

MSSO NEWS 2016

Annual Newsletter of Maharashtra Seva Samiti Organization (MSSO)



Generous donors of Maharashtra Seva Samiti Organization (MSSO),
with matching funds from
the Department of Foreign affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD)
make a difference in the lives of many less fortunate

MSSO Vision

- To promote sustainable development, economic as well as social, of the less fortunate

MSSO Mission

- To create long term partnership of Canadian donors and hardworking, selfless, grass root social workers for building the future and for responding promptly to emergencies
- To enhance the value of donations through careful selection of NGO partners and effective management of development projects
- To empower women to participate as equal partners in achievement of social justice and equitable development
- To promote balance between development and environment

Caroline Orr from Canada visits MSSO Projects

Caroline volunteers every year at the Tibetan Primary Health Center, in Bir, Himachal Pradesh. On her way to Bir, she visited Dhule from 16th till 18th September 2016. She travelled with the team of blindness prevention project and witnessed the vision testing of children aged 3 months to three years and the screening of school children. She was delighted with “the enthusiasm of the people and their delight and pride they had in their projects.” She was impressed with unison and precision of the screening process. Comparing with the Bir project she commented “I hope to, unashamedly, copy their procedures to help reach the same efficiency in Bir.”



A child receives eyeglasses from Caroline
Project administrator Vaishali Songire looks on

She monitored all the MSSO supported projects in and around Dhule, including the charity eye hospital, the school for the hearing impaired, the institute of printing technology, the science laboratory for school children and many others.

She summarized her impressions as follows. “If I had to think of one thing which impressed me most on this whole trip, it was the enthusiasm, pride and hard work your team has in their work. The joy and camaraderie they have is infectious and that is something which only comes from the mutual respect between them and their supervisors. Everyone compliments the works of others — always with a smile and always with a sense they are part of something good and are helping those less fortunate. That’s what life is all about!”

Donations to MSSO are eligible for tax credit
(Charity registration No. 10765 4410 RR 0001)

You may donate online via PayPal or by cheque to:
Maharashtra Seva Samiti Organization

4 Strathbury Circle SW
Calgary, Alberta T3H 1P7
Phone: (403) 288-0048

Past issues of MSSO NEWS on <www.mssoononline.org>

More than a dozen videos on MSSO projects available on
<http://mssoononline.org/videos>

Blindness Prevention among Rural Children, Dhule

This is by far the largest MSSO project. It is progressing at a much faster rate than originally expected at the time of the submission of the project proposal. The stipulated target of screening 40,000 students by the end of the project has already exceeded; till the reporting period the number of students screened stands at 282,971. Taking into account the low speed in the initial start-up period of the project, and the current high rate, this number is likely to exceed 400,000 by the end of the project.

The parents are reluctant to have their daughters wear eye glasses and often return the eye glasses. The successful counseling by the outreach team has led to a sharp drop in the number of parents returning the eye glasses. From the highest of 23 during the first interim report it has steadily decreased to zero in the current interim report.

As per the target, the outreach team was to locate 200 dropout females. This has exceeded far beyond the expectation. As of the end of the reporting period more than

3,685 dropout females have been located. Parents of all of them were provided counseling, though only 30% of them agreed for the eyesight screening of their daughters.



Clothes for deprived children during Diwali season

The outreach team has gone beyond the call of their duty; (1) they conducted eye screening camps during vacations which benefitted 15,945 children; (2) they screened 2,754 adults for vision deficiency; and (3) they distributed clothes and sweets to the rural poor children during Diwali season.

The detailed current progress report is available at:

<http://mssoonline.org/downloads/interim-reports/vision-project-september-2016>

From Toronto Chapter

On Saturday April 9th the chapter held the eleventh annual Indian Fundraising Dinner at St John's Presbyterian Church in Toronto. The evening was started with flute, song and dance performances, and a presentation of the AVANI Project by our guest speaker, Anuradha Bhosale. The dinner was attended by 120 people, who enjoyed wonderful Indian food, and participating in the annual raffle. The chapter raised \$3,650 through ticket sales, the raffle and donations.



Margaret Joshi checks if the guests are enjoying

The event was well received and well supported by the church community and many friends. Funds raised will be

going for the Blindness Prevention Program in Dhule District and for the rescue of child labour at brickyards in Kolhapur.

