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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

SUGRAMA — Grama Panchayat Chunayitha Mahila Prathinidhigala Sangha, Karnataka (SUGRAMA) is a state federation representing the interest and rights of Grama Panchayat elected women representatives (EWRs) in Karnataka. It was formed with the technical and financial support of The Hunger Project India and other donors. SUGRAMA was registered under the Societies Registration Act of Karnataka 1960 in March 2010 and has been funded by The Hunger Project India since then.

A membership based organization, all incumbent and one term previous EWRs can be members of SUGRAMA. At present reaches out to 17 (out of 30) Districts¹, has a 2 tier structure – taluk federations and state federation, is supported by 50 Taluk federations in these 17 Districts and enjoys a membership base of more than 2500 elected women representatives.

SUGRAMA is a platform where members come together in solidarity and support each other to promote good governance, deepen democracy and move beyond representation to participate as effective leaders. This platform has created oneness amongst the Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) irrespective of the taluk, district, caste, creed and class and has provided impetus to these women to advocate for their interests in a collective manner. This sense of oneness has enabled SUGRAMA members to address issues of gender and social justice, accessing development for their panchayats and advocating for their rights as elected women representatives.

The reporting period 2011 – 12 has brought in justice to the three main components – governance, social justice, economic development and gender formalized at the Samavesha of SUGRAMA held on September 2010. These components were the three main priorities for formulating action plans to look at advocacy both at the state level as well as at the taluk level.

The main activities undertaken during this period were:

State	Taluk Level		
Conducting of a workshop on 'Property Rights	Conducting taluk level meetings of the taluk		
and Development' at Bangalore	federations		
Conducting Steering Committee Meetings at	Members advocating for their rights and		
regular intervals and strategizing the activities	privileges through signature campaigns,		
of the federation	dharnas, etc.		
Conducting a press meet	Conducting press meets thereby increasing		
	visibility of a common platform for members		
Networking with likeminded organizations and	Enhancing their capabilities by attending the		

¹ Karnataka state is divided into District or Zilla Panchayats, Taluk or Block Panchayats and Gram Panchayats

individuals	training programmes and other programmes of The Hunger Project, Partner Organizations and other CSOs			
Attending meetings of likeminded institutions	SUGRAMA members acquiring posts at other			
and civil society organizations – national and	networks and groups/committees			
state level				
Members joining other networks protesting	SUGRAMA members conducting Samaveshas			
on good governance and democracy at the	at the taluk level			
local self government.				
Auditing of Accounts and Filing of Returns	Raising revenues through renewal of			
	membership and inducting new members			

Outcomes:

During this year, SUGRAMA members were seen more articulate and voicing their concerns not only on development and governance, but also raising their voices on issues affecting women and have been looking at addressing issues of violence, harassment, etc.

The training programmes of The Hunger Project, ANSSIRD and other civil society organizations have enabled in enhancing their capabilities. Women members who were found less assertive and having no knowledge about the government earlier have now seen articulating for their rights and interacting with the government officials. This can be termed as **success – an** 'effervescent radiance' considering the magnitude of their performance both at their Grama Panchayats and also at the SUGRAMA meetings. They have broken all the myths associated with the women – historical subjugation as well as fears of 'being proxies' – dominated by their men and caste.

Their concern - rich or poor - is for an environment of security free of criminals, free of violence - for raising families; their domestic responsibility generate priority concerns for access to water, to health care, for schools for children - and in the case of the masses for income and assets, for shelter and cooking energy. These would give a direction to the development agenda, drawing attention to basic amenities.

SUGRAMA – GRAMA PANCHAYAT CHUNAYITHA MAHILA

PRATHINIDHIGALA SANGHA – KARNATAKA

Yearly Report - 2011 - 12

Introduction

The year 2011 - 12 has been both progressive and regressive for SUGRAMA. The main aim for SUGRAMA in the year 2011 - 12 has been to function as an independent organization by undertaking advocacy efforts on behalf of its members, increasing its membership base and raising its organizational profile.

The objectives were as follows:

- To sustain its operational platform
- Increase its financial capability by inducting new members to SUGRAMA and initiate the process of renewal of old membership
- To function as an independent body and conduct its own activities

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES:

STATE LEVEL PROGRAMMES:

Press Meet at Bangalore:

SUGRAMA members during this period undertook a press meet primarily to congratulate the government's effort to introduce direct elections for Grama Panchayat President and fixing their tenure for five years. With this amendment, women Presidents will be able to nurture their constituencies better and further the development agenda that they set out to achieve for their respective Panchayats. Presently Section 46 of the Karnataka PRI Act provides reservation for only 30 months in the President's post.

SUGRAMA President, Ms. Renuka along with members – Jayanthi R.V., Nagarathnamma, Lalitha, Bhulakshmi besides the Director – Ms. Padmini Ananth were part of the Press Meet.

Workshop on 'Property Rights and Development':

SUGRAMA in collaboration with ASEDA, Chickaballapur and with the support of Liberty Institute, New Delhi conducted a workshop on 'Property Rights and Development' at Bangalore on November 16, 2011. The workshop highlighted issues of land acquisition, mining, forestry and women's rights on land related issues.

