



# We, The Women



This booklet is a tribute to the indomitable spirit of women and to their innate belief in self & their solidarity, which gives them confidence & a will to fight for change so as to make our society a better place for all

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All photographs in this booklet are of women who are leading various social political initiatives in Rewari district of Haryana

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## Solemn resolve - A Preface

All citizens of India have an inalienable fundamental right to participate in the governance processes of the country. It is enshrined in the constitution without discrimination of caste, color, creed, gender, religion, region, education, and language. The participation of citizens in governance has been strengthened by various amendments and addendums to the constitution. However in practice, people's participation in governance is limited to electing their representatives at village, block, district, state & national level. Citizens' have virtually no say in the framing of policies, laws and national - international agreements that affect them the most in their everyday lives. The general top down approach in governance ignores citizens' participation with the consequence that the mindset of people is attuned to acting as passive recipients of government handouts and programs.

For the past few years peoples' participation in rural areas is being solicited through Panchayati Raj Institutions or while implementing government schemes. But this participation is usually for namesake or punctuated with lots of ifs' & buts'. In some instances where a genuine effort to include people in decision-making is made by government or administration, it is scuttled by entrenched vested interests. Moreover the strong patriarchal control over the governance processes effectively marginalizes the participation of women, accounting for nearly one half of the population. Until & unless citizens participate as equals in all processes of governance, they will remain marginalized and development will not reflect their priorities.

To engage people, especially women, at micro, mezzo and macro levels of governance SCRIA - a non profit organization, working since 1979 in the semi arid region of southern Haryana and in the arid districts of northern Rajasthan - facilitates opportunities for women, men and civil society organizations to understand governance and it's working. At micro level this process of facilitation is intensive and is intended for women & others from socially and economically disadvantaged communities in rural areas. SCRIA focuses on bringing about an attitudinal shift in people's thinking so that they are able to shake off the internalization of being passive recipients of development largesse and become agents of change by articulating and deciding their priorities. For this people are enabled to enquire, question, be instrumental in framing policies that affect their lives and to get intrinsically involved in the decision-making processes at all levels of governance. SCRIA believes that till any society stands up united, informed and ensures timely action against injustice or unaccountable governance, no amount of development initiatives will take that society far or make development initiatives sustainable. Hence SCRIA resolves to, in the words of Soli J. Sorabjee, "*impart to our democracy fullness, vitality and comprehensiveness so that its fruits & benefits are shared and enjoyed by the vast majority of the people of India*".



## ऐसा क्यों



## Reconstituting society - An Introduction

Development, an inalienable human right, is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process meant for the constant improvement of the well being of entire population and for fair distribution of benefits. And democracy, as Amartya Sen states, is not only a goal for development but primary means for it. The present peripheral role of citizens' in the functioning of democracy or in the development process calls for systemic changes with thrust on strengthening people and people's institutions thus ensuring their active participation and a sense of ownership that will bring qualitative and quantitative improvement in their lives. To influence public attitude for this change, organized efforts and actions over a period of time are required and for the change to be peaceful and non-violent citizens must be geared & primed for desired alteration and modification.

To initiate the process of peaceful change SCRIA facilitates support systems for citizens' access and voice in the decision making of social, political, economic and developmental issues. SCRIA in its outreach villages assists women, from landless or marginal farming families & from socially disadvantaged communities, in organizing themselves into groups and federations whereby they identify their critical problems, prioritize them, avail of opportunities offered by governmental & non-governmental agencies and fight against social evils. Elected men representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions & male Gram Sabha members from concerned villages are also involved in various initiatives.

Taking reins of local initiatives in their hands the groups act as catalysts & embark on change missions for promoting meaningful participation of women in self & inclusive governance processes, on social issues and in ensuring gender sensitivity in village level development initiatives and public services. Discussions, community meetings, complaints to "decision makers", negotiations, public demonstrations, rallies for support from general public, memorandum to administration, voluntary labor, press conference and protest march are some of the tools that they take recourse to during local initiatives. SCRIA supports by providing appropriate information, networking and by ensuring that initiatives are within the spirit of law; the members themselves manage these support systems. More on these people's institutions -

### Sakriya Sangathans

Village level women groups are known as Sakriya Sangathans. There are on an average 10 to 15 members per Sangathan, all of whom are either elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions' or Gram Sabha members belonging to different caste and communities residing in the village. Sakriya Sangathan members



are politically enlightened and active women who participate in governance as informed citizens or enter the system for bringing about a meaningful change. Sangathan is a basic self-help support unit for its members and others in the village.

### Sakriya Sangh

A three tier federating structure, at village - block - district level, of all Sakriya Sangathans is called Sakriya Sangh. All initiatives of SCRIA are facilitated through Sakriya Sangh whose members are involved in policy and implementation decisions. The apex body is Nirnaayak Samiti and is responsible for finalizing district level initiatives.

### Shakti Parishad

It is a federation of women leaders for helping women victims-of-violence fight for justice. The members help women in the region who are victims of domestic or gender violence, social intolerance, economic injustice etc.. The members act as a pressure group and do the needful to secure immediate relief and justice for the victim. They lobby with the pertinent administrative bodies, legal offices, social and political institutions.

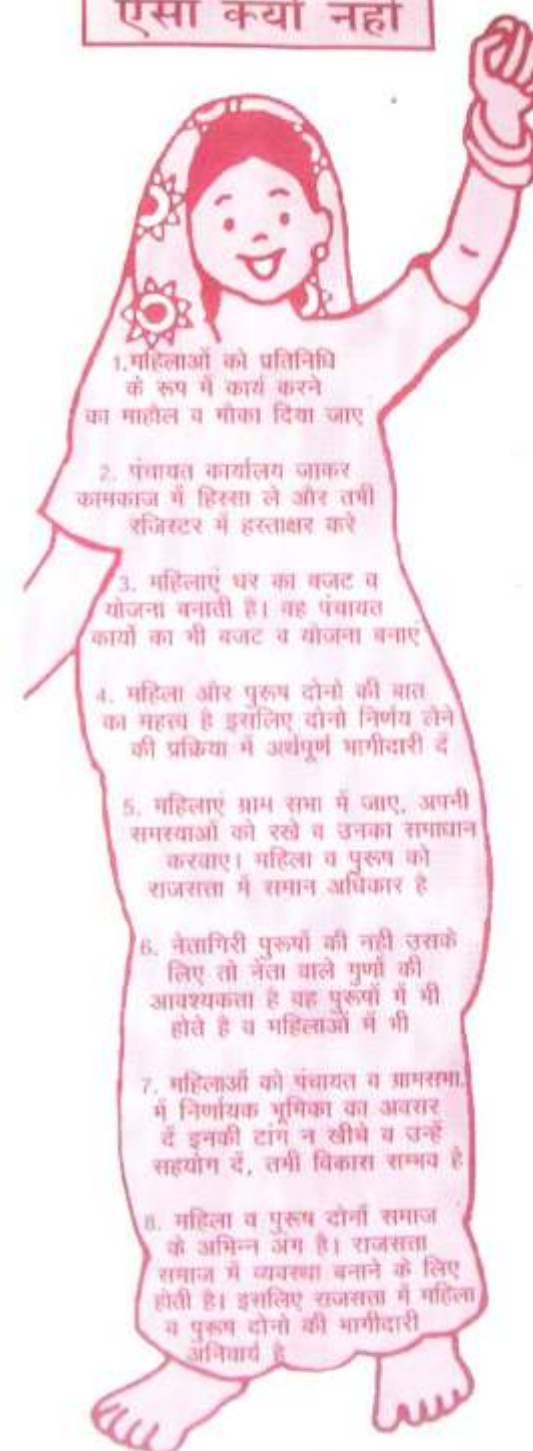
### Sakriya Manch

There being no active federations or networks in SCRIA's outreach area other than the one facilitated by SCRIA for its Sangathans, SCRIA has networked Sakriya Sangathans with women groups promoted through various government departments and programs in the villages. This initiative of intra village networking among women groups is called Sakriya Manch, literally meaning active platform. The Manch identifies critical issues related to women, development & governance in their respective villages, forms a strategy to deal with it and takes collective action.

