

Federations – Journey from Sangham to Autonomy

Federation is a confederation of all village level sanghams (Women's collectives) at Mandal/ block level.

Present status of Federations:

- No. of mandals (blocks) with federation strategy : 28
- No. of Registered federations: 28
- No. of Autonomous federations : 21

Structure

Village level sanghams form into clusters for increased collective strength and to address common issues at cluster level. (cluster is a group of five to six villages within the proximity and formed as per the decision of the sanghams). There could be a minimum of nine to a maximum of fourteen clusters per mandal. These clusters are confederated at mandal level into mandal federation. From each village, one member is elected as governing body member to represent the village in the federation. Thus there is representation from each village to the federation. From these members, seven-member executive committee will be chosen. These are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer and two to three members as opted by the sanghams. Their tenure is two years and every year general body meeting will be held to present the report on activities taken up during the whole year to all the sangham women who form the general council. Each sangham contributes fixed amount to the federation as membership at Rs. 30/- to Rs. 50/- per year. The federations will have charter/framework/bye-laws to serve as the guiding principle for the federation to take up programmes. This broad framework will be 'Women's Empowerment'. MS will provide support in the form of an Advisory Group and Resource Group. Federation is seen as a Resource Centre and Block level Information Centre.

Meetings

Monthly EC meeting on fixed date, Bimonthly governing body members meeting, annual general body meeting and cluster meetings on fixed dates each month are the meetings of the federations. Besides if the federation is taking up activities like projects, alternative structures, the members meet as per the need. Also, all sangham meetings, all sangham cluster meetings, all federation meetings are held as per the demand and to interact, share their experiences and plan their vision.

Capacity building

- Structure, objectives of federations and Roles and Responsibilities of members
- Accounts training
- Managerial training, Leadership qualities
- Institutional building

- Literacy
- Issue based trainings on health, legal literacy, etc.
- Project proposals preparation
- Audit and Annual report preparation
- Documentation
- Resource group formation, ToTs

Exposures

Inter state, inter district exposures are arranged to the federations for sharing of experiences, strategies and for practical understanding.

Initiatives of Federations

- Taking charge of Mahila Sikshana Kendra
- Mahila court/counselling centres
- Catering committees
- Campaigns on identified issues across the mandal and in other MS mandals
- Support to APMSS in expansion of the programme to new mandals and districts
- Support to APMSS in building capacities of Sangham women on different issues

Projects taken up so far

- Residential Bridge Course – three federations
- Mahila sikshana Kendrum – two federations
- Education and enrolment drives in the month of June every year – all federations
- Kalajathas to spread awareness on women’s participation in local governance – all federations
- Nomination desks during election period to provide information to contestants – four federations
- Camps in Jatharas to campaign against child marriages, Jogini initiation – four federations
- Awareness drives/ campaigns to disseminate information on different issues, Acts like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, Right To Information, Marriage Registration, Child marriages etc. – all federations
- Stalls in Jatharas to spread information on HIV & AIDS, nutrition, general health,
- Eye camps, Health camps in collaboration with Non- Government Organizations, Lions club
- Village Contact Drive (VCD) on health and sanitation – project of Integrated Child Development Scheme taken up by one federation
- Awareness drives and campaign on HIV & AIDS covering each village in the mandal
- Nutrition project - one federation
- Enrolment project covering out of school children in the mandal- one federation

- Awareness on Social issues project – by one federation

Specific Support given to MS

- Forming and strengthening of sanghams in the mandal
- Making field visits in new districts and identifying issues
- Resource support in training the issue committee members of sanghams on different issues
- Sharing and interaction in the convergence meetings and different forums
- Participation in the activities of Samatha Gender Resource Centre – Co-facilitators in trainings, field investigators for data collection

Registered Federations

Autonomous Federations

District & Mandals	Name of the Federation	Regd.No
Medak		
Andole	Swashakthi Mahila Sangham	6604/2001
Pulkal	Swatantra Chaitanya Mahila Sangham	7134/2000
Regode	Vijayapadha Mahila Sangham	557/2002
Alladurg	Nava Chaitanya Mahila Sangham	166/2002
Shankarampet	Samana Mahila Sangham	012/2004
Tekmal	Pragati Mahila Sangham	416/2002
Mahabubnagar		
Makthal	Swatantra Bharata Mahila Sangham	5638/2000
Utkoor	Swechha Mahila Sangham	6603/2001
Narva	Kartavya Mahila Sangham	1342/2001
Maganoor	Arunodaya Mahila Sangham	5464/2001
Devarakadra	Chaitanya Mahila Federation	736/2006
Hanwada	Samatha Mahila Federation	735/2006
Karimnagar		
Husnabad	Mundadugu Adarsha Mahila Sangham	401/2005
Bejjanki	Sri Sri Margadarshi Mahila Sangham	952/2004
Ellantakunta	Abhivruddhi Chaitanya Mahila Federation	518/2006
Gangadhara	Shanti Samatha Mahila Federation	386/2006
Nizamabad		
Gandhari	Ikyatha Mahila Federation	559/2005
Yellareddy	Samaikyatha Mahila Federation	190/2005
Adilabad		
Sirpur (U)	Jangubai Mahila Federation	327/2004

