

ANNUAL REPORT ^{2007 - 2008}



SAMARTHAN - Centre for Development Support

Year of Transition and Stabilisation

The current development challenges faced by India influence civil society strategies and action areas. The growing strength of the Indian economy and euphoria of joining the locus of the developed world has further distanced the citizens at the margin for their existence and identity in a neo-liberalising State. Rapid distress migration from rural to urban settlements, widening disparities and invisible poverty in urban settings demand serious civil society attention to strengthen urban local bodies.

We concentrated our efforts to widen and deepen engagement for enhancing governance-accountability discourse within the Government system and questioning the governance framework from outside. Promoting Right to Information and Right to Employment (NREGA) along with promotion of participatory planning has been our focus of work in rural areas. This year we engaged with the citizens of Bhopal in influencing urban governance by building relationships with resident welfare associations. In the towns of Sehore and Ajaygarh, people's plan was prepared and endorsed by the respective urban local bodies. Our long standing field presence in Sehore district got a new legal identity to promote local leaders taking independent responsibilities in the time to come.

We continue to face the challenge of re-organising ourselves to expand our engagement as an evidence based research and advocacy organization keeping our foot firmly on the ground. Many of our supporters and stakeholders have helped and encouraged us to evolve new roles.

I am confident that your association and guidance will help us to maintain our distinction as an effective and relevant organization.

(Yogesh Kumar)
Executive Director

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YEAR

- Prepared and widely shared
 - ❖ National Report on NREGA
 - ❖ Citizen's Report Card on Bhopal Municipal Corporation and 5 small and medium sized towns in Madhya Pradesh.
 - ❖ People's town plan for Sehore and Ajaigarh towns of Madhya Pradesh.
- Oriented over 32000 people in 328 Panchayats of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh on Right to Information.
- Prepared aggregated development plans using bottom up planning processes at the village Panchayat level in Bastar block of Bastar district and Dongargaon block of Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh.
- Conducted Social Audits in 25 Panchayats in Sehore and Panna districts and supported 155 Panchayats in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh to prepare self-disclosure documents under Right to Information.
- Providing long term support in strengthening Gram Sabha in 8 districts of the Madhya Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project (MPRLP) covering about 2700 villages.

I. STRENGTHENING VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

Samarthan has been involved in efforts to bring about transparency and accountability in development works of village Panchayats to promote the rights of the poor.

Deepening Participatory Planning in Chattisgarh

Samarthan is implementing a UNDP project on decentralization in Dongargaon block of Rajnandgaon district and Bastar block of Bastar district of Chhattisgarh. Microplanning efforts were undertaken involving planning by local people following which 483 works were completed in Dongargaon block while 204 works are currently being completed in Bastar block. The district administration was influenced enough to ask Samarthan to facilitate microplanning in the remaining 50 panchayats of Bastar block and 41 Panchayats of Rajnandgaon block.

Pond Cleaning Increases Irrigation

The people of Tappa Panchayat in Dongargaon block wanted to have their pond cleaned by physically removing the weeds and having the canal gate repaired. They conveyed the issue to the Zila Panchayat CEO in a meeting as a result of which a sum of Rs 29 lakhs was approved under NREGA to clean the pond. The effort gave employment to 50 labourers in 11 villages. With the cleaning of the pond it is now possible to irrigate 400 acres of land and a second crop can be grown on 500 acres in the summer.

Increase in Taxation by Panchayats in Chhattisgarh

Many Panchayats in the UNDP project area in Chhattisgarh have begun to levy taxes and there has been an increase in tax collection on items such as royalty from mines, auction of plantation produce, and fees by villagers for services. In Dongargaon block the revenue earned has increased by two and half times since 2004-05. In Bastar block, 15 Panchayats have started earning revenues whereas only 3 did so in 2004-05.

Tax Collection in Mohar Panchayat

The Gram Sabha of the Panchayat of Mohar in Dongargaon block passed a resolution by which the people accepted the principle of paying taxes to the Panchayat. In April 2006 the Panchayat imposed taxes on the sand being dredged from the bed of the river and the revenue from the source increased from Rs 8000 to Rs 37500 in 2007. Other annual income sources include taxes on the animal market (Rs 40,000), house tax (Rs 1700), cowpen (Rs 700), Pan shop (Rs 25), Flour mill (Rs 200), Poha Mill (Rs 200) and the animal pen (Rs 3000). Monthly income sources include the Nal Jal scheme (Rs 700), and electricity (Rs 76 monthly per family). This income is being spent in providing services to families. In the future they plan to increase house tax and construct commercial premises to give employment to the unemployed.

