

EDUCATION

SOCIETY FOR ALL ROUND DEVELOPMENT'S (SARD) approach to education has been inclusive and holistic with a view to ensure the basic rights of children and provide quality education for all. Thus SARD believes that education of children should focus on learning level improvements, promoting cognitive development with IT-enabled support systems, nurturing creative talents and engage in meaningful co-curricular activities. To achieve this, SARD ensures safer schools with positive discipline; teachers with appropriate capacities built through training; and sensitized governance through sustained advocacy.

SARD started its intervention in education in the year 1997 through establishment of non-formal education centres for the most disadvantaged minority community of meo-muslims in remote rural areas of Bharatpur district, Rajasthan. This effort got strengthened by ensuring quality education in formal schooling on a pilot basis, where the processes were streamlined and consolidated for a larger outreach and mainstreaming. This rural experience was scaled up to the urban pockets to work with mainstream schools of Municipal Corporation of Delhi which specifically looked into addressing academically weak children with bridge and remedial support. The tenets of Rights to Education, child protection, infrastructural development, IT-enabled education etc., were built into this core platform of MCD schools.

This model of consolidation, outreach and mainstreaming has been initiated in the states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Delhi.

Today SARD has a direct outreach in 350 mainstream schools covering 45000 children directly and 100 community schools for 3000 rural girls. These efforts are supported by multiple donors comprising national, international grant making agencies, family foundations and leading business houses. Based on experiences imbibed, SARD envisages marching into the future to influence vibrant public policy with systemic advocacy among stakeholders to perceive and own initiatives through converging technology and resources by means of enhanced networking and enabling functional integration.

In view of its broader goal of empowering people to realize their full potential, SARD focuses on rights and education of children. We believe that they are an incredibly important sector of society, as they are its next generation. With appropriate guidance, optimal support and the right opportunities their latent talents and capacities can be brought out to the fore and utilized efficiently. Thus it is very essential that children be provided with best services to develop into contributing members of the society.

As per the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, every child has a right to holistic development, which entails access to proper education and health. The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2) also lists achievement of universal primary education as one of the key goals. India has shown its commitment to the cause by setting a goal of “*All children in school by 2003; all children to complete 5 years of schooling by 2007*”. In 2009 the Right to Children of Free and Compulsory Education Act was passed and ensures compulsory schooling for children of the age group 6-14. Since its origin, SARD has been guided by these international and national approaches towards primary education. It has been deeply committed to the education of marginalized sections of society; we have demonstrated this commitment through past programs that we have successfully implemented.

Our experience and innovation in the education field lead to the development of SARD’s own strategy and pedagogy to provide quality education for students enrolled in government schools. We aspire to develop concepts and models of education which create the best environment possible for students, taking into account their socio-economic and cultural background. Ideally, our innovations will be replicated and thus contribute to the improvement of the current education system. Our target groups in the education field are socio-economically and disadvantaged children of the community who are enrolled in government schools. We do not believe in the effectiveness of a parallel structure to the government education system, therefore we work in close cooperation with the respective state and district level administrations.

SARD’s goal in the education field is to provide **quality education for all**. Quality education in SARD’s view has to embrace the all round development of a child – not only its academic performance, but also the development of the child’s personality and social skills. Therefore our understanding of quality education is not limited to conveying knowledge, but comprises multiple aspects to enable a child to develop all its skills and talents and become a contributing member of our society. To reach this ideal of education, we have to respond to the child’s nature of learning and ensure the quality of the teaching, of the infrastructure and of the applied pedagogical concepts.

In SARD, we believe that a true education cannot be anything else but child centered because the total development of the child’s personality is widely accepted as the most important objective of education. Child-centered education means that the child’s point of view, its interests, needs and aptitudes are prevalent over the teacher’s and curriculum’s point of view.

This understanding of quality education led in the past years to SARD’s development of a *threefold approach* in the education field. We focus in our interventions on three different aspects: Quality of teaching, quality of infrastructure and Child Rights. The combination of these three aspects is

intended to create an environment for the child, which allows it to have access to quality education and fully develop its academic and social skills.

Quality of Teaching:

An essential component of quality education constitutes the quality of teaching. Only when the teaching is conducted by qualified and competent teachers, when the pedagogy, the classroom process and the teaching material responds to the child's nature of learning, then the academic and social development of a child is ensured. Therefore SARD focuses in its intervention on the capacity building of teachers, the provision of appropriate teaching learning materials (TLMs), the implementation of a specific classroom process and encourages the participation of different stakeholders in the education field to build a platform for discussion.

SARD established **Quality Education Centers** (QECs) in order to provide meaningful education, which is sensitive to the context and needs of disadvantaged children. These centres act as a strong link between the learning and living environment of the child and attempt to provide child-centered education. Emphasis is placed on employing innovations in the teaching-learning processes. Teaching-learning strategies and teaching aids have been developed to make use of local resources and reflect the local environment in order to eliminate the discrepancies between the learner's environment and the environment suggested by the instructional content of the formal school system. An emphasis is laid on teaching pupils how to learn, rather than just teaching a body of knowledge.

