

Sankalp Society ~ Rajasthan: Tribal Upliftment

Site: Mamoni (Dist. Baran) Years supported: Six 2017-18 Funding: Rs. 12,24,000
Scope: Preserving livelihoods and forest, Tribal welfare, Freeing bonded laborers
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Sankalp (literally meaning solemn vow, determination) is a group of social workers determined to make a difference in the lives of tribal communities in South East Rajasthan near the border with Madhya Pradesh. IFA supports their women's group called the Jagrat Mahila Sangathan (JMS) meaning the enlightened, awakened Women's organization. This year, their work area will be expanded from 50 villages to 75 villages in the Shahbaad and Kishanganj blocks of Baran district covering families mostly from the Sahariya tribe.

The most powerful impact of this association is the awakening and empowerment of these communities in exercising their rights and in availing of the government entitlement schemes.



JMS leaders interacting with the community women

The leaders of JMS are all from within the community. Once they earn the trust of the community and are able to mobilize the women to rally for a cause, the corrupt officials and shopkeepers are forced to correct the fraud they were committing on these unsuspecting, uneducated tribal people.

Main activities

MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act): Enabling workers to demand work under this scheme and ensuring that they get the Job cards needed to obtain work under the scheme. They further work to ensure that the wages for work done are received by the person in a timely manner.

Pension Schemes: Obtaining pension for the deserving elderly, disabled and widows under the various schemes.

Indra Awas Yojna: Under this scheme the poor are given funds to make homes for themselves. The money is given in installments to prevent misuse. It is released in steps after completion of various stages of construction to ensure that the funds are actually used for building the home. Unfortunately, the reality is that the money is not released unless a bribe is given to the corrupt officials. JMS intervenes as a group to get the installments to the families without bribes.

Food Rations: Ensuring the correct amount of subsidized grains are given to the people at the correct time intervals.

Women's education and empowerment: Workshops are conducted for women to deal with domestic violence, hygiene, disadvantages of child marriages etc. The leaders get personally involved as needed in specific situations.

Bonded Labor: Freeing and rehabilitating people from lifelong bonded labor status based on fraudulent accounting of loans taken by their forefathers.



Tribal community women holding their MNREGA job cards

JMS uses its reputation and collective power of masses through marches and sit-ins (Dharna) to get authorities to pay attention to their demands of justice and equality. IFA members have visited Sankalp in the past and met with members during the annual meeting in India in Nov. 2017 and receive progress reports from them. We hope to continue support of this important work and help them expand. ♦

~ Prepared by Jyoti Sahai