be a bad idea, if the terms are carefully negotiated. In undivided Bihar, there was a separate SPD for MS and BEP. Here, the SPD of BEP is the chairperson of the Bihar Mahila Samakhya because of these things become easier for them.

Service conditions: The MS staff at all levels is poorly paid with little service benefits. This impacts the morale and motivation of the staff. The Beijing Conference also spoke about women having more leisure and less work load. The functionaries of MS are ill paid, work hard and have little leisure. The sahayogini is not seen as a full time worker within the scheme, and the MSK teacher who works 24 hours is also paid less than half of her counterpart teaching in government schools.

2.1 Outreach of the programme to most marginalised groups

The Mission appreciates the effort of the state team to reach out to Muslim women in response to the last JRM recommendation. Most groups of Muslim women and young people are located in peri urban and urban areas. Though the Sangha members belong to marginalized groups, some of them do admit that the very poor women are often left out –

mainly due to time constraints and institutional norm of interaction only as a Sangha member.

The poor road network, especially in the areas affected by LWE, makes it extremely difficult, almost impossible for the Federation member/Sahyogini to reach what are perhaps the poorest pockets of the state. The Mission noted that the geographical distances make Sahyogini visits to all the 10 villages under her purview difficult therefore rationalization of coverage is necessary.

MS-J has recently started work with trafficking survivors – another very vulnerable group and has set up one MSK in Khunti exclusively for them and a Sakhi vocational training cum production center in Chatra.

Sl. No.	MS Jharkhand	Social profile of sangha members		
		Sangha members		
		Upto March 2011	March 2012	%
1	SC	7926	81024	
2	ST	31813	21322	
3	OBC	13244	25586	
4	Minority	3753	8529	
5	General	1605	5686	
6	Total no. of members	58341	142147	
Source: Annual report 2010-11 and 2011-12				

Over the past 5 years the programme has expanded to 11 districts and has achieved the XI plan target. Under the XII plan (2012-17), the program plans to cover 5 more districts - Latehar, Palamu, Gumla, Simdeaga and Lohardaga.

Mission was told that though MS-J did not have a “saturation” strategy, it did consciously cover all the villages under the gram Panchayat before moving to another cluster. The Mission noted the pros and cons of expansion. A significant presence in the state makes MS-J a leading voice in the state on women’s issue and provides opportunity for mainstreaming its learning’s at district and state levels. At the same time there are huge challenges specially of maintaining quality of processes, prioritisation and of trained and capable human resource at various levels.

Recommendations:

- MS-J needs to consider innovative approaches to reach out to poor women. Sanghas could consider opening up some of the issue based group meetings to others in the community so that the most marginalised can benefit from the MS learning process. It should focus on deepening its coverage in the current geographical areas and consider adopting a “saturation” approach.
- Rationalise the “coverage” norm for Sahyoginis wherever appropriate.

2.2 Facilitate increased information and access of women & girls to their entitlements, through various methods of capacity building

The awareness of Sangha and federation women regarding their entitlements including access to existing government schemes/ programmes related to health, education, PDS, RTI, RTE, PRIs, MGNREGS and social security schemes like widow and old age pension was found to be fairly high.

The involvement of Sangha women was also reported in monitoring and demanding improvements in implementation of various schemes like PDS, MDM, MNREGA, etc. In Jharkhand, the team met with a Sangha that was managing PDS shops. Though rigorous and not very remunerative, the women took great pride in managing the outlet. It kept the supplies on track and gave women considerable power and visibility within the village.

The State Resource Center anchors several of these activities and also produces the In 11th plan it was called as State Resource center. As its access to other department is gaining recognition in seeking many reports, conducting thematic consultations, use of the MS data for their activities and the use of the center by not only the govt departments but also by network members /NGOs. JMSS thought to upgrade the center from SRC to State Gender Resource Center with its unit at district (DGRC) to federations (FGRC) and then VRC at village level. Currently the center has 8 units: education, health, water & sanitation, Legal & counseling, vocational cum production, campaign & advocacy, capacity building, research & publication and federation. Under

vocational unit, federation members are being given 3 months training on computer skill and 5 months advance training on tailoring separately.

Sangha women are also active in School management - either as representatives on SMCs or supporting the SMCs. A few members of the Kishori Sangha that the Mission interacted with were aware of the scholarship scheme for minorities but had not shared this knowledge widely with other groups. The state team is working on a little booklet that will list/describe the various schemes.

However, at times during discussion in the field or with the staff, the knowledge appeared to be superficial and there were significant gaps specially about redressal processes, budgets and approved plans. For e.g. Sangha members were not fully aware of the provision of NREGA or the DV Act. There were no linkages with RSBY, that can potentially help women mitigate their health related out of pocket expenditure. Mechanisms to give complete information about the provisions and processes of key entitlements and to ensure regular access to/ and monitoring need to be developed. In Jharkhand the team encouraged MS to develop a common program with another DFID supported program PACS that focuses on entitlements for marginalized groups.

Also while the awareness on small family size was high, Sangha members and field functionaries themselves had borne several daughters in their desire for a male child. They admitted that they were not really able to practice what they preached. Though the DLHS figures for home deliveries were high, women reported that the institutional deliveries had increased.

Training is a core activity for MS-J and it spends considerable resources on it for all aspects of the program. MS-J is encouraged to look at technology based platforms to improve the efficiency as well as repetition of capacity building inputs.

Recommendations:

- Focus on key entitlements and laws and facilitate linkages with administration. In Jharkhand's context, the program team may wish to build comprehensive knowledge look at land rights, RSBY, NREGS, ICDS, DV Act and ITPA.
- MS-J is encouraged to look at quick and innovative ways including technology based platforms to improve the efficiency as well as repetition of capacity building inputs.

2.3 Facilitating increased participation of women and girls in formal and non formal education through sustained engagement with them (lifelong learning/continued education)

MS-J has maintained a focus on generating demand for education for women and girls in all the program states through literacy camps, Mahila Shikshan Kendras, Kishori Sangha, Jagjagi centers and strengthening school management. Not only have these efforts enhanced the academic base for women and girls but have also provided comprehensive support for extra-academic issues.

MS-J is collaborating with Sakshar Bharat in the state which allows it to take its approach to non-MS districts as well. The Jagjagi Centers are a mixed bag and the curriculum needs strengthening. Though some learners are linked with NIOS, opportunities for continuing literacy for older women appeared to be unstructured and raised a concern about relapse of new learners back into illiteracy in the absence of regular practice. Leveraging resources from Sakshar Bharat for continuing education centers, MS-J could use its VRCs to also stock appropriate materials and activities that could also be used by all the users of VRCs. The Mission also noted that teaching women to sign without the capacity to read must not be encouraged as it creates a false impression when documents are signed as it is assumed that they have agreed to what is written. The Mission welcomed the two study commissioned by MS-J on effectiveness of Jagajagi Kendras and the tracking of Ex- MSK by one of the NRG members.

Sangha women's are encouraged to become members of the SMCs. One of the SMC members admitted that initially she did not understand what her role was – she would

go the school and come back. But with the training she received she is now confident of asking the right questions to the school faculty.

A significant development in MS-J has been the work with young girls and boys, some of which was described in the sections above. Formation of Kishori Sanghas, trainings and capacity building has been the main strategies. The Mission noted marked gender stereotypes in technical field. The boys groups take on more “external” and “public’ services such as cleaning of ponds, maintaining water sources or organizing games. They also teach younger kids. One of the key activities in their portfolio is running a “village Resource Center”. The one the team saw was very nascent with no significant books or material, the center regularly organizes sports events for boys and was seen as a resource for boys only. As discussed earlier VRC have the potential to become a “informational” hub for the village and serve the information and learning needs for both girls, boys and adults. The ICDS department is keen to collaborate and Sakshar Bharat can be another potential partner.

MS-J does not run any KGBVs and has discontinued management of NPEGEL since December 2012. MSK is a key intervention and the program runs 14 residential training centers that provide 11 month training to drop out/non enrolled adolescent girls and older women in the age group of 15-35 years. The number of girls per MSK is 30 who are reportedly selected through a fairly rigorous process. Girls who do not make it are linked with the Jajgagi Jendras. Besides, one MSK is also being run for the women prisoners in Hotwar jail in Ranchi and a Jagjagi center at Chatra jail.

With its focus on trafficking, the MS in Jharkhand started its MSK for trafficked children, referred mainly by ChildLine, CWC and network members at Khunti. Most had worked as domestic help in exploitative situations and a few had also been sexually violated. The MSK had the prescribed staff but did not have a counselor nor had the program conducted gynaec checkups – both essential support for a special center for trafficked survivors. Some of the girls shared their traumatic experiences with the team. They felt settled, safe and protected at the MSK but were extremely apprehensive about continuing their education and becoming ‘self-reliant’ beyond MSK.

Similar concerns were also raised by girls at the MSK in Chatra. The team met a young divorcee and a survivor domestic violence. She had passed out of MSK the previous year and was awaiting admission to a KGBV for over a year. In the interim she worked as a cook in her alma mater MSK and was willing to be admitted anywhere so that she could be independent.

Not all girls who passed out of MSK are admitted into KGBVs. Several different reasons are given for it – the girls exceed the age criteria as per the RTE, they are too outspoken in raising the issue of mal practices and not a good influence on the others as they always compare the quality of MSK with KGBV, they do not meet the required academic standards. In Jharkhand, the program tries to link the girls who are not admitted to KGBV with NIOS, but is not always successful.

MSK works with some very vulnerable girls in Jharkhand and must ensure that their integration and rehabilitation is not a brief 11 month interludes but a life time commitment.

MSK's offer of a 11 month residential education course equivalent to education up to class V is not viable. All evidence so far has shown that Minimum Learning Levels up to class one are achieved in one year unlike 2 to 5 may be capsule in another one and a half - year.s

Recommendations

- With RTE in place and RMSA unfolding, the Mission recommends a careful analysis and re-strategizing for MSK to – a) continue transitional training for older girls in the 11-14 years to rejoin the mainstream; b) carefully evaluate the equivalency c) take the students upto secondary level and provide employability and vocational training. This requires careful probing to understand the ground requirements in order to recast the MSK initiative.
- Ensure strong continuing education opportunities for adult learners including linkages with VRC.

- Actively work towards developing a working partnership with SSA. Areas could include teacher training; material development and running KGBVs.

2.4 Building leadership of poor, most marginalised women, and autonomy of women's collectives

Sanghas and federations: MS Program well articulates the need for mobilizing poor women into collectives at the village level and the need for federations at the taluka levels to serve as pressure groups and to take forward the empowerment processes. Though nine federations have been formed in the state and another nine are in the process, there appears to be confusion and lack of clarity on their autonomy, the exit strategy and the nature of MS support to federations after withdrawal.

During the field interactions with two federations - Ujwal Mahila and Preran Mahila in Chatra district, the Sangha women were very energetic and confident but not quite sure about the role of the federation or how it will run in the absence of any resources.

The state team too expressed an honest need to understand some of the issues regarding resources, management systems and institutional development as well as the exit strategy.

Key recommendations:

- Initiate an organizational development process for all players, sanghas, federations and Mahila Samakhya to achieve greater clarity on structures, mutual roles and support and engagement with the external environment.
- Exposure visits to other MS and non MS states to see effective federations in the field.

2.5 Women's agency to challenge social inequality, and to break discriminatory social practices (at individual, family, community levels)

Building women's agency is a core investment and the Mission captured several examples of how women had challenged social inequality and discriminatory social practices. Federations and Sangha members recounted their own personal histories of

family negotiations and change – more mobility, recognition within the community and increase in their own self-esteem and confidence.

Awareness of the members on social inequalities and discrimination that women face was high. Violence against women and alcoholism that affect women the most have the greatest resonance across the Sanghas the Mission interacted with. Other issues discussed were child marriage, education for girls, and dowry. However the Mission noticed that girls and boys from Kishori Manch were oriented more in health, nutrition and hygiene and not on inequality and discrimination.

However the level of correct knowledge about the key provisions of the various Acts and relevant legal procedures varied. For e.g. Sangha members in Jharkhand were not fully aware of the right of residence within the DV act and the trafficking campaign did not carry a “helpline” number.

Sanghas intervene in cases domestic violence, child marriage at the village level, drawing on Nari Adalats for support and for more challenging issues such as desertion, divorce, land rights, rape and bigamy. Sangha members identified dowry as one of the most difficult issues to address.

Though District Legal Services Authority has provided legal support and training, over all linkages with law enforcement agencies, referral networks and legal redressal were limited. The Adalats may be rechristened as Women Counselling centres. JMSS has submitted proposals for two shelter homes to the government of Jharkhand but has not received any response.

In Jharkhand there are many tribes which follow customary law. There is no systematic or even informal information about the tribal laws of Oraons, ho, Munda or other tribe. Nari Adalats cannot be created as quasi constitutional authorities especially in areas where extremists have known to have their own systems of law and levy. The wisdom of elders and women is well appreciated but such wisdom has often led to very

conservative conflict resolutions. Research and evidence building is urgently required in this area.

Discussions with the staff, trainers, and Sangha and federation members revealed that several of them continued to face violence and discrimination at home, and have not been able to negotiate their personal space.