### Sakriya Pratinidhi

Elected women representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions' eager to improve development status of villages and fulfill the development ambitions of its electorate have formed themselves into a group called Sakriya Pratinidhi, active representative. This group primarily focuses on hurdles faced by women representatives in a patriarchic society, monitors inclusiveness in village governance, various public services and systems and acts as a pressure & lobbying group on various issues. Similarly some Gram Panchayats have formed a network called **Sakriya Panchayat**. They too prioritize common issues for development and work collectively on it.

## ऐसा क्यों नहीं



Collective action by women groups has become a norm in SCRIA's outreach villages. The initiatives in this booklet are of women from the villages in Rewari district of Haryana, in northern India. These women are brave, determined, strong willed, energetic & resolute in their struggle for dignity and equality that comes from inclusive and accountable governance. Against great odds, adverse social circumstances and personal sacrifices these women have sought justice, made their voices heard and above all have made a beginning in a conventional society and limiting system of governance.

In the past two years these resolute women in Rewari district have activated Gram Sabhas - in mothballs till then - made many Panchayats inclusive, proactively addressed social issues concerning women, goaded dilapidated & deficient public services and facilities to deliver, have forced public authorities to be more responsible towards their duties and in many ways have influenced the style of functioning of district administration resulting in public good.

Such initiatives in the district are very many. And many more are ongoing. In this booklet an attempt has been made to present a sample from a cross section of change initiated in the past couple of years. We hope that the stories will provoke, motivate and activate citizens to act for systemic changes required for renegotiating democracy so that democracy does not remain only as a "fashionable myth" but brings qualitative change in the lives of millions in this country. The stories are many, the underlying theme is same- "We the women will make ourselves count and will make our lives better". As Sarpanch Banto of Ibrahimpur village says "I may be illiterate but am not unintelligent or helpless. With information I have now, I can and will improve the condition of my village and circumstances of its residents."

To know how Banto and women of her genre are doing it, read on...





## DEMOCRATIC, ~~E~~QUALITARIAN and ~~I~~NCLUSIVE social order

Banto, Sarpanch of Ibrahimpur village, like most residents in the village is from a socially disadvantaged landless community. In the summer of 2006 she had been a Sarpanch for a year but had never chaired a Panchayat meeting or Gram Sabha as she was a woman and that too from a "lower caste". Her son looked after her responsibilities in "consultation" with a group of men from dominant community. Banto with two women Panch, Lalita & Banarasi, had been regularly attending capacity building initiatives facilitated by SCRIA but could not stand up against the prevalent social bigotry that prevented her from managing her constitutionally mandated responsibilities. However, after an interaction with women leaders from the tribal areas of Udaipur, during a visit, she boldly declared to her fellow Sakriya Sangathan members "I may be illiterate but am not unintelligent or helpless. With the information I have, I can and will improve the condition of my village and circumstances of its residents."

True to her resolve Banto organized Gram Sabha in her village, as it should ideally be. All Panchayat members, residents of the village and government functionaries were informed about the Sabha well in advance. Banto with women Panch and Sangathan members identified then prioritized issues of concern in the village and on the day of Gram Sabha led a group of twenty-four women to the venue. At the appointed place there were around 30 men, Gram Sachiv, doctor, teacher and Anganwadi worker. All were surprised to see such a large presence of women. There was sniggering and snide remarks from men but the women ignored them and Banto, confidently, started the proceedings. For the first time ever in Ibrahimpur village a full fledged Gram Sabha, chaired by a woman, took place on December 8, 2006 wherein Panch discussed development issues of their wards, women residents put forth their view on child marriage, education of girl child & lack of toilet facility among the landless and village citizens collectively decided on issues of concern in the village.

In village Lalpur Dabana the circumstances were slightly different. Sarpanch Payal's responsibilities were 'looked after' by her husband and in spite of Sakriya Manch members' constant encouragement Payal remained aloof from her duties. So Manch decided to take matter into their hands. Just before Gram Sabha they strategized to ensure the presence of all elected women representatives, finalized the issues to be raised and publicized the date, time & venue of the Sabha. On the day of Gram Sabha nearly twenty women reached village school, Sabha venue, before the appointed hour. Three Manch members escorted women Panch while members Santosh and Krishna, went to bring Sarpanch Payal from her house. Santosh and Krishna found Payal's husband & Gram Sachiv 'conducting' Gram Sabha among themselves. At







this the two protested loudly insisting that Gram Sabha should be held in a public place among all village residents. Sachiv and Sarpanch's husband then shifted to school and started the proceedings. Again Manch members protested and insisted that the real Sarpanch for whom they had voted for must lead the meeting. At this Gram Sachiv snapped saying, "who do you think is this person who is standing in front of you?" The women retorted "as Sachiv his job was to record proceedings and not to talk unnecessarily". The men present in Gram Sabha too protested against women interrupting the proceedings but women remained determined to have the presence of real representatives in the meeting. Finally, Payal was called and chaired the Sabha. Women brought a resolution making mandatory the presence & participation of elected women representatives in all Panchayat meetings and Gram Sabha.

Stories of women, from SCRIA supported people's institutions', compelling Gram Panchayat & officials to hold Gram Sabha at a common place in the presence of Gram Sabha members, are plentiful. This trend of activating Gram Sabhas and Panchayats started few years back but was not very noticeable. It became perceptibly pervasive only after a week long sustained campaign, by thousands of women from villages in Rewari district, that began on one summer day. It was 8:00 in the morning on April 24, 2006 and the city of Rewari was gearing up for another hot & hectic day, little knowing the significance of the day or about the significance of the event that would take place later in the day. But 238 women from the villages of five blocks in the district who were gathering at Rajiv park in Rewari city knew that it was "Self governance day" and that even after 12 years of 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment to the Constitution, for self and inclusive governance, self & inclusive governance was not a reality, at least not in their villages.

The women gathering were elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions, members of Sakriya Sangathans, Sakriya Manch and Gram Sabha members who had resolved to make self and inclusive governance a reality in their villages. They had left their homes very early in the morning so they could collectively urge the district administration to fulfill its role in making governance inclusive & accountable. The first step, the gathered women decided, was to activate in earnest the Gram Sabhas, a key unit of governance, and to protest against the phenomenon of proxy presence whereby the male relatives represent elected women representatives in all official matters. A charter of demands was prepared urging the district authority to ensure that

- Gram Sabhas are held as per the rules, regulations and spirit of the law
- the date, venue and agenda for Gram Sabha is announced 15 days prior to its scheduled day
- male relatives representing elected women representatives are not entertained, encouraged or otherwise engaged in official matters



The assembled women then proceeded in a procession to district secretariat and gave their charter of demands to the City Magistrate, the senior most official present in the secretariat at the time. Copies of the charter were also sent to Department of Development & Panchayati Raj, Haryana in Chandigarh and to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. In the history of the region it was a first instance where women from more than 100 villages had come together for a cause that involved the larger good of the society. The gathering of such a large number of women surprised one and all in the city and at the secretariat. Upon enquiry when told of the reason most of the people were left flummoxed wondering why these women from villages were talking about self, inclusive and accountable governance. The apolitical nature of the group and initiative too puzzled many, some of whom later appreciated the cause and joined the procession. Electronic & print media of the district too came out in full force along with plain clothed police personnel. The media focused on the issues raised in the charter and gave encouraging coverage to women's view point.

