

# NEED OF FAMILY FARMING @ SEWA :



# SEWA

- Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a member-based organization of poor self-employed women workers. It has a membership of 17,32,728 women workers in 14 states of India. Founded from Ahmadabad, Gujarat, the maximum membership (9,19,712) is from this State only. **Nearly 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of SEWA members are from the rural areas and of these, 50% (2,54,000) are from agriculture.**

# WHY CAMPAIGN ?

Having realized the issues and constraints of farmers and identified their needs, SEWA's members launched "Sustainable Agriculture campaign" in 1995. The main objective of this campaign is "Why does the farmer remain hungry?"

# **SEWA's CAMPAIGN APPROACH**

SEWA believes that there is a need to improve the collective strength and bargaining power of the farmers. This can be done through an integrated approach. SEWA's agriculture campaign is a holistic approach to agriculture development,

- **Comprising of technical trainings,**
- **Introduction of appropriate tools, technology and natural resource development**
- **Own local organizations**
- **Form of cooperatives federated in a regional federation**
- **Providing them access to financial and marketing services**

# WHY SEWA PROMOTES FAMILY FARMING

A large number of SEWA members are into agriculture and agriculture labour. The two major reasons why SEWA promotes family farming are-

- To ensure Food Security
- To strengthen the local economy

*SEWA's approach has been to treat agriculture also as an "Industry" so that agriculture moves from subsistence to becoming viable and profitable.*

# IMPACT OF SEWA'S AGRICULTURE CAMPAIGN

- SEWA's agriculture campaign tried to develop agriculture as an industry. A total Turnover of Rs. 38,17,89,016 was achieved by farmers till Now.
- To decentralize the overall system and to reach out the unreachable farmers we have trained 65 Master Trainer's who further give training not only to the farmers from Gujarat but also in other six states of India and three South Asian Countries under our Farmer's Field school initiative.
- This innovative approach Rs. 23,44,41,344 turnover of marketing has been achieved since last 5 years. This has proven that agriculture can be viewed as an industry. Total agriculture turnover of Rs. 38,17,89,016 have been achieved to showcase the success model to the world "How agriculture can develop as an industry" also.

# CHALLENGES FACED BY SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS

- How we are motivating the second generation of the farmers so that they can take up Agriculture as a sustainable livelihood. This can be done by combining agriculture with 1) Information Technology 2) Agro processing 3) Food processing.
- The terms and conditions of collective farming and contract farming need to be framed in a way that the farmers who put in all their efforts get their fair share. The farmer should not remain only a laborer but should move towards productive farming.
- Need to establish a strong supply chain which would ensure local procurement and distribution. That is why has initiated RUDI which works in this direction. There is a need to upscale this to the National level.
- Since last 5 year India as country face two major crisis is climate crisis and financial crisis and now Government gave permission for FDI in retail so the concern is how small farmers will stand in global market and for that Awareness campaign and information and knowledge management is required

Thank you



## NEED OF FAMILY FARMING @ SEWA :



Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a member-based organization of poor self-employed women workers. It has a membership of 13,47,305 women workers in 11 states of India. Founded from Ahmadabad, Gujarat, the maximum membership (8,23,883) is from this State only. Nearly 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of SEWA members are from the rural areas and of these, 50% (2,54,000) are from agriculture.

These members work predominantly in the north and northwest regions of Gujarat and Rajasthan, which have a harsh climate, saline land and groundwater with frequent droughts. As the majority of agriculture there is rain fed, yields are unpredictable. Following the Green Revolution, India has witnessed a vital boost in agricultural productivity. However, by and large, the main beneficiaries have been for large farmers family who, with larger land holdings and irrigation facilities, are better positioned to take advantage of economies of scale, new technologies, and multiple cultivation seasons.

Small and marginal farmers and landless agricultural laborers family have been left out. They have little or no land, less knowledge and access to innovations and technology, minimal capital or access to credit, and no bargaining power. With few links to the markets in which their products are sold (or in the case of landless laborers, to alternative or self-employment), they are forced to rely on large farmers and middlemen.