Women in Local Governance: 50% of the Panchayat seats are reserved for women in Jharkhand and elections were held in 2011 after a gap of 32 years. MS-J has facilitated women's participation in local governance through participation in Aam Sabha, developing micro plans, and encouraging women to contest and to vote. Total 407 Sanghas women contested the election and 227 were elected. Besides they are also involved as Sahia, Para teacher, Jal Sahia, ICDS worker, ANM, SMC, are also reflected in the field. At the time of the field visit the Sanghas were discussing suitable candidates for the forthcoming Panchayat elections.

Livelihoods support has the highest demand but is perhaps the weakest aspect of the program. Income generating programs of the state appear to be episodic and lack business orientation. The increasing number of young girls and boys associated with the program want employability training and/or livelihood support.

Jharkhand has herbal medicine unit that is often showcased as successful examples of livelihood. However, they are not profitable. JRM teams raised concerns about the scientific reliability of the formulations in the absence of any testing. Secy education, Jharkhand echoed these concerns. Jharkhand also had a sanitary napkin unit and a jute cooperative but did not have any business plans in place. The catering training conducted for batch of 75 was much appreciated and several of the women had set up a catering unit. Out of them 15 Sanghas women were trained by Hotal Ashoka and rest 60 youth from Kishore-Kishori Manch were trained in catering & hospitality by Department of Tourism under HUNAR SE ROJGAR scheme.

Women were not fully aware of the MNREGS and its provisions and wages earned were reported as low.

Recommendations

- Common material and protocols on the provisions of selected key acts – DV, Dowry, the new anti-rape bill and PCPNDT. Regular reinforcement of key provisions, using available technology platforms, and as part of the capacity building calendar.
- Build a more cohesive “end to end” referral and response support especially for women and girls who have faced violence. Work with NPO to build a mandate for MS to run shelter homes at the central level and facilitate state government support as well.
- Provide counselling services for staff. Train women on budget tracking and mock gram Sabha to build their confidence to raise issues in gram Sabha.
- MS needs to develop a clear perspective on livelihood support and employability training for young people. Would the program respond to the grassroots demand and provide technical support and resources to the states? Or would it build institutional linkages with programs such as Livelihood Mission, NMEW or other state level programs? If this emerges as a key priority for the state, then the focus should be on 2-3 product lines based on a market analysis and with backward and forward linkages in place.

III. MS Institutional Processes

3.1 Nature and Quality of Orientation/ capacity building programmes; extent of external training resources tapped

Capacity building programmes are implemented as planned in the AWP&B. The state program developed a “Training Policy” in 2012 that lays down the minimum norms and different types of training that the Sanghas, Federations, district and state teams may require at different stages of program evolution. The training plan covers both the institutions building and thematic priorities. The State Gender

Resource Center anchors several of these activities and produces appropriate material and conducts training.

JMSS has developed a pool of resource persons and also draws on expertise available with other programs such as NRHM, Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan; NGOs, academic institutions like Xavier Institute. State is also trying to build a cadre of trainers from amongst its staff and also draws upon resources available across the different “resource group” members. State Resource Centre for Gender leads curriculum/module development. These were revised in 2011-12 to incorporate the feedback from the field. Given the distances and difficult terrain, more and more trainings are conducted at the district level, since the last two years. The trainings are thus combined with field visit and program “reflection” exercise.

The team was told that several rounds of orientation on the results framework have been held at the state and district level. However, in the short time available to the JRM members it was not possible to gauge the level of understanding of the Framework at the district /field level, though the staff said that their plans were based on the results framework.

In addition to the core training on federation building etc, JMSS has to respond to the requests from the field for capacity building in new areas such as a particular livelihood or a health issue etc. As per the 2011-12 report the 142 state level capacity building events were held at the state level and 1263 at the district level – averaging it to about 10 events a month (11 districts). Though this is a very crude estimation, it clearly points to a very heavy training load on districts. Despite its best efforts, the state team finds it difficult to provide follow up support that is necessary to internalize and practice various training inputs.

All the material/modules are developed at the state level, and are thus tailored to the ground realities. However, there is no peer review of the modules and often there is no “core script” for the modules that the state can refer to. For e.g. the understanding of MS as part of women’ movement needs reinforcement. Terms like Empowerment, gender and Agency are used but whether in training modules of teachers, Sahyoginies’ or functionaries it is limited to 3 sentence definition and 2 role plays.

The MS team needs to build a common understanding on the whole issue of autonomy of the federations and the changing relationship of MS with these federations. The team also found a need to ingrain the feminist ideology, evolution of women's movement in India and grounding of gender as integral components of training for the staff and field level functionaries across the program.

During 2012-13, all the staffs got benefited from various training/ capacity building programmes.

3.2 Recruitment system, adequacy of functionaries including of accounting; and budget; retention

Recruitment is as per laid down norms through advertisements in newspapers following a transparent process. Currently 10 district level positions are vacant out of xxx number sanctioned.

Villages to be covered by Sahyoginis: In some of the more remote and difficult geographies Sahyoginis find it difficult to cover 10 villages. This norm may be relaxed in such places.

In all the three districts the team met hard working, dedicated and energetic staff members. They have the experience and more importantly are highly motivated to deliver the objectives of the programme. Sahyoginis are seen as and see themselves as important change agents "we have no money to give but we have knowledge to empower" they say. The MS functionaries are the back bone of the program but are paid much lower than similar programs of the government and have no social security. (The sahayogini is not seen as a full time worker within the scheme, and the MSK teacher who works 24 hours is also paid less than half of her counterpart teaching in government schools). Poor service conditions make it difficult to hold on as well as recruit staff.

3.3 Annual Work Plan and Budget formulation and tracking system

The annual budgeting process initiated in November is fairly thorough. District level plans are reviewed along with the state level to ensure that program priorities are addressed and duplication removed. The district plans including the state office plan is sent to the national office which is appraised in the month of February/

March at the National level by the NPO. After incorporating the suggestions of National office the plan is placed before the EC for approval in March / April where it is approved.

The state team acknowledged the technical support from the NPO for financial systems. Monitoring and tracking of the budget and expenditure has become more systematic and regular, and budget analysis is now included as an activity in the events calendar both at district and also at the state level. The state has a robust MIS system in place that responds to the results framework. The utilization is on track.

3.4 Feedback Reflection and Monitoring process in MS

Monthly program review are held at district level for a cluster of districts and are also combined with field visits

One to one feedback is part of the annual appraisal. There is scope for improvement for giving and receiving structured feedback between SPOs and DIUs.

Appraisals usually happen in relation to confirmation of probation and extension of contracts and a self-assessment tool is administered. Each staff has a work plan that is regularly reviewed. The Team did not have the time to look at some of the performance objectives and appraisal reports.

The state organized an off-site team retreat last year that the staff thoroughly enjoyed. It was a useful and a strategic planning exercise as also a team building exercise.

Key issues and recommendations

- The state needs to review its training policy in view of its field experience; develop in-house capacity for core areas of MS while outsourcing more technical thematic training; identify themes/areas where training can be consolidated rather than being offered as individual modules; put in place a strong field level on-ground support mechanism; and develop a comprehensive training plan.
- NPO should provide core common curriculum across the states and facilitate experience sharing across the states. At the state level, teacher training colleges and women studies centers may be roped in for developing training and learning material.

- Gender perspective training of all MS functionaries including teachers is to be well planned with focus on women and work, sexual division of labour, invisibility of women's work, women and law, women and health, women's movement, women's contribution to India's struggle for independence, South East Asian women networks and issues, gender budgeting, women's agency and citizenship rights, human rights approach to development, Mahila Samakhya journey of over two decades from Radical feminist strategies to more inclusive agenda.
- Everyone appreciated the NPO inputs on financial side for the annual planning process. Mission recommends this support should be continued for some more time.
- Service conditions to be reviewed and revised scale of honorariums under XII plan be implemented expeditiously.

4. **Convergence:** The Mission endorses JMSS approach to converge with several government and non-government partners to achieve its mandate – it facilitates easy access to basic services and it gives JMSS a “presence” in the state. Most notable is its partnership with the Drinking water and sanitation mission where the Sangha members and federations planned and managed services; the “Dal Bhat” centers (that provide subsidized food to poor people; JMSS runs 16 of these centers in 5 districts) and the state and district level networks with other agencies including police and CBI for anti-trafficking.

JMSS has a strong partnership with Sakshar Bharat and overlaps with Jagjagi Kendra are avoided. The relationship with SSA is on the bend but is not as positive. MS staff feels that SSA does not treat it as an equal partner. As a policy in the state, SSA does not “handover” any KGBV to any other agency. JMSS is also treated as an external agency and not a part of the education department. JMSS did manage a few NPEGL till 2011-12 when the state withdrew the scheme itself. However the education officers that the team spoke recognized the need to reach out to every girl and every child and saw the value in a strong relationship with JMSS. He encouraged JMSS to

send a proposal to run “orphan” schools, strengthening SMCs and to support teacher training.

NRHM and ICDS are other departments that JMSS has partnerships with especially for interventions around adolescent health under ARSH and Sabla schemes respectively. JMSS has submitted proposals for managing shelter homes to Social Welfare department in Jharkhand last year but has not received any response. The National mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) has had a first roll out workshop in the state and has identified JMSS and Assam Mahila Sangha for the “data exhibition” pilot.

JMSS has had several collaborations for livelihoods promotion – Jute cooperative, Ashok hotel; etc. National Rural Livelihood Mission has not yet fully rolled out and can potentially be a very strong partner. JMSS may have to be patient and first educate and demonstrate to NRLM the multiplier effect of combining social empowerment with economic opportunities.

Several other collaborations were seen in the field – for PDS, old age and widow pension, training of elected representatives, though the awareness of the entitlements is high, the participation is inconsistent and irregular. Women need regular reinforcement to fully absorb the various provisions, their rights as well as their duties. Only then will be able to effectively participate and audit/monitor services on the ground.

Recommendations

- The mission would like to also flag the risk of spreading the programme energy and efforts too thin and maintaining quality. It recommends that JMSS prioritizes and builds more comprehensive and intensive partnerships in a few selected areas.
- National Project Office should facilitate institutional partnerships both within its own ministry with SSA and with Sakshar Bharat; and with other key departments/schemes – MWCD and NRLM.

5. Financial Management:

5.1 Fund Flow from GoI and status of releases to districts from State

The overall position of Funds flow from GoI to the State MS Society is as follows:-

Mahila Samakhya Jharkhand							
Year wise details of Budget and Expenditure							
Sl. No	Year	Budget	Grant Received	Expdn.	Grant received/ Budget (in%)	Utilization (%)	
						Rupees in Lacs	
1	2007-2008	345	105	127	30	37	120
2	2008-2009	837	425	434	51	52	102
3	2009-2010	760	311	364	41	48	117
4	2010-2011	656	576	480	88	73	83
5	2011-2012	651	520	529	80	81	101
6*	2012-2013	795	500	550	63	63	110

*Unaudited expenditure as on 28.02.2013

Budget utilization has considerably improved over the last two years. Jharkhand Mahila Samakhya Society was registered as an independent society in 2006 and became fully functional in June 2006. The poor utilization in the first three years is perhaps a reflection of the teething trouble of the society. The regular meetings of Executive committee could not be held in 2012-13 due to non-availability of members resulted in non-approval of several proposals. Despite that the program showed good progress.

However expenditure as a percentage of grants released is as high as 120% in 2007-8. Funds are released by GoI on the basis of AWP&B. The state reports significant streamlining and in the timing of funds release by GoI. The state office releases funds to the districts based on their request which is supported by their funds position.

District-wise data shows improved utilization from about 50-60% in 2010-11 to over 80% in 2011-12, except for Chattra which continued at 50% where the program is implemented mainly through the federations. The allocations across districts appear to be similar (Rs 40-50 lakhs), with the new districts receiving the same amounts as the older ones.

5.2 Status of audits and compliance

Internal audit for the state as well as for the districts has been completed up to September 2012. The audit report for half year ended in September 2012 but it was received in February 2013 which is still under scrutiny. The report(s) will be circulated to respective districts for their comments. As of now the management response is under process. Statutory audit has been completed up to 2011-12. Management response has been submitted to the NPO. Auditor for 2012-13 has not been appointed as yet.

A reading of a sample of the internal audit reports did not reveal comments/observations of any serious nature.

The state follows the finance manual, including the procurement procedures issued by the NPO. Delegated powers are duly approved by the EC and are in accordance with Delegation of Financial Powers for Mahila Samakhya rules 1992. No case of breach/abuse of financial powers was brought to the notice of the Mission.

5.3 Key issues and recommendations

1. Maximum budget utilization is 88%. Mission recommends that this be improved through better planning, budget tracking and implementation at field levels.

6. Good Practices and Innovations

Anti-trafficking – Jharkhand is a “source” state from where several girls are duped into exploitative situations. JMSS is recognized as a lead agency and is frequently contacted by ChildLine and police to rehabilitate girls. Through its community based campaigns, the program has also traced several children back to their families as also reduced overall trafficking of girls – now more and more girls remain in village and finish their schooling. Admittedly JMSS cannot take entire credit for it and the overall campaign too needs to be nuanced, (distinction need to be made between trafficking, migration, child labour) and more holistic in its approach. Nevertheless it is a good start addressing a complex issue so prevalent in Jharkhand.

Kishore Manch – The program has a good network of Kishore Manch and the young boys are enthusiastic about community development. It now has to move on to a more

structured sensitization of boys and men to consolidate the gains in women's empowerment.