QEC teachers believe that the child as an individual has his needs, interest, attitudes and abilities and they try to create a warm and encouraging learning environment in the class and act as a facilitator in the learning process of children. The teachers encourage children to actively involve themselves in the teaching-learning process through participation. The main function of the teacher in QECs is not so much to instruct but to evoke learning.

In each QEC SARD implements a specific curriculum, classroom process and uses TLMs based on the SARD views on education.

Not only changes in the academic performance of our students in the QECs could be achieved, but we could also behavioral changes were identified. When selected children had come to the QECs they were very shy, not vocal, they were feeling uncomfortable but after the efforts of our teachers and the process of play way methods, children were attracted and they started sharing their views. SARD teachers got positive feedback from the school principal and the concerned teachers.

Gradually, students started sharing their personal problems with the teachers and also started mingling with other students in their own classes.

Features of Quality Education Centres

- Students are divided in groups on the basis of learning ability and speed - absence of class standard division
- Teachers are trained in pedagogy and other management related issues
- Teachers are on rotation basis, based on their skills in a cluster
- Teacher student ratio is optimal
- QECs are closely linked to the community
- Community provided us space, contributed in varying degrees to construct building
- QECs have succeeded in sending 40% of the students to continue their education in formal schools
- An atmosphere conducive to thorough and joyful learning
- Flexibility in syllabus
- Activities based on the child learning
- Monitoring on a day to day performance basis
- QECs are mainly for 3-14 year old children, with a focus on girls
- Continuous linkages with different stake- holders including the local govt. formal schools
- Children learn besides language, simple arithmetic and about their own environment
- Panchayat and local leaders of the community joined the movement to bring all children to schools

We believe that an effective intervention needs a systematic approach. Education was one of the means of intervention for SARD and **curriculum** was considered as a tool for channalising the efforts of SARD in the desired direction of mainstreaming the marginalised. After deciding curriculum as the main intervention tool, the question of WHAT and HOW was confronted. Initially assistance of BODH was taken, but after a first phase of experimentation in the intervention area of Mewat region of Bharatpur district in Rajasthan, the curriculum was adopted to cater the specific needs of the Meo-Muslim community and to respond to the objective of mainstreaming our students into the formal education system. Therefore SARD listed the competencies of the BODH curriculum in terms of learning achievements very clearly and introduced the use of textbooks. Now the curriculum developed by the SARD staff is a complete document including philosophy, objectives, teaching methodology, curricular and co-curricular activities, TLM and activities for each curricular point. The

contents of the curriculum are divided month-wise so that it would be very easy for teachers to make weekly planning on the basis of given contents. SARD developed a teacher manual for each subject as per the contents of the given curriculum. It is important to note that the curriculum always takes the specific needs of the students into account and respects the traditions and values of the target community.

The curriculum provides the form and the content of the **classroom process**. The classroom process on a whole is to create a friendly environment for the children enabling them to learn, express, interact in a carefree manner. For the teacher, the classroom process is split into hours of teaching and of preparing and documenting the classes. The optimal teacher-student ratio is of 30 students and of two teachers, each focusing on one subject. Curricular and co-curricular activities are implemented in a flexible way to ensure the children's participation and integration. Weekly assessment helps the teacher to identify the weaknesses of their students and preparation for regular examination is equally part of the teaching. The classroom process is supposed to improve the child's social environment by attaining changes in the attitude of different stakeholders – parents, teachers, institutional heads – through their involvement and participation. Peer learning is encouraged as it promotes social skills and team learning. The constant evaluation ensures progress of the students and aims at freeing them from examination phobia.

SARD's view on education and its pedagogical approach are reflected in the types and the use of the **Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs)**. TLMs play an essential role in the teaching and the learning in QECs and support both teachers and students in their daily work. Toys, worksheets, textbooks, flashcards, play boards, etc. facilitate learning and teaching and make it more interesting, efficient and successful. They stimulate concentration, creativity and interaction between teacher and students. Moreover a more lively and friendly environment is created for the students.

Quality education is the result of good training of the teachers. **Teacher trainings** of our SARD teachers, but also of the MCD teachers are conducted to impart knowledge about pedagogy, classroom process, use of TLMs and the participation of the students through various activities. Apart from that, general concepts are also addressed during the workshops like motivation, gender, RTE Act, Positive discipline, how to develop school specific plans, etc. The teacher trainings constitute an integral part of the SARD methodology, they keep the teachers updated about the latest innovations in teaching methodology and provide a platform to explore the skills, strengths and flaws and discuss new ideas and experiences of our teachers.

To ensure the participation of children and respond to their ideas and complaints, **suggestion boxes** have been set up in SARD intervention schools. Children can put forward their views about their

schools or any suggestion about their school system viz. protection, health and hygiene, quality of mid-day meal, etc. SARD developed a poster with suggestions of the children.

Quality of education is ensured in the **School Management Committee (SMC)** which is a compulsory component of every government school. Parents, community members, teachers as well as the administrative staff discuss issues related to the management and the infrastructure of the school. The encouragement of the parents', teachers' and institutional heads' participation and responsibility improves the child's social environment. SARD developed ICE material including posters, leaflets and a training module on the importance and functioning of SMC.

