



Annual Report 2013-14



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I. INTRODUCTION

II. STRENGTHENING PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS

Since its inception, ANANDI has maintained explicit focus on working with and organizing the most marginalized members of society. In this process, ANANDI has chosen a strategy of promoting the development of people's organizations which have women from marginalized groups as their leaders. The goal of this strategy is to create collective strength amongst marginalized women, to provide women the necessary space and structure to undertake critical assessment of their situation, to think autonomously about how they would like to change their lives, and to provide an organizational base with which to take action. These people's organizations, called Sangathans, form the operational base and starting point for all of ANANDI's efforts.

Thus in each of the geographical area that we work women led people's organizations (sangathans) have been formed. The sangathans taking leadership and ownership of the organizing process, while ANANDI retains a cadre of trained community organizers on its staff. ANANDI has evolved a unique approach of paring its community organizers with Sangathan members in the organizing process. In clearer terms, this means that whenever staff members engage with the community or make contact with a new village, it is done so in collaboration with sangathan members. This practice has provided ANANDI with legitimacy amongst the communities it works with and ensured a continual process of leadership development and support for Sangathan members. The form that the sangathans take is decided by the constituency it serves and not uniformly decided by ANANDI. To begin with the sangathans are solidarity groups and follow a simple federation model. Subsequently other structures have been formed some of which have been formally registered to meet certain specific needs.

Empowerment is a goal as well as a process. Following this principle almost all interventions are undertaken in partnership with the sangathan. While ideally strengthening sangathans should receive independent and exclusive financial support, the nature of funding environment and priorities of donors have not allowed for this since almost 10 years. Thus sangathan strengthening

is designed to take place through their role as partners in delivering project outcomes. Not withstanding the external realities and the internal challenges of poor literacy skills and very minimal education among the leaders the sangathan have become a significant player in the social change processes in their area.

In the following sections the organizational shifts and achievements of the sangathans are mentioned.

II.1 HIGHLIGHTS FOR EACH SANGATHAN DURING THE YEAR 2014-2015

1. DEVGADH MAHILA SANGATHAN –

This year the District Police of both Panchahaals and Dahod requested that the folk theatre team of Devgadh Mahila Sangathan (DMS) should perform their play “ Koi Ben Dakan Nathi” (No woman is a witch) in more than 50 locations to spread awareness about the violence committed on women in the name of witch branding. The police would organize the travel of the entire team from their village to the location and also drop them. Banners were put up by the police publicizing the police stand and support to the long standing demand of the sangathan. The local police would not register cases of witch branding under the pretext that this is superstition and so it is a local community issue. By sponsoring these shows the police have indicated their commitment to deal with the issue.



Figure 1 – DMS leaders performing the play – koi ben dakan nathi

After each show the police officials would tell the audience which would range from 250 to 1000 at a time, that the police is there to help women who are being harassed as “witch”. This has created a positive environment for women.

2. RATANMAHAAL MAHILA SAJIV KHET UTPADAK MANDALI –

This is a separate body created by DMS and ANANDI to specifically address the issues of women farm producers, forest produce collectors. The idea is to register it to undertake economic activities. This year this mandali supported over 250 women farmers to undertake sustainable agriculture from the food security point of view. This year was the sixth year in a row when they put up a stall in the IIM traditional food festival in Ahmedabad and they made profit of Rs. 53370/- in three days. Their total income was Rs.87020/-.

Figure 2Women Farmers cultivating the seeds for food grade maize to ensure food security



Over the past few years ANANDi has facilitated linkages with the Anand Agricultural University to provide the technical inputs and certify the seed production of the Maize - 6 variety developed by the university. Women farmers, small and marginal farmers are given priority as it has dual impact – it gives them better remuneration as well as ensures availability of seeds of the food grade maize in the local market.

Each month on an average, about 150 women farmers join meetings to plan for their activities as women farmers and deliberate on the farming practices and influence the choices made by their families on what need to be grow on their farms. They are also encouraged to seek government support as women farmers.

