



Sewa International's Toilet and Hygiene For the Girl Child Project July - 2016



Highlights:

It's our immense pleasure to announce that SEWA INTERNATIONAL has opened a new office in Bangalore. Since last few months we have been seeing an exponential growth in our activities. We are receiving request letters for our services from various states in India, our team of 2 has grown into a team of 5 with hundreds of volunteers and several local leaders participating in our activities. We are very glad that our work is being recognized and articles are getting published in local media!

Sewa International Portland Chapter and JAZBA , an Indo-American rock fusion music group raised funds for Building Sanitation Infrastructure for Girls Schools in India on July 23 2016. The team collected \$5209 and promises to double that amount next year! Our heartfelt thanks to Aniket Pingley ji and the Portland team!.

At the behest of our Sewa Los Angeles Chapter coordinator Avan Gangapuram, our team visited the weaver and farmer communities in Telengana State.

The team has come up with an action plan to work in parallel with the government to address the plights of the impoverished weavers and farmers.

Sewa International appeals to those who have a special interest in helping these communities to donate generously for Toilet building , Sanitation, Education and Health needs!

TELANGANA WEAVER COMMUNITY VISIT

The Sewa International team (Jayanthi Ramanan, Shruthi Shivanand and Jayanth Bhatt) undertook projects with both weaver and farmer communities as they are extremely under-served and also don't come under any government subsidies due to caste restrictions.

The team traveled to Telengana at the request of one of our karyakarthis from Los Angeles, Mr. Avan Gangapuram. The communities we visited were: Gadwal, Narayanpet, kotakonda, just to name a few.

The living conditions were horrendous in these villages.

GADWAL

Gadwal is a weaving town, about 300 years old, the oldest in South India. Queen of Gadwal dynasty sent the weavers to Varanasi to learn about weaving in general. Gadwal is the only industry that has mastered the art of interlock system of seamless connection between cotton body and silk border and pallu. It is similar to temple architecture.

Cheap import of silks predominantly from China and rise of power looms in Karnataka (Rabkavi and Banhatti), have led to closures of 10,000 or more hand-loom leaving weavers in utter poverty.



The grievances are:

- No subsidized electricity, raw materials or basic health cards.
- The 'master weavers' have taken over the designs, supply of raw materials and production control. They have become the 'middlemen', taking away the creativity and income from the weavers.
- The salary provided for the weavers at present ranges from Rs.1200 - 11,000 according to the intricacies of the design. Average income is about Rs. 6000/month.
- The Master weavers buy the saris from the weavers at rock bottom price and sell it at 600-1000% profit to the retailers, who jack their prices on top of it, leaving the weavers poor, curbing their future economic growth.
- The weavers need air compressors to relieve the knee and joint pains as they have to press anywhere from 35 - 40kgs with each thread.
- Inadequate lighting leaves them blind by the age of 40.
- Frame looms let them at least stretch their legs every now and then. At present they are using pit looms that were used by their ancestors. There is no back support, and with new designs 'Jaquard' materials have to be loomed with heavier weights.
- Poor health care and malnutrition.
- No educational scholarships or support available from public or private.
- The master weavers also loan them money for their immediate needs, but deducts the amount with interest each month from their salaries, leaving them utterly poor.
- High illiteracy among the entire community.



- Poor sanitation and hygiene.
- Poor oral and dental hygiene.

Plan of Action: work in parallel with government to address their situations, enable them to market their products online, and reap the profits directly from customers.

NARAYANPET

4000 hand-loom were closed down in Narayanpet town due to lack of funds. Many of them have switched to power looms to increase production.

Narayanpet saris were very popular with aristocrats. Their art of weaving has been in existence since 15th century.

Today it is almost extinct, with the next generation leaving the art and finding day labor in neighboring urban areas.

About 400 looms are currently operating in 15-20 villages, with an average of 20-30 looms per village.



Kotakonda:

There are 300 weaver families in this small village, specially weaving 'kuttu' saris, which takes 10 days per sari and paithani (Folk art of Maharashtra) which takes about 15-20 days per sari. They are sold to retailers who make 20% profit on raw materials and 500% profit on the finished goods. The poor weaver stays poor only.

With the lack of family support, and the next generation leaving the village, the beggars' community at Kotakonda is being trained as weavers. The entire beggar community has moved into the village.

One school, Shri Saraswathy Vidya Mandir, under the able guidance of Mr. Krishna Rao, a selfless teacher, mentor and an educator, runs the school for 425 children from this community.

Current status of the school is:

1. No compound wall; the animals are constant threat to the kids.
2. No bathrooms or clean drinking water.

3. No lighting
4. Ceiling falling off, and certain class rooms are with no roof, leaving the children wet during rainy season.



Plan of Action:

1. To adopt this school
2. To renovate and restore the school so the kids can continue their education; 50-60% of the students are girls.
3. To create menstrual awareness
4. Provide solar lighting for the class rooms.
5. Build compound walls for their safety and provide area for extra curricular activities
6. Repair the existing toilets, give water connection.
7. Implement rain water harvest and a bore-well.

HALLIKHED.B – Rural slum in Bidar district



Surrounding this defecating area, there is a Primary, Middle and High school and a hostel; Everyday hundreds of children pass through this area which affects the children's health – lot of communicable diseases can spread through easily.

Plan of action: build 200 community toilets with help of Zilla panchayat

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MEDICAL CAMP DODDAKANNENAHALLI

As part of our monthly health camps, This JULY we provided free health check up for more than 300+ people in Doddakannenhalli, sarjapura road, Bangalore.



This time several children were part of the event as volunteers, we are grateful to their assistance and their parents' support.

Medical equipment's were provided by Apollo pharmacy, Gandhibazar – Basavangudi. With the help of team of doctors from Oxford Hospital, Attibele, the camp was a huge success.



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Our mailing address is:

Seva Kirana

#231, First floor, 24th cross, 15th main,
Banashankari 2nd stage, Bangalore - 560070,
Karnataka, India.

Phone: +91 90084 15522 / +91 90084 14422

E-mail: sevakirana@gmail.com

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