Water and Sanitation: Jharkhand Mahila Samakhya Society is playing a critical role in 11 districts in partnership with UNICEF & DWSD to facilitate delivery of water and sanitation services at the grassroots level through the Mahila Samooh, Kishori Manch and Federations at the community, block, and district levels. The partnership includes training of frontline workers, capacity building of Village Health and Sanitation Committees and mobilization for "Nirmal Gram". This is a good example of effective leveraging of government resources where MS leads and facilitates creation of community and household assets.

7 Overall recommendations of the Mission: Through the report, the Mission has made several recommendations for each section. While each of them are important, the members would like to place particular emphasis on the following. The Team would encourage the JMSS to tap into the technical consultancy funds available with the NPO for the studies and reviews as may be required.

- Re-strategize MSK, review the curriculum, invest in training and material required for equivalency for higher grades.
- Comprehensive response to trafficking of girls and violence against women;
- Review training policy and plans to - build a feminist perspective; streamline the load and explore alternative approaches to capacity building;
- Clear operational plan for livelihood promotion focusing on selected commercially viable product lines
- Focus on selected entitlements – FRA, RSBY, NREGS and scholarships for girls.
- Build institutional partnerships with key departments specially SSA, SWD and NRLM/agriculture.
- Continue to lobby with the NPO for better service conditions.

Karnataka Mahila Samakhya

II. Introduction

On behalf of the 4th JRM of Mahila Samakhya, Sanjay Valsangkar (DFID representative) and Kameshwari Jandhyala (GOI representative) undertook a review of Mahila Samakhya Karnataka from 13 to the 17th of March 2013.

At the outset the Mission places on record its deep appreciation of the open and frank discussions with the SPD and the MS team at the State and District levels, the detailed documentation provided and for all the logistical and warm support extended to the Mission. The Mission in particular would like thank all the sangha and federation members of Mysore and Chikballapur districts who gave freely of their time to share their journeys and work of the sanghas and federations. These latter interactions in particular brought alive what MS is attempting to achieve i.e. the mobilization and empowerment of marginalized women.

The Review included interactions with key MS staff of the State Project Office and District Implementation Units (DIUs), and individuals and organisations providing resource support and inputs to MS Karnataka. During the field visits to the districts of Mysore and Chikballapur on the 14 and 15th of March 2013 the Mission interacted with the district teams, sangha and federation members, nari adalat and nari sanjeevani Kendra members, volunteers of the Sakshar Samakhya programme, village resource persons and members of the kishori sanghas. The Mission visited the Mahila Shikshan Kendra at Mysore and also observed the Mahiti Kendras at the taluka and cluster level in Mysore district. The field visits were particularly rewarding as it enabled the Mission to gain an insight into effectiveness of programme implementation, the emerging impact and challenges being faced in the field. The Mission also met the Secretary Education and shared their observations and views on the programme. (Detailed itinerary of the JRM is at Annexure-1).

An Overview of State MS Programme

By the end of 2012 the MS programme in Karnataka expanded to 15 districts covering 62 blocks and 3384 villages. Around 5507 sanghas have been formed with a membership of about 210922 women. Around 49 federations have been formed 7 of which are at a very preliminary stage of formation. In addition to working with adult women, a significant development over the past 5 years has been the expansion of work with kishoris. 2651 kishori sanghas have been formed with around 78992 girls as members. (See Annexure-2 for further details)

II.1 Outreach of the programme to most marginalised and excluded groups/women

MS Karnataka (hereafter MS-K) from the very beginning has had a very sharp focus on working with marginalized social groups. While the programme has been broadly working with marginalised groups such as SCs and STs, its reach out to Muslim women has been limited. During the field interactions sangha women also reported that indeed in their villages there are many very marginalized women who have not been included in the sanghas. **The sanghas and federations, however, did not seem to see outreach to the most marginalised as one of their central planks of work. This particular dimension would need to be built into the visioning and further perspective building of the sanghas and federations**

The Mission appreciates the recent effort (2012-13) to deepen the programme's understanding of marginalization in order to reach out to the most marginalized and excluded through an assessment being done by a group of external resource persons. This is a welcome study as this could inform future strategies and bring the programme closer to its overall goal of empowerment of the most marginalized. A small beginning has been made to reach out to Muslim women in the project areas. The Mission was informed that Muslims tend to be concentrated in peri urban and urban areas, and MS-K is considering work in peri-urban areas to be able to reach out to Muslim women as well.

Table I				
Social profile of sangha members				
Sl. No.	MS Karnataka	Sangha members		% of current total coverage
		Upto March 2011	March 2012	
1	SC	53815	60507	30%
2	ST	32065	36595	18%
3	OBC	44142	47222	24%
4	Minority	9658	12979	6%
5	General	35916	43399	22%
6	Total no. of members	175596	200702	

II.2 Pace of growth

Over the past 5 years the programme has expanded to 15 districts. Expansion, however, has not reached the approved number of districts i.e. 18. The reasons for this delay in expansion were not totally clear. The Mission, however, was informed that in the current year expansion to 3 new districts has been planned.

II.3 Major highlights/achievements and observations based on districts visited

- Both in older and newer project areas, the enthusiasm and energy of the sangha and federation women in the districts the Mission met was heartening which was equally energizing for the Mission members. What needs particular mention is the fact that in districts such as Mysore, even after 20 plus years, sangha women continue to find relevance in the concept of the sangha and now the federation and see it as an important space that allows them to raise, challenge and address gender issues.
- Especially in the older programme areas sangha/federation women are fully aware of entitlements for women, laws relating to women, available government schemes from the government. They are very clear about their agenda as a federation—to raise their voice against gender discrimination, violence against women and above all being a supportive force for women and girls. The legitimacy established by the Nari Adalats is the increasing number of non- sangha women and men in some cases coming for resolution of their problems.

- The Mission observed the effective manner in which theatre is being used by federations in taking issues of gender and violence into the public domain through public performances in the villages. This is a positive development that the discussion on violence against women is being led by the sangha women themselves rather the programme staff.
- In relatively newer project areas, in clusters that have had continuous inputs from sahayoginis there is a qualitative difference in the cohesiveness, awareness and collective spirit in the sanghas.
- One heartening outcome reported during the field interactions with sangha women is the positive trends in girl's education. In one village the kishoris reported that only 2 older girls had dropped out and even though the parents were keen to continue their education the girls were against it. Sangha women reported that in their villages and in their families in particular all girls (especially in the 6-14 year age group) are in school, child marriages are being stopped, and age of marriage is being advanced
- It was a pleasure to see the girls at the Mahila Shikshan Kendra in Mysore and the confidence and boldness with which they performed the kamsaale , which is traditonally performed by men. The Karate demonstration was equally impressive. The Mission suggests that such inputs be extended to the Kishori sanghas as well so that a larger number of girls can benefit from such confidence building and empowering learning and training.
- The Mission commends the programme for the work initiated for sensitization of boys and men. The hard-earned gains made by women can often be vitiated by the unchanging attitudes of men. The gender sensitization material especially in the form of comic books is very welcome.
- MS-K is forging strong partnerships with organisations such as Vimochana and Concern for Working Children to deepen and strengthen their work on issues of violence, gender sensitization of men and boys. These partnerships are also providing an avenue for creating visibility both for the programme and more importantly for sangha women. Recently sangha women (around 5000) have

been the core support for the state wide andolan protesting the amendments that threatened to dilute the delegated powers to the panchayat act. This large scale mobilization was effective in pressurizing the state government to withdraw the amendment. Sangha/federations of Kolar, Chikbalapur, Koppal, Raichur, Bellary and Bagalkot have joined the people's movements for right to water.

- The Mission also appreciates the recent initiatives at building the perspectives and capacity building of MS staff through OD exercises and inputs on marginality and exclusion.

II.4 Key issues, concerns

Expansion and reach

- Expansion needs attention. The Mission noted that the programme had not been able to expand to 3 additional districts as per plan. While the Mission welcomes the attempt to increase focus on reaching out to Muslim women, it is imperative that the MS team have a clear understanding of the issues of Muslim women's marginalization. The recent efforts to enable the MS team develop a more sensitive understanding and appreciation of the layers of marginality is welcome and such understanding needs to be built at the sangha and federation level as well in order to make the various structures being set up under the programme to become truly inclusive.

Sanghas/federation

- The programme is grappling with the whole issue of autonomy of federations. Currently there seems to be a sense that this needs to be done as this being required by the MS Scheme. While over the past 5 years some understanding has been developed as a result of internal debates on the issue of women's empowerment and autonomy and exposure to such processes in other MS states, there continues to be a lack of clarity on the relevance of autonomy, and what if any would be the relationship between MS and autonomous federations.

This lack of clarity is sharper with the MS team rather than the sangha and federation members.

The Mission was informed that in a recent workshop with mature federations, sangha women clearly articulated their confidence of running the federations on their own with an expectation that MS would provide support in terms of solidarity and periodic critical capacity building and training inputs. In January 2013, a workshop called “Samartha Mela” was organised where different organisations such as Mahila Samakhya from AP, Baif, Myrada and others who shared their experiences of federations. This is a good beginning for MS-K in its development of an exit strategy for older and mature federations. This needs to be a priority area for MS-K as the older sanghas/federations seem ready for new challenges and to work on their own.

- The Mission is concerned with the issue of leadership within the sanghas. Especially in the older programme areas the sanghas and federations are dominated by older women who have been with the programme for a very longtime. MSK needs a planned intervention of training and capacity building to encourage younger leadership in the sanghas, the various committees of the federation and the federation itself. Such a transition will not happen by itself but would require that these issues be made central to the perspective building and training of the sanghas and federations as well.
- The Mission was also concerned with the multiplicity of structures being set up as part of the sustainability of the federations- the 6 issue wise committees (education, health, panchayati raj, legal, economic development and sangha self-reliance and sustainability), nari adalat, mahiti Kendra, arogya sakhis, proposed village/sangha resource person, the federation EC.

The multiplicity is particularly troubling at the sangha level. The relationship between these and the ways in which they would mutually reinforce the idea of empowered collectives of the sanghas and federations is not very clear. The lack of clarity is both at the programme staff as well as the federation and sangha level. For

instance the concept of the village and sangha resource person that has been introduced seems to work at cross purposes with the issue-wise committees that had already been set up as part of a strategy of developing a pool of resource persons at the sangha level.

Perspective and capacity building

There is a need to revisit the entire perspective building and content of training of both staff and sangha women to ensure that changed ground realities, newer issues such as declining sex ratios, trafficking, issues raised by the Justice Verma Committee, new developmental policies and initiatives, etc are incorporated. At the same time the increased women's mobilization and organisations under various developmental initiatives and its implications for MS need to be addressed.

As mentioned later in the report the whole federation strategy and autonomy requires a thorough revisit, and a long term coherent strategy evolved on structural issues as well as the relationship between MS and federations in the long run.

Summary of Key Recommendation

Sanghas/Federations

- Evolve a clear plan and strategy for enabling federations to function independently spelling out MS-K long term support for such federations
- Revisit and recast if necessary the various structures set up at sanghas and federation level to ensure that the overall goals of poor women's agency and empowerment are not diluted through a multiplicity of structures that work at cross purposes

Creating a supportive environment

- MS-K to take forward the sensitization of men across the programme areas through sustained and planned interventions. It maybe also useful to explore the possibility of such training being given in schools through a partnership with the School Education Department

Training

- Reexamine the content of training of both staff and sanghas women to ensure that it meets current ground requirements
- It may be useful for MS-K to evolve a long term training strategy on various issues and overall perspective on women's empowerment so that trainings are not ad hoc but build a cohesive understanding and perspective that translates into sound field level strategies and activities.

Education of adolescents

- The Mission urges that the rich experience in providing an enriched curriculum at the Mahila Shikshan Kendras be integrated into the work with Kishoris.
- Re-examine and recast the Mahila Shikshan Kendra in the light of RTE, RMSA and the changed ground level situations and demands for vocational education.
- MS_K consider playing a bigger role in mainstream education through provision of life skills inputs to all KGBVs in the state
- Re-examine the whole literacy strategy on 2 aspects: 1) focus on thematic literacies i.e. make functional literacy an integral part of all issue wise trainings. 2) Develop a group of fully literate women in all sanghas/federations.

Institutional strengthening, organisational issues and assessment

- Initiate an organisational development process for all players, sanghas, federations and Mahila Samakhya to achieve greater clarity on structures, mutual roles and support and engagement with the external environment.
- Seek professional help to streamline and realign the monitoring and reporting system with the results framework so that field processes, outputs, and emerging outcomes can be tracked on a regular basis
- Staff honoraria needs to be enhanced along with service benefits to ensure that the programme can attract and retain committed staff
- A proper and timely Staff appraisal system needs to be put in place.
- Reexamine educational qualification of sahayoginis to make them more flexible so that local women without the required certification could

- Undertake an impact assessment of the grant in aid being given to federations to explore effectiveness and capabilities of federations in undertaking long term sensitization initiatives

III. Facilitate increased information and access of women & girls to their entitlements, through various methods of capacity building

Over the years both the programme and sangha women have developed strong linkages with various programmes that could benefit women. Banks, schemes of NRLM, Horticulture, health, rural development, panchyati raj have been accessed by women. This is one area where the programme has facilitated strong linkages between the sanghas and various departments/ programmes and fairly large numbers have accessed their entitlements. See Annexure -2 for further details.

