

December 2023



SEWA SANDESH

A Monthly Newsletter

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sewa
International



Editors Note

Namaskar,

Lok Utsav: Nurturing and Preserving Cultural Legacies of 'Ladli Mahotsav'

We belong to a society that values its cultural heritage. Folk traditions are not just the reflection of people's ideologies, thoughts, and behaviors, but also maneuver social structures and the functioning of the community. These traditions assist in preserving and showcasing the talents of people from the community, thus fostering the overall development of society.

The establishment of traditions plays a crucial role in shaping methods of worshipping various folk deities, thus fostering communal development. An illuminating illustration of the same phenomenon is found in the folk practices of Uttarakhand, as beautifully articulated by Dr. Prakash Thapliyal. He observes that the '*popularization of Samkhya philosophy led to the emergence of the concept of divine power in the form of female deity*'. The notion that the Supreme Being or the soul is without attributes, gave rise to the belief that the creative power manifests when human desires align harmoniously with the divine.

As part of the same commitment, Sewa International indulges in promoting the rich tapestry of folk traditions by celebrating Ladli Mahotsav. This event stands out as a particularly significant initiative within this framework, hailed towards celebrating the spirit of womanhood and empowerment.

The Ladli Mahotsav allows local participation of girls from the community and encourages them to showcase their local traditions. The program encompasses folk arts, festivals, the environment, local cuisine, and songs. This year, the Ladli Mahotsav was organized in Tapovan, situated near the border with Tibet. In this folk festival, vibrant folk life was vividly presented, representing the essence of the local deity, the significance of nature, and the festivity for everyone.

The festival not only breathes life into folklore but also immerses it in the vibrant tapestry of deities and nature. It emphasizes the significance of folk life, viewing it not merely as a mode of existence but as a dynamic force molding an inclusive and communicative society. The Lok Utsav program, featuring Lok Yatra (folk procession), acts as a conduit for dialogue within the community, fostering connections across generations and facilitating discourse within and beyond society.

Dhanyawaad !



Ladli Mahotsav

The Tales of our Ladlis

Womanhood is a manifestation of respect, confidence, and courage that has always been a celebration. At Sewa, we firmly believe in the profound glory that women embody. In the conventional celebration confined to International Women's Day, we proudly presented "Ladli Mahotsav" this December—an event dedicated to the empowerment and recognition of womanhood.

Ladli Mahotsav was a holistic celebration, featuring a myriad of empowering talks, exciting competitions, and insightful stalls hosted by 10 government departments. The entire event was meticulously curated to honour and uplift our ladlis, celebrating their diverse strengths and achievements.

The heart of Ladli Mahotsav beat with the rhythm of enlightenment as ten dynamic speakers took the stage, addressing crucial themes that resonated with the challenges and triumphs of womanhood.

Renowned dignitaries participating in the event included Dr. Bharat Pathak (National Convener Ganga Vichar Manch, Ministry of Jal Shakti), and Dr. Nandita Pathak (Founder, Udyamita Vidyapeeth, JP Foundation). Themes ranging from Cyber Safety and Child Rights to Climate Adaptation, Career Counseling, Road Safety, Drug Addiction, Primary Health, and Volunteerism were explored. These discussions etched an enduring imprint on the minds of all the 1,000 participants, leaving a lasting impact that transcends time. Ladli Mahotsav did not merely unfold as an event, rather it blossomed into an unforgettable and impactful celebration, honoring the empowerment of women.

From intellectual debates to artistic expressions, our Ladlis showcased their diverse abilities, creating an atmosphere of camaraderie and mutual celebration. In the spirit of ambition, confidence, and courage, women continually seek a life beyond biases, exploring the layers of courage at various stages of their lives.



Embracing the Gift of Giving

Where Joy finds its True Essence

As we turn the final page of the year 2023, one chapter stands out prominently in our hearts—the chapter of 'Sewa Yatra'. December, the season of giving was something different as we celebrated "Sewa Yatra" along with Sewa International USA. The two-day magical tale embraced the spirit of giving to underprivileged children, making the season even more special. Our hearts swelled with warmth as we presented the "SEEK" bag, winter clothes, and bicycle to approx 400 underprivileged children in Delhi/NCR.