Having realized the issues and constraints of farmers and identified their needs, SEWA's member Launch "Sustainable Agriculture campaign" in 1995. The main objective of this campaign is "**Why does the farmer remain hungry?**" SEWA believes that there is a need to improve the collective strength and bargaining power of the farmers. This can be done through an integrated approach. SEWA's agriculture campaign is a holistic approach to agriculture development, (affecting about 50,000 marginal farmer family annually) comprising of technical trainings, introduction of appropriate technology and natural resource development. Under this campaign, SEWA helps agricultural workers family to organize their own local organizations, in the form of cooperatives federated in a regional federation. These agriculture workers' organizations aim to increase productivity, yield, bargaining power, and income through improving their technical skills, providing them access to financial and marketing services.

*SEWA's approach has been to treat agriculture also as an "Industry" so that agriculture moves from subsistence to becoming viable and profitable. In order to address the issues of the agriculture workers and small and marginal farmers, SEWA's agriculture campaign proposes to provide them with technical and managerial trainings, access to agricultural inputs, making agriculture sustainable and rotating the money from the village within the village, providing market information and risk cover.*

*Initially this campaign begun from Gujarat itself but now it has transmitted in other 14 states (Gujarat, Bihar, Delhi, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Orissa and Jammu & Kashmir) by having 5,61,445 farmers at the National level. Gradually SEWA felt that there is a huge need to have a network of small and marginal farmers at the national level. But unfortunately there was unable of having any platform for the small and marginal farmers for lateral learning and knowledge sharing, hence SEWA initiated All India Women's Farmers' Association (AIFWA) , a network of women's farmers at the national level. It has also replicated in the south Asian countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh on the name of "Farmer's Forum".*

## **IMPACT OF SEWA'S AGRICULTURE CAMPAIGN**

Earlier the small and marginal farmers had no platform. Now they have a local, national and regional level platform to share their issues and best practices. This platform is set-up by small and marginal farmers from 2400 villages across Gujarat, 11 states of India and 3 countries of South Asia. The overall concern of this network is to increase their visibility, voice and representation with a focus on small and marginal women farmers & also to improve dialogue between them and the national policy making bodies.

***Received Award for the Best farmer of the Ahmedabad District, Gujarat State—ATMA (Agricultural Technology Management Agency)- year 2013***

Name: Kokilaben Amratbhai Makwana

Agriculture and nursery Master of trainer

Age: 36 years

Land-2.5 vigha

Village: Pisawada, Block: Dholka,

District: Ahmedabad

Kokilaben is a small farmer and having 2.5 vigha of land. She lives in Pisawada village with her husband and 2 daughters and 1 son. Her elder daughter study in college and the younger daughter and son are

study in School. Agriculture is a main source of income for her. Her husband sells clothes and help to Kokilaben in and agriculture.

Being a leader, She have organized almost 450 self Help Groups for “ATMA” programme of government from her village and surrounding 15-20 villages. These groups help the farmers to gain collective strength and bargaining power to develop their farming. These also help the farmers to avail government subsidies to get seeds, fertilizer and trainings and even loans. It gives platform to farmers to come together and discuss on the good practices, market information, challenges and solutions in farming. These have improved the spread of knowledge and awareness among small and marginal farmers in different villages who were previously sidelined due to inaccessibility of information.

She has formed Khedu Mandal (Farmers’ group) in her own village. She is a president of this group. Her group’s name is Pisavada Khedu Mandal. They are working for all the farmers of the village. Through this group, they do collect from collective purchase of inputs like seeds, fertilizer to availing technical trainings and post harvesting processing. In her own village 4-5 farmers have taken loan from SEWA bank and 5-6 farmers have taken loan from nationalized bank for the farming.

There are 11 members in the khedu mandal out of which 6 are women. They are also involved in spreading message of not selling farm land to outsiders and for non farm purpose.

