

July, 2024



# Sewa Sandesh

*July: A Month of Strength and Transformation*



# Editors Note

*Namaskar,*

## *Diversity and Inclusion: A Path to Transform our Nation*

In this transformative edition of Sewa Sandesh, we celebrate the power of diversity and inclusion as catalysts for national progress. July has been a testament to how embracing different backgrounds and perspectives can drive meaningful change and foster resilience.

The Anubhuti Camp stands as a beacon of inclusive education, bridging socioeconomic gaps and igniting a passion for STEM among students from varied backgrounds. This initiative reflects the broader societal need to dismantle barriers to education, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to realise their potential, regardless of their circumstances.

Manoj Benjwal's environmental initiatives, celebrated at the national level, highlight the intersection of individual dedication and community-driven environmental stewardship. His work demonstrates how inclusive approaches to conservation can foster sustainable development, benefiting diverse communities across our nation.

The revitalisation of the Bhotiya community's wool craft tradition illustrates the synergy between cultural preservation and economic empowerment. By integrating traditional skills with modern market access, Sewa International helps marginalised communities navigate the complexities of economic self-sufficiency while maintaining their cultural identity.

The poignant tribute to Prakash Kumar and his legacy of sewa bhav serves as a reminder of the transformative power of selfless service. His efforts mobilised and inspired many, showcasing how individual acts of service contribute to collective upliftment.

Sewa International's initiatives supporting the transgender community and providing healthcare to remote regions further embody the ethos of inclusion. These programmes address systemic inequities, ensuring that marginalised groups receive the support they need to lead dignified and fulfilling lives. These stories collectively underscore the sociological principle that true progress requires an inclusive approach, embracing the strengths and contributions of all societal segments. The path to sewa bhav is fraught with challenges, but it is through these trials that we forge a stronger, more resilient society. Together, let us continue to champion diversity and inclusion, transforming our nation through empathy, solidarity, and the unwavering spirit of selfless service.

*Dhanyawaad!*

*R.K Anil  
Executive Director  
Sewa International*





# Empowering Minds, Igniting Futures

## Sponsor a Child's Anubhuti Camp

Education is the cornerstone of societal transformation, and Sewa International is dedicated to harnessing its transformative power. Among their impactful initiatives is the Sponsor a Child program, which brings children's dreams to fruition by providing them with educational opportunities and a pathway to a brighter future.

Recently, the Sponsor a Child program orchestrated a highly successful 2-day residential Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) camp, known as Anubhuti Camp, in Vijayawada on July 13-14, 2024. The camp welcomed 28 eager students, including 17 girls and 11 boys from grades 8 to 11, with the primary goal of igniting their curiosity and fostering a passion for STEM disciplines.

The program was meticulously curated to offer a stimulating blend of activities that fostered holistic development. Yoga and games sessions promoted physical and mental well-being, while hands-on science experiments focusing on 'Light' kindled a spirit of inquiry and discovery. A dedicated values session cultivated ethical and moral development, and sessions on low-cost model making and engineering-based projects challenged students to innovate and solve problems creatively.

Distinguished guests added gravitas to the inauguration and valedictory sessions. Shri C.V. Sadasiva Rao (PR- Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari) inaugurated the camp, while Shri Subhashekhar (Rtd. Assistant Director, All India Radio- Vijayawada) and Shri Ikkurthi Lakshmi Narasimha Rao (Chairman, Yazali Farmers Producer Company) graced the valedictory session. The camp's success was made possible through the generous sponsorship of Honeywell and the invaluable knowledge partnership with Agastya International Foundation

Through initiatives like the Anubhuti Camp, Sewa International's Sponsor a Child program remains steadfast in its commitment to empowering underprivileged children with the knowledge, skills and confidence to excel in a future dominated by science and technology. This camp not only empowered the participants but also highlighted the transformative power of education and community support in driving social development and inclusive growth.



# "मन की बात"

## Celebrates Environmental Heroism



"मन की बात" - a vibrant tapestry of conversations held with the Prime Minister of our nation, aimed at understanding the issues that matter most to the citizens of Bharat. In the recent edition of mann ki baat, Honourable Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi ji addressed and put significant spotlight on the efforts by Manoj Benjwal ji .