The workshop was inaugurated by Ms. Manjula C., Chairperson, Karnataka State Commission for Women. Ms. Manjula said that Gram Panchayat should be the policy making unit with regard to issues

related to land and added that state and central governments should not be allowed to have monopoly with regard to legislations related to land.

Liberty Institute Director Barun Mitra said that there is strong relationship to the quality of property rights and economic development. Barun Mitra suggested that Panchayats should fight seeking ownership over the land holdings by bringing out a constitutional amendment providing scope for fourth lists of powers, barring from state, center and concurrent lists.

Prof K Uma Devi from Christ University, presiding over the inaugural session said that property right is having greater significance in empowering women. The workshop also saw presentations and discussions on the need for property rights with special reference to women, forest rights and Land Acquisition dealt by Ms. Vedamani from Samarasa, Bidar; Dr Siddappa Shetty from ATREE and Bhargavi S. Rao from Environment Support Group respectively.

Formation of Advisory Committee and Advisory Panel:

The members of the Steering Committee have often felt the need for the support and advice of the past Steering Committee members who were a part of the formation of the federation. They felt that their advice and support could enable the present members to sustain SUGRAMA and look at new membership and strengthen the base of SUGRAMA. It was also felt that their presence would have a positive effect on the members of the Grama Panchayats and the ex. Members who were a part of the GP earlier could easily be romped into SUGRAMA. Further, their strong presence, assertiveness and confidence would help the members to take the advocacy issues forward and look at streamlining the activities of the federation and look at sustaining its activities through its financial resources with less partnership of the partners. This was found vital as SUGRAMA could not only look at strengthening its base at the taluk level but also look at working independently thereby giving a major impetus to the confidence levels of the members. Hence, it was felt that this could be done through the effective participation and support of the former Steering Committee members. Accordingly, an Advisory Committee with 6 former Steering Committee members was decided and discussed upon by the members. A resolution to this effect was also passed with the specifications of their roles and responsibilities. The terms of reference was also chalked out and are attached herewith.

In addition to the Advisory Committee, SUGRAMA has been aspiring for the suggestions and ideas of external experts such as The Hunger Project, academicians and social scientists to give them an idea about the strategies for sustaining SUGRAMA. Further, the members could directly put in their thoughts and share it with the Director which would enable her with her activities. EWRs could give in their thoughts with their expertise at the taluk level while there was a vacuum in the state level. It was felt that this could be filled up through the formulation of an Advisory Panel. Accordingly, the terms of reference for the Advisory Panel was chalked out and the names of the Advisory Panel were discussed and decided upon. The terms of reference of the Advisory Panel is also attached.

Members of the Advisory Committee and Advisory Panel:

Advisory Committee (comprising Ex. EWRs)	Advisory Panel
1. Ms. Sujatha, Kodagu	Dr. T.R. Raghunandan, Former IAS, Former Joint
	Secretary, Min. of Panchayat Raj, Government of India
2. Ms. Shilpa, Kolar	Ms. Sriparna G. Chaudhuri, The Hunger Project, New Delhi
3. Ms. Kenchamma, Chickmagalur	Ms. Suman S. Kolhar, Former Vice President, Zilla Parishat, Bijapur
4.Ms. Sharanamma, Bellary	Ms. Reshma, Programme Officer, Action Aid
5.Ms. Nagarathna S., Mysore	One media personnel – Ms. Poornima, Udayavani, Bangalore
6. Ms. Ambika Mallesh, Chitradurga	

Working Group meeting with Partners, The Hunger Project and SUGRAMA:

The year also saw the first interaction of SUGRAMA Steering Committee members with the partner organizations and The Hunger Project at a meeting on December 21-22, 2011 at Bangalore. The basic premise of the meeting was to enable sharing of SUGRAMA activities between The Hunger Project (THP) and partner organizations. This was found crucial as partner organizations and THP have been supporting SUGRAMA and its activities and there was a need for appraising the activities and collectively look at supporting SUGRAMA in its endeavors with suggestions, guidance, and comments etc. so as to enable SUGRAMA to continue its activities in an effective manner.

Advocacy Initiatives:

At the state level SUGRAMA is preparing itself to undertake three important advocacy initiatives:

- 1. Land Acquisition Bill SUGRAMA members have been attending network meetings and have been part of the efforts of other likeminded NGOs in ensuring that the Bill specifies the role of Panchayats in land acquisitions. When a land gets notified there is no consultation with the Panchayats or local representatives. In the reporting period they have been increasing their understanding of the bill and identifying areas of concern to Gram Panchayat members. In the coming months they will encourage Taluk federations to submit a memorandum to the Tahsildar and the local administration. They will also ensure sustained discussions on land acquisition at all Panchayat meetings through participation of SUGRAMA members. Towards this, SUGRAMA also conducted a preliminary meeting to discuss the possibilities of organizing a workshop on property rights in association with Liberty Institute, New Delhi. SUGRAMA President attended the workshop on land rights and property rights at Hyderabad in August and was invited to hold a similar programme in Bangalore.
- 2. Food distribution in Anganawadi centers The steering committee at the state have raised concern regarding the low nutrition of the food distributed in the Anganawadi centres. SUGRAMA members

have been attending meetings and building alliances with organizations advocating in reversal of contract to Christy Freidgrams by Department of Women and Child Development. SUGRAMA is also looking to gather information from the field with its network base at the panchayats. SUGRAMA is demanding Panchayat have direct role in supply of hot cooked meal in Panchayats.

