

SUTRA's Contribution to Millennium Development Goals

GOAL 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Activities	Impact	
<p><u>Microcredit Program</u></p> <p>Self help groups (SHGs) of women have been formed in across five development blocks. Over the last decade, the groups in three blocks have sustained. The SHG members attend monthly meetings and save a fixed amount and maintain financial records of the same. The groups are also linked to the banks for availability of loans.</p> <p>This activity was initiated with the aim of alleviating the economic condition of women with support from Rashtriya Mahila Kosh.</p>	<p>In 2003 the number of groups was 185 and the number of members 2682 whereas in 2013 the groups are 223 and members 3246. The total amount loaned in the period spanning 2003 to 2013 is rupees 3,55,68,299.</p>	<p>The formation of self help groups (SHGs) as led to a habit of regular savings amongst the women. The women have access to money which is available at reasonable interest in the groups. Initially there was a lot of paperwork and formalities required to arrange a loan from the bank. The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh led SHGs have made the process easier for women. Women's position in their families has become better thanks to their access to financial resources thought the SHGs. A large number of women have also been able to use the money borrowed to start livelihood activities.</p> <p>The involvement in SHGs has lead to poverty alleviation.</p> <p>Economic empowerment has gradually led women to move out of the private sphere, participate in discussions, speak up in Panchayat meetings and thereby gain confidence and increase self esteem. This process has led to a better social status for women. There is a solidarity created within the groups where women even assist each other during any domestic strife.</p>
<p><u>Crèches</u></p> <p>Children from age 0-6 years are enrolled into the crèches supported by Central Social Welfare Board and run by SUTRA. Majority of the children in SUTRA's crèches belong to working mothers or BPL families, migrant workers living in slums. The following things are done in the crèches:</p> <p>Daily additional nutrition supplement- wheat flakes, porridge, sprouts, khichadi, glucose biscuits</p> <p>Hygiene education- e.g. important of bathing, cutting nails, clean water etc discussed with children</p> <p>Pre-primary education</p> <p>Vaccination- crèche workers ensure that children are receiving the</p>	<p>The number of centres has ranged from 24 to 30 in the last ten years and is situated in various places across 3 blocks of Himachal Pradesh- Dharampur, Nahan and Nalagarh. Each year the centres have catered to approximately 300 children or over the decade,</p>	<p>The children from slums (near Industrial townships) who were left unattended are now regular in the crèches and take active interest in the activities conducted.</p> <p>The nutrition supplements have a direct positive impact on the child's health especially since the children in the crèches are from lowest income group who cannot avail of such nutrition otherwise.</p> <p>Regular health check-ups have helped monitor the health status of children and detect problems which were brought to their parents' attention. The crèches workers inform the parents and also help them act upon these problems. This has led to an improvement in the children's health.</p>

<p>prescribed vaccination and immunization</p> <p>Health-checkups on monthly basis is done by inviting by the Sub-centre Health Worker</p> <p>First Aid facilities at the centre</p>	<p>3,000 children were covered.</p>	<p>The educational activities have led to the development of mental and psychological well being of the children. This helps them when they are enrolled in primary schools.</p>
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Goat 2: Achieve universal primary education

Activities	Impact	
<p><u>Financial Support from the State for children</u></p> <p>In October 2005 Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan¹, in its First State Level convention, advocated for the financial assistance to those single mothers who have to support their young children on their own.</p> <p>The Government of H.P. agreed to this and designed a Scheme called Mother Teresa Scheme for the assistance to single mothers (widows, divorcees,) belonging to BPL. The scheme aims at providing Rs 500/- per annum as financial support to children (maximum 2) between the age 5 to 14years whose mothers belong to one of the above category. After a lot of struggle, the scheme was finally implemented but with loopholes. The ENSS has been continuously advocating with the state officials and has managed to iron out some of the difficulties in implementing the scheme.</p> <p>The Mother Teresa scheme for supporting economically weaker students of single woman has increased to Rs.3000 per annum and the age has been increased from 5 to 18 years.</p> <p>Children who have no parents i.e. orphans were also linked to this scheme and now benefit from it.</p> <p>This also happened through sustained efforts of the ENSS.</p> <p>ENSS is still fighting for inclusion of children of deserted and separated women or women whose husbands are missing, in this scheme.</p>	<p>Till date ENSS has helped 1264 children access the scheme.</p>	<p>It has enabled women -divorcees, widows etc. to send their children to school and thereby ensure their access to primary education.</p> <p>The advocacy led policy has impacted children of single woman and children without parents across the state of Himachal Pradesh, who can now access primary education.</p>
<p>A scholarship was provided to SUTRA from a voluntary organization in Delhi, to support education of widowed women's children. The amount was 500 per month per child.</p>	<p>100 children from Solan and Lahaul Spiti districts were supported</p>	<p>The children, who had little income due to the absence of their father, were able to spend money for fees, tuition, and nutrition. This scholarship was available for two years.</p>