3. MALIYA MAHILA SHAKTI SANGATHAN

MMSS was created after the 2001 earthquake of Kutch. The women had led the rehabilitation efforts that ANANDI undertook in over 25 villages. Subsequently the women decided to form their own organization to shape and influence the development of women in their blocks. Today there are over 1000 women in this sangathan and they have the most successful among all the ANANDI

supported sangathans to independently support the Self Help



Figure 3 women taking out a rally in the town of maliya to ress for a violence free society

Groups at the village level. In the year 2014-2015 the MMSS set itself the target to access maximum funds from the government program the Mission Mangalam which aims to empower women through village level mahila mandals and their federations. The MMSS team made sure that their SHGs fulfilled all the criteria as stated by the government programs and with the support of ANANDI submitted the required documents to avail of the funds.

There are strong linkages with the nationalised banks whereby the accreditation process of the self help groups is accepted by the banks which further provides loans for SHGs. The MMSS team ensure that the members understand the value of credit and regular repayment and follow the norms to ensure rotation of funds and a good track record of savings and credit. The ANANDI team helps with maintaining records.

MMSS works with the Miyana community a de-notified nomadic tribe that has come to settle down in the very harsh ecological conditions. They engage in rain fed farming, salt harvesting and prawn harvesting – all dependent on the nature and hence highly erratic. This community has been a neglected community to such an extent that they have themselves internalized negative attitudes about themselves. As result they don't demand government services such as schooling, health and

roads and the local officials disregard their duties saying that this community does not deserve it. As a result there are practically no decent schools and non existent health services. The MMSS has taken the responsibility with ANANDI to identify health workers who have been educating the women about the need for institutional delivery, ensuring adequate nutrition for children. In the last year from practically no institutional delivery at the beginning about 60% of all deliveries took place in the Community Health Centre at Maliya.

The Nyay samiti of the MMSS is a strong women led alternative legal redressal mechanism where the women leaders deal with cases of domestic violence. Instead of having to go the courts which entangle the women into lengthy procedures and huge expenses, this forum calls upon both the parties – takes down case details – makes home visits to verify details and counsels both parties – keeping two principles in mind – interest of woman and providing the woman the strength required to take her own decision. This involves several confidence building dialogues till the woman is clear about what she really wants. The leaders of Nayay Samiti have regular meetings to review the cases, the place the dilemmas they face and sharpen their own ability to offer arbitration and counselling. The Nyay Samiti in conjunction with the leaders of MMSS develops themes of campaigns which includes street marches, poster based discussion and providing information on any new laws, amendments that would have come about.

4. AZAD MAHILA MACHIMARI MANDALI-

This is a registered cooperative of women engaged in various fish related particularly prawn harvesting activities. All the women belong to the Miyana community and follow Islam. Despite the extremely hardworking women, they have practically no control over the pricing of their produce. By registering as a separate cooperative they are able to negotiate better with the middlemen – infact they have removed two levels middlemen which has led to increase in incomes which is still not very high but neither is it insignificant.



Figure 4 Disucssing Key issues with the members of azad Cooperative

In the last year the cooperative has been able to work with the Fisheries dept who has agreed to allocate housing funds for them, starting setting up regular office at the block level to issue licences for fishing and the address other issues of the fishing community.

Addressing the health concerns of the women and young children has been an intensive program for which the sangathan has now developed a cadre of trained bare foot health animators who educate the women and families, support better nutritional practices and better maternal health care. They simultaneously also act as pressure group to seek better service delivery from the public health care department.

5. PANAM MAHILA SANGATHAN AND PANAM MAHILA BACHAT ANE DHIRAN MANDALI –

This sangathan decided five years ago that they wanted to formalize their saving and credit activities by registering a cooperative – the Panam Mahila Bachat ane Dhiran Mandali. Each year they hold an annual general body meeting where they release their annual accounts and also report on the social activities they would have undertaken. This year the Mandali decided to change their office bearers as per the requirements of the law.

This was not an easy process but the ANANDI team led by Ms. Taru and Ms. Neeta developed the confidence of the team to make this change. The overview of the Mandali are as follows

Trainings have been conducted with members to educate them about the role as cooperative share holders – about 23 such trainings were held in which 1299 women participated. 12 trainings were conducted with prospective creditors where 58 women participated.