3. SUGRAMA members have been advocating for Direct Elections of Gram Panchayat Presidents. They are revisiting their existing strategies and planning their next course of action.

Post December, members of the Steering Committee and the Advisory Committee looked at prioritizing the issues affecting the Grama Panchayat and the interests of the EWRs, and accordingly, the members prioritized the following issues as advocacy initiatives:

- 1. Direct Elections/Tenure of the President: Post samavesha at Udupi organized by the Grama Panchayat Hakkotaya Andolana, there have been discussions regarding the tenure of the President. Though direct elections have been a subject of debate and discussions, the Government has instilled the need for increasing the tenure of the President. SUGRAMA members have been advocating for the need for increasing the tenure of the President to 5 years unlike the present term of 20 months.
- 2. Increasing honorarium and bus pass facilities to members: There has been a constant demand from the members for increasing their honorarium. Unlike the Taluk Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat members, the GP members have a major role to play and are devoid of any other benefits. Hence, they have been advocating for the need to increase their honorarium from the present scale to Rs. 5000/-, Rs. 3000 and Rs. 2500/- respectively which needs to be advocated at the taluk level too.
- 3. Quality of food being distributed to children of anganawadi centers: The members have felt that the supply of food through M/s Christy Friedgram was of a great concern. They affirmed that SUGRAMA could also advocate for change in the contract and advocate for the anganawadis acting as nutrition centers and preparing food as needed to the children. With the government's intervention, though there has been a change in the food distribution and the quality of food, yet members feel that it would be worthwhile to make panchayats accountable in supply of hot cooked meal in Panchayats.
- 4. Social justice with special reference to women: SUGRAMA members have also been advocating for protecting the rights of women and addressing issues of women including violence, harassment, etc. SUGRAMA members have already been able to provide justice to some of such cases and looking at upscaling their capabilities and their active role in the course of development. SUGRAMA would also monitor the santhwana Kendras and women police stations and take up the cases and look at resolving them through SUGRAMA.

Enhancing the capabilities of Elected Women Representatives:

During this period, SUGRAMA members participated in the training programmes of The Hunger Project, New Delhi. SUGRAMA's aim has been to connect its members to the ongoing training programmes for elected women representatives on governance and leadership of other NGOs and SIRD in the state. Participating in the training programmes helped members to enhance their understanding on gender, governance, leadership and Panchayati Raj institutions. Gaining confidence after participating in the trainings, SUGRAMA members met 9 MLAs through the partner organizations and The Hunger Project. Besides, SUGRAMA members also attended the training programmes of ANSSIRD and of other NGOs - Grama Panchayat Hakkotaya Andolana, Jana Vikas, etc.

Besides, members also participated and supported the campaign demanding transparency and accountability led by the Federation of Grama Panchayat President, Vice President and Members at Bangalore. SUGRAMA President and members of Gauribidanur taluk participated in the recording of a Radio Programme on SUGRAMA. SUGRAMA members also participated in the Sarojini Naidu Prize distribution function at New Delhi.

Raising the organizational profile of SUGRAMA:

In order to increase the visibility of SUGRAMA as a federation of elected women representatives in Gram Panchayats and to build an alliance with other likeminded organizations, SUGRAMA's Director and President met with the following civil society organizations and presented SUGRAMA's credentials:

- 1. CIVIC, Bangalore: Seminar on the Public Distribution System, April 2011
- 2. Meeting with Networks such as IGSSS, GRAKOOS, ISEC, ANEKA and Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation, April May 2011. The visit to Rajiv Gandhi Rural Housing Corporation helped to get clarity on the Basava Indira Awas Yojana which many SUGRAMA members are not satisfied with.
- 3. Recording a Radio Programme on SUGRAMA for Vancouver Radio, April 2011
- **4.** Invitation by Chattisgarh State Institution of Rural Development to share SUGRAMA's experiences and best practices with EWRs of Chattisgarh, May 2011.
- **5.** Participating in and supporting the Grama Panchayat Hakkotaya Andolana held under the aegis of the Concerned for Working Children. The Andolan is currently involved in advocating against the bad quality of food being provided to the children in the Anganawadi.
- **6.** SUGRAMA nominated three members to the Asian Rural Women's Coalition, September 2011. Ms Nagarathna, Ms Vrunda and Ms Sudha Mohan were nominated for the award. Their case studies along with their photos, newspaper clippings and endorsement letters have been sent to the Asian Rural Women's Coalition.
- 7. Workshop on 'Property Rights and Development' conducted by SUGRAMA in collaboration with ASEDA and with the financial support of Liberty Institute, New Delhi, November 2011 at Bangalore
- **8.** Participating in and supporting the Right to Food Campaign to advocate on regularizing the food distribution to anganawadis and regularizing the Public Distribution System.