In the year 2010 Kokilaben took the training form Anand Agriculture University as a Master trainer and now she run her own “Agriculture School” in her village. As a she trained more than 4328 member from surrounding village and give training in three main subjects are-

1 Integrated crop Management

2 Seed multiplication

3 Green house technologies

She coordinates with government offices to know about the government schemes so that she can link farmer and women with them. Many farmers are inspired by her to take part in the trainings and accordingly 500 farmers from her village and surrounding villages have undergone agriculture training. Now Gram sevak of government dept. also calls her when there is message of some scheme to be spread in villages. When the women were reluctant to start NREGA work in our village, then Sarpanch called her. She took up work first and thus women started coming and taking up NREGA work. Around 350-400 women have taken job card now.

Since last 5 year after taking all technical trainings and information she is also apply new technology in her own field. She used improved and certified Gurjari variety of Paddy and GJ496 variety in Wheat. Also apply Integrated Crop Management technique in her field so because of that since last 2 years she earn more than 80000 Rs Profit. and She got the double production and good quality

To recognize her efforts and hard work, the district level committee of “ATMA” programme have nominated her name as a “Best Farmer”. And she achieved this district level award of Best Farmer. She is the only one women farmer amongst 86 male winner farmers!

**Up till now Agriculture has never been seen as an industry. In the past five years SEWA’s agriculture campaign tried to develop agriculture as an industry. A total Turnover of Rs. *38,17,89,016* was achieved by farmers till 2012.**

**Name: Jashuben Patel**

**President of Ajitgadh Agriculture Development Group**

**District: Surendranagar**

Jashuben explained her experience that, “When SEWA members came to our village in the year 2003, the women were very impressed by the activities and 15 women became the members of SEWA. Thus, SEWA membership increased to 750 members in our village. On the basis of the demand of the communities, I organize trainings in the village. We have formed an agriculture development group of 17 members in the village.

When we organized a gramsabha in the village the members demanded literacy classes. Following that we started a Jeevanshala in the district. SEWA members agreed to it and they said that you yourself need to find out a literate woman from your village who can take the classes. Thus the members suggested my name as a teacher for the Jeevanshala. I went for 5 days training to Ahmedabad. We then started a Jeevanshala in our village with 25 women. Gradually the number of women increased to 35 in the Jeevanshala. Now these women can sign and read small books also. They also help their children in their studies.

All the members in our village are engaged in agricultural activity. In order to make the farmers self sustainable and for their overall development, we started agriculture campaign in the village. I decided that our village should be developed as a model village and all the farmers family get needed inputs. All these activities should be done by the agriculture development group. There are 92 such agriculture development groups under the agriculture campaign but our group is developed as a model. There are four crucial inputs needed by the farmers in order to undertake the activity on a sustainable basis. These inputs are trainings, seeds & fertilisers, credit and market.

Following this, in the year 2007, 9 trainings were organized at the Village resource Centre (VRC) set-up by SEWA and all the farmers participated in these trainings. Trainings on cattle rearing were also given to the members by veterinary doctor and barefoot veterinary doctors were developed in the village. Managerial trainings were also given to the farmers with the help of SEWA Manger ni School. Exposure trip was organized for the farmers with a view to introducing them to the latest tools and equipments in agriculture. In order to provide them with the good quality seeds, fertilizers and other inputs, groups of farmers had taken licenses to purchase and sell these inputs. This has helped in reducing the

dependency on traders and middlemen and it also helps them in attaining self reliance details of the work done by the farmers in the year 2007 are as follows:

Activity	No. Of Farmers	Turnover Rs. (purchase & sale of inputs)	Income – Village Farmers Group	Income – District Association
Seed Purchase and sale	433	9,58,000	42,000	50,108
Fertilizers	400	2,02,440	5,040	5,040
Cattle Feed	50	95,000	5,000	5,000
Neem based Pesticides	200	1,25,000	12,900	-
Tools and Equipments	537	-	25,200	-
Loan for Purchase of Animals	32	5,30,000	31,800	-
Marketing of cumin and castor	913	11585933	289648.3	

Thus, it can be seen that with the initiatives taken by the agriculture development group, the farmers of the entire village achieved a turnover of Rs. 77,10,440/-and thus eliminated the middlemen and the traders in the entire chain. This also helped in rotating the money from the village, within the village. This resulted in the benefit to the groups engaged in the activity, farmers who used this inputs and also the district association who earned through the service charge.”