Suo-moto disclosure by Panchayats under RTI in Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh

155 Panchayats in 18 districts of Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh have openly displayed self disclosure documents in a public venue. In Sehore district the block administration sought our aid to develop the self-disclosure of projects for the other Panchayats in the block.

Model NREGA Panchayats in Madhya Pradesh

Samarthan built 5 model Panchayats each in Shivpuri and Sidhi districts of Madhya Pradesh by enabling them to give employment to the rural poor under NREGA. In Shivpuri nearly 650 applicants were given work.

Further, over 1300 panchayat workers, secretaries and mates were trained in muster roll preparation and accounts maintenance in 10 Panchayats each in Sehore and Ajaigarh blocks.

II. STRENGTHENING OF GRAM SABHA

Samarthan worked to strengthen the Gram Sabha so that the poor people could monitor the functioning of the Panchayat.

Strengthening Marginalized Communities in the Gram Sabha in Chhattisgarh

In the UNDP project Panchayats, the participation of women in the Gram Sabha in Dongargaon block has increased from 37.5% in August 2006 to 42% in 2008. The participation of SC/ST sections has increased from 29.6% to 37% in the same period. In Bastar block the participation of women in 2008 is 37%.

These sections have begun to demand their rights and have ensured that workers are paid the minimum wage under NREGA. They participated actively in the social audit of NREGA work and forced the Sarpanch to reveal the details of the expenditure. In some cases the Gram Sabha even removed the Panchayat representatives from their positions.

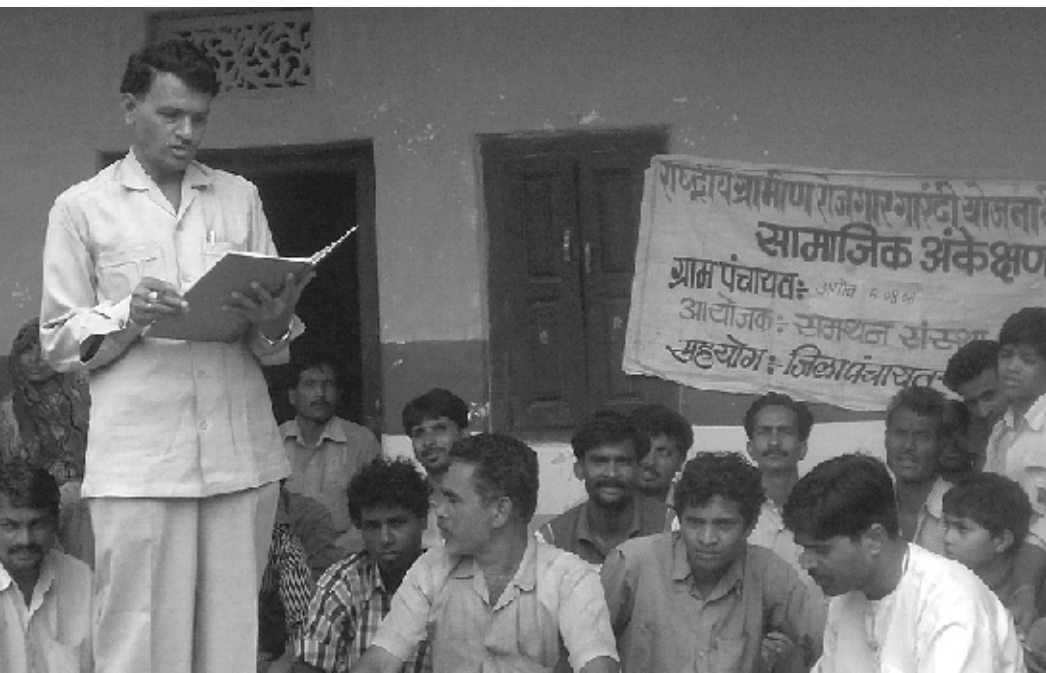
Active Community Monitoring in Chhattisgarh

In the UNDP project Panchayats members of standing committees have begun to monitor services. In Bastar, the Health, Education and Social Welfare standing committee is actively working to monitor anganwadis, schools and receipt of pensions. There is also a PDS vigilance committee that is monitoring the PDS shops.

In Dongargaon block, Samarthan is also monitoring a village planning process supported by UNICEF which aims to organize services around the child for the full development of the child's potential. Over 1700 pregnant mothers were identified and 556 institutional deliveries took place. Households with toilets increased from 14% in 2007 to 35% in 2008. The attendance rate of school children which was 89% in the 6-14 age group and 85% in the 14-19 age group in 2007 has increased to 93%.

