

Activity Report on Social Interventions of Navchetana



NAVCHETANA SARVANGIN VIKAS KENDRA a non-religious, non-political, not-for-profit development organization founded in 2008 by a group of seven social women leaders who wanted to bring changes in the life of vulnerable women. Therefore, this is a women-led organization for women. The organization is registered under The Bombay Public Trust Act 1950 and The Society Act 1860. Navchetana strives to transform unjust structures of the society from grass-roots and works as a catalyst for the betterment of rural communities by providing direct and indirect support to local communities and aims to build harmonious and self-sufficient communities of diverse peoples, religions, languages, and cultures. From the year 2008, the members of the organization have been working on the socioeconomic issues for the development and improvement of the vulnerable and weaker sections of the society residing in the Beed and Osmanabad districts of Maharashtra, India. Navchetana geared up its activities since 2012 after the grave situation of COVID started subsiding.

Our Core Values: Our operations are guided by the following values:

- Focus on the needy
- Be gender responsive
- Enhance utilization of local resources
- Strengthen existing structures and systems
- Encourage environmental soundness
- Promote people-centered development
- No to child labor

Background of General Sectoral Issues in Operational Areas

MARATHWADA -The State of Maharashtra is classified into 6 revenue regions. Out of which Marathwada is the major revenue zone consisting of 8 Districts. Marathwada is situated in south east of Maharashtra and has 21% (64,813 sq km) of the total area of state and 16% (1, 55, and 89,223) of total population of the State. The percentage of rural population in case of the State is 60% where as in case of Marathwada region it is about 75%. Out of the total rural population of Marathwada 3.2 millions are Dalits and of 1/3 population is

BPL. The female sex ratio is less than that of the Maharashtra State. Infant mortality, Maternal Mortality, Immunization, Couple protection rate, all indicate an overall low status of the region. The uncertainty and erratic nature of the rainfall is adversely affecting agriculture. In the Marathwada region, about 70% of the population in the rural areas mostly depends on the agriculture. The wells are the main and chief source of irrigation. Cotton, cereals, pulses and oilseeds are the main crops of the region. Agriculture being seasonal business provides work for three to four months to rural population, which results in the higher rate of migration. The impact of migration is seen on health, education and income status of the rural population. Among the 5 divisions of the state, Marathwada ranks lowest in economical status. It is estimated that over 85% of the dalits working in the agricultural sector in Marathwada region are landless laborers, and are struggling for existence.

This is not an easy task in a society that threatens their very existence based on their caste and class. They fall in the lowest rank of social strata in the caste ridden Indian society. Earlier, treated as untouchables, even today, caste and class doubly jeopardize them, as they are the most marginalized, both socially and economically. Their status is ever declining on any given indicator of development (per capita income, literacy, food security, morbidity, mortality, political participation etc.). A strong feudal socio-economic structure existing in Marathwada, virtually denies all the opportunities of development to dalits. For ages, they have been dependent on or rather bonded to the upper caste landlords for their livelihoods.

1-Livelihood

The District Beed is no more different. In fact, it is most backward and is known as labor supplier region for sugar cane cutting and sugar factories. The land ownership is skewed in favor of big landlords who are upper caste. Lack of access to good quality agriculture land is one of the major causes of vulnerability of dalits and marginal, as it is the only source of livelihood in this area. The land distribution is unjustly unequal. While some upper caste families hold over 100 acres of land, most of the dalits are landless. Access to land has thus become an issue of survival for dalit landless families. Wherever the landless attempt to use these lands (for agricultural), the upper caste / landlords manage to keep them away with muscle power. The project villages / area fall in the Semi Arid Zone. The project area and the beneficiaries are adversely affected due to erratic and uncertain rainfall with annual average rainfall between 550-650 mm. There are less than 50 rainy days in a year concentrated in four monsoon months. Due to the adverse geological conditions, undulating topography, degraded landforms, lack of decentralized water harvesting measures the project villages have a limited source of groundwater. This has impacted pressure on use of ground water and bio-mass which is used in exploitative manner due to increase of population pressure of both – human beings and animals creating the situation more difficult. This calls for proper soil and water conservation, development and management measures with focus on decentralized water resources development. Although agriculture is the main source of survival or livelihood of village community in the project area, it is largely rain fed and pre-

