

# *Annual Progress Report* *2017-18*



**SAHAJ SANSTHAN**

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#### About Sahaj:

Sahaj Sansthan is not-for-profit organization and registered under Rajasthan Society Registration Act 1958 in Feb 2000. Sahaj also registered under Foreign contribution and regulation act (FCRA) and Section 80G: Income Tax Deductions for Donations.

Sahaj has been working in Rajasthan from last 18 years, focusing on ending poverty and social injustice. Overall goal is to empowerment of less heard people. We facilitate the empowerment of people from poor and marginalized communities in the fight to overcome poverty, exclusion and social injustice.

Our practices are:

- Doing efforts to reduce poverty for improving life with dignity
- Improving community health, nutrition and education services
- Empowering women and girls
- Growing community capacity and skills
- Preventing crisis, enabling disaster resilience communities

Sahaj is empaneled organization by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, India and working with our valued partners including Traditional medicinal, women serve, Punj Lloyd, USHA , ILFS, SUMA, CASA-RAJMERU. Our current strengths includes:

- Currently working with 7 partners and more then 7 projects anytime
- Reached across 6 districts of western Rajasthan (Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Barmer, and Nagaur) and 1 district in Punjab

- Regular ongoing activities in more than 230 villages in from last 3 year
- 12 regular staff , 201 worker, community volunteer cum tutor in current time
- More than 1.25 crore turn over on 2017-18
- 2 field offices in Rajasthan and 1 in Punjab

### **USHA Silai School Project:**

The project aims to work with the women in the villages and believes that helping women develop their inherent latent potentialities would bring about a holistic development for the society at large. In the last four years Sahaj through their Silai School Program has reached out to remote villages across the western Rajasthan with support of USHA International. This is a community based initiative with the aim of empowering village women to become entrepreneurs and teach sewing and stitching within the precincts of their homes. This programme is necessarily “inclusive” in character, thereby implying that the programme is implemented for the economically poor irrespective of caste, class, religion or creed.



As on March 2018, Sahaj in partnership with USHA is running 181 Silai Schools (Classical- 46 Satellite- 135) in all the 3 districts of Rajasthan. Sahaj has trained (in stitching, tailoring and repairing of machines) all these village women entrepreneurs, provided them a sewing machine, a syllabus and a Silai School signage and encouraged them to teach other community women the art of stitching and sewing. The trainings have been conducted in their vernacular language with the syllabus available in the same language. More than 1300

learners have completed their course from Silai Schools and nearly 1000 learners continue to get sewing skills training every day from these schools. The schools are making a marked difference in the lives of the women. The women, on an average have started earning Rs. 3000/- per month, with the highest earning going up to Rs.18,000/- per month. This earning, though small, at the moment is working as a catalyst in building the self-confidence of women and raising her status within and outside the family. This financial income and increased self-worth is facilitating in creation of empowered change agents in the villages of India.

The positive results from the Silai Schools in the villages have created a lot enthusiasm amongst the people in the adjoining Silai School villages too. There is an increased demand from the community about starting Silai Schools in the nearby villages and hence the concept of starting the Satellite Silai Schools (SSS) have been started from Aug 2014. Under the SSS model, Silai Schools would be started by any women knowing sewing and stitching (preferably a learner from the existing Silai School) in the neighbouring village. She would then start teaching others or doing job work. Sahaj would do the capacity building of this women as per need in the village.

#### **Health and nutrition programme:**

Sahaj Implementing health and nutrition project in Baap block with the support of Traditional Medicinal. The project aims to strengthen health and nutrition services in the target area. Sahaj developed 4 model Anganwadi centre, strengthen front line health workers capacity and skills. Also generating awareness on health and nutrition issues through different types community events.





Sahaj also done capacity building of asha, anganwadi and ANM on a topic decided (mutually as per training needs of local staff) training sessions would be undertaken. Topics would be relevant to ToR of AWC like Early Childhood Education, supplementary nutrition, malnutrition, recording of data in the registers and the Mother Child Protection Card, early detection and intervention of developmental delays, tips for improving inter personal counseling and community mobilization etc. AWC team would be provided basic training on caring for children under six.