A host of trainings on the 6 core issues that MS-K focuses on are the basis of district and state plans. This is an on-going activity. While it was evident that older and more mature sanghas and federations have a clear grasp of issues, rights, laws and entitlements, the situation is not as strong across the project areas.

In districts such as Chikballapur which the Mission visited and where the programme has been working for over 4 years and where retaining sahayoginis has been a problem, the mobilisation and organisation of sanghas in some clusters has suffered and consequently the basic information levels too have not been built to the same extent. In the absence of any evaluative assessment mode, it would be difficult to conclude on the status across the project area. Given the short duration of the review it was not possible for the Mission to assess the quality or content of the inputs being provided. Proximity to Bangalore city brings in its own set of issues- higher aspirations, apparent economic wellbeing (mainly through dairy farming) and at the same time concerns on increased violence against women. What specifically is the MS approach to address this situation was not very clear.

The brief field visit to Chikballapur suggests that both for the programme staff as well at the sangha level there is a need to revisit and recast the training/information inputs taking into account the changed ground realities. MS-K is alert to this gap and would need to address this expeditiously. .

IV. Facilitating increased participation of women and girls in formal and non-formal education through sustained engagement with them (lifelong learning/continued education)

- Sangha women's literacy continues to be an area of concern despite the fact that women are conscious of the need for literacy and MS-K has over the past several years made many efforts. A variety of approaches have been adopted, campaigns, camps/centres at village and taluka levels. A specific programme, sakshar samakhya has been launched, with the goal of making all women literate.

The Mission was not able to assess the effectiveness of the literacy strategy. In what way is functional literacy woven into the various training and capacity building being done on core issues? While the overall goal is all women becoming literate, should a short term strategy be also considered- every sangha and federation having at least a group of 5-7 women who have good reading writing and numeracy skills? This issue become particularly critical when the autonomy of federations is being considered. And as already mentioned its implications for enabling younger women to come into the collective process and into leadership roles becomes self-evident.

- Sangha women's linkages with formal education are being fostered by encouraging mothers to become members of the SMCs. In addition MS-K also undertakes training of SMCs. While on the one hand women's awareness of the need for education especially girls is very strongly articulated and the women the Mission met were emphatic that all their girls and especially in their villages are in school, the Mission was not able to assess the effectiveness of their participation in formal structures.

In the villages the Mission visited, sangha women proudly reported that child marriages have been stopped and that the age of marriage has gone up. Currently all this valuable information is in the realm of oral reporting. The

sanghas/federations need inputs on how to monitor and build a database on these crucial changes taking place.

- A significant development in MS-K has been the work with kishoris (adolescents girls), which has grown in recent years. **Formation of Kishori sanghas, trainings and capacity building have been the main strategies. The brief field interactions highlight some issues of concern. The creative approaches being used in the Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSK) or the attempts at breaking gender stereotypes through the training of girls in karate or as in Mysore in the Kamsaale performance done by girls (which traditionally is done by men) do not seem to have been integrated into the kishori strategy. This is an opportunity that is likely to get lost.**
- MS Karnataka currently runs 15 Mahila Shikshan Kendras. Unlike other MS states the girls in the MSKs are at class 9 and 10 levels, and are prepared to take the 10th board exams. In addition to the state approved curriculum, MS-K has also developed a more gender sensitive curriculum and pedagogy on child rights, rights of women, etc.

With RMSA unfolding, the Mission felt that perhaps the MSK itself needs to be reimagined, perhaps to provide vocational training. At the same time in some of the project areas the MSK could provide the transitional training for older girls in the 11-14 years to rejoin the mainstream. This is an area that requires careful probing to understand the ground requirements in order to recast the MSK initiative.

- MS-K runs about 33 KGBVs. While the Mission did not visit any KGBVs, it suggests that MS-K consider providing life skill education across KGBVs in Karnataka. They have the experience and capability to do so. This would be one concrete way of influencing the mainstream.

Key Recommendations

1. The Mission urges that the rich experience in providing an enriched curriculum at the Mahila Shikshan Kendras be integrated into the work with Kishoris.

2. Re-examine and recast the Mahila Shikshan Kendra in the light of RTE, RMSA and the changed ground level situations and demands for vocational education.
3. MS_K consider playing a bigger role in mainstream education through provision of lifeskills inputs to all KGBVs in the state
4. Re-examine the whole literacy strategy on 2 aspects: 1) focus on thematic literacies i.e. make functional literacy an integral part of all issue wise trainings. 2) Develop a group of fully literate women in all sanghas/federations.

V. Building leadership of poor, most marginalised women, and autonomy of women's collectives

Women and local governance

One of the strengths of the MS-K programme has been the work to facilitate women's participation in local governance. This is one issue where women have moved from strength to strength. Organising and participating in gram sabhas, standing for election in large numbers has been an important part of the sangha activity. The PRI women members the Mission met spoke of how the training they received helped them in effective participation in the Panchayat meetings- demanding greater transparency in expending the budgets, ensuring roads, lights that are of concern to women, ensuring proper identification of beneficiaries for pensions, housing etc.

At the time of the field visit the sanghas were all excited of the forthcoming panchayat elections and their participation in a statewide corruption free election campaign "my vote is not for sale".

Sanghas and federations

The MS team as a whole has a fairly clear understanding of the need for mobilizing poor women into collectives at the village level and the need for federations at the taluka levels to serve as pressure groups and to take forward the empowerment processes.

While there has been some inputs on the whole idea of women's empowerment, autonomy and the setting up of federations and some interaction with the autonomous federations in the AP programme, this has been sporadic and hence no coherent strategy for the development of federations in this direction has been developed.

Over the past 5 years there been slow progress on the whole issue of federations, though it was reported that around 50 federations have been formed which are at varying levels of maturity. This has arisen out of confusion and lack of clarity on the whole issue of autonomy of federations, the exit strategy and the nature of MS support to federations after withdrawal. Currently in Mysore district it was reported that 2 out of the 5 federations were on the verge of becoming autonomous, over the next 6-12 months.

During the field interactions with the Hunsur federation, Mysore district, the sangha women were confident that they can function independently. And they were equally emphatic of the need for an MS type of federation which provides the space, opportunity and capability to address violence against women and gender issues in general.

The misgivings regarding independent federations were more on the part of the MS team. What, however, was clear was that even after becoming independent the federations would require resource support and solidarity support from MS. The modalities and ways in which this would be provided have yet to be thought through and are an immediate challenge that MS-K needs to meet.

During the course of interacting with the Hunsur federation some issues regarding the structural aspects of the federation have come to the fore. The nari adalats, nari sanjeevani kendras, the mahiti Kendra (information centres), other substructures at the sangha level such as the subcommittees on core issues and the newly proposed village and sangha level resource persons raises concerns of the interrelationships, linkages between these various structures. At an operational level it is a convenient strategy for providing inputs, however, at the level of women it is not very clear how they cooperate/ collaborate with each other to work towards common goals of the

federation. Another question that needs to be looked at is whether these are competing structures and do they negate each other. At this juncture it may be useful for both MS and the federations to receive training on organizational development to clarify some of the structural confusions.

Currently older federations meet their expenses through membership contributions from sanghas and a grant in aid from Mahila Samakhya (ranging between 65-75000 rupees) for conducting issue based campaigns and activities. As suggested later in the report it may be useful to have a study of the effectiveness of such grant in aids, (as this is part of programme implementation from project areas where sahayoginis have been withdrawn) and also to explore the whole issue of financial sustainability of the federations

A similar OD exercise would be useful at the sangha level where there are competing structures such as SHGs formed under the Stree Shakti programme, and the savings groups formed by Mahila Samakhya that come together to work as a pressure group on gender and violence issues. The Mission was informed that during the period under review there was an attempt at forming one sangha per village with the objective to bring all women onto one platform. The strategy is now being reconsidered as it was observed that marginalised women were being further marginalized within these larger forums. Both at the field level and during interactions with the MS team, the Mission sensed a lack of clarity as in the case of the federations of the structural implications and how cross linkages can be strengthened. Overall what is required is in-depth debate, visioning and strategizing on the whole federation strategy.

Key recommendations:

1. Initiate an organisational development process for all players, sanghas, federations and Mahila Samakhya to achieve greater clarity on structures, mutual roles and support and engagement with the external environment.
2. Undertake an impact assessment of the grant in aid being given to federations to explore effectiveness and capabilities of federations in undertaking long term sensitization initiatives

VI. Women's agency to challenge social inequality, and to break discriminatory social practices (at individual, family, community levels)

During the field visits the Mission was given several examples by sangha and federation women of the range of issues they have dealt with and deal with on a daily basis- these range in newer areas with negotiations at the family and personal level to allow women's mobility to the more mature sanghas addressing difficult social issues such as child marriage, devadasi system, caste issues, caste, class and domestic violence. Quite obviously issues such as alcoholism that affect all women have had greatest resonance.

Knowledge of procedures for filing cases, linkages with the police, developing a network of supportive legal help, having their own nari adalats are all part of the strategies of the sanghas. There is a core commitment to raise their voices against violence against women that comes through strongly in all interactions with the sanghas.

The confidence, ability and capability of sanghas to demonstrate their agency is closely linked to the sustained inputs the collectives have received.

VII. MS Institutional Processes

Nature and Quality of Orientation/ capacity building programmes; extent of external training resources tapped

Capacity building programmes are implemented as planned in the AWP&B. For the district functionaries, a stage-wise orientation plan exists and is implemented as per norms. 40 trainings were conducted during 2012-13 across different districts. Participation by districts is variable. Bellary participated in two, Gulbarga & Kolar only in one and Mysore and Chitradurga participated in none of the capacity building programmes. Trainings for state office staff are currently lagging behind and this issue needs to be addressed. Steps have been initiated in this regard. State is also trying to build a cadre of trainers from amongst its staff.

The state office has effectively used external resources for capacity building. In December 2012, Bangalore Medical Service Trust did the sex education programme

for RP, JRPs and federation women where some men were also included. Again in 2012: RP, JRPs and CRPs were trained on Women and Child trafficking issues by Vrinda Adige, a former state resource person and a well-known activist and trainer on women and child rights. A former district coordinator Dr C P Parimala has been involved in providing orientation training, giving historical background and training on the six core issues (literacy/education, legal, health, Panchayati Raj, Sangha self-reliance and economic development). Neelaya and Anusauya, leaders of Swaraj network (Oxfam initiative) trained programme staff on issues relating to female foeticide and the water campaign. Mr Prabhakar, senior activist and an expert on gender & development and water issues has done numerous trainings for men functionaries of MS. Vimochana, a women's collective has been used for trainings on Domestic Violence Act. HID forum carried out an organisational development process across the MS structure. Joy Srinivas, an expert in behavioural sciences has done team building activities with the state office.

During 2012-13, 2485 staff participants have benefitted from various training/capacity building programmes. With the new SPD in place as is clear from above a more planned training plan is being executed.

A quick perusal of the past 5 years, however, indicates that the approach to training needs to be revisited and clear training plans with follow-up capacity building has to be determined in relation to the current status of the programme. The Phase wise training for field staff also needs revisiting to align it more closely to field requirements and the current stage of the programme. Understanding of changed ground realities and challenges, new developments in the area of women's issues, new technologies that can be utilized all would need to be built into the perspective building and capacity building of staff.

For instance the orientation given to the MS team on the results framework does not seem to have been followed up at all to see how the entire framework or its components could be integrated and used within the monitoring framework. Another more critical issue that needs attention is the building of a

sustained understanding within the MS team of on the whole issue of autonomy of the federations and the changing relationship of MS with these federations. The exposure visits to other states needs to be strengthened though sustained internal debate and planning.

VII.1 Functioning of State office: systems and processes

Staff records such as attendance and leave registers are up to date. Other records such as a Library register, Stationary register, Inward-Outward register and a Vehicle log book are also maintained.

Currently MS Karnataka has to face some challenges in meeting several RTI cases. A system for handling RTI applications have been put in place and a consultant has been recently identified to support and build capacities. 119 RTI applications were filed by an ex-employee of MS in the last few months which have all been responded to within the statutory time limit. 3 legal cases are pending for MS Karnataka (2 against an ex-employee for misappropriation of funds at Raichur and one by an ex-employee against MS). A more serious concern is the pending PF issue in the state office. The PF commission has issued a notice under section 7A of the EPF Act, directing the office to refund the employers PF deducted from employee salaries over the past several years. As reported, the overall liability of the office in this regards could be more than Rs.one crore. The Mission brought this issue to the notice of the Secretary as well and urged that some resolution in this regard is required.

VII.2 Recruitment system, adequacy of functionaries including of accounting; and budget

Recruitment is as per laid down norms through advertisements in newspapers following a transparent process. Sometimes the lengthy recruitment process causes positions to remain vacant for long periods that affect programme implementation.

There needs to be some rethinking on the recruitment process of sahayoginis in particular. In Chikballapur district for instance where there has been high turnover; MS needs to consider making flexible some of the educational requirements so that local women without formal certification but with good

reading and writing skills can be recruited. In the past this has been the strength of MS—bringing in enthusiastic committed women to work for the programme and enabling them to improve their educational qualifications

Mission could not verify cash balance at the state office as on 13th March as the cash book was not update. Totals were not inked for some days. Accounts staff seems to be stretched. However, a bank reconciliation for end February was produced. At the District offices visited by the Mission, all books were up to date and authenticated by DPCs and the Accountants.