¹ 'Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan' (ENSS) is a platform for single women – widows, divorced, abandoned, with missing husband and un-married women; to raise their awareness, build their confidence, collectively fight against injustice and demand for their rights.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Activities	Impact	
<p><u>Declining Sex Ratios/ Child Sex Ratios</u></p> <p>The issue of declining sex ratio has been addressed substantially by SUTRA throughout the decade.</p> <p>Meetings were conducted of the frontline Health Functionaries and explained to them the importance of early registration of pregnancy.</p> <p>Women were given Pregnancy Test kit that was available with the Health Department through advocacy efforts, so that if the pregnancy is unwanted, women can access safe abortion.</p> <p>Initial work showed that sex ratio could be improved through sustained efforts involving the Panchayats as well as community based organizations like Mahila Mandals and Self help groups. Therefore work was gradually up scaled.</p> <p>Street plays were conducted to bring the issue in the public eye.</p> <p>The activities undertaken in this regard were-</p> <p>Kanya Bachao Samitis (KBS) have been formed at the Panchayat level comprising of members of Mahila Mandals, Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan, Self Help Groups, anganwadi workers and health workers.</p> <p>The members of the KBS were given training about their responsibilities and work to be undertaken.</p> <p>Boards/ painted walls in the Panchayat office display the child sex ratio for every year.</p>	<p>The board displaying the child sex ratio started in 25 Panchayats and is currently instituted in 300 Panchayats across 5 districts of Himachal Pradesh- Solan, Sirmour, Una, Kangra and Mandi.</p> <p>From 2009-11 KBS were functioning in 140 Panchayats and reaching out to about 15000 people who attended monthly meetings.</p> <p>The work involved 720 villages.</p> <p>Since 2012, 300 KBSs formed with the total membership of 6,507 persons that include 84% women and 16% men. Average members per KBS is 22 persons.</p> <p>In 2012-13, birthday of 44 girls celebrated for the first time in 21 Gram Panchayats.</p> <p>Parents of 74 girls opened recurring deposits in their names in 13 gram Panchayats and saving accounts were opened in the name of 23 girls in 9 gram Panchayats.</p> <p>37 KBSs ensured the availability of pregnancy self-test kits at the anganwadi</p>	<p>The Gram Panchayat have accepted sex ratio as an issue of concern and have taken up the responsibility of monitoring the sex ratio on a periodic basis.</p> <p>In 2003 elections to the State Legislative Assembly removal of the 2 child norm became election issue. The Ruling Party lost the elections.</p> <p>After a struggle of 5 years, SUTRA along with sister organizations, successfully revoked the two-child norm for Panchayat elections² which was against people reproductive rights as well as having a adverse effect on sex ratios. Himachal Pradesh was the first state to remove this norm.</p> <p>The sustained monitoring of the Panchayats led to a gradual increase in sex ratio trends across the Panchayats.</p> <p>The members of the Block office as well as other state authorities have been co-operative and appreciative of SUTRA's efforts since pressure has mounted on them too.</p> <p>All the outcomes indicate the environment of acceptability is gradually being created for girl children.</p> <p>The child sex ratio of HP has improved from 896 in 2001 census to 906 in 2011.</p>

² The two child norm prescribed that only people with two or less children could contest elections at the Panchayat level. While it sought to promote a small family norm by creating role models out of Panchayat representatives, this norm was leading to sex selective abortions and contributing to decline in sex ratio.

<p>Meetings with PRI representatives to bring their attention to the gravity of the issue and encourage them to take actions against the trend. Ward members have been trained to understand the underlying causes of the phenomenon and also to take actions to discourage practices of sex selective abortions in their respective Panchayats.</p> <p>Youth <i>melas</i> (gatherings) were organised in 55 Panchayats where the school going children were made aware of the issue of declining sex ratio through various activities like- role plays, songs, competitions for speeches, slogan writing etc.</p> <p>Health department personnel, anganwadi workers, District Collector were all roped into the advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Information about PCPNDT act has been part of CBO meetings conducted by SUTRA.</p>	<p>centers, by means of presenting resolutions to the health department from the gram Panchayat.</p> <p>87 Mahila Gram Sabhas were organized with total participation of 4,497 persons that included women and Gram Panchayat representatives. The average participation per Mahila Gram Sabha stood at 52 persons.</p>	
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Empowering Single women

‘Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan’ (ENSS) is a platform for single women – widows, divorced, abandoned, with missing husbands and un-married women; to raise awareness, build their confidence, collectively fight against injustice and demand for their rights. ENSS cuts across the lines of religion, caste, class, physical or mental abilities and also extends its arm to women suffering from HIV/AIDS. The objectives of this federation are- to change the traditional outlook towards single women, to support them towards becoming economically independent, advocate for changes in Government policies and bring about the political empowerment of single women.

