



Samanvaya... is 8

Knowledge Services for the Development Sector

www.samanvaya.com

Greetings From Team Samanvaya -

The Year 2005-06 was one of many changes for Samanvaya.

Request for our inputs in the development sector are now increasingly for conceptualizing new initiatives, analysis of problems and evolving strategies to address the same, consulting services for effective communication and research on different aspects of societal changes. Many of these are directed towards creating more rural livelihood opportunities and getting better returns from existing ones. Such requests have impacted our infrastructure creation and skill enhancements.

We have enhanced and broadened our services to address some of the needs we have observed in the development sector. Through Jobs@Samanvaya we are able to provide manpower consulting for the development sector. Later this year we will launch the [Samanvaya Knowledge Network](#) which would create a Virtual Knowledge Network of Grassroot organisations working on development Issues. Our web features have been enhanced by addition of more articles, reports, the earlier PPST newsletter articles and the newsletters of Sanjeevani Ayurvedic Foundation.

Such work has provided us with many opportunities to learn through our work. Whether it is documenting the agricultural practices in Nagapattinam District or interacting with the traditional boat builders in the Ramnad region or elders in the old age homes of Chennai – we have learnt continuously from our work. We share our learning through our website, interactions and lectures and periodic articles for other media and publications.

Our time commitment for youth has increased this year, with periodic lectures for educational institutions and some long term associations. A series of workshops for youth based on the Swaraj framework are scheduled for later this year.

Work kept us constantly on the move this year, providing consulting help to many development sector organisations, promoting new ventures, participating in village gatherings, attending community meetings...we are proud that our travels are largely more to villages and meeting village level workers!

The Samanvaya office has moved too...we are currently located at Perambur, right behind the bus terminus - which means more people traveling by bus visit us! We have offered our office and library as a resource centre for individuals and organisations in this area, working with social ventures.

Better Documentation and Presentation of development work through **creative communication strategies** – Samanvaya has worked with many organisations in documenting their work this year too – over a dozen work documentations including, project, annual and events reports; capacity building workshops on documentation across the state benefiting over 100 NGOs; about a dozen presentations and a considerable amount of handouts, brochures, posters designing work.

Charting New Livelihood Paths - Association with CCD, Madurai

Our association with CCD, Madurai continued through 2005-06. Samanvaya has played a significant role in re-structuring this organisation to face new challenges apart from documenting their processes and some of their projects. We have also played a role in some of the novel livelihood ventures being pursued by this organisation. The two major ventures of CCD, in which Samanvaya has played a substantial role are:

1. Market Access - A network of farmer federations from over 6 states (and over 1000 farmers) will be able to access the urban and organised markets with definite and better returns assured due to the initiative called Market Access. This initiative has created a common brand, sharing of resources and reaching out to better markets possible through networking among farmer federations. Samanvaya has been involved in conceptualizing and planning out this venture.
2. Community Access - Community Access is a network of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and stake holders of CBOs. This network aims to leverage on the rural strength of CBOs to create rural livelihood opportunities either on their own through access to skill, knowledge and resources or along with corporate houses through a process of co-creation. Samanvaya continues to play a role in planning and coordinating community access related events. Towards this Samanvaya has also coordinated a programme to link corporate houses with CBOs as part of their CSR programme.



Samanvaya's Report on the Post-Tsunami Land Reclamation Work in Nagapattinam has for the first time thrown light on the some of the most significant practices adopted by the farmers here, particularly organic. The report for the first time documented 10 traditional varieties of paddy some of which are flood and saline tolerant.



COMING UP: STATUS OF THE ELDERLY - URBAN AND RURAL

Currently, Samanvaya is working on two independent programmes looking at the Urban and Rural issues concerning the elderly. One is a status paper on the Elderly and the Old Age Homes in Chennai City. A larger study on the status and social support for the Elderly in rural areas is also being pursued in collaboration with a local developmental organisation in rural Tamilnadu.