Currently everyone in MS Karnataka is on annual contracts. The Mission endorses the view of the staff that this needs to change and longer contracts be given as this would address some of the staff insecurities and have a positive impact on programme implementation.

VII.3 Annual Work Plan and Budget formulation and tracking system

The annual budgeting process initiated in December is fairly thorough. District level plans are finalised in district level meetings during January. A state level workshop is held in February where district plans are presented and discussed. The district plans including the state office plan is sent to the national office which is appraised in the month of February/ March at the National level by the NPO. After incorporating the suggestions of National office the plan is placed before the EC for approval in March / April where it is approved.

Monitoring and tracking of the budget and expenditure has become more systematic and regular, especially after inputs from the NPO financial consultant. A unique feature is that budget analysis is now included as an activity in the events calendar both at district and also at the state level. While Districts monitor on a monthly basis, at the state level it is done on a quarterly basis. This regular budget tracking has enabled the state to better utilize the budget. Accounts team at all levels were appreciative of the efforts put in by the NPO financial consultant in streamlining budget monitoring.

An amount of Rs.25.98 lacs was allocated to 38 mature federations during 2012-13 across 9 districts. As reported these allocations are usually to carry out activities that would otherwise have been done by MS district office, in order to make the federations autonomous. In few cases, federations are given funds for specific activities. *The Mission feels it will useful to evaluate the impact of these allocations made to the federations and suggests that an external evaluation be commissioned for this purpose.*

VII.4 Capability and efficiency of functionaries; understanding of results framework

Overall position of staffing in MS Karnataka is as per following tables:

Staff position at State office			
	Approved	In Position	Vacant
SPD	1	1	
APD	1	1	
SRP	3	1	2
Consultant	2	1	1
Accounts Officer	1	1	
Internal Auditor	2		2
Accountant	1		1
DA	3	2	1
Messenger	2	2	
Driver	1	1	
Total:	17	10	7

Staff position at District offices			
	Approved	In position	vacant
DPC	15	10	5
DRP	27	25	2
JRP	64	54	10
CRP	86	69	17
Sahayogini	106	79	27
Accountant	15	12	3
Office Assistant	15	14	1
DA	25	19	6
Messenger	25	22	3
Driver	5	5	0
Total:	383	309	74

As can be seen the programme carries a number of vacancies at various levels. The most significant of them being that of (i) 5 district coordinators (ii) accounts staff and

SRPs/consultant at state office and (iii) sahayoginis, JRPs and CRPs at the field level. This significantly impacts programme delivery. For instance in 5 cases the DPCs have additional charge of another district and reported that they are not able to provide sufficient attention to the additional district.

The MS staff in Karnataka is well experienced to deliver the objectives of the programme. Most importantly they are motivated to do so. There were some areas where despite sustained inputs from the NPO problems seem to persist. While the Results framework is understood in broad terms, the staff reported that it is cumbersome to monitor and report on a regular basis against the framework. **The MS team is looking for some further support from the NPO in aligning the internal monitoring and reporting systems with the results framework parameters. This may well be the situation in other states as well and the NPO may consider a national pilot action project on this issue that is monitored from the National level. The TA funds available maybe tapped for such a purpose.**

An external review process is being done by a team consisting of NRG members and senior development activists to understand exclusion and diversity in the programme and to identify training needs for the programme in its current state.

MS Karnataka has a wealth experience and knowledge about the programme given its long existence. **A systematic evaluation of the programme at this stage could provide useful insights into programme achievements and constraints/ challenges that could help shape future direction.**

VII.5 Retention efforts, challenges esp. turnover issues/ causes

State Office: 3 vacancies in programme and 1 in accounts, 2 in internal audit. Reportedly retention is an issue because (i) programme staff have to travel a lot (ii) honorarium is perceived to be low (iii) competitive job environment in a city like Bangalore.

District offices: There is a major issue about retention of Sahayoginis but also that of other field staff because (i) norms of selection are strict (is there a need for a re-look?) (ii) work-load (covering 10 villages is hard) (iii) honorarium is perceived to be low etc.

VII.6 Feedback Reflection and Monitoring process in MS

360 degree feedback is structured into the monthly meetings. One to one feedback is part of the annual appraisal. There is scope for improvement for giving and receiving structured feedback between SPOs and DIUs. SPD has plans to improve this.

VII.7 Quality of performance appraisal processes and internal assessments

Appraisals usually happen in relation to confirmation of probation and extension of contracts. Last year contracts were extended without appraisals as the SPD had just joined.

The Mission suggests that the whole appraisal system be reviewed. It needs to be more systematized to include spelling out of objectives and success criterion at the beginning of the year, identification of learning and development needs, giving and receiving feedback on regular intervals and a mid and end year evaluation of performance against objectives and competencies. This will go a long way in helping the MS programme strengthen staff performance towards achieving its objectives

VII.8 Key issues and recommendations

- 1) *Staff reported that trainings for State Office Resource persons and consultants were inadequate* to enable them to play a resource support role for the programme as a whole. Currently there is no special training for SPO staff. The Mission suggests that MS-K engage in an exercise to spell out expected roles and functions of SPO staff and design and tailor trainings for them accordingly. This exercise would need to be done in the context of the current stage and requirements of the programme both at the field level and its intentions of influencing the mainstream. Overall the whole capacity building plans at SPO and Districts in particular need revisiting
- 2) Steps need to be taken to strengthen confidence in the accounting process at state office by ensuring that books are up to date and balances reconciled on a regular basis. Addressing staffing gaps/issues will help.

- 3) Everyone appreciated the NPO inputs on financial side for the annual planning process. The Mission recommends this support should be continued for some more time. The State reported that similarly programme side inputs from the NPO in the annual planning process will be highly useful.
- 4) A number of federations are receiving funding for their activities in the state. The Mission recommends that an external evaluation be conducted to evaluate the impact of direct funding of federations.
- 5) There are retention issues; most significant reason cited was the low level of honorarium across all levels of the programmes. Mission recommends that the revised scale of honorariums under XII plan be implemented expeditiously.
- 6) The PF commissioner has issued a notice under section 7A of the EPF ACT directing MS Karnataka to refund the employers share of provident fund deducted from employees. Mission recommends that the issue be resolved through intervention of higher officials.
- 7) One of the causes of low retention of Sahayoginies was reported to be strict qualification norms (10th pass). Mission recommends that the norms for recruiting Sahayoginis be reviewed.
- 8) The Mission recommends that MS Karnataka move away from annual contracts to contracts of at least 2 year duration. This may help in staff retention.
- 9) Systems for evaluation of staff performance are weak. Contracts for the last year were renewed without any appraisal. Mission recommends that the state should put in place a detailed system of staff appraisal as part of the contract renewal process. In addition a self-appraisal mechanism at regular intervals could be considered.

VIII. Financial Management:

VIII.1 Fund Flow from GoI and status of releases to districts from State

The overall position of Funds flow from GoI to the State MS Society is as follows:

Mahila Samakhya Karnataka

Year wise details of Budget and Expenditure							
Sl. No.	Year	Budget	Grant Received	Expenditure	Grant received/ Budget	Utilization	
		Rupees in Lacs				Exp/ Budget	Exp / Grant Received
1	2007-2008	695.44	539.68	499.87	77.60%	71.88%	92.62%
2	2008-2009	744.14	576.7	647.82	77.50%	87.06%	112.33%
3	2009-2010	795.34	450.65	537.74	56.66%	67.61%	119.33%
4	2010-2011	699.98	625.43	613.61	89.35%	87.66%	98.11%
5	2011-2012	810.21	757.68	667.67	93.52%	82.41%	88.12%
6*	2012-2013	959.32	853.55	716	88.97%	74.64%	83.88%
*Unaudited expenditure as on 28.02.2013							

Budget utilization varies between 72% to 88% over the last five years. However expenditure as a percentage of grants released is as high as 119% in 2009-10. Funds are released by GoI on the basis of AWP&B. The state reports significant streamlining and in the timing of funds release by GoI. The state office releases funds to the districts electronically based on their request which is supported by their funds position.

VIII.2 Status of audits and compliance

Internal audit for the state as well as for the districts has been completed up to September 2012. The audit report for half year ended September 2012 received in February 2013 is under scrutiny. The report(s) will be circulated to respective districts after that for their comments. As of now the management response is under process. For 2011-12 first half internal audit was completed by Mr Achut Kulkarni, the in-house internal auditor. The second half was outsourced to Jaisimha & Co. His partner took up the statutory audit.

Statutory audit has been completed up to 2011-12. Management response has been submitted to the NPO. Auditor for 2012-13 is to be appointed.

A reading of a sample of the internal audit reports did not reveal comments/ observations of any serious nature.

VIII.3 Financial Rules and delegation of powers, procurement systems

The state follows the finance manual, including the procurement procedures issued by the NPO. Delegated powers are duly approved by the EC and are in accordance with Delegation of Financial Powers for Mahila Samakhya rules 1992. No case of breach/abuse of financial powers was brought to the notice of the Mission.

VIII.4 Accounting and Record Keeping

In the districts visited i.e. Mysore and Chikbalapura, accounts and record keeping was immaculate and up to date. As mentioned above, the cash book at the state office was neither up to date nor inked on the date of inspection i.e. on 13th March 2013. The completed cash book was shown to us only on 16th March. The list of advances did not exactly match with the balances in the advances register. Lack of staff support was cited as the reason for this situation. The Mission did not get the confidence that accounts and financial transaction was being recorded in a timely manner in the state office which could also lead to inaccuracies.

VIII.5 Key issues and recommendations

- 1) Cash book was not up to date in the state office. Cash could not be reconciled on the date of the visit. Mission recommends that steps be taken to improve accounting at the state office to ensure confidence in management of finance and accounts.
- 2) Maximum budget utilization is 88%. Mission recommends that this be improved through better planning and implementation at field levels.
- 3) Internal audit for first half of the year has been completed. The reports are still under scrutiny at SPO after which these will be circulated to districts. Internal audit for second half and statutory audit for the year need to be commissioned. Mission recommends that statutory auditors for 2012-13 be appointed as per norms and internal audit for the second half is completed. Management responses for the reports under scrutiny should be obtained in a timely manner. In the opinion of the Mission, the statutory auditors should not be the same firm that is also doing the internal audit (which was the case in 2011-12).

XI. Emerging Good Practices and Innovations

- In order to sustain and ensure a gender sensitive environment and to consolidate empowerment of women, MS-K has begun serious work on the sensitisation of men and boys. A gender sensitization module “Hosa Ale” and training modules in graphic comic form have been developed. The Mission was informed that these are being translated into English for wider circulation.
- An emerging innovative intervention is the work that has started to set up a community radio station at Bagepalli, Chikballapur district. The plan to harness the reach of the radio that can be run by sangha women and kishoris and through it reach out to a wider public audience is commendable. The Mission suggests that concurrent process documentation be built into the initiative.
- The Mahiti Kendras set up with support from ITforChange in Mysore district are emerging as IT enabled information hubs. These kendras are managed by the sanghas/federation and run by a local educated young woman who is trained by ItforChange. The Mission sees the potential for this becoming a training ground for younger sanghas members and MSK graduates.

Itinerary

13.3.2013	Arrival at Bangalore Briefing by SPD and interactions with State Office Team
14.3.2013	Field visit to Mysore District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with District Programme Coordinator and the District team of resource persons, cluster and junior resource persons, accountants and other district staff • Meeting at Hunsur Federation Office cum Mahiti Kendra. Interaction with Hunsur Federation EC members, representatives of Nari Adalats, Nari Sanjeevani, Elected women representatives, Literacy volunteers of the sakshar samakhya programme, Village Resource persons and sakhi in charge of the Mahiti Kendra of Hunsur Taluka. Visit to MSK • Visit to Attiguppe village. Interaction with sangha members, kishori sangha members and sakhi of Attiguppe cluster mahiti Kendra. Observing the street play on violence against women performed by sangha women
15.4.2013	Visit to Chikballapur district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with District Programme Coordinator and the District team of resource persons, sahayoginis and junior resource person, district accountant and other district staff • Visit to Federation office at Bagenhalli Taluka. Interaction with federation EC members • Visit to Pokamakapalli village and interaction with sangha members • Visit to Kattaraganapalli village. Interaction with kishoris and sangha members
16.3.2013	Interaction with all DPCs and further discussion with SPO staff
	Interaction with MS Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms.Lakshmi Krishnamurty, NRG member • Ms.Kavita Ratna and Mr. Venkatesh, Concern for Working Children • Ms.Shantamma, Vimochana, Koppal • Mr.George Kutty, Centre for Information, Education and Development Studies • Mr.Prabhakar, Development Activist
	Debriefing Meeting with Mr.Kumar Nayak, Secretary Education, SPD MS Karnataka, Assistant SPD, State Resource Person and Accounts Office of MSK
17.3.2013	Report writing Departure to Delhi