Figure 5 Key Indicators of the first women's cooperative of the block

Details	Years		
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Total Villages	21	21	22
Total Number of Members	1162	1343	1622
Share Capital (Rs.)	137250	146050	160250
Interest (Rs.)	153210	391088	598508
Savings Mobilised (Rs.)	1677926	2750396	4014298
Registration Fees (Rs.)	5810	6705	8110
Total Number of Shares	2747	2921	3205
Bank Balance (Rs.)	313389	107762	4639
Loan Taken amount (Rs.)	2272000	6032900	10750700
No. of women taking loan	463	966	1546
Loan Repaid Amount (Rs.)	676720	2851593	2142202
Profit (Rs.)	138970	148311	191532



Figure 6 The secretary entering accounts of the cooperative

6. MAHILA SWARAJ MANCH

This is a registered organization that works to strengthen the elected women representatives and to ensure that the needs of poor women and marginalized communities are addressed through the panchayati raj systems. In doing so this organisation is becoming a model of how the panchayati raj

can be address women's issues. This organization is led by women of Shihor block of Bhavanagar district and majority of them have held places in the panchayats as sarpanch or as members.

Last year the ANANDI and Mahila Swaraj Manch worked together to introduce new technologies such as mobile based IVRS – Interactive Voice Recorded Systems, making video films, using the still camera to further their agenda. The local team were trained in making video films right from conceptualising to shooting, to editing and making the final product. There were several technical glitches but the team did not give up and were able to shoot for about 4-5 films on topics such as role of sarpanch in ensuring good education, providing water and sanitation, and addressing domestic violence. In March 2014 they still had to master the final editing and putting the titles and mixing music.

The women were trained in recorded voice messages and sending out bulk messages through the computer to the elected women and women leaders of Shihor block. They sent out messages about the upcoming gram sabhas and urged the women to attend the same, the new schemes announced by the government and the documents required to avail them.



Figure 8 The president of the MSM recording messages to send out bulk sms to women leaders and elected women about an upcoming meeting.

CONCLUSIONS

Over a period each of the Sangathanas have gained new competencies and recognition in their own area and there is need for space for them to work / function independently .

Each of the sangathanas are a key partner in the model of Lok Adhikar Kendra developed by ANANDI. The role of the sangathan is to make the people aware of their entitlements, schemes and document they need to establish their citizenship and eligibility. Secondly they are the ones who bring to the notice where the state has failed for instance the MNREGA not functioning properly, the PDS system not functioning properly. Based on this the Lok Adhikar Kendra offers technical support through training by ANANDI, and planning for campaigns.

III. PROMOTING GENDER JUSTICE

III.1 ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

This is one of our Key programs which we have been working on since the beginning. Our work has evolved from mere awareness generation to developing mechanisms to respond to women and girls who reach out to us for help.

ANANDI's interventions for combating violence against women

1. Education and Awareness
2. Capacity building of the community to use law to uphold women's rights
3. Providing support to victims of violence
4. Creating community support mechanisms
5. Enabling women's rights over resources reduce vulnerability
6. Generating media material in local language

Lok Adhikar Kendras are community resource centre for gender justice : a collective space formed by ANANDI and women sangathans.

ANANDI plays a capacity building role, resource mobilisation role, and in strategizing access to justice and promoting good governance practices through the LAK.

Mechanisms created to address issues at the grass-root level includes

- **Block level Lok Adhikar Kendra** with trained Leaders, counselors, community volunteers and elected women representatives within the community located at the block level administrative office
- **Nyay Samitis** with trained para legal workers to support survivors of gender based violence at the household level, in community and by state
- **Women's Support Cell** with trained counselor at the police station in Godhra to deal with the gender based violence cases.

As a strategy LAKs are located at government setups like the Mamlatdar kacheri, Taluka Panchayat at the Blocklevel to address entitlement based questions. The space given to it by the administration in Maliya and Shihor blocks would indicate endorsement of the LAK and its work. Some sensitive pro-people top bureaucrats realised that LAK was their partner and not an adversary in furthering the reach of the government's welfare programme.

Violence against women cases are addressed by the Women of the sangathan at the office and in the villages . Also at the police station as the Womens support Cell is located at SP office godhra city, Panchmahals. A compilation of three year data till September 2012 gives the following picture.

