

SEWA INTERNATIONAL'S TOILET AND HYGIENE PROJECT FOR A GIRL CHILD – JANUARY NEWSLETTER

2017

I. January 2017 Highlights

- Jan 4th – Gaatakatha Web Launch (our new community development project)
- Jan 6th – Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) workshop by Arun Kankani, EVP, Sewa International, Houston, TX.
- Jan 7th- 9th – Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Global Indian Diaspora) conference and Exhibition, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.
- Jan 11th – Kanchipuram weaver community visit.
- Jan 16th – Project visit tour, Mrs. Padmini Bhat from Austin, TX, USA, and, Mr. Prakash and Madhavi Saunshi from Chicago, IL, USA.
- Jan 16th- 18th – Rural and Tribal Vijayapura (formerly Bijapur) visit, Karnataka
- Jan 21st – Gaatakatha Exhibition @ Indian institute of science, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India
- Jan 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th – Second exploratory visit to Ughapur, UP (near Allahabad, UP) and Delhi, India visit.

II. 2017 Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conference & Exhibition

Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas is a bi-annual gathering of overseas Indians held in Bengaluru from January 7th-9th, 2017. Sewa International had a corner booth at the large exhibition hall at the Bengaluru International Exposition Center, where the event was held. Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a key note speech at the event. President Pranab Mukherjee closed the event with an award distribution ceremony. It was a great opportunity to be part of this international event!

1. It was a significant networking platform. We met business typhoons to politicians, social activists to government representatives, other NGOs working towards similar or other causes – we received great appreciation for the work we have done so far, **Minister for Higher education and tourism Government of Karnataka, R V DESHAPANDE spent a fair amount of time with us. He praised our Toilet and Hygiene Project for a Girl Child and requested us to keep up the good work.**

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@Pravasi divas

2. We had displayed our handloom products from various parts of India under GAATAKATHA project. We sold Rs 1,23,000 (1806 \$) worth products from our weavers. We received a great response to our initiative to elevate and empower handloom weavers across India.
3. It was a festive occasion, for our Bangalore team, and we got to meet Sewa members from different parts of USA, lot of information exchange, lot of inputs and suggestions, lot of discussions; we thank each and every one of them for their guidance.

III. Visit to Rural areas – Bidar and Vijayapura (North Karnataka), and, Ughapur, UP

We visited Ughapur on request of Gowri Sorenson, a potential benefactor of Sewa from USA. This was our second trip to Ughapur and there is possibility of building 30 toilets. A proposal has been generated.

1. We visited few villages in and around Ughapur, selected a community of Backward Class to start with for our Toilet project.



@ Ughapur, Uttar Pradesh

2. In Phase I, we will build toilets, in Phase II we will focus on education and healthcare and in Phase III we will start other community development activities.

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We visited Vijayapura on request from Madhavi Saunshi from Chicago chapter. We conducted a 'general survey' of the village and the local school, met the local team leaders and have initiated the ground work required to start our Toilet project.



At Bijapur

GAATAKATHA

We are excited and proud to announce that we have started a new project to connect handloom weavers across India.

Why we started this?

The journey of GaataKatha started in the month of April, 2016 after Mr and Mrs Ramanan visited rural Varanasi and saw the distressed environment in the weaver communities there. Our attention was captured and we wanted to serve similar deprived communities in other states.

Our team travelled extensively to various Indian states to understand the plight of the underserved handloom weaver population of this vast developing country. We travelled Kashi to Kanyakumari to meet weavers, to hear their stories and to understand their needs.

Our research and travel led us to learn about the poverty levels of our weaving communities, how the middle men loot them by purchasing their products at rock bottom prices while selling the same at different metro cities with 100 - 1000% profit margin under different brand names. Cheap imports from China and cheap imitation of their products introduced in the market, bring the weavers production down by half forcing them to quit the profession and seek job elsewhere.



We took this project to educate the weavers, support the existing art and revive the fading art, to create a customer base for them, market their products and to set an example for the next generation of weavers that “What their parents are doing is a prestigious art form of India, they should be proud of it” and we hope they follow their parents steps and stay back to support them instead of migrating to other cities to seek jobs. For more info: www.gaatakatha.com

IV. Project visits – Mrs. Padmini Bhat from Austin, TX, and, Prakash and Madhavi Saunshi from Chicago, IL

We sincerely thank Padmini ji and Prakash ji for spending two days with us in visiting our projects, spending time with our team, taking part in our activities and sharing their experience and inputs with us.



Padmini ji and Prakash ji @ Jaibheemanagar slum - interacting with children of slum dwellers and also visited Toilet projects in Bengaluru.