

# **Annual Report**

**2020-21**

**Vikas Samvad Samiti, Bhopal, M.P.**

# 1. The tdh Project

## Brief Description

### *Duration and Coverage*

The project is titled “**building a community-based, resilient and sustainable food security model through community participation and advocacy in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar**”. The project spans across the duration of 5 years from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

This project is being implemented in 100 villages in Madhya Pradesh (around 25 villages each from Panna, Satna, Rewa and Umariya districts) and 40 villages in Bihar (20 villages each from Jehanabad and Sitamarhi districts), thus, covering a total of 140 villages. It covers as many as 23659 households across these 140 villages.

### *Beneficiaries: Target Segments*

The beneficiaries include families from the vulnerable groups including Mahadalits, Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Following constitute the specific target segments:

- ❖ 13896 children,
- ❖ 8336 adolescent girls; and
- ❖ 4803 pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers.

### *Project Goal*

It seeks to render contribution in achieving food security and ending malnutrition and hunger in India (SDG 2).

### *Project Objective*

The project aims to establish an evidence-based framework for monitoring the SDG 2 at local, state, and national levels and ensure that sustainable community-based malnutrition management is promoted.

### *Envisaged Outcomes*

The project objective is sought to be manifested in the realisation of following outcomes:

- Strengthening of the enhanced capacity of community-based institutions across the select 140 villages in monitoring and evaluating national food security programmes,
- An improved access to state health, nutrition and care services for the target segments comprising as many as 13896 children, 8336 adolescent girls and 4803 pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers,
- Enabling of as many as 7500 household across the 140 villages in producing various and sufficient foods so that their dependence on external food supplies is overcome; and
- Evolving a monitoring mechanism for food security and conduct of consultations on it at the state and central government levels towards positioning a lobbying strategy for community-based monitoring mechanism vis-à-vis the governance of public health and nutrition programming.

## A Special Mention

It may be especially mentioned here that in the wake of pandemic situation of Covid-19; the project areas too have witnessed instant and serious challenges of food insecurity. Thus, seeking to establish a model of sustainable food security through community participation and engagement via the strategic courses of evidence-based advocacy, formation and strengthening of community institutions and operationalising the community monitoring and social audit system becomes all the more crucial necessitating an informed and urgent call to action. Accordingly, the relevance of the project assumes huge significance.

## Key Outcomes Realised (Major Achievements) During the Reporting Year

- 1) **Community institutions have come in to being.** As many as 560 community institutions (Women's, Youth, Children and Adolescent Groups) with a total membership of XXXX have been formed. Out of these total members, as many as 6988 persons have been imparted training in their roles.
- 2) **The Community institutions are coming of age.** Supplementary nutrition needs of hitherto unserved 1421 malnourished children and 1866 pregnant women and lactating mothers have been secured by way of connecting them with and through the government's health and nutrition programme.
- 3) **Kitchen Gardens have started happening.** The process of ensuring access to food security through promotion and establishment of Kitchen Gardens has been instituted. As many as 6339 households (MP- 5542, Bihar-797) are now on way to be reliant on Kitchen Gardens to meet their diverse food needs over a period of as many as 8 months in a year and that they do not need to look for outside sources for the same.

- 4) **Seeking out and securing entitlements to the welfare measures of the state government sets off to a notable start.** As many as 1524 applications (MP-960, Bihar-564) were successfully generated by youth and women on PDS inclusion, Anganwadi Services, MNREGA work demand, safe drinking water facilities, linking the BPL Cards, registration in Janani Swasthya Yojana (JSY), Forest Rights Act (FRA), etc. Out of these applications, 542 (MP - 299, Bihar-243) applications have been resolved whilst the process for the rest continues.
- 5) **The community institutions now have the access to knowledge pertaining to the conduct of Social Audit as is enshrined under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.** Vikas Samvad Samiti (VSS) has developed, designed and published reference and reading material on conducting Social Audit. [Action – VNT/AA: Can we say here as follows: “All 560 Community Institutions have copies of the module and that it forms the basis of consultations amongst their members”.]
- 6) **Policy change in nutrition governance is now in sight.** Following continued dialogues by VSS with the Department of Women and Child Development, the government of Madhya Pradesh has evolved a perspective Nutrition Governance Policy. Notably, VSS has been one of the lead agencies in supporting the government in the process of policy consultation and its formulation. [Action – SKJ: Can we add a small paragraph here to mention as to how the department’s actions are reflecting the adoption of the policy?]
- 7) **Adoption of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) as a tool in instituting the process of heightening awareness for Social Audit gets going.** Two modules on conducting the 12 Meetings Cycles of PLA have been designed and published. [Action – VNT/AA: Can we elaborate it slightly with specific reference to use of the modules with (number) the community institutions?]
- 8) **Community-based programming and inter-departmental coordination at the district level get synced.** Whilst maintaining continued engagement with the district administration (District Rewa), VSS has developed an Action Plan for smoother inter-departmental coordination and community-based programming. This has been realised through regular communication and sharing with both the community and women's groups from respective villages as well as the district administration. A Food Fair was held with the district administration’s active support. It sought to address the issue of bringing down prevalence of anaemia. During the Fair, 219 pregnant women and lactating mothers and adolescent girls were distributed kits (comprising an iron pan, lemon, tomato and drumstick plant sapling). At the same time, the local administration has also taken steps in linking the vulnerable households with various government livelihood and food security schemes.