Manoj Benjwal ji's environmental initiatives were prominently documented in a book published by the Government of India. This book features the remarkable work undertaken by Sewa International via the project of PRAWAH in the state of Uttarakhand. PRAWAH stands for Participatory, Rejuvenation, Afforestation & Waste Management Along with Himalayan Springs, which entails waste management and afforestation along the Himalayan regions. This project promotes public awareness and participation by following a landscape approach to environmental conservation.

In recognition of his invaluable contributions, Sh. Manoj Benjwal ji was specially invited to the swearing in ceremony of the 3rd term of the Prime Minister in Delhi. At Sewa International, we deeply appreciate Manoj ji's dedication to environmental conservation and urge everyone to emulate his spirit of 'Sewa-Bhav' in bringing out a change at the societal level.

Through the combined efforts of individuals like Manoj Benjwal ji in collaboration with Sewa International family, we can work towards a sustainable and environmentally conscious future for Bharat.



# Promoting Livelihood and Empowerment

## *Weaving Traditions into Prosperity for Bhotiya Community*

Wool craft has been an important initiative introduced by Sewa International, promoting local activities and preserving age-old culture. The Bhotiya community, one of the ancient tribes of Uttarakhand, relies on their generational knowledge and expertise in wool craft for their livelihood. In a recent milestone, one such wool craft center, supported by Sewa International, was handed over to the community after extensive training. This center is located in Raini Village, home of Ma Gaura Devi, the renowned leader of the Chipko Movement.

The community underwent comprehensive training in product and design development, equipping them to carry out their tasks with greater efficiency and creativity. With the generous support of Crystal Crop Protection Ltd, Sewa International successfully established this community production center in Raini Village.

The project included marketing initiatives through stalls and exhibitions, as well as input support in the form of tools and equipment. Market linkage was facilitated via Himsampada, ensuring the community's products reach a wider audience. The inauguration was graced by notable personalities, including Ma Bali Devi, a comrade of Ma Gaura Devi, adding historical significance to the event.

Through initiatives like these, Sewa International aims to empower communities and tribes, helping them become sustainable and self-reliant. The success of the wool craft center in Raini Village is a testament to the impact of such efforts, preserving cultural heritage while providing economic opportunities.





# Remembering and Honouring Life of Prakash Kumar

## A Tribute to a Cherished Soul

It is with profound sorrow that we share the passing of Sh. Prakash Kumar, a beloved field coordinator from Delhi. Prakash ji's life was a testament to selfless service and sewa bhav, and his legacy will forever resonate within the hearts of the communities he served.

For the past 1.5 years, Prakash Ji has dedicated himself tirelessly to Sewa International, becoming a beacon of hope and inspiration. His unwavering commitment and ability to mobilise over 100 families for any Sewa International event demonstrated his remarkable presence and dedication to the community.

Prakash ji's journey through Delhi's neighbourhoods left an indelible mark, transforming lives and fostering unity. His spirit of service will continue to inspire all who knew him.

The entire Sewa International family stands in solidarity with Prakash's loved ones during this difficult time, offering our unwavering support and deepest condolences.



प्रिय प्रकाश..

माफ करना। इसके अलावा और कोई शब्द नहीं है। तुम्हारा होना सिर्फ होना नहीं था। दिल्ली के बस्तियों के वास्तव में तुम प्रकाश के पुंज थे। और जिससे कई सामाजिक संगठन समय-समय पर प्रकाशित हो रहे थे, सत्यता बस इतनी मात्रा है, हम सब सिर्फ उस प्रकाश को जानते थे। जो हमारे सामने होता था। लेकिन जो व्यावहारिक वैचारिक होने के साथ-साथ परिवार का भी प्रकाश था। उसकी रोशनी सिर्फ इतनी नहीं थी, कि वह अपने घर को उजाला प्रदान करता था। उसकी ताकत यह भी थी कि वह अपनी कम्युनिटी में भी उतना ही लोकप्रिय था। जितना कि वो अपने घर में।

उसके कहने पर 100 से अधिक परिवार किसी भी समय एकत्र हो जाते थे। और सामाजिक कार्यों में हाथ मिलाकर कार्य करने के लिए तैयार होते थे।