Annexure-2**Physical Progress Report 2007-2012**

Subject	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
No Of Districts	12	12	15	15	15
No Of Taluks	51	51	60	60	60
No Of Villages	2562	2798	2941	3225	3298
No Of Sanghas	4131	4545	4754	5058	5315
No Of Sangha Women	68824	74625	138484	175596	201770
Sangha Mane					
No Of Sangha Huts supported by MS (cumulative)	531	534	534	538	-
No Of Huts Completed	434	461	461	486	-
Maha Sanghas					
No Of Maha Sanghas	38	39	41	41	43
Membership in Maha Sanghas	27725	30410	37929	39762	45902
General Fund in Maha Sanghas (in Rupees)	3933530	4184519	4438075	4806762	1161386
Kishoris					
No Of Kishori groups	1199	1368	1728	2128	2570
No Of Kishoris	28239	34084	47031	61788	73089
Literacy in MS					
No Of Sangha women covered in literacy programmes	18963	24294	4319	5058	22267
No Of SDMC members	562	693	867	968	1341
Women In Governance					
Sangha Women as elected women representatives	791	860	836	1208	1549
Sangha women as standing committee members	778	653	791	1096	1526
Kishoras					
No Of Kishora groups	305	389	553	778	1026
No Of Kishoras	5495	8144	13655	21191	29786
Economic Activities					
No Of Sanghas involved in savings	3455	4076	4424	4528	4923
Total savings in sanghas (in Rupees)	31303263	32409964	31876893	25358593	207633497
Health					
No of children covered in pulse polio program	54845	51515	60274	80720	
No of traditional birth attendance in MS Sanghas	1055	1284	833	816	
No Of Nari Sanjeevini Centre's					32
No Of Nari Sanjeevini members					586
Legal					
No Of cases approached to Sanghas	1439	2338	1432	1371	1416
No Of cases handled and solved by sanghas	717	1891	1323	1244	1345
Projects undertaken	KGBV, NPEGEL,	KGBV, NPEGEL,	KGBV, NPEGEL,	KGBV, NPEGEL,	KGBV, NPEGEL,

	MSK's, Sindhuvani	MSK's, MM	MSK's, MM	MSK's	MSK's, Jeeva Project
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Uttarakhand Mahila Samakhya

Acknowledgements

The Joint Review Mission team (JRM) of Uttarakhand comprising Mr. M Bharath Bhushan (Government of India representative) and Ms Alka Aneja (DFID) visited the state between 13 and 18 March 2013. The JRM team wishes to thank the state, district and sub-district functionaries of Mahila Samakhya (MS) Uttarakhand as well as other associates for the support and cooperation extended during the field visits to interact with wide range of stakeholders. The team also thanks Ms Manisha Pawar, I.A.S, Secretary, Education and women members of Sanghas and Mahasanghas from Udham Singh Nagar, Haridwar, Pauri, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Champawat and Nainital for making the visit an insightful experience.

I. Overview of Uttarakhand MS (UKMS) programme

Mahila Samakhya programme was formulated to create a concerted effort towards women empowerment. Traditional gender imbalances in educational access and achievement were redressed by the National Policy on Education and laid new guidelines for policymakers and educationalists. Approach of MS rooted in “Education for women’s equality” emphasises that “Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women”. The basic objective of the MS programme is to lay foundation for women’s empowerment.

Women empowerment interventions in Uttarakhand MS reflect socio-political situation unique of the region with imprint of Sarvodaya tradition, environmental movements, social mobilisation against alcoholism, land alienation induced by conversion of farm land into non-farm, along with strong presence of women’s perspective. MS has high visibility in the state in terms of its presence in contemporary issues of socio-political dialogue and participation in movements demanding equal rights for women in changing social order. Sangha women are part of several coalitions and campaigns with women’s perspective.

Pattern of growth in coverage and outreach of UKMS during past 24 years from one district to seven districts out of 13 districts in the state characterises its identity as vibrant women’s movement especially among the Pahari communities. Issues addressed, forms of mobilisation and articulation of women’s perspective on social change helped MS build a strong alternative social mobilisation for women’s empowerment and providing ‘voice’ to women’s concerns as well as visibility to women’s agenda at varied levels of governance.

MS programme in the state dates back to 1989 in Tehri Garhwal followed by Pauri and Nainital in 1995-96. With bifurcation of Uttar Pradesh into a separate state of Uttarakhand in 2000, the MS programme attained new identity in 2003 as a separate body and subsequently in 2004 with independent office. Coverage and outreach of MS expanded slowly with additional district viz., Uttarkashi in 2004-05 and two more districts viz., Udham Singh Nagar and Champawat in 2007. Haridwar has been added in 2012-13 after six years. Currently MS is working in 7 districts out of 13 districts of Uttarakhand, covering 24 development blocks out of 95 blocks.

Status of MS Uttarakhand

Currently MS Uttarakhand covers 2567 villages spread over 24 blocks in seven districts of the state. While the coverage is very high in Pauri Garhwal and Nainital districts with 560 and 537 villages respectively, it is very low in Haridwar (60) where the activities are not even a year old. Remaining four districts cover 350 to 360 villages each.

Table 1 Current Status of MS Uttarakhand

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Districts</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Development blocks</i>	<i>Villages</i>
1	Tehri Garhwal	1989	3	360
2	Pauri Garhwal	1995	5	560
3	Nainital	1996	5	537
4	Uttarkashi	2004	3	350
5	Udham Singh Nagar	2006	3	350
6	Champawat	2006	3	350
7	Haridwar	2012	2	60
TOTAL:			24	2567

The visibility of MS is very good at all the levels and the team is appreciative of the fact that MS works in tandem with all the likeminded groups in the area. The MS at Uttarakhand works on the core principles and vision of MS and has been a success in raising awareness and visibility of these issues from the state to the village level. It has been working towards empowering women with the help of various means including education to enable them to take informed decisions. The MS team at both state and district level is a very energetic, cohesive and vibrant. The leadership of the state and district units is also self- motivated and dynamic which has resulted in a vibrant and self-reliant sanghas and Mahasanghas that take on the issues fearlessly and learn from their own experiences.

Major Highlights of the programme in the district visited

The JRM team covered Udham Singh Nagar district for field visit and interaction with different sections of people associated with the MS programme. Field study included sharing of experiences and discussions regarding *Apni Adalat*, *Sanjeevani Kendra*, Bridge Course, MSK, Federations and Resource Groups at Block/ District levels. Field visit in the district was conducted on 14 and 15 March 2013.

Achievements

- Uttarakhand MS is seen by civil society as one of the important pressure groups in the state voicing women's concerns. Strengths of MS include its presence at village level in pockets of the state and significant visibility at state level.
- Of late MS programme is making systematic efforts in addressing problems of exclusion of women based on caste/ religion. Leadership in new districts and blocks has women from Muslim and Dalit communities as well.
- Education for empowerment and women's equality as well as collective action through sanghas ensured sangha women to capture political spaces and become Gram sarpanch/ Pradhan in 566 villages out of 2507 villages of MS operational area. Presence of sangha women is also seen in block and district levels with 269 kshetra Panchayat members and 30 block level members.

- There are 18 federations of which are 5 independent of the MS. Federations are also expanding to neighbouring villages and addressing issues of domestic violence.

Expanding Outreach of the programme

Around 37 % of Sangha members belong to SC, ST and Muslim communities. Nainital and Pauri Garhwal districts together constitute around 40 % of the total villages and sanghas members of MS. Large section of tribal and Muslim Sangha members belong to Udham Singh Nagar (ST 4602 and Muslim 599), while one third of SC members belong to Nainital. The programme reach and coverage vis-a-vis the scope and scale has been gradual over the years.

Expansion in terms of additional districts and blocks as well as the demographic composition of the target groups requires greater care to ensure marginalised sections get priority. The coverage and outreach as of now is furnished in Table 2.

Table 2
Social composition of Women at Sanghas

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Total women at Sangha</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>SC</i>	<i>Minority</i>	<i>OBC</i>	<i>General</i>
1	Tehri Garhwal	8372	-	1183	49	2434	4706
2	Pauri Garhwal	11641	-	2233	266	-	9142
3	Nainital	15042	709	5401	207	460	8265
4	Uttarkashi	5367	22	1550	3	3564	228
5	US Nagar	8875	4602	2232	599	816	626
6	Champawat	7595	-	1761	-	280	5554
7	Haridwar						
	Total:	56892	5333	14360	1124	7554	28521

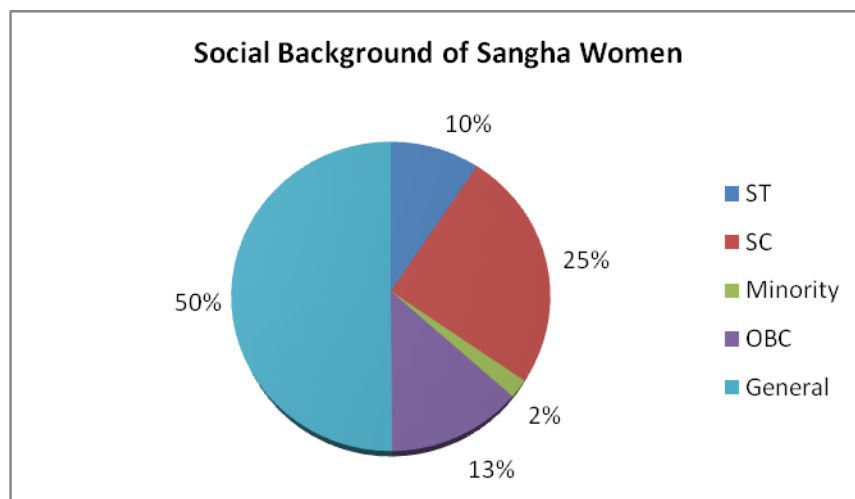
Activities of UK MS are furnished in **Annex 1**

In the year 2012-13

- 1 new District – Haridwar added in the year 2012-13
- 2 additional Blocks added under Haridwar
- Number of villages/sanghas increased from 2507 to 2567 (60 villages from Haridwar)

- Increase in Sangha Members is not significant
- Number of women registered in NIOS (at A,B,C levels) has increased
- New Sanjeevani Kendra added : 40
- There is growing realisation about special attention required for Dalit and Muslim communities
- Building leadership to enter political spaces - Training of Sangha Women about Panchayat system
- Gender Resource Centre is given special focus since 2012 with an independent office to build linkages with universities and civil society to improve interface with students, academia and activists from other social movements to widen space for engagement with other movements and communities

Owing to the demographic composition of Uttarakhand, MS has been for a long time working with women belonging to general categories. Population of Minorities and STs in the state is small. Attention and coverage of these marginalised sections is gaining better consideration of late. The addition of new blocks in Udham Singh Nagar – Baajpur and addition of Haridwar district in the MS portfolio would enable UKMS to engage better with ST and minority communities in Uttarakhand. Now the MS structure also has some key posts held by the SC, ST and Minority communities which would bring in more acceptance by these communities.



The team discussed the issue of inclusion with the state and district offices and following factors/forces for facilitating and or hindering the inclusion came out:

1. Attitude and beliefs towards Minority communities
2. Difficult Terrain
3. Girls/women seen as helping / working hand – most of the girls work in fields/factories
4. Poor access to schools in some villages/ Schools at far distances
5. Non-cooperation of other Govt functionaries –RTE, admission in KGBV, NIOS

There is growing attention being paid to understand marginality and question of Muslim and tribal women, which remained largely ignored in the political debates of the state. Negotiating with these challenges the MS would also be confronting with its own perceptions of marginality and also affecting the debate in the wider arena in the state. A conscious and concerted effort is required to strengthen the UKMS in addressing these challenges.

Awareness on legal issues

The JRM team found that there is a good level of awareness and understanding on the legal issues amongst the Sangha and Mahasangha members across the districts. Sangha members are engaged in several issues and prominent among them are:

- Violence against women
- Domestic violence
- Jal, Jangal, Jameen
- Alcoholism
- Dropout of girls from schools after primary schooling
- Admission of Economically Backward students into private schools under RTE
- Awareness of RTI
- Awareness and training of women Panchayat Pradhans

Participation of women at all levels of Panchayats has increased due to the reservation for women in Gram Panchayats. MS has been working with the elected women Pradhans on raising their awareness on the issues related to power and responsibility enjoyed by these

posts. They have also worked on making these women literate, infuse leadership qualities and empowered to make informed decisions. The team met several Sangha women who have become Gram Pradhans and also a Dalit and a Minority Pradhan who are proud of entering positions which were considered 'only for men' for generations. Women elected members are real and effective. *Sarpanch Pati* (husband of woman Sarpanch acting as real Sarpanch) is not seen in these villages. The team is appreciative of their confidence and awareness of their rights and responsibilities.

Initially when I was elected as Gram Pradhan, my husband would do the actual work of a Pradhan as I was not confident and my awareness was zero. But now I have asked my husband to sit at home and I do all the decision making and liaison with government officials. Confidence and support that I have received from MS members is very appreciable and have changed my own assessment. Others' outlook towards me has also changed radically. – Ms. Rekha, Pradhan of Sonkanj Gram Panchayat, Khatima block, Udham Singh Nagar.