This is a model which shows how the villagers can achieve self reliance. The agriculture campaign follows this model and the values of Mahatma Gandhi that the money from the village should remain within the villages only and this will help to attain self reliance. As of now, there are 92 agriculture development groups at the village level who are taking forward this green campaign to higher heights.

***“We women are trained to manage, develop and survive our agriculture activity and we learnt that being organized means being strong”***

**To decentralize the overall system and to reach out the unreachable farmers we have trained 65 Master Trainer's who further give training not only to the farmers from Gujarat but also in other six states of Indian and three South Asian Countries under our Farmer's Field school initiative.**

Name: Urmilaben Amratlal Parmar

Education: 10<sup>th</sup> pass

Age: 42 years

Occupation: Farmer, farm labourer, Animal Husbandry

Land holding: 2 bigha - Joint possession of Family

Village Name: Rupal

District: Gandhinagar

State: Gujarat

My name is Urmilaben Amrutbhai Parmar. I am 42 years old. My Husband, Mr Amrutlal is 45 years old. My father's name is Mr Maganlal Rathod and mother Mrs Santokben. We are 4 sisters and 2 brothers. My father used to work at Jubilee Mill in Ahmedabad. My brothers studied up to 3<sup>rd</sup> standard only. I have studied up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard. With a large family size and having only one earning member; our economic condition was not very good. After marriage of my sister we shifted to our village Dangarva. Thus my father and brothers started with farming. As we were not acquitted with the farm work, we could not continue farming. Then we started one small Galla (small shop). From that income my brothers were got married. I was 7 years old then and thus I used to stay with my sister-in-law at home. At that time, my mother was suffering from uterus cancer. In spite of medication, she didn't survive and died when I was 16 years old.

After two years of my mother's death I got married at age of 18 to Amrutlal; son of Mr Gandlal. My mother-in-law, Soniben is housewife. I have two brother- in-laws and their family. We were staying in joint family system when I got married. All members were working in farm and as farm labourer. My husband is educated up to Masters of Commerce Year-1 still he joined farming as during that time they had to give Rs. 1 -2 lack to get job of a clerk which he could not afford.

As I was helping my father and brothers at our small shop before marriage, I didn't learn other household work. Thus initially I faced difficulties in adjusting at my in-laws place. We all had to work as our economic condition was poor. My father-in-law had only 2 bigha land among a family of 8 adult members. The land was also mortgaged thus we used to do labour work.

I was managing somehow and learning simultaneously. It was very difficult for me to learn farming work as I had never done that. We used to walk one kilo meter everyday to reach farm and have to do physical work whole day in direct heat.

Other family members were very angry on me as I was not acquitted with household and farm work. My sister-in-law used to tell my husband to beat me with wood if I can't do farm work. My sister-in-laws used to sarcastically say that I am queen and thus I don't know cooking and farm work. In spite of all these problems, I could survive as I had support of my husband. He used to tell all family members that she will slowly learn there is no need to beat her.

Passing all these challenges, I became mother of a girl child after two years of my marriage. After some time, we got separation from our joint family system. We didn't have money or asset in hand when we got separated. My father and sisters helped me at the difficult time. Thus slowly we started our house and work. I became pregnant for second time and again a girl child was born. My sister-in-law used to say that what wrongs you have done that only girl children are born. Our economic condition was not good and thus I had to go to field for sowing paddy leaving my 15 days old daughter at home. We used to earn Rs. 60 per day jointly then. Once my husband met with an accident in field but I was so helpless that I didn't have money to take him to hospital. My brother helped me and I took him to hospital in camel cart.