International Exchange of Best Practices; Actions in India and Overseas

SARD in cooperation with Save the Children participated in the initiative to support the Government of India in achieving the quality targets of the Sava Shiksha Abhiyan through an exchange of international best practices in the education field and the capacity building of policy makers and implementers. The project was funded by the European Commission and was implemented in seven states: Delhi, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh.

SARD participated in the implementation of the project in Delhi, where 100 MCD (EAST) schools in Shahdra – 51 in North Zone and 49 in South zone with the permissions granted by MHRD and DEOs of two districts – were targeted. Fifty sites were selected where 100 schools are being run in two shifts.

The objective of the project was the capacity building of national and state level institutions and education departments by identifying and replicating international models of best practice in teacher cadre management and performance, school management and leadership and by focusing on inclusive education in a decentralized context.

After identifying the need of improvement in teacher cadre management, in inclusive education, as well as in the system for monitoring the teacher performance and the managing of schools, SARD in cooperation with Save the Children conducted a survey to identify areas of intervention where quality changes could be achieved:

- School functioning: Creation of equal opportunities for students of poor socio-economic background
- Teacher management: Teacher training with focus on inclusive education
- Strengthening of school management
- Improvement of data collection of teachers

Divers activities were implemented in a three year period to achieve the desired results. Focus was laid on the formation of committees to improve community participation (SMCs, Children groups, Parents Teacher Associations, Cluster Level Committees, District Core Committees) and obtain their input regarding quality improvement of teaching and management. Capacity building of teachers and staff was conducted, School Development Plans were established and a focus was laid on the enrolment of out of school children. The review of the MIS (Management Information System) was destined to improve the quality of learning and teaching and the distribution of TLMs improved the quality of the teaching. The State Level Dissemination Workshop which was held on the 13th of December 2013 completed the 3 years EU-SSA project and provided a platform to discuss results and challenges faced during the implementation period.

Sava Shiksha Abhiyan: *Flagship programme of the Government of India to support the states in improving the formal primary and upper primary school systems to achieve the Goals of Universal elementary education: universal access and enrolment, universal retention, universal achievement.*

Inclusive education: *Inclusion is an effort to make sure that diverse learners – those with disabilities, different languages and cultures, different homes and family lives, different interests and ways of learning – are exposed to teaching strategies that reach them as individual learners.*

Improving Learning Levels of children in MCD Schools

The teaching-learning methodology SARD developed in the past years is brought together in the project “Improving Learning Levels of children in MCD Schools” supported by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF). Since 2012, SARD is working in 100 MCD schools in West and Najafgarh Zones of South MCD schools and provides remedial support for Children in Need of Academic Support (CNAS). Focus is laid on language and mathematics for students of grade II to V. In the intervention schools, our students are provided with remedial support in the QECs ‘Aanandya Kaksha’. For each classroom there is one teacher responsible for Hindi and one for maths. They follow our specific pedagogy, curriculum and classroom process and the use of TLMs and their own innovative ideas and creativity enhances the students’ performance and creates a child-friendly learning environment. Students are selected at the beginning of the academic year by a baseline assessment, which is followed by a mid- and end-line assessment to ensure the progress of our students and identify weak and strong skills. This increases the effectiveness of the remedial support. Workshops and trainings are not only instructive in terms of pedagogy, teaching methods and positive discipline, but also provide a platform to exchange the teachers’ own innovative ideas and discuss challenges in their teaching. In the overall period of 2012- 2013, in total 8100 students were enrolled in our remedial classes, from which 4037 were girls and 4063 boys.

Initiative in popularizing Education among students Using ICT tools (IPEAS)

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in education is not learning about technology, but about using technology to learn. In most of the advanced countries the use of ICT has been initiated more than a decade ago, while it is at an initial stage in developing countries. Disadvantaged children lack access to quality learning, hence their right to education is denied. The key reason has been lack of quality education in school and lack of discipline. Teachers in schools are not motivated; they follow old methods of teaching without any innovation.

The objective of establishing a Science Lab and the introduction of ICT in school is to achieve increased interest amongst students and reduce their dropout rate. Furthermore, children should be able to learn and grow in a play way environment in child friendly schools which provide quality education.

SARD in cooperation with Plan India established one ICT friendly smart class school in Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya – Kakrola, Dwarka Sector, Delhi, and established three Science labs for biology, math and physics.

The objective of this intervention was to enhance quality education, engage teachers and students towards critical thinking, to develop master trainers who will sensitize peers on ICT pedagogy and mainstream for replication and up-scaling and to digitize content to facilitate effective coherent interactive learning.

Teacher trainings were conducted on the effective use of ICT tools. Classroom Management allows interactive teaching and learning, group collaboration, assessment, file management and the effective control and assistance by the teacher.

The concept of a **smart class** involves learning in a friendly and interactive manner. Teachers make use of computer, smart board and the internet and their lessons are conducted using soft format and animation. This all facilitates teaching and the learning progress of the students.

Components of ICT Labs: High configuration server, teachers' and children laptops, green & white board, charging chart, Wi-Fi switch, LCD projector, censor with digital pen, fire and theft safety equipment, insurance.