This message of self and inclusive governance was further reinforced in the district through a three day cycle rally, a week long padyatra and village level rallies by women volunteers who received warm welcome, with cool water - warm tea - sweet ladoos, in most villages they visited. Dissenting men mocked and established political persons delivered veiled threats but could not deter these women from their mission. In village after village discussions in detail were held on how by participating in Gram Sabhas people could highlight their problems, state & prioritize their needs for a better life and above all ensure a say in the decision making process that controls their lives. Handbills & posters distributed by volunteers became an instant hit with the school children who were seen reading out the contents to their parents. Many men & women assured the women volunteers that they would participate in their Gram Sabha.

This was not the first time when the issue of self & inclusive governance was raised in the district but it was the first time when this was done so at such a large scale and by so many women. The district administration took note of it and initiated steps for redressing the anomaly as highlighted in the demand charter. The results were there for all to see. In May 2006 in most villages of the district notification for Gram Sabhas were, for the first time, given to people on time. In many villages the revival of Gram Sabhas with inclusiveness & accountability in it was visible. But there were still many hurdles. So once again in October 2006 over four hundred women from Sakriya Sangathans - Sakriya Manch and Sakriya Pratinidhi contacted officials at district & block level urging them to step up their efforts in realizing the goal of meaningful self governance by ensuring proper arrangements for women to participate and articulate their issues in Gram Sabha and by making certain that the government functionaries assigned to attend Gram Sabhas should do so. Post campaign follow up results showed that combined efforts of women, Panchayats and district







administration resulted in Gram Sabhas being organized "in open" in over ninety percent of the villages in the district. People's participation varied from 5 to 250+, with women averaging more than fifty percent. In sixty percent of villages district officials participated in the Gram Sabhas and the attendance of elected representatives was over seventy percent.

After little initial resistance a small number of Gram Panchayats too played a significant part in activating Gram Sabha and Panchayat. The case of village Taankri illustrates this. Gram Sabha in Taankri were being organized since 2005 but usually either the elected Panchayat representatives or the concerned government functionaries remained absent or women were bluntly asked to leave for "it was no place for them". Information about the Sabha was also not properly publicized in the village. In May 2006 Sakriya Manch members led by Shushila, Madhu & Rukmani raised the issue with village Sarpanch and offered their assistance in organizing Gram Sabha as it ideally should be. They motivated other Panch also to cooperate and encourage people from their respective wards to attend Gram Sabha. All agreed. Two weeks prior to the actual date of Gram Sabha Sarpanch Yashpal publicized the date, venue and agenda, notified the concerned government representatives and mobilized the community to draw an agenda for the meeting. This was done a day before and also on the day of Gram Sabha. As a result along with all PRI representatives forty women, forty-two men, doctor, head master, bank manager, Anganwadi worker, telephone department employee and water supply incharge participated in the Sabha. Sarpanch presented physical and financial report of initiatives undertaken whereas all government officials presented a report of their initiatives. In the Sabha a sub committee for social justice was also formed that had three Sakriya Manch members, two elected women representatives and eight others. Village Khadagawas too has a similar story where fifty-six members of Sakriya Manch actively assisted Panchayat in organizing Gram Sabha and participated in it alongside twenty men. The Sarpanch, Ramjilal congratulated the women for outnumbering men in Gram Sabha, a first in the history of the village and for bringing up a diverse range of issues to the attention of the Panchayat.

During every Gram Sabha period SCRIA assisted people's institutions' facilitate in at least 50 villages of the district an 'ideal Gram Sabha'. The members of these people's institutions also actively inspire, encourage and support elected women representatives in carrying out their mandate courageously and sagaciously. Wherever assistance is required the members commit themselves to aid and assist. Savitri, Sarpanch of village Tiklaka was fed up with the errant & irresponsible ways of Gram Sachiv assigned to their Panchayat. Numerous complaints to his superiors did not change any thing. All her efforts since her election in April 2005 to bring in inclusiveness and accountability in her Panchayat's functioning were not bearing any fruit. So in one Gram Sabha when Gram Sachiv remained absent without any information, Savitri along with





thirty women and twenty five men approached Block Development & Panchayat Office demanding disciplinary action against the wayward Gram Sachiv. The group relented only after the errant Sachiv apologized to all for his behavior and promised sincerity in future.

A dynamic woman Sarpanch, Soni Devi, leads village Jakhala. Soni with her Panchayat members and Sakriya Manch has taken commendable development initiatives and a lead in Nahar block in conducting Gram Sabhas as per the rules and spirit of the law. She constantly inspires women to get involved in development and governance process. This has offended men in her village, who had always kept women away from such matters, so much that during Gram Sabha in November 2006 they all decided to stay away from the proceedings! This resulted in an all women Gram Sabha where sixty-six women participated. The only four men present were Panch. Undeterred by this boycott Soni, her fellow Panch and Manch members discussed development issues in detail and prepared a blue print of a five year village development plan.

And Narayanpur is another such village where 'all women Gram Sabha' takes place but Sarpanch Kiran and Sakriya Manch members, not deterred by the 'boycott', continue with business as usual. During June 2006 Gram Sabha the absence of Junior Engineer from Block's Development & Panchayat office, the assigned official for the Sabha, did not go unnoticed by those present. Lalita, Adhyaksha of Manch, questioned Kiran about the assigned government official's absence from Gram Sabha. In response Kiran gave JE's phone number to Lalita and asked her to find out the reason. Lalita called and JE told her that he could not come as he was in Jaipur. Lalita informed him that he is being marked absent in the Gram Sabha attendance register. Hearing this JE immediately assured her of his presence in 15 minutes! Upon reaching Sabha JE ticked off Gram Sachiv for marking his absence at which Gram Sachiv explained how the Manch members themselves noted the absence in the register. This mellowed the JE who then without fuss attended Gram Sabha, wherein there were only women.

Activating Gram Sabha is a step towards inclusiveness but to make this primary unit of governance vibrant elected representatives and officials must fulfill their constitutional obligations towards it. When Panchayats and officials fail to do so women incessantly remind them of their duty towards citizens. In Dhani Thethrabad fifty-nine Sakriya Manch members led by Sudesh & Bimla mobilized 150 people in their village to participate in Gram Sabha but at the venue there was no sign of any meeting and none of the Panchayat members were present. Block Samiti member Kamla made enquiries and found that Sarpanch with Panchayat members was holding Gram Sabha at his residence. Livid at the revelation, all-150 people went to Sarpanch's house demanding immediate change in the venue. Unnerved at the protest Sarpanch asked for







forgiveness & moved the meeting to a public site. The participants then noticed the absence of officials in the meeting but decided to go ahead. Halfway through Sabha, Gram Sachiv and Social Education & Panchayat Officer walked in. The two were severely rebuked by the villagers for late arrival with many wanting to report this tardiness to their superiors. The two officials earnestly apologized to all present promising not to do so in future. Likewise in village Jadra, unnerved by the activism of Sakriya Manch, Sarpanch Bimla, influenced by her husband and Gram Sachiv, organized Gram Sabha in a dharamshala located in faraway village forest to discourage people from participating in it!! But she could not get away with this ploy and was forced by Manch to hold Gram Sabha in the officially designated place - a dharamshala located in the middle of the village.