April to March 14

	Caste	DV Alternative mechanism			Domestic Violence Act		Maintenance Recovery 125/3		125		unnatural Death	Murder/Atrocity	Rape/Atrocity	Witch Hunting		498		Abduction		354 , jam in var sai	A n y a	Total	
		A	B	C	A	B	A	B	A	B				A	C	A	B	A	B	B	C		
GJ C Ce ntr e	Dalit	2									0	0					1						
	Adi vas i	4 3	7			1		1		1	0	1	1	3					3				
	Minority	3	0								0	0	0			1							
	OB C	3 2	3	6	1	3	1	2	1		1	0	2	4	1	1	2	1	1	2	1		
	Gener al	2			1				0		0	0	0			1							
	Other s	0			0				0		0	0	0										
	Total	8 2	1 0	6	2	4	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	7	1	4	2	1	4	2	1	1 3 7	
	Dalit	1			1									1		1							
Su pp ort Cel I	Adi vas i	1			0									1	0	0							
	Minority	6			1								0	0	1				1	1			
	OB C	1 1			1					2			4	2	0	6						3	
	Gener al	4			0								0	0	0	1							1
	oth ers	0			0								0	0	0	1							0
	Total	2 3	0 0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2		5	3	0	2	0	8	0	1	5	5 2	
	GRAND TOTAL	1 5	0 0	6	5	4	1	3	1	1	3	1	8	1 0	1	6	2	9	4	3	1	5 9	

III.2 SECURING ENTITLEMENTS

One of the most effective ways to secure lives of the most vulnerable families is to ensure that they have access to the government schemes that have been designed for them without middlemen and

on a regular basis. Through the Lok Adhikar Kendra ANANDI and the Sangathans provide a kind of one stop support on securing entitlements.

Social Security Claims in Tribal Areas of Panchamhaals and Dahod			
	Total no. of People who filed claims at villages level	No. Claims realised	Under Process
Total Claim Making around social Security Entitlements	1159	997	162

Social Security Claims in Saurashtra Regions	
No	Details of Entitlements in Morbi/Maliya
712	Food Security Related
370	Social Security Related
526	Health Entitlements Related
828	Employment Related
588	Identity Documents to enable other access

III.3 WORKING TOWARDS THE FOOD SECURITY ACT

Ensuring two square meals a day is the most crucial form of sustenance that every family deserves. It has been a long journey to realize this for some of the poorest families. From following collective strategies at the PDS shops to ensure that the shopkeeper gives the full share of grains at the right price to advocating at the state and national levels towards to formation of the new law ANANDI and the sangathans have spent considerable efforts to inform the legislative process.

IV. ENSURING REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

IV.1 ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

During the year 2013-14 the outreach to public health services has increased due to the constant awareness among the communities and ensuring that the service providers respond to needs.

No	Details	Outreach in Ghogambha and Baria Blocks
Material Health Rights		
1	Village Health and Nutrition Day	162 mamta divas 400 Pregnant women; 524 Lactating mothers; 0 to 5 Year Children - 862
2	Registration of Pregnant Women	38 Village 194 Pregnant
3	Issuing of Mamta Cards	38 Village 201 Pregnant
4	Access to Janani Surakhsa Schemes	38 Village 145 Pregnant ne
5	Access to Kasturba Nutrition Scheme for pregnant women	38 Village 94 Pregnant and Lactating Mothers
6	Examination of pregnant and lactating mothers at the PHC	35 Camps 250 Pregnant

		22 Lactating Mothers
7	Awareness camps for women	38 Village 606 Pregnant 593 Lactating Mothers
8	As part of a study developing and implementing a tool – pictorial “ varli-Madi” to understand and establish the women’s expectations	583 Varli madi tul dhvara pregnant ane Lactating mothers mahiti ektra karvama avi
9	Referral of High Risk pregnancies to Hospitals/PHC	196 High Risky Pregnants Referral in Government Hospital
10	Gynaecological Checkups	30 Baheno
11	Maternal Death Review	23 Village 22 Social Autopsies in Maternal Death
Awareness Generation Campaigns		
1	Children's Health Rights	13 Village 134 Childrens 47 Pregnant Women
2	Demonstration of Nutritious food for young children	13 Village 23 Bal posankane Siksan Kendra Total 260 (7 mon 59 month) Childrens (F – 123 , M- 137)
3	Referring severally malnourished children to Civil Hospital	83 High Risk Children
4	Ward Meetings between communities, health workers, Anganwadi workers	10 Village 10 Meeting 386 loko sathe
5	Review of Infant and Child Deaths	18 Village 34 Childrens
6	Generic Camps for children and Diagnosis	11 Camps Female- 237 Children- 101 , Pregnant-4 , Janral- 209
7	Awareness Camps around TB and its treatment.	6 Camps 32 Village ,F-133,M-139 , Children -40 Total -321 9 sankaspad TB na dardi rifar