Components of Science Labs: Working models, theme based pictorial charts, static models, equipment, apparatus, chemicals, skeleton and torso, TLMs, need based renovation of labs.

Quality of Infrastructure:

Creating a friendly, inclusive and safe environment in government schools involves not only the quality of teaching, but also the quality of the infrastructure of the school. Lack of appropriate, inclusive and child-friendly infrastructure is one of the reasons of the dropout of students. SARD in cooperation with its donors and partner NGOs has been working in the past years on the improvement of the learning environment in government schools.

In its intervention schools, SARD operates **Building as Learning Aid (BaLA)** as an innovative concept that aims at establishing a child-friendly, learning and fun based physical environment in the school infrastructure. It is a cost-effective technology to improve the physical learning environment, to enhance motivation among teachers and children and help to get a better understanding on different concepts. Classrooms, corridors, spaces between two blocks are transformed with wall paintings and the playground animates children to experience - in a play-way method - concepts of measurement and dimension. SARD in discussion with teachers, principals and experts identify the need of each intervention school and provide the material and ideas to create a child-friendly learning environment.

Lack of clean **drinking water** and deplorable state of **sanitation facilities** are the cause of diseases amongst students in government schools and can lead to their dropout. That is why SARD in cooperation with Plan India has installed water coolers and filters in 80 schools in Delhi in 2011. Moreover SARD provides sanitation facilities in its intervention schools where hygiene and privacy of the students are respected.

Child Rights:

SARD's intervention not only focuses on providing the infrastructure for and on ensuring the quality of education. The promotion of Child Rights constitutes an integral part of SARD's activities. Only when a child has access to education, it will be able to benefit from its quality and infrastructure.

The Right to Education Act of 2009 (RTE) provides free and compulsory education to children from the age group 6 to 14 years. Every child has the right to 8 years of cost-free primary education in a government school. Despite the increased effort of the government to enroll children and ensure their retention, some 8 million children in India never stepped into a school and some 80 million are dropping out without completing their basic education. SARD's objective in the recent years focused on raising awareness on the RTE amongst parents, the community and divers stakeholders in the education field.

Next to the promotion of the right to education, SARD equally conducted interventions to ensure violence free schools and eradicate corporal punishment and the abuse of school children in the

school system and in the community. The focus lies on educating and sensitizing the different stakeholders in the education field on the importance of developing a healthy learning atmosphere for children and the effects that has on the children's overall development and their ability to perform in school.

The formation of **Child Protection Committees** (CPCs) in SARD intervention schools provides a platform for discussion of child rights and ensures the active participation of the students and allows them to raise their voice. Each CPC comprises of 15-20 members of students' representatives, teachers' representatives, principals, parents and community stakeholders. This group meets once in a month in school and discusses various issues related to child protection.

Learn Without Fear

"Learn Without Fear" was a Plan India support campaign to protect children from corporal punishment and to create a safe learning environment for students in MCD schools. The top three priorities of the campaign were corporal punishment, sexual violence and bullying. SARD implemented the project in its operational area with support and guidance of Plan India. The intervention took place in 133 MCD primary schools in four zones of Delhi.

SARD's objective of the campaign was to create awareness of the concept of a "student-friendly school" and illustrate the negative impact of the violence on children through workshops for MCD teachers, parents, NGOs, school administrators and CPCs. It was intended to introduce safe reporting and redressal mechanisms against any form of negligence and to explore different methodologies for teachers on positive discipline and inclusion. Furthermore, SARD's objective was to raise the school administration's awareness on the recommendations of the RTE Act and its provisions on education for all.

Major achievements of the campaign are the following:

- Around 100 schools will remain free from any form of corporal punishment
- Establishment of CPCs and their tackling of issues related to corporal punishment
- Sensitization of around 200 teachers, 1400 principals and 25 authorities from 12 different MCD zones of Delhi
- Increased awareness and participation amongst community and administration about rights of children
- Establishment of framework to check corporal punishment
- Improved coordination between NGOs and government agencies in implementing policies and programmes and improvement of their accountability

Right to Education Act – An Awareness Campaign

SARD in cooperation with Plan India conducted an awareness campaign on the RTE Act in 2011 in three districts of Rajasthan (Bikaner, Udaipur and Bharatpur) and all districts of Delhi. The objective of the campaign was to create and increase awareness of the RTE Act amongst community stakeholders, parents, teachers, SMCs, administration and children. A further objective was to create a platform for discussion for institutions and NGOs on the provisions of the Act and to obtain a consensus on the content and on the implementation. Main components of the campaign included the distribution of IEC (Information Education Communication) material developed by SARD, interface with students and out of school children, with principals, teachers and other stakeholders, street theatre, puppet shows, talks, public hearing meetings with authorities and sensitization workshops. The campaign was implemented during a 30 day period in Delhi and a ten day period in each of the three districts of Rajasthan. The campaign received positive feedback and its target groups appreciated the clarifying and educational aspect of the campaign.