When Sarpanch, Gram Sachiv and SEPO reached one hour late for Gram Sabha in village Dungarwaas Sakriya Manch members, who were in majority in the meeting, took the three to task who gracefully apologized for their late coming and promised not to repeat it. Mollified, women actively participated in the Sabha which prompted the SEPO to remark that, "Gram Sabhas' could be successful if all women come forward". Hearing this Manch leader Rajbala remarked, "we women are already ahead of you and now want to bring you people ahead so that development in villages takes place in earnest". Often such rebukes from citizens do not make any impact or lasting impression on the officials or on people's representatives. In May 2007 on the appointed day Sarpanch and concerned officials, for no apparent, reason again did not come to Sabha even though a large number of Dungarwaas residents had assembled. Rajbala called a photographer to pictographically document as proof the absence of Panchayat head & officials from the Gram Sabha. Next day she with Manch members complained to district officials about it and presented "proof" of their charge. Sarpanch somehow got wind of the matter and by the time women reached village in the evening he had completed all relevant paperwork related to Gram Sabha, had influenced all Panch in his favor and the families of Manch members were subtly threatened with dire consequences if the women did not desist from their course. Deeply angered by the corrupt brazenness of Sarpanch, Manch has requested for a vigilance enquiry against Sarpanch as he is an unemployed person of known limited means but have recently built a fabulous bungalow and has acquired land worth more than Rs. 50,00,000. The vigilance enquiry is ongoing.

In January 2007 all four women Panch of Berli Khurd village Panchayat proposed a no confidence motion against their Sarpanch, Ramniwas. Of the seven male Panch four are supporting the move. Initially Sarpanch was working in consultation with all the Panch and there was openness in Panchayat's functioning but suddenly he changed tactics became secretive & kept all Panchayat dealings to himself. The eight Panch opposed this, when it did not make any difference they informed the BDPO about their lack of confidence in Sarpanch and the resultant negative quorum in their Panchayat. The BDPO office was also



asked not to process issues related to development & Panchayat forwarded by Sarpanch. The no confidence is still pending with officials and Sakriya Pratinidhi in the village are vigilant.

Anxious by the forceful and assertive attitude of Sakriya Sangathan and Sakriya Manch for activating Panchayats and Gram Sabha there was suddenly a spate of Gram Sabha postponements in the summer of 2006. People protested against it. Dozens of complaints in writing and verbal were lodged with district officials. When Gram Sabha members were not satisfied with the reasons given by officials for postponement they applied for information under the Right to Information Act but did not give up on their quest for inclusiveness and accountability in governance.

In the oppressive heat of May more than 70 people gathered in village Khor for Gram Sabha that was to start at 2.00 pm. Till 3.00 pm when Gram Sachiv and other officials did not come villagers called BDPO's office and were told that Gram Sabha stands cancelled for now. A new date for Sabha was given but this time too the Sabha was postponed without any valid reason. When Gram Sabha took place on the third date most of those present were very upset with the cavalier attitude of officials towards Gram Sabha. So when BDPO and other officials arrived for the meeting the villagers in unison asked the officials to "get out of the village" as they were now postponing the meeting this time round. After much apologizing by the Sarpanch and officials villagers agreed to go ahead with Gram Sabha. This was another first in the district where the officials were asked by the villagers to leave and then declare that they are postponing the Gram Sabha. In Mirpur village too when scheduled Gram Sabha was called off at the last moment without any valid reason Sakriya Sangathan members instead of going back home decided to take the matter with district authorities. 18 women hired a tempo for Rs.200 and reached Rewari city where that day an open forum for addressing grievances was being held by district authorities and presided by the local MLA, a minister in state government. Sangathan members stated their problem about the dismal situation of gram sabha in their village. The authorities immediately rescheduled Gram Sabha that took place 21 days later in which a resolution was passed ensuring no such undue cancellation of Gram Sabha takes place in future. The story of Haluhera is similar where due to vigilance of Sakriya Sangathan members Gram Sabha was rescheduled and nearly 350 people participated in it.

Many women representatives of Block Samiti and Zilla Parishad actively support Sakriya Sangathans, Sakriya Manch and Sakriya Panchayats in activating Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats. Sangathans in neighboring Mohindergarh district impressed, with the results of the campaign for making governance inclusive and accountable in Rewari district, have been motivated to initiate a similar drive.





# तीन गांवों की महिलाओं ने किया प्रदर्शन शराब ठेके को बंद करवाया



बरेली। कटु में शराब का ठेका खोलने आने के विरोध में रोज प्रदर्शन करने तीन गांव की महिलाएं।

महिलाओं ने पी चंतावनी, कटु में  
शराब खुला ठेका तो करंगी  
आंदोलन।

संसार न्यूज, बरेली

एक कटु शराब का ठेका खोलने आने के विरोध में  
तीन गांव की महिलाओं ने प्रदर्शन करते हुए ठेका  
को बंद करवा दिया। 23 अप्रैल को भी  
महिलाओं ने गांव चिमनखस में खोलें गए ठेका  
को बंद करवा दिया था।

महिलाओं ने चेतावनी दी कि अगर ठेका को

समाप्त न किया जाये तो ठेका खोलने वाले को  
महिलाओं ने गांव कटु में शराब का ठेका को बंद  
कर प्रदर्शन किया। महिला संघर्ष को प्रथम  
वर्गकांत शर्मा ने आरोप लगाया कि ठेकादार के  
कर्मचारीयों ने उनके घर को दहले हुए खुद हो  
ठेका में शराब की बतलों को बाहर फैलाया शुरू  
कर दिया। इसके बाद उन्होंने महिलाओं पर भरी  
भस्मा का प्रयोग किया।

मुचना मिलने की अवकाश-कालधन विभाग  
के अधिकारी सीक पर पहुंचे और उन्होंने  
महिलाओं की समस्याओं का समाधान दे दिया।



Secure to all women and others JUSTICE

The spirited women from villages in Rewari district are very proactive in addressing social issues around them especially those affecting women the most. One day in December 2005 Sakriya Sangathan members and other women whose husband were habitual drunkards numbering more than two hundred blockaded the main road in their village demanding the removal of liquor vend in their village. Their husbands forcibly removed them and some women were brutally beaten. Undaunted the very next day 74 women met the Deputy Commissioner and requested him to remove the vend. The outlet was immediately shifted to the outskirts but it was now on the way to girls' school! The women again protested and got it shifted three kilometers away from village habitation. Suma Kheda is another village where women opposed the liquor trade in their village. Santosh & Kamla of Sakriya Manch in Suma Kheda took lead in banning the rampant sale of liquor. The village Sarpanch did not pay heed to their request and devised means to scare them off. But the two women along with thirty-four others persisted. Taking the matter in their hand the 36 women warned the alcohol seller to quit or face dire consequences. Sensing the anger and resolve in women the contractor for alcohol outlet backed off from the village for good.

In village Khaleta liquor-gambling was an endemic problem holding the entire village community in its grip and greatly influencing the children in their pre teens. Alcohol was being sold everywhere in the village, from grocery shop to dairy and sweets shop! After sunset it was impossible for women to venture out of their houses as village streets were full of drunkards and brawls were plentiful. Lives inside many homes were also no better as domestic violence was rampant and family finances precarious. Sakriya Manch members discussed about it regularly and on one March day after their monthly meeting 65 women spontaneously took out a rally in the village warning one and all against selling liquor in the village and gambling in public places. Most people did not take them seriously and it was business as usual. The same evening Manch members visited all those known to sell liquor in the village warned them of dire consequences if they persisted in selling liquor. Women also cautioned the drunkards and throwing stones chased the gamblers across the village. This continued for a few days. Local police was informed about the drive and provided needful support. Initially village Sarpanch too supported women in their mission but withdrew his support when police arrested his relative for selling alcohol illegally. People with vested interest in alcohol trade tried to intimidate few women but it did not work, as there were too many who had taken up cudgels. Though the situation in village has improved, women of Khaleta with unwavering zeal & determination are continuing with the fight against the menace.