Citizens Demand and Audit Work under NREGA

More than 859 families were registered, 3529 work applications were filed and 1612 job cards were distributed after awareness generation on NREGA by Samarthan in 45 Panchayats in Ajaygarh, Sarguja and Tikamgarh districts.



Samarthan conducted Social Audit under NREGA in 10 Panchayats in Ajaigarh block, and in 15 Panchayats of Sehore block which revealed that unspent money was in the hands of Sarpanch. The Gram Sabha generated pressure on the Sarpanch to transfer the unaccounted public money back to the Panchayat.

Improving Village Sanitation and Personal Hygiene in Madhya Pradesh

Samarthan is working intensively in 12 villages on drinking water and sanitation. Eight villages have become open defecation free with

ANNUAL REPORT

2007 - 2008

100% toilets constructed while the other four villages have gained 70% toilets. Half of the BPL families in the project area have constructed toilets in their homes. Sanitary pads were distributed to 120 adolescent girls who were unaware about the advantages of their use.

Formation of SHG groups among BPL families in Madhya Pradesh

Samarthan facilitated the formation of 60 SHG groups this year comprising of 750 members belonging to BPL families in 30 Panchayats of Sehore block under the SJSRY programme. Among these groups 8 groups are running the mid day meals while others have been involved in community monitoring of work under schemes relating to health, education, anganwadi centres, NREGA to improve them further.

III. STRENGTHENING URBAN LOCAL BODIES

Like rural citizens, those living in urban areas have long suffered from inadequate urban services. Samarthan envisages capacity building of the staff of urban bodies along with engaging in microplanning and raising awareness among citizens about their role.

Microplanning in towns in Madhya Pradesh

In Ajaigarh, a draft document was prepared for each ward about the available infrastructure, the services offered and the scope for improvement which was shared with the community and ward councillors. The total plan outlay of the town was budgeted at approximately Rs.2 crore. The plan is being followed-up with different departments, municipal corporation, collectorate, citizens and citizen forums for its implementation.

In Sehore, Samarthan revitalized wards by organizing ward committees and holding meetings on problems faced by wards. Ward level meetings were held in the 35 wards of Sehore town in which 15 wards conducted microplanning. Services started being provided on a community basis in these 15 wards which induced the ward councilors of the other 20 wards to show interest in doing it in their wards as well. There was monitoring of services in 8 wards by the members of the community with the lacunae being reported to the ward councilor.

Citizens Clean their Ward

The Shiv Shakti Women's Group which was formed in ward no 23 of Sehore municipality for betterment of the ward took the responsibility of continuous monitoring of the hygiene level in the ward. The ward was very dirty because it fell in the vegetable market area. The sweepers who were supposed to sweep the area hardly performed their tasks and no one took them to task for the dereliction of their work.

The women removed the encroachments on the drains which prevented their cleaning and made other households aware about the need to clean the areas. Following this campaign, the Sehore Municipality initiated a cleanliness drive called 'Operation Clean' for all the wards in the municipality.

Citizen's Report Card of Bhopal

Samarthan carried out a report card survey of the available civic services in Bhopal in which it documented the opinions of 650 interviewed people regarding the quality of service, the context of its availability, and utility and user satisfaction. Eight essential urban services namely water, solid waste management, drainage, street lighting, roads, school education and health services were surveyed for the preparation of the report card. The main findings were:

- 70% of the people did not know their councilors
- Government schools were the least used government service

- The most available urban services were roads and water although both the services are being complimented by the private sources of residents.
- Government Health Services were used only moderately
- In general, the service oriented urban amenities like Solid Waste Management had extremely poor performance

Small Town Citizen Report Card

A small town report card survey was carried out in the towns of Seoni, Sehore, Sidhi, Tikamgarh and Ajaigarh in which 1700 people were interviewed on the quality of urban services. The findings were:

- There appeared to be an inverse correlation between town size and environmental sanitation status, but the relationship was not consistent
- Water-logging contributed to poor environmental sanitation, with the poor condition of drainage across all towns exacerbating the situation.
- Availability of municipal water connections increased with size of the town, but supply was inadequate and quality of water was below acceptable limits
- Coverage of household toilets was also related to town size, but coverage fell to as low as 50% for a small town like Ajaygarh

Jan Sahayta Kendra for provision of Basic Health Services

Samarthan started a Jan Sahayata Kendra or Public Help Centre in the district hospital in Sehore town to strengthen the functioning of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti. It has helped to obtain delivery cash, blood tests, maternity cards, injections, malaria tests, X-ray tests, birth & death certificates, meeting the doctor, obtaining medicine, receiving the disability certificate etc. In the year 2007-08, a total of 11183 people were facilitated by the centre.