dominantly prone to drought. Rain fed farming is complex, diverse and risk prone and is characterized by low levels of productivity and low input usage. Variability in rainfall results in wide variation and instability in yields resulting scarcity of food and fodder. The earning from agriculture is not enough to meet out their livelihood needs during the year. Committing suicides is the accepted /forced alternatives in case of crop failure or insufficient return from agriculture produce. The obvious result is negligence of agricultural lands and unemployment amongst the agricultural laborer. The situation of the land available with the target community is still worse. As this is previously Gairan land, situated on the out skirts and mostly on the hilltops or on slopes. The features of these lands can be summarized as follows.

- Poor availability of natural resources in region.
- Degradation and deterioration of available resources depleting soil fertility status.
- More than 75% lands have no irrigation sources.
- Lack of agriculture extension services resulting in adoption of improper cropping pattern.
- Lack of knowledge, poor capital investment capacity of the beneficiaries for better crop production.
- Lack of investment capacity resulting in unavailability of agriculture tools and implements.
- Poor knowledge level of cultivators for maintenance of agriculture economics.
- Poor Organic Carbon (Humus) content in the soil due to lack of biomass on grazing lands.
- Poor attention towards soil and water conservations efforts.

Thus the degraded condition of the land on which major component of population depends directly affect the life livelihood and living of the community

2- Education

It is important to understand the social and cultural reality of the target group of area in order to keep our interventions focused and thereby effective. The information suggests that child marriage in villages is still prevalent. The poverty of the parents is often held as an important hindrance in providing the primary education to these children. Most of these parents are engaged in wage labor either in agricultural sector or in other unorganized sector .Difficult to cope and avoid, the inherent poverty and illiteracy conditions of the parents transfers the phenomenon hereditary to the children. Due to economic and social constraints, parents cannot fulfill the needs of children. As a result many a times, even basic rights of the children are denied. The facilities of primary education are though available however, due to distance to school, the substandard quality of education, non residence of teachers in the villages and poor relations with school teachers, a big number of children do not develop interest in schooling; hence they get dropped out in the early age. Even it is a fact that majority of the students in 4th class are not able to read and write fluently. Later, the drop out child became a supportive hand for poor families as they fill the gap of manpower required to graze the cattle, contribute towards agriculture and allied activities and even earn something out of flourishing temples and

hotel industries. For a number of girls, early marriage is another impediment to their education. **In rural settings, a neglected attitude towards basic rights of children is a common phenomenon and the issues of the children are generally not priority issues due to uncertain economical conditions of the villagers.**

These children later face difficulty competing with globalizing, competitive world as of their educational, intellectual and mental along with socio-economical backwardness. As a result, children remain far away from the developmental mainstreams and even the rights that are agreed and accepted at various levels. Finally, they get encircled with irresolvable problems in their growing life.

3 -women Empowerment

For NAVCHETANA Women empowerment means emancipation of women from various social economical political caste and gender-based discrimination. It means granting women freedom to make decisions. social empowerment involves promotion of gender equality in which women and men enjoys same opportunities rights and obligations in all spheres of life, educational empowerment means building her with skills and knowledge for self-confidence , in economic areas it involves better quality of material life with sustainable livelihood legal empowerment means supportive laws and structures with political empowerment strengthening her political participation and involvement in wider decisions making processes

4-Farmers

Beed is a most backward, under developed district of Maharashtra state and is well known as a drought prone zone of the region. The average rainfall observed in the district is approximately 400 to 700 mm every year. Due to water scarcity, degraded lands, insufficient employment opportunities and low literacy rates the people in the area are experiencing poor, unhygienic, stressful life situations.