Protection of child rights in metal ware industry of Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh:

Moradabad supplies more than 80 % of the total metal ware/brass ware exports from India. The metal ware industry is highly labor-intensive and traditionally household based, i.e. involving all members of the family, including children. Moradabad is amongst the top ten districts of Uttar Pradesh with a very high number of child laborers, with a reported number of 56,458 working children (State of Children in UP, State Planning Commission, Government of UP, 2006). Children work in almost all aspects of brassware production for long hours and low wages, and are exposed to health hazards.

Larger numbers of children drop out from primary schools and are vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and neglect. A recent survey conducted by Education and Labor Department of Moradabad indicates 11,028 children are not going to schools (Source: Education Department Out - of - School Survey, 2009). Uneducated and drop out children are most likely to be engaged in informal and casual labor and remain poor for the rest of their lives. Large numbers of the Moradabad population live in slums.

SARD identified 36 slums out of the most vulnerable areas where the rate of school drop-outs and the incidence of child labor are very high. Our intervention targets the children involved in child labor, their parents - especially mothers - and other stakeholders and duty bearers. We provide children with access to quality education and conduct life skill training on the importance of child protection. Women are motivated to form social groups for their empowerment and are educated on the 10 Point Child Friendly Agenda. Awareness on child rights amongst stakeholders and duty

bearers is raised and their capacity building for the promotion of child rights and for the protection of children against violence, exploitation and abuse is conducted.

Childline:

SARD in cooperation with Childline International has been active in the Moradabad district since October 2011 for the protection of children through the provision of a children helpline. A team of 12 members responds to their urgent need of shelter, medical support, repatriation, emotional support and guidance. Their rescuing from red light areas, domestic labor and child labor in the brass industry are equally part of the SARD intervention in Moradabad. So far, we were able to get active in 429 cases.

Girl Child Education:

A special focus is laid on girl child education in Mewat district of Haryana since October 2008. In Mewat, girl children are still supposed to be a liability and are still deprived of the very basic rights of education. The objective is to school out of school girl children in the totally 39 education centers in 28 villages. Education is provided in HAMARI TALIMSHALA centers for girl children of the age group 6-14 years who are out of school or have never been enrolled. At village level gender sensitization takes place. There is help and support amongst the community for the SARD initiative with providing free space to run the center and support to the female teachers. In Mewat the female literacy rate is poor but thanks to the intervention of SARD this situation is changing and parents show keen interest in the intervention and the participation of the community is increased.

Girl Child Birth Registration in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan:

Meo Muslim Community, a lot of children, but problems because of lack of certificate

In the context of the national campaign of Plan India to register girl child birth, SARD in cooperation with the mother NGO IIMR and UNICEF is implementing the project activities in two blocks in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan since July 2010 and also in urban wards of Moradabad district in Uttar Pradesh since

Birth registration and the birth certificate is the first legal acknowledgement of a child's existence by a state. The lack of a birth certificate increases the risk of discrimination, violence, abuse and exploitation of children. A birth certificate provides protection against early marriage, child labor and the detention and persecution as an adult. Unregistered children are generally the children of the poor and excluded. The average level of registration in India is at 68 %. Low-performing states are Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The goal of the intervention was the identification of children below the age of 14 through their registration and the provision of a birth certificate. Furthermore, awareness within the community on traditional harmful practices affecting the girl child (female foeticide/infanticide, child marriage and child labour) was raised. In total 19 workshops for community members, NGOs, government officials and staff of the project were conducted. Eight street plays and puppet shows as well as the Girl Child day celebration raised awareness on the issue and the eight birth registration camps organized by SARD could register ... children.

Safer School Project:

This initiative is a model of convergence of different components creating a safe and fear-free learning environment for children through the change of attitudes of different stakeholders, improvement of the infrastructure and implementation of the SARD teaching-learning methodology. The project has been implemented in Delhi for 12 Zones since July 2010 in cooperation with Plan India.

Awareness on child rights:

- Trainings/activities to sensitize MCD teachers, school administrators against the use of corporal punishment and to promote the concept of positive discipline
- Encourage children to raise their voices and to adhere to self-discipline
- Strengthening of Child Groups, SMCs, CPCs
- Installation of suggestion boxes
- Awareness raising through street plays
- Publication and distribution of IEC material
- Awareness raising on Child Sexual Abuse

Safe and child-friendly environment:

- BaLA
- Proper water and sanitation facilities
- Set-up of libraries
- Playground

Main achievements of this intervention include the increased enrolment and retention of children, improvement of the quality of education, including inclusive practices, increased awareness of MCD teachers on learn without fear, positive discipline and the RTE act, improvement of management of school facilities. Furthermore a positive mindset at elected representative level and at school administration level could be achieved.

Healthcare

One of the key focus areas of SARD since its inception has been the health sector. The reason for SARD getting active in the field of healthcare was its observation that especially rural India lacks proper infrastructure and trained healthcare professionals. Furthermore, knowledge on RTI/STI, on family planning, on reproductive child health (RCH) and HIV/AIDS is very poor, especially amongst women. Therefore we focus in our interventions on reproductive and child health with a special focus on polio eradication, on HIV/AIDS and RTI/STI, on hygiene and nutrition.