- 9. SUGRAMA SC members met the officials of Karnataka Vikasa and Upa Lokayukta at his chamber and had discussions with them. This brought in great visibility about the activities of SUGRAMA. This interaction with officials has led to wider spectrum of SUGRAMA and the officials are enthusiastic to collaborate with SUGRAMA.
- 10. Participating in the International seminar on Public Policy and Management organized by the Centre for Public Policy and Research Unit of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore in December 2011
- 11. SUGRAMA members attended a workshop on NREGA at New Delhi.
- **12.** SUGRAMA Members attended a two day seminar on NREGA hosted by Gandhigram Rural Institute, Dindigul, Chennai in March 2012.
- **13.** Vani, Joint Secretary, SUGRAMA participated in the Grama Panchayat Hakkotaya Andolan (GPHA) at Kundapura on 6th and 7th of February.
- **14.** Participating in the regional consultation meeting on Violence against Women on January 5, 2012 organized by Women's Voice, Bangalore.
- **15.** Participating in the interaction between the MLAs and MLCs regarding budgets on January 19, 2012 organized by the Grama Panchayat Hakkotaya Andolan under the aegis of the Concerned for Working Children, Bangalore
- **16.** Networks have also built with Vimochana and a preliminary discussion between Vimochana has been done.

Udupi Samavesha:

A Samavesha of the Elected Representatives of the districts of Karnataka was conducted by the Grama Panchayat Hakkotaya Andolan under the aegis of Concerned for Working Children at Udupi in the month of December. The three day programme saw members of about 25 districts (both men and women) participating with the officials and functionaries of the State Government. About 60 SUGRAMA members from Udupi, Mangalore, Bantwal and Tumkur participated in the Samavesha. Asha Shetty, SUGRAMA Steering Committee member who is also part of the committee of GPHA was more articulate and under the banner of SUGRAMA spoke about SUGRAMA and narrated some success stories found under the platform of SUGRAMA. This brought in greater visibility especially in taluks where SUGRAMA is nonexistent. This created a space for expansion of SUGRAMA.

TALUK LEVEL FEDERATIONS:

During this period, SUGRAMA organized taluk level federation meetings at the taluks. 36 meetings of the taluk level federations were conducted. The taluks covered during this period were:

Udupi	Shira	Mangalore	Malur
Chamarajanagar	N.R. Pura	Periyapatna	Bidar
Somawarapet	Madhugiri	Bantwala	Aurad
Mysore	Koratagere	Virajapet	Bhalki

Maddur	Корра	Chennagiri	Basavakalyan
K.R. Nagara	Bhadravathi	Shikaripura	Bangarapet
Gauribidanur	Hunsur	Belur	Aland
H.D. Kote	Sringeri	Shidlaghatta	Gulbarga
Humnabad	Kadur	Koppal	Sedam

The primary aim of the taluk level meetings was to look at the performance of the functioning of the taluk level and analyze and strategize a suitable action plan to increase its performance. The meetings primarily highlighted the following:

- Review of Progress of activities of the Taluk level
- Achievements documented
- Membership mobilisation –New / Renewal
- Action plan for next 3 months (with advocacy initiatives)
- Roles and responsibilities of EC members in Taluk level.

Accordingly, an agenda was prepared so as to enable the EC Members to decide upon the process of facilitation in the meetings. The agenda enabled members to undertake fruitful discussions about SUGRAMA, activities at the taluk level, renewal and new membership. The members also discussed about the need to sustain SUGRAMA at the taluk level.

In addition to these discussions, the advocacy initiatives at the taluk level were also discussed and decided upon. After the interactions between THP and partner organizations, SUGRAMA finalized the issues to be advocated by SUGRAMA. These were also taken up at the taluk level and efforts were made by the taluks to work on these advocacy initiatives through signature campaigns, submitting memorandum to taluk panchayat Executive Officer and other concerned officials.

The members also shared their experiences and success stories of their collective action in their GPs as well as in supporting other GPs.

Initiatives of the Taluk Level:

The taluk federations in the process of organizing taluk level federation meetings discussed the following and also looked at monitoring thereby looking at Grama Panchayat development. Following are some of the highlights/initiatives of the taluk level:

- **★** Monitoring and addressing irregularities in public distribution system (9 taluks)
- ★ Monitoring and addressing of issues of ICDS schemes/Right to Food (16 taluks)

- **★** Monitoring and addressing provision of better health facilities (5 taluks)
- **★** Addressing gender discrimination (almost all taluks)
- **★** Addressing violence against women and other issues affecting women (30 taluks)
- ➤ Implementation of schemes National Rural Employment Guarantee Act,
- **X** Provision of education and monitoring other developmental issues.
- ★ Looked at Illegal quarrying at Kadur and bringing it to the attention of the Minister
- ➤ Providing awareness on proper supply of water, hygiene and sanitation
- **★** Monitoring the education system and corruption levels in schools.
- ➤ Preventing child marriage (Mysore)
- ★ Enunciating the interests of the community about their presence in grama sabhas and ward sabhas and enabling them to avail the benefits of the government
- **★** Bringing in transparency and accountability in GP affairs
- ➤ Providing awareness through SUGRAMA about the notification of Gok about conducting special grama sabhas on nutritious food. Through SUGRAMA there was a spread of information to the GPs, while it was found lacking through the GoK perspective. The members followed it up and conducted special grama sabhas.
- ➤ Post taluk federation meetings at Somwarapet, the members have raised their voices against non release of pensions to beneficiaries and regularization of food distribution and ration card.
- ➤ Suvarnavathi, President, Taluk Federation, Mandya recently won the individual award for Nirmala Grama Puraskara for 100% sanitation in her GP.