Quintessential Gandhi was published in October 2005 and the first edition has sold out (whatever was for sale after we enthusiastically gifted most of it). It was a unique moment for us to have the book released simultaneously in Madurai Gandhi Museum by the Collector and the Veteran Gandhian Kameshwar Bahuguna in the Lakshmi Ashram in Kumaon, Himalayas!

The book is being translated into German currently and will be released during the Frankfurt Book Festival in October.



Other Major Publications we have compiled in 2005 – 06

1. "Learning from Endogenous Development" (LenDev) for the COMPAS Network
2. "Best Practices and Lessons Learnt in the Post-Tsunami Livelihood Initiatives" for Practical Action, Sri Lanka
3. "Life & Health Risk of Rural Poor" for DHAN Foundation, Madurai
4. "Organic Solutions – The Post-Tsunami Agricultural Land Reclamation Utilising Organic Farming Practices" for TOFarM, Nagapattinam
5. "The Odavis of Tamailnadu", for CCD, Madurai

Samanvaya Status Papers on Social Issues and Institutions in Chennai

Chennai City has many societal problems and many players attending to them. Old Age Homes, Orphanages, Home for Disabled...many of these institutions have become a necessary part of the urbanisation and 'growth' into a globalised city.

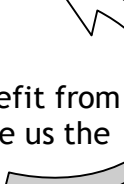
What is the status of these institutions? How do they manage? What motivates them? Who reside in them? - there is a need for citizens of Chennai to understand the issues that concern such institutions and its inmates. Samanvaya along with CIOSA network has embarked on a series of status papers on such institutions. Four of these are scheduled to be released in 2006 - 07.

SwaRaj for Youth

Gandhiji wrote the book 'Hind Swaraj' in 1909 and at Samanvaya we have found it relevant even in the current day's context. Samanvaya has been promoting the swaraj framework of understanding society over the past few years. In 2004, we conducted a course on understanding and initiating social action through the framework of 'swaraj'. Since then we have designed in-house programmes for students in educational institutions and given lectures based on the framework. Currently, Samanvaya is planning a year long programme with a few educational institutions. You can write to swaraj@samanvaya.com for more details on these programmes.

Feedback Gives Us Strength -

Words of Thanks, Appreciation and How did some one benefit from our work...these provide us the fuel to move forward!!



Feedback from capacity building workshops -

“Learnt systematic ways for documentation” – *head of an NGO, Tiruchy*

“Our Knowledge base on documentation has been enhanced” – *head of an NGO, Tiruchy*

“We never knew that there was so much to documentation, it is something we always end up pushing down in our priority...we have immensely benefited through this programme” – *Chairperson of an NGO, Chennai*

“More such programmes are necessary.” – *Senior Volunteer, NGO, Chennai*

Typical Feedback from our website -

“I chanced upon your website and have spent more time on it than many interesting websites I come across. The emphasis on Gandhian tradition, the study of SwaRaj by youth are laudable. The websites you have constructed for various organizations and the knowledge compilation in your own are commendable. I also read the absurd side of humanitarian aid. When I was asked to speak to my local Rotary club in Phoenix, I emphasized similar points about responsible aid work. Thank you for that article also....

My intention is to be in India Nov/Dec of this year. ...I will inform you of my dates in Chennai and hope to connect with you. It would be an honor... - S..., USA.”



“At the outset may I say a big THANK YOU for the happiness you gave my wife V.. and myself when we happened to visit your website.

It reiterates our faith in today's Generation (much maligned) that the values and traditions of our great country can never be 'lost'.... pictures could be shared when we meet up some day.

with best wishes
R..., Bangalore”

...About Samanvaya Knowledge Network (SKN)

The Search engine dominates internet activity. Yet, it is least in the minds of organisations when they create their web presence. Knowledge content on the web can be more effectively and widely utilized if it were to learn from search applications. Content Providers on Development Sector can benefit immensely if they were to classify and present their content based on the behaviour of web searches. Smaller, but, effective web presence can be created through multi-level networking and resource sharing on-line. SKN is an attempt in this direction, the launch is scheduled for December 2006.

Communication

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