We believe that education cannot be separated from health and this approach is reflected in the type and the quality of our interventions. A large number of health problems are preventable and by raising awareness and educating community members, illnesses can be greatly reduced. Moreover, capacity building of different stakeholders related to health issues ensures the sustainability of our interventions and creates self-reliance of the target community. This corresponds to our overall goal of empowering deprived members of the community and providing them with access to basic infrastructure.

All our programmes have been implemented in partnership with and thanks to the support of UN organizations, bilateral organizations, international donor organization, the Government of India and various state governments, as well as corporate partners. Main partners in the past five years have been Oxfam India, SRF, BILT, Reliance, Dalmia, PCI, Core India. We are working in close cooperation with leading medical institutes and hospitals (All Indian Institute of Medical Science) and can mobilize support for our health intervention within the community.

The main objectives of our health interventions focus on emergency treatments based on the community needs, increased awareness and education of the community about health related issues, increased access to health services, improved coordination between government health authorities, local health service providers and NGOs and capacity building of health service providers, volunteers and other stakeholders. To achieve these goals our strategy involves trainings and workshops, awareness campaigns, health check-up camps, celebration of important health-related days, mobilization of media and the community and their participation in our interventions. Our target group is the community in general and children, women and persons with special need in particular.

In the past five years our health interventions took place in six states of India, mainly in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Maharashtra and Delhi.

Health Camps

Several health camps have been organized throughout the year in our areas of intervention. Health facilities at community level are often poorly equipped and cannot provide the necessary diagnostic facilities and treatments. There is a need of facilities for routine diagnosis of gynecological problems, improved obstetric care, sensitive counselling and for sound referral services. Thus these camps provide additional services to the community and are equally destined to train local staff and improve the local health services. We consider these health camps only as an intermediary solution. They contribute to a constant improvement of the health structure of the community. SARD facilitates the organization of the camp, recruits the staff and analyzes the collected data of the intervention. Every camp has a specific set-up divided into registration, examination, laboratory, counselling and guidance, as well as the dispensing of medicine. Check-up, treatment and medicine for our patients are free.

We conducted general health check-up camps, with a special focus on girls and women. Here we focus on hemoglobin testing and provision of iron increasing medicine. We inform about immunization and care during pregnancy, about the health of the new born baby, the right diet during pregnancy and about ante natal care. Dental check-up camps focus on demonstration of how to brush teeth and on the importance of dental hygiene. Health camps in schools focus on ENT (Ear Nose Throat) related diseases and disability. Blood donation camp, HIV/AIDS screening camp and eye-screening camp for Cataract identification and operation at AIIMS was equally organized.

Capacity Building Workshops

Trainings and workshops for rural health service providers are destined to equip local staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide basic health services and counselling to the community. We explain their role and importance within the community and how they can provide their services to the community. Especially trainings of ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activist), ANMs (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife) and MPWs (Multipurpose Worker) allow our interventions to reach out into the rural areas and especially improve the condition of women.

Creating Awareness

Awareness is the first step to improvement. Observation of World Health Day, of World AIDS Day, World T.B. Day, speeches, street plays and talks on Polio Immunization, HIV/AIDS and STI all contribute to raising awareness on health related issues and thus constitute a first step towards change. Especially for children, early education on basic hygiene can prevent diseases and help them to form small habits in their daily life. Hand-Washing days in schools not only demonstrate how to wash hands properly, but also involve children immediately in the activity.

Special Focus on Eye-Screening

In recent years we put a special focus on eye-screening activities in rural and urban India. In rural areas we conducted eye-screening camps with an emphasis on Cataract operation and in Delhi we implemented capacity building for teachers to detect eye problems of their students. With the help of All Indian Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) we could provide cost-free eye check-ups for government school students and we provided them with free-of-cost glasses.

HIV/AIDS Mainstreaming Project in Uttar Pradesh

HIV mainstreaming is a process of reshaping and redesigning the core sectors of a programme to reduce vulnerabilities of people towards HIV, as well as helping people living with HIV (PLWHIV) to cope better.

In the light of India ranking third in terms of absolute number of people living with HIV/AIDS, SARD as an implementing partner of Oxfam India took part in the mainstreaming project of UNDP in Uttar Pradesh from October 2008 until March 2009.

Illiteracy, poverty, migration and sexual taboos contribute to the spread of HIV and its stigmatization and discrimination hinders the prevention efforts as well as the care and support to PLHIV (People living with HIV). HIV not only impacts the labour productivity of those living with it but also their livelihoods and those of their dependents, i.e. family and the community. Consequently HIV has an impact on the economic and social fabric of India.

The main objectives of the mainstreaming project involved the enhancement of capacities of partners and state level functionaries to manage and co-ordinate multi-sector HIV/AIDS activities and in the long-term reduce the rate of transmission amongst the most vulnerable members of the community. UNDP implemented the mainstreaming project in six states of India with the aim to support the ambition of complementing the Millennium Development Goal to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. Oxfam's role in UP consisted in providing regular, sustained and high quality technical support in the five districts of UP. SARD as an implementing partner was responsible for deploying personnel and realizing the envisaged work-plan on the ground.