Samavesha - Taluk Level:

During the year, 3 samaveshas were conducted at the taluk level by the taluk level federation members. The 3 taluks were – Gauribidanur, Chickballapur and Chennagiri. SAMAVESHA was used as a platform to build ownership amongst members, draw an action plan for the year, orient its members towards good governance and developmental activities, establish its presence amongst citizens and government officials, demand accountability from the MLAs and build a rapport with their local administrative officers.

Gauribidanur: The primary aim was to motivate members of the taluk federations to independently manage its activities and take action to support its members. The members invited the MLA, former MLA, members of Zilla Parishad and Taluk Panchayats as well as well other SUGRAMA members.

Members from neighboring taluks - Tumkur and Koppal also attended the meeting. The taluk federation presented its annual report and shared their achievements. The SAMAVESHA was also used a platform to increase membership, renew membership of old members, open bank accounts and transfer 50% of the membership fees collected to the state federation.



Chickballapur: On the lines of samavesha conducted at Gauribidanur, members of the taluk federation of Chickballapur taluk conducted a samavesha at Chickballapur. The members invited the MLA, members of Zilla Panchayat and Taluk Panchayat besides the secretaries and PDOs of the Grama Panchayats. The samavesha provided a platform for SUGRAMA members to have direct interactions with the MLA and officials of the GP, TP and ZP. Besides, the presence of government officials of the departments provided an impetus to members to resolve their grievances in one go.



Chennagiri:

A samavesha of SUGRAMA was conducted by the taluk level federations of Chennagiri taluk. 312 Participants from EWRs and block level SUGRAMA members met Mr.Virpakshappa, MLA, Chennagiri.

Memorandums on issues of the GPs were also submitted to the MLA. The Samavesha also paved way for renewal of membership and inducting new members to SUGRAMA.



Interaction with officials - Belur Taluk/Tarikere Taluk:



The members of Belur Taluk and Tarikere Taluk conducted a meeting which not only looked at int eractions with the government officials but also looked at Women's Day celebrations in Belur Taluk. The President of the Taluk Federations took keen interest and participation in organizing the programme. Though the MLAs were not present at the event, the event at Belur looked at the participation of 32 EWRs while Tarikere had the presence of about 30 EWRs. The members had discussions with the officials and submitted a memorandum seeking increasing

honorarium, ensuring good quality of food in anganawadi centres, domestic violence, etc.

Campaigns/Programmes conducted:

SUGRAMA members in addition to the samavesha conducted at 3 taluks, also looked at conducting other programmes as listed below:

- **★** Koratagere Taluk Federation conducted a Jatha to demand proper functioning of the GP, regularization of honorarium and sitting fees, copies of resolutions.
- **★** SUGRAMA members joined hands with other local network organizations and participated in the protest rally in Bijapur against the nonpayment of honorarium, irregularities in the GP affairs.
- **★** SUGRAMA members at Gauribidanur protested and petitioned the Tahsildar about the need for Permanent water supply to the taluk.
- **★** The members of Mandya Taluk raised slogans and undertook a jatha against the allegations of the Government on the Elected Representatives about the harassment to PDOs and Secretaries.
- ★ Members of Somwarapet Taluk demanded for proper disbursement of honorarium, sitting fees, resolutions copies of the monthly meetings, notifications and disbursement of salaries under MGNREGA.
- ➤ Members of H.D. Kote taluk raised slogans and created awareness on the Public Distribution System and undertook a signature campaign
- Members of Madhugiri taluk undertook a press meet to raise voices against the lethargic attitude of Secretaries and PDO in assisting the EWRs in developmental activities
- * The taluk federation at Bantwal and Udupi conducted a programme called 'Aati Koota' which aimed at providing awareness on medicinal plants and its nutritional content.
- **★** SUGRAMA members of Koppa, Sringeri and N.R. Pura taluk raised awareness against the use of plastic and petitioned the Tahsildar and government officials.
- ➤ Members of Koppa campaigned against alcohol and were successful in curtailing the illicit liquor sales and alcohol. This has resulted in zero supply of alcohol.
- ➤ Members of Koppa, N.R. Pura, Shikaripura, Kadur, Bhadravathi, etc. have submitted memorandums upto the tune of 500 to the Chief Minister and Minister of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, Government of Karnataka, with respect to corruption and misappropriation in NREGA.
- ➤ The constant training programmes of the partner organizations and other NGOs has enhanced the capabilities of the EWRs so also their participation levels in ward sabha and grama sabha. Furthermore, the members have been assertive and demanding for their rights in the meetings.