This 2-day expedition embarked on a journey of exploring Indian culture,

while simultaneously connecting with the roots of Bharat. The expatriates dedicated themselves to bringing joy to the underprivileged sections of society by engaging in diverse initiatives such as distributing school kits, renovating libraries, and distributing cycles to those in need. Immersed in these activities during their time in India, they found fulfilment in giving back to the very foundations of their homeland. This act of sharing not only brought joy to those in need but also bestowed upon the expatriates a profound sense of completeness.

Via these activities, we discovered a magic that goes beyond the festivities—a magic that resides in bringing enduring joy to others. December became a beautiful chapter etched in the hearts of these underprivileged children.



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PADYATRA



1

Vision



25

Sewa Fellows



38

Villages



97

Hours



100

Kilometers



3500+

Women SHG
Leaders

Mission **Accomplished!**

Sewa Padyatra, an inspiring expedition to discover the inner self, covering 100 kilometers on foot. It was no less than a test for our fellows. 25+ Sewa Fellows alongside esteemed social workers and hundreds of women leaders from Self-Help Groups traveling through the heart of Chhattisgarh, India (Bharat). Wrapped up with tired bodies but with supercharged minds, and inspired hearts, they were geared up to translate their learnings into action in their respective projects!

Through this Grassroots Connect Camp, these fellows are primed to emerge as community leaders, equipped to translate their experiences into impactful actions in the field. The path to a brighter Bharat for the fellows continues with Sewa International, fueled by enlightening sessions and direct connections with grassroots realities. The padyatra brought together a diverse community, united with the purpose of traversing through various villages and connecting with the grassroots realms. Amidst the scenic and soulful journey, impactful sessions were conducted by renowned social workers, addressing crucial social issues and leaving a lasting impression on the fellows. Immersed in inspiring narratives from the true heroes of social work, these fellows stand poised to become catalysts for profound change.

Reaching the tail end, it could be said that the Padyatra became a harmonious blend of cultural immersion, community engagement, and insightful dialogues, fostering a holistic experience for all the attendees. This journey was not just a physical exploration, but rather a profound odyssey of self-discovery that goes beyond the aim of spreading information with the community, and involves depths of connecting the roots of Bharat.



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Tamil Nadu Floods

A Saga of Sorrow and Resilience

In December, unprecedented rainfall in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu led to severe waterlogging challenges, resulting in a series of tragic incidents and extensive damage. This deluge left behind a landscape of widespread destruction in Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, and Thenkasi areas. The torrents ruthlessly inundated these regions, leaving a trail of despair in their wake. Amidst the ruins, the survivors of this calamity find themselves struggling to meet even their most basic needs.

In Thoothukudi, where the impact was severe, the Sewa International team along with Seva Bharati distributed essential rations such as rice, dal, sugar, and oil to those grappling with the aftermath of the disaster. In the face of adversity, these relief efforts have become a silver lining, bringing hope and solace to a thousand lives affected by the floods. The emotional toll of the situation is immense, but in the triumph of collective humanity, resilience prevails once again!



Achieving the Incredible

A Remarkable Triumph

36 rickshaws, 108 self-funded participants from the UK, USA, Kenya, and Australia conquered over 2000 kms, fueled by soaring energies to serve the most underprivileged section of India (Bharat)!

Sewa International UK feels ecstatic to announce that the Rickshaw Run participants have raised £500,000, to support the refurbishment of the dental unit at Arogyadham Hospital. This hospital aims to provide life-changing cleft and palate surgery to inhabitants of the 500 surrounding villages. In tandem with this initiative, the organisation is resolute in establishing the 'Medics4Sewa' community, with a passion to serve and support the community with the best treatment, equipped with the latest instruments and technology.

Though the journey has concluded, this closing chapter of Rickshaw Run 2023 signals a beautiful new beginning for countless underprivileged children with a promise to serve the best world-class healthcare facilities.



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Be the
ONE



***Together, we've sketched stories of change,
etching hope into hearts. We want to express
our sincere gratitude for your continued support
and readership.***



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