Thus my life was going on with constant challenges and during that time I came in contact with SEWA sisters. SEWA sisters had come to my home when I returned from farm. After that they came often and taught me about SEWA through membership training. I became member of SEWA by giving fee of Rs.5 in 1986. Then I had undergone Movement training at SEWA. In the training I learnt about women's strength and ownership by women. Then on my relationship with SEWA became constant. In 2002, I had undergone Midwives training. After that I had undergone Agriculture training. I find it very interesting as by now I had learnt about farming and thus I found the training very relevant and helpful.

Slowly I also learnt about saving, credit and other awareness helpful for our development. I formed many savings and credit groups in our village. I used to save Rs. 25 per month. On that saving, I took loan of Rs. 25000 from SEWA bank to regain 2 bigha lands (which was mortgaged) for my father in law. We released our land and thus all family members (my husband all three brother in laws) started farming on that land. We also continued labour work along with farming. This helped me to gain respect in my family. I am also an executive committee member of the SEWA's executive committee and take part in decision making which affects all agriculture workers at village, state, national and international level.

I also ensured that my children get proper education. My daughter had done BRS and other daughter is studying PTC while my son Civil engineering in diploma.

### **Agriculture Extensions**

I had participated in the agriculture trainings several times with my husband. This helped me immensely in farming on our own land. Though my family is traditionally in to farming, they were not aware about

importance of soil testing, use of certified seeds, organic fertilizer, sowing and harvesting techniques, techniques of usage of inputs in farm etc. Continuous trainings helped me learn all these. I also taught my family members and thus we have started following same learning in our 2 bigha farm. Other SEWA training and meetings also increased my self confidence and thus I could also spread these message to other families in my village. SEWA made me independent and self reliant. Based on my work, strength and confidence I became spearhead team member. And then my journey of development against struggle took speed. I started visiting other villages also as a spearhead team member of SEWA. Meantime my learning was continued at SEWA by participating in different training which also includes costing and marketing. I spread messages of Agriculture and SEWA in all villages. I was elected as member of the executive committee in 2009 and now representing our agriculture labour force at every level at village level, at SEWA, nationally and even internationally through SEWA. It was prestigious not only for me but in our entire family.

I also coordinate with government offices to know about the government schemes so that I can link farmer and women with them. I have inspired farmers to take part in the trainings and accordingly 500 farmers from my village and surrounding villages have undergone agriculture training. Now Gram sevak of government dept. also calls me when there is message of some scheme to be spread in villages. When the women were reluctant to start NREGA work in our village, then Sarpanch called me. I took up work first and thus women started coming and taking up MNREGA work. Around 150-200 women have taken job card now.

I have organized almost 200 self Help Groups for “ATMA” of government. The groups are from my village and surrounding 5 villages. This helps the farmers to gain collective strength and bargaining power to develop their farming. This also helps the farmers to avail government subsidies to get seeds, fertilizer and trainings and even loans. It gives platform to farmers to come together and discuss on the good practices, market information, challenges and solutions in farming. This has improved the spread of knowledge and awareness among small and marginal farmers in different villages who were previously sidelined due to inaccessibility of information.

We have formed Khedu Mandal (Farmers’ group) in our village. I am president of this group. Our group’s name is Vardayani Khedu Mandal. We are working for all the farmers of the village through this group right from collective purchase of inputs like seeds, fertilizer to availing technical trainings and post harvesting processing. We are 11 members in our Khedu mandal of which 6 are women. We are also spreading message of not selling farm land to outsiders and for non farm purpose.

In our village 4-5 farmers have taken loan from SEWA bank and 5-6 farmers have taken loan from nationalized bank for the farming.

### Harvesting Techniques

Previously	Now
Urea was used	Cow dung Compost, Vermicompost



There was no methodic usage of Fertiliser and other inputs	Now people use it in methodic manner 1) first watering then pesticides
No Soil testing	Now we test soil and add required nutrients
No crop changing at several intervals	Crop changing
Casual labourers were not calculating the hours of work	Casual labourers are now counting the hours for payment

Now me and my husband are working in our family land in both seasons and get work as casual farm labourer for almost 4 and half months in a year.