Women in Khaleta were inspired for action by the example of Sakriya Sangathan in Biharipur village who, among all Sakriya Sangathans, had initiated the fight against rampant sale of alcohol in 2005. In those days alcohol and alcohol induced violence was rampant in Biharipur and the sight of young boys & men lying drunk in village streets was not unusual. Rekha, Shanti, Mukesh, Anita and ten other members of Sakriya Sangathan in the village decided to do something about the deathly grip of alcoholism & substance abuse on most of the families in the village. Some Sangathan members too were facing this problem at home. Men would engage in wage labor during day, spend the income on alcohol in the evening, return home at night drunk then beat women and children viciously. The whole atmosphere in the village was permeated with alcohol & alcoholism. Women were finding it increasingly difficult to go out even for fetching water as everywhere there would be drunk men passing lewd comments or making obscene gestures. One day Rekha noticed four 12 - 13 year old boys lying next to the dirty water drain, senseless with alcohol. Incensed with rage against the people who sold intoxicants to them she discussed the matter with Sangathan members and in the next Gram Sabha they presented a written proposal for banning liquor sale in the village. This created a furor in the Sabha and Gram Sachiv tore the proposal. Sangathan members loudly protested against this, they knew that some Panch, Gram Sachiv & the village watchman were involved in the illicit liquor business hence were opposing their move. Sangathan members immediately approached the district administration. The police raided the premises of those involved in the supply & sale of illicit liquor and arrested few culprits. Enormous pressure & threats were brought on Sangathan but undeterred members continued against those selling liquor in the village. Sangathan patrolled village streets at night and started punishing the drunks also. Soon the problem was under control. Now it is very difficult to find any one selling or abusing alcohol or creating ruckus. Peace prevails.

With this victory over a vice that seemed to have a deathly grip, the Sangathan of Biharipur village is considered an expert and their advice is widely sought. Stories of struggle against rampant illicit sale & abuse of alcohol abound from villages like Jadra, Jagthala, Chandawaas, Khadagwaas, Thothwaal, Chimnawaas, Kadhu, Ashiyaki, Panchor, etc. in the district. At some point in their struggle all Sangathans and Manch seek help from community, Panchayat, police, district administration & media. When this help is not timely, forthcoming or adequate women initiate group action on their own.

Violence against women is an emotive issue with most women. Prior to the Domestic Violence Act it was a grey area, both socially and legally, with not enough support or sympathy for the victim. To address this anomaly in 1997 a group of eleven women leaders from different villages of the district got together for helping women victims of violence fight for justice. The group is called Shakti Parishad and has vowed to help







women victims' of domestic or gender violence, social intolerance, economic injustice and any other form of violent discrimination. The Parishad members act as a pressure group, provide & secure immediate relief and justice for the victim. They lobby with pertinent administrative bodies, legal offices, social and political institutions. To financially assist victims Parishad has initiated a fund called Shakti Kosh.

Aware of the fact that in a patriarchic society violence against women starts even before they are born, in the form of female feticide, all members of the Parishad have sworn not to adopt this practice in their family. They have also motivated all members of SCRIA facilitated self-help support institutions to do the same. Many Sangathan, over the years, have attempted to prevent this evil and on an average deal with 15 to 20 cases per month. They succeed at times in preventing gender specific abortions but often their efforts fail. The twin reasons for failure being that on one hand the preference for male child is so strong that no amount of reasoning, threats or illustrations of the societal problems resulting from skewed gender ratio makes any difference to the family opting for it while on the other gender specific abortions is such a well entrenched business with a large network of "beneficiaries" across wide cross section in the society that preventive initiatives by Sangathan members 'on their own' fail. The situation is disheartening at times but it inspires women to fight more vigorously for the right of life of the unborn girl child.

Women routinely face violence behind closed doors and more often than not suffer in silence without any realistic remedy or relief from those around. Shakti Parishad always encourages Sangathan members and other women to speak, protest and fight against any kind of violence inflicted on them. Parishad members selflessly assist & support victims for justice. One cold December night there was a loud knocking at the door that woke Sushila, Parishad member in village Tankari. She found Laali's two young children standing there crying & shivering in the cold night. The children told Sushila that their father in a drunken stupor had beaten their mother to death and she must come quickly. Sushila immediately contacted couple of Sakriya Sangathan members and rushed to Laali's house where they found Laali breathing but unconscious. Immediate medical care was arranged for Laali while her children were taken to a Sangathan member's house. Next day Sangathan along with women Panch called a village meeting where, unabashed, Laali's husband started blaming her for all their troubles. Others knew better for he was a habitual drunkard and it was not the first time he had resorted to violence. The abusive husband was warned to cease violence against Laali and children otherwise he would "meet the same fate" from twenty eight women in the village. The admonition worked and peace continues in Laali's home.

When young Poonam of Ghaseda village, was badly beaten up for dowry Pushpa and others of



Sakriya Sangathan in the village took lead in resolving the matter. Discussions with Poonam's in laws did not yield any result so the matter was lodged with women's cell at district headquarters. Very soon divorce was finalized and Pushpa encouraged Poonam's parents to remarry her. Today Poonam is happily married. There have been many other such cases where families of victims have requested Parishad and Sangathan's intervention. More often than not solution is found by discussing the matter between the concerned families, without taking recourse to legal action. Though where legal action is required Parishad members do not shy away from it, even when police does not lodge complaints or when influential people are involved in wrongdoing or are supporting the perpetrators.



A man from an influential family raped a young girl of village Turkiyawaas. In spite of all the medico legal evidence pointing towards his involvement the man went scot-free as his family used their influence in evidence tampering. When Revati, Sarpanch & Parishad member from the same village, heard about it she informed others in the Parishad. Nearly 500 women from different villages were mobilized who protested against this travesty. Compelled, the district administration investigated the matter, punished the evidence-tampering doctor and registered a case against the accused. After due legal process the accused man was held guilty & sentenced to seven years in prison. Justice was served.

Marriage of underage girls is another issue against which women groups and federations regularly campaign. Couple of years back when Sakriya Sangathans led by Rajbala in village Mundi were informed about the impending marriage of a 12-year-old girl with a 50-year-old man the members immediately contacted the girl's family who refused to reason. So district administration was informed about the impending marriage. The "groom" was from an affluent & well connected family and no immediate action was taken. Sangathan then reported the matter to National Commission for Women, State Commission for Women & local journalists. This at last stirred the local administration to act and stop the marriage. Sakriya Sangathan in Batori village too could not get timely support from district officials to stop a child marriage in their village. Incensed they have taken recourse to Right to Information act for enquiring about the procedure and process administration has to legally take once informed about an impending child marriage and about the punitive provision when officials do not act in a lawful manner.