The government schemes that are meant to benefit single women were problematic, so ENSS created pressure by organizing rallies, marches on foot, state level meetings, Jan Sunwai (public hearings), conferences, submitting memorandum to political parties and submitting petitions to the government.

The ENSS started in 2005 with 105 members and currently (2013) it is active in 7 districts of Himachal Pradesh with 12051 members of which 11291 are registered members who pay a membership fee.

The advocacy efforts for increasing the beneficiaries under the various categories progressed as follows- 237282 in 2007-08 increased to 292921 in 2013.

ENSS has till date helped women access the following- Pension (old age and widow)- 1930

PM Kanyadaan Scheme- 457

Enrollment into MNERGA – 4798

Computer course- 77

Re-marriages- 22

A house through Indira Awas Yojana- 494

Enrollment in BPL list- 391

Stitching machines with advocacy from Welfare Department and Voluntary organizations- 247

There are 46 SHGs of specifically ENSS members

16 women from ENSS were given accounting training in order to independently operate their own financial records.

Every year since 2009,

The ENSS has led to a lot of change in the treatment and outlook towards single women since its formation. Widowed, divorced or separated women led desolate lives and many things were denied to them.

Women’s association with ENSS has led them to step out of the house, actively participate in the Panchayat activities, wear clothes which are colourful and pleasing, eat eggs, get invited to and attend ceremonies like weddings etc, fight for their rights and entitlements, take their own decisions regarding their lives and leading a respectful and dignified existence.

Ekal women have taken strides to improve their economic condition by learning to make candles, bags, clothes, selling milk, stitching clothes and getting enlisted under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MNREGA) scheme.

The advocacy efforts of the ENSS have bore fruits-the pension has increased from 200 to 1000 per month, The Prime Minister Kanyadaan scheme has been increased from 5000 to 25000.

The policy changes have impacted the entire state and thereby benefit more women and children than what SUTRA records reflect.

Single woman are now prioritized for government jobs.

Single women can now apply for a separate ration card and they are a separate category for ration distribution.

An important social change to directly address a society which gives importance to men, is the celebration of ‘*Bhenadooj*’ (festival of celebrating sisterhood) started in 2010. The Ekal members celebrate at Panchayat, block and district level by gathering together, sweets, good wishes and entertainment programs. This has been

	<p>a group of women are selected from ENSS members for leadership training. 513 such women have been thus trained.</p>	<p>getting news coverage. The President of the National executive body of the National ENSS is from SUTRA, owing to her active participation and mobilizing and understanding of the issue.</p> <p>In 2011, Tikra village in Kangra achieved the distinct feat- all single women there were enrolled in at least one Govt. schemes set specifically for single women.</p> <p>The work done by the ENSS is at the state as well as national level and has been recognised and awarded by Ashoka Changemakers, out of 87 countries, along with Brazil and Colombia.</p>
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<p><u>Efforts against Domestic Violence</u></p> <p>The awareness generation on Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005 has been extensively carried out in all the CBOs that SUTRA is associated with- SHGS, Panchayat Mandali, KBS as well as Yuvati Sangathans.</p> <p>SUTRA also undertook a study on dowry and its links with violence against women and girls in 2007</p> <p>In 2008-09, SUTRA conducted a study about Nyaya Panchayats³ which brought out a lack of gender sensitivity. However, it was also found that women find Panchayats affordable and accessible. A campaign was launched for autonomous Nyaya Panchayats that would be well-equipped to deliver gender justice.</p> <p>Village level camps built understanding about- gender, discrimination, violence and its forms, PWDVA, Nyaya Panchayats etc.</p> <p>SUTRA field staffs are routinely contacted by victims of domestic violence and are given counseling and relevant help within the means of the organisation.</p>	<p>Awareness about PWDVA in the KBS of 140 Panchayats.</p> <p>400 village level camps were conducted across 200 Panchayats and 10,531 women signed a petition to demand autonomous Nyaya Panchayat</p>	<p>Camps lead to an understanding of concepts of gender, domestic violence and lack of gender justice.</p> <p>Women were more confident about recognizing and addressing occurrence of domestic violence in their area.</p> <p>The issue was then taken up in monthly meetings of CBOs and became a topic of public articulation and therefore acknowledgement.</p> <p>Women became aware about the PWDV Act and its provisions.</p> <p>Illustrations made by participants depicting incidents of violence were collected and SUTRA created flexes with anti-violence slogans written on them. These illustrations were exhibited in many meetings and activities, thereby generating a much wider discussion on the issue.</p>
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³ Nyaya Panchayat were justice delivery bodies at the Panchayata level, but they are no longer in existence. Now the Gram Panchayat is burdened with Judicial functions.