### **Post Harvesting**

I am also a RUDIben- marketing woman for RUDI products. We are also organizing Krushi Bazaar in our area where farmers can participate and take advantage of the direct marketing to consumers. I achieve target of around Rs. 1000 to Rs, 1500 per month visiting different houses and natural market locations in village and area and even during meetings.

In last Krushi Bazaar we sold almost 150 mann (i.e 3000 kgs; 1 mann = 20 kgs) wheat. Previously farmers of our area used to sell their produce to middle men which have now changed through my organizing constant awareness programmes. Now farmers directly sell their produce to yard.

We were also not grading the crop and directly selling but now we are grading the crop and by all these efforts we are getting good rate of our harvest and even the expense on transportation is also saved. Previously we used to get Rs. 125 per mann of wheat which we are getting Rs. 150 per mann of wheat and in addition transportation cost to send it to middleman has also been saved.

I got first prize in the Krishi Bazaar organised by the government.

### **Some of the Outputs achieved as a result of Urmilaben's efforts are as given below**

1. Almost 400 bighas of land has been improved due to spread of message and farmers have undergone trainings. The farmers have witnessed improvement in production, nourished growth and quality of produce, good rates and all this has ultimately increased the income.
2. Around 100-150 farmers have taken advantage of certified seeds, soil testing etc through government schemes.
3. All these efforts have helped Urmilaben's family, farmers of her village and surrounding villages with improved agriculture and income. Previously farmers used to cultivate 25 mann wheat/25 mann cotton/25 mann castor in 2 bigha land now after all these learning and using in their farm land they are cultivating 30-35 mann for all crops which leads to their earning of Rs. 25000 per season.
4. In the village they get same wage rate for men and women.

5. Urmilaben can now prepare the business plan of the agriculture work.

Thus it can be seen that Urmilaben's efforts have not only helped her and her family but also the other communities from her village, neighboring village and the district. Her efforts in spreading awareness among the communities have been commendable. All this has ultimately helped the communities get regular sustainable employment and has led to an increase in the income of the communities. All this has in turn led to an improved lifestyle of the communities.

**Following the climate changes agriculture has become risky for the small and marginal farmers. In order to equip the small and marginal farmers against the risks, SEWA successfully piloted rainfall insurance and providing future and spot prices to 3862 farmers family. This has now been taken up as a campaign at all India level.**

***Through this innovative approach Rs. 23,44,41,344 turnover of marketing has been achieved since last 5 years. This has proven that agriculture can be viewed as an industry. Total agriculture turnover of Rs. 38,17,89,016 have been achieved to showcase the success model to the world "How agriculture can develop as an industry" also.***

## **CHALLENGES FACED BY SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS**

The small and marginal farmers and agriculture workers face several challenges, which are as follows:

- Since last 8 months SEWA has done a series of focus group discussions with the younger generation of SEWA and we found that because of more laborer work, less income and lack of sustainability this young generation does not like to continue to work on their own trade and that is why we are motivating the second generation of the farmers so that they can take up Agriculture as a sustainable livelihood.

This can be done by combining agriculture with 1) Information Technology 2) Agro processing 3) Food processing.

- A large number of farmers these days are moving towards collective and contract farming. SEWA feels that the terms and conditions of collective farming and contract farming need to be framed in a way that the farmers who put in all their efforts get their fair share. The farmer should not remain only a laborer but should move towards productive farming.
- Lack of supply chain mechanism. SEWA felt that there is huge need to establish a strong supply chain which would ensure local procurement and distribution. That is

why has initiated RUDI which works in this direction. There is a need to upscale this to the National level.

- Since last 5 year India as country face two major crisis is climate crisis and financial crisis and now Government gave permission for FDI in retail so concern is how small farm hold will well to stand in global market and for that Awareness campaign and information and knowledge management is required .