V. PROMOTING CHILD SURVIVAL AND EDUCATION AMONG THE MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

V.1 DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY OWNED AND COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO MALNUTRITION AMONG CHILDREN BELOW 5

We are working in about 50 settlements to develop a model of community owned health program to address issues of child malnutrition and maternal health. We undertake weight by age growth

monitoring of Over 200 children of the age 0-5 years every six months. The results have been encouraging.

No	Services	Figures
1	Treatment and medical assistance to Severe and Acute Malnutrition	385
2	Institutional delivery (at the PHC, CHC, Chiranjeevi Hospital)	221
3	Regular checkups of High Risk Pregnancy	353
4	Children attended and received immunization during Mamta Diwas	1596
5	Ante Natal Care of pregnant women	691
6	Post Natal Care for lactating mothers	811

V.2 IMPROVING RETENTION AND ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

WORK WITH TRIBALS AND DENOTIFIED TRIBES

In Panchmahaals and Dahod we have been supporting the Right to Education by ensuring full enrollment of Children and improving quality of education. As most of these children are first generation learners ANANDI has been conducting summer and winter camps for children to bridge the gap between their age appropriate learning levels and the class they go. Over the last 6 years we have reached out to about 1000 children and almost 80 – 90 % of these children have completed their studies till 10th and did not drop out.

Survey of schools with basic amenities and facilities was undertaken in select villages and the SMC were activated to look into and follow up of the infrastructure needs.

In Maliya where the Miyanas de-notified tribe lives the community Due to the significant amount of internal migration that families have undertaken the children of the fishing communities, the salt pan workers largely from the Miyana community have remained without education. There are also deep rooted beliefs about Miyana communities among the educational fraternity and even among the community itself that their children are naughty and not interested in studies. Thus in order to set an example and offer quality education inputs so that children become interested in education

and demonstrate to themselves, their families and the local education administration that given an opportunity the children will blossom and take keen interest in studies – non formal Kalrav Education Centres have been started. These have been located in far flung areas where the communities live during their salt farming period. The status of 4 such centres is presented below. Based on the attendance of these children the teachers of the Kalrav centre approached the local schools and were able to get about 70% of these children admitted to regular village school. This has broken the myth that Miyana children cannot study and created a positive environment for other children to join the formal system.

V.3 PROMOTING VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Although there has been an increase in the number of girls being sent to school, there is a high drop- out rate as there is pressure on the girls to contribute to the family income. The key activities done this year have been

- Enrolling about 250 girls in the two and a half month residential vocational course offered by Dalit Shakti Kendra Sanand that provides training on character building, confidence building along with the vocational skills.
- Counseling of parents in cases where they seek early marriage and dissuade them.
- Awareness around age of marriage and the need to register marriages.

V.4 WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE COTTON FARMS

In Morbi and Maliya we work with Children engaged in Cotton Cultivation to weant hem away from Child Labour and send them to the village schools. In the year 2013-2014 the highlights were as follows.

- ✓ 14 Bridge school teachers and 13 health workers have been roped in the program
- ✓ Instead of the 12 Bridge centres projected, 14 centres have been functional in the project area in which 688 children of age 3 to 14 years got basic education and nutritious food. On an average 300 children have regularly attended the Bridge centre.
- ✓ 67 children of families who migrate for about 8 to 10 months were admitted to formal schools and 25 have been admitted to STPs which led to realisation of right to education for these children.
- ✓ Advocacy at district level and with local institutions such as Block Resource Centre, Cluster Resource Centre, School Principals and School Management Committee members led to enrolment of above mentioned children and at a larger level the implementation of RTE Act has been enforced in these schools.
- ✓ An Education Awareness Rally was carried out in Morbi after follow up with local SMC members and School Principal.
- ✓ 10 children of migrant families could not be admitted to primary school facilities because they take care of younger siblings at home, 11 children live in far flung areas hence cannot access primacy school facilities.