Table 3
Sangha Members elected to Panchayats

<i>Post</i>	<i>Pauri</i>	<i>Tehri</i>	<i>Nainital</i>	<i>Uttarkashi</i>	<i>US Nagar</i>	<i>Champawat</i>	<i>Total</i>
Gram Pradhan	178	76	99	116	38	59	566
Upa Pradhan	0	29	0	28	9	15	81
Ward Member	983	451	549	536	230	269	3018
Kshetra Panchayat Member	109	26	51	38	20	25	269
Zilla Panchayat Member	9	3	7	6	2	3	30
Total	1279	585	706	724	299	371	3964

Trainings

Various training programmes are being conducted on different issues by district as well as state office. New trainings as well as new stakeholders are being identified across the districts and state office. The target groups vary from members of old Mahasanghas to newly formed sanghas. The team is also working on capacity building of its own staff as per the requirement from time to time. Some of the key issues covered in the training are education, health, gender, sanitation, nutrition, Panchayat literacy, water resource

management, food processing, RTI, NREGA, report writing, planning and management, federation visioning. The details of coverage and types of training activities is furnished in Annex – 2

Awareness about entitlements/ rights

Sangha members are aware of the functioning of varied welfare measures and rights and entitlements of girls and women especially with regard to Domestic Violence Act (DV ACT), Janani Suraksha, SMCs, MDM, FRA, PDS, pensions for widows/ old age, etc. *Apni Adalats* conducted at cluster sanghas and federations reveal high level of efficacy and awareness about women's rights. Awareness of entitlements has also been observed in monitoring and demanding improvements in implementation of MDM, MGNREGA, FRA, etc. Women demanding their entitlements and rights are also seen in the struggle against land grabbing by builders in Nainital which was successful in restoration of rights over common property.

Schools in several villages serve 'peela baath/ jarda' (only rice with little dal or sabji). There is significant awareness level of awareness of entitlements and a sort of "information revolution". Sanghas are also monitoring attendance of teachers and MDM. Sangha women of Nandanna village in Udham Singh Nagar have exposed through media case of misappropriation in MDM and the teacher was transferred.

Monitoring of schools and MDM is not regular and concerted effort is lacking to ensure significant qualitative improvements. However, application of awareness to ensure access and improved services is not correspondingly adequate.

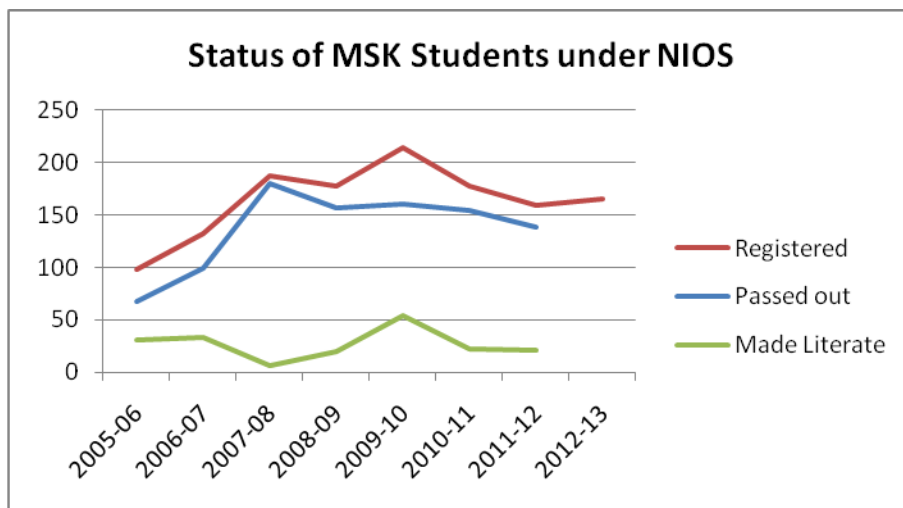
Participation in formal and non formal education

MS interventions in promotion of formal and non-formal education for girls and women are at varied levels and in both forms- direct and indirect. Sangha women as SMC members also strive to strengthen school education under RTE.

Direct form of MS involvement in education is primarily of two types viz., a) education for girls for mainstreaming through NPEGEL, ECCs and MSKs, and b) education for women through NIOS certification.

MSK the team visited interacted with 28 girls who were inspiring for their satisfaction with the MSK. Most importantly, most of them were adolescents and a perfect peer group with small variations in age of the members. Some of them had no formal education at all and some of them dropped out from school to extend help at home. It was surprising to find never been to school girls in good number from some villages. It was reported that girls leaving MSK have problems to get admission in regular schools. Admissions into NPEGL has been also not very feasible owing to rules that require a candidate to be drop out. The problem is more serious for girls from Muslim communities as there is trust deficit on the use of other / alternate hostel facilities.. UKMS has to find out concrete solutions or alternatives to these problems. Educational demands of challenged girls is an area that requires more attention in making MSK helpful in reaching out to these girls.

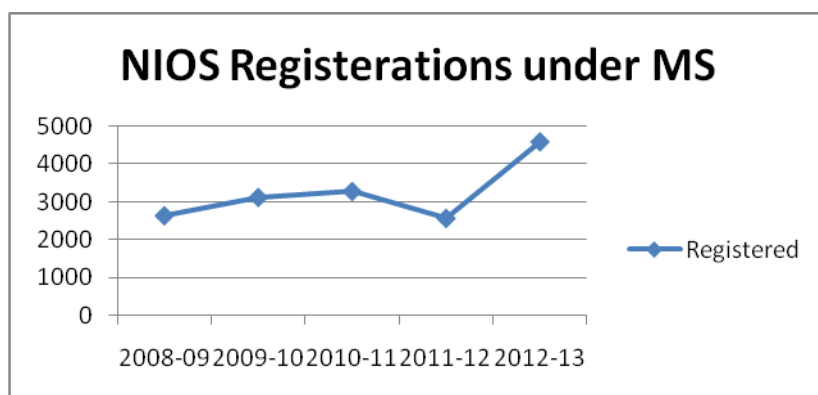
Literacy campaigns are also organised by sanghas for motivation and mobilising girls and women into different educational interventions run by government and MS itself. Meetings, workshops, trainings are organised at sangha and cluster level to ensure girls and women to take part in educational programmes.



The number of registrations with NIOS is increasing over the years and women of all ages are writing these exams and clearing with good results. The team found amazing to interact with women aged above 60 years also taking keen interest in improving literacy through NIOS. Hundreds of women are able to write clearly and read. Uttarakhand is the only MS programme adopting NIOS for enabling formal education to adult women.

I appeared for class 8th exam alongwith my grand-child and I could clear the exam with better grades than him. Initially my grandchildren made fun of the fact but when the results were out, they became speechless. – Pushpa, Sangha member from Tehri

The enthusiasm and confidence among women who have cleared the NIOS exams and obtained certificates is very high. There is need to assess how the changing self-image, confidence and newly acquired skills have changed the functioning of the sanghas in regard to social audit of the development programmes or the organisation matters like book keeping or documenting the experiences of women engaged in challenging discrimination at varied levels. The JRM team could not find much to assess the impact of newly acquired skills in improving the governance at village or higher levels. There is also need to maintain a system of data to track the post MSK and post NIOS status of the candidates to understand what difference did the MSK or NIOS attempts have made to the individuals and sanghas in general. There is no such MIS that could help in tracking the improvements or change owing to educational interventions. This is a serious lacuna in MS.



Details are furnished in Annex - 3

Leadership building amongst most marginalised

The team is pleased to see that 5 Autonomous Maha Sanghas (Federations) are working independently of MS. UKMS is organising trainings and workshops to develop capacity of members of these Mahasanghas on management, planning, evaluation, monitoring and documentation. Federations reported that their members are capable of making work plans and executing them successfully due to the capacity building support. All except one

Mahasangha has been reported to participate regularly in the DIU review meetings and monthly meetings of the Maha Sangha. There has been a debate suggesting the need to revisit criteria for making federations autonomous based on their strengths and local specific situation instead of a one-size-fit-all norm.

Work undertaken by autonomous Federations include

- Post card campaign under One Billion Rising (OBR)
- Letter campaign against new state Excise Act
- Land acquisition by builders Dhari and Ramgarh in Nainital district
- Relief for disaster affected families by mobilising resources and distributed through teams in new areas
- Campaign against construction of dams

Autonomous Federations are reported to be following management principles

- Monthly EC meetings
- Regular attendance in DIU meetings of the MS
- Financial management based on members' contributions- collection and utilisation of funds

Old Mahasanghas have also started to expand to the nearby villages on their own and are working as resource persons in other districts.

At present, UKMS supports a district for 5 to 10 years and then plans the 'roll back' withdrawal. The process of formation of Federations is a key concern and should be looked into in detail. How the process operates in the field requires serious review- what is the relation the autonomous federations have with UKMS, how much of their financial requirements are met from the MS, whether federations have become substitute to the sahyoginis, block units and DIUs, and what type of issues are addressed by the autonomous federations and what is the value addition they make to the approach of women's empowerment from having an institutional structure different from the UKMS. Owing to time constraints, the JRM team could not make significant inferences in this aspect, and recommends that it requires attention for making future designs more meaningful.

Issues

- Discussions with members of the federations revealed that they seek assistance of the MS in programmes that cover beyond the block
- There is a need for a wider platform linking federations independent of the MS. A forum and a structure for linking federations to act collectively is reported to be necessary as the number of autonomous federations are many. However, there is no clarity on what could be the form of such structure that enables federations to become state wide agencies facilitating them to act collectively and independently of the MS.
- The capacity building / hand holding period after withdrawal should be decided case by case rather than applying a uniform policy & fixed time lines
- Development of leadership in federations is very critical beyond withdrawal also
- Sustainability of autonomous federations requires examination in terms of their vision, organisational strength, financial viability, etc

Capacity to challenge

Participation of women in Panchayats – MS in Uttarakhand imparted intensive information to women representatives regarding Panchayats functions. They were motivated to activate different committees in their Panchayats, hold open gram sabha meetings and make women oriented schemes. Women panchayat representatives are now aware of their role and are performing independently.

Apni Adalat – JRM team visited the Apni Adalat at Sitaarganj district and was pleased to see the good work being done there. The issues brought in Apni Adalats are usually related to domestic violence and desertion /extra marital affairs. Issues like land related disputes or rape cases are being forwarded to the local authorities. However, all the help is provided to the victims to deal with the authorities. Apni Adalat members keep record of all the cases, invite both the parties and do counselling. There were many success stories that these women shared. Apni Adalats have gained the status of an informal institution that is respected by the community. The team witnessed a male approaching the Apni Adalat with a request to restore conjugal relations with the spouse.

Sanjeevani kendras – JRM team visited the Sanjeevani Kendra run by three ‘Gyani’ (women herbal medicine experts) in Pachpedha village, Khatima block, Udham Singh Nagar district. These Gyanis were provided exposure to experts and training in growing, processing and packaging of these medicines. The Gyanis mainly assist women with common ailments as well as chronic diseases. Gyanis are not only poor women’s gynaecologist but also physician for general public. Gyanis are accessible and affordable in areas where the PHCs are known for poor functioning. Some of them also work as bare foot veterinarians. Besides, many of these practitioners conduct regular orientation and health check ups for adolescent girls in the schools. Teachers of these schools also welcome these Gyanis to address health issues of adolescent girls, which would otherwise be not addressed.

The gyanis and Sanjeevani Kendras have earned great reputation for treatment of joint pains, arthritis, piles, menstrual health, etc. Gyanis charge only Rs 10 from patients and there are 6 to 10 patients once a week. Gyanis viewed Sanjeevani kendras as means of preserving traditional heritage of knowledge systems and breaking patriarchal control of over such knowledge systems.

I was suffering from heavy menstrual periods, but was very reluctant to discuss this with any one or to go to the doctor. Then I discussed this with my aunt and she advised me to see the sanjeevani practitioner. I discussed the problem with Gyani women and got the treatment. I took medicine for one month and now I am fine. –

Suneeta, student of class 9, Pachpeda village, Khateema

Issues

- Herbal medicine centres cannot be assumed as livelihoods since the earnings to Gyanis is nominal. Livelihoods approach in herbal medicine is also possible, but requires cultivation of medicinal plants on a scale that makes it economically viable. Potential of

the cultivation through buy back arrangements from the market are possible options that MS needs to examine.

- Understanding that herbal medicine is good for poor women also requires critical examination if that is to ignore their entitlements from the public health systems or the best medical care that is available for some sections of the society.
- Herbal medicines need scientific validation. Some of the SRG members suggested that Pharmacy departments of the universities be engaged in ethno pharmacology to provide scientific evidence.
- Branding/ marketing is also required to make herbal medicine centres to become financially viable.

III. MS Institutional Process

Detailed discussion with district and state functionaries revealed that institutional processes are affected by systemic problems that relate to remuneration of staff and funds flow among other problems. More than half the posts (49 out of 87 posts) are vacant in MS Uttarakhand!

Availability and retention of staff has become serious issue of late with changing scenario of the development sector in the state with many projects with participatory approach being implemented. It is observed that HR matters require re-examination to address issues large number of vacancies and high attrition.

‘What we pay is so less and our MS personnel become most sought after by other agencies who see here a readymade, trained and committed person’ told a SRG member.

‘We are not able to attract or retain people in our jobs now because there is so much work and so less is paid. The problem is severe because for the same skills they are paid more in other jobs by government or NGOs’ added Mr Praveen Bhatt.

Table 4
Status of vacancies in UK MSS

Posts	Sanctioned	Vacant	On-job
JRP	50	31	19
RP	25	12	13
DPC	7	3	4
SRP	2	1	1
APD	1	0	1
Consultant	2	2	0
Total	87	49	38

Large number of vacant positions leads to financial and programmatic problems. It contributes to poor utilisation of funds and non implementation of some programmes which again adds to less utilisation of funds. Another reason cited for vacancies was delays in appointment of the selected candidates due to approval procedures for posts above the level of Sahyoginis and CRPs.