The continuous drought for last five years coupled with COVID in Beed made it absolutely difficult for the poor to survive even at the subsistence level. The 2500 plus indebted farmers committed suicide. The insufficient rains destroyed hope of the farmers. The farmers are now in grave situation. They often lose the crop and the land is spoiled that it has to be cleaned before further sowing for which farmers have no money and resources. The Govt had declared some support and that is absolutely meager. The district is one of the poorest district and backward in terms of human development. The agriculture is rain fed and due to vagaries of monsoon and sub standard quality of the land productivity is low of the land. Those who depend on the land as source of livelihood had to face drought almost every year. The low industrial development also contributes for poverty and vulnerability as there is no alternative option for survival.

5 -Climate and Environment

Rural India has already experienced impacts of climate change related weather effects, including **crop and livestock loss from severe drought and flooding**, damage to roads from extreme storms, shifts in planting and harvesting times, and large-scale losses from fires and other weather-related disasters.

Increased warming is **likely to lead to higher levels of air pollution** in BEED climate. The timing may also shift, causing a drying during the late summer growing season.

Climate change poses a serious threat to people and impacts their livelihood to varying degrees. Studies reveal that the most vulnerable people belong to developing countries and more precisely rural communities and small farmers. The changing climate is adversely affecting the productivity and livelihoods of Indian smallholder rural farmers and agricultural productivity.

Smallholder rural farmers dominate the farming system in BEED accounting for about 80 to 90 percent of producers. However, productivity is hampered by insufficient capacity to acquire necessary **farm inputs such as enhanced or improved crop varieties, fertilizers, irrigation, and other production inputs**. Also, agricultural productivity declines have been linked to climatic and weather variability or change, hence facing problems with food productivity arising from dependence on rain-fed farming worsened by low inputs. **Farmers should therefore adopt climate-resilient adaptation measures to cope with or reduce climate vulnerability**. This makes the community highly susceptible to even a slight change in weather patterns, making the people severely vulnerable to climate change resulting in the issue of food insecurity, it is important that climate-smart farming techniques are promoted and adopted. This would help in making agriculture, resilient to climate change and also ensure food security and cope up with, **or reduce climate vulnerability**.

Following Issues are identified and focused by NAVCHETANA

1. IN Livelihood we intervene in Strengthening of Self Help Groups already formed and its Bank linkages, support for reinvest and entrepreneurship development with hand holding for market support training and livelihood and building model of like Dairy farming as sustainable source of livelihood



2. Education:

Navchetana ventured in providing permanent school establishment namely Navchetana International English School in Dongaon village of Kaij taluka, Abhiruchi Classess for NT and DNT children of vadi and vasti , Linkgae to Govt seasonal Hostels to prevent migration of vulnerable children



3. Women Empowerment:

it imparts Training and capacity building in various women related laws and various Govt schemes on health, violence, campaigns on land and home ownership and flag ship programs of Govt like Janani suraksha Yojana, Niradhar Mahila support and so



4. For Farmers it is actively engaged in Formation of farmer's group's information dissemination on Agro base schemes like Krushi Vidnyan Kendra, Krushi Karyalay, variance needed in crop cultivation and development of Agro Based Models for sustenance of living like farming on one acre of land

5. In Climate and Environment area it is mobilizing Community participation in education and awareness of impact of climate change on life and living. Water and water conservation through Bore recharge, cleansing of percolation tanks and resilient agro practices



Existing Interventions of Navchetana

In livelihoods Navchetana, since 2013 onwards have formed 3000 Self help Groups [SHGs] in 300 villages and intensely worked for its capacity building and credit and loaning activities. Till today 1322 SHGs are linked to various nationalized Banks and are availed credit. The total members linked are 11395 and received loan to tune of 57 cores with cent percent repayment. More than 8934 women have started their own small enterprise like poultry, goatry, stationary and grocery shops, cloth shop, parlor, tailoring, cake making and jewelry designing