मुझे लगता है ईश्वर को इसी से तुम से जलन होने लगी थी। इसलिए उन्होंने तुम्हें अपने पास बुला लिया। मुझे याद है वह दिन 2014 का वर्ष होगा। पीजीडीएवी कॉलेज के प्रांगण में नवोदय का कार्यक्रम था। और तुमने कहा था भैया हम अपने बस्ती में एक सेंटर चलाएंगे। और तुम ने शुरू भी कर दिया था। और वहीं से तुम्हारी सक्रियता सामाजिक कार्यों में हुई थी। वह शब्द "भैया" शब्द बार-बार कानों में गूँज रहा है। लग रहा है कि तुम कहीं से फिर आवाज लगाओगे। कोई हमसे फिर पूछेगा भैया आरएमएल के किसी डॉक्टर को आप जानते हो क्या? पापा को डॉक्टर से दिखाना है।

अब यह सब सारे सवाल मौन हो चले हैं। अब सिर्फ एक जवाब है। प्रकाश हमारे बीच नहीं है। प्रकाश तुम तो चले गए। पर हमारे लिए कई सवाल छोड़कर चले गए। कम संसाधन, जटिल स्थिति, परिवार का दायित्व, सामाजिक कार्य। और एक कॉल पर सबके लिए उपलब्ध रहने वाला मेरा भाई चला गया।..

जिसका होना सिर्फ संबल मात्र नहीं था। वह तो हमारी शक्ति था। वह जैसा दिखता था वह वैसा जीता था। वह जैसा सोचता था वैसा बोलता था। बस प्रकाश इतना ही वो प्रकाश चला गया।...

~A note from Sh. Harshit Kumar (a fellow Sewa Karyakarta) to Prakash



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SEWA SANDESH





# A Journey of Empowerment and Self Sufficiency

## *Transforming Transgender Lives*

In a country where social identity often dictates one's life path, the transgender community continues to battle for recognition and acceptance. Recognizing this assertion, Sewa International's SHE-CAF team is dedicated to empowering the transgender community across India. Recently, the Sewa SHE team has launched a series of initiatives aimed at supporting and uplifting transgender individuals, spanning a wide landscape from Maharashtra to Odisha.

In Nagpur, Maharashtra, five transgender beneficiaries have been empowered through micro-enterprise setups. This initiative has provided them with the means to establish and sustain their own businesses, fostering economic independence and self-reliance.

In Raipur, Chhattisgarh, a comprehensive transgender empowerment program focusing on tailoring skills has been developed and is set to launch soon. This program, in collaboration with the ground partner NGO Mitwa Sankalp Samiti, aims to bring about transformative change by equipping transgender individuals with valuable vocational skills.

Both Sewa International and Mitwa Sankalp Samiti teams have conducted field visits for project planning and initiation, ensuring the program's success.

Additionally, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Sewa International is collaborating with SAKHA on a transgender empowerment program that offers computer training to 50 beneficiaries. This initiative aims to enhance digital literacy and open up new opportunities for the transgender community, enabling them to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

By combining these efforts, Sewa International aspires to create a supportive and inclusive environment for the transgender community, empowering them to lead dignified and self-sufficient lives. Together, we can pave the way for a brighter and more equitable future for all.





## Laxmi Devi

### A Testament of Resilience and Courage

Laxmi Devi, a 39-year-old woman, living in the village of Mansoona, Rudraprayag district whose life is a true example to the transformative power of tradition and empowerment. While working as a farmer and daily wage labourer, Laxmi's true passion lies in the intricate art of Ringal weaving, a traditional bamboo craft passed down through generations. Her story exemplifies the impact of SEWA's ALIGN project, which has equipped her with the skills and resources to not only preserve this heritage but also turn it into a source of sustainable income and personal growth.

Prior to joining the SEWA Jai Maa Laxmi Self-Help Group (SHG) in 2023, Laxmi's life was marked by financial constraints and limited opportunities. Working as a daily wage labourer, she struggled to make ends meet and provide a secure future for her family. However, her passion for Ringal weaving, a skill she learned from her elders, came up as a new opportunity for her. Yet, the lack of formal training and exposure to new techniques restricted her ability to create innovative products and command higher prices for her craft.