Sakriya Manch members of village Jakhala, in the middle of the night woke their Sarpanch Soni as police had raided Sharmila's house ostensibly to search for illicit liquor that was reported to be hidden in that house. For a moment Soni was stunned for she as Sarpanch had no prior information about the raid by the police, which is a mandatory established procedure and secondly because she knew for a fact that Sharmila,







an active Sakriya Sangathan member, was not involved in trading illicit liquor. Just the day before Sharmila and several other women had complained to the police about people in the village who were complicit in illicit liquor trade. Soni immediately went to Sharmila's house. To her dismay she found six police constables, in inebriated state, loudly abusing one and all, pushing people and throwing things. Soni right away told assembled men to lock up the policemen in one room and informed the Superintendent of Police about it. Very soon Deputy Superintendent of Police and other officials reached Jakhala and requested access to the erring personnel, promising departmental enquiry. Soni and rest of the villagers refused point blank. They demanded public apology, instant dismissal and legal action against erring policemen and liquor traders, who had instigated the policemen to take action against Sharmila. Soni, other Panchayat members and villagers agreed to hand over the 6 drunk and rampaging policemen to police only after DSP publicly apologized for the despicable behavior of his departmental colleagues and assured all of strict action against the six.





## EQUALITY of status and of opportunity

In a democracy citizens have fundamental rights and duties along with the privilege of basic essential services and facilities to be provided by government from the myriad of taxes paid by citizens. However, in reality, due to inefficient delivery mechanisms and pervasive corruption in the delivery system these services and facilities are often substandard, insufficient or altogether denied to the citizens. Women groups and federations supported by SCRIA in Rewari district are determined to rectify the deficient mechanisms and corrupt systems.

Few days before Gram Sabha meeting of November 2005 was to take place in Khol village 60 members of Sakriya Sangathan met to discuss and prioritize issues for Sabha. Absentee midwife and lack of doctors & medicines in Public Health Centre in the village topped the agenda, with availability of midwife a prime priority. The veterinary hospital, in a similar state of deprivation & neglect, had vets who never followed fixed work hours regularly causing great hardship in an agrarian community where for many livestock were mainstay of income. This came second on Sangathan's list of issues. The third was the very erratic supply of ration from public distribution system. The ration depot holder, on a regular basis, used to withhold supplies from consumers saying he has not received it from the district. If somebody persisted he would verbally abuse & physically push them away from his shop.

Sixty Sakriya Sangathan members with 40 other women attended Gram Sabha. There were 150 men also in the Sabha. The village Sarpanch, Shiv Narayan, has progressive attitude and is keen on including people in the village development process, hence there was such a large turnout of people. Sarpanch invited women to initiate proceedings with their issues. Seema, Draupadi, Prem & Geeta on behalf of all women presented the three concerns. Sarpanch confessed to being unaware of the problem and complimented the Manch for bringing it up to everyone's attention. He immediately proposed a resolution demanding immediate corrective action from health department on the issue of absentee midwife and the deplorable condition of the general hospital. While the assembled were deliberating on the resolutions for Veterinary hospital and PDS, the vet and the depot holder publicly apologized for their neglect and conduct, urging people to give them a chance to improve. The people did that and to prevent a reoccurrence formed an oversight committee of six members to monitor public services in the village. All members of the committee were nominated from the Sangathan, as it was the Sangathan who had highlighted the glaring aberration in public service systems. The committee is functioning and reports to the Panchayat on a monthly basis and to the village during Gram Sabha. The condition of various public services in the village has improved though at times the committee has to resort to 'arm-twisting'.







Likewise, in Balwaadi village fed up with unresponsive and uncaring attitude of service - facilities provider Panchayat sought clarifications from erring officials through Right to Information act on work delays, continuing from one year to the next. Applications were sent to electricity board; telephone department and BDPO. After receiving the request the erring officials took immediate action - electricity department reduced their cost estimate for a job by 1/3<sup>rd</sup>, people from telephone department did the needful & BDPO officials completed work on unfinished drain. All did the work before the expiry of 30 days by which information had to be provided by the departments.

For two months village Kharkada had no electricity. Sarpanch Sumitra had been incessantly trying to get the electricity board replace the burnt out wires and transformer, but to no avail. During a meeting of Sakriya Manch when members asked Sumitra about the progress in restoring electricity she narrated her frustrating experience with unresponsive officials. Poonam, Manch Adhyaksha, proposed a protest demonstration at electricity board office in Dharuhera to which all agreed. Next day, early in the morning more than 60 women in tractor trolleys reached Dharuhera. They lambasted the officials for not treating citizens' complaints earnestly. Sumitra wanted to know "whether the officials were servants of the public or was public their servant?" Sensing deep anger in women, officials apologized for tardiness and promised quick redressal of their problem. And within 24 hours the damaged cable and transformer of village Kharkada were replaced and electricity resumed.

Sakriya Manch members of village Mirpur realized that the area habited by socially disadvantaged and landless community in the village suffer from longer power cuts than the rest of the village as that area was serviced by a very low capacity transformer which kept on tripping. It was a long-standing problem, totally ignored by electricity department. The members approached the district authorities, brought the problem to their notice. The very next day electricity board officials installed a higher capacity transformer and scheduled power supply resumed. Similarly in Khol village the Indira Awas Colony, an area where landless families lived, did not have any transformer of its own. The colony was provided electricity from another part of the village. The supply cables passed from the houses of rich & influential families who had numerous illegal hook-ups on the cable. For 20-25 days in a month the area remained powerless. Repeated complaints to electricity board official had no effect hence Sakriya Manch members organized a mass protest by blocking a busy road passing from the village. In no time police and senior district officials reached Khol, patiently listened to peoples' grievance assuring all of quick solution. Within 3 days a separate transformer for the Colony was installed.

During agriculture season 7-8 hours of power supply is regulated for irrigation purpose. But



farmers in Tankri village did not get electricity for specified hours and their crops started wilting. The two linemen of electricity board were usually drunk on duty and complaints did not make any difference. Fed up, Rukmani, Sangathan leader, filed an application under Right to Information act seeking answers about electricity schedule, employees code of conduct and about disciplinary proceedings. Soon Sangathan received answers and they approached district officials for assistance. This resulted in the recall of negligent employees from the village, posting of new employees and electricity resumption. Panchayat acknowledged the determination and resourcefulness of Sangathan. Few months later when Sangathan proposed to introduce rainwater harvesting - for drinking and ground water recharging, at community level in the village, Panchayat supported the move wholeheartedly. Now Tankri and neighboring Rajgarh are two villages in the district where Sangathans have introduced rainwater harvesting at community level.

Haluhera and Chandawaas villages shared a common problem. For the past one year water supply to scheduled caste residents' colony was as good as nil. The influential people in the village were drawing everybody's share of water and Panchayat was unable or unwilling to resolve the issue. Sakriya Manch & Sangathan members approached Public Health Department officials at district headquarters demanding immediate restoration of water supply in their colony failing which they promised to hold a protest demonstration. Within a week in both villages, water that was pending for more than a year was restored. Most Sangathans and Manch in the district have taken steps to rectify the problem of irregular, insufficient or inequitable water supply in the villages.

Maya, Sarpanch of Teent village is a postgraduate. Her family asked her to contest elections so she contested and won. But she had no goals or ambition for the development of village during her tenure and let her husband manage her official responsibilities. However, members of the two Sakriya Sangathans in the village motivated her to take interest in Panchayat activities and encouraged her to attend meetings and capacity building initiatives facilitated by SCRIA. Soon Maya got involved in various social, political & development issues of the village. Once while prioritizing development issues Sangathan members felt the urgent need to address the sorry state of sanitation in the village. This was brought up in Gram Sabha and Maya proposed a "village free from open defecation" plan whereby all in the village would construct & use sanitary toilets. Though the proposal received mixed response Maya with Sangathan members met and convinced all village residents into adopting the plan. It took more than a year to implement it but it was done. Teent became the first village in the district where all houses have planned sanitation facility. Sakriya Sangathans in many more villages are motivating people to adopt and use sanitary toilets and practice environmental sanitation.