Federations in Consolidation stage

Medak		
Tekmal	Pragati Mahila Sangham	416/2002
Papannapet	Rakshana Mahila Sangham	165/2006
Mahabubnagar		
Koilkonda	Jhansi Mahila Federation	771/2006
Karimnagar		
Saidapur	Vennela Mahila Federation	467/2008
Koheda	Sri Chaitanya Mahila Federation	478/2008
Chigurumamidi	Jhansi Mahila Federation	466 /2008
Nizamabad		
Nagi Reddipet	Samanthara Mahila Sangham	216/2008
Adilabad		
Kerameri	Nava Jyothi Mahila Federation	339/2008
Jainoor	Parvathi Mahila Federation	13/2008
Asifabad	Saraswathi Mahila Federation	431/2007

Towards Autonomy

The year 2007-08 is significant for us as we have withdrawn from implementation in two mandals each of Medak and Mahabubnagar districts. The federations were confident of independent functioning but at team level we had few concerns about continuing the momentum for sustainability of these federations. However, we are proud to report that these four federations have become the role models and learning source for all other middle level and young federations. Presently the journey is towards sustainability of the federations. This is facilitated through need based capacity building to the federation EC and Governing Body members like imparting literacy skills, building institutional capacities, trainings on accounting, managerial skills, documentation, legal literacy etc. Apart from these the efforts are also towards building linkages and networks to establish support systems for effective and independent functioning of the federations. Facilitating district level network of federations is another step in the recent years for constant exchange of experiences, strategies and mutual support among the federations themselves. Identifying resource pool from Sanghams and building their capacities with MS support and working towards evolution of Mandal level resource group (MRG) is another initiative in this direction.

Independent federations:

The programme has reached another milestone by withdrawing from direct implementation from five federation mandals in Medak (Andole & Pulkal) and Mahabubnagar (Makthal, Utkoor & Maganur) districts. It required lot of preparation both

at programme and federation level. The whole of last year was an intense activity period with workshops, meetings, brainstorming sessions on formalizing systems and facilitating forward and backward linkages at all levels – sanghams, issue committees, federation bodies and team members. It could happen with concerted efforts by all in bringing it into reality. As there were no set models in this direction to gather experiences, we all had to work together taking our intuitions in to confidence. It was on trial and error basis which yielded positive outcomes. Holding cluster and mandal level meetings regularly, taking charge of interventions like Samatha – Dharani, literacy centres, MSK, etc; maintaining communication channels and following the necessary institutional procedures are few to quote. The whole experience has been overwhelming and a rich learning for all of us.

Giving a fillip to the previous years' facilitative processes of consolidation, the programme team was formally withdrawn from five mandals of Medak and Mahabubnagar districts with effect from April 1, 2007. Subsequently reflecting on the needs articulated by the federations brainstormed on what would be the role of DIU, mode of support and financial implications. It was felt that one team member must attend EC and Governing body meetings of the federations for next one year to enable federations ensure continuous flow of information from sangham to federation and back to sangham, to strengthen the capacities of the office bearers in managing institutional systems and to help in facilitating formation of advisory committee. For the first few months this support was frequent but gradually federations got used to manage things on their own requiring less support from MS team members.

The two district level meetings held in August, 2007 with federations from consolidation mandals were of great help in reflecting on the status of the sanghams, identify difficult areas and plan for next steps. Federations came up with issues like strengthening of weak sanghams, regularity in contributing for federation fund, formation of resource group and sustenance of Bala Sanghams. Another major concern raised by all the federations was financial sustainability. To overcome this challenge, federations sought resource support from MS for innovative and educational activities. This was addressed to some extent by approving their proposals and sanctioning short term need based awareness campaigns and educational activities.

The MSKs run by the two federations in Medak & Mahabubnagar districts with grants from MS form the link for constant interaction and reflection with the federations. These federations have become a model and major source of learning for other federations in consolidation phase.

Another inspiring development is that the Makthal mandal federation is expanding MS programme to a new mandal, Dharur, on its own and is trying to further strengthen their independent initiatives. As of now, 17 mandal federations have become independent across Medak, Mahabubnagar, Karimnagar, Adilabad and Nizamabad districts and the team members are extending technical and resource support for their independent functioning.

Challenges

- Availability of optimum financial resources for sustainability
- Networking and linkages for strengthening the initiatives
- Federations getting legal identity to Nyaya Committee through Legal services Authority, ICDS
- Capacity building for all alternate structures on various issues
- Legal, Educational, Managerial, Entrepreneurial, Networking skills