The active men and women groups from 10 villages have given wonderful model of Laxmi Milk Collection Center in which more than 238 farmers have collectively involved in 2070 liters of milk collection. Navchetana provides further marketing support for its processing

As far as Education is concern Navchetana ventured in providing permanent school establishment namely Navchetana International English School in Dongaon fata of Umri village of Kaij taluka, The school is well build in area of 110X35 feet with 13 classes from Nursery to 6 class running presently. School has Principals room along with 210 children {122 boys and 88 girls} with 11 well trained teachers, with two residential care takers and one helper. The area is spread over 2 acres with excellent play ground, and separate toilets.

Navchetana in future is visioning that the school to enroll 1000 poor children with residential support to 200 children, well established infrastructural support for building third floor, Bio Gas and sour urja facility with kitchen hall and other essential required

Navchetana runs Abhiruchi Classess for NT and DNT children in 5 each Pardhi and Laman habitats where efforts are made to bring 310 children in mainstream educational process of which 153 are girls and 157 boys. 112 children are already joined regular schools. Simultaneously it works with community of 40 villages where efforts are made to put children in the seasonal Hostels run by administration. With continuous follow up and advocacy The Govt has open seasonal hostels in 7 villages and 292 vulnerable children are benefited and prevented from migration along with their parents for sugar cane cutting.

Thus Navchetana wishes to overcome the challenges faced by these communities and make them understand the importance of education, facilitate these households to send their wards to school and also create a conducive atmosphere for education in the family and within the community

For women Empowerment Navchetana is organizing comprehensive empowerment programs consist of socio economical, political capacity building. It imparts Training and capacity building in gender based discrimination, health violence related laws and counseling and participation in Grampanchayat activities. It builds their capacity and confidence for availing various Gove schemes. More than 3214 women are now availed of benefits under Janani Suraksha Yojana, Gharkul, Pension of Sharvan BAL Yojana and support from Panchayati samiti schemes. It is running counseling sessions with 2000 women from 45 villages whose uterus is removed at earlier age to enable them to work as laborer at sugar factories

With Navchetana support more than 1255 women are owner of land and 9220 women are owners of Homes. Thus women's involvement and partnership Navchetna's work focuses on livelihood generation through self-employment and wage employment, women empowerment

During COVID period it provided ration and food support to 15000 families of 300 villages and supported 2000 COVID affected people through isolation centers in 10 villages, In 10 habitats it provided food to 300 children for 3 months and provided clothes, started community kitchen and provided food to 400 old people, provision of masks and sanitizers and general health awareness in 300 villages

With Farmers it is actively engaged in Formation of farmer's group's from 40 villages and 150 farmers groups are formed. In all 352 farmers are linked to Agro base schemes like Krushi Vidnyan Kendra, Krushi Karyalay, It organizes group discussions on natural farming as well as various issues related to farm and farm produce like insurance, crop pattern and its variance needed in crop cultivation. Presently It is active

developing Model Farming on one acre of land where 100 farmers are engaged. It will be unique and sustainable Agro Based Models for sustenance of living on one acre of land

In Climate and Environment, Principle areas are mobilizing Community participation in education and awareness of impact

Of climate change on life and living. It needs information on Nature and Conservation, ways of effective Community participation and sustainable Development. Key Environmental and climate Sustainability issues faced include Air Pollution, Water Pollution, and Waste Management

In this area Navchetana initiated various related activities. It recharged 570 bore wells and 55 wells constructed 3000 soak Pits developed 516 kitchen gardens and planted one lakhs trees and constructed Bundara's in 10 villages involving local community. Navchetana hopes to do more interventions in these areas involving farmer's group's school children .

Thank you,

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