



SEPTEMBER 2023

SEWA SANDESH

Namaskar,

With the mission of "Serving Humanity in Distress," we have expanded our efforts and successfully met our targets this month. Our focus remains on strengthening schools across India by constructing toilets and providing school kits. We firmly believe that these initiatives play a pivotal role in reducing school dropout rates, with girls being particularly affected by the lack of accessible toilets.

Times are gradually changing for the women of Bharat, and the recent introduction of 33 percent reservation for women in Parliament fills our hearts with joy. While we continue our grassroots efforts to empower women, the government has taken a significant step towards ensuring equal participation for women in governance.

Sewa International, in its pursuit to serve mankind, will always try to find ways to work with the community. In our experience, a community knows how to tackle all the issues and a little push in right direction can enable them to find the solutions. Let us all pledge to serve selflessly and inculcate "sewa" in ourselves.

Dhanyawaad !

Editor's note
(Sewa International)

Countering open defecation

According to the NFHS 2022 report, 69.3 percent of households have access to improved toilet facilities. Still over 30 percent are in need of toilet facilities. Open defecation leads to numerous diseases such as diarrhoea, regular stomach upsets, etc. Once a child suffers in her early stages, it leads to malnutrition. The subtle impact of open defecation is child stunting, gender based violence, dropout rates in schools.

We under the SHE (Sanitation, Hygiene, and Empowerment) project have recently completed the construction of 24 new toilets in schools across Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh. In our pursuit to make this world a better place, we will continue to bring small changes like this!



Serving Himachal amidst disaster

It was the longest night for us. We were stuck in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh and nowhere else to go. My team was looking at me to take some action but I couldn't. I had to choose between serving the people or saving my team's life. I chose the latter. The dilemma continued throughout the night.

Weeks ago, we received the news that Himachal Pradesh was suffering from torrential rains and floods. We were asked to go there and set up medical camps. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us. Though a small team, we took the onus to serve the people of Himachal Pradesh. Our travel was difficult in the mountains

since the roads were in bad condition. Somehow we reached Kullu and set up a medical camp there. It was heart-wrenching to see the number of people that were affected. Our next stop was Mandi. The condition there was worse. It was raining continuously for 96 hours. We didn't have time to find a perfect location for the camp. Therefore, we decided to set up the camp amidst the rain.

Our days turned into nightmares when we saw what floods had done to Mandi. The roads were completely damaged, people went missing, and homes were swept away. As if the horrors of staying weren't enough, we had to move to Shimla.

On that fateful morning, I opened Facebook and was shocked to see the videos pouring in from Shimla. Everything was crumbling down. It was then I had to choose between staying or moving. I decided to stay considering the safety of my team. An hour passed and my team came to me. I was confused looking at their faces. They looked determined and said in unison that we should move to Shimla. I was so moved by their resolution to serve mankind.

The next thing I knew, we were on our route to Shimla. After dodging damaged cliffs, walking with the mobile van for hours to see if the road was cleared, and switching drivers; we finally arrived.

It was worth it. The affected people came in numbers. Their eyes gleamed at the sight of camp. Had my team not decided to move, it would have been an injustice to these people. I realised the importance of taking calculated risks and thinking beyond ourselves. We said our goodbyes to Himachal Pradesh after a 25-day stay. And all the setbacks, victories, smiles, and tears will forever remain in our hearts.

-Dr. Rajshekhar, Alwar Mobile Medical Unit



SEEK to fulfill students' dreams!

A student's interest in the classroom depends on many factors such as teaching methods, peer group interaction, etc. But other subtle factors are often overlooked. One such factor is the school kit, without which a student's confidence is affected.

Studies have shown that children having a school kit of their own can improve grades, creativity, attitudes towards learning, behaviour, peer relationships and self-image. A single pack of pencils can be a gateway to a promising year.

Sharing with you some moments from the National Launch Event of School Educational Empowerment Kit (SEEK) in Gujarat.

With SEEK we handed out wings to fly to 100+ children who can dream big. Our kits go beyond providing basic stationeries and help them reach for the stars!

Oxygen to Kerala

During the COVID-19 outbreak, Bharat had observed a tremendous lack of oxygen. At that time, we had sent oxygen concentrators to many hospitals and helped in setting up oxygen plants at multiple locations.

In 2023, we realise that oxygen is still a critical issue. Considering that, we have sent out 880 oxygen concentrators across Kerala. These concentrators will be distributed in various hospitals for the treatment of elderly and bedridden patients. We hope that no hospital faces a shortage of oxygen and can save as many lives as possible.



33% women in Parliament

One of the most anticipated bills has been passed in the Lok Sabha granting 33% of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. After a long struggle of almost 27 years to create a quota for women since the mid-1990s, today, we rewrite history with golden words.

With this the hopes and dreams of the women of this country to be adequately represented in law-making bodies. Let's welcome the government's

initiative to make women's reservations a reality. There are miles to go in achieving gender parity in politics and this is just the beginning.

Reusable sanitary pads for climate consciousness

While the younger generation champions the end of taboos surrounding sanitary pads, the bigger issue remains. A society cannot compromise on the usage of sanitary hygiene products in a country where women's health is often neglected. The usage of sanitary pads is posing a serious plastic waste pandemic that is another challenge attributed largely to climate consciousness.

Reusable menstrual pads are a modern solution for both menstruators and Mother Earth. Let's rethink our approach and make a shift towards reusable menstrual pads.