<p><u>Political Empowerment of Women</u></p> <p>The Panchayat Mandali program was initiated with an aim to enhance women's leadership and representation in village Panchayats in order to achieve social justice. The Panchayat Mandali was a group of men and women who met regularly and received trainings about Panchayat process and many other issues that SUTRA has worked on over the years. Earlier women specific issues were not raised in the Gram Sabhas, i.e. village meetings, nor did women participate in the deliberations that happened there.</p> <p>A campaign and rally along with petitions were sent to the state authorities in order to conduct Mahila Gram Sabhas (MGS) that is all women meetings in the Panchayats which would facilitate women's participation in the Panchayat processes. The Government issued a notice to convene MGS on 23rd September 2007.</p>	<p>2006-07, Panchayat Mandali meetings were held in 31 Panchayats and attended by more than 11000 people.</p> <p>275 MGS were organised in the period of 2010-11 in Poanta, Nalagarh, Chautada, Una, Gagaret, and Darang where more than 15000 women participated.</p> <p>In 2013, 199 MGS were held with 10000 women participating.</p>	<p>After successive meetings and discussions, women have realized the importance of attending Gram Sabhas and Up-gram Sabhas and have started participating in them. They get information about various Govt. schemes as well as their rights and entitlements.</p> <p>The issues that were taken up in these Mahila Gram Sabha (MGS) were- Health care- organization of health camps and regular visits of health worker, exclusion of single women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) lists, social security pensions for old and widow women, special services for senior citizens, job cards for women under MNREGA and increasing number of days of work, domestic violence, preservation of water bodies within the village, pollution of drinking water sources, toilet facilities in primary school and many other development issues.</p> <p>On one hand, the women wanted to raise issues which were considered beyond the realm of the Panchayat, but on the other, they were also realizing that as citizens they had a say in all issues. The MGS gave them a platform for doing both, prioritizing what are 'women's issues' but also emphatically making their demands heard on all issues.</p> <p>Not only were these issues brought up but many resolutions were passed in successive MGS which were then implemented by the Panchayats. Thus, the MGS has helped women make their voices heard and actually demand action.</p> <p>As a part of political empowerment, 89 Ekal women contested the Panchayat elections and 25 have won and occupy different position like Pradhan, Up-Pradhan, MLA, etc.</p>
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Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Activities	Impact	
<p><u>Reproductive Rights</u></p> <p>Conversations around women's health have been happening since the very beginning. Activities like meetings specifically on health care, importance of health insurance, Haemoglobin (Hb) checkups and discussions on gynaecological problems have been taking place in CBOs like SHGs and Panchayat Mandalis. Some of the topics include- cancer of reproductive parts, uterine prolapse, leucorrhoea, menstrual problems, effects of tubectomy, menopause, cysts, infections etc. Meetings of pregnant women were conducted over the years to talk about- nutrition requirements, safe abortion, Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)⁴, registration etc. SUTRA workers have been organizing health check up camps for women by involving health workers from relevant sub-centres and also encouraging the Panchayats to organize them.</p> <p>Gram Panchayats were made aware of their role in successful implementation of National Rural Health Mission as well as Reproductive and Child health care.</p> <p>Strengthening community based organizations like Mahila Mandals, Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan and SHGs to take up the issue of Reproductive Rights and create ownership at the community level Promoting change in Health seeking Behavior – in the context of RTI/STIs</p> <p>Increasing women's access to information on Reproductive and</p>	<p>In 2010, 304 women across 6 development blocks received benefits from JSY amounting to Rs.1,73,800.</p> <p>This is indicative of the benefits over the consecutive years.</p> <p>In 2012, KBS member training saw participation of 8,139 persons, to develop a greater understanding of the issues at the Panchayat level- reproductive health</p>	<p>The achievements have been early registration of pregnancies to facilitate pre and ante natal care, improvement in institutional deliveries. Antenatal care directly impacting maternal health and therefore helped reduce maternal and neonatal mortality.</p> <p>More and more women were made aware of and availed of JSY benefits.</p> <p>As the Mother NGO for Reproductive and Child Health program in Himachal, SUTRA has been instrumental in building capacities of other organizations on the subject</p> <p>Management of RTIs/ STIs has been facilitated by first creating an environment where women could talk about them and also working on the service delivery by advocacy with State officials. Sub-centres started Hb testing due to effort by the organizations in that district.</p> <p>Access to safe abortion and making women aware of unsafe methods of abortion has also led to had significant impact in the community. While women do not report cases in such instances, the dissemination of information about the right to abortion and the MTP Act has been well received.</p>