Under the project, the infrastructure of the intervention AWC assessed and done necessary minor renovation and modernization would be done. Supplementation of PSE Kit & Learning Materials given at Anganwadi centre.

The Anganwadi centre enabled with IEC and all other required materials. The regular activities also facilitate by team sahaj on regular basis.

## Revive project

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The Revive! Project supports farming families of the Thar Desert in Rajasthan, India which depend on the cultivation of the medicinal plant *Sonamukhi* (senna). This organic agricultural project is being implemented by WomenServe (WS), Sahaj Sansthan (SS) and Traditional Medicinals Foundation (TMF), with support from Martin Bauer (MB), Umalaxmi (UL), and Traditional Medicinals (TM).

The long-term goal of the project is to create a social business partnership focused on the reduction of poverty through organic farming that can be replicated in other communities in the Thar Desert and around the world. To accomplish this goal, the Revive! Project has identified five primary objectives: water/food security, health/hygiene, education, community development and women's empowerment.

Gender inequality and the low social status of women in the Thar Desert are the result of a repressive culture that has existed for centuries. Often confined to their homes and veiled in purdah, many women are denied family decision making and participation in their

communities. With minimal personal rights and patriarchal succession of land ownership, young girls can be forced in to child marriage and their families subjected to the financially devastating system of dowry. Girls are often underfed, malnourished and anemic. Impacted as well by a horrific shortage of water, girls and women are subjugated in to manual labor, often carrying 25 pounds of water many miles a day in desert temperatures reaching 130 degrees. In addition to limited access to health care, girls can have face barriers to attending school and there is 85% female illiteracy in the region.

Revive! Project partners share the belief that the desert's greatest underdeveloped resource are its women, and that removing barriers to their empowerment is fundamental to the success of every objective of the Revive! Project.

### **PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAMME:**

Agricultural Business with a Social Purpose:

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**Women empowerment is the very focused area of work under Revive**

### **PROGRAMME Objectives**

- Form and strengthen the organization and self-reliance of six senna farming communities (approximately 12,000 people).
- Improve water security through the harvesting, storage and treatment of rainwater using traditional and sustainable technologies (taankas, khadins and naadis).
- Enhance food security by developing khadin (field embankments) water storage, family gardens (horticultural units), community seed banks, and agriculture training.
- Ensure livestock security through the development of fodder cooperatives, pasture lands, stud bull centers, veterinarian health services and animal husbandry trainings.
- Remove barriers to women's empowerment through the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs), leadership & vocational trainings, and financial support utilizing community banking.
- Improve community health through hygiene education, the training of Village Health Workers (VHW) and midwives, mobile medical camps, and the provision of health services



(ANC & immunizations, pre-& post-natal check-ups, TB screenings, and cataract eye care/surgeries).

- Provide education through the construction of primary and middle schools, teacher trainings, English & computer literacy, and access to secondary education (including student transportation, college scholarships and night school classes.)
- Construct Community Resource Centers (CRCs) which provide clean, protected storage for the organic senna (including senna seed storage) during harvest times and facilitate village meetings for education, health care, enterprise and community development.
- Organize farmer clubs, deliver training in agricultural best practices, provide access to farm equipment & technology and distribute improved quality organic senna seed.
- Produce academic based studies, both agriculture and social, that evaluates, measure, and guides the progress and outcome of the Revive! Project.

## **COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAMME:**

### **EMPOWERED WOMEN = EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES**

After witnessing these conditions, we began imagining a different future for women and their families. We realized that by providing women with empowerment opportunities, we could help secure the social and economic futures of these villages. The Revive Project began by setting up Village Development Communities (VDCs) in each of the six villages to assist in implementing projects, conducting trainings, and allocating community assets. Represented by all castes, genders, and socio-economic groups, the VDCs represent the communities' voice and provide structure for decision-making. Using contributions from TM and our Revive Project partners, the six villages of Khidrat, Kan Singh Ki Sid, Sodadhada, Nayagaon, Khara and Dayakaur —over 12,000 people—have the potential to enjoy newly written destinies.