## Highlights during the Year

- 2049 families were supported with Covid Relief Kits in MP and Bihar.
- In Bihar, **XX** groups of children with a total membership of **YYY**, **ZZ** groups of women with a total membership **AAA** and **SS** groups of women with a total membership of **TTT** were formed and are functionally active. In Madhya Pradesh, **XX** groups of children with a total membership of **YYY**, **ZZ** groups of youth with a total membership of **AAA** and **SS** groups of women with a total membership of **TTT** have been active since the previous project cycle. Their functionality processes were continually strengthened during the reporting year. In addition, new 140 groups of adolescent girls have been formed in Madhya Pradesh and have been operationally functional.

[ Action – VNT/AA: This para needs to be checked and completed, please.]

- Total 1421 malnourished children (MP-1377 and Bihar-44) were tracked and ensured that they received supplementary nutrition and health check-up. As many as 100 severely malnourished children were referred to and admitted in the Nutrition Rehabilitation Center (NRC). [Action – VNT/AA/AM: if possible, can we also show here as to how many malnourished children improved their status – overall – and how many duly recovered returned home from the NRCs?]
- 1866 pregnant women and lactating mothers were linked with the government health and nutrition programmes like supplementary nutrition, immunization and special nutrition days were celebrated at the respective Anganwadi Centres.
- During the year, a total of 1665 deliveries took place across the project area out of which 1263 deliveries (76%) were conducted in the health institutions. Due to the lockdown and covid-19 infections, institutional deliveries had a lag. As many as 1013 pregnant women received the incentive amount as is stipulated in the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) Scheme. [Can we say here that XXX number of women who were eligible for the incentive under the JSY, YY could not avail the scheme benefit or that all eligible women received the incentive amount?]
- In 110 of 140 project villages (76%) a total of 1146 women and youths are actively involved in monitoring 115 Anganwadi Centers, 38 PDS Ration Shops and 47 schools on monthly basis.
- 3 state level leadership development training programmes were conducted with participation of **XX** women, **YY** youth and **ZZ** children.
- As many as 16 district level leadership development training programmes were conducted for youth (**XX**), women (**XX**), children (**XX**) and adolescents (**XX**); both in Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.
- **14 (MP-7, Bihar-4)** field visits were conducted by the VSS team to appraise the project progress, systems, baseline survey process and render handholding support.

- 3 Quarterly Review and 2 Annual Review meetings were organized by the VSS with the project districts' staffs of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.
- As many as 5542 households across 100 villages in Madhya Pradesh are rotating XX varieties of vegetable seeds in their groups while in Bihar, 797 household from 19 villages have supported 14 varieties of the kitchen garden seeds.
- 10 marginalized farmers who have livestock and land space have been selected and were supported with the material required for NADEP construction. One NADEP was supported completely by Panchayat and Rural Development Department in Panna (MP). As many as 107 families are getting benefited from newly constructed NADEP structures.
- 102 (XX in MP and YY in Bihar) water structures from 76 project villages (XX in MP and YY in Bihar) were repaired and cleaned This includes ponds, wells, step wells, check dam, handpumps and handpump platforms as recommended by youth, and women group member during monthly meetings. 1731 (MP-1064, Bihar-667) families of 76 villages and 290 farmers of 36 villages in Madhya Pradesh will get benefit in terms of water for drinking and irrigation facilities for 290 hectares of farmland. 950 days labor and material and equipment worth INR 247680 were contributed by the community. [Action – VNT/AA It is best to have separate paragraphs for Madhya Pradesh and Bihar].
- 4880 total chicks (40 chicks for each family) to 122 (Rewa- 92, Umaria-30) families from two districts and 17 project villages of Madhya Pradesh were linked with Animal Husbandry Department's backyard poultry farming scheme in subsidized rate.
- A scientific study on the status of the NFSA has been carried out in Madhya Pradesh to measure the 'Impact of the lockdown due to the Covid19 Outbreak on Health and Nutritional Status of Women and Children' in the project area. A mini-survey conducted across 122 villages of 6 districts, 2 districts were adjoining project districts, where in total 63 beneficiaries [6 pregnant women, 12 lactating mothers 21 children (below 3 years of age), 24 children (3 – 6 years of age)]. The qualitative and quantitative data further analysed, and findings were shared with media and the government. [Action – VNT/AA/FN/AM It is better to bring in 2 or 3 main findings here].
- 27 project staff were trained on "Social Audit Training of Trainer (TOT)" organized and facilitated by VSS state team with focused on communication skills, provision under NFSA and its schemes, steps of social audit and community monitoring.
- In 10 villages (MP-8, Bihar-2), Social Audit of Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY-Maternity Benefit Scheme) under National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013 was conducted with support of Social Audit Team (including youth, women, project team). The rigorous process entailed regular home visits, interviews, wall writing, focused group discussion etc. Analytical findings were shared in the special Gram Sabha named as " Samajik Sampariksha Sabha"(Social