In the summer of 2006 a peripheral road in Khaleta village was being laid. During a review Sangathan members found that inferior quality material and a substandard ratio of cement mixture was been used for the construction. As Panchayat expressed helplessness in the matter Sangathan members along with two women Panch approached district authorities and urged for corrective action. Before long, DDPO reviewed the quality of work, found lapses and ordered reconstruction of the road.

In 1990 Mirpur village Panchayat donated 125 acres of Panchayat land for a regional center of a state university. Sixteen years hence nothing was done about university and Panchayat too was not able to use the land for revenue generating purpose. In 2006 Panchayat, not getting any response on the impasse from the officials, requested the help of Sakriya Manch. After intense deliberations it was decided to approach High Court on the matter. This stirred the government to act and now construction work has been initiated. In village Sundroj there is one school with three teachers, who often remained absent and when they attended school they were busy knitting while children were engaged in keeping the premise clean and in fetching water. During Gram Sabha Sangathan members brought up the dismal state of education in school & resolved to take up the matter with district education officials. But before Panchayat could act the teachers apologized and promised a more responsible & accountable behavior.



Panch Shakuntla of Mohanpur, wanted to raise the issue of 'non functional' Anganwadi in the Panchayat meeting but as a 'low caste woman' she was not welcomed in Panchayat meetings. Sakriya Manch members suggested her to raise the issue in Gram Sabha. Shakuntla did just that as a result of which a subcommittee for the supervision of Anganwadi & school was formed. Shakuntla & two Manch members were its members. Many men present in the Sabha protested vociferously against Shakuntla's inclusion in the committee but Manch members shouted them down. Next day Shakuntla along with other committee members inspected the Anganwadi and found it lacking in every way. The Anganwadi was immediately shifted to primary school and its worker was given a warning with a chance to improve things. Teachers in the primary school were also asked to carry out their responsibilities in good faith and keep the committee informed about school issues. Anganwadi in Mohanpur has been working well since then. Shakuntla and her committee members regularly inspect Anganwadi and mid day meal program in the school. In village Basduda, Bimla, Sakriya Sangathan Adhyaksha & Parishad member, raised the issue of gross irregularities in Anganwadi program. She complained to officials and when attempts were made to hush up the matter she took Panchayat and concerned district officials to task.



## Promote among all people FRATERNITY

“We women are already ahead of you and now want to bring you people ahead so that development in villages takes place in earnest” responded Rajbala of Dungarwaas, during a Gram Sabha in their village, to Social Education & Panchayat Officer's comment on how women should come forward for development work. Apart from activating Gram Sabhas & Panchayats, tackling social issues concerning women, forcing dilapidated and deficient public services - facilities to deliver and compelling public authorities to be more responsible towards their duties the women members of SCRIA supported people's institutions have in many ways influenced the functioning, strategy and decisions of state & district administration. At district level, there is a palpable increase in responsiveness among officials towards citizens' needs though things have not yet reached a stage where the administration is overtly proactive regarding inclusiveness or accountability in governance and development.

Since the summer of 2006 the Deputy Commissioner of Rewari district and other officials are striving to ensure that the officials concerned with Gram Sabha fulfill their responsibilities. When district officials are approached by people about discrepancies or irregularities in the facilitation of Gram Sabha or in public services more often than not the matter is looked into and addressed immediately.

In October 2006 over 400 women from SCRIA facilitated people's institutions - Sakriya Sangathans, Sakriya Manch and Sakriya Pratinidhi - contacted administration officials at district & block level urging them to step up their efforts in realizing the goal of meaningful self governance by ensuring that proper arrangements are made for women to participate and articulate their issues in Gram Sabha. They forwarded a copy of their demand to the Directorate of Development & Panchayats. In February 2007 the directorate asked officials in all districts of the state to ensure participation of women Sangathan members in the Gram Sabha, provide conducive arrangements and opportunities for them to articulate their viewpoint. However, the immediate and most visible impact of women influencing the decision of the government is reflected in the resurvey ordered for identifying families that are “below poverty line”. In February 2007 results of Below Poverty Line survey, done few years back, were displayed in the villages for public scrutiny. All women Sangathans and federations took responsibility for ensuring the inclusion of genuinely poor families in the BPL list of their respective villages. In most villages gaping anomalies were found as nearly fifty percent of those included in the list were families with access to sustainable sources of income and property.





सच्चे प्रजातन्त्र के लिए 110 गाँवों के जागरूक महिलाओं, युवाओं व किसानों को महेन्द्रगढ़ लोकसभा चुनाव क्षेत्र के उम्मीदवारों से चाहिए कुछ सवाल के जवाब

न कोई ठग न कोई झूठा

चाहिए एक नेक और सच्चा सांसद जनाब  
वोट मिलेगा सिर्फ उसी को जो देगा हमारे इन सवालों के सही जवाब  
एक सौ दस जागरूक गाँवों की जनता ने मिलकर ये आवाज है उठाई  
जो देगा सही जवाब हमारे इन सवालों के हम उसी के साथ हैं भाई

### अति महत्वपूर्ण सवाल

1. बिजली, पानी की कब तक पहुंचे यहाँ परेशानों?
2. प्रशासकीय कब तक पहुंचे इस मण्डल के निवासियों?
3. कब दोगे इस क्षेत्र के लोगों को नौकरों व स्वरोज्जागार के अवसर?
4. कब और कितना खर्च करेंगे तुम इस क्षेत्र को नए में?

### अन्य महत्वपूर्ण सवाल

1. कब दोगे महिलाओं को संसद और विधानसभा में आरक्षण?
2. कब मिलेगा बहु और वोटियों को सुरक्षा और सही सम्मान?
3. कब लाओगे मुक्तकान किसानों के इन कुरबान बंधनों पर?
4. संसद निर्धन से इस क्षेत्र में कितना विकास कराओगे?

मत करो झूठे वादे मत लाओ इन पर आश्वासन की टोकरी  
वोट मिलेगा अब उसी को जो देगा बिजली, पानी और नौकरी  
मत जोड़ो हाथ, मत लगाओ घर-घर और गाँव-गाँव में फेरी  
लाओ सही मायने में प्रजातन्त्र, रामराज्य में ही न अब कोई देरी  
पहले इन सब कुरबानियों पर ठीक तरह से जाँच परखने जाओगे  
तभी हम महिलाओं, युवाओं व किसानों का बहुमत वोट तुम जाओगे

**सक्रिय महिला, युवा व किसान संगठन**  
**जिला रेवाड़ी व महेन्द्रगढ़ के गाँव**

क्र.	पंचायत	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति
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19	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति
20	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति	समिति

As before most of the real poor were left out. The significance of the BPL categorization in the lives of rural deprived, for getting out of the quagmire of poverty by availing numerous state benefits, is immense. Focusing on the implication and consequence of 'wrong selection' vocal and written protests from a large number of villages were conveyed to the Panchayats and the district administration. Apparently there was some protest in other parts of the state also and Government of Haryana announced a fresh survey. The process of resurvey began in April this year and women Sangathans and federations are vigilant about fairness and impartiality.