### **Some of our Women empowerment initiatives of 2017-18 as given:**

#### **THE SELF HELP GROUP MODEL**

While educating the next generation is essential, the project has also funded ongoing financial and vocational training for women in 18 self-Help Groups (SHGs) that serve approximately 185 adult females. The women who choose to participate in SHGs hail from a variety of castes, ages, and socio-economic groups to represent a wide range of diversity. SHG members receive vocational trainings, from financial planning to traditional handicrafts, and have increased access to savings and micro-loans. These SHGs are part of a movement that is providing a platform for women's voices and their participation in their communities. Through the SHG project under Revive Programme, we generated the awareness for their own savings, interloaning, bank linkages & self employment of the rural women of the six villages. We also conducted the management trainings for their skill &

knowledge development about the project. Through the vocational training we tried to make them empowered for their own business establishment.

#### Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of groups trained	Total training conducted	Total Women trained	Focus aspect of training
SHG financial management training	6	2 Times	60	To increased the knowledge to handling the internal financial process
SHG vocation training	16	4 times	132	To make them skilled for the home based products for their self business
SHG Leadership training	18	1time	185	To increased the knowledge about the SHG functioning
SHG meetings	198	11 months	185	For regularity & functioning the groups



### **|SHGs training for leadership development& vocational training**

**Thar Artisan Collective Training:** For the Women Empowerment, WomenServe has been initiated this project for the Self Income generation of the Rural Women through learning & skill development. Through the TAC trainings WS trying to link them with the self income generation & skill development, so that they will feel capable enough to earning for their families & take some self decision for their families. TAC project has launched in two remote villages of Jodhpur district as Kan Singh kisidh&Nayagaon as a pilot phase.

Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of Trainings conducted	No of villages	Total Women trained	Focus aspect of training
TAC training	4	2 villages	128	Self sustain as a earning member of Family



### **Thar artisan collective training for self income generation for women**

#### **Village Health Workers (Women worker for Village Health improvement)**

In Phase Four the Revive! Project began training Village Health Workers and equipping them with basic first aid kits and medical supplies. The VHWs attend births, serve as midwives, and with specialized training in women's health issues, many desert women are for the first time benefiting from health care. These VHWs also provide much needed rural care to men and children as well, and they are quickly becoming respected leaders in their communities. In Phase Four Sahaj Sansthan will recruit and train more women as Village Health Workers and the trainings will continue to expand into more specialized areas of treatment.

Chronic unattended health problems, female illiteracy and numerous cultural obstacles often prevent village women from having the same rights and benefits enjoyed by men. Now unified through the Self Help Group program these women are learning to take charge of their health, becoming trained and educated, and are joining together through matching grant community banking to initiate micro enterprise. With the success of the SHG program thus far, significant expansion (both in membership and funding) has been planned for Phase Four.

Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of Trainings conducted	No of villages	Total Women trained	Focus aspect of training
VHWs training	7	6	18	To improved the health facilities in the villages





## Capacity development trainings of Revive Village Health Workers

### IMPROVED HEALTH & HYGIENE AWARENESS

The remote location of these senna communities makes accessing healthcare challenging for most families and especially women. To address this gap, the Revive Project funds mobile medical camps, the construction of public toilets and health awareness classes to bring greater knowledge and education around health and hygiene for the villagers. The Revive Project's comprehensive health program trains village women as village health workers (VHWs), helping them to care for village families while assuming an important role in their communities. By learning basic first-aid and midwifery, many VHWs have become respected leaders and contributed to improved maternal and infant health.

Revive Project partner contributions have also led to the construction of three large Community Resource Centers (CRCs), which serve as meeting places for trainings, medical camps, and economic development, as well as food, crop, and grain warehouses.

**Family planning camp:** Under the Health project & supported by Sahaj Sansthan, The Family planning project launched in Bhatt Community in Nayagaon. Bhatt is a type of community having low ratio of education, birth control & low living standard as health, sanitation & hygiene.



## Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of Trainings conducted	No of villages	Total Women trained	Focus aspect of training
Family Planning camp	3	1	25	Improved the quality of living of the very deprive community

**School Hygiene camp:** Under the Health project, Revive conducting the school hygiene camp in the 5 Revive schools for the awareness of health, sanitation & hygiene, we also support to increase the awareness for regular hair cutting & nail cutting of the children. Through these camps we conduct the one day health based programme in the schools.

Initiation	No of Trainings conducted	No of villages	Total no. beneficiaries	Focus aspect of training
School hygiene camp	5	5 Revive schools	742 Girls & boys	Increased the level of awareness about health, hygiene & sanitation



**Initiations for Schools Hygiene camp**

## ENHANCED FOOD & WATER SECURITY

Given the dense population of the Thar at roughly 22.5 million inhabitants, food and water are at a premium. To take advantage of what little rain the Thar receives; the Revive Project has built 365 *taankas* (underground rainwater catchments) to equip individual households with water for families and livestock. Named for the female recipient of each household, they are a symbolic tribute to women's traditional role in securing water for their families and have proved helpful in raising the status and dignity of women.

The Revive Project also built 145 large *khadins* (agricultural rainwater catchments) to help with senna and millet irrigation. In addition to protecting against soil erosion, *khadins* nourish crops and increase yields, improving the incomes and nutrition of desert farmers. The project also funded the renovation, desilting, and expansion of six community *naadis* (large rainwater catchment ponds). As one of the largest sources of water for desert dwellers, *naadis* are an essential lifeline for humans and livestock alike. Through the Revive Project's contributions, villagers now have improved access to water and food security, health and hygiene, and a more equitable way to bring people of all castes together.

To boost food security, the Revive Project constructed and installed 170 family gardens, planted two village pastures and established five stud bull centers to improve herd genetics and invigorate milk production. To further efforts, the Revive Project team is collaborating with agricultural scientists to raise awareness and education around organic senna farming practices—vital to preserving the traditional cultivation of this precious plant and the economic stability of the region.

#### Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of Taanka/training	No of villages	Total no of benefited	Focus aspect of training
Taanka construction	62	6	434 family members	Improved the water security
Water security training	6	6	62 Families	Awareness for water security plan

As the taanka construction in the year 2017-18 Revive also focused to repair those taanka having the leakage problem with the contributed by the beneficiaries.

#### Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of Taanka	No of villages	Total no of benefited	Focus aspect of training
Taanka repairing	19	5	133 family members	Secured the water storage system for long term



### **During the taanka digging & construction, community meeting for Taanka**

**Animal Vaccination Camp:** After the agriculture animal husbandry is the most important livelihood options of these areas. So Under the Revive programme, we conducted the animal vaccination camp before the monsoon to save the animals from the deceases. After vaccination the community will increased the milk production & that is the important step for their livelihood security. We also conduct the farmers meeting for awareness about animal production as milk, paneer & other income generation activities, not only that our expert provide them the free medicines for their animals too.



### Animal Vaccination camp

Initiation	No of Taanka	No of villages	Total no of benefited	Focus aspect of training
Animal vaccination camp	4	4	420 people	Increased the milk production too secured the lively hood option

### EDUCATION, SCHOOLS & BICYCLES

To date, the Revive Project has built five elementary and middle schools to educate roughly 950 young people—nearly half of whom are girls. Considering that 85% of the Thar's women are illiterate, having such a high student population of girls is an impetus for change for these remote communities. To accommodate the vast distances between families and secondary schools, the project has provided nearly 450 bicycles mostly to girls to help keep them in school longer and improve the status of the community's impoverished youth.

Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of scholarship	No of villages	Total no of benefited	Focus aspect of training
Bicycle Scholarship	150	6	150 students	To support the Girls education





### **Bicycle scholarship to the Girls for their continuation of education**

**Girls Exposure Visit:** As we know that the education ratio of the girls are very low & due to conservative mentality, the majority of the communities are not allowing their girls for the higher education in the collages. So we took the initiative to motivate the girls as well as their parents & community leaders we conducted an exposure visit to the women collage in Jodhpur & the students & teachers given them the motivation for the higher education & also some of the girls has presented their dreams come true have the education in the collages to the girls of the Revive villages, may this help the girls & communities to break the rigidness & send their girls for the higher education.



#### Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of Visit	No of villages	Total no of benefited	Focus aspect of training
Girls Exposure Visit	1	3	20 Girls	Increased the higher education of the rural girls

**Teachers & School Management comity training:** Under the Revive programme we are running 5 schools for the quality education of the remote areas of the project villages. To increase the level of awareness about the education programme we conduct the trainings for the teachers as well as for the School management comity members. For the quality assurance & community led education system we formed the SMCs in every schools, so time to time we conducted the trainings for them for their role & leadership development. We also conducted the trainings for the teachers for their skill development & innovative techniques development for the Rural education system.

#### Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of scholarship	No of villages	Total no of benefited	Focus aspect of training
Teachers & SMC trainings	6	4	45	Improved the quality education for the remote villages



**During the teachers & SMC training**

**The Revive! Project is a social business partnership focused on reducing poverty & removing barriers to women's empowerment through organic agriculture!**

### **Community Resource Centers**

The Community Resource Centers continue to serve as a central location for all kinds of demonstrations, trainings, meetings and village events. The Centers in Dayakaur, Nayagoan and Khidrat are supplied with and additional amenities to meet the needs of the villagers.

### **Community Resource Centers (CRCs): Agriculture, Empowerment, Education, and Health**

Through a generous grant from Martin Bauer, Community Resource Centers (CRCs) have been constructed in the organic senna farming villages of Nayagaon, Dayakaur and Khidrat. The Khidrat mixed use CRC also serves as an elementary school for 170 children.

The multi-purpose CRCs are integral to the success of the Revive! Agricultural social business model. The increasing demand for certified organic, high quality (pharmacopoeial grade) senna, requires protected storage for the harvested plant material, the senna seed (distributed directly to farmers) and agricultural equipment such as seed graders, solar dryers and other pre/post-harvest technology.

The CRCs also provide a most important asset to the education, health, economic wellbeing and social development of the community. A few of these features for development are described below:

#### **Medical Services & Trainings**

The CRC buildings offer private, indoor spaces for medical clinics, pre/post-natal check-ups, and Village Health Worker/midwife services and trainings. As well, each CRC provides space and equipment to facilitate community meetings, education and trainings. In Phase Four, the CRCs provide seasonal clean/dry storage for fodder and food grain seed bank cooperatives.

In this year we repaired the CRC of the Nayagaon with the support of community for long term utilization for the community.

Details of 2017-18

Initiation	Village	No of villages	Total no of benefited	Focus aspect of training
CRC maintained	Nayagaon	1	120 HH	Repaired the center for community's use.

**Village Development comity:** In 6 Revive villages we formed VDCs or village development comities for the community representation& they are working as main platform of the programme& development of their villages. So we conducted the trainings time to time for villages' level planning, leadership development & role & responsibility development

among the groups for their self sustainability. We also conducted the trainings for the awareness about the different govt. programme for their benefits & linkage.

#### Details of 2017-18

Initiation	No of scholarship	No of villages	Total no of benefited	Focus aspect of training
VDC planning & management training	1	6	56	For village level planning development
Govt. Schemes	1	6	56	For linkage with the govt. programme



#### During the training & plan development by the VDCs

**Support Govt. Programme:** Under the Revive programme, we support the Govt. run programme too for the holistic development of these areas. Our supported programme is as under:

- A. Nutritional Support to the Girls of Bap Girls Hostel: In the year 2017-18 we support the Girls those who came here for their higher education & as we know the girls of these areas suffering with the poor health & nutrition so we support them for their health improvement through regular milk & ghee delivery to the hostel.
- B. Educational support to KKS remote school: Since independent Govt. sanctioned 1 school in very remote dhani of kansinghkisidh village, but initially they required some support to run the school properly, so revive support the school through TLM & 1 teacher stipend from the community, he appointed to support the 1 regular teachers appointed by the Govt. Today almost 60 poor children are studying there.