Audit Assembly) [Can we give the specific dates when the Sabhas were convened?]. Also, can we give place some of the keyset decisions taken in the Samajik Sampariksha Sabhas in a box?].

## Key Outputs Generated

- For as many as 2049 families, food security was ensured during the lockdown. As many as 2019 families were linked with the PDS and 6339 families food security had been ensured.
- On exchanging the finding of the NFSA study with the state government, the Ready to Eat Nutrition services in the villages was resumed. Also, growth monitoring of children in Anganwadi Centres and referral services for Severely Acute Malnourished Children were resumed.
- 2734 families were distributed 54.8 quintals vegetable to 2527 deprived families. The vegetables included Bottle gourd, tomato, potato and others that were grown in either their backyard or land provided to them.
- Siya bai Gond d/o Lallu Gond and Gauri Bai Gond, from Sunehara village of Panna was forced to marry the boy of her parents' choice. She had condemned this, stood for herself and raised the voice against the child marriage. Due to pressure created by the Women's group, the parents were counselled and willingly changed their decision to put off the marriage until their daughter turned 18. Siya later on shared the details in the Women's Group meetings and has set up an example to be followed.
- In Umaria district, 85 children across 5 villages participated in the seed ball activity and 150 seed balls were prepared. Accordingly, 621 sapling plantation activities have been conducted in 52 villages by the Children's Group.
- 6339 households (MP- 5542, Bihar-797) have developed kitchen garden and are now growing 14 types of green and leafy vegetables such as Pumpkin, Bottle gourd, Sponge gourd, Bitter gourd, Ridge gourd, Broad beans, brinjal, Okra, Tomato, Onion, Spinach, Red leafy vegetable (Laal Bhaji). Thus, household consumption of these vegetables has been secured for the rainy and winter seasons. It has led to food security for the families for a good period of 8 months.



## Speaking Case Studies with Speaking Images

### Case Study 1: Livelihood and Pandemic

Pandemic has affected millions of lives across the world but the most vulnerable were those who earn on daily basis. For them, it is the most difficult time wherein they are struggling hard to get meal for two times a day. Katak Baiga lives in village Karondi of Umariya district MP. He is 56 years old. He has a piece of land which is insufficient for the family. There are 7 members in family including his son, daughter-in-law and 4 grandchildren. He does not own any ration card nor has any other source of livelihood. As per NFSA 2013, his

family is eligible, but his name is not enrolled. He has been requesting for a long, raised issue in Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat but could not succeed till date. During Corona, he got 35 Kg ration twice from PDS but that also has been stopped. Katakou gets labour work in village from the bigger landlords. His son also works on daily wages on a tractor and earns for 12 days in a month, but during the pandemic, both son and father are jobless.

Under MNREGA, work was started in the village. His daughter-in-law got work for a week. However, she had to stop the work as her youngest daughter fell ill. In pandemic, Vikas Samvad distributed relief packets for poorest families. Katakou's family too was given the same. But they are more worried about the upcoming time as lockdown has got extended and that there are no chances of getting labour work in the vicinity. The family did not get any benefit of govt schemes in spite of writing to Panchayat and concerned departments.

Namkesh says “ real victims of pandemic are not given any benefits, no land, no ration and our children are affected badly. We even do not have clothes for our kids. Even Anganwadis and schools are closed unfortunately, else kids would get one meal at these centers”. Nobody is sure about the situation and how things will unfold, clarity is missing at all the levels, but poor families are suffering badly.



## **Case Study 2: Enthusiastic Krishna and her Kitchen Garden**

Krishna Mavasi is very vocal about the issues of malnutrition and problems of her own village Jhiriya Ghat. Jhiriya Ghat is under Kailhora Panchayat of Majhgavan block, district Satna. She has completed her 10<sup>th</sup> and came in this village after marriage. It is a typical village comprising mostly Yadav and Mavasi tribes. Her husband, Lalu Mavasi - 28, is a marginal farmer with a small land holding and lives in a joint family. Now her both the children are studying in school. There are 7 members in her family. Her daughter Gayatri is studying in a boarding school at Chitrakoot. Mostly, the family is dependent on labour work as the land is not adequate. They have an AAY Card and have been getting 35 Kg ration from PDS under the scheme. Though they have 6 acre land, but 3 acre is almost barren as there is no water to irrigate.