There is clear policy on Monitoring and Evaluation which includes regular monitoring of the progress of the programme and evaluation of MS personnel. There is also self-evaluation of the personnel.

IV. Convergence and Resource Support

There is high resilience of MS programme in associating with varied issues and campaigns in the state. UKMS is seen by other civil society agencies as an active and strong people's organisation with gender perspective. It is important to stress that UKMS is also actively associated with State Women's Commission, NIOS and Jan Shikshan Sanstan. Prominent groups among the civil society agencies that are associated with UKMS include Uttarakhand Mahila Manch, DISHA, Astitiva, Sri Bhuvanewari Mahila Ashram, Prayas, Kumaon University, etc

The MS in Uttarakhand gets help of a large and diverse group of experts at SRG and DRG in identifying areas for convergence and engagement of MS personnel and sangha members'

involvement in different programmes. Members of the SRG and DRGs/ BRGs also help the MS in informing of new spaces for convergence.

MS has also planned to expand their interface with universities for learning from the universities as well as to sensitise the students about gender issues. GRC has planned lecture series with experts from universities from different faculties and also research studies engaging students in women's issues and action research programmes.

MS at state level also planned to facilitate the federations and functionaries at varied levels to interact with Dalit and Muslim movements to build understanding of the issues affecting the marginalised sections. State level functionaries explained that role of NRG is very critical in enlisting support of the state officials. However, the role of NRG members is seen very important in non policy matters within MS as they provide inputs in trouble shooting and vision building related matters. NPO provides strategic and critical help with regard to planning, project management, financial management, HR policy, exit strategy, funds flow, etc.

V. Financial Management

Funds flow and budget utilisation were discussed to find reasons for continued under utilisation compared to approved budgets as well as utilisation against actual releases. UKMS representatives suggest that that more assistance from NPO is required to improve financial planning and effective utilisation of funds as per plan. More training is required for the functionaries on organisational matters and project management. Consultations on financial management and procurement systems have helped improve the practices considerably, they told.

VI. Good practices and Innovations

MS has a State Resource Centre that is functional with an independent office since 2012 although it was there from 2004-5. For several years it only served the purpose of providing 'contingency' fund and scope for re-appropriation of funds. Today it is vibrant and dynamic means to provide vision building and learning form other groups as well as a centre for dialogue on women's issues.

Bol Ke Lab Azaad Hain Tere (Speak, that your lips are free) is a collection of life stories of 8 selected MS members (Karyakartas). These stories are not fiction but the life experiences of sahyoginis engaged in working for women's empowerment. These stories told by sahyoginis reflect the learning and growth trajectories and experiences of engagement in women's movements at grassroots. The stories cover the trials and tribulations these women have faced in their journey towards freedom from age-old shackles of the patriarchal society. The stories, selected from among the MS members, to inspire and motivate the existing and upcoming members of the MS. The book is published by MS Uttarakhand and is edited and compiled by the SPD – Ms Geeta Gairola and Kamal Joshi, an independent journalist.

State Resource Centre at Dehradun conducted a need assessment workshop for training module on Gender issues for Government and NGOs. The participants included activists, academics, officials from Government departments, members of Civil society working in different parts of the state.

Two studies commissioned by the GRC of MS have been completed.

- 1) Status of literacy among women in the blocks of MS operational area
- 2) The state of drop outs from schools in the blocks with MS presence.

Training of sangha women on village governance by the elected Panchayat pradhans is another best practice. Learning from the women pradhans, who belonged to sanghas, has been very effective in sharing and inspiring the members of the sanghas. These TOT programmes also help in ensuring more women from sanghas take part in gram Panchayat elections and use the new spaces for advancement of women empowerment agenda.

VII. Conclusion

Strengths

- MS has a political forum and voiced for the sangha women through elected representatives at different stages of Panchayat system.

- GRC and MS have publications on varied issues of women's agenda and perspective which is a significant strength in making gender perspective that sangha women can relate to and apply in mobilising the women to challenge structures of patriarchy and discrimination.

Challenges

Expansion of MS in terms of new areas predominantly inhabited by the Dalits, ST and Muslim communities and new members from marginalised communities require special attention. Conscious and consistent effort is required in Uttarakhand which is less appreciative of the challenges of vulnerable sections.

UKMS requires attention to activities that are not agitational in nature as well to strengthen and improve outcomes of their interventions in long term. For instance MSKs failing to ensure continuation/ mainstreaming of the Muslim girls into schools/ hostels and the women victims of domestic violence in need of shelter require suitable measures, which are within the scope of MS as an autonomous body.

Border areas of Uttarakhand pose special problems and they affect girls and women in significant way. Different market and legal landscapes across the borders along with remoteness from the district headquarters subject vulnerable sections to become victims of the illegal practices. Trafficking problem has been reported to be a serious issue on the borders of Nepal. It is recommended to study the implications of the issue for MS to address the problem in near future.

HR issues affecting adequacy and retention of personnel as well as work load of Sahyoginis and CRPs needs to be examined and addressed at the earliest.

The growth trajectory of MS with 18 federations including 5 autonomous federations requires attention to start exploring means to evolve a collective vision and suitable institutional structures so that they become sustainable. Immediate steps in this direction could include brainstorming and dialogue with federations about what they visualise.

JRM team recommends a study on the activities, functioning, priorities and capacity building needs of the federations to plan post- MS withdrawal sustainability of autonomous federations.

Livelihoods programmes of MS include training for income generation. These training programmes are conducted in ad hoc manner and lessons are not drawn to improve the programme. Livelihoods is one of the neglected issues which needs attention in the present scenario as more and more girls are in need of guidance for alternative livelihoods due to shift from farm to non-farm lifestyles and education levels which are higher than what used to be in the past. MS needs to adopt a professional approach to livelihoods programme to examine appropriateness of livelihood activities, training, placement assistance and employment opportunities in formal/ informal sectors in the local context.

One of the major limitations or gaps in MS Uttarakhand is the absence of MIS that enables review of the activities based on experiences. There is need to build MIS for its activities to assess the interventions and their outcomes so as to help plan for effective interventions in future. There is no data that is systematic and retrievable for any purpose of review or planning as of now. Anecdotal data and rich oral histories would not replace the need for a database on interventions and outcomes for regular monitoring for improvements.

List of persons / organisations interacted with (Annex - 4)

Activity profile of Uttarakhand MS

Activity	Status up to January 2013
Districts	7
Blocks	24
Villages	2567
Mahila Sangha	2507
Members of Sanghas	56892
Trained women (participation)	575770
Mahasangha (Federation)	18
Cluster Sangha	324
Sanjeevani Kendra	147
Apni Adalat	12
Sangha Women elected as Panchayat Members	3964
Kishori Sanghas	270
Kishori Sangha Members	4417
Villages in Rollback process	1158
Sanjeevani Herbal centres	107
Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSKs)	6
Girls passed from MSKs	132
No of women in village health committee	2934
No of women in School Management committee	3960
Asha workers motivated by MS	198
No of mid day meal cooks	313
No of Anganwadi workers	244
No of girls selected in Sakshar Bharat as Motivator	163
Total Birth registrations	2413
No of women benefitted by Janani SurakshaYojana	597
No of MNREGA job card holders	2541
Literacy camps participants	593
Bridge Course Participants	2735
Registration in Open Board	2566

Trainings / workshops undertaken by MS Uttarakhand**Education**

	Workshops/Trainings			
District	Sangha	Participants	Cluster	Participants
Pauri			5	223
Tehri			28	1162
Nainital	61	1278	19	570
Uttarkashi	30	504	0	0
US Nagar	2	54	8	405
Champawat	31	637	8	159

Health Workshops and Trainings

	Workshops/Trainings			
District	Sangha	Participants	Cluster	Participants
Pauri			16	532
Tehri			103	2296
Nainital	82	2188	44	1284
Uttarkashi	27	420	30	802
US Nagar	18	648	16	867
Champawat	96	1312	32	728

Panchayat Literacy

	Workshops/Trainings			
District	Sangha	Participants	Cluster	Participants
Pauri			37	387
Tehri			66	1017
Nainital	109	2433	83	2297
Uttarkashi	58	1326	33	680
US Nagar	10	202	33	857
Champawat	85	1353	33	757

Legal literacy

District	Workshops/Trainings			
	Sangha	Participants	Cluster	Participants
Pauri			23	239
Tehri			45	1208
Nainital	27	776	70	2088
Uttarkashi	6	103	24	464
US Nagar	11	301	30	708
Champawat	26	415	8	242

MNREGA

District	Workshops/ Trainings			
	Sangha	Participants	Cluster	Participants
Pauri			29	539
Tehri			113	2224
Nainital	130	3208	46	1538
Uttarkashi	25	204	24	422
US Nagar	5	107	14	331
Champawat	85	1274	38	634

Economic Empowerment

District	Workshops/ Trainings			
	Sangha	Participants	Cluster	Participants
Pauri			17	243
Tehri			22	433
Nainital	172	3010	18	470
Uttarkashi	10	147	3	45
US Nagar	15	551	5	137
Champawat	192	3443	5	189

Development Block Level Workshops and Trainings

Subject	Numbers	Participants
Literacy	14	327
Legal Literacy	28	415
Health	18	607
Economic Empowerment	5	155
Panchayat	22	416
General	12	379
Forest Panchayat/ Forest Rights	9	197
Right to Education	2	63
Anudeshika Orientation	6	95
Mahasangha Trainings	10	188
Core Team	39	719
MNREGA	2	29
Leadership Development	61	1837

NIOS Registration under MS

Year	Registered	Appeared	Passed
2008-09	2637	2058	1975
2009-10	3121	2577	2505
2010-11	3279	3006	2871
2011-12	2566	2425	2401
2012-13	4596		

The data includes registrations at A,B & C levels
(A=3rd , B=5th and C=8th Standards)

Women selected in Govt and NGOs after undergoing Literacy Training

Post	Numbers
Sangha women in School management committee	3960
Sangha women in monitoring mid day meal	843
Nomination done by Sangha women/ MS worker	91
Girls benefitted from Nanda Devi Scheme	473
Nominations in KGBP by workers	194
Women selected as AshaWokers	198
Women selected as mid day meal cooks	313
Women selected as Aanganwadi worker	244
Girls selected as motivator in Sakshar Bharat Programme	163

List of persons/organisations interacted with

Srl	Name, designation, organisation
	Ms. Manisha Pawar, Secretary Education, Govt of Uttarakhand, Chairperson, Executive Committee, MS
State Office, Dehradun, Uttarakhand	
	Ms. Geeta Gairola, SPD Uttarakhand
	Ms. Hemlata, SRP Uttarakhand
	Mr. Ajay Rawat, Accounts Head, MS UK
SRG Members, Dehradun, Uttarakhand	
	Ms. Kamal Joshi, freelance Journalist
	Virendra Panuli, educationist
	Kamlesh Khantwal, BGBS
	Jay Prakash Pawar, Media expert
	Dr. Kamal Bhatt, Journalist
	Dr. Anita Dighe, Retd. Prof. Delhi Univ.
	Mr. Praveen Bhatt, Journalist, India Today
	Shashi Bhushan, State coordinator, SBMA,
	Ms. Jahnvi Tiwari, State Coordinator, Disha
	Dr. Kamla Pant, Retd. Dy. Director Education & Linguist
	Ranu Bisht, Entrepreneur
Other MS Uttarakhand members	
	Ms. Basanti Pathak, DPC, Nainital
	Ms. Bhagwati, In-charge DPC, Champawat
	Ms. Reena Pawar, In-charge DPC, Tehri
	Ms. Preeti Thapilyal, DPC, Pauri
	Ms. Sarita, In-charge DPC, Haridwar
	Ms. Pramila Rawat, In-charge DPC, Uttarkashi
	Ms. Kusum Bhatt, RP, Pauri
	Ms. Suneeta, RP, Pauri
	Ms. Shashi Joshi, RP, Uttarkashi
	Ms. Suneeta Rawat, RP, Uttarkashi
District office, Udham Singh Nagar	
	Ms. Chandra Joshi, DPC, US Nagar
	Ms. Archana, RP US Nagar
	Ms. Naahid Parveen, JRP, Haridwar
DRG Members, Khateema, Udham Singh Nagar	
	Mr. Pushphas Pande, NABARD
	Dr.Suneeta Chuphal, Medical Officer, Khatima
	Mr. Vikaas, Azim Premji Foundation
	Mr. Laxmikant Rohni, NGO

	Dr.Sidhshwar Singh, Prof. Degree College Khatima
	Prof. Raj Saxena (Retd),, writer, poet
	Ms. Beena Darmiyal, ICDS
	Rakesh Suman, BRC Coordinator, Khatima
	Mr. Kunwar Singh Rana, Asstt BRC Sitaarganj
	Mr. Daan Singh Rana, President, TharuBalParishad
	Mr. Narendra Rautela, Lecturer, Tharu Intern college
	Mr. BS Mehta, Kumaun Sanskritik Manch
	Mr. Khob Singh Vikalp, Social Worker
	Mr. Naval, Journalist, Electronic media
	Mr. Pandey, Journalist, Hindustan
	Ms. Rekha, Pradhana, Sonkanj Gaon
	Ms. Beena Rana, Pradhan, Pankatia
	Mr. SC Haldhar, Post master, Bengali Samuday
	Ms Noor Afsa, Pradhan, Pandri Sitaarganj