- C. Installed water cooling system: As we know KKS having PHC & 7 villages are depends on the PHC. During the summer time the women & patients suffering for the cold water, we Revive has installed a water cooling system & also build a taanka for the patients & community.

#### Details of 2017-18

Initiation	Type of support	Total benefited	Frequency	Focus aspect of the support
Support Bap Girls Hostel	Nutritional supplement to the Girls	66 Girls	8 (one time each month)	Improvement of the health of the Girls so that they will study well
Installed water facility in KKS hospital	Water facility	The surrounded villages of hospital	1 time	Provide facility for the cold water for the patients & communities
Support KKS remote school	Educational & teacher support	50 poor students	12 time in anyear	Educational status improvement of the children of that area

**Staff facility Improvements and Training:** One of the difficulties in managing the Revive! Project has been the lack of adequate office/residential facilities in this very remote area of the Thar Desert. For many years, the organization has maintained a field office in the Baap area which is central to the Revive! senna farming villages. Each year, Revive! Project funds are made available for staff trainings. In order to better serve the senna farming villages, additional English language and computer literacy training are being conducted at the Baap Center for staff and program participants. In this year we conducted the training programme on health with support of our partner SahasSansthan& also conducted the leadership training too.

#### Details of 2017-18

Initiation	Type of training	Total benefited	Frequency	Focus aspect of the support
Capacity building about health aspect	Nutritional supplement to the Girls	7 Project staffs	1 time	Improvement of knowledge about the health aspect
Capacity development on leadership aspect	Leadership development	7 Project staffs	1 time	Increased the leadership capacity among the team



**Staffs capacity development training**

## **Research Work under Revive Programme, So far:**

### **Scientific Agricultural Study**

#### **Agricultural Study**

Starting in Phase Two the Revive! Project management collaborated with agricultural scientists to initiate both best practices and senna variety studies. Two separate strategies have been employed in tandem with scientists working in both the US (Dr. Eleanor Kuntz and Dr. Zoe Gardner) and India (Dr. Harsh, Dr. Bora and Dr. Dhir). The first strategy is to utilize best organic agricultural practices related to producing a consistently high level of sennosides (the active ingredient) in organic senna leaf. The second strategy is to develop a



higher sennoside containing cultivar and provide the seed from that cultivar to the Revive! Project senna farmers.

### **Study Objectives and Goals**

Develop a senna cultivation protocol incorporating the results of the organic agricultural study for use in the villages of the Revive! Project to optimize production and sennoside levels in organic senna grown for Martin Bauer, Umalaxmi and Traditional Medicinals. In addition, utilize genetics information learned from the study regarding sennoside production variability to initiate a senna cultivar breeding program (seed farm) with high sennoside producing maternal plants.

### **Study Tactics**

1. Research best organic agricultural practices for senna cultivation in the villages of the Revive! Project.
2. Identify best organic agricultural practices in relation to sennoside content via agricultural trials.
3. Implement organic agricultural training programs for Revive! farmers.
4. Investigate and catalogue wild and cultivated senna diversity, with a focus on sennoside production variability.
5. Develop molecular markers in both senna (*C. angustifolia*) and weedy senna (*C. italica*) for future use in diversity experiments and breeding programs.
6. Identify specific genetic markers associated with sennoside production (and/or elevated sennoside production) in the wild senna project population.
7. Breed high sennoside senna cultivars and employ seed farms to grow them out and produce seed.

### **Study Outcomes**

The outcome of the first strategy has resulted in dramatic agricultural improvements. Sennoside levels have increased significantly and yields have produced 3-4 times more raw material.

The preliminary results of the second study are very promising and the senna cultivar breeding program will be a strong focus in Phase Four.

**PRI strengthening project:** Sahaj implementing PRI strengthening project with SUMA-Chetna in Barmer district.