- The members of Shidlaghatta taluk remarked about the nonpayment of honorarium and sitting fees and the reactions of the members were published in the press during their interaction with the press. This was noticed by the secretaries and PDOs who questioned the members though some were given. The press statement proved an impetus to member to seek honorarium and sitting fees
- The members of Malur taluk discussed about the honorarium and sitting fees and the changes in the secretaries and PDOs at regular intervals. Some members got an opportunity to meet the Taluk Panchayat Executive Officer demanding honorarium and sitting fees. The EO promised to take up the matter in the meeting with the secretaries and PDOs and resolve the matter. The members also got an opportunity to meet the local resource person of SIRD.
- The members are not only advocating for good quality food at anganawadi centres but also for the control and ownership of SHGs in owning the food preparation and distribution. The members have now started visiting the anganawadi and monitoring the quality of food.
- Bidar taluk saw a change in the President as there was no performance of the President.
- ➤ Though there was less participation of members of Aurad taluk primarily because of the Bandh of the Hyderabad Karnataka region, there was considerable zest of the members to look at enhancing their capabilities.
- The members of Basavakalyan taluk submitted a memorandum to the Tahsildar urging to continue the old age and widow pensions which have been stopped now. The members though had been introduced to the EO, taluk officials and Tahsildar; they had little opportunity to interact with them.
- ➤ The President and Director who were part of the taluk level meetings at Bidar district found that the Taluk Panchayat were demanding SUGRAMA and the partner NGO ORBIT to pay hall charges of Rs. 500/- for every meeting of the GP members. This was taken up by the members and was discussed with the Managers of the TPs so also with TP member at Aurad taluk. The member promised to help GP members SUGRAMA members to conduct their meetings free of cost after discussions in the TP meetings and passing a resolution to this effect. The TP member also helped SUGRAMA get its identity in the TP and was instrumental in helping the President, Taluk Federation in resolving her grievances.
- ★ The members of Basavakalyan taluk are very articulate and have found the support of male members. The members of Kitta GP have joined hands with other GPs to redress the grievances of the beneficiaries of housing schemes. The members of Erandagi GP – especially Lakshmi was

- successful in addressing the arrack menace in her GP and was successful in curtailing it. She also fought for the misappropriation of NREGA funds.
- ★ Members of Bangarapet taluk protested against the high corruption levels and members of a grama panchayat have filed a complaint in this regard.

BRIEF OUTCOMES:

- ➤ Women Presidents have initiated work on various critical issues affecting the vulnerable in their respective panchayats, such as alcoholism, encroachment on common property resources, and education for the girl child.
- ★ Women's issues are being brought to the Gram Sabha by elected women representatives
- ★ Women have started advocating for their rights and demanding decision making powers.
- **★** Women are advocating for proper implementation of schemes and transparency in grama panchayat affairs
- **★** Women have sought functioning of standing committees
- **★** Taken up issues of MGNREGA to bring up regularity in funds, functions and accountability and asserting the role of panchayats mandated under the act.
- ★ Women have been successful in obtaining honorarium, sitting fees and copies of the resolutions of the monthly meetings
- Members of Bantwal taluk federation were successful in helping an old age couple by constructing toilet with the assistance and support of other groups and MSW (Master of Social Work) students.
- They also have questioned the authority of the Government doctor who was misusing his position to run a private clinic from his government residence.
- ★ Ms. Renuka, President, SUGRAMA was interviewed by the local media of Mangalore during her visit to Mangalore
- ➤ Members of Mysore taluk have been successful in resolving the issue of an aggrieved woman of Nanjangud taluk. She had sought the intervention of SUGRAMA members to resolve her issue.
- **★** Taluk Federation members visiting other federations and sharing their experiences, these enabled in gaining confidence and understand the larger political picture in a better manner.
- ➤ Members of Shira taluk especially Yashoda, Secretary has filed a RTI seeking details of conversion of private lands to revenue sites. The secretary of her GP had issued a no objection certificate to distribute revenue sites without the approval of the GP.

- **★** The members of Somwarapet taluk were instrumental in protesting against the harassment of girl students by the school teacher and were successful in removing him from the school.
- Members of Mangalore taluk have looked at a programme wherein they could create awareness amongst the schemes and the facilities to women and marginalized sections and were also fruitful in getting pensions to the poor and old.

SOME CASE STUDIES:

Puttamma, Member, Steering Committee and President, Chamarajanagar taluk was successful in stopping her GP in changing the President as she was forced by the members to resign and pave way for another member of her category to complete the next few months in the 2 ½ year tenure. The President, also the member of SUGRAMA is articulate but illiterate, but was working in her GP in an effective way. She was supported by Puttamma and other members and now she continues to be the President.

Members of Mysore taluk who were instrumental in getting justice to a woman in Nanjangud visited Nanjangud again to see the current status of the financial settlement and are in the process of looking at a lumpsum amount of Rs. 2 lakh to be paid to Sunitha.

ADMINISTRATION:

Governance Structure

The broad governance of SUGRAMA is looked after by the Steering Committee at the State Level and Taluk Federation at the Taluk Level. The members of the Steering Committee are all the members of the Grama Panchayat who have been elected to the State from the taluks of their district. They act as the medium for coordination between the state and the taluk level. Currently, there are 17 members representing 17 districts. The table below gives the names of the steering committee members.