### Joining the SHG: A Spark of Change

SEWA's ALIGN project has played a pioneer role in transforming Laxmi's life by equipping her with avenue, training, knowledge and expert support to excel in her craft. The project's impact is evident in several key areas such as skill development, income generation, saving and credit linkage along with huge exposure to the field of livelihood.

Through SEWA's intervention, Laxmi has been empowered in multiple ways. The project introduced her to new designs and techniques, allowing her to create a wider variety of high-quality Ringal products that appeal to a larger market.

**Tokri – Grain measures**

**Doka – Large Baskets**

**Dalia – Shallow Baskets**

**Puthuka – Grain Baskets**

**Dvak – Double-walled Baskets**

**Suppa – Winnows**

Additionally, the SHG connected her with more customers and expanded her market reach, resulting in a significant boost to her income. SEWA's training and exposure visits also equipped Laxmi with valuable knowledge, skills, and the confidence needed to turn her passion for Ringal weaving into a sustainable source of income.







# Bringing Healthcare to the Unreachable

## *Sewa International's Mobile Medical Unit*

Sewa International's Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) is a transformative initiative dedicated to delivering essential medical services to the most remote and underserved regions of India. Operating in some of the country's most challenging terrains—Tripura's hilly and forested areas, Rajasthan's expansive deserts, and the mountainous regions of Uttarakhand—the MMU is a beacon of hope for many who otherwise lack access to healthcare.

Recently, the MMU embarked on an intensive month-long mission in Tripura, traversing various districts to bring medical aid to those in need. The mobile medical van, equipped with necessary medical supplies and staffed by dedicated healthcare professionals, provided free medical services to the residents of this northeastern state. Over the course of the month, the MMU conducted 23 camps, reaching out to 973 patients who received crucial medical attention and care.

The initiative's impact in Tripura was profound, addressing a wide range of medical needs and ensuring that vulnerable populations received timely and necessary healthcare services. From treating common ailments to providing preventive care and health education, the MMU's presence was a lifeline for many.

## *Medical Camp Locations*

1. Kahamthai Para
2. Bahadur Para
3. Kaskaw 2
4. Thumsarai Para
5. Khorendra Para
6. Nandalal Para
7. Sudaham Para
8. Bottola
9. Joymani Para
10. Shantipur
11. Kaalapani (Ananda Bazar)
12. Borcherra
13. Kormulung
14. Asha Para
15. Kangrai 1
16. Rambahadur Para
17. Brikkhatal
18. Purnajoy Para
19. Sananda Para
20. Mitrajoy
21. Kostra Chandra Para
22. Danga Cherra
23. Daincherra

Through initiatives like the Mobile Medical Unit, Sewa International continues to make significant strides in improving health outcomes for India's underserved regions. The organization's relentless efforts to provide healthcare to those who need it most highlight the transformative power of compassion and commitment.



# Kerala Landslide

## *A Devastating Debacle in Wayanad*

On Wednesday, July 30, 2024, Kerala's Wayanad district was devastated by a significant landslide triggered by intense rainfall. This series of catastrophic landslides, caused by recent extreme downpours, has become one of the state's worst disasters in recent memory.

In just two days, over 140 lives were lost, and numerous families have reported members missing or untraceable. To read more about the effects of the disastrous Landslide and how you can Support Kerala.



Support Kerala  
Landslide Victims:  
Become a Beacon of  
Light in the Wake of  
Disaster

**DONATE NOW**



# Himachal and Uttarakhand Cloudburst

## *A Catastrophic Calamity*

A catastrophic cloudburst has devastated several districts in Himachal Pradesh, including Manali, Shimla, and Mandi as well as parts of neighbouring state of Uttarakhand. Tragically, the disaster has claimed at least 15 lives, and around 50 individuals are still unaccounted for. As per the state emergency operation centre, the cloudbursts took place in Nirmand, Sainj, and Malana area in Kullu, Padhar in Mandi and Rampur in Shimla, with torrential rain washing away many houses, roads and bridges on its way.

Stand with Himachal and  
Uttarakhand:  
Illuminate the Path to  
Recovery for Cloudburst  
Victims



**DONATE NOW**



*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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