- ✓ Bridge school teachers engage with local and migrant tribal children in academic and extra-curricular activities which include children's camps, SMC meetings, and follow up with primary schools independently.
- ✓ 10 SMCs out of the 15 villages have been activated and have started discussing issues of enrolment of tribal/migrated children, irregular attendance of enrolled children, implementation of mid-day meal scheme, and active participation of women members of the SMC
- ✓ Out of the 10 activated SMCs, 8 conduct regular meetings and in 5 to 6 SMCs, women participate actively in discussions.

VI. IMPROVING GOVERNANCE THROUGH WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

ANANDI and Mahila Swaraj Manch have been working in Shihor for over a decade. One of the clusters – known as Tana cluster is located about 17-18 kms away from the block headquarters. One of the key strategies adopted under this FGE project was to set up info-centres at the cluster level. Despite several efforts the EWR and the leaders from the villages of this cluster were finding it ensure regular participation in programs and events to strengthen governance. Thus the opportunity to set up info-centres was seen as a means to strengthen ties with the EWR and provide information on entitlements especially to women from marginalized communities in that cluster.

Tana is a large village and has a well established panchayat building. Due the efforts of the infomediary the Tana panchayat members agreed to spare a room for the activities of the Mahila Swaraj Manch. Initially the infomediary set one day a week when she would be available at the info-center. Between the period July to December several events have been held which include three rounds of trainings, meetings to conduct focused group meetings, share experiences and information among the EWRs and women leaders, ex- sarpanch women. The women of Tana village who started coming regularly to the infocentre became familiar with the space and their own roles and responsibility. The woman ward members of Tana village decided that hence forth they will not sign the register at their homes but will come to the panchayat meetings and attend then and only then sign for their participation in panchayat meetings.

The most significant impact of the info-centre can be seen in the experiences of the Devi-pujak women of Ukhrala. The elected women ward member Jashuben was accompanied by two other women Jashuben and Sharadaben when they came to the Tana infocentre to know more about how they can avail of the government housing schemes. They said most of the families of their community engage in wage work and there has been no housing assistance for any of their families. Since the last three generations no. of children have increased but the no of houses of Devi Pujak has remained the same at 100 and it was getting very difficult for three generations of families to live in the same house. Although various rounds of of Ukhrala have availed of the services of the info-centre through a combination of use of face to face interactions, telephonic conversations.

They said while they are aware that each year a set of select families get identified who become eligible for the housing schemes. Their point was, "How come in so many years not a single devi-pujak family has been selected although they are among the poorest in the village."

They learnt about the procedures to be followed from the infomediary and realized that they will have to present their case in the next gram sabha. The women leaders from that cluster shared their stories of how they have used information and activated the panchayat, the talati to respond to needs of the poorest families. This process of peer learning provided further motivation to the women and a few days later 18 women from Ukhrala came to the Tana infocentre with a resolve "we will go the gram sabha to present our case. We want to know how exactly we should do this".

The women and men from the community went to the gram sabha and it was the women who made their point and the sarpanch had to make a commitment that they will start allotting funds towards housing of the devi-pujak families.

In all during this period other than the infomediaries 11 sarpanch and 17 panchayat members have participated in various activities of the 5 infocentres.

ANANDI – The EWRs have barely completed a year of their term as they have been elected in three 2012 and 2013. In the first year the focus is on ensuring that the EWRS gain the confidence to take their rightful positions during formal meetings of the panchayat members and gram sabha. A couple of strategies are deployed to achieve this. One is to conduct mock gram sabhas in which only women of the village, particularly from the marginalised sections are invited and the women EWRs play out their roles. Members of the Mahila Swaraj Manch explain the procedures such as taking the chairpersons positon is the prerogative of the Sarpanch and that the Talati is the secretary who has work as per the directives of the the chair person. Although this is laid down there are gender barriers, caste and cultural barriers and class barriers that have to be recognized and the EWRs have to be prompted and enabled to prioritize the constitutional identity over her other identities.

This year with the government issuing a GR to hold Mahila gram sabhas this strategy got a formal sanction. In 5 villages 5 formal Mahila gram sabhas took place and all the issues that were raised in these mahila gram sabahs were taken up as agenda and resolutions passed in the common village gram sabha.