Apart from promoting inclusiveness in Panchayati Raj Institutions SCRIA also works for qualitatively enhancing people's participation in governance process at state and national levels. Women are actively encouraged to be a part of larger picture of governance, for self-governance is not and must not be limited to Panchayati Raj Institutions. During parliamentary and assembly elections women & men from 110 villages prepared a development charter and asked the candidates to present their views on it. This took most of the candidates by surprise, even prompting some of the "established" candidates to leave midway while canvassing in villages. Women are also motivated to join political parties, as per their political persuasion, assume position of responsibilities and be effective change agents. Presently many dozen women have taken membership of various political parties in the district and eight have become office bearers. It is hoped that over a period of time these women, with their high degree of commitment towards inclusive and accountable governance, will make political parties more citizen centric and responsive to citizens' needs thus not limiting the role of citizens to being 'vote banks'.

Though the task of making democracy and development process inclusive and accountable is immense a beginning has been made for people's participation in it as equals. A large number of women have decided to make certain that their right to development includes a process of development that is democratic, decentralized, inclusive, transparent, accountable & comprehensive. It cannot be a process that is "top down" or conceived or implemented without the fullest degree of popular participation at all levels. They have solemnly resolved to "impart to our democracy fullness, vitality and comprehensiveness so that its fruits & benefits are shared and enjoyed by the vast majority of the people of India".





### Some others in the district leading various social political initiatives

#### Sakriya Manch

Bairampur	Ladhuwas
Balawaas	Maliyaki
Berli Khurd	Mirpur
Biharipur	Mohammadpur
Bolni	Mundi
Budhpur	Nangal teju
Chimnawas	Narayanpur
Dakhora	Nimoth
Dhani Thethrabad	Padla
Didoli	Pithanwaas
Dungarwas	Shabaazpura
Haluheda	Shadipur
Jakhala	Suma Kheda
Jatuwas	Taankri
Khaleta	Titarpur
Khol	& 80 more villages

#### Sakriya Pratinidhi

53 women Panch  
20 women Sarpanch  
18 women members of Block Samiti  
4 women members of Zila Parishad  
9 women as office bearers in political parties

#### Sakriya Panchayats

In 37 villages

#### Shakti Parishad- 26 members

Several men, Gram Sabha members & elected representatives of PRIs', actively support women in their quest for inclusive, comprehensive and accountable governance

#### Sakriya Sangathans

Ashiyaki	Ibrahimpur
Bagthala	Jadra
Berli Kalan	Jatuwas
Bhateda	Jharoda
Bhotwaas	Kharkhada
Bhurthala	Lala
Bikaner	Lisana
Budana	Manethi
Chitadungra	Pithanwaas
Chowki no 2	Ramgarh
Dhani Santo	Rajgarh
Dharchaana	Sahranwas
Ghaseda	Sanjharpur
Gothda	Tehna
Gujriwas	Tothwaal
Gumina	& 131 more villages

***More than 3400 women in the district are involved in bringing inclusiveness and accountability in the functioning of democracy and development process***



## Glossary

<b>Aam Sabha</b>	General body meeting of Sakriya Sangh
<b>Abhiyaan</b>	Campaign
<b>Adhyaksha</b>	Group leader, chairperson
<b>Anganwadi</b>	Child care centre
<b>BDPO</b>	Block & development Panchayat office/officer
<b>Block Samiti</b>	Block level PRI for self governance
<b>DC</b>	Deputy Commissioner; administrative Incharge at district level
<b>DDPO</b>	District development & Panchayat office/officer
<b>Gram Panchayat</b>	Village Council- a constitutional body at villages for village governance; its members are elected for a period of 5 years
<b>Gram Sabha</b>	A primary unit of self governance in the villages comprising of all residents
<b>Manch</b>	Sakriya Manch in short - Literally meaning a platform in Hindi
<b>Panch</b>	Elected member of Gram Panchayat
<b>Panchayat</b>	Gram Panchayat in short, but the term is also used for informal councils of homogenous social groups
<b>PRIs'</b>	Panchayat Raj Institutions - A three tier body for self governance at village, block & district level; comprising of Gram Panchayat, Block Samiti & Zilla Parishad
<b>PIM</b>	Participatory impact monitoring
<b>Samiti</b>	Nirnaayak Samiti in short
<b>Sangh</b>	Cluster level federating unit of Sakriya Sangh
<b>Sakriya Manch</b>	Intra village network of women groups promoted by SCRIA, literally meaning active platform
<b>Sakriya Panchayat</b>	Gram Panchayats working actively for inclusive & accountable governance
<b>Sakriya Pratinidhi</b>	Active elected representative of people
<b>Sakriya Sangh</b>	District level federating body of women groups facilitated by SCRIA
<b>Sakriya Sangathans</b>	Women groups promoted by SCRIA
<b>Sangathans</b>	Groups
<b>Sarpanch</b>	Head of Gram Panchayat; elected by residents of concerned village
<b>SCRIA</b>	Social Centre for Rural Initiative & Advancement
<b>Shakti Kosh</b>	A fund to financially assist women victims of violence; fund is managed by Shakti Parishad
<b>Shakti Parishad</b>	Group of women leaders helping women victims of violence fight for justice
<b>SP</b>	Superintendent of Police - Head of district police
<b>Zila Parishad</b>	District level PRI for self governance



## SCRIA at a glance

### Vision

Sustainable rural development by rural communities

### Mission

Building capacities of rural communities for their active & meaningful participation in self governance processes

### Outreach

Villages in the districts of Rewari, Mohindergarh, Jhajjar, Gurgaon in Southern Haryana and Alwar, Bikaner, Churu in Northern Rajasthan in northwest India

### Development initiatives

#### ***Svashaasan* Self Governance**

Women *sangathans* for social & economic justice

Women in self-governance processes

Men & youth mobilization for good governance & social change

#### ***Samridhi* Prosperity**

Promotion of rural entrepreneur & crafts person

Micro finance

Fair trade

#### ***Sampada Prakritik* Natural Resources**

Water harvesting & conservation

Soil conservation

Vegetation -plantation & regeneration

Alternate energy - extension & research

### Partners in progress

\*11000 volunteers in 730 villages \* Asahi India \* Australian High Commission \* British High Commission \* Canadian High Commission \* Canadian Hunger Foundation \* CAPART \* Canadian International Development Agency \* Department of Science & Technology \* District Rural Development Agency \* CTM- Italy \* Embassy of Federal Republic of Germany \* Embassy of Japan \* Embassy of Sweden \* European Union \* Friedrich Ebert Stiftung \* German Agro Action \* GTZ \* Habitat for Humanity International \* Helpage \* Indian Council for Agricultural Research \* Indo Global Social Service Society \* Industrial Development Bank of India \* Ministry of Environment & Forest \* Ministry of Non Conventional Energy Sources \* Ministry of Panchayati Raj \* Ministry of Rural Development \* Misereor \* NABARD \* One Village - U.K. \* Oxfam - U.K. \* Rashtriya Mahila Kosh \* Rotary India Water Conservation Trust \* Royal Norwegian Embassy \* Small Industries Development Bank of India \* Solidar' Monde \* Swedish International Development Agency \* UNDP \* Youthreach



## We, The Women

hereby solemnly resolve to  
reconstitute our society into a

**DEMOCRATIC, E**QUALITARIAN

**I**NCLUSIVE social order

And to secure to all, women & others

**J**USTICE social, economic and political

**L**IBERTY of thought, expression  
belief and to vote

**E**QUALITY of status and of opportunity

And to promote among all people

**F**RATERNITY assuring the dignity of women  
and the unity & integrity of the society

In our midst we do hereby adopt, enact and  
give to ourselves this resolution



**SOCIAL CENTRE FOR  
RURAL INITIATIVE &  
ADVANCEMENT**

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### **Main Office Rajasthan**

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