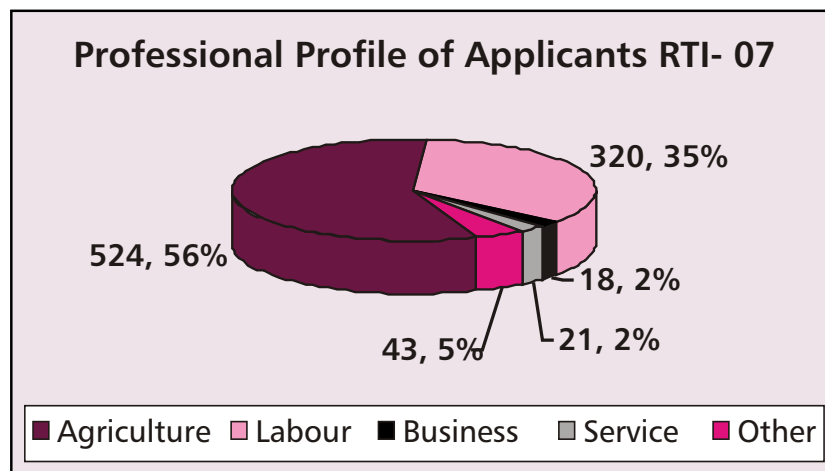
Resolution in a Single Day – Public Service Centre Builds better Systems

Samarthan associated with the district administration in Sehore to set up the 'Resolution in a Single Day – Public Service Centre' in the district administration office campus. Through the centre, residents of rural and urban areas are able to get 24 kinds of services such as age proof certificate, residence proof, birth certificate, marriage certificate etc in a single day for a nominal cost of Rs 5 or Rs 10. Today over a hundred people obtain benefit daily and in 2007-08 a total of 4127 people were benefited. The centre is generating its own revenue.

IV. ENABLING CITIZENS FOR DEMANDING INFORMATION

Right To Information promotion in rural areas in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh

- Over 2500 Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) Representatives and 1700 Government Field Functionaries were oriented over Right To Information (RTI) in 15 districts of Madhya Pradesh and 3 districts of Chhattisgarh.
- Over 32000 Villagers were oriented through local folk forms, RTI stalls, Gram Sabha meetings, and facilitation for filing applications in both states.
- Over 1300 RTI Applications were filed from the intervened rural and urban areas in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.



ANNUAL REPORT

2007 - 2008

Right To Information promotion in urban areas in Madhya Pradesh:

- 68 Municipal Representatives and 100 government field functionaries were oriented over RTI in 64 wards of six districts in Madhya Pradesh
- Over 6000 people were oriented over RTI in six districts - Gwalior, Sidhi, Sehore, Tikamgarh, Seoni, and Panna – of Madhya Pradesh
- Over 400 RTI Applications were filed in the six districts

In urban areas most of the applicants belonged to BPL category (75%) and resided in urban slums. The majority of the information seekers were labourers (44%) and their queries were related to BPL survey, Deendayal Antyodaya card, social security pensions, and availability of urban services.

Setting up an Right To Information helpline and a radio programme

An RTI helpline based in Samarthan, Bhopal was set up which clarified the queries of callers on RTI. Further, a Radio Programme (Jingle) on RTI was relayed on the FM Radio Channel which was broadcast to the areas of Bhopal, Raisen and Sehore. The RTI Helpline received more calls as a result and indirectly the relay reached over 15 lakh people five times a day for one month.



V. STRENGTHENING DISTRICT LEVEL PROCESSES

Strengthening Gram Sabha for promotion of rural livelihoods in Madhya Pradesh

Samarthan is strengthening the Gram Sabha through the Madhya Pradesh Rural Livelihood Project (MPRLP) in 8 districts of the state. MPRLP has contracted Samarthan to build the capacity of the MPRLP teams (DPSU and PFTs) to facilitate Gram Sabha strengthening effectively. Samarthan has conducted two training sessions to train master trainers and appointed district coordinators to assist teams in providing hand holding support to the Gram Sabhas in addressing poverty and livelihood issues within their village.