A subtle but a strong power play takes play around the seating arrangement during the gram sabhas. As per the cultural practices, women will not sit on chairs if the village elders are sitting on the floor. Thus, it would transpire that the men members of the panchayat and the government officials would sit on chairs and the woman sarpanch would sit on the floor with the other villagers. The Mahila Swaraj Manch members have raised this in their own internal meetings and come up with the strategy of following the "Indian style of seating" for gram sabhas wherein everyone sits on the floor. This brings in both a sense of equality and does not clash with cultural practices.

VI.2 USING ICT TO MAKE WOMEN'S VOICES AND VOTES COUNT

The current team of infomediaries - Mahila Swaraj Manch team is largely drawn from the villages and they have been EWRs for one or two terms or have been survivors of domestic violence. Their confidence level and depth of knowledge on issues of governance, panchayat sub-committees gender issues, understanding local caste dynamics is very high. With this project we were expecting this team to befriend technology to boost their efforts and enable them to widen their outreach.

This process of learning to 'play with technology' to fulfill their tasks, roles and to integrate it into their daily work has been slow and steady. From feeling intimidated with the word "technology" itself, in these six months the infomediaries have learnt to operate the video camera, formulate and record voice message, understood the stages in production of audio clips. They never sent sms over phones as they thought only companies send sms to push their products. They became familiar with use of Indian text on their phones and started communicating among themselves. Later they composed and sent an sms during a meeting to the women present there and got them to read it. Thus the group of women who began using the mobile phones for purposes other than conversation began growing. Later the infomediaries started using the sms to alert the women about meetings, upcoming gram sabhas and so on. It is these seemingly small and mundane efforts that have created an enabling environment and set the stage to introduce the IVRS.

VII. FEMINIST ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH

Very early on ANANDI founder directors made an effort to undertake action research projects that allowed reflection and reading of the current trends in feminist research and draw lessons that were emerging from the field interventions to create a bridge between praxis and theory. The organization took up specific assignments, collaborated with academic institutions to put out papers, reports that required analysis and not just reporting of interventions

Feminist research for us carries messages of empowerment that also challenge the encircling of knowledge claims by those who occupy privileged positions. Our efforts at writing are steps from the 'margins to the centre'. Our writing is done with the acknowledgement that there is a need to learn from feminists around the world, and link women's everyday lives whereby as they challenge and change gender relations as an outcome of their mobilization and collective strength.

Some of the key papers/reports that ANANDI has put out as co-authors and independently are mentioned here

1. Unpacking Social Protection from a Women's rights lens;
<http://anandiindia.org/Documents/Unpacking%20Social%20Protection%20from%20a%20Women%20Rights%20lens.pdf>

2. ANANDI's Work with Women Survivors – Compilation of 20 Women survivors from Morbi, Bhavnagar, Panchamhaals and Dahod (2014) ANANDI – Student TISS
3. Community Organisation for Women's Empowerment – (2014) ANANDI and Kyle Barrette Student - University of Connecticut and
4. Gender Justice Centres – Understanding Intersectionality in Gujarat: Challenging Patriarchal Institutional Structures (2014) .
5. Witch Branding and Police Response: Case Study from ANANDI Gujarat: (2014).

Advocacy to take ahead the women's equality agenda is also done through offering training support to other organizations in Gujarat and outside Gujarat to engender their interventions. One of the key organizations to whom we have offered our lessons learnt is to Pradan as part of the technical support group through Jagori.

ENHANCING CAPACITIES OF ORGANISATIONS FOR GENDER- RESPONSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF MAHILA KISAN SASHAKTIKARAN PARIYOJNA (MKSP) IN BIHAR AND MADHYA PRADESH

One of the initiatives undertaken in this year was to take the learning of ANANDI's engagement with rural vulnerable women to a large national program in partnership with UNWomen.

The aim of this UN Women and ANANDI partnership was to¹:

- Nurture, deepen and widen women's leadership at the grassroots - addressing intersectionalities of vulnerabilities, caste, ethnicity, single women for inclusion.
- Enhance knowledge and skills of women in realizing their rights and entitlements
- Enhancing capacities of project staff on addressing gender issues
- Create forums that will legitimise women's participation in public spaces and institutions through collectives.
- Build support from the community to recognize, prevent and address the forms of discrimination and violence against women and its impact on livelihoods and well-being.