Sl. No.	Names	District	Taluk	Grama Panchayat	Designation
1.	Renuka M.	Chickaballapur	Gowribidanur	Namagondlu	President
2.	Bhagya Puttaswami	Mysore	Mysore	Hinakal	Vice President – South
3.	Chinnamma	Gulbarga	Gulbarga	Kusnur	Vice President – North
4.	Sunitha Jagadeesh	Chickamagalur	Kadur	Hirenallur	Secretary
5.	Vani M. Gowder	Bijapur	Muddebihal	Davalige	Jt Secretary – North

6.	Nagarathnamma	Tumkur	Madhugiri	Singanahalli	Jt Secretary – South
7.	Jayanthi	Kolar	Bangarapet	Hulibele	Treasurer
8.	Mani T.S.	Chamarajanagar	Chamarajanagar	Somanahalli	Member
9.	Lalithamma	Mandya	Madduru	Athguru	Member
10.	Vrunda	Mangalore	Bantwal	Meramajalu	Member
11.	Asha G. Shetty	Udupi	Udupi	Kadekaru	Member
12.	Jayanthi Viraj	Hassan	Belur	Cheekanahalli	Member
13.	Lavanya Mahesh	Kodagu	Somawarapet	Kodlipete	Member
14.	Vijaya Ravi	Davanagere	Chennagiri	Thippagondanahalli	Member
15.	Anasuya	Shimoga	Bhadravathi	Singanamane	Member
16.	Laxmi Bai	Bidar	Basava Kalyana	Erandagi	Member
17.	Shobha	Koppala	Koppala	Kinnala	Member

Steering Committee Meetings:

During this period, 6 meetings of the Steering Committee members were conducted. Of the 17 member steering committee, on an average all 17 members have attended the three steering committee meetings in the reporting period. The steering committee members meet to discuss their experiences and challenges in their respective districts and try to find a common solution to their problems related to governance in Gram Panchayats. Members also chalk out an action plan for the next quarter. The members during this period primarily discussed about the need for increasing membership of SUGRAMA, besides renewal of membership. Discussions were also held pertaining to the formation of new taluk federations. The members felt that it would be feasible to form 6 new taluk federations instead of 5 that were budgeted. An emergency meeting of the Steering Committee members was also conducted during this period to discuss about the issues relating to the state Secretary and her GP.

Amendment to the Bye-law:

SUGRAMA has been advocating for the rights and interests of the Elected Women Representatives across Karnataka. The EWRs as per of development of the GPs have been looking at providing best services to the community which includes health, water, sanitation, housing etc. Being representatives, the members have been looking at other facets of development and looking at bringing in a change in the GPs and act as 'Change Agents'. Hence, there was a need to include those points into the bye law to

make it more regularized and legitimate to conduct such programmes and undertake initiatives. Hence, it was decided to alter the bye law and amend it with the following objectives to be added:

- To facilitate the advancement of women on the protection of human rights and generate awareness in combating HIV/AIDS, trafficking, domestic violence, sexual harassment and other atrocities on women and children, migration, female feticide, devadasi system and ensure just and equitable society.
- 2. To work for rural development with special emphasis in the field of health, education, disability, rural development and agriculture.
- 3. To take up research work on women and rural development, and to publish research reports, professional books, articles and such other activities in the name of the organization.

Finances:

SUGRAMA during this period received an amount of Rs. 10,00,000 from The Hunger Project as per the action plan prepared in the month of April 2011.

Besides, SUGRAMA also received an amount of Rs. 58,341/- from The Liberty Insitute, New Delhi for conducting the workshop on 'Property Rights and Development'.

The year looked at renewal of membership and increasing membership by inducting new members into SUGRAMA.

Audit of Accounts

M. S. Kamath and Associates, a Chartered Accountant firm was commissioned to audit the accounts of SUGRAMA State Federation. The accounts of financial year 2010 – 2011 have been audited. SUGRAMA also filed returns for the Tax Deducted on the instalments received from The Hunger Project.

Membership and Revenue raising:

This forms the most integral part of SUGRAMA as being a membership based organization, it is necessary for SUGRAMA to raise its own revenues from membership not only to be financially independent and sustain its activities but also to run its programmatic costs.

SUGRAMA raises its revenue through membership fees of Rs. 100 on an annual basis. Thus a member, during her tenure of five years, shall be paying Rs. 500 as membership fees to SUGRAMA. The membership is renewed every year and deposited in the taluk accounts. 50% of the membership fees is then transferred to the bank account at Bangalore. The 50% remaining at the taluk level bank account is being utilized for conducting programmes of SUGRAMA – dharna, jatha, samavesha, etc.

It is heartening to note that inspite of the absence of a partner NGO, Vani Gowder, Joint Secretary North representing Bijapur had managed to get the renewal of 19 members of the 21 members and is now concentrating on new memberships in her taluk. She also aspires to form new taluk level federations at Basavana Bagewadi and Indi Taluks of Bijapur.

The following table gives a detailed account as on March 31, 2012:

Membership

Total Membership as on March 31, 2011 - 2498

Total membership as on March 31, 2012 -

New members inducted (April 2011 to March 2012) -

Geographical Spread

Total number of Taluks federations (also Taluks covered) - 50

Number of strong and vibrant taluk federations – 36

Number of moderately active taluk federations - 14

Revenue Raised

Total membership fee collected from the start of SUGRAMA is Rs

Total membership fee collected for the reporting period is Rs. .

Donation received:

SUGRAMA obtained a computer as a donation during this period.