Supporting bottom up planning process in Chhattisgarh

Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) is the programme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India to promote comprehensive planning with people's participation. We are providing technical support in Korias, Bastar and Dantewara districts. The planned documents will be the comprehensive district plans keeping the perspective of development for 5 Years.

VI. STRENGTHENING STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL PROCESSES

Citizen's campaign for attaining Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)

To fulfill the Millenium Development Goals, Samarthan and the Panchayati Raj Mahasangh, a state level network of elected Panchayat representatives, ran a joint campaign under the aegis of the 'Wada Na Todo Abhiyan'. A 'Stand Up and Speak Out' event was organized in which over 2,00,000 people participated and gave feedback on the status of health and education facilities in their Panchayat. Memorandums were submitted to the government following which the Collectors of the districts of Seoni, Datia, Balaghat and Sidhi responded proactively by ensuring inspection of the sites. Funds were allotted for the repair of schools and government land was identified for school construction. A memorandum comprising all the major findings was submitted to the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.

VII. Influencing Policies and Practices at the state level

Samarthan engaged in several assignments for the state government and other development agencies that had the potential to influence policy and improve the quality of governance.

Making Government Procedures of Rural Development Programmes User-Friendly in Madhya Pradesh

Samarthan supported the Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Madhya Pradesh in simplifying procedures and formats for easy access of development programmes and schemes by the rural community. The study covered 10 important schemes related to the Panchayat and Rural Development Department in Sehore and Dhar districts.

Capacity building of Panchayats for Village Health services in Madhya Pradesh

To generate interest in Panchayats on health issues, Samarthan in collaboration with the Health Department and the Academy of Administration, Madhya Pradesh decided to train elected representatives of Gram Panchayats and members of community based organizations in Sehore District. The assignment included building capacities of youth leaders to develop them as Master Trainers. Master Trainers (44) were identified from various blocks of the district and trained for carrying out training in the 499 Panchayats of Sehore district.

Assisting the Chhattisgarh Irrigation Development Project to reach target groups

Samarthan was involved in disseminating information about the goals of the Chhattisgarh Irrigation Development Project (CIDP) of the Government of Chhattisgarh that is supported by ADB. A Quarterly newsletter was published to educate the Water User Associations (WUAs) on better agricultural practices and an agricultural planner was prepared to highlight the major technical and time concerns in Kharif and Rabi crop cultivation. A website has been developed (www.cidpgov.in) and pamphlets have been prepared on participatory irrigation management (PIM) and CIDP.

Raising awareness for the Chhattisgarh State Electricity Regulatory Commission

Samarthan engaged in an effort to build awareness of different stakeholders on the effective consumption of electricity and its maintenance in the districts of Mahasamund and Janjgir Champa. More than 30000 people were oriented across 1073 panchayats. The focus of the training was on building capacities of leaders at the village level who would interact continuously with the community on conservation of electricity. After the training 263 complaints related to low voltage, hooking, street light, power cut etc. were filed by the participants.



ANNUAL REPORT

2007 - 2008

Abridged balance sheet on 31st March 2008

Particulars	Amount 2007-2008	% 2007- 2008	Amount 2006-2007	% 2006-2007
Assets				
Fixed Assets 1	77,21,044.00	25	73,11,2352.00	26
Investments	78,93,837.00	25	72,42,029.00	26
Loans Disbursed 2	0.00		0.00	0
Deposits and Advances	53,22,491.00	17	39,00,248.00	14
Current Assets	1,03,28,575.00	33	95,45,105.00	34
Total	3,12,65,947.00	100	2,79,98,634.00	100
Liabilities				
Corpus/Endowment fund(s)	25,02,000.00*	8	2,000.00	0
Earmarked funds	0		0	
Loans/Borrowings			0	
Current Liabilities and provisions	1,80,27,954.00	58	1,33,67,916.00	53
Income and Expenditure A/c Balance	1,07,35,993.00	34	1,46,28,717.00	47
Total	3,12,65,947.00	100.	2,79,98,633.00	100

*Transferred by permission of the Board from Income & Expenditure A/c.