OUTCOMES

¹ From Brief Need Assessment Report of Engendering MKSP-Jeevika by ANANDI and UN Women.

1. Institutional mechanisms at the state level: SRLMs to take the onus of Gender Mainstreaming

The trainings plan developed through this six month process aims at institutional capacity building of state delivery mechanisms and of Project Implementation Agencies. The training process will developing a gendered understanding of women in agriculture across all the levels of the implementation teams.

UN Women has developed the terms of reference for a Working Group at the state-level, which will embed the process within the existing institutions. It is envisaged that through such arrangements which will be held and hosted by the SRLM there will be greater ownership of engendering a flagship program like the NRLM. Gender trainings when outsourced to agencies or individuals usually are unable to integrating the learning and insights generated into actionable plans. This requires commitment from within the structure created by the state.

2. Negotiating Access to Information Institutions and Meeting Spaces²

PALS exercises with SHG members revealed that women felt the need for more information and skills to improve their access to and quality of entitlements. Further, they needed support in dealing with community based institutions and state agencies, and to access and demand community resources, public spaces and monitoring of government schemes. Strengthening of local women's institutions as spaces for exchanging peer learning and negotiating their rights at the community as well as state level was identified as important.

2. LEVERAGING COLLECTIVE STRENGTH

The articulation of needs and the participation of women during the training programs reiterate that there is a foundational benefit that emerges from forming women's collectives. The NRLM has organized women in different forums starting from the SHG, to village and cluster level federations. The MKSP participants are also members of the very same forums. Initiating an action and reflection cycle on gender discrimination in these forums, requires expert facilitation to ensure that becomes a space for women to speak out, be vocal, gain exposure, exchange experiences and develop solidarity.

The first reflection review exercise done with the animators/ trainers of Muzaffarpur in bihar showed the immediate actions taken by the group ranging from supporting a women victim of violence to resist violence and seek arbitration by the community members, to woman CSP taking a lead in asking the sarpanch to return the job cards to the workers in another village. The reflection

² Report on Undertaking Gender Trainings Of Organizations For Gender Responsive Implementation of MKSP In Bihar And MP

with the animator trainers also helped to sharpen the analysis in another case of challenging caste discrimination and the peer process helped to strategise way further in an intervention where a powerful sarpanch was putting pressure to withdraw the complaint against an AWC worker continued absence.

3. MOVING BEYOND GENDER MAINSTREAMING – TRANSLATING CONVERGENCE AT THE GROUND LEVEL

Large program necessitate that structures that ensure efficient delivery of outputs and outcomes are put into place. However, they also lead to a situation where they begin to operate in silos and lose sight of the original vision that guided the setting up of the program. For instance Sarada Muraleedharan, COO says, “ Women are not the route, but they are the destination.” ; T.Vijay Kumar, CEO NRLM has said “ “Women does not mean gender equality ”.

Within the SRLM’s, the different verticals seem to be working in distinct spaces without effectively drawing upon the energies that they each create at the village level. Thus there is a need to rename the efforts which will focus on convergence at the village level where the women’s collectives are located. The initiative of the Social inclusion and Livelihoods units to pilot the gender trainings collectively would be an example of how the process could move forward. /

Further, the SRLM’s also have seen the value in drawing upon existing local experience and expertise of other state programs like Mahila Samakhya for gender sensitization and convergence at the ground level.

4. TOWARDS AREA NETWORKING OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

At the end of the training of PIA staff there was much excitement among local NGOs and stakeholders to combine their efforts through area networking to achieve maximal results. It has urged them to come together and work with combined efforts at the district level for regular review and reflection and common lateral learning events for the Mahila kisans.

Gender responsive governance and livelihood programs require to be supported by institutions of different capacities in order to

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this year ANANDI continued to work on the diverse issues that affect some of the most vulnerable communities in search of ways to move them out of poverty and keep them there. The task remains daunting while at the same time there are adequate instances and evidence to indicate that we are on the right track. Collective organizing and developing the local teams through the

sangathan to address issues of health, violence against women, securing their children's rights makes for sustainable interventions.