Monitoring Visits

Jagannath Wani, President Emeritus, gave courtesy visit to many Indian partners funded by MSSO which included Nachiket Bal Wachanalay in Amaravati, Bhagini Nivedita Gramin Vigyan Niketan in Bahadarpur, K.S. Wani Memorial Trust in Dhule, AVANI and Helpers of the Handicapped in Kolhapur, Schizophrenia Awareness Association in Pune, Samata Pratishthan in Yeola and Caring Friends in Mumbai.

The following were the most notable events during the visit.

In Dhule, at the alumni get together of the Institute of Printing Technology, the alumni expressed their gratitude to the institute for providing the education which would have been impossible if they had to go to big cities like Pune or Mumbai for the same. The other mega event was the annual eye camp which organizes eye treatment for more than 2000 patients at no cost.



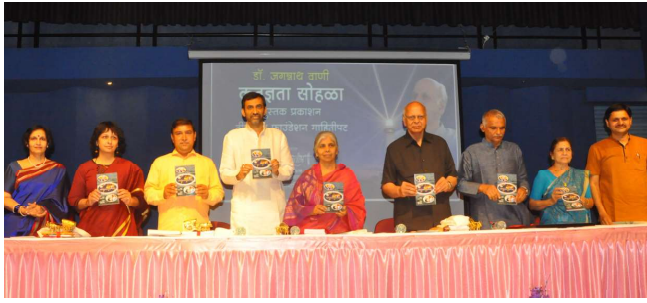
Patients waiting in que to be registered at the eye camp

In Kolhapur, World Disability Day was observed by the Helpers of the Handicapped and the ground breaking ceremony was held for AVANI's hostel for the girls rescued from being child labourers.



The awardees and the guests at the World Disability Day

Pune visit was crowded with many events at the Schizophrenia Awareness Association including the Founders' Day and an evening reception for the mental health professionals, volunteers and caregivers hosted by Amrit Bakhshy. In addition, Deepstambha organized a book launch for the book *Satasamudrapalyad* (Beyond Seven Seas) written by Jagannath Wani. It was a houseful audience with Dr. Prakash Amte as the chief guest. Similar program was also organized in Dombivli chaired by Vidya Bal.



Book launch in Pune

The inauguration of the vocational centre for the hearing impaired was a major function in Yeola. One of our generous donors, Arif Ratnani, was also in attendance.

Besides partner visits, Jagannath Wani was also invited to appear at many public meetings in Maharashtra. The following were the most notable amongst them.

Jagatik Marathi Akademi interviewed him at their annual meet in Amravati on his work in the creating awareness and providing rehabilitation facilities for persons with mental health issues.

Deepstambh Foundation in Jalgaon interviewed him on his social work at their annual foundation day.

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 3555 - 93 Street, Edmonton, AB, Canada T6E 6N6
 in the production of MSSO News.

Financially assisted organizations

Since the release of the last newsletter, MSSO provided financial assistance to the following sixteen organizations, listed along with the purpose of assistance.

AVANI – Prevention of Child Labor
 Dilasa Sanstha, Yeotmal - Drought relief
 Gharkul Parivar – Helping Mentally Challenged Women
 Jnana Prabodhini (Sholapur) – Agricultural Training
 Jnana Prabodhini (Pune) – Counselling of adolescent girls
 K.S. Wani Memorial Trust –Blindness prevention
 Lok Biradari Prakalp – Education of Tribal Children
 Mahan Trust – Health Services for Tribal People
 Narmadalay – Rehabilitation of Displaced Tribals
 Samata Pratishthan – Vocation Training of Hearing Impaired
 Schizophrenia Awareness Assoc. – Rehab of mentally ill
 Snehalaya – HIV Affected children and women
 SRUJAN – Student Sponsorship
 Student Welfare Assoc. – Residence for rural students
 Swadhar – Life skill education of underprivileged girls
 Tara Sansthan – Blindness Prevention

Details of some projects which received major assistance are briefly described below.

Narmadalay, Lepa Punarnivas, M.P.

During the 1980s, many activists protested against the building of big dams on the river Narmada. On one hand the strength of the voice of the common man was heard and produced some results, but sadly on the other hand, though the displaced received monetary compensation, the relocation plans were void of any strategy for their better

future. Their children floundered in ignorance and illiteracy and the men became alcoholic having no regard to wellbeing of the family; the social fabric was completely torn.