Lalu and his brothers work in a farm, but the production is not good. Hence, they migrate on seasonal basis to earn. In last Kharif crop, they produced 50 kg Sesame seeds, after saving 10 kg, they sold the rest 40 Kg and earned Rs 4000/-. Due to heavy rains, the crop was affected badly. They used the money for education of children, grocery and medicines. Krishna Mavasi had saved Rs 2500/- for the Rabi crop.



Krishna is also the Secretary of Dastak Group under the Project. The group works for health, education, nutrition and livelihood. Every month, the group meets, and the women discuss about the problems and seek to learn from each other. In one of the meetings, the group was told about Kitchen garden as to how small initiative can be a boon in eradicating malnutrition from village whilst also helping in earning. She was motivated and thought to experiment. Her child, Chandani was admitted in NRC but her improvement was not up to the mark. Krishna got various vegetable seeds from the Project and sowed in her backyard. Surprisingly, the result was very good. There was more than enough production of 7 – 8 types of vegetables for a family. This resulted in change in their food intake. After all, now there were more vegetables in the platter and the family was enjoying free vegetables. She fed her children and also used vegetables for the malnourished children. Results were overwhelming, the children were getting healthier.



Krishna also owns a small house wherein they dug a small well for water. Due to availability of water, they decided to sow more vegetables and along with her sister-in-law, Dulari bai, they have sown vegetables now for commercial purpose in 2 Beegha. They bought seeds from KVK and market. “We would irrigate the land with water from the same well. However, we had to hire the water pump. “We did hard work and grew lots of vegetables in the land. “Most difficult task was to fence the land, but we did it”, says Dulari. ‘We would also distribute vegetables to some poor families and rest we would sell. We would earn Rs 300 to 400 a day and also start selling in vicinity. Time was good and we were quite optimistic for future. But suddenly, the Covid 19 spread brought a black page in our life. Lockdown has broken our spinal cord – all were jobless and there was no hope’, she says.

There was no hard cash and no ration in houses, poor community was most vulnerable among all as there were no outlets to earn. Mobility was jammed and hence all were stuck in homes. Children were victims of this lockdown the most. Things were very expensive and out of reach, this enhanced nutritional issues in families.



After observing this pandemic and severe conditions, Krishna talked to her family and decided to support the families in some ways. She distributed free vegetables to such families – especially where small children and pregnant women were residing. She supported all the 60 families in her village and 150 families in the vicinity. “ I supported them because they all are from my village and due to this pandemic things had deteriorated badly; severe hunger was seen in families. Thus, at least by providing vegetables, I could contribute to a cause” Says Krishna. She served

honestly and diligently and gave away as much as 700 Kg of vegetables for free. In addition, she earned Rs 8000/- by sales as well.

In showcasing her work and enthusiasm, the Project Team displayed her work on social media. A tweet became so famous that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh retweeted it. After this tweet, people came to know about her work and services and the Member of Parliament, Mr. Ganesh Singh visited her home and appreciated her work. She narrated about the problems of village to him. Immediately, an extra bore well was sanctioned for her village. Though she and her family lost a lot during the pandemic, she continues to be hopeful for a better future. The Project Team is supporting her and in order to construct her pucca well, work is in progress.

Krishna is happy and looking forward for better opportunities and future. She is determined to eradicate Malnutrition from her village. She says, "If I can help people by giving vegetables and eradicate the curse of malnutrition, then I am convinced fully that I don't need money. However, the people must grow vegetables, and this is the easiest thing which they can do". Undoubtedly, Krishna is a role model for other women in the area.



## Challenges Ahead

**[Action – SKJ/VNT/AA/FN: Please include some points here – as the Project Team considers significant.]**

## Related Data, Tables and Weblinks (as applicable)

**[Action – AM in consultation with SKJ: It could be a good idea to provide any worthwhile tables from the MIS, both for Madhya Pradesh and Bihar].**

## Special Mentions, Feedbacks (Including Appreciation and Awards Cited)

**[Action – SKJ/VNT/AA/FN: Please include some points here – as the Project Team considers significant. For example, the tweet and its retweet by the MP CM may be mentioned here!]**

## **Key Points for Next Year's Plan**

- Mapping of those families who are food insecure on identifying main causes of food insecurity and work on the same to help the families become food secure.
- Strengthen PLA and Community monitoring process.
- To facilitate improvement in nutrition governance so that deficit in the implementation of schemes and plans is bridged vis-à-vis policy expectations.