⁴ JSY is a scheme which entitles a woman to cash amount meant for diet etc. this is given when she delivers in a hospital.

<p>Sexual Rights, enabling them to choose methods for limiting families.</p> <p>Monitoring public institutions like govt. health facilities, anganwadi etc. to ensure necessary support and services to as measure to reduce gaps in RH services.</p> <p>Facilitating women to create larger forums in the form of Mahila Gram Sabhas to address the gender discrimination and advise Gram Panchayat to take action for promoting Gender Equality</p> <p>Kanya Bachao Samitis are not only well aware of the different aspects of reproductive health but they also disseminate information on the issue, set examples and take actions for ending gender based discrimination, develop mechanisms for community based monitoring local health care institutions.</p> <p>Between October 2012 to March 2013, 208 separate meetings were organized with Mahila Mandals, SHGs and newly married couples. Middle age as well as young women participated in these meetings to share experiences of adoption of various family planning methods</p> <p>While working on declining sex ratio, SUTRA has also simultaneously made efforts to inform women of their right to access safe abortion services and also advocate for these facilities to be made available in public health care institutions.</p> <p>Awareness about Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP), Act was also on the agenda.</p>		
<p><u>Work with Adolescents</u></p> <p>In 2003-04 SUTRA had helped make Yuvati Sangathan, groups of adolescent girls. They had monthly meeting and also participated in residential camps where issues like reproductive health issues, gender</p>	<p>There were 47 sangathans in 3 blocks of Dharampur, Nahan and Nalagarh with a membership of 455.</p>	<p>Monthly savings which were used by the girls for supporting education, for health treatments, to buy gifts etc were started in 16 sangathans.</p> <p>Book banks run by the sangathans led to a habit of reading.</p>

<p>based violence and sex ratio, education etc were discussed</p>		<p>Discussions on health and violence helped develop an understanding about gender based discriminations within the girls at an early age. The girls also participated in Gram Sabhas and village level activities like cleaning drinking water sources.</p>
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Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Activities	Impact	
<p><u>Awareness Campaign on Clean Drinking water</u></p> <p>SUTRA along with another organization SEVA had run an awareness campaign on clean water for all, following the Government's directive of the year 2003 being dedicated to this issue. Trainers participated in a workshop to learn street theatre techniques and puppetry. They in turn trained their team mates and then conducted the shows across sites in their chosen field areas.</p>	<p>The campaign was organized in 4 development blocks 29 Street play performances and 21 puppet shows were organized. The importance of clean and safe drinking water was conveyed to 15,983 people across three states through the workshop.</p>	<p>People realised the importance of the issue. In some places children and school teachers decided to work towards regular cleaning of water storage places. School children made slogans and posters about the issue In many villages people decided to clean the surroundings of their water source and monitor the area to ensure that no one dirties it. The performances were well received and appreciated. They were invited to perform in villages and the people were willing to bear expenses.</p>
<p><u>Roof Top Water Harvesting</u></p> <p>In 2006-07, SUTRA constructed roof top water harvesting tanks on school buildings to store rainwater, with support from Ministry of water resources in Dharampur, Nalagarh and Nahan blocks.</p>	<p>19 water reservoirs of 40-50 liters were constructed. 5274 children and adults benefited</p>	<p>The work was well appreciated by the beneficiaries who could avail of the stored water. SUTRA won the President's award for North India for this work.</p>
<p><u>Rural Sanitation Programme</u></p> <p>SUTRA was instrumental in construction of low cost toilets which not only improved the sanitation conditions of the village but also provided temporary employment to the women who worked as labourers on the project in 1992.</p>	<p>7000 low-cost toilets were constructed, large majority of which are still being used by those many families.</p>	<p>Affordable sanitation was available to these families.</p>