Abridged income and account expenditure for the year ending on 31st March 2008

Particulars	Amount 2007-2008	% 2007- 2008	Amount 2006-2007	% 2006-2007
Income				
Self Generated Income	63,80,691.00	22	48,79,412.00	15
Indian Sources	75,28,424.00	26	1,13,74,780.00	35
International Sources	1,53,36,885.00	52	1,61,10,601.00	50
Total	2,92,46,000.00	100	3,23,64,793.00	100
Expenditure				
Programme	2,30,40,756.00	92	2,74,85,381.00	95
Public Education for Fundraising	0.00		0.00	0
Management	12,56,675.00	5	8,94,935.00	3
Others	6,68,726.00	3	6,88,403.00	2
Total	2,49,66,157.00	100	2,90,68,718.00	100
Surplus	42,79,844.00		32,96,075.00	

Samarthan follows the norms of the Credibility Alliance

Staff

Salaries	Male	Female	Total
<5000	80	1	81
5000 - 10000	6	3	9
10000 - 15000	9	1	10
15000 - 20000	5	1	6
>20000	3	1	4
Total	103	7	110

International Travel

Name	Visited Country	Period	Programme	Sponsor Organization
Dr. Yogesh Kumar	London, UK	10.7.2007 to 14.7.2007	International Workshop: 'The impact of transnational non-governmental public actors (NGPAs) on policy processes and policy outcomes: translating advocacy into sustainable policy engagement'	Institute of Common Wealth Foundation, UK
Sameer Chaturvedi	Dhaka, Bangladesh	28.1.2008 to 30.1.2008	South Asia Water & Sanitation Workshop	Water Aid India

Statutory Auditors

AK Surana & Associates
H-38, Nishant Colony
74 Bungalows
Bhopal

Internal Auditor

Arun Malhotra
M. Malhotra & Company
HIG-132, Sector C, Vidhya Nagar
Hoshangabad Road, Bhopal

OUR DONORS

Direct partners

- Cordaid, The Netherlands
- Ford Foundation, Delhi
- Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) programme (DFID)
- Development Alternatives and Price Waterhouse & Coopers, Delhi
- Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), Delhi
- District Poverty Initiative Programme (DPIP) Government of Madhya Pradesh.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Delhi
- Water Aid, Delhi

- Coffey International Development, U.K
- Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Mumbai

Associates through PRIA, Delhi

- Ford Foundation
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- Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), Delhi
- Cordaid, The Netherland

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- Indo-German Social Service Society, New Delhi
- SIDA, New Delhi

ANNUAL REPORT

2007 - 2008

Collaborators on specific issues

- Department of Panchayat and Social Welfare, Government of Madhya Pradesh
- Education Development Center, Bangalore
- United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA), Bhopal in association with SIRD, Jabalpur
- MP Community Forest Management, Government of Madhya Pradesh
- Catholic Relief Services, Chhattisgarh
- Chhattisgarh District Poverty Reduction Programme, Raipur
- Rajiv Gandhi Watershed Mission, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal
- Madhya Pradesh Urban Services for Poor (MPUSP), Municipal Corporation, Bhopal
- Chhattisgarh Irrigation Development Project, Water Resource Department, Chhattisgarh
- Oxfam India Trust, Delhi
- RCVP Noronha Academy of Administration, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh
- United Nations Millennium Campaign, Bangkok
- UNFPA, Bhopal
- Hans Siedel Foundation, New Delhi

Board of Trustees

Dr Rajesh Tandon, Chairperson, is the President of PRIA and internationally known for his contribution to participatory research and training. Currently, he is the chairman of VANI, a network of voluntary organisations in India.

Mr Ashok Singh, Treasurer, is the Executive Director of SSK (Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra), Lucknow, UP which is a state level support organisation specialising in participatory trainings and decentralised governance.

Dr BK Joshi, Member, is a political scientist, who has served various academic institutions as a faculty member. He was the Director of Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, and former Vice Chancellor of Kumaon University.

Ms Devinder Kaur Uppal, Member, is a faculty member on development communication in Makhanlal Chaturvedi University of Journalism, Bhopal.

Prof Amitabh Kundu, Member, is an internationally acclaimed social scientist on urban development. He is a Professor and Dean at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi.

Ms Rekha Gujare, Member, is the director of voluntary organisation 'Pradeepan' working with tribals in Betul district.

Dr Indira Mishra, Member, is a retired Additional Chief Secretary from the Government of Chhattisgarh. Dr Mishra was the Director of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Delhi and served as the Principal Secretary in various departments in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh.

Dr Yogesh Kumar, Member Secretary, has a doctorate in development economics and has worked for several years to promote community participation and supporting development initiatives. He specialises in participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Mr TN Srivastava, Retired Civil Servant and former Chief Information Commissioner, State Information Commission, Madhya Pradesh, is supporting Samarthan as Governance Advisor.

Mr M Kandasami, Financial Advisor, is a renowned financial and organisational management expert in South Asia with more than two and a half decades of expertise in non-profit organisations.

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