One of the main activities within the project constituted the sensitization workshops for different stakeholders. The pedagogy was a mix of classroom sessions, group work, movies and open house discussions. The workshops focused on empowering the respective stakeholders in their role of providing services and raising awareness on HIV/AIDS. A special focus was laid on the sensitization of around 1000 village Pradhans who would function as message carriers in their villages. This would ensure the spread of the information into the rural areas of the districts. ASHA and AWW workers

were equally sensitized with the goal to reach especially women who had no access to information about HIV related issues. Sensitization of paralegal workers about the fundamental rights of PLHIV was conducted with the goal to ensure their living quality and prevent discrimination. Uttar Pradesh, and especially the Moradabad district, has a lot of industries, therefore sensitization of industrial representatives had an important impact on the spread of the information about HIV/AIDS amongst industrial workers. Civil society organizations and district/block level officials took equally part in sensitization workshops.

Other activities within the project included a candle light march on World AIDS Day, blood donation camps, the setting up of Migration Information Centres in four of the five districts, the establishment of District Information Profiles with the relevant information on stakeholders and networks and of Core Committees consisting of district level service providers.

The mainstreaming intervention could achieve its goal of disseminating HIV related information to rural areas and sensitize different stakeholders in their role and responsibilities. There was a positive response of the participants to the activities and they showed motivation to carry on and integrate the activities of the project.

Polio Immunization Campaign:

Since 2007 SARD in cooperation with Project Concern International (PCI) is implementing the Core Group Polio Project in the district of Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. Thanks to the constant effort in polio immunization, India has made tremendous progress in the polio eradication and was declared a polio free country in January 2014. Most polio cases were reported from the Northern states of UP and Bihar. Being the largest state in India, raising awareness on the issue and implementing immunization campaigns in UP will have a great impact on the eradication efforts.

SARD's role in this campaign included capacity building, project planning and implementation, interface with government officials, NGOs, stakeholders and funding agencies, as well as the establishment of the MIS.

Activities within the project included:

- **Door to Door Survey:** Identification of eligible children for immunization, the status of their immunization, reasons for no immunization, resistant families and their conviction to let their children immunize.
- **Mothers Meeting:** Conduct of regular discussions on polio, child health and hygiene.
- **Healthy Baby Show:** Evaluation and appraisal of the status of immunization of babies.

- **Health Checkup Camps:** Conduct of routine immunization sessions, increase of community participation, involvement and motivation of local community members in the immunization process.
- **Rallies** to enhance community participation.
- Increased involvement of **religious institutions**.
- **Interface/influencer meeting:** Engagement of local influencer and religious heads to reduce resistance within the community.

These diverse activities ensured that as many children as possible were reached during the immunization interventions and led to the drastic reduction of the reported polio cases in the area of intervention.

Livelihood

SARD's activities in the livelihood sector focus on enhancing the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable members of the community by providing them with skill training and the necessary infrastructure and support for access to the market. This gives them the possibility to improve their living-conditions and the living conditions of their families. Within the community, we have a special focus on women and youth as they are the most vulnerable sections of the society.

Our strategy involves facilitating the change in the community by building the capacities of diverse stakeholders and providing the ideas and the infrastructure for their becoming self-reliant. This ensures the sustainability of our intervention and allows the community itself to become the agent of their change. SARD equally focuses on building networks and creating forums where different stakeholders can find local solutions for local problems of the community.

Our experience has shown that only a culturally sensitive, holistic and integrated approach to community development has a successful outcome. Each intervention has to take the specificities of the target group into account and has to embrace multiple aspects. Therefore we work in close cooperation with local stakeholders and conduct research and surveys before designing our projects. The result is a community specific approach – we adapt our innovative concepts to the culture and customs of the community of intervention.

In the livelihood sector we focus in particular on two strategies: the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and the conduct of vocational trainings for deprived youth and women in particular. Both strategies allow market access to socio-economically disadvantaged sections of the society.

SELF HELP GROUP

Self Help Group, generally referred as SHG is formed to facilitate economic self-reliance, social development and political participation of marginalized sections of the society with a special focus on the empowerment of women. The concept of SHG strongly believes that the smallest of the small has the capacity and potential to impact one's own development and also to participate in and contribute to the development of others. An essential condition for this concept is awareness about this potential and the organization into a group. The group combines the multiple strengths and limited resources of its members and their utilization for the individual and collective benefit of the members.

This innovative concept provides banking access to the rural poor, who only had the possibility to get loans with very high interest rates from money lenders before. Once the group of around 20 members is formed it can proceed to mobilizing savings on a weekly or monthly basis. This fund is used for financing among the group members and they decide on the operation of the fund. Credit worthiness, need and requirement of the exact amount, the possibility of income generation and repayment, etc... are discussed within the group. Decisions are taken based on practical and human considerations and the SHG members are aware of each other's problems, needs and capabilities. Thus, the group is functioning on a democratic basis.

In the initial phase of existence of the SHG, the savings are used for consumption purposes, like food, health and social functions. Thereafter, a shift to production needs like crop loans, purchase of cattle, of good carrier vehicles and to paying back other loans with higher interest rates could be observed. Gradually, more and more women could be motivated to participate in SHGs and involve them in entrepreneurial activities.