Bharati Thakur conducting a class of tribal children

Social activist Bharati Thakur took note of the situation and rather than joining the protesters she decided to be constructive; she accepted the challenge of helping the displaced and improving their lives. Her source of inspiration was the trio - Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Parmhans and Maa Sharda. Today, about 1800 children from 15 different villages are taking advantage of this free education to better their future, increasing their knowledge as well as confidence in their abilities.

MSSO provided financial assistance in the production of an awareness video on the work of Narmadalay. The video will come in handy for them in their fund raising activities.

Samata Pratishthan, Yeola

With financial assistance from MSSO, Caring Friends in Mumbai and Arpan Foundation, Pratishthan constructed a vocational training centre for hearing impaired adults and from August 1, 2016, started vocational training in four trades – weaving of paithani (special variety of sari), computer operations, tailoring and welding.



Trainees busy at the paithani weaving loom

Nitin Tendulkar specially visited Pratishthan's Maiboli School for Hearing Impaired on the World Deaf Day and presented copies of autographed photos of his brother, well-known cricketer Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar, to each hearing impaired student.



Students holding autographed photo of Sachin Tendulkar

Nitin later recommended to Sachin to provide financial help to Samata Pratishthan. Heeding the advice of his brother, Sachin allocated forty lakh rupees to further develop the vocational training program for hearing impaired.

Dilasa

Established in 1994 by its director Madhukar Dhas, Dilasa runs farmer's support Centre and educates them on various Government schemes meant for their benefit. MSSO helped Dilasa in their efforts to remove acute shortage of water. One example is the village *Akola Dev* in Jalana, Marathwada. The village was reeling under acute shortage of water for two years. Using Government schemes, participation of the local population and financial assistance from organizations like MSSO, they removed silt that was blocking the storage capacity of a dam. This not only solved the water scarcity problem of *Akola Dev* but also increased the underground water table of neighbouring ten villages. This provided drinking water as well as water for irrigation of farms.



Rejuvenated dam after removing the silt

Schizophrenia Awareness Association (SAA), Pune

With MSSO assistance SAA is expanding their awareness and rehabilitation programs. Smita and Anand Godse from SAA travelled to Ratnagiri on the World Mental Health Day on 9th October 2016 to address the members of Sahaj Trust, which is working for persons with mental illness in a rural area around Ratnagiri in Konkan. SAA extended a helping hand to them by donating Rs.100,000/- towards their corpus fund on one to one matching basis. SAA will provide additional Rs.150,000/- on the same matching basis. Construction is in progress to provide additional 5000 sq.ft. space for the rehabilitation centre to accommodate increased number of patients seeking help for rehabilitation.

President of SAA, Amrit Bakhshy, is the chairperson of the Hospital Management Committee of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosurgery (NIMHANS), Bangalore. Appalled at the sight of the patients and their families waiting in long queues at the OPD, he recommended additional waiting space and a canteen with better amenities. NIMHANS acted on his suggestion. Amrit inaugurated the new canteen during his last visit to NIMHANS on October 5, 2016. Involvement of Amrit at NIMHANS has given visibility to SAA at the national level.



Amrit Bakhshy inaugurating the new canteen at NIMHANS

MSSO Board Members

The general meeting of MSSO held on April 17, 2016, unanimously elected the following to the Board of Directors.

Jivan Kayande	President
Ramesh Aggarwal	Vice President
Sarvesh Thuse	Secretary
Chandrakant Lad	Treasurer

Dr. Jagannath Wani continues to be the President Emeritus.

Heartfelt "Thank You" to Volunteers

Krishan Chawla organized the following team of volunteers for fundraising on 6th and 7th February 2016. The proceeds totalling \$76,917 will be utilized for the vision project.

Kumud Acharya	Negi Nageshwarn
Sachin Ahuja	Ofelia Nageshwarn
Jainesh Bali	Renu Narang
Rakesh Bansal	Savita Patel
Neeru Channan	Ram Punjabi
Krishan Chawla	Dinesh Rai
Dilip Dasmahopatra	Saurabh Saxena
Rohit Desai	Anil Sharma
Girish Garge	M.P. Sharma
Kishwar Ghani	Tushar Sharma
Ranjan Ghosh	Vishal Sharma
Navdeep Girdhar	Subhash Sikka
Makarand Gulawani	Ashok Singh
Mahendra Jain	Rajeshwar Singh
Yogesh Kumar	Hansa Thaleshwar
Vinod Marwaha	Ishwar Thaleshwar
R. D. Mehta	Jagannath Wani

MSSO appreciates the contribution of all volunteers and the coordinators for the planning of the fundraising event.