Non participation of Steering Committee Members – Changes in the Steering Committee members:

During the year, of the 7 Steering Committee meetings conducted, 4 members representing Bidar, Gulbarga, Chamarajanagar and Kodagu were found to be irregular and were absenting themselves to the meetings. Hence, there was a need to look at changing them and looking at participation from other taluk Presidents as State representative. After discussions at the Steering Committee meeting, the members were sent letters enquiring their absence and upon receiving their feedback, 3 changes were made. In case of Kodagu, the representative apparently found it difficult to continue with her post at the state level and hence had requested for relieving her. Incidentally, the taluk level members found that they could find another suitable President in wake of her absence and ineffectiveness. Accordingly, Asha Prakash was chosen as the President of Virajpet taluk. After discussions with the Presidents of Virajpet and Somawarapet taluks, the taluk members nominated the President of Somawarapet taluk to represent SUGRAMA at the state level.

Inducting new taluks to SUGRAMA:

SUGRAMA during this period envisaged to look at forming new taluk federations in 6 taluks of Karnataka. The action plan devised earlier looked at forming new taluk federations in 5 taluks, while members during discussions in the Steering Committee meetings felt that it would be possible to look at 6 new taluks with the budget earmarked for the new taluks. The new taluks that were finalized by members are as follows:

- 1. K.R. Pet taluk, Mandya District
- 2. Tumkur taluk, Tumkur District
- 3. Mudigere taluk, Chickmagalur District
- 4. Arkalagud taluk, Hassan District
- 5. Kudligi Taluk, Bellary District
- 6. Karatagi Taluk, Koppal District

Sustaining the operational platform:

SUGRAMA maintains its own office space in Bangalore, Karnataka. Its operations are handled by a Director who is paid a monthly salary. The Director facilitates communication between all 50 Taluk federations and also between the steering committee and other stakeholders. The Director reports to the President of SUGRAMA. The Director represents the organizations in different platforms and fora in the capital city of Bangalore since members of SUGRAMA are scattered across the state.

Glimpses of the programmes - Photos and press clippings:































Press Clippings:





ಗ್ರಾಪಂ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರ ನೇರ ಆಯ್ಕೆ: ನಿಯಮ ಬದಲಿಸಿ

ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯತಿ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರ ನೇರ ಚುನಾವಣೆ ಸಂಬಂಧದ ಕಾಯಿದೆಯ ಅಧಿನಿಯಮ 46ಕ ಕರಿತವಾಗಿ ತಿರುಪಡಿ ತರುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರ ಅಧಿಕಾರಾವಧಿಯನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಿ. ಉತ್ತಮ ಕೆಲಸಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲು ನೆರವಾಗಬೇಕು ಎಂದು ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಜಾಯಿತಿ ಚುನಾಯತ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ ಅದ್ದಕ್ಕೆ ಎಂ. ರೇಣುಕ ಪತ್ರಿಕಾಗೋಷ್ಠಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸರಕಾರವಾ ಒತ್ತಾಯಿಸಿದರು.

ಐದು ವರ್ಷ ಏರಿಕೆಗೆ ಬೆಂಬಲ

ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯ್ಕೆ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರ ಆಯ್ಕೆಗೆ ನೇರ ಚುನಾವಣೆ ಮತ್ತು ಅವರ ಅವಧಿ ಯನ್ನು ಐದು ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸುವುದರ ಕುರಿತು ಸಚಿವ ಜಗದೀಶ್ ಶೆಟ್ಟರ್ ಮಾಡಿರುವ ಘೋಷಣೆಯನ್ನು ಸುಗ್ರಾಮ -ರಾಜ್ಯ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್ ಚುನಾ ಯತ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಪ್ರತಿನಿಧಿಗಳ ಸಂಘ ಬೆಂಬಲಿಸುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂದು ಸಂಘದ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷ ಎಂ.ರೇಣುಕಾ ಹೇಳಿದರು.

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾಗೋಷ್ಠಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತನಾಡಿದ ಅವರು ಈ ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿಯಿಂದ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಅಧ ಕ್ಷರು ತಮ್ಮ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸುಧಾರಣೆ ತರುವುದಲ್ಲದೇ, ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರ ಸೇವಾವಧಿಯನ್ನು ಐದು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಕಾಲ ವಿಸ್ತರಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಒಂದು ಉತ್ತಮವಾದ ಬೆಳವಣಿಗೆಯಾ ಗಿದೆ ಎಂದ ಹೇಳಿದರು.

ಗೋಷ್ಠಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸುಗ್ರಾಮ-ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯ್ತ ಚುನಾಯಿತ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಂಘದ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕಿ ಪದ್ದಿನಿ ಅನಂತ್, ಸುಗ್ರಾಮ-ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯಿಕಿ ಚುನಾಯಿಕ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಂಘದ ಖಜಾಂಚೆ ಆರ್.ವಿ ಜಯಂತಿ ಮತ್ತಿತರರು ಉಪಸ್ಥಿತರಿದ್ದರು.



శనివారం స్వతంత్రపార్కు పథ జన లోక్ఎంల్ జలు కోసం నినాదాలు చేసాకన, 'సుగామ' మహేకా సంఘం

ಎನ್ಆರ್ಇಜಿ ಅನುಷ್ಠಾನಗೊಳಿಸದ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗೆ ದಂಡ