SARD in cooperation with its partners enables and assists the formation of SHGs in the rural areas of its intervention and provides them with the necessary infrastructure and trainings to ensure the sustainability of their existence and functioning. In this context, trainings on the functioning of the group, on book keeping, record keeping of the savings, on credit distribution and the importance of written documentation were conducted.

Workshops on diverse activities which can lead to entrepreneurial involvement of SHG members are constantly held, with a focus on the area-specific needs and resources and the focus on women-related trainings.

Trainings for SHG members on:

Vermi-compost preparation	Paper plate making
Candle making	Mushroom cultivation
Spice packaging and marketing	Kitchen gardening
Nursery raising training	Agro processing
Stitching and embroidery	Jute bag making
Soap making	Dress designing
Pickle making and food preservation	

In the year 2008 SARD within its SAMPARK project in Yamuna Nagar could mobilize Bank of Punjab National Bank of Yamuna Nagar for the provision of a loan for the SHGs in the region. This constituted a huge opportunity to link the SHGs with a nationalized bank for credit mobilization. The cooperation with Bank of Punjab was continued in the subsequent years and Vijaya Bank joined in 2009 to disburse a loan to our SHGs.

Vocational Trainings form an equally important component of SARD's efforts to empower women and youth of rural areas. Semi- or unqualified members of the community get the opportunity to participate in trainings and acquire vocational skills, which will allow them to get involved in entrepreneurial activities. We conducted trainings on automobile and mobile repairing, computer literacy and on dress designing, stitching and sewing.

EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING PROGRAMME

SARD in cooperation with its partners is conducting employability trainings for unqualified/semi-qualified youth and women with the objective to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge for market entry. This allows our participants to gain economic self-reliance by improving their earning capacities. The initiative started in 2007 with the pilot project "Ek Mouka" in cooperation with the CAP Foundation. Thereafter SARD replicated this model within diverse projects and with different partners.

We provide trainings based on the employment need of the market and thus can achieve effective job placements of our participants. Apart from market-entry level competencies and job readiness, we equally focus on enhancement of life skills, personality development, First Aid trainings and HIV/AIDS workshops. Moreover, we organize interface meetings with leading corporates and exposure visits to gain first-hand experience. The overall goal of this intervention is the training of disadvantaged youth and women to equip them with the required capacities and skills to obtain a long-term placement on the job market.

Ek Mouka – Employability Training Programme

SARD in cooperation with CAP Foundation conducted an employability training programme in 2007.

The objective of this intervention was the empowerment of unemployed and unskilled youth from deprived and marginalized background through skill enhancement. This should ultimately lead to their economic self-reliance by improving their earning capacities. We conducted vocational skill trainings based on the employment need of the market. Our target groups were young adults of the age group 18-30 from slum and resettlement colonies.

Courses were offered in housekeeping, hospitality, ITE services and customer relations and sales. We developed a curriculum which provided the participants with market entry-level competencies and workplace readiness. Life skill training, personality development , First Aid training and HIV/AIDS workshops were equally part of the training as well as the interface with leading corporates for job placement and exposure visits to gain first-hand experience on working conditions (cafe coffee day, telemarketing offices, ...).

The trainings were conducted in Kakrola Training Centre in West Delhi and in Harkesh Nagar, Okhla in South Delhi. In total 120 men and women could benefit from this vocational training initiative. They gained eligibility to get different jobs in the market, confidence to attend interviews and the necessary skills for a long-term employment.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR is the commitment of each company not only to focus on its own profit and to care about its direct stakeholders, but to be equally accountable to the environment and to the society on which they ultimately depend. Social responsibility of corporates should have a long-term and sustainable perspective. The health, environmental and education sector as well as community development are the main areas of intervention of CSR activities.

CSR is the response to a change in the perception of corporates and of the role they play within the society. Customers are increasingly empowered and well-informed and are concerned about the ethics of their service providers and of the producers of their products. Media and interest groups put equally pressure on corporates and governments are pressurized to enforce regulations for corporate activities and their responsibilities. Apart from that, social responsible behaviour has a positive impact on the image of a company and employees will be more inclined to work for a company they can be proud of. Ultimately CSR leads to an improvement of the relationship to all stakeholders of the company's environment – to the customers, employees, community, investors and the government.

In SARD's view CSR is a contribution to decrease the negative influences of the corporate sector on the society and the environment and the stimulation of the corporate sector to have a positive influence on the process of empowering the deprived sections of the society. Corporates on their hands have the resources to support the community in its development, but lack the specific knowledge to do so. SARD provides this specific knowledge and supports the companies in their CSR activities.

SARD in cooperation with its corporate partners focuses on building Community Based Organizations (CBOs) like SHGs and Youth Groups, capacity building of divers stakeholders, building strong networks of stakeholders, networking with other NGOs and the government, as well as the empowerment of employees through their active participation in CSR activities. We could especially mobilize corporates to get involved in the education and the livelihood sector. They support our QECs and participate in community development projects.